

Hong Kong's Last English Bishop

The Life and Times of
John Gilbert Hindley Baker

Philip L. Wickeri

Sample Pages Only

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Sheng Kung Hui: Historical Studies of Anglican Christianity in China

The purpose of the series Sheng Kung Hui: Historical Studies of Anglican Christianity in China is to publish authoritative volumes on the history of Anglican-Episcopal Christianity as a contribution to the intellectual, cultural, and religious history of modern China. With an in-depth focus on one particular denominational tradition, which has been in China for almost two hundred years, the series presents an interdisciplinary perspective that will also contribute to the history of Christianity in China. The emphasis throughout is on the life and work of the Church in society. Individual volumes are written for an educated audience and a general readership, some titles more academic in character and others of more general interest.

The spirit of Anglicanism is expressed by the Chinese term Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, meaning the “Holy Catholic Church of China,” the national church that was founded in Shanghai in 1912 and the first non-Roman church body in China. Anglicans stand between Protestants and Catholics in their approaches to Christian tradition and church order, but they are usually regarded as part of the Protestant movement in China. Since the nineteenth century, the Sheng Kung Hui has been involved in a wide range of educational, medical, and social welfare work alongside efforts to spread the Christian message and establish the Church. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Chinese Sheng Kung Hui leaders began taking the lead. The Sheng Kung Hui has also played an important role in cultural exchange between China and the West. It is hoped that the series will encourage further dialog on the place of Christianity in the history of modern China.

Copublished by Hong Kong University Press and the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, this is the sixth book in our series. The earlier volumes are:

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Philip L. Wickeri, PhD, DD
Series Editor

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Foreword

Bishop Baker was the successor of Bishop R. O. Hall and the predecessor of Bishop (later Archbishop) Peter K. K. Kwong. Because he fell between these two great bishops, his own important contributions have often been overlooked. This book corrects that oversight. It suggests that he made his own distinctive contributions to Hong Kong and Macao and that he laid the groundwork for what was to come in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui. I heartily agree. He brought to Hong Kong sixteen years of missionary experience in China, as well as his experience in an American parish and his administrative leadership in the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.

As a teenager, I attended the consecration of Bishop Baker on the evening of December 6, 1966, St. Nicholas Day. This was the first such service I had ever attended, and I was interested in seeing what it was all about. I sat in the congregation and found the service deeply moving. I distinctly remember Bishop James Wong, Bishop of Taiwan (originally from Hong Kong), who was the chief consecrator. I also remember the sermon delivered by Canon Theologian Lee Shiu-keung, an old friend of Bishop Baker. Although I did not get to meet Bishop Baker on this occasion, I came away with the understanding that he had become our leader and that he would chart the path for the future of the Church.

I came to know Bishop Baker in different capacities. I was a member of the Post-Secondary School Fellowship, which had originally been set up by Bishop Hall and then continued by Bishop Baker. Our purpose was to provide a venue for young people to serve the Church and get together on our own, at a time when many graduates did not go on to university. In the 1970s, I was put on the executive committee and later became president of the fellowship, reporting directly to Bishop Baker. He took our work very seriously, and he encouraged us to participate in the life of the Church. He was easy to speak with, and he let us use Bishop's House for meetings. I was even given the tower office there. Through this fellowship, I got to know people all across the Church. I came to understand that this fellowship was Bishop Baker's way of encouraging participation by young people in the life of the Church.

Bishop Baker also assisted in the reestablishment of Lingnan College, now a university, in Hong Kong. As a missionary, he had taught at the old Lingnan in Canton, and he became Bishop just as alumni and other supporters were trying to build up the college and seek government accreditation. He became a good

friend of Raymond Huang, Lingnan president in those years. Bishop Baker wanted to strengthen the Church connection with tertiary education in Hong Kong. He was delighted that I chose to go to Lingnan, and he was the speaker and guest of honor at my graduation in 1977.

A few years after my graduation, I decided that I wanted to become a priest. My vicar at St. Stephen's Church was Cheung Wing-Ngok, who had an enormous influence on my life. He encouraged me to go and see Bishop Baker. Bishop Baker knew me quite well by this time, and when I saw him in January 1979, he wanted me to go overseas to study. He had suggested Cambridge, but Gordon Lau, who was curate at St. Stephen's, encouraged me to consider the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, where he had gone. Bishop Baker was also supportive of this choice because he knew Massey Shepherd, who taught there and who eventually became my teacher and advisor. Bishop Baker also provided me with the scholarship and support that was necessary for my theological studies. After I had begun my studies, and after he had retired, Bishop Baker and his wife Joan visited me in California. I know that he continued to pray for me during my studies and in my early years as a priest, and I was thankful to God for this continuing support.

