The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay
The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada’s First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872 – 1901)

Edited by

Clyde R. Forsberg Jr.

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING
For Cholpon
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... ix

Introduction: George Leslie Mackay in Brief.................................................................................. 1
Clyde R. Forsberg Jr.

**History and Missiology**

“Growing Up Presbyterian in Victorian Canada”: Childhood Influences and Faith Formation ................................................................................................................................. 21
Marguerite Van Die

Putting Taiwan’s People in the Center of the Story: Reflections on the History of Christian Mission in Taiwan......................................................................................................................... 43
James R. Rohrer

More Treasures Preserved Abroad: New Mackay Letters in the Presbyterian Archives.......................................................................................................................... 57
Rev. Michael Stainton

**Comparative Literature**

Heroic Memoirs from a Hot Country: Taiwan Missionary Life Writing... 71
Mary Goodwin

**Dramaturgy**

*The Black Bearded Bible Man*: Flagship Opera. Formosan Epic, Emblem, and Enigma .................................................................................................................. 93
Llyn Scott

**Historiography and Cultural Studies**

Pan Celtic Anglo-Saxonism, the Polar Eden, and Crossing Racial Divides: The Interesting Case of George Leslie Mackay................................................................. 111
Clyde R. Forsberg Jr.
Religious Studies

Prolegomena to Missiology: Reflection on Religious and Political Differences ................................................................. 139
Hugo A. Meynell

Contributing Authors ........................................................................................................................................... 151
I want to begin by thanking Aletheia University, the National Science Council of Taiwan, Ministry of Education, and Queen’s University (Kingston) for their generous moral and financial support. Special thanks to Principal Jean Stairs of the Queen’s School of Religion and Siphiwe I. Dube of the Lectures and Colloquia Committee for bringing Mackay scholar Prof. James R. Rohrer to Queen’s University in 2009 to deliver the Elias Andrews Lecture on science and religion, as well as classroom space and other amenities for a Mackay workshop and international exchange that ran concurrently. An important facet of the Queen’s University meeting of scholars interested in advancing Mackay studies that year, West and East, was the chance to share knowledge and pool archival resources. Queen’s University archivists Deirdre Bryden and Gillian Barlow warrant special mention in this regard, locating the minutes of Mackay’s doctoral convocation which my colleagues and I at Aletheia University took back with us to Taiwan, and for organizing a tour of the Queen’s University Archives that would prove so illuminating. But let me also suggest that without Prof. Marguerite Van Die at Queen’s University, her experience and generosity, the idea of a three-year international exchange on the subject of George Leslie Mackay and subsequent collection of essays would have died on the table. The Taiwanese delegation that came to Queen’s University that year also travelled to Toronto and the United Church of Canada Archives where a thousand Mackay letters awaited inspection, copies of the same now in Taiwan thanks to both Alvyn Austin and Michael Stainton (York Centre of Asian Research and Canadian Mackay Committee) who presided over this leg of our journey, advancing the state of Mackay studies in Taiwan for years to come.

In 2010, a Mackay conference was held in Taiwan and hosted by Aletheia University. It was a first. Another is planned for 2012, and largely because of the international vision and dedication of Aletheia University’s new president, Prof. Ming-Ta Wu. Special thanks as well to the Dean of the College of Humanities, Prof. Chi-Rong Chen, and to Profs. Wei-Min Tsai and Jane Lee (Department of Religion and English respectively) for their long suffering and remarkable feats of translation, but more than that, for giving so much of their precious time and energy.
Words cannot express my admiration for all the students at Aletheia University who volunteered their time and expert translation and conference services in 2010 for the Mackay conference and other events related to it, attending to the needs of the distinguished scholars who came to Taiwan, some for the first time, and with such grace and style.

I must thank Carol Koulikourdi of Cambridge Scholars Publishing for agreeing to publish this collection and, indeed, for responding in such a timely manner—such a rarity in academic circles. Sincere thanks, as well, to everyone at CSP, to Soucin Yip-Sou for a beautifully designed cover and Amanda Millar for typesetting and other editorial assistance that proved so invaluable. In addition, Canadian historian Dr. Gordon D. Pollock and wife Dorothy read the manuscript at several points along the way, offering up a number of critical insights for which I am immensely grateful.

