

**Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume 1: 635–1800.** Edited by Nicolas Standaert, Leiden, Brill, 2001. 964 pp. \$201.00.

Produced with the meticulous scholarship for which Louvain's Catholic University is well known, this book will be for many years the standard introduction to its subject. It covers the three major periods of early Christian presence in China, from the first Nestorians and the later Catholics up to but not including the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries: the T'ang dynasty (618–907), the Mongol Yüan dynasty (1206–1368), and 849 pages on the Late Ming/Mid Q'ing (1572–1807). Each period is divided into subsections comprising academic yet readable essays. *Sources* presents a first-rate, urgently needed updating and critical analysis of the available primary and secondary Christian resource materials. *Actors* treats of missionaries, missions, and foreign Christian residents in China, along with Chinese clergy, converts, and their Christian communities. *Scene* is more chronological, describing patterns of mission and church development in each dynasty. *Themes* covers the broad cultural context, allowing illuminating treatment of specific subjects such as the Rites Controversy, anti-Christian reaction, and the role of western science and political imperialism in the missionary approach. Enhancing this volume's usefulness are its maps, tables, and indices, one of which reveals an immense, fascinating array of subjects: everything from accommodation to women, Chinese elites, finances, medicine, and morals.

The result is a remarkable achievement: a book essential for scholars, priced for libraries, but worth it for anyone concerned about the future of the global church. Its carefully balanced description of Christianity's past encounters with China—a nation that may shape the future of the world—represents an intentional shift of focus from Europe-centered missiology to a China-centered approach. Standaert's *Handbook* lays critical foundations for a theology and history of global mission, which in the future must focus as much on how non-Christians receive the faith as on how Christians should be intent on presenting it.

*Samuel Hugh Moffett*, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ



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# Theology Today



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Edited by Nicolas Standaert together with an international group of scholars the book is produced with the meticulous scholarship for which the Catholic University of Louvain is well known. For many years it will be the standard introduction to research on the first 1165 years of Christianity in China.

Volume I covers the three major periods of early Christian presence in China, from the first Nestorians and the later Catholics up to but not including the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries: the Tang dynasty (7th-10th c.), Mongol Yuan dynasty (12th-14th c.), and 849 pages on Late Ming/Mid-Qing (16th c.-1807).

Each period is divided into subsections. Precise academic methodology is spiced with page after page of concise, readable essays on an immense and fascinating array of subjects. Sources is a first rate updating and critical analysis of the primary and secondary Christian resource materials available. Actors treats of missionaries, missions and foreign Christian residents in China; and Chinese clergy, converts and their Christian communities. Both

contain some short biographies. Scene is more chronological, describing patterns of mission and church development in each dynasty. Themes is the broad cultural context, which allows illuminating treatment of specific subjects like theology and ethics, the Rites Controversy and anti-Christian reaction, and the role of western science and political imperialism in the missionary approach.

Particularly useful are the maps and tables, indicating locations of Christians in each of the dynasties, and the number of Catholic missionaries and Christians in selected periods. Adding these visuals to the table of contents would help browsers. The Index of Subjects, one of four indices, reveals the immense range of research by the editors--everything from Accommodation (contextualization) to Chinese Elites, Finances, Medicine, Morals, Religions, and Women.

It is a remarkable achievement. This Handbook is a major step toward filling an urgent need for more sources in English on Catholic missions, and lays some critical foundations for a theology and history of global mission which in the future must focus as much on how non-Christians receive the faith as on how Christians should be intent on presenting it.

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