

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

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CHAPTER THREE

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

I

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

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

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

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

worshippers as well as idolaters. In sum, McGilvary believed that northern Thai popular religion was inconsistent, incoherent, contradictory, and thoroughly false.[7]

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

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

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

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

Religion, nevertheless, determined the condition of society and culture. Protestant

Christianity encouraged the growth of civilization while Buddhism resulted in an uncivilized condition,[18] and that contrast meant that the Laos Mission looked upon northern Siam as a vast field of battle and itself as living in the midst of "enemy country." Satan commanded the enemy forces while it, on the other hand, represented the army of God invading Satan's territory. Quite often, in fact, the missionaries employed military allusions and terms when they wrote about their work. They called themselves "generals" and spoke of the Christian converts as the troops in "God's militia." They "invaded" new villages" and "consolidated their lines" when training new converts. Buddhist monks, temples, and revivals represented instruments of Satan and his forces of darkness.[19]

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

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

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

II

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

American foreign missionary movement.

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

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

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

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

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

III

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

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

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

Catholicism and the American Indians provided but two instances of the much more pervasive and consistent dualistic habit of mind. From colonial times, whites categorized black Americans, slave and free alike, as "savage" and "heathen," associating whiteness with civilization and blackness with savagism.[36] Nineteenth-century evangelical Protestants equated black ghettos with Satan, placed blacks with Indians at the bottom of the scale of civilization, believed that the very presence of blacks defiled and endangered white civilization, and sought to evangelize blacks in order to protect that civilization.[37] The fact that blacks themselves

accepted and employed dualism demonstrated the extent of its power in American thinking. Booker T. Washington applied its categories to Indians and treated them with the condescension and paternalism savages "deserved." Nineteenth-century black American Protestant missionaries used those same categories on African "natives." Even those black American denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, most independent of white Protestantism, accepted without question the superiority of western culture.[38]

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

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

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

The dualistic interpretations expressed by both sides during the Civil War represented, in fact, yet another use of dualism. In the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War, Americans characteristically branded their enemies with such as labels as "agent of Satan," and "Anti-Christ." They attacked anti-war factions as the enemies of freedom.[46] Robert Jewett shows how this tradition has continued uninterrupted down to the present, and he finds the true origins of the American use of dualism during war in the apocalyptic literature of the Old and New Testaments. In every one of its wars, Americans believed their pure, righteous nation engaged in a cosmic battle against the unprincipled, dirty, lawless, cowardly, arrogant forces of Satan. The "blood thirsty Huns" of World War exemplified the archetypical American enemy.[47]

While wars presented a ready-made opportunity for the use of dualism, it manifested

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

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

IV

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

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

A great many American Presbyterians came from Scotland and Ulster, and the rest seemed quite as able to think dualistically so that American Presbyterians exhibited the same combative divisiveness as the Scottish Kirk. In the mid-eighteenth century, colonial Presbyterians split into two warring factions, the Old Lights and New Lights, over the issues of the purity of Presbyterian doctrine and the use of revivalism. Scotch-Irish immigrants had a major hand in the events, which followed and led to the first formal split between American Presbyterians. Each side hurled damning charges at the other and believed that the other hurt the cause of God and Presbyterianism in America.[55]

In the early national period, Presbyterians continued to fight over how best to preserve the purity of the denomination. A powerful faction of orthodox church leaders feared the rise of

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

When Jonathan Wilson took his axe to that long-buried Buddha image, he did so, then, from a habit of mind that had long since permeated the fabric of American thinking. That habit of mind divided the world into two spheres, each entirely separate and distinct from the other. Each sphere had its own essential nature, everything within that sphere sharing that nature, so that when Wilson looked at the Buddha image he did not see a religious object that people venerated. He saw an Idol. He saw a blasphemous representation of a false prophet. There could not be any good in that object because it originated in Satan's sphere. Wilson used his axe. Therefore, not only to reaffirm the division of reality into two parts but also to strengthen and expand the sphere of God while weakening that of Satan. From within the logic of dualism, his acted would seem entirely logical to nineteenth-century Americans.

Reality, says Berger, is socially constructed. The reality that the Laos Mission created in northern Siam set solid limits upon the types of activities in which the mission could engage. Those activities had to reflect the "fact" that northern Thai society was essentially evil while

American society was essentially good. They had to proceed from the assumption that missionary activities could in no way draw upon that which was essentially evil in pursuit of mission goals. In the logic of dualism, then, lies the path to understanding why the Laos Mission acted as it did.

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[18] McGilvary to Irving, 19 April 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 17 December 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, "Laos Mission.—Chiengmai," *Foreign*

Missionary 26 (May 1868): 280-81; McGilvary, Summary of a report published in *Foreign Mission* 28 (July 1869): 31; and McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 70.

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

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

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

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

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

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