Preface

TERROR, VIOLENCE, AND THE NEED OF A THEOLOGY OF PEACE

I live in two worlds: one is a Chinese world shaped by Confucian ethics, and the other a Christian world informed by Pauline theology. Despite the stark differences between the two worlds, both Confucius and Paul advocate peace and wholeness. Confucius believes that cultivation of virtues will bring about harmony; Paul believes that a faithful reception of God's grace through the work of Christ will bring about salvation. This sacred wisdom of shalom and freedom is constantly challenged by terror and mistrust throughout history.

It seems that more people seek to resolve conflict with militarism, mistrust with fear. Two books, *Jesus in Beijing* and *China Inc*., raise the specter of the increasing power of China, thus implying that China is now—or is increasingly becoming—a threat to the West.[1] In an article entitled, "How We Would Fight China," Robert D. Kaplan writes: "The Middle East is just a blip. The American military contest with China in the Pacific will define the twenty-first century. And China will be a more formidable adversary than Russia ever was."[2] When we encounter those whose worldview, cultural framework, or way of life differs from our own, we oftentimes allow our fear to guide us toward a fight or flight. Confucius and Paul believe that genuine encounter and mutual accep-

1. Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, passim; Fishman, *China Inc*., passim.
2. Kaplan, "How We Would Fight China," 49.

tance can overcome fear. The lack of knowledge of the true identity of the others causes one to stereotype, that is, to objectify them. To romanticize or to demonize China is unhelpful, for these approaches will surely lead to violence between China and the West.

I am an overseas Chinese living in the West, and I am aware of the escalating violence in the world and the increasing fear in the psyche of Western nations. Nations are determined to kill one another; suicide bombers are so desperate they seek "honor" by sacrificing their own lives in order to take the lives of others. If "the axis of evil" uses tactics of terror, "we civilized nations" use military might and threaten preemptive measures. If there is any similarity between "they" and "we," it is in the appeal to God for blessings, and both are ready to use evil against the other—resulting in the dehumanization of both. The spiral of evil does not end, no matter how fervent the rhetoric of "jihad" or "God bless America" may be.

The present context reminds me of similar fear and violence described in the two ancient texts. The *Analects* and the Epistle to the Galatians are canonical texts of Confucianism and Christianity respectively.[3] Each text has been studied by followers of each religious tradition faithfully over the last two millennia. The *Analects* is a compilation of Confucius' (551–479 BCE) and his disciples' teachings on their social and political ethics to the rulers and kings of their day. It contains twenty chapters of mostly the Master's (Confucius) sayings and also the interpretation of his major disciples. It was believed that the compiling, editing, and interpretation of the *Analects* began soon after the death of Confucius. The main thesis in the *Analects* is that, human beings are endowed with benevolence, and that the cultivation of virtues is the way for people to live in a world of difference and violence. While the *Analects* is a compendium of wisdom literature, the Epistle is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to Christians in Galatia. It was written by Paul (ca. 6–64 CE) in the early 50's and is found in the New Testament. Paul defends his understanding of the gospel of Christ, which invites Gentiles to become the people of God without the requirements of the Jewish law. Paul also argues that the power of the Spirit and the way of love should be the guiding force

3. On Confucianism see Yao, ed., *RoutledgeCurzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 1:2–11; on Confucianism and Christianity, see ibid., 106–9.

of Christian ethics in order to form a cohesive community of Jewish and Gentile Christians.[4]

The *Analects* of Confucius and Paul's letter to the Galatians may be ancient texts, but the problems they dealt with re-appear in our world today. "The Analects Problem" concerns forming community by means of violence or virtue. The problem has not left us. We have witnessed the propensity of modern nation states to use military force to resolve conflict or simply to cause terror. "The Galatian Problem" is about becoming the people of God by means of religious observance or in freedom. The historical problem was an inner-Jewish or inner-Christian dispute as to whether the relationship of humankind with the divine was established through law-obedience or whether it was a gift freely given and freely accepted (or declined). Some forms of Islam are ready to die, even by suicide, to preserve the law (such as the law of *shari'ah* in the belief that the divine-human relationship is observed by submission to specific demands and regulations. There are some American leaders who are convinced that they have been divinely called to establish among the Near Eastern legalists democratic rule in which the divine-human relation is a matter of individual free-choice, and that no religious law can be imposed by one culture on another. Although, of course, like "the circumcision party" before him, the American leadership is ready to impose "freedom of choice" (now with quite a different meaning).

