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Table of Contents

Lead Essay

Writer - Text - Reader

Postmodernism has thrown many of the things we used to take for granted "up for grabs," which in many ways is, at least, not a bad thing and may even be beneficial. It never hurts to test one's assumptions because it is precisly in our assumptions that we so often fail to distinquish between what is true and what is patently false. Postmodernists, however, tend to carry potentially useful insights to such extremes as to undo the value of the insight in the first place-which leads to the conclusion that postmodernism is roughly 10% right on the money and 90% hype. An article entitled by Edgar W. Conrad, "How the Bible was Colonized" (*Scripture, Community, and Mission: Essays in Honor of Dr. Preman Niles*. Edited by Philip L. Wickeri, 94-107. Hong Kong and London: Christian Conference of Asia and Council for World Mission, 2002.) provides a case in point.

Conrad begins his article with a brief exposition of the standard postmodernist understanding of the location of meaning in a given written piece of work, a text. Where it was once held that the intentions of the author determined the meaning of the text and, more recently, that meaning emerges from the text itself, postmodernists argue that the reader is the active agent in determining what the text means. Stated most radically, this position holds that a text means only what the reader thinks it means. Conrad acknowledges that the claim that the reader determines the meaning of the text appears chaotic in that one hundred readers will "construct" one hundred different meanings for one text. What holds chao in abeyance, he argues, is the fact that there are "interpretive communities" that "construct" a collective, communal meaning for the text.

This postmodernist perspective is helpful to a degree. It undermines the safe, old-fashioned ("modern") assumption that writers control the meanings of what they write, which assumption is patently false. We can hardly deny that readers do, again to a degree, impress their own meanings on a text as they read it. Readers do not read every word; they do not give equal attention to every paragraph and page; and they have to read a book or an article over a period of time, during which they forget some of its earlier content. Readers also have their own ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes, which shape how they understand the meanings of words. The idea that there are "reading communities" that interpret texts in different ways seems to be an equally valid perception, if not more than a little obvious.

There are, however, two related assumptions that this postmodernist approach does not question. First, it assumes that in the process of writing and reading there are three independent entities known as "writer," "text," and "reader." Second, it assumes that the writer is an entity that stands outside of the interpretive communities of readers. The theory fails to acknowledge, in other words, that writers are also readers; they are individuals who associate themselves with interpretive reading communities and who have some sense of what communicates within their reading community. Writers already share meanings with readers, and when they write they

inject those communal meanings into what they write. Reader and writer form a community and the text written and read is an artifact of that community.

The postmodernist theory, helpful as it is in some ways, simply cannot account for the fact that the contents, the meanings of a book, an article, or a particularly powerful speech can change a person's life. There is a leper in Nan Province, northern Thailand, who years' ago moved into a leper colony full of Christians and swore he would never become one himself. Then, however, he read in a tract about Christ's healing ten lepers. The idea, written down in a book, that a World Religious Figure would show that kind of compassion to people like him shattered his resistance, brought him to his knees, and transformed him into a member of a tiny minority religious group, the northern Thai Christian church. It is certainly true that this individual read his own meaning into the biblical text, which focuses on the idea that only one of the ten came back to thank Jesus for being healed. At the same time, however, the content of the text transformed his own self-image as a leper by recounting for him Jesus' compassionate treatment of other lepers. There is more to reading than simply imposing our meanings on what we read.

Conrad, unwittingly, exposes the particularly difficult problem facing postmodern Christian authors when it comes to the content of the Bible. He contends that over the course of the years the Bible has been subjected to all manner of ideological meanings, which biblical readers have to expose and, by implication, transcend. Given his own introduction, one can only ask, "Why?" What difference does it make? Your reading community reads it one way. Mine another way. His another way. Conrad seems to assume that there is an "original" or a "real" meaning, which assumption (if he holds it) contradicts his own ideological orientation to written texts. In his attempt to free the Bible from ideological readings, Conrad states, "In the contemporary western world the Bible must be read in connection with other sacred texts and stories that have played formative roles in shaping culture." (page 103). His point is that the Bible is no longer the dominant text of Western culture and so has to be read in conjunction with other key Western texts. Again, "Why?" If the reader in community determines the meaning of the text, why is it necessary to read the Bible in some way mandated by this author? Who is this author to tell readers how they must read anything? Deep down inside Conrad still evidently believes that the Bible has an integrity of its own, an integrity which readers cannot ignore just because they are readers.

Written works do have an integrity of their own, and that integrity cannot be disentangled from the originial intention of the author. It is more helpful and true, I think, to see author, text, and reader as three interconnected moments in an admittedly imperfect human communication process. The author's literary intentions and skill inscribe a set of meanings in a text. The way in which those meanings are assembled in the text, especially as the text becomes older, influences the meanings themselves. The text, particularly if it is a sacred text, does have a life of its own apart from the author. Readers bring their own meanings to the text and, again, reassemble the meanings in a way that makes sense to them. In doing so, however, they are still bound to the text itself, which in turn still contains the words of the author. The boundaries between the roles of author, text, and reader are fluid and indistinct and yet there still are three roles, however much the postmodern critics want to raise up one (the reader) and beat down the other two.

Herb Swanson
Ban Dok Daeng
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Articles

Religious Identity and Globalization
(Would Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed Drive a Sports Utility Vehicle?)

Donald K. Swearer

Note: Dr. Swearer delivered the following key note address to an international conference on "Religion and Globalization," July 27th through August 2nd, 2002, sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture (ISRC), Payap University. I would like to thank Don for permission to reprint his address here.

Globalization: Setting the Stage

The term, "globalization" has a distinctively modern resonance. In the arena of the global economy the word evokes the activities of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the global dominance of multinational corporations, and popular brand names the likes of Nike, Gucci, and Channel, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and CNN. In regard to globalization and nation states, we're apt to think in terms of "super-territoriality" (Jan Aart Scholte, Globalization: A Critical Introduction. Macmillan, 2000), international and regional organizations and alliances, the United Nations, the European Union, NATO or ASEAN, the historical forces of colonial imperialism or post-cold war American hegemonic power. In regard to culture, one has only to stroll through the mega-shopping centers in Bangkok or Chiang Mai to observe the pervasive influence of Western styles, tastes, and mores in this country. Dr. Kritsadarat Wattanasuwan's (Faculty of Commerce and Accounting at Thammasat University) recent study of young Thai nouveau riche finds that owning popular Western brands is not a simple display of superficial materialism but represents a search for personal identity and a way of negotiating relationships (Karnjariya Sukrung, "Behind the Brands," Bangkok Post, April 29, 2003). Possessing luxury brands has become a modern talisman, replacing amulets and tattoos as a way of warding off evil, protecting the owner from uncertainty, and providing peace of mind. Even the world's religions have modern global organizations of which the World Council of [Christian] Churches and the World Fellowship of Buddhists are but two examples.

The processes of globalization are not new, but the technological revolution of the past half century has greatly accelerated their impact on the lives of people the world over. This very conference, "Religion and Globalization," is itself an example of globalization. Conference papers will be reproduced on electronic and digital copy machines and made available on the Institute website, a technology almost unknown a decade or two ago but now spanning the world. Many of us were informed about this conference through the virtual reality of the internet and

traveled here on jet planes from far distances in only a few hours. By way of contrast, my first trip to Thailand forty-six years ago on a Maersk line ship was a journey of six weeks. Needless to say, in 1957 I reached my destination considerably more rested than after my recent twenty-eight hour flight from Philadelphia!

Globalization affects religion in more profound ways than my trite reference to this conference, however. As current events the world over demonstrate, religion is imbedded in the fabric of individual and community identities threatened by the forces of globalization that seem to be creating a "runaway," out of control, world. Anthony Giddens, the influential Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science, describes one of the fundamental tensions resulting from globalization in this way:

The battleground of the twenty-first century will pit fundamentalism against cosmopolitan tolerance. In a globalising world where information and images are routinely transmitted across the globe, we are all regularly in contact with others who think differently, and live differently, form ourselves. Cosmopolitans welcome and embrace this cultural [and religious] complexity. Fundamentalists find it disturbing and dangerous. Whether in the areas of religion, ethnic identity or nationalism, they take refuge in a renewed and purified tradition--and quite often, violence. (Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World*. New York: Routledge, 2001, 22-23).

I believe our conference to be a gathering of cosmopolitans who welcome and embrace cultural and religious complexity!

The meaning and impact of globalization is hotly debated. Giddens views it as a complex set of processes that concern not only large economic and political systems but all aspects of our personal lives from the nature of the family, to the role of women, to sexuality. A recent article in the New York Times Magazine contends that while globalization is meant to signify integration and unity it is has been as polarizing as the divisions of the cold-war (Tina Rosenberg, "So far, globalization has failed the world's poor. But it's not trade that has hurt them. It's a rigged system," New York Times Magazine, August 8, 2002, 28). Popularly speaking the term, "globalization," was probably first used in a modern sense in1961. It connotes post-colonial modernization and Westernization, and is perceived in some circles in increasingly critical and negative terms. We have only to recall the demonstrations at recent meetings of the World Trade Organization and protests against development projects funded by the IMF and the World Bank in Thailand, India, and elsewhere. The United States has been particularly demonized for pursuing hegemonic imperialistic-like policies driven by national economic self-interest, instead of promoting democratic ideals of justice and equality at a time in history when global problems--poverty, epidemic disease, environmental destruction, threats of weapons of mass destruction--call for an unprecedented degree of cooperative international collaboration. Enemies of globalization see the pervasive power of free market capitalism as having a particularly negative impact on local societies, economies, culture and religion, and as leading to a commodification of values dominated by acquisitive greed. To be sure, thoughtful critics of globalization also acknowledge its positive benefits highlighted by the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, halting steps to create participatory democracies, and the expansion of scientific and medical advances that promote human health and welfare in ways undreamed only a few

decades ago. But the benefits of global economic development that have reduced so many quantitative barriers have led to such an economic disparity that the 1996 *Human Development Report* could cite the astounding statistic that the financial assets of the 358 wealthiest people equals that of half the world's population!

