

the lives of many persons, and his projects laid the ground-work for rural development in subsequent years. And the church to which he devoted his life has emerged, from thirty years of repression and eclipse, stronger and more vigorous than ever.

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Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and The Church in Hong Kong

by Carl T. Smith, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong

reviewed by Harold Naylor

Carl Smith came to Hong Kong more than twenty years ago to teach theology at the Chung Chi College of Chinese University. He is now retired and therefore able to give full time to the keen interest he has always shown for local history and local geneologies. His book is a collection of ten studies which have appeared in local scholarly journals here throughout the years. As the title suggests, it offers brief biographies of the outstanding personalities of the Protestant community during the years 1845 to 1911. Brief though the sketches may be, they represent years of painstaking research into primary sources, including many private documents and personal papers. This is not an easy task when one considers the fact that local urban history has yet to receive adequate systematic treatment from the hands of professional historians and scholars.

As a Catholic, I found most interesting the study

of how Protestant missionary work here in Hong Kong developed through the effort of such noted missionaries as Dr. James Legge and Rev. Robert Morrison, who combined Christian zeal with high academic qualifications to found religious and educational institutions that are still very much a part of Hong Kong life today. Smith also traces the history of such local leaders in the church and in society as Rev. Ho Fuk Tong, and all three Tong brothers who were pioneers in the modernization of China's commerce and industry. He also records in detail how the early Protestant churches in Hong Kong confronted the traditional family structure, a study of particular interest to those who are struggling with the problem of cultural adaptation.

The book offers much first-hand information on that group of Chinese who accepted the message and teaching of the early Protestant missionaries during the last century. It is also a valuable record of missionary influence on the development of the English language and Western styles in the commercial and educational worlds of the territory, not to mention the christian orientation of many social structures here in the society at-large which is also part of the missionary heritage.

If there is one small criticism of this highly readable and informative collection, it is the lack of a study on the church communities themselves. One looks in vain for a description of the day-to-day faith life of those early christian communities. However, this small reservation aside, Carl Smith's book will be of great interest to anyone concerned with the early history of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong, their growth and development, and to those looking for a more detailed account of the history of urban Hong Kong families in the late nineteenth century.

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