Bishop Baker had a pastoral and accessible nature, and he was generally well liked in our Diocese. I had great respect for his pastoral sensitivity, which I experienced on his final visit to Hong Kong in 1984. He preached at the installation of Mary Au as Vicar of Calvary Church, and I served as his interpreter. He later took time out of his busy schedule to visit my mother, for my father had recently passed away. He wrote me a short letter expressing his condolences. This pastoral side of Bishop Baker strengthened my faith, and it is something that has stayed with me all these years.

Bishop Baker contributed a great deal to Hong Kong and to the Church, as you will discover in this book. His response to the 1967 riots, emphasizing the need for better channels of communication; his ordination of the first two legally ordained women priests; his work on the Joint Agreement on Baptism with the Roman Catholics; and his bringing together of the English and Chinese parishes of Hong Kong and Macao into one synod stand out among his unique contributions. Bishop Baker continued to develop our work in education and social welfare and raised the ecumenical and international profile of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao. The first Hong Kong church leader invited to visit mainland China, he laid the foundation for our improving relationships with the Church in China, as well as our greater integration with the Mainland. Bishop Baker was a generous spirit but also a solid Anglican, his faith well grounded theologically, and oriented to the mission of the Church. He was and is well respected in Hong Kong and Macao and throughout the world.

Hong Kong's Last English Bishop: The Life and Times of John Gilbert Hindley Baker is a book that should be read and studied by all priests and laypeople in our province, in order to get a better perspective on our history and tradition. I want to thank Philip Wickeri for his careful and creative work on this book and for his editorship of this series, "Sheng Kung Hui: Historical Studies of Anglican Christianity in China." The series helps to describe our history to scholars and anyone else interested in the Anglican and Episcopal tradition in Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China. The sixth volume in the series, this book focuses on the life and times of Bishop Baker and reveals the ways in which he helped open the way for who we are as a Church today to a new generation.

Paul Kwong
Archbishop Emeritus of Hong Kong
Epiphany 2021

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Introduction

John Gilbert Hindley Baker (1910–1986) was the last English Anglican Bishop of Hong Kong. Since childhood, he was known as Gilbert. All the boys in the family were known by their second name, and all the children took the name Hindley, their mother's maiden name. Gilbert was Bishop of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church, HKSKH) during an important transitional period for church and society in Hong Kong. In a very real sense, his life had prepared him for this position but did not make it inevitable.

Unlike the other HKSKH Bishops in the twentieth century, Gilbert had been involved in China and Hong Kong for most of his working life. His university education and work in the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Britain generated a commitment to church and missionary service. He went to Canton as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at the end of 1934 and was in China for most of the next sixteen years. There, he was ordained deacon and priest in the Diocese of South China, of which Hong Kong was a part. In the early years, he traveled extensively. This was a turbulent time in China, and his work took him to Kunming, Shanghai, and finally back to Canton. He met his wife, Martha Levering (Patty) Sherman (1911–1976), in China, and their first three children were born there. After all missionaries had to leave China, Gilbert and his family spent three years in an American parish, at Christ Church in Guilford, Connecticut. Patty was from the United States, and his three years there helped him become better acquainted with the Episcopal Church. In 1955, Gilbert and his family moved to England. The Archbishop of Canterbury had appointed him to two positions concerned with the international work of the Church of England, and to a third position to oversee the restoration and serve as vicar of Nicholas Cole Abbey in London.

These appointments came to an end in 1966, and Gilbert found himself unemployed. He was not qualified for suitable parish work in the Church of England, and he did not really have an interest in ministering to a middle-class church community. Eventually, he accepted a temporary position as acting director of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Study Center in Hong Kong. This was somewhat unsettling because, at the age of 56, he did not have a permanent position. But then, this had always been part of his commitment to the missionary life, and he was happy to return to Hong Kong.