The sardonic subtitle I've appended to my remarks this evening points to the increasingly vigorous and critical response by representatives of the world's religions to globalization as itself a"religion" of market competiton and consumption. It's a religion that promotes an ecologically unsustainable lifestyle and has created a development gap between rich and poor which, in the words of Ameer Ali, "is morally obscene, economically unjust, socially intolerable, and...politically perilous." (Ameer Ali, "Globalization and Greed: A Muslim Perspective," in Paul F. Knitter & Chandra Muzaffar, *Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy*. Orbis, 2002, 143). Christian activists in the United States are among those challenging the production and purchase of gas-guzzling, resource depleting private vehicles such the SUV, and many of you at this conference are engaged in constructive and confrontational forms of direct action in your own countries. In Thailand, Sulak Sivaraksa, the founder of many NGO's and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, has fought against numerous governmental and private enterprises in this country detrimental to the natural environment and to human communities. S. Sivaraksa is more than a Buddhist social activist, however. As part of the international socially engaged Buddhism movement he has contributed to the formation of a global Buddhism referred to as the fourth turning of the Wheel of the Dharma. And, oh yes, before I continue I have it on good authority that at this very moment, Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed are picketing the manufacturers of SUVs, all-terrain vehicles, jet skiis, and snow-mobiles!

Buddhism and Christianity in Thailand

This evening it is not my intention to talk about the responses of contemporary forms of socially engaged Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam to globalization. Many of our discussions during the next few days will center around this topic. Rather, with the purpose of introducing those of you who are unfamiliar with our host country's religious history, I want to look briefly and very selectively at two of Thailand's religions that I know best, Buddhism and Christianity, from a perspective on the concept of globalization rather different from my opening remarks. I use the term, globalization, in this context in a very loose sense as, for example, when we refer to Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam as a world or global religion. Such a designation suggests "global" in the sense of "world-wide." More specifically it implies that a world religion has a common founder, a core set of shared beliefs or doctrines, a common scripture and sacred language, and often common rituals and priesthood. Historically, wherever a world religion has taken root and flourished it has adapted to different cultures, that is to say it has contextualized.

Buddhism

In the early centuries of the Common Era, the Buddhism that filtered into the region that came to be known as Siam was diverse and eclectic. It was more a matter of wandering monks, sacred relics, and magical Buddha images than of sectarian traditions. Organized Sangha lineages, especially from Sri Lanka, began to play an important role in the history of the region with the

formation of the major Tai city-states of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Chiang Mai from the 13th century. By the 14th and 15th centuries a distinctive form of Thai Buddhism evolved that decisively influenced Thai identity formation on all levels--state, community, family, and individ ual--an identity that remained relatively stable until the modern period.

At the state level, a mutually symbiotic relationship existed between Thai monarchs and the Buddhist Sangha. Royal patrons sponsored the construction of grand monasteries, reliquary monuments, and colossal Buddha images at Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. By the end of the fourteenth century kings sought to enforce religious and political unity by patronizing the Sinhala Theravada Mahaviihara monastic heritage. The state that Thai kings sought to create and enforce through monastic patronage, sectarian favoritism, and the creation of ritually legitimated political alliances was able to survive often in the face of severe outside threats and internal stresses and strains.

Equally important to the formation of Thai identity at the state level was a cosmological charter of Thai kingship, The Three Worlds of King Ruang (*Traiphumphraruang*) composed by King Lu' Tai (Lidaiya Mahadharmaraja) who ascended the throne of Sukhothai in 1347. Nearly 500 years later, King Rama I (1787-1809), who restored the fortunes of the Thai monarchy with its capital in Bangkok after the Burmese sacked Ayutthaya in 1767, commissioned a new recension of the *Traiphum*, a witness to its utility as a charter for order and stability during a period of political and social disruption at the beginning of Thailand's modern era.

The cosmology of the *Traiphum* and the central place it accorded the mythic *cakkavattin* king were soon to be challenged by the historical forces of colonial globalization--European and American missionaries, merchants, commercial and political treaties, government administrators, and travelers who came to Bangkok in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1850 Siam, as it then was known, had signed treaties with several Western nations. The Siamese royal elites led by King Mongkut, Rama IV, crowned king in 1851, were fascinated by Western science and technology. A pragmatic, scientific empiricism began to develop that challenged the mythologized cosmology of the Traiphum.

It was during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, (1868-1910) that far-reaching steps were taken to transform Siam into a modern nation-state. He and his successor, King Wachirawut, Rama VI (1910-1925) looked primarily to European countries for political models to strengthen the infrastructure of the developing nation-state. This involved a shift away from a religiously grounded cosmology and mythologized conception of kingship to a national bureaucratic administrative structure that included the Buddhist Sangha. The king and his advisors changed the basic structure of the government by creating twelve national ministries and a framework of provincial government to link the outlying regions with the capital. Parallel with the implementation of reforms designed to integrate provincial areas politically into the emergent Thai nation-state, Rama V also initiated policies to incorporate all Buddhists within the kingdom into a single national organization. The principles that established the basis It incorporated all monks into a national structure, established a hierarchical principle of authority, and created a national system of clerical education with a standardized curriculum.

Buddhism was instrumental in the formation of the major Thai kingdoms in pre-modern Siam and later in the creation of the modern nation-state that today we know as Thailand. In both sets of historical circumstances, Buddhism served to "globalize" what it meant to be Thai. In the era of the classical states Buddhism not only legitimated kingship but through the Sangha and a network of relics, images, and other signs of the Buddha literally created a *buddhadesa* or "Buddha-land." To be Thai was to be part of a local history but also the universal history of Buddha and *cakkavattin*(world-monarch), and of India, Sri Lanka, and Burma. The 20th century political transformation of Siam brought another kind of globalization to Thai Buddhism. Local traditions and customs were gradually superceded by the dictates of Bangkok; local knowledge was replaced by a mandated monastic curriculum; and ecclesiastical appointment and privilege came to supercede the personal relationship networks of teacher-student, master-disciple.

Until recent years, this state controlled civil religion, although never monolithic, was the dominant feature of Thai Buddhism. Today, however, it faces a series of challenges linked to new forces of globalization quite different from those that incorporated the classical Tai states into a universal Buddhist history or that contributed to the creation of Thailand as a modern nation-state on the world stage. As S. Sivaraksa and other critics charge, the Wat as the center of community life has been displaced by the shopping mall, and more attention is given to building and maintaining upscale gas stations and their convenience stores than temples. Statistically, the custom of temporary ordination relative to population size has suffered a significant decline in the past few decades, and the monk's role as educator and community leader has, in many cases, been reduced to that of ritual practitioner. The Sangha, as a national institution is criticized for being a rigid, hierarchical organization unable to address the most pressing issues faced by both rural and urban Thais, and respect for the monkhood has been diminished by high profile cases of fraud and sexual misbehavior,

Changes associated with globalization have led to several developments within the fabric of Thai Buddhism of which only a few can be mentioned here: the appearance of new movements such as Wat Dhammakaya and Santi Asok; the empowerment of lay leadership and emergence of Buddhist NGOs as a kind of "sangha" blurring distinctions between monk and laity; innovative, existential interpretations of the dhamma exemplified by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto) ; the increasingly widespread practice of insight meditation and the formation of lay meditation groups and centers; the ordination of women and the possibility of the establishment of a Bhikkhuni Sangha with the next decade; the veneration of charismatic monks often identified with the forest tradition; and the popularity of the cult of images, relics, and the belief in their power to protect and guarantee material benefit and success. As this extraordinarily diverse list illustrates, Thai Buddhism has become increasingly pluralistic, some would say fragmented, over the past half-century. What does it mean to be a Thai Buddhist in today's globalized world? Recent interviews with young adults indicate that Buddhism plays a relatively unimportant role in most of their lives. Others identify with the teachings of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu or the socially engaged Buddhism of Ajaan Sulak, or are committed to Wat Dhammakaya or Santi Asok, or seek refuge in the veneration of icons and relics. There are, indeed, many Buddhist identities in today's Thailand.

In February 2002 the Ariyavinaya Conference held at the Wongsanit Ashram outside of Bangkok focused around the question, "What Is Buddhist Identity in the Modern World?" Included in the writings collected for the conference was an essay by Pracha Hutanuwatr, "To Be Buddhist In Contemporary Society." Pracha's story provides an insight into one facet of Buddhist identity in a globalized world, one particularly relevant to this conference. I am taking the liberty of sharing parts of it with you in somewhat modified form as one example of what it means to be a Thai Buddhist in a globalized world. (And, oh yes, I think you will understand why Pracha does not own a sports utility vehicle!)

