

“And the Leaves of the Tree Were for the Healing of Nations”
Philosophical Explorations and Documentary Strategies for Global Missions

Professor Gary Mar
Department of Philosophy, Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, New York 11794-3750
Gary.Mar@stonybrook.edu

*In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life,
which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month:
and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
Revelation 22:2 (KJV)

經過城裡的街道。河的兩邊有生命樹，結十二次果子，每月都結果子；樹葉可以醫治列國



Figure 1. Sadao Watanabe's "The Angel Ascends from the Rising Sun"

In loving memory of RKI, LAM, DJM, and JWM.

— GRM, JUNE 2007

Table of Contents

<i>I. A Sacred Metaphor: The Tree of Life</i>	2
I-A. The Tree of Life and the Healing of Nations.....	2
I-B. A Digital Leaflet for the Healing of Nations: "Like a Family Reunion".....	2
I-C. Three Questions—the Trunk, the Roots, and the Pruning of the Leaves.....	3
<i>II. The Theological Trunk: Identificational Repentance</i>	3
II-A. The Great Commission and the Healing of Nations.....	3
II-B. No Future Without Forgiveness.....	4
II-C. An Example: Abraham Lincoln's Fervent National Prayer.....	6
<i>III. Historical Roots: A Philosophy of History</i>	7
III-A. Two Models of the Divine Action in Human History.....	7
III-B. Who is the Seed of Abraham?.....	9
III-C. Postmodernism's Skepticism Towards Grand Narratives.....	10
III-D. J. R. R. Tolkien's and C. S. Lewis's Philosophy of History.....	10
III-E. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill: "He is not far from each one of us".....	12
<i>IV. Pruning the Leaves: Strategies for Creating "Like a Family Reunion"</i>	13
IV-A. The Chinese Exclusion Act and a Legacy of Shame.....	13
IV-B. Angel Island: the "West Coast Version of Ellis Island"?.....	13
IV-C. A Yearning to Recover Family Roots.....	15
IV-D. Digitally Designing and Disseminating "Like a Family Reunion".....	16
IV-E. Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker.....	16
<i>V. Angel Island at the Intersection of Histories</i>	18
V-A. The Healing of U.S.-China Relations.....	19
V-B. Confronting the Problem of Absence by Creating Presence.....	19
V-C. Dispelling Stereotypes of Chinese by Discovering Chinese Gold.....	21
V-D. Some Episodes in the History of Christian Missions in China.....	22
V-E. Katharine Maurer, the "Angel of Angel Island".....	27
<i>VI. Epilogue: An Enacted Parable</i>	28

I. A Sacred Metaphor: The Tree of Life.

I-A. The Tree of Life and the Healing of Nations.

The great Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) noted that there was a Tree of Life at the center of the first paradise (*Genesis* 2:9) and that there will be a Tree of Life at the center of the new paradise (*Revelation* 22:2). What is this Tree of Life? According to Spurgeon:

I say that Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, is in Heaven and is there comparable to a tree planted in the very center of the City! Under his broad shadow, the redeemed delight to sit, and His leaves, as they are wafted down to earth, bring health with them! If we would be healed, we must gather those leaves and apply them to the wounds and bruises of our souls and we shall surely recover...."The leaves of the trees were for the healing of nations."¹

According to Spurgeon, Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life. What then are the "leaves of the tree ... for the healing of nations"? Spurgeon extends his interpretation as follows:

"The leaves of the tree" — that is to say, even little portions and single pages about Christ will do good... Do not despise a mere leaf, or as you say, 'a leaflet,' for if Christ is in it, it is a leaf of the Tree and he will bless it.... Scatter the leaves! Let them fall as thickly as leaves descend in the last days of autumn. Scatter them everywhere, since they are for the healing of the nations!²

I-B. A Digital Leaflet for the Healing of Nations: "Like a Family Reunion".

This article is about one such leaflet—an original documentary project "*Like a Family Reunion: Researching My Family History at NARA*". The idea for the documentary came about quite serendipitously when I became reacquainted, after 20 or more years, with my cousin Theresa Ihara on Mother's Day, 2006. Theresa had been researching our family history including digging up the documentation on her maternal great grandfather (and my paternal grandfather) Louie Mar (1859-1954). (Technically, this means that Theresa is my half first cousin once removed.)

At that time I said that it would be very educational and personally meaningful to create a documentary about the process she went through to recover our family history. Probably assuming that I wouldn't see her again for another 20 years, Theresa agreed it was a good idea. Less than two months later, a series of events conspired to turn this wishful thinking into a reality. With a team of talented friends and colleagues and with some funding from Allstate and OCA, we were able to create "Like a Family Reunion" and to distribute it to school teachers at a Conference on Prejudice Reduction later that year. Making this documentary is part of a larger project to donate an interactive computer kiosk to the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation in 2010 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Angel Island Immigration Station (1910-1940)³

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "Healing Leaves", a sermon delivered on May 9, 1875 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington on behalf of the Religious Tract Society, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon #1233, 1875 (vol. 21), p. 265.

² Spurgeon. *op. cit.*, p. 295.

³ The history of this larger project is recounted in Gary Mar, "New Media and New Mirrors in Asian American Studies: Strategies for Transforming Knowledge into a Pedagogy of Empowerment" in *Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies*, David H. Kim (ed), APA Newsletters, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 19-33, Fall 2003.

I-C. Three Questions—the Trunk, the Roots, and the Pruning of the Leaves.

This article explores how this documentary "leaflet" can be part of the larger project of global missions in which the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the "healing of nations." In this article I will briefly explore the following questions:

- What is the *theological trunk* of the Tree—that is, what is the scriptural basis for a type of spiritual warfare known as "identificational repentance"?
- What are the *historical roots* of the Tree—that is, what is a theology of history that allows us to understand the relation of divine purposes and human history? In particular, we will explore how the unduly neglected history of the Angel Island Immigration Station at the crossroad of American immigration history and the history of Christian missions in Asia can be a resource for the "healing of nations".
- What are some *principles for pruning* the leaves of the Tree—that is, what are some strategies for making effective digital tracts or "leaflets" that can be drawn from the experience of Asian American documentary filmmakers?

The story of the making of "Like a Family Reunion" is a tale about the recovery of family history hidden in shame and silence, giving voice to ancestors by honoring the legacy of their struggles, and experiencing the healing that comes through placing one's family story in the public history of a nation. As historian Ronald Takaki has persuasively urged in his book *A Different Mirror, America*, as a nation, needs to cultivate a "larger memory" of who we have been and that "much of our society's future will be influenced by which 'mirror' we choose to see ourselves."

II. The Theological Trunk: Identificational Repentance.

II-A. The Great Commission and the Healing of Nations.

The most-quoted passage relating to the Great Commission is Matthew 28:19, where believers are directed to "... go and make disciples of all nations [*panta ta ethne*]...." The Greek word translated 'nations' is *ethne* (from which we get the word 'ethnic'). So the word 'nations' does not necessarily refer to 'nations' in the geopolitical sense but to people groups—races, sexes, ethnic communities, economic classes, religions, church denominations, families, or generations, to name a few examples. Although Matthew 28 is the most frequently cited reference, the Great Commission is also echoed in each of the other gospels (Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 17:18). Indeed, the Great Commission is a theme that winds, like a River of Life, through all of scripture.

In the call of Abraham (Genesis 12), known as the "Great Commission of the Old Testament", God promises that through Abraham's seed "*all the peoples of the earth will be blessed*" (see also, Genesis 26:4, 28:14). The Great Commission is reflected in the "all peoples" perspective. This perspective recurs in many passages of the Old Testament, e.g., Psalm 2:8 proclaims "*Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.*" Beginning in Genesis and winding through all of scripture, the theme of the Great Commission ultimately issues forth in the eschatological vision St. John in *Revelation* 21:24-22:2:

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

This healing of nations is, therefore, central to fulfilling the Great Commission. "The Bible does not speak about 'humanity' but about 'all the families of the earth' or 'all the nations', notes theologian Lesslie Newbigen: "It follows that this mutual relatedness, this dependence of one on another, is not merely part of the journey toward the goal of salvation, but is intrinsic to the goal itself."⁴

II-B. No Future Without Forgiveness.

The greatest sins and injustices in history have not been committed by individuals acting independently, but by groups of individuals committing collective atrocities and then rationalizing their actions in the name of patriotism, racial superiority, political ideologies, and even religious zeal. Sins of nations (or "people groups") committed by one group against another, must be confessed and forgiven corporately. Unless those who inherit the responsibility for those sins are willing to identify with their people groups, to confess their corporate sins, to seek forgiveness, and to walk in obedience to whatever reparations are required to restore relationships, generations will be locked into the sins of their fathers. In Exodus 20:5b we read: "I the LORD your God am a jealous God punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me". If the deep wounds of history remain buried and unresolved, there can be no deep and lasting peace. In the words of the prophet Jeremiah (6:14 and reiterated in 8:11): "They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."

The title of Bishop Desmond Tutu's essay on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is a succinct summary of why the healing of nations is so critical to the future of humanity: "Without Forgiveness There Really is No Future". In this essay, Bishop Tutu writes:

True forgiveness deals with the past, all of the past, to make the future possible. We cannot go on nursing grudges even vicariously for those who cannot speak for themselves any longer. We have to accept that what we do, we do for generations past, present, and yet to come. That is what makes a community a community or a people a people—for better or worse.⁵

No Future Without Forgiveness

"True forgiveness deals with the past, all of the past, to make the future possible. We cannot go on nursing grudges even vicariously for those who cannot speak for themselves any longer. We have to accept that what we do we do for generations past, present, and yet to come. That is what makes a community a community or a people a people—for better or worse."

— Bishop Desmond Tutu, "Without Forgiveness There Really is No Future."



Figure 2. Bishop Tutu on Restorative Justice

⁴ Lesslie Newbigen, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Erdmans: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989), p. 82.

⁵ Bishop Desmond Tutu, *There is Really No Future Without Forgiveness*, (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p. 279.

Some might object that such lavish and radical forgiveness is fundamentally unjust. Again Bishop Tutu:

One might go on to say that perhaps justice fails to be done only if the concept we entertain for justice is retributive justice, whose chief goal is to be punitive so that the wronged party is really the state, something impersonal, which has little consideration for the real victims and almost none for the perpetrator. We contend there is another kind of justice, restorative justice, which was characteristic of traditional African jurisprudence. Here the central concern is not retribution or punishment. In the spirit of *ubuntu*, the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offense.⁶

Forgiveness, argues Tutu, is not contrary to justice, but part of a different conception of justice: *restorative* justice is a conception of justice that includes and extends the more common notion of *retributive* justice.

II-C. Identificational Repentance.

The healing of nations comes about by prayers of *identificational repentance*. Although this term is due to John Dawson⁷, theological models can be found in *Daniel 9:4-19*, *Nehemiah 1:1-10*, and *Ezra 9:5-13* and the scriptural basis can be found in *2 Chronicles 7:14* "If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turns from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Identificational repentance typically involves confession, repentance, reconciliation and restitution.

