Front. Educ. China 2012, 7(3): 309–337
DOI 10.3868/s110-001-012-0018-7

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mary Shepard WONG

Gender, Identity, Missions, and Empire: Letters from Christian Teachers in China in the Early 20th and 21st Centuries

Abstract This article presents the findings of a historically-informed comparative study that juxtaposes the lives of three missionary educators in China in the early 20th century with three Christian educators in China today. Data sources included hundreds of letters from the women written in China to their families and friends over several decades and transcripts of over a dozen interviews. Wenger's social theory of identity formation was used to analyze the data and address the questions of why they went to China, the intended and actual results, and the impact it had on the women and their identity construction. The findings show that although there were major differences across the two centuries, as was expected, there were surprisingly many similarities among the individual teachers, as are noted in the common communities of practice that emerged: "educator," "missionary," "gender advocate," "Chinese advocate," "leader," and "learner."

Keywords China, missionaries, education, gender, English teaching

Introduction

Since this issue pays tribute to Dr. Ruth Hayhoe, it is relevant to note how I came to know her and why I regard her as a mentor. I was acquainted with Dr. Hayhoe through her work as it related to my dissertation research into Western missionaries in higher education in China. When I presented a paper at Comparative & International Education Society (CIES) in 1999 at University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), I recall how thrilled I was to meet Dr. Hayhoe for the first time. Twelve years later, when I saw the call for papers for a conference to honor Dr. Hayhoe, I decided to take the opportunity to conduct a follow-up study on the research I had presented in 1999.

Mary Shepard WONG (✉)
Department of Global Studies, Sociology, and TESOL, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA 91702, USA
E-mail: mwong@apu.edu

In a way, this brought me, as her 2004 autobiography says, "full circle." Like Dr. Hayhoe, I went to Asia to teach English at the age of 21, was in China in the late 1970s, and lived in China from 1981–1982 as she had done. We both studied Mandarin and Cantonese, and began our relationship with China as Western Protestant English teachers with connections to missionary sending agencies. We have both studied international and comparative education, have somewhat feminist leanings and have critical views of missions, yet consider our faith an essential aspect of our identity and lives. In summary, my connection to Dr. Hayhoe is mostly through her scholarship and my admiration of what she has accomplished, but is also a personal connection in our similar trajectories within parallel communities of practice. Thus, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on her life and her work as it relates to my research into the lives of Western women in education in China at the turn of the last two centuries.

In their introduction to *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-Century China*, Hayhoe and Peterson note that "despite a growing effort in recent years to 'bring women in' to the social and cultural history of modern China, surprisingly little attention has been focused on the subject of women's education and its relationship to nation building and the construction of modern identities" (Peterson, Hayhoe, & Lu, 2001, pp. 16–17). In the same way, surprisingly little attention has been given to those who were instrumental in establishing the first schools and colleges for women in China, specifically Western Protestant teaching missionaries. Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, and Shemo (2010) note that a rich source of data is available in carefully archived missionary correspondence, which provides a way to view "missions as sites of encounter and exchange where individuals met, interacted, and triggered change" (p. 6). In the past few decades, feminist scholars have analyzed these once overlooked archives, and concepts of women, mission, empire and nation have been applied in nuanced ways to understand and analyze the attitudes and actions of missionary educators. Yet what has not been done is a study comparing these women to their present day counterparts. Hunter (2010) notes that missionaries in China today are "robust … abundant and active and often officially described as English teachers but propelled by missionary commitments and training" (p. 38). She asks "what influence will this century's evangelical missionaries have on America's domestic affairs?" (p. 40) and what will be "the impact of [this] global exchange on gender roles?" (p. 41).

The moderated discussion in the February's issue of 2011 *Comparative Education Review*, which brought together six perspectives on "Religion, Education and Secularism in International Agencies" demonstrates the relevance of a historically-informed study on the intersection of faith and education. In the article, Katherine Marshall (Stambach et al., 2011) highlights the "central place" of religion in meeting global education challenges, noting that "religious

institutions are responsible for a large share of educational offerings" (p. 112), so there is a "great need both for better understanding of religious roles in education and for religious leaders and communities to recognize how they might contribute to reaching important national and international education goals" (p. 113). She notes that the challenge for "education for all" demands stronger faith and secular partnerships and that robust education about religion and comparative religion needs to be addressed. Moreover, basic religious literacy needs to be seen as a "core competency, […] "a sine qua non for successful societies" (p. 129). Marshall states that they agree on the core message of the six reflections, which is "that more thoughtful consideration of religion in education is much needed and that it must be grounded in a deep respect for both the essence of secular values and of the human quest for religious understanding" (p. 128). Her question " […] how can religious institutions preserve and extend into the next generation what makes their traditions unique without engendering the chauvinism that so easily bleeds into distrust and hatred?" (p. 115) is key and one that studies like this one can start to address.

Background

Although the role of Western Protestant missionary women in education in late 19th and early 20th century China is undeniable, this was not studied by scholars until the mid-1980s when historians, feminists, and other researchers started to critically analyze the correspondence of these women that in many cases had been carefully archived by their mission boards and families. What emerged from the careful study of their diaries and letters was an understanding of their lived experiences and how the experiences of living and working in a foreign land had changed not only the women themselves but their home and host societies and the gender construction of women.

The fifty-year period from 1880 to 1930 is especially significant for Western Protestant teaching missionary women in China. In terms of missionaries in China during that time, Americans outnumbered other nationalities, women outnumbered men, and teaching missionaries outnumbered evangelists (Kwok, 1992, p. 19). It was a time when China offered these educated women meaningful positions that they could not find at home. Work in China gave them a purpose that fostered in them a newly discovered sense of independence and self-confidence. When the decision in missionary societies came in the 1880s and 1890s to shift their efforts in China from evangelism to education and social work, the doors that had been closed to single women missionaries suddenly opened, allowing them to engage in "women's work for women" and to become teachers and in some cases founders of girls' schools and colleges.

New interest in gender arose with the feminist movement in the U.S. and U.K. in the 1970s, and the question was raised as to why women had been left out of the analysis of China missions, especially given the way the experience had transformed their lives. Jane Hunter was one of the first to address this situation. Using the lens of gender, she examined the lives of 40 American women missionaries in turn-of-the-century China. The title of her book, *The Gospel of Gentility*, speaks to her premise that many of these women were more successful ambassadors of culture than of Christ. In this book, Hunter (1984) finds that these female missionaries were more cultural chauvinists than they were cultural imperialists.

In the 1990s Pui-Lan Kwok (1992) was the first to bring a much-needed Chinese perspective to this inquiry. While agreeing that "women's work for women" gave single missionaries in China new opportunities, Kwok notes that their ethnocentrism did not always allow for equal relationships with Chinese women to emerge. Another noteworthy work is Gael Graham's (1995) book which supports three claims: (1) American teaching missionaries made concessions in order to establish their schools, diminishing an emphasis on evangelizing; (2) missionaries used education to reform what they felt was a flawed gender system with its ideologies of sexual difference; and (3) missionaries revised their views of the merits of Chinese and American culture, coming to value Confucianism just when the Chinese were discarding it, and questioning some of their own cultural assumptions.

Kathleen Lodwick's (1995) fascinating study on the life of Margret Moninger, who taught in China from 1915–1942, reveals what can be learned from an investigation of correspondence of missionary women. Lodwick's study of the "huge trove" of the "letters record in measured weekly installments [of Moninger's] twenty-three years as a missionary on Hainan Island" (p. ix) provides a rich understanding of this "community of people dedicated to, indeed often truly absorbed by, their calling" (p. x). Moninger was one of the thousands of American college graduates who were swept up by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVMFM). In 1913, there were few career options in the U.S. for female college graduates, but China provided both a challenge and opportunity for this girl from a farming town in Iowa, as mission was becoming more of a "profession" (especially in education and medicine) than a "calling" for someone to do whatever was needed on the missionary field (Lodwick, 1995, p. 3).