Pracha relates that for the first 18 years of his life Buddhism was mainly a matter of ritual and magic, his main memories of monastic activities being big funerals and ordinations. At his school Buddhism was taught by old fashioned teachers who only succeeded in making Buddhism boring. His main interests and values were absorbed from radio, television, and advertising. He saw the good life as making a lot of money, and having a big house and car. But all this changed in the 60's and 70's when a wave of student activism swept into his school. He read Buddhadasa who challenged the Americanized version of success and prosperity. After entering university he joined the Marxist student movement but in 1975 because disheartened with it because more time was spent in internal bickering than fighting for social justice. Supported by Ajaan Sulak and others he ordained a Buddhist monk for eleven years. Seven of those he spent at Wat Suan Mokh with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. Disrobing in 1986 he has been an important associate of S. Sivaraksa ever since. Pracha writes,

For me to be a Buddhist means to reject the aims of life promoted by the corporate globalization to have more power, wealth, recognition, and sensual pleasure. Our aim should be to reduce the existential suffering of others and ourselves by reducing our cravings in the form of greed, lust, hatred, and self-importance. For me a meaningful Buddhist life in this contemporary world needs to be based on the application of wisdom and compassion both for inner and outer work. Striving for inner change through insight meditation by itself risks escaping from social responsibility. On the other hand, working only for social change may become an escape from confronting negative aspects of consciousness and cultivating positive ones. I like to think of myself as a small bodhisattva whose mission is to transform my consciousness and to change the structure of society.

Christianity

My discussion of Christianity in Thailand will be relatively brief, practically because of limited time but also for historical reasons since Christianity has had a much shorter history in this country. In the 17th century Roman Catholic missionaries brought Christianity to the Kingdom of Ayutthaya during the reign of King Narai (1656-1688) and it was not until 1828 that Protestant missionaries arrived in Bangkok. Like Buddhist monks, they brought with them a global or world religion, but the story of Christianity's contextualization differs significantly from that of Buddhism. While Buddhism became a key factor in the development of the early Tai monarchical states and subsequently in the formation of the modern Thai nation-state, and engaged and absorbed both Brahmanical and animistic religious beliefs and practices to form a unique religious synthesis, the Christian community was less directly associated with state

formation, and in the early years it basically isolated itself from the religious underpinnings of Thai culture. In my remarks, I shall focus only on the chapter of the Christian story in Thailand that deals with the early years of the Presbyterian mission to Chiang Mai toward the latter half of the 19th century. The mission saw itself engaged in a battle between God and Satan, light and darkness, a view that impacted significantly on Thai Christians' self-perception within their wider cultural context during the formative period of the Christian community. Not surprisingly, for Buddhists Christianity was perceived as the "foreigners religion," and in many respects it was.

The contributions of Presbyterian missionaries to the modernization and, perforce, Westernization of Siam during the reigns of Rama IV and V from 1851 to 1910 has been well documented. The Rev. Dr. Daniel Beach Bradley is remembered as the father of modern medicine in Thailand; at the invitation and sponsorship of Rama V, the Rev. Samuel G. McFarland founded King's College, the first government school; his son, Dr. George McFarland, at age twenty-five beame the superintendent of the new Sirirat Hospital as well as the dean of its medical school and was decorated by the king with a royal title; his brother, Edwin, invented the first Thai typewriter and served as secretary to the distinguished H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Minister of Interior; and another brother, William, was private secreatry to H.R.H. Prince Bhanurangsi, the Minister of Defense. In these and other ways 19th century missionaries contributed to the growing modernization and inevitable Westernization of Siam as a modern nation-state. In other words, Christian missionaries were factors in the process of Siam's late 19th century globalization. As the first Siamese regent to Chiang Mai remarked, "Siam has not been opened by British gunpowder, but by missionary effort."

The Presbyterian mission in Chiang Mai, known as the mission to the Lao, was begun by the Rev. Daniel McGilvary and his wife, Sophia who reached Chiang Mai on April 3, 1867, after an arduous three-month trip upriver and overland. One can only imagine the physical discomfort of their first year. Arriving at the peak of the hot season, attired in long, heavy, dark Victorian clothing, their first home was a twelve by twenty foot semi-open rest house near the central market area, where daily they were gawked at by curious crowds. While their cramped and exposed living conditions must have been stressful, at the same time their situation gave the McGilvarys an opportunity to teach and for Daniel to practice basic medical skills such as sewing up wounds, setting broken bones, and vaccinating against smallpox. From the outset the practice of medicine, especially dispensing quinine and smallpox vaccinations, proved to be a crucial aspect of the Presbyterian mission to the Lao as it was in many contemporaneous mission stations throughout other parts of the world. After living in Chiang Mai for ten months, the McGilvarys were joined by Jonathan Wilson and his wife in February, 1868. The events that transpired within the next five years offer a case study of late 19th century globalization in northern Thailand.

The McGilvarys began their work in Chiang Mai with high hopes and expectations. By August, 1869, there were seven Thai Christian converts. Four of the seven were people of some influence and included two former Buddhist monks. Furthermore, two daughters of the Prince of Chiang Mai, Chao Kawilorot, had shown more than a polite interest in the missionaries and their message. In and of themselves conversions to Christianity might not have distressed Chao

Kawilorot, but the missionaries' zeal to convert, their total rejection of the Lao religious-cultural synthesis of Buddhism and animism, and their demand that baptism required an absolute loyalty to the church posed a dangerous threat to the traditional structure of political authority and the well-established socio-economic system of corvee labor.

By mid-1869 Chao Kawilorot had decided to banish the McGilvarys and Wilsons from Chiang Mai. He had little control over other forces beginning to transform his kingdom and challenge his authority. These included Chiang Mai's tributary subservience to Bangkok; lawsuits over British-Burmese teak concessions pending before the British Consul; and the military threat of Shan incursions from the north that could be exploited by the Siamese. However, the Prince thought he might be able to rid himself of the aggravation of those unwelcome "globalizers," the American missionaries who were creating a new pattern of patron-client relationship in which the mission rather than the traditional ruler was lord. He tried several stratagies to force the missionaries to leave including the execution of two Christians, but before he was able to realize his purpose, the Prince died.

For Chao Kawilorot the execution of two Christians was primarily an exercise in princely authority. He was the "Lord of Life" (*chao chiwit*) with absolute authority regarding the governance of the kingdom. He promulgated laws, levied taxes, and exacted labor for public works such as roads and irrigation canals. He conscripted able bodied men as soldiers, adjudicated cases ranging from small offenses to murder and levied punishments as he saw fit, including death. His was a declining power, however, that was being increasingly eroded by more global events beyond his control. By 1874 a treaty between Bangkok and Chiang Mai established a dual government in the northern kingdoms, that of the local lord and a Thai commissioner (*kha luang*) from Bangkok. By the turn of the century, the north was no longer a collection of semi-autonomous tributary states but a centralized region (monthon). The patronage system at the basis of the chaos' power and authority was gradually replaced by the political and economic structures of an early modern nation-state controlled from Bangkok. Wittingly or unwittingly, the missionaries and fledgling Christian community in Chiang Mai contributed to this transformation.

Paradoxically, the efforts of American Presbyterian missionaries to create a religious community protected from the religious and cultural ethos of northern Thailand and even traditional economic and political structures contributed to Thailand's late 19th century globalization. A key event was the Edict of Religious Toleration promulgated by Rama V in 1878 instigated in part by the first Christian marriage in Chiang Mai between the granddaughter of Nan Inta, the first convert, and one of McGilvary's students whose patron, Chao Tepawong, the brother of the viceroy or "second king," opposed the mission and harassed native Christians On the day of the wedding, the titular head of the groom's family refused to sanction the marriage unless he received the traditional 'spirit fee' of six rupees. Because McGilvary saw such payment as a religious act since it recognized the spirits and guardians of the family, a practice a Christian must reject, the wedding had to be postponed until the confrontation could be resolved. Because of the viceroy's adamant opposition, McGilvary appealed to King Chulalongkorn not only to allow Christian marriage without the payment of the traditional spirit fee, but to guarantee the

same civil and religious privileges granted to non-Christians, and also to exempt Christians from compulsory work on the Sabbath.

On September 29, 1878, the Thai commissioner notified McGilvary that he had been granted enlarged powers by Rama V, including the power to proclaim religious toleration in the Lao states. The Edict of Religious Toleration, as it was known, was a crucial turning point in the history of the Protestant church in the north. Protected by the authority of Bangkok's official sanction, the mission embarked on a decade of expansion that included establishing mission stations in Lamphun, Chiang Rai, Phrae, and Nan and several hospitals and schools. Through the establishment of schools where the language of instruction was Siamese and the propagation of a Christian literature in that language, Presbyterian missionaries became collaborators with Bangkok in the Siamization of the nation. Therefore, although in dissimilar ways, like the Buddhist Sangha, Christianity in Chiang Mai figured into Rama V's strategies for the creation of a unified state controlled from Bangkok.

While both Buddhism and Christianity were factors in Siam's globalization process in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they were poles apart when it came to the matter of contextualization. In the eyes of the missionaries, to become a Christian demanded a complete separation from northern Thai culture. The missionary critique focused primarily but not exclusively on its religious dimensions, namely, Buddhism and animism. To the missionaries, moreover, becoming a Christian also meant adopting a lifestyle that more nearly approximated the habits of the West ranging from dress and cleanliness to monogamous marriage and a puritan ethic that prohibited alcohol, smoking, and chewing betel. Christian schools were perceived as a training ground in Christian virtues and habits, especially girls' schools.