- ***Confession***: acknowledging the truth about unjust or harmful actions of my nation or people group towards another. This often involves researching or digging up history to uncover the festering wounds that has been covered over by guilt or shame.
- ***Repentance***: turning away from those actions. A prayer of repentance may involve formally and symbolically apologizing to and asking the forgiveness of representatives of the victims of the corporate sins.
- ***Reconciliation***: expressing and receiving forgiveness and pursuing fellowship with previous enemies. Without these further action steps, the apologizing mentioned above can seem to be empty words. True reconciliation cannot happen if words are not followed by credible actions: walking in obedience to God to restore broken relationships.
- ***Restitution***: attempting to restore what was damaged or destroyed; seeking to do justice in whatever way one has the power to act or influence those in authority.

⁶ Tutu, *op. cit.*, "What About Justice?", pp. 54-55.

⁷ John Dawson is founder and director of the International Reconciliation Coalition in Los Angeles and international director for urban missions for Youth With A Mission (YWAM). He developed the concept of "identificational repentance" in *Taking Our Cities for God: How to Break Spiritual Strongholds* (Creation House: Altamonte Springs, Florida, 1990) and *Healing America's Wounds* (Regal Books: Ventura, California, 1994).

Legal models of pursuing racial justice and reparations have been successfully argued before the Supreme Court and articulated by University of Hawai'i law professor Eric Yamamoto⁸ in several books including *Interracial Justice: Conflict and Reconciliation in Post Civil-Rights America* (NYU Press: New York, 2000) and *Race, Rights and Reparation: Law and the Japanese American Internment* (Aspen Press: 1999) co-authored with Chon, Izumi, Kang and Wu, which received national attention in light of its relevance to the post-September 11th tension between national security and civil liberties in America.

II-C. An Example: Abraham Lincoln's Fervent National Prayer.

Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address is a striking historical example of identificational repentance. At the time Lincoln delivered the speech, the *London Spectator* commented, "We cannot read it without a renewed conviction that it is the noblest political document known to history, and should have for the nation and the statesmen he left behind him something of a sacred and almost prophetic character."⁹ Historians have traced Lincoln's changing attitudes towards the political and moral dilemma of slavery—painting more and less flattering portraits, for example, of the timing and compass of the Emancipation Proclamation. Nevertheless, according to Stephen Carter, Lincoln's greatness lay in elevating the Declaration of Independence above the legalism of the Constitution—calling Americans to give up their self-interest to live up to the ideals of freedom.¹⁰ It seems that a critical turning point of the Civil War occurred when President Lincoln finally came to the realization that it was not enough to *restrict* the spread of slavery into the new territories but that America as a nation had to *repent* for having been conceived in the sin of slavery.¹¹ Lincoln's view of God's providence in human history, the rhetorical echoes of Biblical language, and his repentance over the compromise of America's creational blessing to be a land of freedom, imbues his speech with its prophetic character.

If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

⁸ Professor Eric Yamamoto served as a co-counsel in the successful *Coram obis* reopening of the infamous World War II internment case of *Korematsu vs. the U. S.* (1944). The reversal of the *Korematsu case* in 1983 set the stage for the reparations in the historic 1988 Civil Liberties Act. Yamamoto has argued other cases before the Supreme Court including the successful Hawai'ian Homelands breach of trust class action resulting in a state reparations settlement and an amicus brief in the *Rasul v. Bush* post-9/11 Guantanamo Bay mass detention case.

⁹ Abraham Lincoln on-line, <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/inaug2.htm>.

¹⁰ Stephen L. Carter, "Lincoln's America," *Books and Culture*, July/August 2001.

¹¹ John Dawson, *Healing American's Wounds*, p. 71.

If America's creational blessing was to become a torch of freedom to the world and a refuge for immigrants seeking a new life, then her greatest sin has been to sacrifice this blessing for wealth and power, and one of the most egregious expressions of this sin was the institution of slavery.

American history is full of examples—from Columbus' initiation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade¹² to the post 9-11 rhetoric of a war against terrorism—of abuses that arise from invoking God's name to rationalize sins of slavery, greed, and racism. Such abuse, however, does not take away from the proper use of a biblical perspective on history that can lead a nation from repentance to healing.

For Christians to participate in the Great Commission, then, is to engage in the "healing of nations" and to engage in the healing of nations requires identificational repentance. For identificational repentance to be rooted in the truth, Christians must struggle to recover the sometimes shameful hidden history of nations or "people groups" inflicting wounds on each other. Historical research alone, however, only goes so far in revealing the horrendous evils of hatred and the wounding of nations. And there is no future without forgiveness—the mystery and power of the cross of Christ to reveal the historical wounds in our national souls, to cleanse our souls from these buried sins in the light of truth, and to give us the courage to walk in obedience towards a future of restored relationships. In the next section, we articulate a Christian philosophy of history.

III. Historical Roots: A Philosophy of History.

III-A. Two Models of the Divine Action in Human History.

History, according to a Christian perspective, is not merely a random series of happenings, but a meaningful sequence of events in the grandest of all narratives—a narrative that lead to the end of history in the final fulfillment of God's purposes for humanity. Moreover, the acts of God in history are not limited to the Old and New Testaments, but continue today in the unfolding of current events. To clarify how this might be conceived, I borrow two contrasting pictures from Robert Farrar Capon's *Parables of Judgment*. The first picture sees God as transcendent upon, but connected to, human history through a few critical biblically-recorded divine interventions. Robert Capons explains:

¹² While it is true that Columbus was inspired by Christian zeal to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, he nevertheless initiated two very anti-Christian practices. According to James Loewen in *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Rockefeller Center, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 60: "Two phenomena that revolutionized race relations and transformed the modern world: the taking of land, wealth, and labor from indigenous peoples, leading to their near extermination, and the transatlantic slave trade, which created a racial underclass." Loewen further notes: "A particularly repellent aspect of the slave trade was sexual. As soon as the 1493 expedition got to the Caribbean, before it even reached Haiti, Columbus was rewarding his lieutenants with native women to rape. On Haiti, sex slaves were one more prerequisite that the Spaniards enjoyed. Columbus wrote a friend in 1500, 'A hundred *castellanoes* are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls: those from nine to ten are now in demand.'"

Since God, the Alpha and Omega, the A and the Ω , is up there above history, I shall draw a series of descending lines to represent his several comings down—his interventions in history, his intersections in history.... The picture we have drawn looks like nothing so much as a divine sewing machine, with the needle coming down at various points... and tacking God to history. It is salvation as the divine basting stitch.¹³

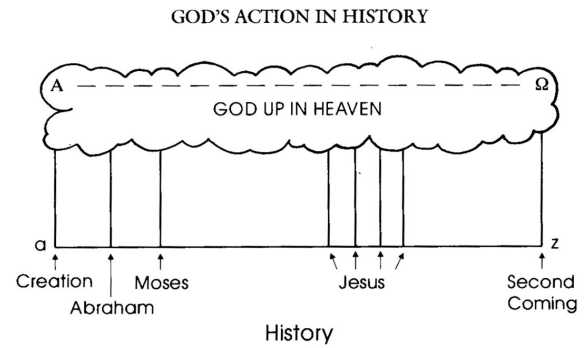


Figure 3. The "Divine Tailor" or Interventionist Model of God's Relation to Human History

The above *divine tailor* or *interventionist view* of history with its occasional biblically-recorded accounts of divine actions connecting heaven and earth can be contrasted with what might be called the *divine iceberg* or *sacramental view* of God's relationship to human history. Capon contrasts and continues:

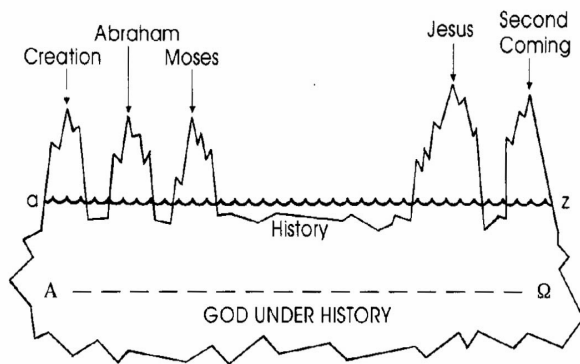


Figure 4. The "Divine Iceberg" or Sacramental Model of God's Relation to Human History.

But now, let me posit God not as a divine tailor in heaven sending down an interventionist needle from time to time but as a divine iceberg present under all of time. On that analogy, one-tenth of his presence to history will be visible above the surface of its waters and nine-tenths will be invisible below the surface, but his presence out of sight will be as much a part of history as his presence in broad daylight.... The divine acts in history are not just occasional interventions of a reality that wasn't present before, they are precisely acted parables—sacraments, if you will, real presences--of a reality that was there all along.¹⁴

If God's interaction with human history is more like an iceberg than a sewing machine, then it is reasonable to suppose that the particular cross section of the iceberg represented by the narrative of scripture might intersect with the cross-sectional histories of many nations. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, could direct and inspire the Civil Rights struggle in America by drawing upon the Old Testament narrative of the liberation of the Jewish nation from Egypt. When Christians immerse themselves in the gospel narratives, they naturally interpret the events of their lives through the spiritual categories and truths of the Scripture—such notions as creational blessing, fall, and redemption. This is part of what is meant by "conversion." Similarly, to interpret our nation's history—like our life stories--through the categories of scripture is an invitation to see more, and more deeply.¹⁵

¹³ Robert Farrar Capon, *The Parables of Judgment* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Press, 1989), pp. 90-91.

¹⁴ Capon, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

¹⁵ There is, of course, the danger of "over-spiritualizing" one's autobiography—twisting scripture to rationalize one's self-importance, selfishness, and sin. The same temptation to invoke God to rationalize a nation's exceptional destiny is very real. On the one hand, George Washington regarded as providential the narrow escape of his nearly defeated Army from entrapment by the British under the cover of a fog in the summer of 1775. On the other hand, Governor John Winthrop proclaimed the Massachusetts Bay Colony to be a "city on a hill" in 1630 before colonists moved out

III-B. Who is the Seed of Abraham?

If a Christian philosophy of history connects divine action in history (not like a sewing machine, but like an iceberg), then one can expect that even at times of greatest darkness (in the 10% of highly visible events of world history), there can be, at the very same time, a divine rescue operation at work (in the 90% of the iceberg of history below the level of visibility). We can see this at work in scripture by revisiting the Old Testament Great Commission. The Abrahamic promise was that his *seed* would be a blessing to all nations. In Galatians 3:16, Paul explains: "The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed' meaning one person, who is Christ." The seed, therefore, is Christ (*vide* Acts 3:25), and by extension all who believe in Christ "are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

That seed, however, was already promised in the first Messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15: 'I will put enmity between you [the Serpent] and the woman between your seed and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' This prophecy states that the seed of the woman—Jesus Christ—will crush the serpent's head—Satan—at the cost of the serpent striking his heel—the crucifixion of Christ. And adding to Spurgeon's interpretation, Christ is also the Seed of the Tree of Life, a sacred metaphor for the reconciling work of the Great Commission.