Daniel Bays' (1996) edited volume *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, has notable chapters by both Hunter and Kwok (mentioned earlier). Relevant discussions in these and other chapters in this volume such as Liu and Kelly (1996), Ross (1996), and Honig (1996) focus on the social and value changes that took place in 20th century China and the role

that missionary schools and colleges for women had in those changes. Chinese graduates of these Christian institutions were affected less by religious doctrines than by the ideals that they inculcated such as cooperation, self-reliance, community, and service. As Bays (1996) states in his introduction to this section:

> It seems clear that the single woman missionary teacher, who by the early part of the twentieth century was a professional reasonably well trained for and usually highly committed to her calling, had *a crucial role* in personifying to the Chinese students the ideas of self-improvement, equality, self-sufficiency, and service to which many of the girls responded positively. (p. 178, emphasis added)

Wayne Flynt and Gereld Berkley's (1997) book focusing on missionaries from Alabama contains a chapter that discusses the importance of gender in missions in China. It starts, "without the presence of women no substantial Protestant missionary effort would have occurred in China" (p. 191). They go on to state, "during the hundred years between 1850 and 1950, Western and Chinese attitudes toward the proper sphere of women changed dramatically. Christianity contributed substantially to that change both in the United States and China" (p. 191). They note how the experience of male and female missionaries was different. For females the experience allowed them to create a "third culture" that was neither American nor Chinese. But these missionary women were not feminists, as they conformed to Victorian notions by "deferring to men, confining their evangelism to women, and working in professions deemed appropriate to their gender" (p. 192). Nonetheless, the effect of their work on the lives of women in both China and America "pioneer[ed] different roles for women" (p. 193), and "paved the way for enfranchisement of women within both denominational and national politics" (p. 192).

Dana Robert's (1997) book *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*, provides a larger context in terms of how the missionary teachers (chapter three) and "women's work for women" (chapter four) are viewed within the wider timeframe of the modern mission era (1792–1992) and within the larger mission context (i.e., outside of China). Robert's edited volume in 2002, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*, provides perspectives on evangelism and women's rights, and the globalization of women in mission, describing the role of women's movement in the U.S. in the rise and decline of the gender separated mission boards and how this influenced mission work of women in China and elsewhere. Roberts (2002) notes that the 20th century started with:

> … hope and tangible signs of women's progress in the churches and in the world. After hard-fought struggles for acceptance, women's mission organizations existed in nearly

> every Protestant denomination... Missions occupied the central spot in women's hearts because they provided opportunities for leadership in the church. With their focus on reaching women and children, women's missionary societies had carved out a vital niche and power base from which women could participate in lay ministry. (p. 5)

Robert (2002) describes a "fundamental shift" that took place in 1920 when women got the vote and felt that separate women's causes such as women's mission boards and "women's work for women" were outdated. Moreover, the sober realities of the horrors of the First World War and later the Great Depression caused some to question their assumed Western cultural superiority and their need to "save" their non-Western "heathen" sisters. As Robert states, "women's work for women" was the first significant gender-linked mission theory, but "behind it lay the middle-class western assumptions that western women needed to help liberate their sisters around the world by reaching them in their homes, teaching them to read, and providing medical care for their bodies" (p. 7). Robert tracks the "familiar story" of women gaining power, only to lose it to male-led bureaucracies, which was played out not only within the lives of individual missionaries, but also in the once gender separated but now merged mission boards, and schools and colleges of China. Robert asks, what impact does this loss of women's power have on the mission field and mission work? And this remains a question that has not been fully investigated.

Another related book is Pruitt's (2005) *A Looking-Glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century*. Pruitt examined the "oriental other" in the 19th century American Protestant mission movement, which she says led to a feminization of women in mission work of China. She maintains that women played a significant role in missionary efforts in the 18th and 19th centuries, and that gender was the basis for conceptualizing mission work in what she calls "evangelical Orientalism," described as not only a deep and abiding fascination with what was considered "the orient" a region that spanned from "Bible lands to Burma" and beyond (p. 4), but also a desire to evangelize that region of the world. Evangelicals, in her view, created a stereotype or fantasy of Orientals who were more alike than different, portrayed as "irrational, backward looking, childish and feminine" (p. 4). She posits that Evangelicals held up this portrayal of effeminate men, oppressed women, and exploited children in "the orient" as a positive contrast to themselves, the Western educated privileged missionaries who sought not only to save the souls of the "Orientals," but to rescue them from gender oppression. Images of the oriental other were used, she posits, to engender sympathy in order to recruit missionaries and gather financial support for missions.

An edited volume by Daniel Bays and Ellen Widmer (2009), *China's Christian Colleges: Cross-Cultural Connections, 1900–1950*, contains a chapter by Terrill

Lautz that examines the motives of some of the 33,726 American college students who volunteered through the SVMFM between 1890 to 1920 whose brazen rallying call was "the evangelization of the world in this generation" (p. 4). His analysis of hundreds of randomly selected applications reveals the motivation of missionary candidates, many of whom were bound for China in the early 20th century. He found that religious conviction alone did not explain their willingness to leave home and country to travel to the unknown. Their motivation was bound up in the American self-image of innocence, idealism, and individualism, and "seeking self-fulfillment through an act of selfless generosity" (p. 4) by engaging in "the noblest and grandest thing one could do" (p. 8). Many candidates felt they had no choice but to go out of duty, or as an applicant put it, "I felt I could not dare refuse when the need was as great" (p. 10). Lautz notes that the hundreds of applications talked less about "saving souls" and more about "doing good" (p. 15) and that the movement was a forerunner of post-Second World War American foreign aid, humanitarian assistance, the Peace Corps, and international educational exchange.

Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, and Shemo's (2010) edited volume brings together a number of authors whose chapters have relevance to the present study. The most notable is Hunter's (2010) chapter, in which she concedes to her critics who noted that her study in 1984 was somewhat one-sided in that she did not adequately assess indigenous uses of missionary work. Hunter agrees that an attempt to be "multiarchival" is needed, telling history from several sides, examining both "the sending and the receiving end of the missionary exchange" (p. 21).[1] Of particular interest to the present study is the fact that Hunter makes the connection between the teaching missionaries in China at the turn of 20th century and those at the turn of the 21st century, and argues "that the story of this book is ongoing" with similar issues and tensions, as well as the strategies used to address those tensions. She contends, "the intensity and the political stakes of that struggle are as high today as at any time in the past" (p. 38), as the American missionary presence in China today is alive and well. She notes the Chinese strategy of "don't ask, don't tell" suits both the Communist Party and missionary agencies, as evangelical English speakers fill a pressing need for teachers in remote locations willing to work for meager salaries. Hunter states, "twenty-first century China is replicating the strategic use of Western missionaries for self-strengthening just as it did at the turn of the nineteenth century" (p. 38). Hunter also posits that while we have yet to determine what the impact this generation's missionary lobby will have on American international politics and domestic affairs, just like centuries before, it is certain that "the impact of this new evangelical missionary outpouring will confound the intents of its initiators" (p. 40). In the end, Hunter agrees with historian Jonathan Spence, who noted that

[1] This type of multi-archival or multivocal research is typical of Dr. Hayhoe's work.

Western missionaries were changed more by China, than China was changed by the missionaries.

A more critical body of literature related to contemporary English language education and its connection to Christian mission, post-colonial ideologies, and neoliberal agendas can be found within Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) literature. Related works criticizing the connections of missions and English teaching are Edge (2003; 2006), Johnston and Varghese (2006), Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003), Vandrick (2002), Varghese and Johnston (2007), and Wong (2009). See Wong and Canagarajah (2009) for a dialogue among 30 educators from a variety of faith beliefs as well as atheists and agnostics regarding the dilemmas and tensions found at the intersection of English language teaching and Christian missions and faith. Empirical studies of Christian English teachers abroad include Wong (2000), Zimmerman (2006), and an anthology of research-based studies of faith and teaching, edited by Wong, Kristjansson, and Dornyei (in press).