The mandate to create a separate and distinctive Thai Christian culture was undergirded by a view of conversion as a passage from darkness to light, from untruth to truth. Lillian Curtis, a Presbyterian missionary in Lampang from 1885-1889 described the first Lao convert's decision to become a Christian in the following terms:

With the passage of time, the rather militant, separatist ideology of the Presbyterian mission softened and what Richard Niebuhr termed the "Christ against culture" perspective was complimented if not superceded by "Christ the transformer of culture" and an even more accommodating "Christ with culture" attitude. Today churches are exploring new ways of contextualizing the Christian life in community that are more inclusive of their Buddhist neighbors and the cultural forms they share together as Thais.

This past April the Siriwattana Church at Ban Tho, a Chiang Mai suburb, celebrated Thai New Year with a tam hua or "paying respects to the elders" ritual identical in form with the tam hua ritual at the Ban Tho Buddhist temple, and an even more elaborate tam hua ceremony was part of the Easter service at First Church Chiang Mai. In addition to adopting and adapting indigenous architectural, artistic, musical, and other cultural idioms, in some cases church congregations participate in Buddhist festivals and rituals in ways that would have been unimaginable even a decade or two ago. Herbert Swanson, one of our conference participants who moderates a panel later in the week, has written a fascinating account of the decision made by the church at Ban Dok Daeng to be part of a kathin festival at the local Buddhist temple. As attitudes have changed

over the decades since the Protestant missionaries first came to Chiang Mai, Christians are more open to seeing themselves not only as Thais in the sense of the nation-state, but as constitutents of a religiously pluralistic community rather than first and foremost as members of a particular Christian church. More than a few would empathize with the sentiment attributed to the Dalai Lama that he is first a human being, second, a Tibetan, and third a Buddhist; and some might even concur with Mahatma Gandhi's confession, "Religion is dear to me﷿Here I am not thinking of the Hindu, the Mahomedan, or the Zoroasterian religion, but of that religion which underlies all religions."

Institutionally and individually Christian identities in Thailand are as varied as the Buddhist identities to which I referred earlier. The Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture at Payap University and its sponsored projects that include courses co-taught by a Buddhist and a Christian at the McGilvary School of Theology and at one of the universities for Buddhist monks represent part of this diversity and, it goes without saying, is a significant departure from McGilvary's day!

Globalization Revisioned

Philip Hughes, a Christian who has conducted extensive empirical research in northern Thailand on the values and beliefs of Christians and Buddhists, and from whom we'll hear later in the week, has observed that globalization is not only "the extent to which wars, trade, culture, and many other aspects of life are becoming globally interrelated. 'Globalization' also refers to a change in consciousness.... The core of globalization is increasing interdependence. What happens in one part of the world affects what happens elsewhere."

The Buddhist monk, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu echoes a similar sentiment in writing about the environment in a prose form that verges on the poetic: "The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees, and the earth. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise... then we can build a noble environment. If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish."

The members of the churches in Chiang Mai, Ban Tho, and Ban Dok Daeng I have recently interviewed agree that love, above all, defines what it means to be a Christian. A typical sentiment goes something like the following: "'God so loved the world' is the principle that grounds my faith and 'Love your neighbor as yourself' is the great commandment that flows from it. As Saint Paul said, 'Without love I am a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal." This conviction underlies the Thai Christian commitment to a wide network of social welfare activities from its schools and hospitals, to AIDS hospices, and vocational training centers Echoing a similar sentiment, in an essay on contemporary Thai Buddhist identity Ajaan Sulak writes, "If contemporary Buddhists follow the Buddha's footsteps and awaken from greed, hatred, and delusion, they will transcend suffering and experience peace, purity, and clarity, and will be enabled to burn the flame of love without the smoke of jealousy, selfishness, and possessiveness." And he adds, "who burns with the flame of love will engage in the struggle against social justice and structural violence." The identity of Thai Buddhists has been formed against the backdrop of a history that has evolved from loosely structured galactic polities to a

modern, centralized nation-state competing in the global marketplace. Northern Thai Protestant identity reflects this second historical dynamic, but an even more definitive influence is its heritage of mid-19th century American Presbyterianism. However, while religious identities are forged within the crucible of history and culture, they cannot be reduced to these contexts. The normative principles of a religious faith test and challenge each and every contextual status quo and guide us through the maze of our moral dilemmas.

In the final analysis then, globalization in the deepest religious sense cannot be reduced to economic and political factors or the accidents of history. Therefore, as we join together at this Religion and Globalization conference let us affirm the following:

- the inter-becoming of all life forms;
- in mindful awareness of this truth, let us embrace the imperative to act empathetically and compassionately towards all beings;
- and, within the interdependent world we all inhabit, irregardless of our religious, ethnic, or political identities, let us commit ourselves to be agents of justice, equality, peace, reconciliation, and non-violence.

In contextualizing this global vision we offer Pracha Huntanuwatr's hope that we, too, may become, "small bodhisattvas."

Sophia Bradley McGilvary and Sarah Blachly Bradley: Notes Towards a Family Biography

Herb Swanson

Introduction

One of the joys of historical research is how one thing leads to another, so that slowly over the course of days and weeks of research one begins to understand things that at first did not make sense. During the summer of 2003, I spent a delightful seven weeks (thanks to a small grant from the Luce Foundation), partly in visiting family, but primarily ensconced in the libraries of Berea College and Yale University tracking down data for a dozen different research topics. In particular, I was following up leads on the life of Sarah Blachly Bradley (1817-1893), a minor character in the history of Protestant missions in Siam who turns out to have been a quite remarkable individual. She is known in the missionary records, generally, as "the second Mrs. Bradley," the second wife, that is, of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, the single-most Protestant missionary to serve in Siam during the nineteenth century. How I became interested in Sarah Bradley and what I have learned about her is the subject of this article; I ran out of research time in the States before I ran out of questions, and another summer in the United States may well turn up further data. However, before going on with that research, I would like to use this opportunity to "get down" what I know so far and share that knowledge with the readers of HeRB. As usual, citations are included in the text and the details for each source can be found in the list of sources at the end of the article.

Sophia & Sarah

My research on Sarah Bradley actually began with her stepdaughter, Sophia Bradley McGilvary (1839-1923), one of the key figures in the early history of the Laos Mission. I hope to "get going" again on my long-delayed history of northern Thai Christianity, and when I do it will be important to have on hand as much information as possible on the women members of the Laos Mission. Those women, especially the married women, pose a major challenge to the historian because there is so little readily available and obviously relevant data about them. Sophia McGilvary was the first woman missionary to serve in northern Siam; the daughter of missionary parents, she became a Presbyterian missionary in 1860 when she married Daniel McGilvary in Bangkok. From that date until her death sixty-two years later, Sophia McGilvary carried out a remarkable missionary career filled with a series of notable achievements. She initiated informal women's education in northern Siam. She played an important early role in introducing Western homemaking technologies and women's fashions into that same region. She translated the first Christian Scriptures, the Gospel of Matthew, into northern Thai. She played a part in the conversion of the first northern Thai converts. She and her husband also raised five children, three of whom eventually became members of the Laos Mission. Sophia McGilvary is particularly credited with beginning a small class for girls on her veranda at some point in the mid-1870s, which by 1879 had been transformed into the Chiang Mai Girls' School, today's Dara Academy.

Beyond her particular contributions, moreover, Sophia is important for another reason. When she became a Presbyterian missionary in 1861, the Presbyterian Church was still divided into two separate denominations usually known as the Old School and New School churches. These two factions parted ways in a bitter split that took place in 1837, and each claimed that it was the "real" Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). As their names suggest, the Old School was the more conservative, traditionally Calvinistic of the two sides. Old School Presbyterians were suspicious of theological innovation and, to a degree, of inter-denominational cooperation. The New School tended, on the other hand, to be more open to theological change and its members were quite willing to cooperate ecumenically with other denominations, especially New England Congregationalism. The Old School generally looked on emotional forms of revivalism with disfavor, while the New School was associated with the more enthusiastic "new measures" revivalism. The split was an acrimonious one, involving apparently underhanded political gamesmanship as well as theological dissension. Over the course of the years, however, the denominational crises of the 1830s grew increasingly less significant, and in 1869 the two separate churches reunited to form one PCUSA again.

The Siam Mission, which Sophia McGilvary joined in 1861, was an Old School mission, and the Laos Mission that she and her husband Daniel founded in 1867 was also, if only briefly, an Old School mission. Daniel McGilvary's voluminous writings reveal clearly that he was an Old School Presbyterian, as was the other senior male leader of the mission in its early years, the Rev. Jonathan Wilson. The presumption might be then that Old School theology dominated the mission since the two key leaders, Wilson and McGilvary, adhered to it. But, was that the case? Sophia, as one of the two senior women of the mission, complicates giving a clear answer to this question. Before the American Civil War, her father, Dan Beach Bradley, associated himself

with Charles G. Finney, the premier revivalistic and theological innovator o f his day. Theological conservatives regarded Finney with deep mistrust, and Bradley had been forced to leave his original mission, the Siam Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), because of his "Finneyite" proclivities. Bradley's theological views, that is to say, if anything went beyond even those of the New School. Did her father's views influence Sophia? Did she consciously, or even unconsciously, bring a different theological perspective to her work as a missionary? Given Sophia's role in the Laos Mission, especially in its pioneer era, these questions are potentially important for our understanding of the larger theological orientation of the mission itself.