If the above philosophy of history is correct, then a Christian view of history is indeed a "grand narrative." Theologians Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh admit, "Scripture discloses a worldview in storied form. It is difficult to see how one could take the biblical presentation of creation, fall and redemption as merely a local tale. Indeed, it is difficult to find a grander narrative, a more comprehensive story anywhere. Christianity is undeniably rooted in a grand narrative that claims to tell the true story of the world from creation to *eschaton*, from origin to consummation."¹⁶

to massacre the Pequot Indians. Jacksonian democrats appealed to America's "Manifest Destiny" (1845-1855) to dislocate Native Americans from their homelands and to appropriate Mexican territory. President McKinley's decision to annex the Philippines captured by the U.S. in the Spanish-American War of 1898 was rationalized as an attempt to "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize them and Christianize them" despite the fact that the Filipinos had already been converted to Catholicism by the Spanish. President Ronald Reagan declared war on the "evil empire" of Soviet communism while clandestinely engaging in the illegalities of the Iran-Contra scandal. Most recently, after 9-11 President George W. Bush promulgated the confusion of "homeland security" with pursuing a Christian "crusade" against the "axis of evil" in West Asia to rationalize an unprecedented doctrine pre-emptive war while suppressing democratic debate as unpatriotic as well as suppressing disturbing revelations about the lack of justification for the invasion in the first place.

¹⁶ J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, "Facing the Postmodern Scalpel: Can the Christian Faith Withstand Deconstruction?" in *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, edited by Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), pp. 141-142.

Seed of Abraham

The call of Abraham in Genesis 12:

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you...'"

Rubens, "Abraham and Isaac", 1634

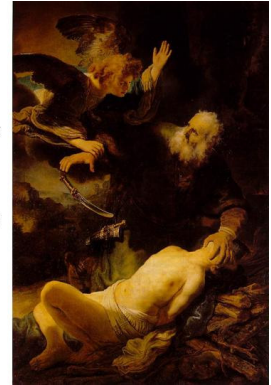


Figure 5. The Seed of Abraham and the Great Commission of the Old Testament.

Christ, the Seed



God promises that through Abraham's seed "all the peoples of the earth will be blessed" (see also, Genesis 26:4, 28:14). Who is this seed? It is the seed promised in the first Messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15:

'I will put enmity between you [the Serpent] and the woman between your seed and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'

In Galatians 3:16, Paul explains: "The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed' meaning one person, who is Christ." The seed, therefore, is Christ (*vide* Acts 3:25), and by extension all who believe in Christ "are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Figure 6. The First Messianic Prophecy.

III-C. Postmodernism's Skepticism Towards Grand Narratives.

According to Jean-Francois Lyotard's famous remark, Postmodernism can be "defined... as incredulity toward metanarratives"—as skepticism towards all "grand narratives". The Grand Narrative of the Enlightenment, for example, is a story of the triumph of science and rationality over superstition and religion. However, a closer examination of the Enlightenment reveals the collaboration of philosophy with the rationalization of racism and colonialism. For example, John Locke justified the Royal Africa Company's slave expeditions as "just wars," and recently Immanuel Kant's racist remarks have been much discussed.¹⁷ Contemporary scholars of race theory—such as Paul Gilroy, Theo Goldberg, Charles Mills—have convincingly argued that such examples are revealing, not because they contradict Enlightenment ideals, but because they flow naturally from its commitments to categorizing, classifying, and controlling. Generalizing from such examples, Postmodernism preaches skepticism towards all grand narratives. No narrative is able to encompass the experiences and perspectives of all peoples and hence all Grand Narratives inevitably serves to legitimate and universalize the perspective of the ruling elite and to marginalize the experiences of others.

How can a Christian philosophy of history respond to the critique of Postmodernism? A Christian philosophy of history can, and should, take advantage of the incisive Postmodern critiques of the Grand Narratives of the Enlightenment, Marxism, and Darwinism. The folly and deceptiveness of human philosophy compared to the wisdom of God (Colossians 2:8, 1 Corinthians 1:22) is a well-known theme from scripture. However, these critiques—and even critiques of Christian scripture twisting—can be acknowledged without embracing Postmodernism's grand claim of universal skepticism and relativism. Alistair Macintyre in *After Virtue* (1981, second edition, 1984) insightfully points out that Postmodernism is, in fact, "the inverted mirror image" of the Enlightenment. According to Macintyre's diagnosis, the unwarranted power of relativism in contemporary intellectual life derives largely from the simplistic "inversion of certain central Enlightenment positions." Isn't Postmodernism itself caught in an inconsistency in preaching "universal relativism" and in assuming the privileged perspective of an "all-knowing skepticism"? If Postmodernism is itself a kind of Grand Narrative that is open radical doubt, then this leaves open the intriguing possibility of a true Grand Narrative or a "true myth".

III-D. J. R. R. Tolkien's and C. S. Lewis's Philosophy of History.

J. R. R. Tolkien in his Andrew Lang lecture "On Fairy-Stories" given at the University of St. Andrews on March 8, 1939, suggests an intriguing answer to the nagging question of whether a Christian interpretation of history is "just a fairy tale." Tolkien calls attention to the particular quality of 'joy' in a successful fantasy or, by extension, a Christian interpretation of history that can only be "explained as a glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."¹⁸

It is not difficult to imagine the peculiar excitement and joy that one would feel, if any especially beautiful fairy-story were found to be 'primarily' true, its narrative to be history,

¹⁷ For example, Kant wrote in his book *Physical Geography*: "Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians do have a meagre talent. The Negroes are far below them, and at the lowest point are a part of the American people."

¹⁸ J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories", in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, edited by Christopher Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1984, p. 155.

without thereby necessarily losing the mythical, or allegorical significance that it has possessed....

[I]n God's kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The *Evangelium* has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them.... The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that ... he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation.¹⁹

In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis recounts how a conversation with Tolkien removed the last intellectual obstacle to his conversion from atheism to Christian theism—the abundance of pre-Christian pagan myths with the idea of the dying and reviving god.

...now what Dyson and Tolkien showed me was this: that if I met the idea of sacrifice in a Pagan story I didn't mind it at all; again, that if I met the idea of a god sacrificing himself to himself... I liked it very much and was mysteriously moved by it: again, that the idea of the dying and reviving god (Balder, Adonis, Bacchus) similarly moved me provided I met it anywhere except in the Gospels. The reason was that in the Pagan stories I was prepared to feel the myth as profound and suggestive of meaning beyond my grasp even tho' I could not say in cold prose what it meant. Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened: and one must be content to accept it in the same way, remembering that it is God's myth where the others are men's myths: i.e., the Pagan stories are God expressing Himself through the minds of poets, using such images as He found there, while Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call real things. Therefore it is true, not in the sense of being a description of God (that no finite mind can take in) but in the sense of being the way in which God chooses to (or can) appear to our faculties. The doctrines we get out of the true myth are of course less true: they are translations into our concepts and ideas of that which God has already expressed in a language more adequate, namely the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Does this amount to a belief in Christianity? At any rate I am now certain a) That this Christian story is to be approached, in a sense, as I approach the other myths. b) That is the most important and full of meaning. I am also nearly certain that it really happened.

If Tolkien and Lewis are right, then skepticism towards Grand Narratives deconstructed by human minds does not preclude the possibility of seeking to understand a "true narrative" disclosed by God. Lewis is the first to admit that the theological concepts we draw from the narrative of scripture are less than completely true because they are limited by our finite minds. But this is a concession, not to relativism, but to epistemological humility. However, if God has chosen to express His story in a narrative form, then, Lewis supposes, God has the power and creativity to express Himself through real history. Human beings write their myths in words and images but God writes His Story in history. Human beings do not escape their finite limits by grasping transcendental knowledge of a world beyond, but the Author of history could choose to reveal himself by writing himself as a character in human history. The experience of the Resurrection that burned in the hearts of the disciples, and in the lives of believers throughout the millennia, is precisely the "shock of recognition" of the Living God. Lewis described this shock in one of his most memorable passages from his book *Miracles*:

¹⁹ Tolkien, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

It is always shocking to meet life where we thought we were alone. 'Look out!' we cry, 'it's alive'. And therefore this is the very point at which so many draw back--I would have done so myself if I could--and proceed no further with Christianity. An 'impersonal God'—well and good. A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads--better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap--best of all. But God Himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, king, husband--that is quite another matter. There comes a moment when the children who have been playing at burglars hush suddenly: was that a real footstep in the hall? There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion ('Man's search for God!') suddenly draw back. Supposing we really found Him? We never meant it to come to that! Worse still, supposing He had found us?

III-E. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill: "He is not far from each one of us".

If, as we have argued, history from a Christian perspective is like an iceberg, then there is more to history than meets the eye. Below the surface, even local histories can be deeply connected to God's global plan of salvation for all peoples. As Paul preached in his famous sermon to the philosophers on Mars Hill (Acts 17:24-28):

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. *'For in him we live and move and have our being.'* As some of your own poets have said, *'We are his offspring.'*

This essay has been an extended meditation on the scripture *"And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations"*. In section I, we set forth the sacred metaphor of the Tree of Life. In section II, we argued that the theological trunk for the "healing of nations" is the prayer of identificational repentance. Nations or "people groups" are natural and necessary units of reconciliation because of the history of the world's sins have been nation against nation, or people group against people group. In this third section, we set forth a philosophy of history that attempts to give a model of God's interaction in the human history of all peoples and to answer the postmodern skepticism towards all Grand Narratives.

In the next section we will illustrate how the local is connected to the global—how God's healing work in the recovery of a family history can be a point of connection to God's larger plans for global missions. We shall do this by revealing the remarkable history behind some of the surprising and historically significant records to be found at National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in San Bruno relating to the documents generated by the immigration station located at the North Garrison of Angel Island.

IV. Pruning the Leaves: Strategies for Creating "Like a Family Reunion".

IV-A. The Chinese Exclusion Act and a Legacy of Shame.

The wealth of information in the NARA archives in San Bruno is due to a historical fact that is not widely known by most Americans: the North Garrison on Angel Island was set up to be an immigration station (1910-1943) to enforce the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first law in U. S. history to single out a particular group for exclusion by race and class. When the 1906 San Francisco earthquake destroyed municipal records, this "act of God" created a legal loophole for Chinese to circumvent the discriminatory exclusion acts. The Chinese living in America—as legal citizens or aliens—realized they could claim to be naturalized citizens. They, in turn, could become an anchor for a chain of "paper sons and daughters" who could emigrate to America bypassing the gates of the exclusion laws on the basis of family reunification.

While this practice of "paper sons and daughters" was illegal, one must not conflate illegality with immorality. Ling-chi Wang, emeritus professor of ethnic studies at U. C. Berkeley, has forcefully pointed out that of all the immigrant groups, the Chinese have been subjected to the longest history of legalized discrimination in America:

[The United States] enacted no less than fifteen Chinese exclusion laws from the early 1880s to the early 1990s". In effect, they criminalized Chinese in the U. S. by race. After the exclusion, those in the U. S. already were discriminated against, denied, sometimes, even their constitutional rights, giving rise to the popular expression, 'Not a Chinaman's chance.' They were also denied the right of naturalization, rendering them permanent aliens and their image, as perpetual foreigners, even if they were born in and therefore citizens of the U.S. This is also why as the U.S. strongly pushed the 'Open Door' policy on China at the turn of the century to protect U.S. interests in China, the U.S. Congress continued to enact harsher laws and more restrictive regulations to close the door to Chinese immigrants of all classes and to severely limit their opportunities in the U.S. These restrictive laws were not effectively repealed until 1965.²⁰

Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was nominally repealed by the 1942 Magnuson Act, it only raised the national quota of 100 Chinese immigrants from anywhere in the world to a yearly quota of 105. This quota compares to the yearly quota of 65,721 from Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It was the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act that finally put Asian immigration on an equal footing with other nations.

IV-B. Angel Island: the "West Coast Version of Ellis Island"?