Methodology

General Overview

This study benefits and draws from the work of many scholars who have identified promising questions and data sources (Graham, 1995; Hunter, 1984, 2010; Kwok, 1992; Stambach et al., 2011; Robert, 2002; Worden, 1986). The analysis is qualitative in nature, anchored by a case study of three 20th century Western Protestant teaching missionary women in China analyzed in juxtaposition to three 21st century counterparts. The study was undertaken with assumptions from a postpositivist paradigm using the principles of grounded theory to investigate the lived experience of the teachers in China. A postpositivist paradigm is guided by the understanding that everything is value laden; our values and identity impact our inquiry, the subject of inquiry is complex and situated and afforded agency, knowledge is dynamic and changing, and accommodating for difference, diversity, and pluralism and an openness to complexity is desired. Steps were taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner. Official approval from the human subjects review boards of the relevant universities was obtained and signed consent forms were collected from the three 21st century participants, whose confidentiality was maintained through use of pseudonyms.

Research Questions

The overall question guiding the study was what can be learned from the

experiences of Western Protestant teaching missionary women in China at the turn of the 20th- and 21st centuries. Hunter's two questions mentioned earlier informed the study: What influence will this century's evangelical missionaries have on America's domestic affairs and what will be the impact of this global exchange on gender roles? The specific questions were: Why did these women go to China? What were the intended and actual results? What are the differences and similarities across the two time periods and among the six women? And what are the implications of the findings?

The 20th Century Missionaries and Data Sources

Elsie Clark, Alice Reed, and Luella Miner were chosen in part because they were single female missionary women teaching in China in the early part of the 20th century who chronicled their lives as educators through personal correspondence and journals that were saved and archived. The three women were also chosen because they represented a range of time spent in China (6, 32, 48 years), lived in different locations in China (south, central, and north), and held different levels of positions from classroom teacher, mission board worker, to academic dean/college president, thus providing a range of the experiences of missionary women in early 20th century China. Specifically, Elsie Clark (Krug) was in southeast China 1912–1918; Alice (Clara) Reed was in central and northern China 1916–1948; and (Sarah) Luella Miner was mostly in northern China 1887–1935.

Hunter (1984) also noted in her study of American women missionaries that these women were particularly informative stating, for example, that Elsie Clark was "a woman suffragist and an eloquent commentator on China mission life" (p. 305), whose letters, diaries, and notebooks are particularly noteworthy. Alice Reed, who served in China for over 30 years, is of interest due to the transcripts of three interviews conducted as part of the China Oral History Project. Luella Miner's letters spanning almost five decades "comment extensively on the changing political climate of Peking" (p. 306), and as the founder of the first college for women in China and author of two books on the Boxer rebellion, Miss Miner's life experience and writings are of particular interest.

In all, over a thousand pages of primary data consisting of personal correspondence, journals, photos, diaries, transcripts, and other documents related to these three women were located and analyzed. Secondary data included papers and books written on their lives, published and unpublished, as well as books and articles by the women themselves. In April and May 2011, I spent three days in each of the following libraries to read and copy excerpts (when permissible) of documents: The Special Collections at the library at Yale Divinity School, which houses six boxes of the correspondence, journals, notebooks, and

photos of Elsie Clark; Claremont College's China Missionaries Oral History Project at Honnold Library, which houses the 122-page transcript of Alice Reed's interviews and 250 pages of her correspondence; The Houghton Library at Harvard University which houses the complete set of papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission by female missionaries from 1836 to 1919, which has six boxes of Luella Miner's papers (see Table 1).

Table 1 Data and Material Regarding the Three 20th Century Missionaries

Name	Years in China	Historical Material
Elsie Clark	1912–1918 (6 years)	Yale Divinity School: Six boxes of data with hundreds of pages of journals, letters and articles
Alice Reed	1916–1948 (32 years)	Claremont College: Over 100 pages of transcripts from 1969s interviews, 241 pages of letters and journals
Luella Miner	1887–1935 (48 years)	Harvard (Houghton Library): Over six boxes of data with hundreds of pages of letters, journals and articles

An effort was made to control for bias. In their introduction to *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues*, Bickers and Seton (1996) state "To a generation of largely secularly trained and secularly minded professional academics missionary writings prompt suspicions of evangelical bias which precludes an objective approach to the past. The missionary is, by nature and vocation, biased" (pp. 3–4). Yet they go on to state that some researchers have found that once the writer's "prejudices and assumptions are recognized … missionary sources offer valuable insights" (p. 4). They state that "Evangelical bias is certainly present, but it is not insurmountable" (p. 4). As I read the personal letters and diaries in this study, I kept in mind that each letter or entry was written to a particular audience for a particular purpose. For example, one of the 20th century missionaries, Alice Reed, noted in an interview that she downplayed her precarious situation in letters home to calm her father's fears. Personal journals and diaries of the three 20th century missionaries provided yet another perspective. Letters of the 21st century teachers addressed to supporters highlight encouraging news, as funds were needed to support their efforts, while "hand carried" letters to sisters or mothers at that same time revealed more personal struggles. I found that a fuller portrait emerged when reading letters addressed to several different audiences (i.e., family members, mission board, missionary peers, supporters, etc.) and personal journals, diaries, and notes over several years.

The 21st Century Teachers and Data Sources

The three 21st century participants in this study are Suzanne, Cindy, and Barbara (all pseudonyms) who taught in China for 13, 16, and nine years, respectively.

Suzanne and Cindy were chosen because they also took part in a study I conducted from 1998 to 2008 (Wong, 2000). Barbara was added to the study in 2008. All were my students in a Masters in TESOL program in which they completed their degrees while teaching abroad. The teacher-student relationship may have affected their responses to the interview questions, but they were no longer my students in the final 2008 interview, and other data sources were analyzed such as their correspondence sent to sponsors over a long period of time, thus displaying the richness of their experience.

Furthermore, the three teachers were part of the same nonprofit organization that recruited, trained, and sent teams of Christian teachers to teach English in universities in China. The nonprofit represented in this study was transparent about its Christian identity to both the Chinese government and the academic institutions where the teachers worked. The teachers were financially supported by individuals, many of whom were part of the teachers' local church and thus the supporters may have viewed these teachers as "missionaries" who were offering both a service and a Christian presence in China. At the time of the final interview in 2008, they were still part of an American-based Christian nonprofit and still received financial support from individuals or churches.

The data sources documenting the experiences of Suzanne, Cindy, and Barbara included 154 letters, some of which were personal letters to siblings and parents, but most were "support letters" which their sending organization had requested. Similar to their 20th century counterparts, the letters spanned several years (1995–2011), and the majority of them were written while the three teaches were in China. Suzanne's 42 letters spanned 13 years, Cindy's 85 letters spanned 16 years, and Barbara's 27 letters spanned 10 years. In addition, I conducted 10 interviews with Suzanne and Cindy over a period of 10 years (January 1998, July 1998, January 1999, July 1999, and March 2008) and I conducted one interview with Barbara in March 2008 followed by a classroom observation in China. The 11 semi-structured in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed resulting in over 100 pages of data (see Table 2).

Table 2 Data and Material Regarding the Three 21st Century Missionaries

Name	Years in China	Material
Suzanne	1992–2010 (13 years*)	Five interviews: January 1998, July 1998, January 1999, July 1999, March 2008; 42 letters over 13 years
Cindy	1992–2011 (16 years*)	Five interviews: January 1998, July 1998, January 1999, July 1999, March 2008; campus visit; 85 letters over 16 years
Barbara	2000–2010 (nine years*)	One interview: March 2008; observation in Chinese class March 2008; 27 letters over nine years

Note. * The rage of years does not always match the number of years in China because there were some breaks in service in which they were in the U.S. for one or two years.

In March 2008 I met with all three teachers in China to conduct interviews and observations. I stayed with Cindy and Barbara for a few days on each of their campuses, and observed several classes and met informally with their colleagues and students. I took detailed field notes during this trip and used them to corroborate findings drawn from the letters and interviews.