I am not sure how best to express my sincere gratitude to my wife of five glorious years now, Cholpon Alieva, for her love, support, and sacrifice, except to dedicate this volume to her—for all that she does and means to me as friend, partner, and fellow-traveler far from home.
INTRODUCTION:
GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY IN BRIEF

CLYDE R. FORSBERG JR.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, TAIWAN
MACKAY RESEARCH GROUP, ALETHEIA UNIVERSITY,
TAMSUI, TAIWAN

“Statue of George Leslie Mackay in Tamsui, Taipei, Taiwan”
13 Jan. 2006, Ming-Wang-x
This collection of essays on the life and legacy of Presbyterian missionary to Northern Taiwan, George Leslie Mackay, poses a number of questions and from a variety of disciplinary vantage points. The bulk of the essays themselves are a consequence of two trans-Pacific crossings, the first in 2009 when Taiwanese scholars from Aletheia University (formerly Oxford College and founded by Mackay) made the long trip to Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada for a George Leslie Mackay workshop organized by myself—a Queen’s University alumnus, class of ’94, and scholar of 19th-century American and Canadian religious history—and colleagues. The Canadian meeting was also sponsored by the Queen’s School of Religion, formerly Queen’s Theological College. Among the Canadian treasures that my Taiwanese colleagues and I brought back with us to Oxford College was the dedication that Principal George M. Grant read into the record on that auspicious occasion. In 2010, a select group of western scholars from Canada and the United States came to Aletheia University to discuss in greater depth the issue of Mackay as Taiwanese cultural icon and mystery to the West respectively—Canada’s best kept secret in some ways and despite the best efforts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Canadian Mackay Committee to get the word out.¹

Among the volume’s strengths is an interdisciplinary approach and constituency of scholars from such academic disciplines as History and Missiology, Comparative Literature, Dramaturgy, Historiography and Cultural Studies, and Religious Studies. The other important organizational point to make is yet another division between analytical and reflective, descriptive and prognostic, the object in mind, to lay the foundation for a more nuanced discussion of Mackay that might be said to avoid two extremes: missionary as saint versus missionary as foreign devil. Reminiscent in some respects of C.S. Lewis’ enigmatic depiction of heaven and hell in *The Screwtape Letters* (hell a peevish attempt to feed oneself despite the dysfunctional cutlery, heaven a cooperative enterprise), the end result might be described as a case of sharing, but an intellectual feast in the Chinese tradition. Around this particular table, moreover, all agree that Mackay matters.

¹ Case in point, the petition by the CMC for a stamp in honor of Oxford College (10 August 2010), accessed 1 Sept. 2011, http://www.presbyterian.ca/pccconnect/daily/5357.
Mackay’s Unique Place in Religious History and Post-Colonial Studies

Mackay can be seen as a remarkable specimen of Late Victorian, North American religious outreach. Arguably among the more unique expressions of Canadian Presbyterianism abroad, coming to Formosa (Taiwan) in 1872 and preaching specifically with aborigines in mind, he died prematurely from throat cancer June 2, 1901. It is difficult to imagine what he might have done had he lived longer—another thirty years in effect. Born March 21, 1844 to pious Scottish Presbyterians from Upper Canada (Zorra Township, Oxford County, Southern Ontario), he embraced the faith at a tender age, foreign missionary work his calling. His post-secondary education was Presbyterian through and through, studying at Knox College (Toronto), Princeton Seminary, and New College (Edinburgh) and where a life-long devotion to “natural theology” was born. Queen’s Theological College (Kingston) honored him with a Doctorate of Divinity in 1880. Mackay also went on to become the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1894 albeit in absentia. He built sixty churches, Taiwan’s oldest western-style university, Oxford College, now Aletheia University, a school for girls, now Tamkang Middle School, and even a medical clinic (1882), all of this in just thirty years. In fact, he is revered by Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and Christian alike for his medical outreach and amateur dentistry, pulling somewhere between 20,000 and 40,000 teeth before all was said and done. Two of Taiwan’s most prestigious hospitals bear his name.

A very private man, Mackay wrote comparatively little, his diaries notwithstanding. It is doubtful that he wrote his autobiography, From Far Formosa, his editor, the Rev. J.A. MacDonald, claiming full credit. As Mackay scholar James R. Rohrer rightly notes, Mackay’s “correspondence and even his diaries reveal relatively little about his inner life, leaving us in many cases to read between the lines and to conjecture.”

---


3 James R. Rohrer, “Mackay and the Aboriginals: Reflections upon the Ambiguities of Taiwanese Aboriginal Christian History,” in Christianity and Native Cultures: Perspectives from Different Regions of the World, ed. Cyriac K. Pullapilly et al. (Cross Cultural Publications, Inc., 2004), 263-275; “George Leslie Mackay in
more soldier than scholar who, according to critics, spent his time “rushing around the country like a madman.” Alvyn Austin’s seminal Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom may not be wide of the mark either in its characterization of Mackay as “the strangest character nineteenth-century Canada ever produced.”