The problem is that it is very difficult to find answers to these questions concerning Sophia's theological orientation directly from the historical record of the Laos Mission itself. While both her father and husband have left us with a copious historical record, including Bradley's famous diaries and McGilvary's equally well-known autobiography, nothing has come down to us from Sophia but a paltry few letters. She did not write articles or correspond with the Board. She did, evidently, write family letters, but few of those are available, and we have to assume that most of the rest are lost forever. A full telling of Sophia's tale, in light of this dearth of data, thus requires a search for further information about Sophia's life before she became a missionary. It was that search that led me to Sarah Blachly Bradley.

I was looking, in particular, for was information about Sophia Bradley's childhood and her educational background that might provide some clues as to her later role in the Laos Mission. How was she raised? What was she taught about the Christian faith as a child and teenager? Where did she go to school? My search for answers to these questions almost immediately led me to discover Sophia's stepmother, Sarah Blachly Bradley. It turns out that Sophia's mother, Emilie Royce Bradley (1811-1845), died when Sophia was only five, and Sophia was largely raised by her stepmother, Sarah.

Donald Lord's biography of Sophia's father, Dan Beach Bradley provides one important entry point into Sophia's life. As described by Lord, Sophia Bradley's education can be divided into four distinct phases. During the **FIRST PHASE**, she was raised and educated by her mother, Emelie Royce Bradley, who according to the biographical notes of Paul Eakin was educated at the Clinton Female Seminary in Clinton New York. Three of her aunts ran the school, and at age 15 she became an assistant teacher, a position she held until she was 19, when she mo ved to Manlius, New York, to become the "preceptress" of a female seminary. That is to say that Emelie Bradley was herself an unusually well-educated woman for her day and age and had at least five years teaching experience before she began to home school Sophia, her second daughter. Lord, who has also written a brief article about Emelie, obviously has a very high regard for her, and she surely was a loving, competent mother for Sophia and her siblings. Emilie Bradley died, however, on 8 August 1845, when Sophia was still five years old. At that point her life and education entered its >b>SECOND PHASE, during which her father tutored her himself, this phase lasting until February 1847, when Bradley and his three living children arrived in Oberlin, Ohio. He left the children there with friends to attend school while he traveled to various places in the United States, and it was at this point that Sophia, age 7, started in the **THIRD PHASE** of her young life. Her stay at Oberlin was the only time in her life that she received her education

in a regular classroom situation. In July 1848, however, Sophia's older sister, Emilie, died, and her father rushed back to Oberlin, at which time he learned of a woman, Sarah Blachly of Dane, Wisconsin, who wanted to marry a missionary. After a courtship conducted by mail and a hasty arduous trip to the backwoods of northern Wisconsin, Bradley married Sarah in Dane in November 1848. From that point onwards, Sarah raised Sophia and her brother Cornelius; Sophia was just nine years old when she entered this **FINAL PHASE** of her life and education before her marriage to McGilvary. Sarah had five children of her own with Bradley, and Lord writes that she "...prepared all seven for advanced study in a day when college admission called for a knowledge of Latin and Greek. Not handicapped by the limitations of her residence in Thailand, she also gave her children a foundation in Hebrew as well." (Page 131).

It is clear from Lord's sparse data on Sophia that Sarah Blachly Bradley was a highly important person so far as Sophia's educational and religious training are concerned. It is also evident, that Lord has as high a regard for Sarah Blachly as he had for Emelie Royce. He writes, "Sarah Blachly Bradley was a fiery woman who accepted her role in life much as Bradley had his. For twenty years after her husband's death, she managed the press and continued his missionary work. Eventually, Sarah's status in Thailand nearly equaled Bradley's." (Lord, Mo Bradley, 206). What impact did this fiery, competent, and socially influential woman have on Sophia? What theological background and orientation did Sarah bring to Sophia's education?

Trying to find answers to these questions confronts the researcher with a situation even more frustrating than Sophia's. If we are to understand how Sarah Blachly Bradley raised Sophia, we have to study Sarah's own personal history before her sudden marriage to Bradley. But where Sophia was born in the very midst of Thai missionary history, as it were, and some information about her is accessible through the ordinary archival and secondary sources of the field, Sarah Bradley was born, raised, and educated far beyond the pale of Thailand missionary records. In the records of the Laos Mission, in particular, she is a shadowy figure known only as "Dearest Mother" in a few letters written by Daniel or Sophia McGilvary to her. Lord's biography of Bradley provides very little background information about her other than she graduated from the Oberlin Collegiate Institute (later Oberlin College) and was from Dane, Wisconsin (Lord, Mo Bradley, 130). Bertha McFarland provides a somewhat fuller description of Sarah Bradley without resolving any of the questions about her background. McFarland states that she was a graduate of Oberlin College and a woman of "unusual intellectual attainment," who was clever and competent. McFarland also relates in a very long end note how Sarah provided her step-children and children with a very intense education that involved both a great deal of Bible memorization and knowledge of the larger world. (McFarland, McFarland of Siam, 28, 290).

Asides from impressions and character sketches, Lord and McFarland do not give us with much to go on in terms of actual information. Sarah Blachly went to Oberlin College. She was from Dane, Wisconsin. These two bits of information, however, turned out to be crucial leads in a happy chase.

The Hunt Begins in Berea

Logically, I should have investigated Sarah's connection with Dane, Wisconsin, first as it appeared (incorrectly) that she was originally from Dane. I began my research, however, at the Berea College library, which not surprisingly had a great deal more on Oberlin than on Dane.

One item that quickly came to hand was an entry in Oberlin College's *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary General Catalogue*, which reads:

Blachly, Sarah (Mrs. D. B. Bradley); enr. '41-'45 coll.; fr. Wethersfield, O.; d. Bangkok, Siam, Aug., 16, '93; A.B., Oberlin, '45. (p. 89).

The first thing notable about this entry is that Sarah is listed as being not from Wisconsin, but from a place called "Wethersfield" in Ohio. Obviously, things were going to be more complicated than I had expected, although if I had remembered that there was no such place as "Wisconsin" when Sarah was born in 1817, I would have anticipated a more complicated scenario. Dane, Wisconsin, did not even come into official being until only a few months before she was married! As it turns out, this entry misspells "Wethersfield." The correct spelling is Weathersfield, a typographical error that later wasted some of my time in the a frustrating search for a place that never existed.

The second significant piece of information contained in this entry is the fact that Sarah Blachly received her B.A. degree from Oberlin College in 1845. Both McFarland and Lord mention that Sarah "graduated" from Oberlin, but it was not clear that this meant that she actually received a bachelor's degree, the same as any male student. One could all but count on one hand or two the number of women in the United States in the 1840s who graduated from a regularly established college rather than a "female seminary." Oberlin was virtually unique in the fact that it admitted both women and African Americans to its regular degree program. The word "remarkable" constantly comes to mind in the unfolding story of Sarah Blachly, with cause. She brought to the Bradley family an exceptional educational attainment that, according to McFarland above, she passed on to her stepchildren as well as her own. That is to say, Sophia Bradley McGilvary was tutored, from the age of nine, by one of the most well educated American women of her age. Stated from the perspective of the history of the Laos Mission, Sophia McGilvary brought to the mission an educational background that equaled her husband's, or nearly so.

A third important fact contained in this entry is the dates she attended Oberlin, that is in the early 1840s. Hutchins Library at Berea provided several helpful secondary sources on the history of Oberlin College and the life of Charles G. Finney, which showed that Oberlin, both the college and the town, was an intensely religious place during the 1840s. Finney was the president of a college that had a sincerely evangelical faculty and deeply committed student body; the college in those days experienced frequent spells of revivalistic renewal. Sarah must have studied under Finney as well as other well-known Finneyite supporters on the Oberlin faculty, and it is evident that Sarah participated in central currents of Finneyite revivalism. It is clear, especially from McFarland, that she brought that same intensity of religious commitment to her stepdaughter's education and upbringing. That is to say, that Sophia Bradley's stepmother, Sarah, shared the same general theological and revivalistic orientation as Sophia's father.

Whatever she herself believed, she was raised in a decidedly New School environment quite different from the majority of her future Presbyterian missionary colleagues.

Although I looked through several other sources on Oberlin while at Berea, I found nothing further relevant to Sarah Blachly, except for the following brief notice of her marriage to Bradley in the *Oberlin Evangelist* for 22 November 1848 (v. 10, No. 22). That notice contains the added information that she was the daughter of Miller Blachly and states, "Mrs. Bradley is one of the few ladies of our country who have received the first Degree in the Arts from a literary institution. She is a lady of excellent spirit and talents, and is doubtless the first foreign missionary from our new State." (p. 175) This notice helps to confirm the image of Sarah Blachly as an unusual, competent individual. It also proved very helpful in my further research to know her father's name.