Through an unexpected turn of events, he was elected Bishop in 1966. He joked that he was an “accidental” bishop, but he served with distinction in the position for more than fourteen years, during which time he became a leading religious figure in Hong Kong and around the world. Bishop Baker opened a new era in the Anglican Communion by legally ordaining the first two women priests in 1971. These ordinations were unprecedented and put Hong Kong in a unique position in global Anglicanism. This was a singular achievement. Under his leadership, the Diocese expanded the number of its parishes. He oversaw the building of fourteen primary schools and twelve secondary schools. The HKSKH Social Welfare Council was formally organized in his time, and social welfare work greatly expanded in the diocese. The Wen Lin Hostel, named after the Anglican Hostel for university students in Kunming, was built at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as a residential center for college students. The work of St. John’s College at Hong Kong University was greatly expanded, and Ming Hua College continued its work for lay theological training. He also helped with the reestablishment of Lingnan College in Hong Kong. Bishop Baker strengthened the Council of the Church in East Asia (CCEA), a grouping of former colonial dioceses. He also raised the ecumenical profile of the Church through his leadership in the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC) and his work with Roman Catholics. As the first Hong Kong Church leader to visit China in 1981, he laid the groundwork for improving relationships between Hong Kong Christians and the Church in China. He retired shortly after this visit and returned to England, where he remained active in the Church until his death in 1986.

Many people think of Baker as an insignificant interim Bishop in the twilight of the colonial era. One historian wrote to me,

My sense is that his period fell between two stools. He followed one of the most powerful personalities in 20th century Hong Kong and preceded the first Chinese bishop who turned out to be the architect of a new church and probably should have come in earlier were it not for the customary caution of the Anglicans.

It is true that Bishop Baker succeeded R. O. Hall, an outstanding figure in global Anglicanism and the longest-serving Bishop in Hong Kong history. And he preceded Bishop Peter K. K. Kwong, Hong Kong’s first Chinese diocesan Bishop, who created the HKSKH province and was an important figure in Hong Kong Christianity in the last decades of the twentieth century and the early years of our current century. But Baker was more than a place holder, and as this book shows, he did things as Bishop that strengthened the Church in Hong Kong and its place in world Anglicanism.

This book draws on a wealth of archival sources. The HKSKH Archives has well-organized materials on Gilbert Baker's bishopric, as well as some earlier material about him. Some of these have been deposited in the Hong Kong Public Records Office, but most materials on Bishop Baker are housed in the archives at Bishop's House. Especially useful has been the large number of letters and essays he wrote, both official and private. These offer his own perspective and reflections on people and events. Throughout his life, Baker was an inveterate notetaker and a prolific writer—diaries, letters, reports, sermons (which he usually wrote by hand), essays, and several short books. His notes and other unpublished material are an especially rich source for understanding his evolution as a thinker. As bishop, he preached widely and wrote extensively, and the HKSKH Archives has collected most of his sermon texts and informal writings from this period. In this biography I will be drawing heavily on his own words and reflections, published and unpublished, because this is the best way one can hear Baker as a “bishop speaking.”¹

The minute books of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao,² especially of the Diocesan Standing Committee, records from individual parishes, and diocesan publications in Chinese and English detail the life and work of the Church during his time as bishop. It is tedious to go through these many records but useful for the unexpected finds. Bishop Baker himself began several informal newsletters to communicate the work of the diocese to the English-speaking world beyond Hong Kong. The Church weekly now known as *Echo* (in Chinese, 教聲) has been an invaluable source for tracking his week-by-week activities. The *St. John's Review*, published by St. John's Cathedral, and the *Outpost*, published by the Hong Kong Diocesan Association in London, have important essays and reports on the work of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao during this period. Finally, there are hundreds of digitized photographs from Bishop Baker's time, the best of which appear in the pages of this book.

David Baker, Gilbert and Martha's eldest son, has what I have termed the “Baker Family Archives” housed in his home in England. This private archive has a rich record of Gilbert's early years and his time as a missionary in China. Gilbert wrote weekly letters to his father and mother in the late 1930s and 1940s, containing reflections on his personal life and observations on the Church and the political scene. Some of these letters became the basis for a

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1. His own short selection of sermons and addresses from his episcopacy is entitled *Bishop Speaking: Addresses by the Right Reverend John Gilbert Hindley Baker, Bishop of Hong Kong and Macao, 1966–1981* (Hong Kong: Ye Olde Printery, 1981).
 2. During this period the spelling in the name of the Diocese was Macao. This is the older, traditional spelling, and it is still used in the official name of the territory today and in most European countries. In the HKSKH, with the establishment of the province in 1998, the spelling was changed to Macau. This is the name used in most English-speaking countries. Both spellings are recognized by the government.

biographical reflection on his and Patty's (Martha's) life in China that he began writing a few years before his retirement.³ This archive also contains a large collection of family photos and photos from China in the 1930s onward, some of which appear here. There are altogether fifty-three boxes by my rough count, folders, and albums that I was given access to for one day in 2014. I wish I had been able to spend more time there.