Dominic McDevitt-Parks contends that Mackay was an “Orientalist” and thus a pawn of western imperialism. Mark Eric Munsterhjelm attempts to pin a charge of “cultural genocide” on Mackay’s lapel for his role in the destruction of Chinese idols and ancestor tablets. On that count, it is important to point out that Mackay was surely guilty of preserving native culture, too, his private collection of Formosan native artifacts considered to be among the best and most complete in the world and housed at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto—although it is high time this Taiwanese treasure trove be returned to its ancestral home. Moreover, as Rohrer argues, Mackay was a charismatic figure and founder of a new Taiwanese religion. Rightly or wrongly, Mackay is considered by many to be Taiwan’s most famous western defender of native culture and pioneer of Taiwanese independence.

Western missionaries of Mackay’s generation and breeding were proponents of what has been called the “second era of the British Empire,” Christianization and civilization going hand in hand, and the mission abroad an extension of the mission at home—Freemasons, Catholics, and Mormons the targets of virulent evangelical attacks and what David Bryon Davis characterized long ago as a type of “counter-subversion.”


Alvyn Austin, Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 30.

Dominic McDevitt-Parks, “19th-century Anglo-American representations of Formosan peoples” (Freeman Summer Grant, 2007).


See in this connection, the premier defender of this interpretation, Michael Stainton, “The Politics of Taiwan Aboriginal Origins,” in Taiwan: A New History, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 27-44.

Presbyterians took on the job of creating a modern, democratic society in the wilderness “shaped by the spirit of Christ.” Presbyterian uplift, Brian Fraser explains,

strove for an ethical Christian community characterized by those vital virtues they felt necessary for the regeneration of the world—a strong work ethic, sobriety, probity, thrift, charity, and duty informed by a democratic Christian conscience. They united evangelical zeal with moderated reason in their attempt to establish a universal consensus on individual morality and social responsibility. Taken together, these qualities of character would reform, in an ascending pattern, the family, the city, the province, the nation and ultimately the world.¹⁰

Race figured prominently in the creation of a “responsible Christian citizenry in Canada guided by the best that Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture had to offer.”¹¹ A Canadian melting pot was the end in sight. W.D. Reid’s mission to western Canada is instructive, Native Indians (Blackfeet), Irish Catholics, French and Russian Doukhabours, German/Austrian Anabaptists (Mennonites and Hutterites), Eastern European Russian Orthodox and Ashkenazi Jews, Chinese Buddhists, and even polygamous Mormons tilling the same Prairie soil and simply waiting to be civilized in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. “Woven into the texture of the life of this great nation,” Reid also believed,

shall be the impulse of the Celt, the endurance of the German, the patience of the Slav, the daring of the Northman, the romance of Italy, the suavity of France, the buoyancy of Ireland, the shrewdness of Scotland, and the enterprise and leadership of England. What a nation it should be.¹²

Whether this was Mackay’s understanding and mission proves somewhat illusive.
In the same vein, historian of western Canada Howard Palmer argued long ago now that Canadians were “reluctant hosts” at best. “There has been a long history of racism and discrimination against ethnic minorities in English-speaking Canada,” Palmer writes, “along with strong pressures

¹¹ Ibid, 94.
for conformity to Anglo-Canadian ways.”¹³ For British Columbians, the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians were particularly worrisome amid fears of “Asian hordes” threatening to wash away Anglo-Saxon self-government. “The introduction in Canada of a head tax on Chinese immigrants,” Palmer continues, “was based in considerable part on the assumptions of Anglo-conformity—immigrants who were culturally or racially inferior and incapable of being assimilated either culturally or biologically, would have to be excluded.”¹⁴

Suffice it to say that Mackay’s life in brief does not square very well with the above, or for that matter the customary, post-colonial critique of foreign missions as inextricably connected to nineteenth-century notions of inferior races and thus an imperial project that “sought to transform indigenous communities into imperial archetypes of civility and modernity by remodeling the individual, the community, and the state through western, Christian philosophies.”¹⁵ As Nicholas Thomas has masterfully shown, colonial relations were more complex and fractured, foreign missionary work a contradiction in terms with plenty of examples of both accommodation and resistance to the imperial powers that be.¹⁶ Although Mackay was certainly proud of his Celtic Anglo-Saxon heritage, a loyal Canadian with unbreakable ties to the Scottish Highlands and, of course, Britannia, he also raged against social injustice and the infamous head tax in particular. The bulk of his reading took issue with British abuses and religious bigotry in Asia, calling for greater cultural sensitivity and respect for China as a high culture and great civilization. Criticism is reserved for the superstitious and misogynistic—ancestor worship, fung shui, footbinding, and polygamy. Rev. John L. Nevius, China and the Chinese . . . Its Present Condition and Prospects¹⁷ and the Rev. George Smith, A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, in Behalf of the Church