Theoretical Framework and Data Analysis

Wenger's (1998) social theory of identity formation, a theory of increasing promise within the field of educational policy and comparative analysis (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009), provided a useful framework for comparing the teachers and describing how they engaged in their work. The underlying premise in this framework is that learning is not simply the reception of knowledge and facts, but is in fact social in nature, and thus is a process of participation in communities of practice, participation that is first legitimately peripheral but that gradually increases in engagement and complexity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The framework was used to analyze how the teachers were moving along trajectories and positioning themselves as professionals and individuals within their various communities of practice in terms of who they were, where they had been, and where they were headed.

Data analysis of the correspondence and transcriptions of the interviews was conducted holistically, looking for themes that emerged in grounded analysis and communities of practice the teachers engaged in. Analysis was also conducted purposefully, searching for data that responded to the questions of the study, namely why they went, the intended and actual results, similarities and differences across time periods and women, and implications of the study. The letters and transcripts were read several times and themes were recorded and communities of practice were noted as well as the teachers' trajectories within the various communities of practice. Once themes and communities were determined to be robust, they were grouped into categories, and a comparison across time periods and participants was conducted.

Findings

Wenger (1998) states that identities are temporal, ongoing, complex, and defined with respect to the interaction of multiple convergent and divergent trajectories. He notes five types of trajectories, which were helpful in analyzing the data in this study. The first are *peripheral trajectories*, which by choice or by necessity never lead to full participation, yet contribute to one's identity. One participant in this study (Elsie) chose to have a peripheral trajectory in the missionary community. She notes in a diary entry "How very wrong!" when reporting that

her missionary peers were punishing girls who were political activists (EC Diary, February 15, 1913). The second are *inbound trajectories*. Newcomer inbound identities are invested in their future participation, even though their present participation may be peripheral. For instance, all participants were on inbound trajectories at the start of their teaching positions. *Insider trajectories* are those that obtain full membership, but the formation of an identity does not end there, as new demands create occasions for renegotiating one's identity. So for example, most participants in this study had insider trajectories within the missionary community. Another set of trajectories are *boundary trajectories*, which find their value in spanning and linking communities of practice in brokering work. Two participants in this study (Luella and Barbara) had evidence of bridging their foreign communities with Chinese communities, and thus had boundary trajectories. Finally, *outbound trajectories* are trajectories that lead out of a community and involve developing new relationships and seeing the world and oneself in new ways (Wenger, 1998, pp. 154–155). This outbound trajectory was experienced by one participant in particular (Elsie), who exited the missionary community of practice. The others were still members of the missionary community when they retired, but in her diary and letters, it seems clear that Elsie came to see herself in a new way, and thus exited the missionary community of practice as described below.

Their Motivation to Teach in China

The first set of findings, which address the participants' motivations for going to China, are prefaced by a quote by Dr. Hayhoe from her autobiography *Full Circle: A Life with Hong Kong and China* (2004), in which she discusses her reasons for going to China.

> My letters to Mother over this period also reveal that at one point I was wavering between pursing theological studies in London or academic studies in comparative education. The primary consideration in this decision, I believe, was my love for China and commitment to participating in its opening up to the world in the best way possible. Comparative education struck me as a field that would require careful observation and respectful listening to understand the culture underlying different educational systems and pedagogies. It would be the ideal preparation for my China sojourn. Theology would not have fulfilled this role. (Hayhoe, 2004, pp. 50–51)

The 20th Century Missionaries' Motivations: "to Help the Women and Girls in China"

The journals, letters, and transcripts of Elsie, Alice, and Luella confirm that a

common reason for going to China was to improve the condition of girls and women through education. As discussed in the literature of Western Protestant missionary women in early 20th century China, the early emphasis of missions to evangelize had shifted by 1900 to more of a social gospel. Thus all three women had at first an inbound and then insider trajectories in the community I labeled "gender advocate," and "teacher/educator." However, each woman had her own set of complex and sometimes conflicting reasons for going to and staying in China that evolved and changed over time.

In the case of Elsie Clark (Krung) her trajectory in the community "gender advocate" was clearly one of insider, while her trajectory in the "missionary" community was peripheral and eventually outbound when she left the mission after her first term of service. Although Elsie was one of the thousands to sign the SVMFM pledge: "It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary," she left for China in part to evade a proposal of marriage by Andrew Krung in the U.S. From her letters it is clear she sought to emancipate her students from a perceived flawed gendered system more than convert them to Christianity, although the former was often assumed to result in the latter. In her correspondence she notes she did not feel like a "real missionary" and on several occasions she voiced her disagreement with the views of her fellow missionaries such as when they discouraged students from being politically active. As she stated in a speech, her goal was to extend "women's influence [beyond] the tea table to the schoolroom and church-parlor, to the political platform and the ballot-box" (Worden, 1986, p. 11). This was demonstrated in the extra class she prepared for her students at Hwa Nan called "the problems of girlhood," detailed in her notebook in which she provided readings and questions to teach them to think independently and critically.

Alice Reed's trajectories were clearly insider for the communities of "missionary" and "educator." When asked directly, "[Do] you consider yourself primarily as an educator?" Alice replied, "Yes, yes. I took part in the church activities, just as I would have in America. You know, you might teach a Sunday school class in church, be active in a church. I taught Bible class, *but I was primarily an educator*" (Reed, interview, p. 16, emphasis added). But she too, was interested in changing China's gender system. In an interview conducted in 1969, and also in her letters, Alice Reed stated:

> My chief interest in going [to China was] to help the women and girls in China. In all the schools in our different stations if a girl came to school, she had to un-bind her feet. One Chinese girl asked me once "When our mothers bound our feet we had to say thank you. Now when you unbind them we have to say thank you. Were our mothers wrong?" I answered: "You were right thanking your mother because she did what she thought was right for you. She knew no better. But the next generation of mothers will know better."

(Reed, letter excerpts, October 19, 1919, p. 50, in Reed, 1969; Reed, interview, 1969, p. 14)

It was clearly part of Alice's mission to educate this "next generation" of mothers so that they would "know better." Luella Miner was also situated within these three communities of practice: "gender advocate," "educator," and "missionary." She wrote on May 28, 1900 "On the whole it has been a prosperous year, as many baptized, I believe as on any previous year" which shows a concern for the traditional missionary work of baptism (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 2012, February 29, HOU, ABC 76, Folder 1:1). Education, however, was clearly her passion as is evidenced by her founding of the North China Women's College in 1905. The fact that it was the first college for women in China demonstrates she was involved in the work to liberate Chinese women, but her vision was broader as she was an advocate for all students, two of whom (both male) she helped bring to the U.S. for college (see Miner, 1903b).

Luella Miner's pioneering leadership roles as Principal of Bridgeman Academy (1903–1913), President of North China Women's College (1905–1920), Dean of Yen Qing College (1920–1922), and Dean of Cheelow (Shantung Christian) University (1923–1935), demonstrate that another community in which she was an insider was "leader." Her reasons for being in China evolved, and soon encompassed not only "saving" China spiritually, but also changing China socially, as well as influencing the country politically. Luella was one of the few missionaries who read Chinese newspapers and was dubbed "the best-informed foreigner in China" (as printed in the Missionary Herald article "Luella Miner and China" by Dorothy P. Cushing, March 1928). Her advocacy for Chinese people both in China and in the U.S. was most evident in her writing against the anti-oriental prejudice of Americans. This confirms the community of "Chinese advocate" (see Table 3). Thus the three 20th century missionaries had much in common in their desire to "rescue" China's girls and women from a perceived flawed gender system through a Christian education.