Angel Island is sometimes described as the "West Coast version of Ellis Island." However, unlike Ellis Island where white European immigrants were welcomed, Angel Island was a place where Chinese immigrants were treated like criminals. Asian immigrants coming through the West Coast were processed on Angel Island, but only the Chinese were singled out for long detentions and harsh interrogations. In contrast to Ellis Island where processing would take a matter of hours, on Angel Island the Chinese were detained for weeks and months, even years.

²⁰ Ling-chi Wang, "'Model Minority, High-tech Coolies, and Foreign Spies: Asian Americans in Science in Science and Technology, with Special Reference to the Case of Dr. Wen Ho Lee,' *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2007, p. 51.

On the walls of the barracks, the Chinese carved poems expressing their loneliness, disillusionment, and protest. The Chinese poems carved on the walls of Angel Island are especially poignant and reveal the hopes and hardships of the Chinese immigrants stranded in a "land without ghosts"—a place where people are so enchanted with the lure of wealth that they have forgotten where they came from and who their ancestors were.²¹

*There are tens of thousands of poems
on these walls
They are all cries of suffering and sadness
The day I am rid of this prison and become successful
I must remember that this chapter once existed
I must be frugal in my daily needs
Needless extravagance usually leads to ruin
All my compatriots should remember China
Once you have made some small gains,
You should return home early.*

Felicia Lowe, cultural activist and the director and producer of "Carved in Silence," the classic documentary on the Chinese detainees on Angel Island, noted: "Once you go into the building and see this poetry, unless you're a piece of wood, you cannot help but be touched by the experience.... The walls speak to you."

In 1999 the National Trust for Historic Preservation (<http://www.nationaltrust.org>) listed the Angel Island Immigration Station as one of America's 11 most endangered historic sites: "A unique and moving record of the hardships they endured can be found in the 30 years' worth of Chinese poetry—as well as other inscriptions in Japanese, Russian, Arabic, East Indian, German and English—carved in the walls of the former Detention Barracks.... Unless stabilization is undertaken soon, many of California's state-owned historic places—including the Angel Island Immigration Station, with its poignant record of hope and heartbreak—will crumble and disappear.

The Chinese Exclusion Act and the Angel Island experience have created a legacy of shame and fear within the Chinese American community. In researching his book *Chinese Gold*, Sandy Lydon noted the chilling legacy of the exclusion act continued to cast a shadow on generations of Chinese who harbored deep-seated fears of being deported. "One of the saddest legacies of the Exclusion Law is the inability of many Chinese-Americans to trace their genealogies back more than two or three generations. During its existence (1882-1943) the Exclusion Law destroyed most of the Chinese families it touched, permanently separating members in America from those in China. ... From the family-conscious Chinese this inability to trace their genealogy back beyond 1900 is tragic."²²

Angel Island wasn't the West Coast Version of Ellis Island



Angel Island was part of the legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first immigration law in American history to target an ethnic group by name. Chinese immigrants carved poems on the walls of the Angel Island immigration barracks in protest as they were interrogated and detained from six weeks to several years. These poems tell the "dark side" of the American immigration story. Angel Island, once on the nation's 11 most endangered historic sites, can now be used to "interrogate" the role of "Ellis Island" as a symbol of America as a refuge of freedom.

*"Once you go into the building and see this poetry, unless you're a piece of wood, you cannot help but be touched by the experience.... The walls speak to you."
— Felicia Lowe, filmmaker and cultural activist*



Figure 7. Angel Island Poems Carved in Silence.

²¹ The poetic and haunting description of America as a "Land without ghosts" is due to Fei Xiaoton, a University of Chicago trained Chinese sociologist. It is also the title of a book by David Rakish and Leo O. Lee, *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989).

²² Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, p. 6.

IV-C. A Yearning to Recover Family Roots.

As mentioned above, it was on Mother's Day 2006 when the project of creating a documentary about researching one's family history using the San Bruno archives relating to the Angel Island Immigration Station was birthed. When the families were getting together for Mother's Day, I was excited to discover that my cousin Theresa had actually been to the San Bruno archives. Although I had known about the San Bruno archives, I had never had the opportunity to go there myself.



Figure 8. Theresa Ihara at the Chinese School in Locke, California.



Figure 9. Author in Modesto, California at Grave Site of Louie and Yung Shee Mar.

Having worked on a project for the Angel Island Immigration Station foundation since 2000, I called up the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (www.aiisf.org) to update them. While on the phone I found out from educational coordinator Erika Gee that the AIISF was hosting, for the first time, NARA 101, a Family History Day at the National Archives at San Bruno. The facilities would be opened that Saturday as an outreach to the Chinese American community, teaching families how to use the archives to discover their family roots. It turned out that I was driving out to the Bay Area that weekend and so I called my friend and U. C. Berkeley colleague Loni Ding, a Emmy Award-winning PBS documentary filmmaker and executive director of the Center for Educational Telecommunications (www.CETEL.org). I called Loni to see if I could borrow a camera and to get her advice for filming this unique opportunity. Loni Ding has been making history-making documentaries about Asian Americans for over 30 years; for example, her documentary "The Color of Honor: Japanese American Soldiers in World War II" was screened in both houses of Congress in 1988 and is credited with being a critical factor in the passage of the historic 1988 Civil Liberties Act.

After talking to me on the phone for over an hour, Loni called back and said she would cancel her plans for the day and teach me how to shoot. Loni would personally show me how to get the kind of footage needed for a documentary that gave voice to those who are invisible in that history. With Loni's patient and persistent coaxing, Theresa had the encouragement, and freedom, to express why she felt compelled to seek out her family roots. We brought her notebooks of research—with the family trees she had painstakingly created on her computer, copies of original documents, and the file numbers of the family documents that needed to be pulled. The raw materials of her historical research were at hand so Theresa could point to what she had done and how she felt about it. So many circumstances came together serendipitously to make "Like a Family Reunion" possible.

IV-D. Digitally Designing and Disseminating "Like a Family Reunion".

Since this was the very first time this type of workshop had been arranged between the AIISF and NARA, Felicia Lowe, the director of "Carved in Silence", was on hand to welcome the workshop participants. Director of Archival Operations NARA, Daniel Nealand, would be giving an introductory talk in which he mentioned some of the historical highlights to be found within the archives. This was an unexpected convergence of circumstances. How else would we be able to get, in such a short amount of time, the best possible footage shot by the most experienced Asian American documentary filmmaker in the nation and an introductory talk explaining the historical significance of NARA? Moreover, this would be the first time I would be able to see and hold the actual documents relating to my own family history. There was a "healing of nations" for me personally in reconnecting with this family history.

I learned about the craft of documentary filmmaking from observing how Loni Ding patiently elicited from Theresa personal accounts of what she was doing, why she was doing it and, more importantly, how she felt about what she was doing. By giving Theresa the gift of her active listening presence, Loni created a safe space where Theresa's feelings could be honestly expressed. When I reviewed the two 45 minute tapes of footage that Loni had shot, I realized that it was these moments of epiphany that give a documentary its ring of truth.

It took me the next three months to produce the 9 minute and 48 second documentary. The documentary was a special feature on a DVD entitled "*Cinderella and the \$10,000 Haircut*", which was created with the help of friends—video editor, DVD designer, and Master of Fine Arts graduate student Ha Na Lee, Christian musician and composer Chihwei Julie Li, and veteran TV director Dini Diskin-Zimmerman. A grant from Allstate and the Organization of Chinese Americans allowed of the DVD to be distributed at the 14th annual *Conference on Prejudice Reduction* on November 14, 2006 at the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University on Long Island, New York. You can view or download a PodCast of "Like a Family Reunion" at https://podcast.ic.sunysb.edu/weblog/gary_mar/.

IV-E. Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker.

As I was editing "Like a Family Reunion", I was guided by Loni Ding's illuminating advice in "Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker":

Almost all my work has been for television, designed for reaching a mass audience. In doing that, I've made certain assumptions about the audience. I assume, for example, that they carry somewhere in their minds three common misrepresentations of Asian Americans: the common stereotypes of Asians as perpetual foreigner, as resigned, silent victims, and more recently, as successful 'model minorities' who 'contribute to America'. I have tried not to counter these misrepresentations directly, but rather to address the three kinds of stereotypes in my overall project design... to "show the opposite" rather than to 'explain, argue and oppose.'

For the problem of absence, the main work is to create presence. My preferred approach is to displace stereotypes with individual faces, voices, and personal histories that we come to know and care about. They would not be the Americans whose differences are dissolved into the 'melting pot.' But people speaking with the distinctive accents and rhythms of their real individual and family histories; neither looking nor sounding like the 'typical American.'²³

²³ Loni Ding, "Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker," in Russell Long (editor), *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts* (UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Visual Communications, 1991).

Following Loni's advice, I tried to imbue "Like a Family Reunion" with a voice of those who are usually absent from history. Several moments in the documentary stand out to me because they speak the truth. The first moment comes when Theresa describes what it was like to hold the original documents in her hands. "History never meant anything to me until now," she says. "When I first saw the pictures, it was like my family had been waiting here for over 80 years or so, waiting to be rediscovered. No one had come to see who they are. So it was like a family reunion." A second moment occurs when Theresa, after reading portions of the transcript of a demeaning interrogation of Lee Fook Toy, Louie Mar's first wife, objects to the document calling her an "alleged wife". This meant that the interrogators were trying to "trip her up" because Lee Fook Toy was assumed to be "guilty until proven innocent." Rather than accepting the stereotype of her family members as "perpetual foreigners", Theresa instead points out the unfairness they had to endure as American citizens. Putting aside, for the moment, the struggle to have one's citizenship recognized and respected, there was the more basic issue of the struggle for survival. Noticing the unusually high mortality rate of babies in my family lineage, Loni remarked that *my* very existence was something of a miracle. A third moment—and what I regard as the emotional climax of the piece—occurs when Theresa talks about how her great grandfather helped others to bring their families to America: "He was very kind. And that, in itself, considering all that he's gone through, really means a lot to me because adversity didn't change the way he cared about people. That's my kind of person. That's my great grandfather." Rather than countering the hideous caricatures of the Chinese, the documentary paints a portrait of an ordinary hero and provides a "history that can be shared with others."

The voice of history that emerges from "Like a Family Reunion" is, therefore, quite a different one from the Grand Narrative that merely rehearses a litany of discriminatory decrees of officials (e.g., the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Scott Act, the Geary Act, etc.) against a victimized group. Instead, a documentary gives voice to the people who have struggled to attain freedom and dignity—e.g., we can read the poetry about the longing for freedom carved in protest on the walls of Angel Island, we can sense the indignities suffered by relatives from the transcripts of the interrogations based on the assumption that they were liars, we can take pride in the legal victories of the Chinese who pooled their resources to challenge injustices of the American legal system. To omit the stories of these hard-won victories—no matter how fleeting—of America's peoples is to give the false impression that history is only about the official acts of those in power. The struggles of these ordinary Chinese contributed to making America a freer and more democratic nation for all. "Like a Family Reunion" also makes my family history part of American history, and so, in its small way, is part of the remembering and re-visioning of history required for the healing of a nation.