---

¹⁴ Ibid, 188.
Missionary Society in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846 \(^{18}\) are two cases in point and high atop Mackay’s reading list. As the Rev. R.P. Mackay and author of The Life of George Leslie Mackay of Formosa explains: “While sometimes the missionary led the way, ordinarily the Church waited until the way was opened by national and commercial considerations.” \(^{19}\) Mackay’s marriage to Tiu-Chhang-mia is cited as incontrovertible proof that “he did not advocate . . . colonization.” \(^{20}\) So fierce and uncompromising was his love for Taiwan that he chose to be buried there.

**Mackay, Protestant Manhood, Interracial Marriage, and Female Missionaries**

Mackay was a contradiction in terms, his mission to Formosa having a Roman Catholic quality. William C. Barnhart argues in “Evangelicalism, Masculinity, and the Making of Imperial Missionaries in Late Georgian Britain, 1795–1820,” for example, that manhood and empire were inextricably connected, boys in essence embarking on a mission to save the empire and return home as men—their manhood and the empire intact. \(^{21}\) However, Catholics and Protestants disagreed on what constituted true manhood in the Christian mission field *per se*. As Yvonne Maria Werner has shown, the Catholic foreign mission in Nordic countries at least was very much a test of manhood and even a contest of Catholic and Protestant notions of masculinity. \(^{22}\) Whether celibacy and the monastic life were superior to marriage, Catholic masculinity superior to that of Protestantism and its feminized clergy was reason for some concern. \(^{23}\) In fact, Mackay’s heroic exploits are reminiscent in some respects of the Russian Catholic convert and rogue Jesuit, Count Stephan Djunkowsky, whose “masculinized missionary rhetoric . . . audacity, courage, and

\(^{18}\) Rev. George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, in Behalf of the Church Missionary Society in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857).

\(^{19}\) Rev. R.P. Mackay, *The Life of George Leslie Mackay of Formosa* (Toronto: Board of Foreign Missions, 1913), 15.

\(^{20}\) Ibid, 33.


endurance . . . raising money . . . [and] extensive missionary travels” gave him a “great degree of freedom of action.”\textsuperscript{24}

Mackay came to Formosa in 1872 as a single man, resisting the temptation to marry at first, living a near monastic existence before and even after his marriage to Tiu-Chhang-mia, their relationship a somewhat pragmatic if not cold affair on paper at least. He also had little interest in or use for Canadian female missionaries, married or single, which he considered to be an affront to Chinese culture and impediment to the spread of the gospel. It would not be too off beam to say that he despised the Presbyterian Women’s Auxiliary to the bitter end, his marriage to Tiu-Chhang-mia meant to silence female critics (and suitors) back in Canada.

Indeed, to marry a local woman of color in essence, and ostensibly for the good of the mission, was an audacious departure from the colonial norm. Mackay’s was a missionary underground after a fashion. One may consider the reaction to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s no less scandalous proposal in \textit{Adventure of the Yellow Face}, published in 1894 but set in the 1880s. In short, Holmes solves the mystery of a white woman in this case, her secret marriage to an African-American male, the child of mixed race that she bore him, and whether polite society should accept one and all, arguing in the affirmative.\textsuperscript{25} Anti-miscegenation reached a fever pitch in the years that followed the mutiny of Sepoys of the British East India Company in Meerut, escalating into the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58. Defenders of empire and white womanhood exaggerated incidents of wartime rape to justify reprisals, giving impetus to the stereotype of the “Indian dark-skinned rapist.” England did not enact anti-miscegenation laws as such, but an unwritten rule militated against marriage to an Indian national, which for military and diplomatic men was tantamount to professional suicide.

Of course, native women played an important role in the spread and consolidation of imperial rule, but as colonial Malaysia illustrates all too well, as so-called “sleeping dictionaries”\textsuperscript{26} with whom a true English gentleman knew better than to become romantically entangled. Whether Tiu-Chhang-mia was more than a “sleeping dictionary” to Mackay is difficult to gauge, at least from his published works. His private correspondence reveals a tender and warm side. Tiu-Chhang-mia is barely mentioned in his diaries, but this can be attributed to his strict Anglo-

\textsuperscript{24} Werner, “Manliness and Catholic Mission in Nordic Countries,” 6.