Continuing the Hunt in New Haven

It was this picture and few snippets of information that I took with me from Berea to New Haven and the several libraries of Yale University. Having accessed the Yale University online catalog from Berea, I knew that Yale had (unexpectedly) several histories of Dane County, Wisconsin; and virtually the first thing I did at Yale was to put in a request for several of those histories. Instead of being on the shelf of one library or another, those seldom used nineteenth-century tomes were being held captive in a mysterious facility known by the ominous acronym of "LSF" (Long Storage Facility), Yale's internment camp for old books that are n ot rare, just old. Twenty-four hours later, I opened the dusty, magic pages of the *History of Dane County, Wisconsin*, warmed up my trusty iBook, and discovered the following facts. The town of Dane was first settled in 1845. Early settlers, according to page 885, included three Blachly families, those of Miller, Eban, and Bell Blachly. The next page, 886, adds, "The first school was held in the Luse neighborhood in 1847, Miss Sarah Blachly being the teacher." Given her educational background and the fact that virtually the only profession open to single women in the 1840s was teaching, it was not at all surprising to learn that Sarah was a pioneer teacher. I now had some other family names, although it was not clear at that point whether Eban and Bell were Sarah's uncles or brothers (they were her brothers). That same page, 886, also states, "Rev. Mr. Blachly was Pastor of the first Congregational Church, organized in 1848." Which Blachly "Rev. Mr. Blachly" is, unfortunately, not stated, but the evident family connection to Congregationalism only serves to reinforce the sense that Sophia's heritage through her stepmother was definitely not Old School Presbyterian.

Another brittle old tome entitled, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns; Being a History and Guide*, provides still further information. The Blachly Family, it reports, immigrated to Dane in the summer of 1846 and was part of what was locally called "the Ohio settlement," meaning that they came with a number of other families from Ohio (pages 468-469). Of the Ohio settlement the book notes,

This was a valuable acquisition to the town, and it is seldom that a settlement is made up of men and women as well qualified for pioneer life; all, men of a high moral character, and in possession of a liberal education. They wielded a powerful influence in shaping the moral sentiment of the community. (Page 469).

Two of the prominent members of the Ohio settlement in Dane were Dr. Eben Blachly and his brother, Bell. The next paragraph on page 469 relates that "In this settlement the first school district was organized, and the first school house in the town was built in 1847; Miss Sarah Blachly teaching the first term." We also learn on that same page that her marriage to Bradley was the first marriage in the community.

Things were falling into place. For one thing, the reference to Wethersfield, Ohio, in that brief Oberlin College entry about Sophia, mentioned above, began to make sense. Wisconsin was still on the fringes of the western frontier in the 1840s. The Blachlys had to have come from somewhere else, and where they came from was Ohio. They appear to have migrated to Wisconsin as part of an organized effort involving several families. Clearly, some amount of planning and preparation must have gone into this move by a group of people who were anything but the oppressed refugees of our own age. This is not to belittle in any sense the difficulties involved in moving from Ohio to Wisconsin; it was no small matter to pick up and move over 800 kilometers on the all but impassable forest tracks of the North American frontier to the backwoods of frigid Wisconsin. How long did it take them? What conditions did they meet with? Had anyone gone ahead to make preparations? How did they survive that first long winter of 1846? What motivated them to move to Wisconsin in the first place? Finally, it is evident that Sarah came from a family and a community that valued education.

While I was accumulating this information on the Blachlys from their connection to Dane, Wisconsin, I was also getting Weathersfield sorted out from Wethersfield. The problem was that Wethersfield was apparently an alternative spelling for Weathersfield so my research in various databases got "hits" on "Wethersfield, Ohio," but those hits never led anyplace. It took a helpful reference librarian and the use of a different database to break the logjam. Once broken, I could begin to gather in the Ohio strand of this story, which had been dangling since Berea.

The Yale University online catalog lists among the university's holdings a microfilm copy of the two volume History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties. Volume two, beyond all expectation, provided a veritable mother lode of information on the Blachlys. Page 223 contains the following paragraph, which is worth quoting in full:

Aaron Bell was an early settler [in Weathersfield], but sold out to Miller Blachly. Miller Blachly settled about one mile from Niles, a little northeast of the town. He had three sons, Eben, Miller, and Bell; and three daughters, Phebe (Dunlap), Eleanor, who remained single, and Sarah (Bradley). Eben became a doctor and practiced several years in Niles and Warren. He married Minerva, only daughter of Dr. John Seely. Miller, Jr., was also a physician and practiced here. Bell married and settled in Weathersfield. All moved to Wisconsin. Miller Blachly was a very good man, but positive, and even obstinate in adhering to his opinions. He was a devoted Presbyterian and a strong temperance advocate. In early days the roads in his neighborhood were very bad, and sometimes teams stuck in the mud and could not move their loads. Mr. Blachly was usually ready to lend his team to assist over the difficult places; but when a man who was hauling a load of grain to a neighboring distillery asked for such assistance, he obtained only a very stern refusal.

Historians live for paragraphs like this one! Eben and Bell Blachly were Sarah's brothers, not uncles. She had five siblings including a brother named Miller, so her father was Miller Sr. Two of her brothers were doctors, which in Niles, Ohio, in the 1840s meant that they were members of the local social elite and two of the best-educated individuals in their community. Eben married a doctor's daughter as well, doubly confirming his local status. We already had the impression of a well-educated family, but now we also see the Blachlys as a locally prominent family.

This paragraph even provides a hint of an answer to the question of why they moved to Wisconsin. It tells us that the Blachlys were early settlers in Weathersfield Township, although we do not know yet when they moved there. Since we know from this same source that settlement in the area of the township began in 1801 and the township was formally established in 1807, it seems likely that the Blachlys had moved to Ohio before 1817, when Sarah was born. The matter is not "nailed down," but Sarah was probably born in Weathersfield, Ohio; at the very least, she surely lived there from the time she was a small child. The move to Wisconsin, in any event, was not the first time this family had picked up and moved westward to the fringes of the frontier. In fact, it appears that they came from Pennsylvania. Page 222 states of the early nineteenth-century residents of Weathersfield, "The settlers of this township nearly all came from Pennsylvania, and many of them, after several years' residence here, moved further West..." The fact that Miller Blachly, Sr. was a Presbyterian strongly supports the supposition that the Blachly family actually came from Pennsylvania, the heartland of American Presbyterianism. If the family did move to Ohio from Pennsylvania about 1810, as our evidence suggests, then it was just a generation later that it picked up and moved on to Wisconsin. Their move, furthermore, was typical of the Pennsylvanians who moved to Ohio. Without having any details, we can at least surmise that the Blachlys were one of "those" families that felt the westward tug, which kept Americans moving westward for several generations.

This paragraph also gives us the important information that Sarah's father, Miller Blachly, was a Presbyterian and tells us a rather unflattering little story about him, which provides us with an insight not only into the father but also the piety of the family. Page 234 of this history adds that the Blachly family participated in the founding of the Weathersfield Presbyterian Church in 1839 and that, "Eben Blachly and Miller Blachly, Jr., were appointed to the office of ruling elders, and at the same time were ordained and installed." Reading on that same page, we learn that the Presbytery of New Lisbon founded the church.

Given what we had known previously about Sarah Blachly, it comes as a surprise that she was a Presbyterian, although her family's strong commitment to education fits with a Presbyterian background. The Presbyterians played a major role in spreading formal education across the frontier and were invariably found among the local social elite in rural and frontier American communities. What is not clear at this point is whether the Weathersfield Church was an Old School or New School congregation. The fact is an important one; if the church was founded as a New School congregation, it would further strengthen our sense that Sarah came from a New School background and brought that theology and piety to raising Sophia. If, on the other hand, it was Old School church, we are suddenly confronted with a more complex scenario in which

Sarah came from a mixed theological background that included both traditional Old School and innovative Finneyite elements.

With the data at hand as described above, we can construct at least the beginnings of a time line for Sarah Blachly Bradley's life before she moved to Bangkok.

Time Line for Sarah Blachly Bradley

1801	the first settler arrived in what became Weathersfield Township, Ohio.
1809	Weathersfield Township established. The Miller Blachly Family is reported to have been "early settlers" in the township.
1817	Sarah Blachly born.
ca. 1830	a temperance society was formed at Weathersfield with Miller Blachly listed as one of the two key leaders of the movement.
1839	Presbytery of New Lisbon established the Weathersfield Church (today's Niles Presbyterian Church). Members included Miller Blachly and his wife Phebe, Eben B., Anna B., Miller B., Jr. and his wife Mary.
1845	Sarah graduated with a B.A. degree from the Oberlin Collegiate Institute.
1845	the first settlers of the future town of Dane, Wisconsin, arrived.
8 Aug 1845	Emilie Royce Bradley died in Bangkok.
2 Feb 1846	Wisconsin Territorial Legislature approved the establishment of the town of Madison, which included the area of Dane.
Summer 1846	arrival of the "Ohio Settlement" in the area of Dane, including Dr. Eben Blachly, his brother Bell, and Miller Blachly, probably Miller Jr.
11 Feb 1847	government act creating the town of Clarkson, which included the area of Dane.
1847	Sarah taught at Dane's first school, in the Luse neighborhood.
1848	Congregational Church organized in Dane with "Rev. Mr. Blachly" as pastor.
11 March 1848	State Legislature approves changing the name of Clarkson to Dane.
3 Nov 1848	Sarah marries Dan Beach Bradley and leaves for Siam.

This time line summarizes where our investigation of Sarah Blachly Bradley's life before she married Bradley has taken us. "The chase," thus far, has turned up a fair amount of information that is relevant to understanding Sarah's personality, family background, and educational experiences. It confirms that she was a strong, competent, and hardy person. She came from a highly educated and locally socially prominent family and achieved the highest educational level a woman of her generation could attain. Her family, however, also exemplified the restless, mobile, migratory habits typically associated with the nineteenth-century American frontier, and Dan Bradley found his intended hidden away in November 1848 on the very edges of a chilly, trackless wilderness. She was raised in a Presbyterian family, graduated from Finney's Oberlin, and became a schoolteacher. The daughter of a rigidly pious father, her own Christian faith was such that she jumped at the chance to become a missionary and agreed to marry Bradley sight unseen. She was 31. He was 44.