Table 3 Summary of Participants' Trajectories in Communities of Practice

	Teacher/ Educator	Missionary/ Team	Gender Advocate	Chinese Advocate	Leader	Learner
Elsie Clark	Insider	Peripheral/ outbound	Insider			
Alice Reed	Insider	Insider	Insider			
Luella Miner	Insider	Insider	Insider	Insider/ boundary	Insider	
Suzanne	Insider	Insider			Inbound	In/ outbound
Cindy	Insider	Insider	Insider		Inbound	Inbound
Barbara	Insider	Peripheral		Insider/ boundary	Inbound	Insider

The 21st Century Teachers' Motivations: "Called to China to Share, Learn, and Teach"

Cindy, Suzanne, and Barbara shared many of the same reasons for going to China and so inhabited similar communities of practice to one another. All three were teachers who decided to pursue a Masters degree in TESOL while they were in China, and they all spent years studying and learning the Chinese language (more common for 20th-century missionaries, but not so for 21st Christian teachers) so they were within a "learner" community in addition to that of "teacher." All three women felt "called" by God to teach in China, sought to form deep relationships with students in order to share their faith, and were supported by churches or individuals, so this would place them all, at least initially on an inbound trajectory in a "missionary" community. They would avoid the term "missionary" since proselytizing is banned in China. All three teachers were given leadership roles within their sending organization, such as team leader, or later more significant roles, although this was always under the senior male leadership of their organization.

Thus, the three teachers shared the following mutual communities of practice: "teacher," "missionary," "leader," and "learner," but differed in terms of the trajectories into, through, and sometimes out of those communities. Suzanne sought the opportunity to share her faith outside of class. She was careful not to proselytize in the classroom, as she said, "I don't preach from the classroom. I don't bring a Bible to class, no Bible stories when I'm teaching" (interview, March 2008). But of the three teachers, her trajectory in the "missionary" community was most secure, and her role and service in China as an English language teacher was used to support this purpose, as the following excerpt from the March 2008 interview reveals:

> Researcher: Do you consider yourself a missionary?
>
> Suzanne: I do [nodding yes]. But in the States I would also consider myself one, because I gravitate to people who are from different cultures than myself.
>
> Researcher: What is your main purpose for being here?
>
> Suzanne: [pause] … to make disciples. Part of my life in the fall will be teaching, and studying Chinese.

Cindy's role within the "missionary" community evolved over the years she was in China so much so that she wanted to become a caregiver to her fellow expatriates who were in need of learning to adjust to the culture and to learn Chinese. In her words, "I want to be able to encourage the people who are in the field, with good sound admonition. One of the reasons people leave the field is because of tension with the teammates not the [Chinese]" (interview, March

2008). The "team" or the fellow Christians that the teachers were placed with at their schools was a community all three teachers engaged in, but for Cindy, the subset of the missionary community of "team" was where she was a true insider.

In addition, Cindy felt she was a model of singleness for Chinese students, to remain pure before marriage and to prefer a single life to marriage to a non-Christian. In personal correspondence she wrote:

> Perhaps the most difficult changes/impacts culturally have been the Chinese sisters who look to my life as an example of remaining single until His [God's] choice—a Brother who is mature—enters the picture. This particular area goes against traditional Chinese cultural mores and inflicts a great deal of sorrow on the gals, particularly as they consider what it means for their parents and the way they lose face in their towns and villages. My mere existence as a 42-year-old happily and contentedly single woman simply cannot [be] reconcile[d]. So, I carry with me a load of baggage—misperceptions, judgments, and condemnations—from believers and non-believers alike. Girls here don't want to believe in a God who can't get their foreign teacher a husband. Girls here can't imagine that a Western girl could be able to be chaste and content without a boyfriend or husband, or child to make her complete. Single women have no place in China, even content Western ones.

This quote demonstrates that Cindy joined her 20th-century counterparts in the community of "gender advocate."

Barbara's insider trajectory was in the "educator" community of practice as she sought to collaborate with Chinese colleagues in her academic work and research as she notes here, "I've noticed at the school here I'm treated like a real teacher and it's because I'm interested in research and I talk to the team about academic issues and all the stuff I learned" (interview, March 2008). In contrast to Suzanne, Barbara was on a peripheral trajectory in the "missionary" community. Barbara states in the 2008 interview:

> I feel like the Lord called me to China and [this missionary organization] and I don't necessarily feel called away yet. I don't want to be with them [missionary organization] always, but if people like me leave … Some people who don't agree with everything have to stay and be that questioning voice.

Barbara was also on the peripheral trajectory in "team" as she states here:

> The place where I am, so many of my social needs are met by Chinese people. It's hard to find the balance between how much you serve your team and when you draw those boundaries. I'm drawing stronger boundaries as the year goes on. But I don't always know if I'm drawing them at the right place. (interview, March 2008)

The Intended and Actual Results of Teaching in China

The next set of findings responds to the intended and actual results of the participants' tenure in China. To introduce these findings relating to teachers' accomplishments and regrets, are Dr. Hayhoe's (2004) reflections on grace and opportunities.

> Whatever problems I might have had with particular doctrines, the sense of providence, of an all-wise God guiding my steps and giving me strength to open up to each new opportunity, has been a continuing foundation of life. The one core concept that I associate most deeply with Christian belief is the idea of grace, the sense that each moment of life, with the special opportunities it opens up, is a gift from God to be accepted and held in open hands never to be tightly grasped or held so closely that the next moment or opportunity is overlooked. This has meant living a life of thankfulness for each moment—the painful and the happy ones—and for each opportunity, which is a gift. (p. 60)

The 20th Century Missionaries' Results: Regrets and Accomplishments

Elsie's intended results were to expand her experiences and those of the girls and women she taught in China, and in that she succeeded if only for the six-year term she spent with the small group of women at Hwa Nan. She longed for the intimacy and intellectual stimulation of a group of educated women, which she had first discovered at Goucher College, and she found this among her students in China once she was able to learn Fukienese, which she found to be one of the most difficult things she had ever done. She was able to promote her students' ambition, self-worth, and independence, perhaps as much by modeling these traits as by her lessons about them. The following quote from her letter describing her student illustrates that they were getting the message. The student is responding to a comment from someone during her sermon, who said that surely women would not be in heaven. Elsie wrote:

> Oh, it seemed to me that the student of ours who was preaching the sermon almost choked with emotion. I thought she almost gritted her teeth in indignation. Her words poured out in answer, "Oh don't you know that women aren't like us Chinese women all the world over. It's only our bad customs that keep women down and despicable. They are not so in the sight of God. He made men and women to be both alike his children. There are other countries where women are honored and taught. In the land this lady (pointing to me) comes from, women are respected as much as the men, and they have let them come here to tell us about the Christian religion that brings women this happiness. China ought to change her evil customs." (Elsie Clark letter to family, May 22, 1915)

Although I would hope that Elsie was able to amend her student's notion that it is the "Christian religion that brings women happiness," and that Chinese customs are "evil," she did not mention this in her letter.

As Hunter (1984) noted of many of the missionaries who went to China at this time, Elsie was freed from domesticity and marriage to more options and a meaningful career. It was ironic that when she went home on furlough six years later, she married Andrew Krung, the man who had proposed to her before she left for China. However, the marriage quickly ended. Elsie lived with her daughter in Baltimore until her old age, selling Chinese "curiosities" and telling and re-telling the stories of her life in China so often that her nephews and nieces called her "China." Elsie wrote the following to her parents in 1915 almost predicting that a future in America would only be a "deprivation" compared to her life in China which she found "surpassing and abundant," as she alludes to here:

> People are so strange and unlike in what they get out of things. There are some folks here in Foochow who say they almost get desperate with the monotony of it, but as for me it seems that I have constant succession of new and broadening experiences of the most enviable kind since I left Baltimore. (Elsie Clark letter to family, June 13,1915)

Alice Reed was asked if she had any regrets in one of the interviews, and her reply was that she wished she had "entered into Chinese life a little more, in spite of the cultural difficulties, and live a little closer to the Chinese" (Reed, interview, p. 119). She also wished she had gotten more involved in social reform in China. But she was quick to add "But since we can't interfere, that's impossible" (Reed, interview, p. 118).