\textsuperscript{25} First published in \textit{Strand Magazine} in 1894 with illustrations by Sidney Paget.

\textsuperscript{26} See in this connection, the 2003 film, \textit{The Sleeping Dictionary}, by Guy Jenkin, filmed in Sarawak, formerly a British Protectorate, and set during the 1930s.
Canadian culture, a true gentleman not one to kiss and tell, failing to disclose the facts of one’s private life also typical of missionary “life writing” of the period.

**Mackay’s Remarkable Mastery of Chinese and Wide-Ranging Nocturnal Reading**

The quality of Mackay’s mind cannot be doubted. The speed with which he mastered Chinese is revealing. First, he overcomes the “tones,” and after a single day with a minimum of review, and all the grammar a mere four days later. As for the difficult business of the fifty-thousand or so Chinese characters, he commits to memory one hundred new characters every four days on average and thus a total of 1,200 in just three months.

27 “Began some Chinese at 6 A.M. learned the tones. . . . This day O Lord I need to consecrate myself to thee. This language between me and the people—I’ll die or remove it, so help me God” (9 Jan. 1872). “Went out to the sea-side and aloud repeated all I learned ‘Tones’ etc—” (23 Jan. 1872).

28 “At work again, no declensions! No conjugations! That’s good at any rate. . . . I like the ‘odd fellows.’ ‘Tones’ are very nice things if nobody else hears!” (13 Jan. 1872).


The 214 Radicals take him no more than two months all told. He is teaching Hokkien to native speakers in Romanized colloquial by the end of his fourth month. He gives his first sermon in Chinese on April 4, 1872. About the same time, he is going toe to toe with Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian literati, debating them in Chinese and winning. The

31 “Studied the delicious characters and colloquial. Nothing I believe like drilling, Repetition, and that aloud” (12 Feb. 1872). “Worked away at many more new characters, wrote them, took them to pieces. Drilled myself again on the Radicals 214. All right” (13 Feb. 1872). “Radicals again. Wrote them all from Memory, backwards as well. Went over their sounds, meaning and again drilled on them. . . .” (14 Feb. 1872). “Began at the first and Just kept at them Radicals and all including colloquial. Repetition! Repetition!” (2 Mar. 1872). “Pretty stiff those chaps; but I will Not Submit to them. Come on ‘Radicals’ 214 of you let me name and dissect you again” (5 Mar. 1872).

32 “Studied hard and began to teach Romanized colloquial. . . .” (15 Apr. 1872). “Practiced in Romanized colloquial—” (16 Sept. 1872). “We all got to work on the Gospel of Mark. First reading the Radicals, then the ‘book reading’, then the way we would read for the people to understand. All then took the Colloquial Romanised. . . .” (30 Oct. 1872).

33 “Left to myself what I knew of Chinese soon came into practice on the way. . . .” (4 Apr. 1872). “Began to preach. I determined to put what I had learned into practice, so Spent nearly whole day trying to convey thoughts and ideas to the few around me. In the eve, I examined them on what I had said and was amazed at what they understood and answered. From that day I continued every morning and eve. Testing and examining. I prepared through the day. Intensely interesting!” (14 Apr. 1872). “Splendid progress made by my servants in the Romanized Col[loquial]. I found vocabulary so enlarging that I seldom hesitated for a word. Out again amongst the boys, who got in the habit of waiting for me. From them I picked? Words and phrases not to be found in any books I had; besides they were the very words of the people. In eve. Some outsiders came in to listen. By this time were able to have sweet worship. I read, then explained and asked questions, then sang and prayed. I found myself quite at home, had no difficulties in expressing my views. I owed that to practice, drilling and constant Repetition. I still kept up the ‘book Reading.’ Read Romanized Col[loquial] also every day and fixed characters in my mind” (18 Apr. 1872). “I slept none that night but prepared for battle with the Literati. . . .” (20 Apr. 1872). “I was ready and pushed [them] on their own ground and attacked their systems, their Religions. Tauism, Buddhism and Confucianism. They were ‘thunder struck,’ stayed only a Short time and left. I sat up all night preparing for further attacks—” (22 Apr. 1872). “Preached in English forenoon and afternoon in Chinese. . . .” (16 Jun. 1872). “Preached in English and Chinese. . . .” (14 Jul. 1872). “In the afternoon preached on Acts 10:43. Afternoon in Chinese and in the eve. Discussed God as law maker” (21 Jul. 1872). “Morning service in English and after that all Chinese. . . .” (18 Aug. 1872). “Read
following month (May), he characterizes himself as a native speaker of Amoy.\textsuperscript{34} For Mackay, Chinese takes him five months from start to finish.