The "Analects Problem" and the "Galatian Problem" reappear not just in the Middle East and North America, in China and the West where violence and virtue, bondage and freedom are in conflict. This volume wrestles, alongside Confucius and Paul, with the old problem of who we

4. For more on the *Analects* and Galatians, see Chapter One. To speak of Jesus, his followers, and those believers in the first-century context as "Jews or Jewish" and "Christians" may be imprecise and misleading. In this book I use these traditional terms, but I am basically in agreement with John Elliott's view, which is reflected in the title of his article: "Jesus the Israelite was Neither a 'Jew' nor a 'Christian': On Correcting Misleading Nomenclature." According to Elliott, in the first century, *Ioudaios* did not refer to a "Jew" in the sense of religious affiliation, but a Judean in terms of ethnicity. *Ioudaios* is a term used often by non-Israelite to refer "those connected to Judea by blood relations, Torah allegiance, patriotism, and loyalty to Judea, the holy city of Jerusalem and the Temple" (ibid., 146). The first followers of Jesus "were identified by fellow Israelites also as 'Galileans,' 'Nazarenes,' or members of 'the Way,' but never as 'Judeans'" (ibid.). See also Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History"; Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, passim.

are in a world of violence, fear, and difference—and the hope that diverse groups can coexist peacefully in this "global village" of ours.

The hermeneutical task of finding wisdom in scriptures and in the Chinese classics in order to construct a Chinese Christian theology of peace and salvation has been a personal quest. My family, both in Malaysia and in China, had suffered because of war. Memories were too painful for my parents to speak about their lives during the Japanese occupation of Malaysia. Relatives in China told us of the suffering they had endured during the Cultural Revolution. I lived through the 5/13 Incident (May 13, 1969) in Malaysia, and have been horrified by the casualties of race riots.[5] In the comfort of my living room in the seminary apartment, I witnessed the June 4th (1989) conflict at the Gate of the Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen Square), and am still chilled by the thought that even such "human sacrifice" may not be enough to guarantee freedom. I was equally shocked by the 9/11 (2001) event when thousands were evaporated in flame and smoke, and I too felt the worldwide panic and uncertainty that followed.

As a teenager and even as a young man, I held the naive assumption that Coke and McDonalds would one day unite Israelis and Palestinians, Americans and Russians, North and South Koreans. I also dreamed that one day Honda, Sony, and IBM would help China and Taiwan to coexist peacefully. Yet, the more alike our material possessions have become, the more divergent our ideologies and beliefs seem to be. The smaller the global village becomes, the greater the distance and the greater the difficulty there is in crossing the thoughts and feelings of others. What can link human hearts? What can unite the human spirit? Can capitalism or democracy or science bring us closer?

As a Malaysian Chinese living in America, my reading of the Bible is filtered through my American context. I seek to make sense of current events in dialogue with the scriptures. For my family and for many of my American friends, the tragic events of 9/11 are a reminder that none of us is invulnerable. We live in a land of freedom, power, and affluence, and the 9/11 event proved that our freedom can be taken away, our power weakened, our prosperity ruined, our security threatened, and life itself destroyed. To think that we are invincible and can therefore respond with our own alienating measures may eventually be to dig our own graves.

5. See Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor*, 253.

Great empires in the past have spent huge amounts of their national resources on preserving their national security. Is spending eighty-seven billion dollars fighting terrorism justifiable? Is the "Homeland Security" project a repetition of the Great Wall the Chinese Empire devised to keep out the barbarians and terrorists? The project of the Great Wall was a failure. It merely served to keep the Chinese from reaching out to the world rather than keeping the invaders out. It burdened China with such heavy economic (taxation) and human (3,500,000 people worked on it and a million of them died) costs that this "imperial project" became a death blow to the Qin dynasty (255–206 BCE)—one of the shortest dynasties in China.

In this volume, I am not ready to address the issue of America and its role in the world of nations, though this is one cultural context that constantly drives me to read sacred texts, paying attention to the questions of political ethics and the coexistence of humankind. I may return to study the American national security issue from the perspective of a Chinese American in the future. For now, I have the more immediate concern of addressing the issue of Chinese coexistence in a politically, ideologically, religiously, linguistically, and ethnically diverse world, such as the situation between China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas Chinese. My hermeneutical interest is also driven by the problem of clans and dialects and divisiveness that mark many Chinese societies throughout the world. My basic inquiry is twofold in its intertextual reading of the *Analects* and the Galatians: first, regarding the cultural etiology (beginning) of Chinese Christian theology and, second, regarding a hybrid identity of a Chinese Christian. The first enquiry asks: "What makes Chinese Chinese, Christian Christian?" "How has Confucius shaped China, up to its present?" "How has Paul shaped the Protestant West?" And "What scriptures can provide resources for a Chinese Christian theology?" The second enquiry asks: "What will Chinese Christian theology look like?" "What will the moral and theological identity of Chinese Christians be?" "How will such identity and theology be helpful to China and the universal Church?"