"Like a Family Reunion" is also a leaflet, which reflects, in its small but unique way, the greater light of the Gospel. Isn't there a facet of the Gospel story reflected in the remembrance of a man who generously sacrificed so that others could come to a land of freedom? In the demeaning questions designed to "trip up" his "alleged" wife isolated in an interrogation room on Angel Island, isn't there an echo of Satan's temptation of Christ in the wilderness with the insinuating words "if you are the Son of God..."? And in experiencing a "family reunion" through recovering the life of a grandfather buried in the tomb of government archives, isn't there a reflection of Resurrection Sunday?

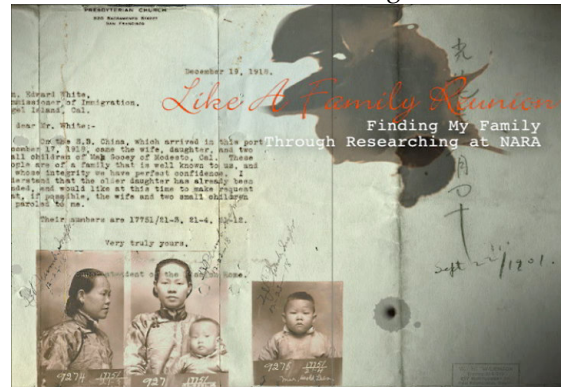


Figure 10. Download a PodCast of "Like a Family Reunion" at https://podcast.ic.sunysb.edu/weblog/gary_mar/.

According to Tolkien, such moments of true joy have “the very taste of primary truth”. The joyous turn around—the “eucatastrophe” in which good emerges out of the darkness of suffering—is true because it reflects the deeper truth of the Son of God entering into the prison of this world, to be interrogated by the Enemy, to die and then to be resurrected. Whereas we human beings tell our stories in words and images, God has told, and is telling, His story in history. As Tolkien puts it, “Legend and History have met and fused.” We should therefore be encouraged to tell our stories even if we think such stories have been told before. Our stories are unique and, if successful, pay homage to the one True Myth. Tolkien writes, “Spring is...not really less beautiful because we have seen or heard of other like events.... Each leaf ... is a unique embodiment of the pattern, and for some this very year may be *the* embodiment, the first ever seen and recognized, though oaks have put forth leaves for countless generations....”²⁴

V. *Angel Island at the Intersection of Histories.*

From 1910-1940, the Angel Island Immigration Station processed about 175,000 Asian Immigrants, and so it is uniquely situated at the intersection of the histories of the United States and China, as well as other Asian nations. A brief history of the history of the Angel Island Immigration State illustrates how the recovery of history can also restore the dignity of a people whose history has been buried in shame.

Recovering the History of Angel Island

- 1940 Angel Island Immigration Station is closed because the Administration building burns to the ground.
- 1943 Congress repeals the Chinese Exclusion Act since China is a U. S. ally in World War II, but the law continues to limit Chinese immigration to 105 persons per year. The station is re-opened to be used as a POW camp by the U. S. military.
- 1963 Angel Island established as a State Park
- 1965 Hart-Cellar Act finally puts Asian immigration on an equal footing with other nations.
- 1970 California State Park Ranger Alexander Weiss rediscovers the Chinese poems carved on the barrack walls and contacts San Francisco State Professor George Araki who, together with photographer Mak Takahashi, spark the interest of the Asian American community.
- 1976 The Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee (AIISHAC) headed by Paul Chow succeeds in lobbying the California State legislature to appropriate \$250,000 to restore and preserve the barracks as a state monument.
- 1983 The barracks are opened to the public and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF) is formed to partner with the California State Parks and the National Park Service to restore the historic immigration station and to educate the public about the role of Pacific Rim immigration in U.S. history.
- 1997 The Angel Island Immigration Station was declared a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.
- 1998 Save America's Treasures, a project of the National Trust and the White House Millennium Council, adopts Angel Island Immigration Station as one of its Official Projects, providing \$500,000 for the preservation of the precious Chinese poems carved into the barracks walls.
- 2000 California voters passed a state bond measure that set aside \$15 million specifically for restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station.
- 2007 The Angel Island Immigration Station is closed for renovations and restoration as a historic site.
- 2010 Centenary celebration of the Angel Island Immigration Station.

²⁴ Tolkien, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

As a result of the Angel Island Immigration Station being such an important historical point of intersection, the archives at NARA, which contains its paperwork, contain some historically significant files. In the documentary, we highlight the following:

- *Wong Kim Ark*, of the famous Supreme court challenge *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898), which ruled that the 14th Amendment applied to all born in the U.S. "regardless of race or color";
- *Sun Yat-sen* (1866-1925), First President of Republic of China (1912), who had come to Hawaii where he became a Christian at the Anglican school and who posed for many years as an American citizen to raise funds for China;
- *Quok Shee*, perhaps the longest detainee on Angel Island (September 1916-August 1918);
- *Japanese "Picture Brides"* (1908-1924) allowed by the Gentleman's Agreement;
- *Punjabi Sikhs* in California (1907-1917) who provoked nativist fears of the "Turban Tide";
- *An Ch'angho* (1878-1938), Father of Korean Constitutional Democracy.

It is clear from this small sampling that the histories of the United State and China, as well as other Asian nations, intersect in quite an unique way at Angel Island, providing a rich historical resource for the "healing of nations."

V-A. The Healing of U.S.-China Relations.

The healing of Sino-American relations in today's world is of increasing urgency in light of three factors: (1) China's ascendancy as a rival global economic power to the U.S., (2) the conflicted history of U. S. indirect confrontations with China in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and now through the "war on terrorism", and (3) the exponential growth of an indigenous Christianity in China after a tarnished history of Christianity's association with Western imperialism.

In his remarkably revealing book *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*, former *Time* Magazine bureau chief David Aikman has boldly speculated:

Christianity will change the nature of China... and in doing so will change the world in which we live. China's moment of its greatest achievement...may lie just ahead. That moment may occur when the Chinese dragon is tamed by the power of the Christian lamb. The process may have already started in the hopes and works of China's house church leaders.²⁵

The Angel Island Immigration Station is at the intersection of two histories—American labor and immigration history and the history of U.S. foreign policy with respect to China and Asia more generally.

V-B. Confronting the Problem of Absence by Creating Presence.

As Loni Ding noted above, recovering Chinese American history is confronted with the problem of absence. Indeed, Chinese enter into American history by images of absence, even though their presence through their technological and agricultural achievements was absolutely crucial to U. S. emergence as a world power.

²⁵ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*, Regnery Publishing: Washington, DC, 2003, p. 292.

When I began writing this essay, I was in Sacramento, the first Chinese American city, known by the Chinese as *Yee Fow*. An article in the *Sacramento Bee* (March 8th, 2007) raised the issue of whether a Chinese railway yard deserved to be recognized and preserved. This railway yard was the western terminal for the Central Pacific Railroad. Although today many Americans know that Chinese laborers were involved in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, that is, sadly, about the only fact they know about Chinese American history. Not many know that about 12,000 Chinese workers, about 90% of the workforce of the Central Pacific Railroad were Chinese. Furthermore, the Chinese not only provided the collective muscle, but also the technological know-how to work with blasting-powder and to dig tunnels through solid granite.

- ### Sacramento History
- Sacramento valley was originally inhabited by the Nisenan, a branch of the Shasta, who lived in the valley for 10,000 years before white settlers arrived.
 - 1806 Spanish Lieutenant O'Neil Moraga, the first European to visit the valley, discovers the New World (the Sacramento and American) which they name the "King of All" and the "Sacramento" which is Spanish for "Sweet Sacramento".
 - 1825: An epidemic of smallpox kills about 20,000 Native Americans; the remaining population is too small to resist future expansion into the valley.
 - 1829: Captain John Augustus Sutter arrives at the land grant on the western shore to establish the colony of New Helvetia (present day Sacramento).
 - 1841 Sutter begins building fort using Native American labor; Sutter and Fort Bidwell's Sutter for 50,000 overland wagon trains to Sacramento—Boonville and Chico are established.
 - 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; James W. Wadsworth discovers gold.
 - 1849: Gold Rush—Sutter is named financially.
 - 1849: 1853 Roads, 1852 fire.
 - 1850: Sacramento becomes the first incorporated city.
 - 1854: Sacramento becomes the capital of California, paying the state \$1 million.
 - 1855: Collier Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker and Leabard Stanford financially back the Sacramento Valley Railroad.
 - 1869: Central Pacific Railroad joined east and west coasts—taking a 6-month trip into 9 days.
 - 1880: 1890-1910: Agriculture starts to become Sacramento's most profitable industry.

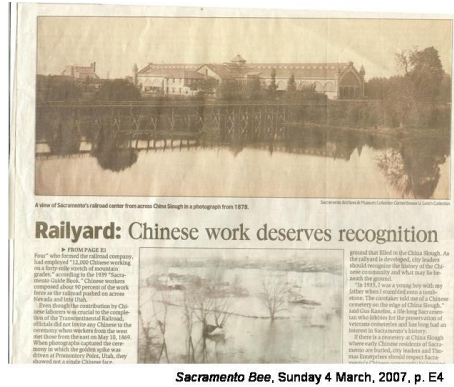
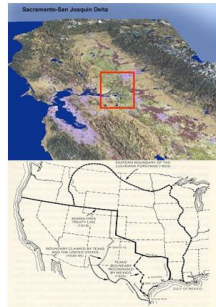


Figure 11. Chinese Contributions to Sacramento ("Yee Fow") History.

Most history books now include the historic photo of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Point on May 10, 1869. What is significant about the photo, the textbooks comment, is that not one Chinese face is to be seen. The presence of Chinese in American history is, ironically, represented by their conspicuous absence.



Figure 12. Chinese Enter into American History Through Images of Absence: Promontory Point, May 1869.

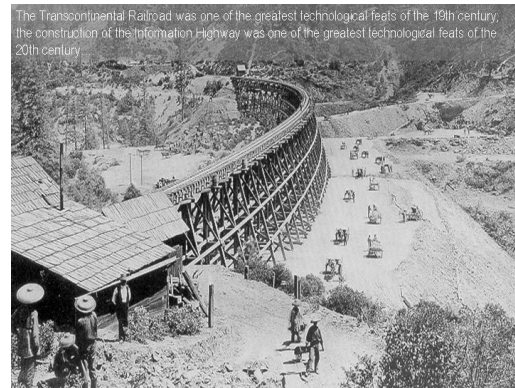


Figure 13. Chinese Labor & Technology Created Prosperity for the U.S. in the Second Halves 19th & 20th Centuries.

As Ling-chi Wang points out, in the second half of the 19th century and also the 20th century, Chinese Americans completed technological achievements—the Transcontinental Railroad and the Information Highway, respectively, that created great wealth for America and in both instances, they were repaid with racism—racial exclusion in the 19th century and racial profiling in the 20th. How did Chinese come to America in the first place? From 1849 Gold Rush to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, over 300,000 Chinese entered the United States. While initially their labor for developing the

Frontier West was welcomed, their reception turned decidedly hostile by 1852 when 20,000 Chinese immigrants arrived. Imbued with a sense of Manifest Destiny and white supremacy, Americans felt justified in engaging in racial discrimination and class exploitation. The Chinese were viewed as unfair labor competition, racial inferiors, and, in the words of the satirical Bret Harte poem, as 'heathen Chinese'. Moreover, discrimination was institutionally protected with the passage of such laws as the Foreign Miner's Tax (1852) and *People v. Hall* (1854), which reversed the conviction of George Hall for murdering a Chinese man, Ling Sing, on the grounds that the Chinese were non-whites along with Indians, Negroes, and Mulattoes and so were banned from testifying in a court of law.