Luella's intended and actual results of her tenure in China no doubt exceeded her expectations professionally, yet sociopolitically, her expectations for her work in China were not fulfilled. In the midst of the political turmoil she lived though, including the Boxer Movement in 1900 (see Miner, 1903a), the occupation of the Japanese, threats of war from British and American troops, and floods and bandits, she longed for a Gandhi-like figure to turn the nation from war to peace, and this was not realized in her lifetime. Here is an excerpt from a letter to Marshal Feng's wife late in her career in the 1930s in which her advocacy for the Chinese and China is seen:

> I have had a hard struggle in my own heart, for it has been so hard to see the right way for China, or for oneself. Perhaps most of us missionaries ought never to have come to China, certainly not unless we who say we are followers of Jesus really understand him we should not try to teach others about him…. Gandhi is saving India. Do you think that HC [Marshal Feng] could yet be China's Gandhi? Much as I love you both there is

> sorrow in my love for I do not believe in war. I do believe in non-violent resistance unto death. That is the way of Jesus. (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 2012, February 29, HOU, ABC 76, Box 3, Folder 2:11)

The 21st Century Teachers' Results: "Fits Perfectly vs. Hard to Reconcile"

Cindy stated that her intended results were to share her "language, life, and hope" (personal correspondence). The effect on U.S. society that Cindy noted was that she brought back her "transformed understanding" of her former "limited American faith to the American folks who had sent me" and "shared the lives and faith of my [Chinese] brothers and sisters which have served to challenge and encourage the faith of my American family back home (as well as my own faith)" (personal correspondence). Other results she noted were that she completed a Masters degree, acquired "a sound level of proficiency in Chinese," and formed many relationships with Chinese with some opportunities to share her faith. The communities of "missionary" and "learner" are evident in these statements.

Suzanne's purpose was to teach English, make friends, and share her faith, and this she did. In the March 2008 interview she stated, "I turned 40 recently and at my party there were three to four people who had known me for ten years and that is amazing in China, and that makes it really rich." She did not have a problem reconciling her role as teacher and Christian witness, and said that "it fits perfectly." Her letters home reveal numerous friends she made and Chinese Christians she met in China who strengthened her faith.

In contrast, Barbara struggled with reconciling the expectation to witness and teach as she states here:

> But I don't know how to reconcile that expectation of what they [the mission organization] want me to be with who I really am which is a professional educator who cares deeply for my students holistically, which involves their spirituality. We are … I don't know exactly how to say it, fragmented … um, in some ways…. We are professional teachers, we are full-time workers or missionaries in some people's minds. I don't like to use, I don't see myself in that realm, but that spiritual aspect is there. And then we're, you know learning about, learning Chinese and learning about Chinese culture, and then we are team members. To do all of those things while maintaining a healthy balance of spirituality in your own self and living in China, which is rather time consuming, is nearly impossible.

Barbara's comments have resonance with Elsie's letters in which she wrote that she didn't feel like she was a "real missionary." In fact, four of the six participants' quotes in this section reveal that they had to come to terms with

some type of disappointment, or as Dr. Hayhoe's quote suggests, learn to "accept each moment." To apply Wenger's framework, these are points in which they were reconciling multimemberships of communities of practice.

The Differences and Similarities across Time and among the Six Women Teaching in China

The next set of findings examines differences across the two time periods and among the women in this study. Dr. Hayhoe's work examined the development of a modern system of higher education in China in the early 20th century. In this quote from the introduction of *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-Century China* (2004), co-written with Glen Peterson, she speaks to the importance of framing this discussion within a broad understanding of Chinese history and thought, and suggests we consider "activities" which resonates with Wenger's theory in his discussion of "participation and non-participation" in communities of practice.

> We have found it fruitful to conceive of education in terms of constituent activities. The best way to grasp the significance of these activities in the changing context of the twentieth century is to begin by locating them on the broader historical canvas of Chinese educational thought and practice. In their introduction to *Education and Society in Late Imperial China* Woodside and Elman refer to the "three inexhaustible categories of "teaching" (*jiao*), "learning" (*xue*) and "culture/literature" (*wen*) that made up the corpus of educational pursuits in the later imperial period." (pp. 3–4)

The first half of the 20th century was a tumultuous time for the foreign missionaries involved in education in China. The only constant was change and uncertainty. As mentioned in the introduction to Alice Reed's transcripts, missionaries dealt with disturbances caused by bandits, warlords, the Japanese invasion, and the early Communist penetration. Alice Reed states in a letter home, "Imagine trying to conduct a class in the middle of battlefield, as that is what we had to do!" Alice Reed also noted the difficulties faced after 1928 when they had to decide whether to register their school in order to gain more opportunities for their graduates, but in doing so, they would lose the ability to offer any religious education during school hours. Luella Miner who arrived in China in 1887, experienced firsthand the bloody and violent anti-foreign movement of the Boxer Movement in 1900 in a 10-week siege that she details in her books *China Book of Martyrs: A Record of Heroic Martyrdoms and Marvelous Deliverances of Chinese Christians During the Summer of 1900*, and *Two Heroes of Cathay: An Autobiography and a Sketch*, both published in 1903. From reading these accounts, one gets the feeling that the beginning of the 20th century in China was

like a volcano with explosive eruptions resulting in an entirely new landscape.

The changes experienced by the Christian teachers in China at the beginning of the 21st century are mild in comparison. Thus one might say that Chinese education went through a rather traumatic "birthing" process in the early 20th century, while in the following century Chinese education gradually matured and developed over time. Although there were notable changes at the beginning of the 21st century in Chinese higher education as it expanded into a form of mass higher education, this situation was a "blessing" for Christian teachers in China as they were needed to help modernize China. Thus the historical context of these two time periods was extremely different for these two groups of women, in spite of the common Confucian-informed activities that linked them, learning, teaching, and culture.

One of the most notable ways in which the different time periods affected the women was in their primary motivation for going to China. As discussed previously, the 20th century women were motivated by "a social gospel" to educate Chinese women and establish Christian schools for girls and women in China, while the 21st century women were motivated by a desire to form friendships and share their faith. But another difference in the two sets of women from the two time periods was the degree of superiority they felt upon arrival. For the 20th century women, although they came with the intent to learn the Chinese language, learning from the Chinese was not necessarily a primary goal. Superiority was assumed and not questioned, until experience taught them otherwise. Fortunately for Alice, Luella and Elsie, gradually the realization came upon them that Chinese culture had something to teach them, and they began to see their own practices and beliefs in a new, critical light. This confirms Graham's (1995) and Robert's (1997; 2002) findings that many missionary women revised their views of the need to reform Chinese "heathen" culture, to a more complex view which acknowledged both positive values within Chinese culture and questionable values within Western culture.

Suzanne, Cindy, and Barbara, on the other hand, had the benefit of pre-field training and were exposed to terminology such as ethnocentrism and "othering" Chinese, which may have helped to mitigate such perspectives, not to mention they were in China during a period of China's rise to become a superpower. Although the six women ended up in a similar place of respect for the Chinese culture, the 20th century women had to "unlearn" prejudice and discover through experience that learning could be two-way. An exception to this was perhaps Luella Miner, who arrived with more inclusive views, as she had been the only white student in her high school graduating class in the U.S. She had worked among native Americans with her missionary father and to prepare for the mission field in China, and taught three years in a "colored" school in the South. Perhaps these experiences helped prepare her for the advocacy roles among the

Chinese she developed that seemed to elude Alice (which she regretted later).

As to individual differences, each woman was unique, but perhaps the two women who stand out the most are Elsie who might have fitted in better in the Peace Corps (which was not an option at the time) than the mission field, and Luella, who was an outlier due to her notable accomplishments as a leader in education. When she sailed to China in 1887, Luella probably did not set out with the intention to establish the first women's college in China nor did she intend to become an author and advocate for Chinese students. This became her role, however, and her lifelong friendships with Chinese colleagues, students, and others, and the work of establishing schools and colleges must have been fulfilling. Yet in spite of this, in her last years she had doubts about mission work and missionaries' foreign presence in China. Luella was not able to "save China" spiritually, socially, or politically, but the result of her work was one of the many influences that prompted China to find its own way to respond to the humiliation of defeat faced in the early 20th century and to move forward on a quest to modernize and find a new form of education for a new China. So of the six participants, Luella made the largest contribution, but all six participants had an impact on the students who they taught, so in this they were similar.