PREVIEW OF THE BOOK: MUSING WITH CONFUCIUS AND PAUL FOR A CHINESE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

The Overture and Epilogue chapters contain the hermeneutical interests I use to frame the six chapters (or movements) of the book. "Overture" and "epilogue" are musical metaphors that provide aesthetic harmony and open-endedness to the expression of themes. The framing chapters are narrative in style, dealing with the moral and theological identities of the Chinese. My story and my people's story are intertwined with the Confucianist and Pauline traditions. As a cultural critic, I identify with Confucius and Paul as I observe how they were cultural critics in their own day (Overture chapter). The Epilogue seeks to delineate the cultural, political, and theological identity of Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere overseas. Nothing definitive is claimed in the framing chapters—they are suggestive pointers for my own people, to work out ways to live in the "beautiful harmony" of coexistence, of diversity in unity, of individual freedom in mutual service.

The book as a whole uses cross-cultural hermeneutics, moving between the historical meaning and the "applied" meaning of the texts. Readers will discover that just as the historical reading sets a certain limit to the way I do my hermeneutical reading, my hermeneutical lenses also condition me to read the classical texts from a certain perspective. The Overture chapter discusses the intertextual approach I use in crossing back and forth between the *Analects* and the Galatians. Both texts are well read in both the West and the East, but seldom are they read together. My close reading of both texts intertextually here may be the first attempt to bring these two texts into dialogue. Since I am more interested in practice rather than in theory, I have demonstrated throughout the book how Confucius and Paul are helpful for Chinese Christians to construct a theological understanding of virtue, violence, politics, anthropology, coexistence, and so forth. Thus, the framing chapters serve to construct a Chinese Christian theology.

Between the framing chapters of Overture and Epilogue are six chapters that focus on the major themes that emerge from the intertextual readings between the *Analects* and Galatians. The six chapters, which constitute the core of the book and the dynamic of a Chinese Christian theology, are grounded more in the literary and exegetical interpretation of texts. These chapters are my interpretation of the classical texts; I admit

that other plausible readings exist, ones that may in fact be better than mine when the cross-cultural contexts of the interpreters shift or change.[6] Chapter One is an introduction to the texts and the critical issues of the two books—*Analects* and Galatians. They constitute the textual basis of a Chinese Christian theology, thus the scope of my study; as indicated they are very different from one another. I conclude, however, that their intertextual or common thread lies in the theological ethics they share with each other—concern for the common good within a community of difference. Chapter Two confronts the obvious question of incommensurability between the *Analects* and Galatians, between "Chinese" and "Christian" in a Chinese Christian theology, differences I want to maintain. Despite the different presuppositions underlying Confucian ethics and Pauline theology, I find in my intertextual readings that shifting their lenses slightly is mutually enriching. Confucius' relative weakness in theology (notably Christology) can find its counterpoint in Paul, and Paul's relative weakness in ethics can find its amplification in Confucius. Chapters Three through Six demonstrate various counterpoints between Confucius and Paul in my constructive Chinese Christian theology. These chapters investigate their straightforward and critical dialogues on law and *li* (propriety), music and harmony, ritual and style, on what it means to be human and to be *renren* (benevolent or humane persons), to be holy (pious) and to be *shengren* (a holy person), to be *zhongshu* (loyal-empathetic) and *jing* (respectful), and to have *xin* (trustworthiness) and *pistis* (faith).

I find delineating the differences between Confucius and Paul necessary to the understanding of Chinese Christian identity and theology. I also find the combined wisdom of Confucius' and Paul's theological ethics still to be useful to our modern world. For example, I try to show in Chapter Five that Confucius and Paul were aware of the cultural ills of bondage, patriarchy, and violence. Though they did not know our modern terminologies of sexism, racism, slavery, and so forth, their less than "(post-)modern" theological ethics remains a persuasive paradigm for me and for many Chinese Christians.

The book is a manifesto or *apologia* for Chinese Christians. It seeks to articulate how it is possible to maintain a Chinese identity and a

6. On the criteria for discerning the plausibility and legitimacy of interpretations, see Yeo, "Culture and Intersubjectivity."

Christian identity *concomitantly* without capitulating to some western or other cultural model of Christian identity. To be a Chinese Christian is to adopt a distinctive, unique identity that owes much to both traditions but is *sui generis*. Providing great resources for the construction of a Chinese Christian theology, Confucius and Paul converge across a surprisingly broad front. Yet, the Christ of the Cross completes or extends what is merely implicit or absent in Confucius; and Confucius amplifies various elements of Christian faith (e.g., community, virtues) that are underplayed in individual, western Christianity.