Conclusion

One cannot help but wonder how nine year-old Sophia felt about this woman who suddenly appeared on her doorstep in Oberlin and was introduced, we assume, as her "new mother." Her own mother had been dead for over three years and Sophia's memory of her was probably growing fuzzy; but those three years had been chaotic ones for Sophia, ones that included a long trip to the United States, an extended separation from her father, a period of living among strangers in a cold and foreign place where only her siblings spoke Thai, and the death of her older sister. Now, she was in the hands of Sarah, a person of noteworthy talents and background but also a strong personality. How did they get on? How did Sarah "manage" Sophia? Was she a stern disciplinarian, as seems possible? And, what did she teach Sophia about God, the person and work of Jesus, and the Bible?

We do not have any answers to the above questions and probably never will have. In speculating about how Sarah influenced Sophia, in any event, one cannot help but consider the parallel between Sarah's setting off for distant, unknown Bangkok in 1848 and the way in which her step-daughter, Sophia, set off with her family for equally distant, equally unknown Chiang Mai nineteen years later, in 1867. Did Sarah's influence have anything to do with Sophia's willingness to do that? Although not a Blachly herself, did Sophia "catch" something of the Blachly restlessness, along with its piety? Or was there another factor at work, one having to do with an inherent family sense of mission? Lord points out, as we saw above, that Sarah wanted to become a missionary, and it appears that her desire marks a continuity with her own family history rather than a break. From the comments in the history of Dane County, above, concerning the Ohioans who settled in Dane, it is clear that they had some sense of mission and purpose in bringing "civilization" to the frontier, civilization and evangelical Christianity being but two sides of the same coin for them. Sarah's family had probably been about that mission in Pennsylvania in the late eighteenth century, certainly in Ohio in the early and mid-nineteenth century, and then in Wisconsin in the mid-nineteenth century. Her family seems to have been a piously restless and restlessly pious parent, and Sarah expressed that same restless and pious spirit in her marriage to Dr. Bradley. It is hard to believe that she failed to communicate her sense of mission and that same restless spirit to her stepdaughter, in some degree at least.

I hope that, after another summer trip to the United States, I will be able to share further information on the life of Sarah Blachly Bradley and her family with the readers of HeRB. Her story is important because of her relationship to Sophia Bradley McGilvary, because of her relationship to the work of her husband, and in its own right. The problems we face in finding out about that story are indicative of the challenges and frustrations of the field of women's history. The satisfaction and just plain fun in recovering something, however modest, of such a story is that we are reintroduced, albeit imperfectly, to a memorable individual who has all but disappeared from the memory of the church today.

A Note of Thanks

I would like to close with a brief note of thanks to the librarians at both Berea College and Yale University for the excellent assistance nearly all of them provided me during the summer. In tracking down as much as I know to date about Sarah Blachly Bradley, I had to consult (as you can see below) a flock of "strange" sources, most of which were stored in equally strange places. I would like to especially thank Martha Smalley at the Yale Divinity School Library for taking the time and going out of her way to put relevant materials into my hands. The Overseas Ministries Studies Center, where I stayed in New Haven, also assisted the process by providing letters of introduction from a locally respected place of reference, as well as providing an excellently congenial place to park myself when I wasn't in one library or another.

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Short Items

An Idle Tale

Commenting on their lack of converts, the members of the Presbyterian Siam Mission wrote to the Board of Foreign Missions in New York City, "Surely there could hardly be a more striking proof of heathen helplessness and ruin than this, their insensibility and indifference to divine things. The glorious themes we bring before them-all new and unfamiliar to their minds, surely enough, one would think to arrest the attention if not to call out the wonder and gratitude of the most besotted soul-fail to excite any emotion, or to awaken any permanent desire. Our words are as the empty wind. The story of the cross is as an idle tale; or if perchance any profess to wish to learn more perfectly of this strange way, we have always had reason to fear they were desirous of making merchandise of faith, and had some ulterior purpose to gain." (Source: *Board of Foreign Missions, The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, 1859), 73.)

There is little question but the people of Siam initially greeted the Protestant missionary message with a general lack of interest and did treat it as empty verbiage and idle tales. Where I differ with the analysis offered in the quotation is in who was to blame for the failure in communication.

Thai Theological Innovation Reconsidered

One of the marks of Christian theological thought in Thailand is that, among Protestants at least, "Thai theology" is largely informal. There are no Thai theologians of any note and no major or classical works by Thais themselves to be cited. Peter Jackson, writing about historical Thai Buddhism, sheds some light on one reason why this might be. He writes, "Theoretical innovativeness in doctrinal interpretation has not been a historical feature of Thai intellectual life. The interpretation of Buddhist teachings has been a static field, the primary concern of Buddhist monks being with the conservation and faithful reproduction of holy texts and established commentarial interpretations from one generation to the next." (*Buddhadasa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003).

If Jackson is correct, the Thai church has not inherited from Thai Buddhism an inclination towards doctrinal reflection that might lead to theological innovation. Missionary nervousness in former times about any hints of "native Christian" ideas that did not conform to their understanding of the Bible only served to reinforce a disinclination towards systematic theological musings.

Gleanings From 1905

Recently, *The Blue Book of Missions for 1905* (Henry Otis Dwight, ed. New York: Funk & Wagnall's, 1905) came to hand. The book contains a number of interesting pieces of information including:

In 1905 it cost US$1.19 per word to send a telegram from the USA to Siam. By comparison it cost $1.22 per word to send a telegram from to China, $1.53 to Japan, and $1.11 to Singapore. In 1905, the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. had the second largest number of missionaries, 837, of any Protestant missionary agency in the world. Britain's Church Missionary Society had the most with 1,344. The third largest sending church was the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S. with 709 missionaries.

The *Blue Book* gives Siam's population as being "about 5,000,000" and estimates that the country includes 3.6 million Buddhists, 1.6 million animists, and 15,000 Protestant Christians. For the Protestants, it states that there were a total of 3,250 communicant members in two missions (Presbyterian and Baptist) and gives a total for "professed Christians" of 14,400. The *Blue Book* also reports, "The most progressive parts of the fields in Siam are the stations among the Laos in the north and among the Chinese of the Southern provinces." (p. 62)

What's Happening to British Christianity?

"What is happening to Christianity in Britain? On one level this is relatively easy to answer. Seven in ten of us call ourselves Christian but hardly seven in one hundred attend church. We are spiritual but not religious. We believe but tend not to belong. The church, like other establishment institutions, no longer commands our confidence. On a macro scale, we are slipping from being a nominally Christian nation to a sub-Christian one."

Nick Spencer, "The Barriers to Belief," *Quadrant* (September 2003), 1.

News & Notes

Thesis on Thai Community Church, Chicago & the Lamp of Thailand

The Rev. Dr. Don Persons, formerly a United Church of Christ missionary connected with the CCT, has recently completed his doctoral thesis, entitled "Learning the Bible at Thai Community Church in Chicago: A Study of Contextualization of Religious Education with Reference to Lamp of Thailand Distance Education Ministries" (D.Min., McCormick Theological Seminary, 2003). As indicated in the title, the thesis deals with distance educational and contextualization issues related to the Lamp of Thailand's Bible correspondence ministry through the lens of the

experience of a local Thai church in the United States. A copy of Don's thesis has been deposited at the Payap University Archives.

Bradley Genealogy On Line

In the course of my research on the first article in this issue of *HeRB*, I came across an interesting and useful website that contains the genealogy of the Bradley Family, including most importantly Dr. Dan Beach Bradley. The site is that of The Thomas Osgood Bradley Foundation, a foundation that "is a non-profit organization dedicated to researching and publishing the history and genealogies of the Bradleys of Bingley, Yorkshire and New England, as well as of New Englanders who removed to the River Plate Basin area prior to 1850, and to the preservation of documents and other materials relating to their activities." The foundation maintains a library in Miami, Florida. The website states, "Our holdings include Town Histories and Records of several Massachusetts towns, Social Security Records, Vital Records, Cemetery records, Marriage Records and several published genealogies." It also notes that the library is closed "temporarily," but that some records may be available. Email inquiries may be sent to Saul M. Montes-Bradley at saul@bradleyfoundation.org. Dan Beach Bradley is listed as being part of the 8th generation of the "Descendants of Danyell Broadley of Newclose and West Morton."

2011 Note: users can access the notes on Dan Beach Bradley directly (here).

Knox Family History

Helen Knox Murphy, the daughter of H. Gaylord & Lela Knox, Presbyterian missionaries to Thailand (1920-1941, 1947-1961), has recently privately published a family history, entitled *Common Nobility: A Family Story* (Houston: Table Kitchen Top Publishers, 2002). The book includes substantial chapters on her family's missionary life in Phrae from the 1920s through to the end of World War II. It is useful, as well as interesting, for the perspective it brings to that life, namely the perspective of an "MK" (missionary kid) who is very self-consciously a "TCK" (third culture kid). Helen describes her life in boarding schools in India (Kodaikanal and Woodstock), as well as her sometimes painful visits to the United States on furlough. While actual material on Thailand and India amounts to somewhat less than one-third of the book's 200-plus pages, Thailand suffuses its narrative, providing a vivid portrait of how being born here can permanently mark and enrich a life. The volume is liberally sprinkled with photographs, many of them from Thailand. Spiral bound, it is a fine example of what desk top publishing can accomplish these days. *Common Nobility* is a welcome addition to the shelf of books on the history of missions in Thailand. A photocopy is available at the Payap University Archives.