His bedtime reading was no less impressive, the bulk of it in the sciences and budding social sciences. He does not appear to sleep. “Why am I here?” he writes in \textit{From Far Formosa}. “Is it to study the geology, botany, or zoology of Formosa? Is it to examine into questions about the racial relations of the inhabitants? Is it to study the habits and customs of the people?” And yet, he answers plainly to the contrary. “No, not for that did I leave my native home,” he writes: “Whatever else may be done must have a real and positive hearing on the fulfillment of that commission. Whatever of history, geology, sociology, or of any other subject may engage the missionary’s attention must be regarded in its relation to the gospel.”\textsuperscript{35} Moreover, from his diaries emerge a would-be scholar of remarkable linguistic talent and academic imagination, a proponent of creation science and thus late Victorian exemplar of faith seeking understanding.

In this case, the Orientalist label may well apply to Mackay, but as Robert Irwin has redefined it vis-à-vis the polemical position of Edward Said.\textsuperscript{36} In fact, Mackay’s linguistic and scholarly temperament is comparable to that of Sir Arthur Jeffery. To be sure, Mackay had virtually nothing in common with such virulent pundits of foreign service as Sir Richard R. Burton and so crucial to Said’s harsh indictment of the colonial ethos.

And so, Mackay can be seen as one of a kind, his missiology a multifaceted, interdisciplinary, and iconoclastic many splendored thing. A variety of approaches and degree of polyvalence is not only desirable in this case, but essential to a more balanced understanding of this iconic figure in Canadian and Taiwanese social, cultural, and religious history, the essays in this volume adding their voices to a growing chorus of neo-post-colonial interpretations.

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{34} “Paced the floor reading aloud for A-hoa to write and he listened to my Chinese until it sounded like from a native” (1 May 1872).

\textsuperscript{35} Mackay, \textit{From Far Formosa}, 135.

The Essays in this Volume

Marguerite Van Die’s essay, “‘Growing Up Presbyterian in Victorian Canada’: Childhood Influences and Faith Formation,” documents Mackay’s childhood and formative religious experiences that led inexorably to a life of religious service and foreign missionary work. What soon becomes clear is the extent to which Mackay drew upon the Presbyterian culture of his youth for models of faith in Formosa and how these were clearly responsible for his overall success. Using such categories as family, education, and religion, Van Die sees Mackay’s missionary style to have been a “transmission” of the Scottish and Canadian Presbyterian culture of his youth, but adapted to a Formosan or colonial Taiwanese context. Frugality and austerity, a love of learning, a tendency to look for answers beyond the narrow confines of the classroom, the sanctity of the home and a mother’s instruction in matters of faith, the value of physical work, tenacity, and persistence above all defined the times in which Mackay lived and the community in which he was raised. As a consequence, Mackay had both spiritual and physical strength and the will to succeed regardless of the cost. A talent for sermonizing and love of the Shorter Catechism, scripture, hymnody, and science appeared to have come to him very naturally as the scion of Scottish Highland spirituality and evangelical Calvinism. However, he was no slave to Presbyterian convention, breaking with the patriarchal structures of the past by including women as active participants in his recasting of the “Long Communion,” the traditional and annual Presbyterian Eucharist, which he shortened and tailored to the specific needs of his Formosan, aboriginal converts. Van Die contends that in being a conduit of an earlier Scottish-Canadian spirituality and adapting it to the Taiwanese context, Mackay provided an opportunity for native Taiwanese to appropriate the Christian message and embrace the Presbyterian faith on their own terms.

James R. Rohrer’s essay, “Putting Taiwan’s People in the Center of the Story: Reflections on the History of Christian Mission in Taiwan,” contends that Mackay perhaps looms too large and to the exclusion of other missionaries and missions of equal if not greater importance in the region—those in central and southern Taiwan, for example. Rohrer questions the wisdom of publishing anything more on Mackay in essence that does not attempt at least to be more outward looking with respect to the larger question of religion in Taiwan and Mackay’s Taiwanese converts in particular. At the same time, Rohrer laments the fact that critical scholarship on the history of Christianity in Asia is not only wanting but that Taiwan itself suffers from a kind of invisibility. In
keeping with recent trends in the history of religion and missiology, a
dialogue between scholars from varied disciplines and diverse cultural
settings is required. Among Rohrer’s many recommendations is a
missiology that does not fall prey to the colonial patterns of the past and
such quasi-Orientalist literary tropes as proactive, western missionary
meets passive, often nameless, aboriginal conscript. According to Rohrer,
Mackay created a kind of “biculture” in which missionary initiative and
aboriginal agency worked together to create something equally western
(Canadian) and eastern (Taiwanese). Mackay’s reading of Confucius for
types of Christ, his belief in creation science and eclectic medical practices
illustrate this, native Taiwanese converts and missionaries taking his
homespun, Scottish-Canadian curriculum and running with it.