The Lambeth Palace Library and Archives has important correspondence between Bishop Baker and the Archbishop of Canterbury, letters and reports relevant to Gilbert's work in England in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as material on the ordination of women. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) Archives at the University of Birmingham has material from Gilbert's time as a CMS missionary in China between 1935 and 1940. I am grateful to Dr. Judith Curthoys, Archivist at Christ Church, Oxford, who supplied me with a copy of Gilbert's academic record and other materials during his university years.⁴

The Archives of the Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, has some materials from the time he was a missionary of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church, 1940–1951. The Archives of the Special Collections, Yale Divinity School has material deposited there by Bishop Baker himself during a study leave after his retirement. These archives also have material on the many friends and colleagues of Gilbert and the institutions he served, as do the other archives that have been mentioned above.

The author has chosen not to incorporate oral histories of people who knew or worked with Bishop Baker into this study, with a few important exceptions. At one point I had planned to do a few more oral histories with former colleagues, but the restrictions occasioned by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made this impossible. I have spoken, by phone or in person, with dozens of people who knew him, to check facts and learn how they understood Bishop Baker, but these were not formal interviews let alone oral histories. I also looked at notes taken from conversations with colleagues and friends long before I knew I would write this book. But for the most part, I have based this book on the extensive documentary material that was made available to me.

My method and perspective in writing this book are straightforward. I have tried to narrate Gilbert Baker's life in the context of his times, drawing on available documentary evidence. I have had no overall theme, for I do not believe an individual's life can be fit into a theme or preconceived framework. I have tried to let the facts speak for themselves. But all people have different ways of interpreting facts, and like all biographers, I have made certain assumptions.

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3. Gilbert Baker, *Flowing Ways: Our Life in China* (Chichester: RPM Graphics, 1996). Gilbert never finished writing this book, and it was completed and published by his second wife, Joan. See Chapters 6 and 7.
 4. Judith Curthoys, *The Cardinal's College: Christ Church Chapter and Verse* (London: Profile Books, 2012).

I have assumed that Gilbert Baker's life has been a response to his times, based upon his own perceptions, beliefs, social location, and standing within the institutions of which he was a part. His Christian faith and theology certainly guided his actions, but I do not think that any churchman, even a bishop, acts solely on the basis of his religious beliefs. This is another reason why there is no overview in this study, for one's view of things changes and develops on the basis of a variety of factors. Gilbert's life as an Englishman in China, his role as a CMS missionary, his relationship with Bishop R. O. Hall, the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan, his ensuing life in Kunming, his marriage, the struggle leading to the establishment of the People's Republic of China, his expulsion from China, all affected him, as is evident in the discussion in Chapter 2. Gilbert was an historian and a writer, and so he thought about things and wrote down his reflections. There were different events and forces at work recorded in each of the remaining chapters, and so this biography is inevitably a life and times.

I have taken Bishop Baker's writings as a true reflection of what he believed and acted upon. Although a hermeneutic of suspicion is always appropriate in historical analysis, it is not definitive and must be accompanied by a hermeneutic of trust. Where the analysis is inconclusive, or the documentary evidence absent, I have said so. This is the first biography of Gilbert Baker, but in time there will be others. I have nothing to deconstruct and I have, as indicated above, no position to advance. This is not an "official" biography, and I have tried to follow the evidence wherever it led.

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The title of this book, *Hong Kong's Last English Bishop: The Life and Times of John Gilbert Hindley Baker*, requires a word of explanation. Gilbert was historically speaking the last of eight British bishops in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui. This is a historical statement, not a prescriptive one, for there is no canonical reason why the HKSKH could not elect another English Bishop, or even a Bishop of some other nationality. Nevertheless, his bishopric marks the end of an era in the HKSKH and in the history of Hong Kong in the transition from British to Chinese rule.

This book covers not only his time as Bishop of Hong Kong but his whole life. As I indicate above, I have done my best to place him in the context of his times, to show how he responded to the challenges he faced and opportunities he was given in each stage of his life. It will be up to the reader to judge how successful I have been. Not everything that happened in the diocese was the result his initiative as Bishop although it is customary in the HKSKH to identify the Bishop as the center of unity for the Church as a whole, and the one who oversees the life and work of the Church.