Stripped of legal protections, the Chinese were victims of hate crimes such as the Rock Springs Massacre (1885) and the Los Angeles attack on the Chinese community (1871). Shortly after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, the United States reneged on the Burlingame Treaty with China (1868) which recognized the "Chinese subjects visiting or residing in the United States, shall enjoy the same privileges, immunities, and exceptions in respect to travel or residence, as may be enjoyed by the citizens of subjects of the most favored nation", but which, at the same time, denied Chinese naturalization rights.

V-C. Dispelling Stereotypes of Chinese by Discovering Chinese Gold.

The stereotype of the Chinese as the "perpetual foreigner" was created in part to rationalize blatantly racist and discriminatory laws. If, unlike other immigrants, the Chinese were not settlers, but mere "sojourners" who came to steal America's wealth and to send it home to China, then their exclusion could be justified. However, research shows that the return rates of Chinese immigrants was no different from other immigrant groups. If these sojourners who were submissive, passive people who would not resist the legal and physical harassment, they could be harassed with impunity. Yet there is a long and noble tradition of Chinese banding together to fight injustice. While it is true that the Chinese called America "Gold Mountain" and that were lured to the frontier west, as were many others groups, by dreams of wealth, the stereotype of the perpetual foreigner, was motivated by envy, greed, and guilt. Moreover, the stereotype was not merely false, but quite the opposite of what was true.

- The Chinese did not merely come to America to steal her wealth for many were settlers. However, Californians did unfairly extort the wealth created by the hard work of the Chinese. In 1852 California enacted the Foreign Miner's Tax, which was collected primarily from the Chinese. Until its repeal in 1870, the tax accounted for \$5 million, a sum representing between 25% to 50% of the entire state's revenue.
- The Chinese were settlers. The Chinese established many industries that built the American West. The Chinese of Sacramento — and the associated farming townships Courtland, Locke, and Walnut Grove—had come from the Pearl River Delta in China and realized that the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta despite its frequent-flooding cycle, could be made into productive farmland. Working collaboratively, the Chinese reclaimed over 88,000 acres

Legacy of Asian Exclusion and Legal Resistance

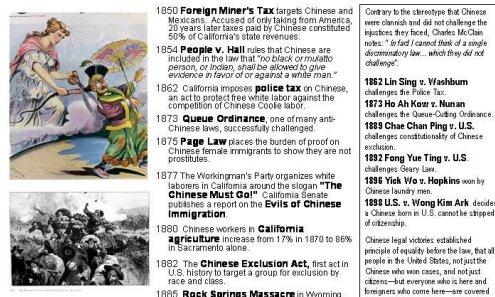


Figure 14. Chinese Struggles for Justice Made America a Freer and More Democratic Nation for All.

creating what would become the richest farmland on the planet. The Chinese in Monterey at Point Alones established fishing industries, still profitable today, based on seafood that had been previously ignored.

- The Chinese were not passive, but collectively challenged over 160 laws they regarded as unfair. Professor Charles McClain of the Boalt School of Law in Berkeley, has documented the profound impact of Chinese legal protests on the development of Constitutional Law. McClain comments, "In fact, I would say it's hard to think of a single discriminatory law, a law perceived by the Chinese as discriminatory, that they did not challenge in court." Famous legal precedents were the result of Chinese protests in such cases as *Tape vs. Hurley* (1885), which preceded *Brown vs. the Board of Education* and in which the California Supreme Court held that Chinese children should be admitted in public schools. *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* (1885) prohibited discrimination against Chinese laundryman, and *Wong Kim Ark vs. U. S.* (1898) decided that Chinese born in the U. S. could not be stripped of their citizenship. The Chinese—through their active participation in a legal system which did not exist in China—made America a freer and more democratic nation for all.

To sum up, the Chinese provided the ingenuity and muscle for the mines, railroad lines, farmlands, fisheries and factories that built the Frontier West. According to Sandy Lydon, it was the Chinese who created the "Chinese Gold" that made possible the great wealth of Americans:

Perhaps the greatest contribution the Chinese made... was the gift of vision—the ability to see potential value in the most mundane creatures, crops, and discarded items. The Chinese worked the edges, taking fish heads, mustard, sea urchins, culled apples, and willow swamps and elevating them from the status of waste products to healthy peripheral industries. More often than not, bemused white observers usually followed suit and copied what the Chinese did... Through their particular form of alchemy (insight plus ingenuity plus energy), the Chinese turned what they found into gold....²⁶

V-D. Some Episodes in the History of Christian Missions in China.

While the Chinese were stereotyped as sojourners who came to "Gold Mountain" to steal her wealth, it was the Western colonial powers that originally sought a route to the Orient to obtain her teas, silks, and exotic export goods. Columbus was seeking a passage to India and the Orient when he inadvertently named the Native Americans "Indians".

The third wave of Christian missions in China (1807-1949) was carried on by the Protestant Christian missionaries. In 1807 Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society arrived in Macao. Morrison translated the New Testament by 1813 and the Old Testament by 1819, but his effectiveness was compromised by his association with the British East India Company, which had encouraged the growing of opium in India to raise money from trade with China. Another Protestant missionary Charles Gutzlaff was employed by Jardine Matheson, a major British company involved in pushing opium.

The British smuggled illegal opium grown in India into China, and when the Chinese confiscated and burned the illegal opium because of its deleterious effects on society, the British used this pretext for waging the First Opium War (1839-42). This war ended in the humiliating Treaty of Nanking (京條約,

²⁶ Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, p. 504.

Nánjīng Tiáoyuē) in 1842. The U. S. followed suit with the Treaty of Wanghia (中美望廈條約) in 1844. These treaties gave Western powers Treaty Ports, a base to force open China to foreign trade and much more. The doctrine of extraterritoriality at the Treaty Ports—Hong Kong, Canton (Guangzhou), Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai—gave the Western powers legal immunity to engage in the Coolie Trade, a demeaning practice known by the Chinese as the “buying and selling of pigs”.

Asian Indian and Chinese coolies were exported around the world, as replacements for enslaved Africans. One impetus for the Coolie Trade was the ending of British participation in the slave trade due to the reforms of Christian activist William Wilberforce. The British parliament passed the slavery abolition act in 1833, a month after the death of Wilberforce in 1833. (The feature film “Amazing Grace” was released in 2007 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the date the Parliament of the United Kingdom voted to ban the transport of slaves by British subjects.)

One of the darkest chapters of Christian missions in China is the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) roughly contemporaneous with the American Civil War, in which its leader Hong Xiuquan declared himself to be the younger brother of Jesus. The Taiping Rebellion had its origins in missionary activity of William Milne who baptized a Chinese printer Liang Fa, who in turn, passed on a tract to Hong Xiuquan. Hong Xiuquan, after failing his examinations for entry into the scholar-gentry class, began to have dreams and visions that led him to believe he had been chosen to cleanse China of its corruption and overthrow the Qing dynasty. In 1854 Hong initiated the “Society of God-Worshippers” and some Christian missionaries initially hoped that Hong would be a welcomed reformer as he ignited a rebellion against Empress Dowager Ci Xi. The Taiping Rebellion resulted in the deaths of 20 million Chinese before it was finally suppressed with the help of Western military advisors eager to uphold their investments in the corrupt Qing Dynasty.



Figure 15. How the 1773 Boston Tea Party was Related to the Turn Over of Hong Kong in 1997.

Protestantism & Anti-Foreigner Rebellions

1807 Robert Morrison of London Missionary Society begins Protestant Missions

1831-1839 The First Opium War—Missionaries associated with colonialism taints the gospel message

1842 Treaty of Nanking—an unequal treaty leading to extraterritoriality in the Treaty Ports like Hong Kong, Coolie Trade

1850-64 (contemporaneous with American Civil War) Taiping Rebellion led by Hong Xiuquan, who claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus, 20 million Chinese died

1865 Hudson Taylor founds China Inland Missions (CIM)

1900 Boxer Rebellion results in death of 230 Western Missionaries—79 of whom were from CIM. Birth of Wang Mingdao, John Sung, Watchman Nee

"Should I have a thousand pounds, China can take them all, should I have a thousand lives, I would not spare one note to give to China."

Figure 16. History of Protestant Missions in China.

Meanwhile, during the early years of the Taiping Rebellion, Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) arrived in Shanghai at the age of 21. At his birth, Hudson Taylor’s parents had prayed “grant that he may work for you in China.” Taylor was inspired by a vision to take Christianity well beyond the boundaries of the Treaty Ports deep into the heart of inland China. Hudson Taylor founded Chinese Inland Missions (CIM), and he gained a reputation for his love for the Chinese people which he had shown in building schools and hospitals. By 1895, CIM’s outreach had grown to 641 missionaries. However, China’s humiliation and forced exposure to the Western abuse ignited anti-Western outbreaks.

One of the most significant anti-foreign events occurred at the beginning of the 20th century was the Boxer Rebellion (1900) which resulted in 230 Western missionaries killed—189 of whom were Protestants, and 79 of whom were from CIM. The Boxer Rebellion was suppressed by eight foreign powers. Hudson Taylor rejected any compensation from China for the lives and properties of missionaries working under the auspices of CIM and wrote an article in which he proclaimed, “Should I have a thousand pounds,

China can claim them all; should I have a thousand lives, I would not spare one not to give to China." This was only the tip of the iceberg. Below the surface of these tumultuous historical events, there was born, during the Boxer Rebellion, three mighty men who would become the Patriarchs of the 20th century Christian Church in China--John Song (or Sung, 宋尚節), Wang Mingdao (王明道), and Watchman Nee (倪柝聲).

In 1911 Sun Yat-sen and his followers finally overthrew the corrupt Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China, for which he is still honored by both Communists and Nationalists. Born in Guangdong Province in 1866, Sun Yat-sen had become a Christian while attending an Anglican school in Hawai'i in 1879. Sun Yat-sen's file, as noted above, is contained in the NARA files in San Bruno.

Indigenous Christianity in China

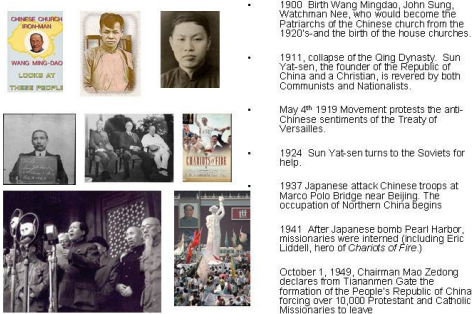


Figure 17. How Indigenous Christianity in China was Birthed During the Boxer Rebellion.

In 1924 Sun Yat-sen turned to the Soviets for aid and formed a United Front with the Chinese Communist Party. In the 1920s and 1930s, John Song (also known as John Sung Shang Chieh) played a key role as an evangelist in revival movements on the Chinese in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, Wang Mingdao founded the *Christian Tabernacle* in Peking, and Watchman Nee, who became a Christian in 1920 and who was profoundly influenced by the British missionary Miss M. E. Barber, wrote influential books on the extraordinary "normal" Christian life.

When Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek, who was baptized a Christian in 1930, became commander-in-chief. The Sino-Japanese war broke out at Marco Polo bridge in 1937, the same year Wang Mingdao dedicated his *Christian Tabernacle* in Peking on August 1, 1937. This was about one week before the invading Japanese army marched full force into the city; however, Wang Mingdao's inflexible staunch independence from foreign missions organizations earned the secret respect of the Japanese occupiers. By 1941 when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, most missionaries in Japanese-controlled China had been evacuated or interned (among those interned was Eric Liddell, whose life was portrayed in the film *Chariots of Fire*).

Missionaries were allowed to return to China after the Japanese surrendered in 1945, and the next years of civil conflict were characterized by economic inflation, social chaos, and government corruption. The bitter and open civil conflict between the Nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist forces led by Mao Zedong was temporarily resolved in 1949.

On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong stood on the Gate of Heavenly Peace, Tiananmen, and declared, "China has stood up!", establishing the People's Republic of China. Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan which became the home of the National Republic of China. About 10,000 Protestant and Catholic missionaries were forced to leave China.

In 1950 China formed an alliance with the Soviets, and, the same year, the United States entered into the Korean War against China. Wanting to control and infiltrate Christian churches in China, the Communist government established the puppet Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), which co-opted

In the May 4th Movement in 1919, another notable anti-Western outbreak, 300,000 students and intellectuals, demanded the national independence and territorial integrity of China. This outbreak was a response to the Treaty of Versailles (1919) which gave formerly German-controlled parts of China to the Japanese, who were hated by the Chinese as occupiers.

Mao Zedong's Communist Party was formed in 1921. At this time the United States was still enacting discriminatory anti-Chinese legislation; for example the Cable Act (1922) stipulated that any American female citizen marrying a Chinese male non-citizen would lose her citizenship and the Immigration Act of 1924, excluded all "aliens ineligible to citizenship" including the Chinese wives of citizens.

Wang Mingdao's principles of self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance. Any church in China associated with American Christians was in danger of being persecuted as "a running dog of imperialism." In 1955 Wang Mingdao was imprisoned for his staunch independence and refusing to be associated with the TSPM Movement.²⁷

²⁷ Today is a few days after Ruth Bell Graham's death on June 14th, 2007. An example of a historical meeting at which there was a "healing of nations" occurs in her biography *A Time of Remembrance: The Ruth Bell Graham Story* by Patricia Daniels Cornwell (Harper and Row: New York, 1983, p. 7.). This biography recounts an intriguing 1980 meeting with an unnamed "Chinese pastor who had been imprisoned for 22 years and his wife who had spent 15 years in another camp." Who was this Chinese pastor? Why does he remain unnamed? Why was this meeting so historic?

Ruth Bell was born on June 10, 1920 in Qingjiang, Kiangsu, China, the daughter of medical missionaries Lemuel Nelson and Virginia Leftwich Bell. Lemuel (whose Hebrew name means "belonging to God") was also known by the Chinese people as "Chong Ai Hua" or the Bell who is lover of the Chinese people" was a medical missionary at Tsingkiang General Hospital in North Kiangsu. This 170 bed hospital was founded in 1894 by a mission established by Absalom Sydenstricker, the father of Pearl Buck, the author of *The Good Earth* (1931) who would become the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in literature (1938). Caught up in the enthusiasm of Dwight L. Moody's 1886 Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Nelson changed his study from law to medicine and later gave up a career in professional baseball to fulfill his dream to become a medical missionary in China. He had heard stories from his mother's missionary friend of China, "a land of mystery on the dark side of the world, polarized by squalor and opulence where few Westerners had tread, save importers of opium and Christianity" (Cornwell, p. 7). Ruth attended high school in Pyongyang, (now North) Korea. She first came to the United States at the age of 7, while her parents were on furlough, but returned at the age of 17 to attend Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, where she met and eventually married Bill Graham in 1943.

Now the unnamed pastor in Ruth's biography was undoubtedly Wang Mingdao, the "Nelson Mandela" of the indigenous, independent Chinese church. Wang Ming-dao was arrested in 1955 for refusing to be associated with the TSPM. In 1956, after signing a confession and promising to cooperate with the TSPM, he was released. However, he was tormented and went around confessing, "I am Peter!" Then in 1958 he, and his wife, were arrested again. Wang Mingdao was imprisoned for 22 long years, and his wife was imprisoned for 15. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1971), he was handcuffed for months and beaten daily. His uncompromising witness helped to ignite and inspire the independent house church movement in China. James Hudson Taylor III, grandson of Hudson Taylor, has said of him: "No Christian Chinese leader in the twentieth century has more clearly articulated the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ or poignantly experiences what the Apostle Paul described as the 'fellowship of sharing in his sufferings'." (David Aikman, p. 56).

Ruth had unsuccessfully petitioning the Chinese government for this meeting for months before it was finally arranged as a personal favor to Billy Graham by President Nixon, who had taken the historic step of formally normalizing relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1972. Perhaps a condition of the arranged meeting was that the name of this dissenting Chinese Pastor would not be disclosed.

When Ruth first called at the apartment of the Chinese pastor and his wife, there was no answer. Ruth was disappointed and prayed, "You know I needed to see them. I need to learn from them. We who have never been through what they have been through need to hear how You supported them—it may help prepare us for what lies ahead." Then words floated through her mind: "Look to the Rock from whence ye were hewn", which Ruth interpreted as the Lord telling her to look to Him for support in the time of testing ahead. When Ruth returned to the apartment several hours later, her desire was to go "not in order to get, but to give." A "thin, balding man who squinted ... his eyes almost blind with cataracts" answered the door and there began the time of "healing of nations."

As Ruth was about to leave, the Chinese pastor confessed, "Once ... your father invited me to Tsiangking to hold meetings for the hospital staff and the patients who could walk and the families of patients." Then he apologized, "I was too busy." Ruth replied, "That's understandable."

This meeting, therefore, is another example of God working behind the headlines of history to accomplish the "healing of nations." Ruth wrote about this meeting in her journals: "There was no bitterness or complaining, no hatred for the perpetrators of their suffering. They were at peace. They were grateful to God, not because He had

In 1971 the United Nations recognized the People’s Republic of China and unseated Chiang Kai-shek’s Republic of China. President Nixon’s 1972 visit to China began the process of restoring diplomatic relations, which occurred in 1979. Mao’s communist regime, like the Roman Empire in Biblical times, instituted sweeping reforms that greatly aided spread of the gospel. For example, Mao’s introduction of



Jonathan Spence: “Tiananmen Square, where so many of the impassioned events of the spring of 1989 unfolded, is the most emotionally and historically charged urban space in China. Tiananmen, itself—the Gate of Heavenly Peace—is of great antiquity and great beauty. It is at once the entryway into the inner vastness of the Forbidden City, the exit from that imperial and bureaucratic world into the zones of public space and revolutionary memory. In the ninety-acre square in front of it stand the massive monument to China’s revolution martyrs and the mausoleum honoring the embalmed remains of Mao Zedong. On either side of the square see the huge buildings that house the National People’s Congress and the museums of revolutionary history. To the east and west run some of Beijing’s busiest boulevards, with their government offices and big hotels, and off these arteries lie a maze of narrower streets and alleys filled with the hubbub of stores and small restaurants. To create a rough parallel in modern American life, one might imagine Times Square in New York expanded to a space of ten city blocks long and four wide, with the White House at the northern end and the Lincoln Memorial at the southern end.”

simplified Chinese character, while making older classic texts inaccessible to modern Chinese, nevertheless allowed for the Chinese Bible to be printed in one language, and the communal communist meetings in which citizens were force to confess their sins against the state, set the social pattern for Christian confession and repentance. These turbulent and sweeping social upheavals set the stage for the tremendous growth of indigenous Christianity among the rural population. The government’s suppression of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement in 1989 by turning tanks against her youth was a turning point for many disillusioned intellectuals to explore Christianity.

Figure 18. Tiananmen Square In Chinese History. According to David Aikman, the contemporary House Church Movement in China was influenced by missionary Dennis Balcombe, who in 1988 began to infuse into the Chinese home churches a Pentecostal style of worship characterized by an emphasis on healings and miracles, and a fervent zeal for evangelism. Today, the underground church in China consists of four major networks—(1) the Fengcheng Church in Henan Province, known as the “Bethlehem” or “Antioch” of the movement shepherded by Li Tianen in the 1970s and “Uncle” Zhang Rongliang in the 1980s; (2) the Tanghe (“China Gospel”) Fellowship shepherded by senior leader Feng Jingao and Xing Liaoyuan, an “uncle in the making”; (3) the Born Again (“Word of Life”) Movement led by Xu Yongze and Peter Xu; and (4) in Anhui Province, two branches based in Lixin and Yinshang. Sensing the need to come together with a common statement of faith, the House Church leaders met together in 1998 to hammer out, with the assistance of seminary professor Jonathan Chu, a common “Confession of Faith.”

According to David Aikman, the contemporary House Church Movement in China was influenced by missionary Dennis Balcombe, who in 1988 began to infuse into the Chinese home churches a Pentecostal style of worship characterized by an emphasis on healings and miracles, and a fervent zeal for evangelism. Today, the underground church in China consists of four major networks—(1) the Fengcheng Church in Henan Province, known as the “Bethlehem” or “Antioch” of the movement shepherded by Li Tianen in the 1970s and “Uncle” Zhang Rongliang in the 1980s; (2) the Tanghe (“China Gospel”) Fellowship shepherded by senior leader Feng Jingao and Xing Liaoyuan, an “uncle in the making”; (3) the Born Again (“Word of Life”) Movement led by Xu Yongze and Peter Xu; and (4) in Anhui Province, two branches based in Lixin and Yinshang. Sensing the need to come together with a common statement of faith, the House Church leaders met together in 1998 to hammer out, with the assistance of seminary professor Jonathan Chu, a common “Confession of Faith.”

House Church Movement



- 1988 Dennis Balcombe (Pentecostal)
- Fangcheng Church (Henan Province)—“Bethlehem of the Movement”
 - Li Tianen (1970)
 - “Uncle” Zhang Rongliang (1980s)
- Tanghe (“China Gospel”) Fellowship,
 - Feng Jingao—senior leader
 - Xing Liaoyuan—“Uncle in the making”
- Born Again (“Word of Life”) Movement
 - Xu Yongze
 - Peter Xu
- Anhui Province—Lixin and Yinshang
- 1998 “Confession of Faith”—authored with Jonathan Chao

Figure 19. The House Church Movement in China.