Turning now to similarities between the two time periods, one of the most obvious is the demand for education and English by the Chinese. Education according to Graham (1995) was "a patch of common ground" (p. 13) between the Chinese and missionaries in the 20th century and this has continued right up until today. Education was in great demand by all, as it allowed elites to mold society and held promise for non-elites to advance in it. English was also in demand as it was regarded as modern, progressive, and patriotic at a time when China was suffering from defeat and needed to modernize to survive. Thus the "craze for English" was as strong in 20th century as it is today. And although the missionaries of the 20th century at first resisted the use of English in their schools, eventually the need for students and funding forced them to give in and offer classes in English.

Missionaries of both centuries also had a similar sense of calling during what they felt was a critical point in history. In 20th century China it was the demand for single female missionaries to engage in "women's work for women" to help educate the girls and women of China. The SVMFM, whose mantra was "The evangelization of the world in this generation" (as cited in Lautz, 2009, p. 4) motivated thousands of college students to go to China as teachers. The 21st century's parallel to this was China's open door policy. China had been closed to Westerners since 1949, and only in the 1980s it was possible for Christians to go to China again. Missionary conferences such as "Urbana" brought together over 10 thousand students, asking them to go to places like China to "be a witness" in this formerly "closed country" (i.e., closed to missionary work). Once again

education and English created an opportunity for missionaries to work in China. Barbara and Elsie both questioned their role as missionaries and found themselves on a peripheral trajectory, and Luella, though an insider in the missionary community, ended her career questioning if missionaries should ever have come.

In looking at the communities of practice (see Table 3), all six women were insiders in the community of "teacher/educator." Four out of six women were insiders in the "missionary" community of practice, although two were peripheral in that community. Four of them were "gender advocates," two were "Chinese advocates." Four of the women were part of the "leaders" community (three inbound and one insider) and three were part of the "learner" community. From this analysis it seems that the six women had much in common. Perhaps the most interesting similarities are those found among the women across time periods. Elsie and Suzanne both got married at the end of their service in China. Luella and Barbara both sought out advanced degrees and engaged in collaboration with local Chinese colleagues. Elsie sought out deep relationships with students, as did the three 21st century teachers. Cindy saw herself as a gender role model of singleness and sought to adjust the construction of gender in China, much like the three 20th century women. Jonathan Spence's comment mentioned earlier, best summarizes the experiences of these six women: Western missionaries were changed more by China, than China was changed by the missionaries. And perhaps this was a good thing.

What are the implications of the previous analysis and what have we learned from these women about gender and identity, missions and empire? As Hunter (2010) has described, today in China there is a "don't ask don't tell," policy in place for Christian teachers sent from missionary-like agencies, and this seems to be working well for both the Christian sending agencies and the Chinese Communist government. The level of awareness and transparency of the Christian sending agencies has increased over the years as trust has been established. For example the mission statement of the nonprofit organization in this study evolved over the years to reflect a more transparent goal of being a Christian witness in China. Alice Reed's prediction in 1969, that "There will never be missionaries again in China as there were in the past" (Reed, interview, p. 118), may not be the case, as Christian teachers are in China today in no small numbers. They are selected, trained, sent, and cared for by Christian (missionary minded) agencies and they are financially supported by American Christians and churches interested in providing a Christian witness in China. As long as Christian teachers follow Chinese law and know their limitations, such as not proselytizing in the classroom, not criticizing the government, and not interfering in internal political matters, they are welcomed. Christians and Communists, in their overlapping interest in education and in improving the English proficiency

of Chinese students, have created a space, however awkward and precarious, to work together.

Conclusion

This study examined the lives of three missionary women educators in 20th century China juxtaposed to three Christian English teachers in China today. Through an analysis of letters, diaries, journals and interview transcripts, six communities of practice emerged: “educator,” “missionary,” “gender advocate,” “Chinese advocate,” “leader,” and “learner.” The six women engaged in similar communities of practice but traversed different trajectories into, inside, along the edges, across the boundaries, and out of their various communities, as they formed their identities through their work in China. All six women felt a divine call to teach in China. For the three 20th century missionaries their desire to educate China’s girls and women and save their “heathen sisters” was one of the main reasons to go to China, while their 20th century counterparts went out of a desire to share their faith and learn about Chinese culture. All six women were offered positions of leadership within their mission organizations, although it was men who held the key positions in their organizations, and the 20th century women lost their power when the women mission boards and women colleges became coed. As Robert (2002) notes, the impact of the loss of women’s power and influence in leadership in Chinese Christian universities and Western mission boards is one that is yet understudied and thus ripe for future research.

Notions of gender and religious intentions informed why they went to China, but this evolved and changed though their interactions with Chinese culture and people. Two women in this study became advocates for the Chinese and engaged in linking communities of practice either through publishing or academic collaboration. The thousands of letters the six women sent home no doubt had an impact on their local communities and churches. The need to raise support required that they relate stories of their work and lives in Chinese society to their sponsors on a regular basis. These women were the West’s eyes and ears in China, interpreting Chinese events and helping to form opinions of Chinese people; thus they had and continue to have an influence on both societies.

Future studies might include participants from other countries who went to other destinations and for other purposes to explore the differences and similarities that might be found (see for example Zimmerman 2006, who looks at both missionaries and Peace Corps volunteers who went to China and the Philippines). Future research might explore how a teacher’s faith affects the motivation (impetus, effort, and duration) to teach English and to learn a foreign language and culture (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) and how this affects their

students. Questions that address multi-archival perspectives could be explored such as the effect that Chinese students and colleagues have on missionaries and teachers. For example, additional types of research might be conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of how Chinese received, rejected, or revised for their own purposes the messages that were and are still are being conveyed and constructed through the encounters of Chinese and Western missionaries and Christian English teachers working in education in China. Collaborative research of Chinese and Western colleagues holds the most potential to get at such questions such as Hu and Zhang's (2010) work on diaries from both a Western missionary and local Chinese on the events of the Rape of Nanking.

In addition, providing a more contextualized understanding would be helpful to offer local perspectives on the work of missionaries in the past and Christian English teachers today. Dr. Hayhoe's historically and culturally informed scholarship provides an example of how one can contextualize the findings within the broader framework of Chinese history. How are the Confucian practices of teaching (*jiao*), learning (*xue*), and culture/literature (*wen*) expressed in Chinese education today and what impact does this have on Western teachers and education? Dr. Hayhoe's work helps us re-envision how Western Christians in education and higher education can approach China with the attitude of learning with the skills to engage in "careful observation and respectful listening to understand the culture underlying different educational systems and pedagogies" (Hayhoe, 2004, p. 77), rather than an attitude of linguistic, cultural, or religious superiority. Dr. Hayhoe emphasized the need for higher education in China to find its own path and not mimic the West. She acknowledged what was unique and valuable in Chinese society and Chinese culture and wrote about notable Chinese scholars and Chinese universities and their contributions, explaining what can be gained from an understanding of a Chinese perspective of education (see Hayhoe, 2006; Hayhoe, Li, Lin, & Zha, 2010). Buddhist ways of reasoning and women's ways of knowing, as Hayhoe (2005) suggests, are well matched, in that they tend to be integrative, holistic, aesthetic, affective and intuitive (p. 73) providing a needed corrective to the linear type of working style found in institutions of higher education in the West. The hardships many women have faced puts them in a unique place to identify with and understand problems that societies face today, and thus it is worth exploring "ways in which women scholars in the university community may contribute to overcoming the constraints of these patterns, and stimulate active participation in dialogue" (Hayhoe, 2005, p. 67).