Gilbert Baker's life and times is presented in seven chapters. Chapter 1 is concerned with his early life, his family, education, and involvement in the Anglican Church. He was raised in a typical middle-class family in greater London, and family relationships were always important for him. The chapter relates Gilbert's schooling up to his matriculation at Christ Church Oxford, where he read modern history. It also shows how life in his local parish, and later in the SCM, shaped him for his life as a missionary in China. Particularly important was his encounter with R. O. Hall, his predecessor as Bishop, who inspired young men (and a few women) to become involved in the Church and work for social change. In Gilbert's case, the influence of Bishop Hall was decisive in bringing him to China in missionary service to the Church.

Gilbert's life and work as a missionary in China is covered in Chapter 2. This chapter provides extensive background on China and the Anglican Church during the period and shows how Gilbert changing assignments were made in response to war and revolution. Not long after his arrival, he was ordained deacon by Bishop Hall in the Church of Our Saviour in Canton (Guangzhou). In 1936, he was ordained priest, again by Bishop Hall. He began work at Lingnan University, a rather unusual assignment for a CMS missionary. With the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan, he moved from Canton to Kunming, where he was in charge of a hostel (Wen Lin Tang) for Anglican students who had been displaced by the war. He had met Martha Levering Sherman, known as Patty, the daughter of Episcopal missionaries from the US, and they were married on her home leave. They returned to Kunming, where they had their first two children, before leaving in 1945, for England and the US. In 1947, they returned to Shanghai, and after a few years, were back in Canton, until the family, along with all other missionaries, was forced to leave China in early 1951. These years gave Gilbert a personal sense of China during an important historical epoch. He also met Christian leaders on the mainland, many of whom he would continue to have contact with in the decades that followed.

Chapter 3 is largely concerned with Gilbert's work in the US and England. He became the rector of Christ Church, Guilford, Connecticut, for three years. With Patty's help, he learned to adjust to life in an American Episcopal parish. By this time, the Bakers had four children, including a second son born in Shanghai, and a second daughter born in the US. In 1955, at the invitation of Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher, he returned to England. He was appointed to three positions: General Secretary of the Overseas Council of the Church Assembly, Joint Secretary of the Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy of the Anglican Communion, and Vicar of St. Nicolas Cole Abbey, which became a Guild Church of the Anglican Communion. The first and primary position took him to many parts of the world to observe and take part in Anglican mission work and to foster ecumenical participation throughout

the Anglican Communion. He oversaw the reconstruction of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey and worked on conferences for the Advisory Council. In 1966 he found himself unemployed, and after a consideration of various possibilities, he accepted the post of Acting Director of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Study Center in Hong Kong.

It was in this position that he was elected Bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao in 1966. Chapters 4 to 6 cover his life and work as Hong Kong's last English Bishop. Shortly after his unexpected election, he had to respond to the 1967 Riots, which he saw primarily as a challenge to the social inequities of Hong Kong society and the need for better channels of communication. Much of his work dealt with the routine duties of any bishop: presiding over regular meetings of the Standing Committee; performing confirmations at each parish, usually once a year; attending special parish and school anniversaries; and participating in civic functions, as was expected of the Bishop of Hong Kong. These are all discussed throughout Chapters 4 to 6. Bishop Baker had a special interest in the work of the Anglican Communion, and particularly the Council of the Church in South East Asia (CCSEA), in which the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao played a leading role. He was also committed to ecumenism in Hong Kong, with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong and with Protestants in the Hong Kong Christian Council. The legal ordination of the first two women in the Anglican Communion in 1971 was easily the most significant decision of Gilbert Baker's early years as Bishop. It paved the way for the ordination of women throughout the Anglican Communion.

Chapter 5 deals with his bishopric up to early 1976. The chapter details what may be called the second founding of the HKSKH Social Welfare Council in 1973, the visit of Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey that same year, Gilbert's work on the Joint Agreement on Baptism with the Roman Catholics in 1974, the bringing together of the Chinese Synod and the English Churches' Conference in 1975. In each area, he brought to completion the work of his predecessors and laid the groundwork for his successors. This chapter also discusses the changes that were taking place in Hong Kong and the response of Bishop Baker and the Church to new social issues. The 1970s marked the emergence of Hong Kongers as a distinctive voice within the territory. During this time, Bishop Baker outlined his conception of the role of the Bishop and began to regularize the way in which finances were allocated within the Church. The Queen visited Hong Kong for the first time in 1974. And beginning in 1975, Vietnamese boat people started to arrive in large numbers, which demanded concrete responses from the Church.

