

## BOOK REVIEWS

Linda Banks and Robert Banks, *Through the Valley of the Shadow: Australian Women in War-torn China* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications [Wipf & Stock], 2019), pp. xxi + 122. ISBN 978 1 5326 8617 9 (pbk).  
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This book is one of a very useful recent series entitled *Studies in Chinese Christianity*. The latest volume in this series, by Wayne ten Harmsel, *The Registered Church in China* (2021) is a valuable account of the Protestant Three-Self Movement, Christian Church of China, in post-1949 Communist China. The book by Linda and Robert Banks, under review here, explores an aspect of Protestant Christianity, before 1949, from the late Qing and Republican eras up to 1949. The authors rightly describe this period as characterized by extreme disruption and violence: anti-Qing rebellions, bandits, war-lords, disputes between Nationalists and Communists, and, finally, the Japanese invasion. The title ‘Australian women’ is slightly misleading – the book is not a general survey of Australian women in China in this period, let alone female missionaries, but an account of seven individuals: all Anglican, single, and members of the Australian Church Missionary Society (CMS). Their stories are certainly worth hearing.

The first two missionaries, Eleanor and Elizabeth Saunders, tragically had only a brief time in China. Inspired by the visit to Australia in 1889 of Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, the sisters applied to CMS and embarked for China in 1893, aged only 22 and 20. They were bound for an inland mission station in Fuzhien province, Kucheng (Gutien). They spent less than two years there before being caught up in a peasant protest movement. The insurgents were alarmed at Qing incompetence (they had just been defeated by the Japanese and had had to cede Taiwan, just off the Fuzhien coast) and by malign foreign interference in China since the first opium war of 1840–42. The sisters were among eleven foreigners who died in the attack on the mission station in 1895. The widowed mother of the two girls, Eliza Saunders, had originally accompanied her daughters from Melbourne as far as Brisbane on their journey to China. She now volunteered to become a missionary, and served in Fuzhien for 20 years. It is a pity that we don’t learn more about her work in China.

The five single Australian women who arrived in the years after the Kucheng massacre lived through equally dangerous times – one was taken hostage by bandits, others found their institutions sacked by marauding soldiers, some were imprisoned by the Japanese after Pearl Harbor. But they all survived, dedicated their working lives to Christian work in China over many years. They made valuable, pioneering contributions to female education, to healthcare and the care of orphans. Victoria Mannett, a trained teacher, worked in Sichuan province from 1911, promoting female education, eventually serving as co-ordinator of the Women's College of the University of Sichuan, described as the first co-educational tertiary institution in China. She was also involved in educational work for the diocese.

Martha and Eliza Clark, identical twins, first came to China in 1904 and served as Principals of girls schools in Ningpo and Shanghai. Still active in education in their 60s, they were interned by the Japanese in Shanghai. After the war, despite their age, they resumed their work, finally leaving China in 1947 because of Martha's failing health.

Rhoda Watkins arrived in China in 1922. She was a trained nurse and became the Matron of The Way of Life Christian hospital, in Kweilin, in the mid-reaches of the Yangze. She was still there in 1944 when Japanese air-raids necessitated her evacuation. She returned as soon as the war was over, and stayed on in Kweilin until 1950, the last missionary in the area.

The last biography is of Nora Dillon, who worked in China from 1930, did rural evangelism among women and children in Guangxi Province in south China, and established orphanages in Lianzhou, Guangdong Province, and at Taipo in Hong Kong. Here she created a boarding school, for over a hundred orphaned girls and boys. She escaped internment during the Japanese occupation because the authorities considered her work to be essential. After the war she moved back to the mainland, and was one of the last missionaries to leave China in 1951.

The stories of these women are based on wide reading in mission archives and personal correspondence. The writing is vigorous and unsentimental. To read about the lives of these Christian women is intensely moving. The Australian Anglican Church should be proud of their Christian witness; as are many Christians in China itself.

Inevitably the format chosen for the book has certain limitations. There is no claim to present these vignettes as representative of the experiences of the many other Australian Anglican missionaries in China during this time. Indeed their stories are all unique in the sense that they lived in widely varying parts of China, learnt different languages, and had little, if any, contact with each other. I would have appreciated a more substantial final chapter in which an analysis could be undertaken about what these stories reveal about the constraints and ambiguities of foreign mission work in China, and on the complex relationship with the local church as it developed a distinctive Chinese Christianity. It would have been good to have a discussion about the role of single missionaries (usually women) in evangelical missionary thinking. Reference is made to the influence of Keswick spirituality, and it would have been useful to explore this dimension of Anglican evangelicalism, both in China and within the church and mission societies of Australia. The book provides little indication of how their work fitted into Anglican structures in China itself, or how their institutional work linked to the development of a local Chinese

Christianity and to the ‘modernization’ of China. There are a few comments about the anti-Christian student movement, provoked by the killing of protestors in Shanghai in 1925 by British police. This impacted on the work of Christian schools and colleges throughout the late Republican era, and it would have been good to know more about how the Clarks and Mannett understood those issues, as well as the question of gender both in China, and among Australian evangelical Anglicans.

This critique does not, however, detract from the intrinsic value of these inspiring stories. As well as the well-constructed narrative, there are many illuminating black-and-white photographs. The authors also supply a glossary of place names, which translate the Western orthography used at the time into modern pinyin. Very useful for anyone using a modern map!

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Steven Ogden, *Violence, Entitlement, and Politics: A Theology on Transforming the Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 150. ISBN 9781032076638 (pbk); ISBN 9780429273520 (ebk).

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Steven Ogden is an Australian priest and theologian who is interested in the theme of addressing domestic violence. The heart of the argument of the book appears to be the work of a couple of criminologists who, in a detailed series of case studies, found that ‘It is men’s orientations to and assumptions about the appropriate behaviour of women, their sense of entitlement over women, and the need to uphold their own moral universe that led to the murder of the vast majority of women partners’ (p. 111). Ogden acknowledges that understandings of the roots of violence are complex, and there is no silver bullet to deal with the problem, but he wants to follow up this lead. The question is how far it will take us. He finds entitlement to be evidenced in the way in which we use the possessive pronoun: the way in which we talk of my house, or my partner. The problem is that in everyday speech this usually says nothing about entitlement but is simply an aid to identification – ‘my house is the one with the geraniums on the window ledge’; ‘this is my partner’ (as opposed to my solicitor, vet, plumber etc.). Only occasionally does it mean ‘mine and not yours’. Other criminologists talk of sexual jealousy in relation to male violence against women. Fair enough, but does sexual jealousy derive from a sense of entitlement? The libertine Catherine Millet suggests not (*Jealousy: The Other Life of Catherine M*, 2008). Even if it did, surely the question is why a sense of entitlement should issue in violence? Does it do so necessarily? Ogden finds entitlement springs from a sense of rights. Surely, a perverted account of rights? Rights, as set out in the 1948 Declaration, are a precious marker of what is properly owing to human beings – the right to education, a safe dwelling, adequate food and so on. There is no right