This book is not written specifically for scholars in Pauline or Confucian studies, but more generally for college-educated readers. These readers may find theological ethics; or cultural studies of Confucius and Paul; or intertextual (cross-cultural) hermeneutics on ethnic, political, and theological identities subjects interesting to study. Because of my background in the ethical reading of the Confucianist texts and on the exegetical study of the Pauline epistles, my presentation of both texts may be partial. I have worked to provide as much balance as possible on thematic material from the Confucianist and Pauline texts. Much more scholarly material has been published on Pauline texts than on Confucianist texts. However, an exhaustive review of scholarship for both texts (*Analects* and Galatians) is not my point; my intention is not to be consumed by exegetical details. Rather, I wish to work from a sufficient knowledge of both texts and move confidently toward a creative intertextual reading.

THE HENRY LUCE FAMILY AND THEIR CHRISTIAN PASSION

Without a critical theological understanding of culture and politics, some missionaries regarded the Chinese as benighted heathen practicing the infidel Confucianism.[7] Some "belittled Chinese politics and institutions and even insisted that Confucius was expiating his sins in hell."[8] Patricia Neils writes,

7. Even before becoming a Luce Fellow, I identified with the Luce legacy of cherishing the intertwining relationship between theology, politics, and the Chinese culture. Ralph G. Martin, biographer of the Luces, once wrote, "God and country and China: this was the passionate core of the Luce heritage." Martin, *Henry and Clare*, 16.

8. Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire*, 19.

> The negative stereotyped images of China at that time were often reinforced, if not created, by the missionaries themselves in their sermons and speeches and in their prolific writings for magazines, journals, and textbooks. Generally the missionaries were not well acquainted with Chinese accomplishments in science, art, philosophy, and literature and purveyed instead debasing images of opium dens, female infanticide, long fingernails, bound feet, pigtails, ancestor worship, superstitions, floods, and famine, and of the cunning, inscrutable, heathen Chinese. They wrote and told about all these conditions and thus may have been America's most powerful China image-makers in the era before photo-journalism and television.[9]

By contrast, Henry Winters Luce (1868–1941) and his wife Elizabeth Middleton Bloodgood Root (1869–1948) were unusually astute missionaries to China. Pastor Charles E. Robinson, who married them before their departure of China, urged them to "[s]trive to learn the Chinese way of looking at things."[10] When they set foot in Shantung province, the birthplace of Confucius, Luce preferred to call himself a "missionary in reverse"—rather than "bestowing the American way of life upon a heathen backward nation. Luce felt that it was at least equally important for him to educate Americans to the philosophies, traditions, and achievements of the Chinese. 'He must become a missionary from China to his own native land.'"[11]

Henry Winters Luce was passionate for Chinese culture. "The Chinese gave him the name Lu Suiyi, 'one who seeks righteousness.'"[12] The word righteousness in Chinese has a rich Confucian meaning, connoting the virtue of sacrificial love based on heavenly (*tian*) endowed human bonding. Luce was convinced that China could integrate its culture with Christian theology.

Many missionaries were shortsighted, wanting the immediate result of individual conversion. Luce, however, had the telescopic vision of educating the Chinese for Christian leadership. He helped finance and enlarge a number of Christian universities in China, for example,

9. Neils, *China Images in the Life and Times of Henry Luce*, 19.
10. Martin, *Henry and Clare*, 17.
11. Neils, *China Images in the Life and Times of Henry Luce*, 23.
12. Martin, *Henry and Clare*, 19.

the Cheeloo (Shantung) University at Tsinan, the capital of Shantung Province, and Yanjing University in Beijing.

Henry Winters moved to Tengchow in September 1897. The following year (April 3), Henry Robinson Luce was born, and the Chinese gave him the name, "small boy Luce," Lu Shaoyi. It was the father's open-minded and ecumenical attitude that "would later become one of the finer qualities in the character of his son and would be manifested in *Time* and *Life* magazines' treatment of world religions."[13] The younger Luce grew up to be an editor and publisher whose initial goal was to educate readers of the East and the West to better understand one another. Against the background of negative, inaccurate, stereotypical, patronizing, and prejudicial images of the Chinese in the nineteenth century, Henry Luce's publishing empire sought to change peoples' understanding of one another. And through the Luce Foundation, God's creative and redemptive work continues to touch the lives of many. In this age of hatred and violence, the empathic missionary spirit of the Luce family is to be admired and emulated. I am grateful to be named one of the Henry Luce III Fellows in 2003–2004—Luce III passed away in September 2005. Many missionaries to China risked their lives so that the new identity of the Chinese Christian might be conceived. Of these I am graced to be one. Many missionaries to China "have died, yet they continue to speak" (Heb 11:4). This "Luce Project" is a testimony to the creativity of life as intended by the Creator God, for God is the God of Life, and Death is not the end of our human story.

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13. Neils, *China Images in the Life and Times of Henry Luce*, 42.

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