Chapter 6 considers his last five years as Bishop, beginning with the political changes that began to take place in China, following the deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, and the fall of the "Gang of Four." These changes had an enormous impact on Hong Kong relations with mainland China, and

Bishop Baker offered his own perspective on what they might mean for the future. The suicide of his wife, Patty, in late 1976 was a tragedy which affected Bishop Baker deeply, but he chose to deal with this mainly within the family and a small circle of friends. This chapter also treats changes in the Church, the most important of which was the appointment of Cheung Wing Ngok as Assistant Bishop. Because of the recurrence of cancer, Bishop Cheung died only six months into his bishopric. Bishop Baker was increasingly interested in the reemergence of Christianity in China, and this chapter discusses the significance of his visits to the mainland prior to the conclusion of his time as bishop.

Chapter 7 discusses his five years of retirement in England, where he remained actively involved in the work of the Church until his declining health made this impossible. He also did some writing and organizing of his personal papers. Gilbert and his second wife, Joan Rogers, were invited back to Hong Kong by Bishop Kwong for the opening of a school named after him, and they took advantage of his time to make what would be his final visit to the mainland, including his first return visit to Kunming, where he had worked forty years earlier. He had come full circle. Bishop Baker died in the spring of 1986 at the age of 75, and his ashes were placed beside those of his first wife, Patty, in the parish churchyard.

Throughout his episcopacy, Bishop Baker continued to be attentive to clergy training and to the formation of priests for the future. He also worked on the establishment of churches, schools, and social welfare centers all during his time as Bishop, as was expected. These were part of his role of all bishops. The details of ordained clergy, churches started, schools established, and welfare units set up are listed in the four appendices of this volume.

The book concludes with a bibliography of Baker's published writings, a general bibliography and an index.

I spoke at length with Bishop Baker only once, on his return visit to Hong Kong in late 1984, when I was working at the Tao Fong Shan Christian Study Center.⁵ This was the same place where Gilbert had worked for three months before becoming Bishop in 1966. I had just finished my dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary, based on research I had done in the early 1980s while teaching at Nanjing University.⁶ This is what he was interested in speaking with

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5. I met Bishop Baker a second time at the conference preceding the first AGM of the Friends of the Church in China in England in December 1985, but there was no opportunity for an extended conversation.
 6. The dissertation was later published as Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

me about, especially the development of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. I have no recollection of the details of our conversation, but what impressed me was that he spoke not only with me but with each member of the staff, showing warm concern for what they were doing and offering encouraging words as needed. I recalled this brief visit as I began writing this biography, because it revealed something about his character that made his life as a missionary, a priest, and a bishop remarkable to the people around him.

Epiphany 2021

Sample Pages Only

America, England, and the World, 1951–1966

The Church is therefore called upon to break out beyond its own boundaries and to make bridgeheads in areas of life still unclaimed by Christ. It is a world-wide task which can only be effectively carried out by a world-wide Church. But until we have a unified command, each sector must move forward to the best of its ability, co-operating with neighbouring units as much as possible.

Gilbert Baker, *The Church on Asian Frontiers* (1963)

After celebrating the Chinese New Year in Hong Kong, the Bakers sailed from Hong Kong on the *President Cleveland*, flagship of the American Presidential Lines. They were once again bound for San Francisco via Japan. It was winter, and the seas were rough, but passengers enjoyed the amenities on offer. Gilbert records that they were on passage aboard “your American hotel abroad,” which was how the American Presidential Lines advertised itself.

The ship first stopped in Kobe, where the Bakers spent a few days with Canadian missionary friends from South China, now university teachers in Japan. There, Gilbert also visited Bishop Yashiro, presiding bishop of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, whom he had met as a young priest in Kobe before the war. Two days later, Gilbert and Patty visited the Central Theological College in Tokyo, where he met several missionary teachers. Central Theological College was regarded as the model of the CTS in Shanghai, where Gilbert had taught. From Tokyo, the family took the train to Yokohama, and reboarded the *President Cleveland*.