Michael Stainton’s essay and annotative bibliography, “More Treasures
Preserved Abroad: New Mackay Letters in the Presbyterian Archives,”
draws upon select letters written by Mackay, immediate family, and
colleagues (recently discovered in the closet of Isabel Mackay of Toronto
in 2009) to paint a very different picture of Mackay than previously
imagined. The public and private Mackay were two very different people
it would seem, the latter an affectionate father and husband it turns out.
Stainton’s foray into the private life of the ‘great man’, using this cache of
never-before-seen letters, opens the door to a variety of new interpretative
and revisionist possibilities on the inner life of Mackay. However, this is
not all according to Stainton. Letters written by Mackay’s teenage
daughters, Bella and Mary, constitute the basis for a new view of Formosa
in the turbulent years of 1896 - 1901 and the Japanese occupation of
Taiwan that would last some fifty years. They also suggest that the
personal charisma and dogged determination of Mackay’s early ministry
gave way to a more routinized, bureaucratized, and even globalized
missiology, the “Prophet” as he was known to his Taiwanese disciples
going from peripatetic single hero to paterfamilias of a large family church.

Mary Goodwin’s essay, “Heroic Memoirs from a Hot Country: Taiwan
Missionary Life Writing,” discusses Mackay’s public face and Christian
heroism, both real and imagined, as a factor of the “missionary memoir”
and “life writing” of the period. Goodwin’s analysis of Mackay’s From
Far Formosa as “heroic memoir” casts a wider net still vis-à-vis the life
writing of American Presbyterian Lillian Dickson, wife of Dr. James
Dickson and founder of Taiwan Theological College in Tainan. Not unlike
Mackay, Dickson trudged the mountainsides of Formosa to make friends
and converts of Taiwan’s aboriginal peoples, doling out free medical care
her stock in trade. Taken together, Mackay and Dickson constitute nearly a
hundred years of missionary life writing that can be seen as “part Christian
witness, part adventure fiction, part historical survey, and part self-aggrandizing promotion.” Mackay’s *From Far Formosa* was typical of male heroic memoir of the period, Dickson’s *These My People: Serving Christ Among the Mountain People of Formosa* a twentieth-century, feminist appropriation of a decidedly nineteenth-century male genre. The differences are informative and due to gender differences in the main. Ironically, Mackay defends women, whereas Dickson does not, accepting her own inherent female inferiority and that of her Taiwanese counterparts as a matter of course. Mackay’s interest in Taiwan’s physical landscapes (geographical and anthropological) also stands out, Dickson very much the tourist by comparison—albeit a better student of family relations and local government hierarchies than Mackay. The militarism and self-righteousness endemic to Mackay is conspicuously absent in Dickson who tends to be self-deprecating, hitting upon the humor of the situation as seen in *Chuckles behind the Door: Lillian Dickson’s Personal Letters*. Their respective medical outreach to aboriginal peoples can be divided along gender lines as well, Dickson less judgmental of local practice and more caring, Mackay ever the stern father and professional, medical practitioner. The fact that neither Mackay nor Dickson reveal any particulars concerning their private or family lives, Goodwin argues, is largely a factor of their audience and agenda, writing for public consumption and in hopes of raising money. Exculpating family from the narrative was part and parcel of the heroic memoir genre, in short. For Goodwin then, the life writing of Mackay and Dickson can be seen as two distinct types of Christian heroic memoir: one late-nineteenth century and male, the other early twentieth-century and female and which, taken together, speak to the larger issue of a nascent globalized sense of mission and national identity.

Llyn Scott’s essay, “The Black Bearded Bible Man: Flagship Opera. Formosan Epic, Emblem, and Enigma,” explores the issue of Mackay’s public face from a decidedly fictive and Taiwanese point of view. In Scott’s view, Mackay is lost in the crowd. And although de-centering Mackay, as Rohrer argues, has much to offer the historical discussion of his place in Taiwanese society, this does not work well on stage. That said, the Mackay opera itself proves beyond any doubt that Canada’s first Presbyterian missionary to Taiwan, in the eyes of his Taiwanese followers, is not only a complex mixture of East and West, but the “character and soul” of modern Taiwan—a sky god and Taiwanese animistic deity of supernatural power and political influence *par excellent*.