If a Hayhoeian approach were to be adopted by Western teachers in China, then answers to Hunter's (2010) question about "the impact of this global exchange on gender roles" (p. 41) may be found in what Western women can learn from Chinese women ways of knowing, and not just vice versa. And

answers to "What influence will this century's evangelical missionaries have on America's domestic affairs?" (p. 40) may be found in integrative Buddhist-informed approaches that Westerners may learn to adopt. This approach holds promise to address Marshall's question "how can religious institutions preserve and extend into the next generation what makes their traditions unique without engendering… chauvinism?" (Stambach et al., 2011, p. 115) as future research could explore the impact of partnerships among Chinese universities and foreign faith-informed universities as well the impact of Confucian Institutes in the West as part of China's "soft power initiative."

To conclude, in her autobiography Dr. Hayhoe (2004) relates the story of her mother's "last gift" of "the amazing pile of letters" (p. 10), that she had collected, kept and filed month by month over 24 years, providing a rich resource of data. This paper sought to use some of Dr. Hayhoe's reflections on her letters in the description and analysis of the letters of six women in China, to frame the findings but also to point to what could be done with "careful observation and respectful listening to understand the culture underlying different educational systems" (p. 77). It is hoped that this Hayhoeian approach will inspire many more studies focused on the fascinating exploration of gender, missions, identity, and empire.

References

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. (2012, February 29). Miner, Luella (N. China, 1887–1935). Letters and papers, 1884–1935. [Letters and papers]. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives (ABC 1–91). Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Bays, D. H. (Ed.). (1996). *Christianity in China: From the eighteenth century to the present*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bays, D., & Widmer, E. (Eds.). (2009). *China's Christian colleges: Cross-cultural connections, 1900–1950.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bickers, R. A., & Seton, R. (Eds.). (1996). *Missionary encounters: Sources and issues*. Richmond, UK: Curzon Press.

Clark-Krug, E. (n.d.). Elsie Clark Krug papers. [Detailed correspondence, diaries, photographs, and collected material document]. Special Collections (Record Group No. 142). Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self.* Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Edge, J. (2003). Imperial troopers and servants of the Lord: A vision of TESOL for the 21st century. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(4), 701–709.

Edge, J. (Ed.). (2006). *(Re-)locating TESOL in an age of empire*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Flynt, W., & Berkley, G. W. (1997). *Taking Christianity to China: Alabama missionaries in the Middle Kingdom 1850–1950*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Graham, G. (1995). *Gender, culture, and Christianity: American protestant mission schools in*

China 1880–1930. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Hayhoe, R. (2004). *Full circle: A life with Hong Kong and China*. Toronto, Canada: Women's Press.

Hayhoe, R. (2005). Universities, women, and the dialogue among civilizations. In G. A. Jones, P. L. McCarney, & M. L. Skolnik (Eds.), *Creating knowledge, strengthening nations: The changing role of higher education* (pp. 67–80). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Hayhoe, R. (2006). *Portraits of influential Chinese educators.* Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong and Springer.

Hayhoe, R., Li, J., Lin, J., & Zha, Q. (2010). *Portraits of 21st century Chinese universities: In the move to mass higher education.* Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong and Springer.

Hayhoe, R., & Peterson, G. (2004). Introduction. In G. Peterson, R. Hayhoe, & Y. Lu (Eds.), *Education, culture, & identity in twentieth-century China* (pp. 1–21). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Honig, E. (1996). Christianity, feminism, and communism: The life and times of Deng Yuzhi. In D. H. Bays (Ed.), *Christianity in China: From the eighteenth century to the present* (pp. 243–262). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hu, H.-L., & Zhang, L.-H. (Eds. & Trans.). (2010). *The undaunted women of Nanking: The wartime diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-fang*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Hunter, J. (1984). *The gospel of gentility: American women missionaries in turn-of-the-century China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hunter, J. H. (2010). Women's mission in historical perspective: American identity and Christian internationalism. In B. Reeves-Ellington, K. K. Sklar, & C. A. Shemo (Eds.), *Competing kingdoms: Women, mission, nation, and the American Protestant empire, 1812–1960* (pp. 19–42). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Johnston, B. & Varghese, M. (2006). Neo-imperialism, evangelism, and ELT: Modernist missions and a postmodern profession. In J. Edge (Ed.), *(Re)locating TESOL in an age of empire* (pp. 195–207). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kwok, P.-L. (1992). *Chinese women and Christianity 1860–1927*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

Lautz, T. E. (2009). The SVM and transformation of the Protestant mission to China. In D. Bays & E. Widmer (Eds.), *China's Christian colleges: Cross-cultural connections, 1900–1950* (pp. 3–21). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power: Theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, *23*(6), 767–795. doi:10.1177/0895904808320676

Liu, J., & Kelly, D. P. (1996). "An oasis in a heathen land": St. Hilda's School for Girls, Wuchang, 1928–1936. In D. Bays (Ed.), *Christianity in China: From the eighteenth century to the present* (pp. 228–242). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lodwick, K. (1995). *Educating the women of Hainan: The career of Margaret Moninger in China 1915–1942.* Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.

Miner, L. (1903a). *China's book of martyrs: A record of heroic martyrdoms and marvelous deliverances of Chinese Christians during the summer of 1900*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.

Miner, L. (Ed.). (1903b). *Two heroes of Cathay: An autobiography and a sketch.* New York: NY. Fleming H. Revell Co.

Pennycook, A., & Coutand-Marin, S. (2003). Teaching English as a missionary language (TEML). *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *24*(3), 337–353. doi:10.1080/0159630032000172524

Peterson, G., Hayhoe, R., & Lu, Y. (Eds.). (2004). *Education, culture, & identity in twentieth-century China*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Pruitt, L. J. (2005). *A looking-glass for ladies: American protestant women and the orient in the nineteenth century*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

Reed, A. C. (1969). Excerpts from letters from China written by Alice Reed to her family and friends during the years 1916–1948. Interviews conducted by G. Irwin, C. H. Peake, J. O. Regan, and A. L. Rosenbaum. [Series of interviews and collections of letters]. China Missionary Project (Special Collections). Honnold Library, Claremont College, Claremont, CA.

Reeves-Ellington, B., Sklar, K. K., & Shemo C. A. (2010). Introduction. In B. Reeves-Ellington, K. K. Sklar, & C. A. Shemo (Eds.), *Competing kingdoms: Women, mission, nation, and the American protestant empire, 1812–1960* (pp. 1–18). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Robert, D. L. (1997). *American women in mission: A social history of their thought and practice*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

Robert, D. L. (Ed.). (2002). *Gospel bearers, gender barriers: Missionary women in the twentieth century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Ross, H. (1996). "Cradle of female talent": The McTyeire Home and School for Girls, 1892–1937. In D. Bays (Ed.), *Christianity in China: From the eighteenth century to the present* (pp. 209–227). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Stambach, A., Marshall, K., Nelson, M. J., Andreescu, L., Kwayu, A. C., Wexler, P. et al. (2011). Religion, education, and secularism in international agencies. *Comparative Education Review*, *55*(1), 111–142. doi:10.1086/657650

Vandrick, S. (2002). ESL and the colonial legacy: A teacher faces her "missionary kid" past. In V. Zamel & R. Spack (Eds.), *Enriching ESOL pedagogy: Readings and activities for engagement, reflection, and inquiry* (pp. 411–422). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Varghese, M., & Johnston, B. (2007). Evangelical Christians and English language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, *41*(1), 9–31.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wong, M. S., & Canagarajah, A. S. (Eds.). (2009). *Christian and critical English language educators in dialogue: Pedagogical and ethical dilemmas*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wong, M. S., Kristjansson, C., & Dornyei, Z. (Eds.). (in press). *Christian faith and English language teaching and learning: Research on the interrelationship of religion and ELT*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wong, M. S. (2009). Deconstructing/reconstructing the missionary English teacher identity. In M. S. Wong & A. S. Canagarajah (Eds.), *Christian and critical English language educators in dialogue: Pedagogical and ethical dilemmas* (pp. 91–105). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wong, M. S. (2000). *The influence of gender and culture on the pedagogy of five Western English teachers in China*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

Worden, A. J. (1986). Elsie Clark Krug from Goucher to Hwa Nan: An American woman's quest for happiness. Unpublished manuscript.

Zimmerman, J. (2006). *Innocents abroad: American teachers in the American century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.