They sailed to Honolulu, their next port, and again spent a few days with former China missionaries who took them to local church sites. It seems everywhere they went there were friends and former China missionaries they knew. The *President Cleveland* continued across the Pacific, and on Palm Sunday (March 18) they spotted the California coast. The family spent Holy Week in San Francisco. Yet again they met friends from China, and Gilbert was asked to assist in services at Grace Cathedral. In late March, they headed east by train, stopping to see the Grand Canyon and the deserts of the American southwest.

They continued on to Chicago, and from there to New York City.¹ Gilbert and Patty had been traveling, with three young children, for more than six weeks.

The Bakers lived in the New York area for the next few months, at first with the Shermans, Patty's father and stepmother in Grammercy Park. Her father, Arthur Sherman, had retired in 1950, but he maintained a long-standing interest in Christian higher education in China and followed events closely. His second wife, Margaret Marston (they were married a few years after his first wife died in 1939), had been the Executive Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church. Arthur and Margaret were both very interested in the mission of the Church in China, and they were eager to get firsthand news from Patty and Gilbert.

Later, the Bakers moved to Brugler House in Westchester County, a home provided by the Episcopal mission board. The Shermans were delighted that the family was still nearby so that they could enjoy being with the grandchildren. Gilbert and Martha's fourth and last child, Martha Levering, was born in White Plains on August 2, 1951. Her name was that of her mother and her maternal grandmother, Martha Keyser Levering. Later that summer, the Bakers moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where they stayed with relatives until the end of the year.² Gilbert was still in search of a job.

He did some teaching in the Department of Religion in the University of North Carolina, where the head of the department was a friend from BSCM days.³ He was also invited to preach and speak at church gatherings, and he continued with his writing. Initially, however, there was no job in the church, and nothing was on the horizon. He was supported by the Episcopal Church mission board, but he had no assignment after the family settled in New York. This was the unsettled situation of many ex-China missionaries. With the outbreak of the Korean War, all missionaries had been expelled from China, and those not reassigned to other mission fields returned to their home countries. The vast majority of China missionaries were American, and Gilbert could be counted among those in the US, even though he was English.

The US in the 1950s was a powerful country in ascendancy, despite its internal divisions in race, class, and gender. President Eisenhower was a reassuring, even grandfatherly, figure to most Americans, and his war record showed his strong leadership as a custodian of American interests abroad. The Cold War was beginning, and the US wanted to extend its hegemonic interests against Soviet threats and expansion in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It never occurred to Americans that they were perceived as an imperialist power in much of the developing world. Mainline churches like the Episcopal Church had reached the peak of their influence in the 1950s. The Civil Rights Movement

1. Gilbert Baker, "Across the Pacific," *St. John's Review*, XVIII:5 (May 1951): 174–178.

2. Martha (Baker) Kemp to the author, October 12, 2018.

3. David Baker to the author, October 24, 2020.

was just beginning, and the anti-war movement, the women's movement, and the culture wars were still in the future. On the surface, the Eisenhower years seemed peaceful and contented, at least for the white middle class. But trouble was brewing just beneath the surface, domestically as well as internationally.

It is unclear how Gilbert became aware of the vacancy at Christ Episcopal Church in Guilford, Connecticut.⁴ The Shermans were well connected in Episcopal circles, and the mission board had put out the word that Gilbert was looking for an appropriate position. In any event, Gilbert applied to fill the position as rector, and he was accepted. He began work at Christ Church in January and was formally installed on June 18, 1952.⁵ This was to be his only position in full-time parish ministry, and it was in the US, not in England or China. Fortunately, he had Patty, who knew the culture and ways of American Episcopalians, and she would help him adjust to the parish. The emerging Cold War notwithstanding, Guilford was enjoying the easy affluence of white middle-class America in the Eisenhower years.

Guilford is a quiet and pretty town, typical of those along the southern New England coast. Christ Episcopal Church is across the street from a picturesque village green, around which are clustered historic buildings, other churches, small shops, restaurants, and a post office. It was settled by the English in 1639. Two years later, the Niantic Sagamore Wequash Cooke deeded the land for settlement by the English to one Henry Whitfield. Wequash himself was an important historical figure, purported to be one of the earliest New England converts to Christianity.⁶

Christ Episcopal Church was founded in 1744 by the Reverend Samuel Johnson, the father of Episcopalianism in Connecticut and later the first president of King's College, now Columbia University. Johnson was a Puritan from Guildford in Surrey (hence the name for the new town but without the "d"), and many friends had come over to America with him. Some of their descendants were still in the church when Gilbert arrived. For the first thirteen years, the church had had no priest, and services were taken by lay readers. In 1764, the church had grown large enough to call its first rector, the Reverend Bela Hubbard. During the American Revolutionary War (also known as the War of Independence), Christ Church was severely damaged. Lead from the windows was said to have been melted down for bullets to be used against King George's soldiers.⁷ This suggests that members of the church were on the side of the Americans in the war against England, which was not the case for most Royalist Anglicans, as they were then called. After 1776, the church continued

4. "Epilogue," Joan Baker, in Gilbert Baker, *Flowing Ways*, 169.