My own essay, “Pan Celtic Anglo-Saxonism, the Polar Eden, and Crossing Racial Divides: The Interesting Case of George Leslie Mackay,” is historiographical in the main and discusses Mackay’s preferred reading
vis-à-vis Darwin’s theory of evolution in particular. A little background is necessary in order to locate Mackay along a spectrum of competing scientific theories all jockeying for position at the time. Polygenesis, or the American School, espoused a theory of separate and distinct supernatural creations for the different races and thus permanent, biological inferiority of all dark-skinned peoples. Monogenesis, the racial theory going back to the Enlightenment, explained racial difference as a corollary of sustained exposure to the elements. Non-whites were deemed unfit and relegated to the slave class, notwithstanding. The Bible affirmed that all were children of God, but condemned the descendants of Canaan (the son of Ham) to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. As the Atlantic Slave Trade reached a fever pitch and Africans by the millions were deported to work sugar, tobacco, and cotton plantations in the New World, their Christian masters were quick to employ the Bible to defend slavery, Africans becoming the cursed seed of Canaan after the fact.

Darwin’s theory of evolution promised to undo centuries of scientific racism and religious intolerance by leveling the playing field once and for all. Unashamedly racist but highly respected for much of the nineteenth century, Craniometry and Phrenology lost all credibility, too. Darwin’s revolutionary work on human biology also threatened to destroy the careers of such virulent, scientific racists as Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, and their bulldog and parson-baiter, Josiah Nott. And yet, Darwin’s theories, rightly or wrongly, would become synonymous with even greater perversions of science—Social Darwinism and Eugenics—which would be used to justify the deportation and exclusion of the Chinese, sterilization, and even genocide.

As David Livingstone has shown, conservative divines were among Darwin’s strongest supporters in the beginning and at a time when science and faith marched in lockstep. Evolution was a unitary theory that agreed with the biblical account of creation in principle. However, a perceptive few were not as quick to throw their support behind Darwinism per se and which, as Charles Hodge first observed, amounted to materialism. What followed was a remarkable feat of religious and scientific imagination: the North Pole as the original location of the famed Garden of Eden. This pious alternative to Darwinism enjoyed a certain legitimacy in ivy-league circles for a time, as well as the provisional support of conservative, Bible-believing Christians.

Mackay’s extensive reading of the best and worst of Victorian science included the wildly problematic theory of the Polar Eden. Although he does not say very much, Mackay most certainly approved. We cannot know his true mind on the subject in any depth to be sure, but it is worth pointing out that his unbridled enthusiasm for a theory that looked backward and forward to a glorious reunion of some Oriental-Occidental kind is consistent with Mackay’s blurring of racial lines and rejection of such binary opposites as East and West. Little wonder he reacted so positively to the possibility at least that Chinese and Taiwanese were the scion of Northern Europe and, one supposes, how this might prove an effective weapon in his battle against the head tax and other acts of racial narrow-mindedness that targeted Asians in North America.\(^38\) One thing is clear: Mackay’s opposition to Darwinism may have kept him from committing such grave crimes against humanity as Social Darwinism and Eugenics. He was, after all, a dentist not an abortionist. And although evidence of a benign strain of anti-African prejudice can be found in his diaries, taken in context, and as a whole, this does not constitute proof of racism. As Van Die argues, Mackay was no mere agent of Presbyterian tradition with regard to gender. Importantly, his relationship and, indeed, debt to science was no less innovative when it came to the issue of race.

Hugo A. Meynell, the distinguished Roman Catholic philosopher, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a participant in the 2010 Mackay conference at Aletheia University is given the final word. As the premier defender of intelligent design in professional philosophical circles and Bernard Lonergan scholar of our day, but more than this, a moral philosopher of remarkable courage and honesty, he is uniquely equipped to comment on Mackay’s intellectual and moral virtues in the broad sense. In his essay, “Prolegomena to Missiology: Reflection on Religious and Political Differences,” he roams the highways and byways of Religious Studies, surveying a wide array of competing religious intellectual traditions, philosophical schools of thought, and antithetical political ideologies. Inspired by Mackay’s dedication to a rational faith and his essential goodness, Meynell goes on to formulate a mission statement and balanced approach to religious and political difference for the twenty-first century that is inspired by Mackay’s life and legacy.


HISTORY AND MISSIOLOGY