Book Review

Mark A. Noll. *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Thai Protestantism stands, historically, at the confluence of two vast rivers, Asian and Western, and the further back in time we go the more clearly we can distinguish the Western, missionary sources of contemporary Protestantism in Thailand. The great majority of Protestant missionaries serving in Thailand, until after World War II, came from the United States, which means that the study of Thai Protestant church history requires a strong grounding in American church history as well. A firm knowledge of American church history is especially important to understanding the origins and growth of the Thai church from its beginnings virtually to World War II. Those seeking an understanding of the nineteenth-century American sources of Thai church history would do well to begin with Mark Noll's *America's God*.

Noll focuses on the development of American theology from the 1790s, after the end of the American Revolution, through the 1850s to the eve of the American Civil War. *America's God* is more than a study of theology in a narrow sense. Noll describes how the churches of post-colonial America went about adapting themselves to their new socio-cultural situation after the Revolution. Where colonial American society had built itself around patronage and deference, post-colonial society developed a republican, egalitarian ethos that self-consciously did away with the traditional European model of the state-sponsored, established church. In many cases, church leaders themselves promoted disestablishment, and one of Noll's themes is that the American churches contributed significantly to the creation of the American republican community and its ethos. Republicanism was not something foisted on unwilling churches nor did it mean that the churches discarded everything from their past; Noll describes, rather, how the American church retained, for example, a strong Protestant emphasis on the centrality of the Scriptures.

Noll's central thesis, well and persuasively presented, is that after 1790 the American churches reconfigured their theologies along republican lines. They increasingly rejected the older Calvinist theological portrait of a stern, judgmental God who justly damns all but those chosen by divine mercy for salvation. They made greater space for human initiative in the process of salvation, and they appropriated Scottish commonsense philosophy, a moderate Enlightenment philosophy, to augment and even, at times, embody their new republican theology. Noll does an excellent job of charting where and how this change took place. In the course of his narrative, he presents a sweeping survey of the vast secondary literature on the relationship of American Christianity to its culture and society between the American Revolutions and the Civil War. He also very capably summarizes numerous American theologians, demonstrating their relationship to each other and the directions of their thought, and he does so in generally clear prose that is understandable to educated people with no background in theology.

As valuable as *America's God* is to understanding the American sources of Thai Protestant church history, it also contributes to a more general historical and theological understanding of the process of contextualization. We tend to forget in this age of the American imperium that the United States is not a Western nation in the same sense as Germany, France, or even Britain. It is still a "new nation," which has undergone and continues to undergo a process of self-invention; what Noll describes is how the American churches played a role in that process as they adapted themselves to the new post-revolutionary social and culture context. He shows how the different denominations went about the process of contextualization in different ways and at different speeds and, yet, participated in a common process that resulted in an identifiably American theology. He also describes, however, how American evangelical churches then failed to re-contextualize themselves in the 1850s and, more blatantly, after the Civil War. He points out that in the era when the evangelical theologians were producing a massive and creative theological literature that dominated the American scene, they were also engaged in intense internecine disputations and seemed more intent in attacking each other than in developing more positive theologies for the churches.

The ultimate tragedy Noll describes in *America's God*, however, is not the American theologians' failure to move beyond contentious apologetics directed at other theologians, and it is not the failure to recontextualize American theologies for later generations. He describes, rather, the way in which pro-slavery Southern theologians transformed the American evangelical commitment to a literal interpretation of Scripture into a weapon against its anti-slavery foes. Southern theologians demonstrated that the Bible, literally taken, condones slavery and that, therefore, all "good" Christians had to accept the Southern social and economic system. American theology's ultimate failure, then, was to achieve a cogent biblical critique of slavery. It was a failure with significant consequences for the future course of American theological reflection.

In terms of Thai church history, Noll provides an excellent description of the ideological and theological worldview that the first generations of American Protestant missionaries brought with them to nineteenth-century Siam. It was a contentious ideological-theological mixture, which the missionaries, irrespective of their particular denominational affiliation, would have seen as being both scriptural and commonsensical. Noll describes it as a combination of theological republicanism, philosophical commonsense realism, and the Bible, which played an important role in determining how the missionaries in Siam structured their work, understood Thai society and religion, and framed the activities they carried out. If we want to understand why the Thai Protestant churches have evolved in the directions they have, it is necessary to understand the ideological-theological world view their founders, the missionaries, brought with them to Siam. Noll's *America's God* is an invaluable tool for achieving that understanding.

This is a book that many audiences will want to read. American Christians of all backgrounds can learn a great deal about our theological heritage, not all of it comfortable or comforting. Given the dominant political role of the United States in our world and the relationship of religion to government, especially today, *America's God* is a timely book for understanding how Americans, including their political leaders, understand religion and the Christian faith. Those who are interested in and involved with the contextualization of the Christian faith will find this

an important book, one that suggests that contextualization of the Christian faith poses dangers as well as gives hope to churches in "non-Christian" contexts. Students of the American missionary movement, finally and as stated above, will want to use this book to help them understand "where the missionaries were coming from." Noll's *America's God* is a good read, good history, and an important contribution to the historical study of the Protestant church in Thailand.

Nigel J. Brailey, "The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Western Laos, 1850-92." Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1968.

It probably needs to be made clear from the beginning that the "Western Laos" in the title of Brailey's groundbreaking study does not refer to the modern nation of Laos but to modern-day northern Thailand. As not a few readers already know, the northern Thai were widely known in the nineteenth century as the "Lao" and their territory referred to as "Laos." For some readers, the term "forward movement" may also be somewhat obscure, it being a somewhat old-fashioned way to refer to the full incorporation of historical Siam's semi-independent northern tributary states into the Siamese state. This thesis, thus, describes in considerable detail the early stages of the process by which the Siamese central government transformed the northern principalities into provinces, a process that directly involved the Laos Mission and its churches and had a fundamental impact on their development.

In spite of its age, Brailey's "Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement" remains one of a handful of English-language studies on the history of nineteenth-century northern Siam, and even it is not actually a history of the North as such. The dissertation is a study in Siamese political and diplomatic history, however prominently events in northern Siam are featured. It focuses, furthermore, on the three "western Laos" states of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang to the exclusion of Phrae and Nan; and, in fact, it gives by far-and-away the bulk of its attention to Chiang Mai. Those who are interested in northern Thai history, thus, have to "extract" that story from the one Brailey tells. The thesis also describes, necessarily, the history of British diplomatic relations with Siam and Burma, which relations involved not only the British Foreign Office in London and its consular officers in Bangkok and, later, in Chiang Mai, but also officers of the British Government of India and British officials in Burma and even Singapore. Brailey, in sum, tells a complex story involving factions in Bangkok, in Chiang Mai, and among the various British governments and officials. It is a political and diplomatic story with considerable economic implications, which the author also considers, although in less detail.

On the whole, Brailey tells the story well, although he seems to be of the school that holds that doctoral dissertations are to be mined rather than read. His prose is not exactly ponderous and certainly not self-important, but it is bland, pedestrian, and sometimes fails to communicate his stories and make his points as clearly as they could be communicated and made. A saving grace is that he has included a very helpful set of tabl es listing the names of the kings of Siam, princes of Chiang Mai, the numerous Siamese envoys (commissioners) to Chiang Mai, and various Siamese government officials and British consular representatives. Without those lists, one would get quickly lost in the details of negotiations, contending parties, particular events,

and appointments of officials. Even with them, this is a slow read. But if the reader is motivated and persistent, a great deal of information on nineteenth-century northern Siam is there for the taking.

There are things to complain about. The author has a nasty habit of referring only to the month in which an event occurred, not infrequently leaving entirely obscure the year of the event. Most British officials are referred to only by their initials rather than full first names. At other times, the author refers to a new official holding an office without telling us that there had been a change, a new British vice-consul in Chiang Mai being mentioned without the former one being dispensed with or a new Siamese Foreign Minister discussed without the reader's knowing that the former minister had retired. Brailey uses a rather unusual transcription system, which means that we are left with some strange spellings for Thai names, such as "Jularlonggon" for King Chulalongkorn. The difficulty is that if those using Brailey wants to refer to more obscure figures mentioned by him, it is difficult to transcribe his spellings into ones that will be more widely recognized and acceptable.

Brailey's dissertation, nonetheless, is a key secondary work for the study of northern Thai missionary and church history. The author makes substantial use of missionary records, and he gives due consideration to the role of the Laos Mission in the history of Siam's incorporation of the northern principalities into the Siamese nation-state. He places events in northern Thai church history in their larger political context, helping us to understand how changes in the political climate in Bangkok influenced the missionaries' situation in Chiang Mai. One of the most important insights to be gained from Brailey, for example, is the way in which the Laos Mission as a powerless religious organization had to deal with and even attempt to manipulate a highly complex, multi-polar, and constantly shifting political situation in a foreign context. Brailey also directly treats several significant events in northern Thai church and missions history in their political and diplomatic context, which treatment adds to our ability to understand why those events happened when and as they did. Brailey's " Siamese Forward Movement" is, in sum, a specialist work, which is essential for those who want to understand nineteenth-century northern Thai political, economic, and church history.