Today the vision of taking the Gospel “Back to Jerusalem” inspires many Chinese Christians. Originally given to Jing Dianying’s “Jesus Family” in Shangdong Province in the 1920s, the “Back to Jerusalem” vision has spread among the house church movement in China. The gospel first came to China along the Silk Road from modern day Iraq by the Nestorians in A. D. 635, and the “Back to Jerusalem” movement wants to take the gospel back along this same road, witnessing to Buddhists, Hindus, and especially Muslims. The goal of raising 100,000 Chinese Christians to return along the Silk Road by the year 2007 was to coincide with the 200th anniversary Protestant missions in China initiated with the ministry of Robert Morrison in 1807. Taking the gospel back to Jerusalem will symbolically complete the spread of the Gospel around the world. According to the pre-millennialist interpretation of Matthew 24:14 (*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations,*

shielded them from pain, not because he had prevented the loss of their human rights and for a while even the loss of each other, but because He had given them the strength to bear it all.” (Cornwell, p. 261).

and then the end will come."), this final trek will initiate the end of history. Zhang Rongliang, one of the best known "uncles" and senior leader of the Fengcheng House Church Fellowship explains:

It was the Apostle Paul who took the Gospel to Europe and now, after 2,000 years, it has come to China. When the disciples left Jerusalem to go toward East Asia and Europe, they were only a few people. They went barefoot. Now the Gospel has reached China and we have several Christian networks. We believe that now the Gospel has reached China, it will follow the Silk Road back to Jerusalem. Once the Gospel comes back to Jerusalem, it will mean that the Gospel has been preached to the whole world.... The Muslim religion is the biggest obstacle on the road back to Jerusalem.²⁸

Mark Ma is vice-principal of the Northwest Bible Institutes in Fengxiang, Shaanix Province, under principal James Hudson Taylor III, grandson of Hudson Taylor. In prayer, Mark complained that the Silk Road "is under the power of Islam and the Mohammedans are the hardest of all peoples to reach with the Gospel." In prayer Mark Ma says he heard God reply: "Even you Chinese, yourself included, are hard enough, but you have been conquered by the Gospel.... I have kept for the Chinese Church a portion of the inheritance; otherwise, when I return, will you not be too poor?"²⁹

The history of Angel Island, therefore, reaches back into the intertwined histories of the United States and China—a history which is a rich source of prayers for identificational repentance. Perhaps our family history will be further connected with these histories as Theresa returns to China in July 2007 to teach at an English camp.

V-E. Katharine Maurer, the "Angel of Angel Island".

I returned to California during a sabbatical in the spring semester of 2007. A second trip out to Angel



Figure 20. Katharine Maurer, the "Angel of Angel Island".

I returned to California during a sabbatical in the spring semester of 2007. A second trip out to Angel Island turned out to be a day in which docents were being given a tour by Daniel Quan, the architect in charge of the historic restoration of the facilities. Some of the docents in training who were on the tour talked about Katharine R. Maurer, known as the "Angel of Angel Island". Born in Canada the year before the Chinese Exclusion Act, Katharine felt a call to global missions. In 1912 Miss Maurer was appointed by Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Church to serve as Deaconess with the United States Immigration Service on Angel Island. In this occupation she spent 40 years of continuous service and retired on June 11, 1951. She died in San Francisco, June 24, 1962.

²⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*, Regnery Publishing: Washington, DC, 2003, p. 203.

²⁹ Aikman, *op. cit.*, p. 198

was ushered into a special reading room, and I wondered what I would find here below sea level of the iceberg of history. Was the "Angel of Angel Island" motivated by a desire for the "healing of nations"?

As I opened the box and the first folder in the file, a handwritten scripture passage in a plastic sleeve slipped out of the folder with a note on the back saying it had fallen out of its proper place in the files. There were other handwritten notes in the files containing quotations and poems, but this particular note contained a scripture verse:

Luke 21:14-15. *"Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."*

In her quiet way, Katharine Maurer had been able to open the hearts of the officials at the immigration station with her years of ceaseless service and selfless acts of charity. As a result of her witness, when she talked officials listened. Leafing through the files, it was clear that Katharine Maurer viewed her ministry from the "Great Commission" perspective of the global missions:

"I've always spoken of this as a world parish. I like to think of my work in retrospect as candles being lighted all over the world, maybe dimly, but candles that were lighted by inspiration."

Also in these files were testimonies by Chinese pastors. Some had gotten their start through working with Katharine and then went on to pastor their own congregations in the Oakland-San Francisco area. One pastor described how children of former detainees would stop playing and call out greetings to Miss Maurer as she walked through the streets of San Francisco Chinatown, a testimony to the esteem in which she was held by the Chinese American community. As I spent the next few days reading the file, I felt as if I had a glimpse of God's working in history, a bright candle light shining in the darkness of Angel Island's legacy of discriminatory interrogation and detention of Chinese immigrants.

VI. Epilogue: An Enacted Parable.

This essay has been an extended meditation on a sacred metaphor: the enduring Tree of Life which occupies a central place in the paradise of Eden and also in the second paradise of Revelations 22:2. We have explored what Scripture means when it records that *"the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations"*. We have suggested that the theological trunk or basis for the "healing of nations" is the prayer of identificational repentance. Nations or "people groups" are natural and necessary units of reconciliation because of the history of the world's sins have been nation against nation, or people group against people group. We then argued that if prayers of identificational repentance are to be based on truth and social justice, intercessors must recover knowledge of the historical roots of wounding and resentment that have been barriers to reconciliation between nations.

"Like a Family Reunion" is an example of how a digital documentary—when combined with the strategies of Asian American documentary filmmaking—can become an effective gospel track or leaflet playing its part in carrying out the Great Commission. The healing of memory through the recovery of family history can be part of a larger project of the "healing of nations". Local history, when placed in the context of God's work below the surface events of history, is connected to global history and so to the task of carrying out the Great Commission.

As I was seeking an ending for this article, I stopped by, as is my weekly routine, to bake bread with Brother Clark Berge, Society of Saint Francis (SSF). Brother Clark is the Guardian of Little Portion Friary in Mount Sinai, New York and also the Assistant Minister Provincial of the Province of the Americas.

Baking bread is a way of making grocery money for the brothers, but Brother Clark also bakes for its creativity, its camaraderie, but also for its comfort, having baked since the age of eleven. This particular week—and for the next month—I was able to talk with Noel Nikki and Patteson Kwa'ai, SSF brothers in the Church of Melanesia, the Anglican Church in the Solomon Islands. They told me their own story about the "healing of nations" in Melanesia and Guadalcanal.

In the Solomon Islands, the Franciscan Brothers, the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Sisters of the Church, and the Sisters of Melanesia were able to stop a war. Camping in a trench in the no man's land between the warring ethnic groups of Malaita and Guadalcanal for four years, the religious communities offered mass, heard confessions, and prayed for peace. During the cessation of hostilities, these Brothers were eventually able to diffuse the false stories and suspicion, negotiate the release of hostages, and pray for the healing of memories. According to reports of the atrocities, one Melanesian said, "I could not forgive what I had seen. I felt unable to eat and tried to forget so I could feel peaceful again. My whole body felt sick at the terrible evil things I had seen done to another person." An article given to me by Brother Patteson delineates some practical points in the ministry of the healing of nations.³⁰

- *Indigenous Spiritual Reconcilers with Integrity:* The success of the peacemaker depends on the role being honored and respected by the community. The peacemaker belongs to the people; the peacemaker must have an indigenous record and history, and the reconcilers themselves must be reconciled.
- *Acknowledging History and Personal Accountability:* The religious communities acknowledged, and did not try to diminish, the impact of war on the lives of people. On the other hand, the religious communities also emphasized personal accountability. Everyone has a choice. Brother Noel commented, "A turning point for reconciliation happened when the people realized that, despite the injustice of the deep wounds inflicted upon them, the hating and killing their brothers and sisters were deeply displeasing to God. They realized that true peace and love comes from God alone."
- *Communicating Through Words and Symbolic Actions:* The peacemakers communicated not just through words but also through symbolic action. Presiding on Pentecost 2002 over the disarmament process, the Franciscan and Melanesian Brotherhood eventually collected the rifles that had been used for killing, including the guns held illegally by the police force, broke them and threw them into the sea so they would rust and never be used again.

On Good Friday April 6, 2007 I turned down an invitation to have dinner with Loni Ding in New York in order to attend a candle light procession in Farmingville, New York with Brother Clark and Noel Nikki. The small suburban town of Farmingville on Long Island was catapulted into national headlines with the shocking hate-based attempted murders of two Mexican day laborers. *Farmingville* (2004) by Carlos Sandoval and Catherine Tambini was also a P.O.V. documentary aired on PBS. The candle light procession on Good Friday would be with members of *Human Solidarity*, an organization representing over 400 Latino Migrant workers.

It was a very cold night and the Good Friday procession would stop along the way to observe the Stations of the Cross as one of the workers would wear a crown of thorns and carry a heavy eight foot wooden cross. As the Stations of the Cross were commemorated in both English and Spanish, I looked

³⁰ "Lessons learnt from indigenous methods of peace-making in Solomon Islands with particular reference to the role of the Melanesian Brotherhood and the Religious Communities". The author's name is missing, but the paper was delivered at the *Melanesian Contextual Theology Conference*, August 19th-26th.

out into the gathering to see the warm glow of the candle-lit faces of immigrant workers. Perhaps this was a glimpse of the end of history when people from all tribes and nations will be worshipping together.



Figure 21. Brothers Clark Berge, Noel Nikki, Pateson Kwa'a at *Little Portion Friary* in front of a Watanabe's *“The Last Supper”*.

This essay began with Watanabe's print of *“The Angel Ascends from the Rising Sun”* in which there is a picture of the Tree of Life. Watanabe's work is to be found in collections from the Vatican to the White House, and I had even taken a slide of the former print to illustrate a talk given in 1995 at the University of Peking (*Beida*). However, I had never seen a Watanabe print in person until I saw the Watanabe's print of *“The Last Supper”*, which is in the above photo of the Brothers at Little Portion Friary. These prints can serve as bookends to an enacted parable—a parable that begins with a vision of the Tree of Life and ends in symbolic solidarity that brings us into contact some of the most profound mysteries of the Christian faith—the power of the cross and communion, the meaning of history, and the healing of nations.

Professor Gary Mar
 Department of Philosophy
 Stony Brook University
 Stony Brook, New York 11794-3750
gmar@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Table of Figures.

Figure 1. Sadao Watanabe's "The Angel Ascends from the Rising Sun" 0
 Figure 2. Bishop Tutu on Restorative Justice 4
 Figure 3. The “Divine Tailor” or Interventionist Model of God’s Relation to Human History 8
 Figure 4. The “Divine Iceberg” or Sacramental Model of God’s Relation to Human History..... 8
 Figure 5. The Seed of Abraham and the Great Commission of the Old Testament. 9
 Figure 6. The First Messianic Prophecy. 9
 Figure 7. Angel Island Poems Carved in Silence..... 14
 Figure 8. Theresa Ihara at the Chinese School in Locke, California..... 15
 Figure 9. Author in Modesto, California at Grave Site of Louie and Yung Shee Mar..... 15
 Figure 10. Download a PodCast of *“Like a Family Reunion”* at https://podcast.ic.sunysb.edu/weblog/gary_mar/. 17
 Figure 11. Chinese Contributions to Sacramento ("Yee Fow") History..... 20
 Figure 12. Chinese Enter into American History Through Images of Absence: Promontory Point, May 1869. 20
 Figure 13. Chinese Labor & Technology Created Prosperity for the U.S. in the Second Halves 19th & 20th Centuries. 20
 Figure 14. Chinese Struggles for Justice Made America a Freer and More Democratic Nation for All. 21
 Figure 15. How the 1773 Boston Tea Party was Related to the Turn Over of Hong Kong in 1997. 23
 Figure 16. History of Protestant Missions in China 23
 Figure 17. How Indigenous Christianity in China was Birthed During the Boxer Rebellion. 24
 Figure 19. The House Church Movement in China..... 26
 Figure 18. Tiananmen Square In Chinese History..... 26
 Figure 20. Katharine Maurer, the "Angel of Angel Island". 27
 Figure 21. Brothers Clark Berge, Noel Nikki, Pateson Kwa'a at *Little Portion Friary* in front of a Watanabe's *“The Last Supper”*.30

Published in “Featured Article” July 2007 www.globalmissiology.org