5. *Journal of the Annual Convention*, Diocese of Connecticut, 1952: 219.

6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wequash_Cooke, accessed October 19, 2018.

7. "Our Parish History," Christ Church, Guilford, undated (around 1998).

to expand, and in 1834 the vestry decided to raise money for a new church building.

The first wooden structure was built in 1750. It was located inside the green, surrounded by poplar trees. It had no pews, pulpit, or window glass. The green was later cleared of buildings and gravestones, and the current church was consecrated in 1838. It is an impressive stone structure with Gothic detail and a tall tower, said to be one of the notable Episcopal churches in southern New England. It stands to the east of the green, opposite to where the original church stood. The adjacent wooden rectory was built in 1820 and bequeathed to the church in 1899 by the Reverend Lorenzo Bennett.

The historic Christ Church and rectory was the Bakers' new home. It was a comfortable and even genteel parish, buffered from the wider world, with neither the excitement nor the deprivation that Gilbert and Patty had known in China. David, Anne, and Peter were enrolled in local schools, and Patty stayed home with little Martha. She also became active in the church and community as the rector's wife, which was expected. Gilbert adjusted to the ways of the Episcopal parish. Given what we know of his work habits, he would combine study and writing with careful attention to parish responsibilities and pastoral care for individuals and families. He took time in preparing his sermons, which were always concise, thoughtful, and challenging. He was dedicated to pastoral work and gave full attention to the people he was with. He organized parish activities, and he especially liked working with young people. Gilbert served on the social services committee of the Diocese of Connecticut and its national counterpart.⁸ He was fully engaged in his work but not particularly busy.

In an informal circular publication of ex-China missionaries, Gilbert wrote in 1954:

Guilford is an attractive New England town, founded by a Church of England clergyman from Guildford, Surrey, in 1639; he brought many of his Puritan friends with him, and his descendants are still prominent members of the community and the Church. Our rectory . . . looks out over a pleasant Green, and is capacious, but not too large for our family . . . The stone Church next door was built in 1838 (though the parish had had almost a century of history before then) and is now a pleasant and worshipful-place thanks largely to the work of redecoration done in the time of my predecessor, Norman Dare, and also to a real sense of devotion that many people have shown . . .

I think some progress is being made in the parish. As everywhere, but perhaps particularly in America, the greatest enemy is "nominal religion"—the kind which people want injected (in small doses) into their children, thus immunizing the whole family against the real thing! We are, however, slowly getting in touch with more parents through the Couples Club and

8. "Autobiographical Statement," 1966, BFA.

Bishop of Hong Kong, 1972–1976

It is by your receiving Jesus Christ in the bread and the wine that you are strengthened for service. The secret of this strength lies in prayer. For when you open your heart to God, He will reach out His hand to you, just as the Good Shepherd reached out to the lost sheep. And you will be given strength to play your part in fulfilling those other words of the Gospel about the Good Shepherd: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. I would also bring them, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." May Christ the Good Shepherd breathe upon you today so that you may receive His Holy Spirit and draw others into His Family.

Bishop Baker, "Holy Carpenter" (1974)

Theological education was a continuing concern for Bishop Baker, and he believed that the system he had inherited was not adequate for the HKSKH. Anglican candidates for the priesthood went to Union Theological College at the University of Hong Kong. But Union was not deemed educationally viable by Dean Paul Gibson, and in 1972, its program was folded into the Theology Division of Chung Chi College.¹ For the next decade, most Anglicans went there although Bishop Baker sent a few candidates for the priesthood overseas. Mary Au was the first woman to be educated in the degree theological program at Chung Chi. But Chung Chi was not an ideal solution for the Church. It was and is more an academic institution than a seminary for the formation of clergy. Because it was ecumenical, it downplayed denominational distinctions in both campus life and courses. It did not have morning and evening prayer, or weekly Eucharist, or even regular courses on Anglicanism. These concerns were lingering sources of tension between the HKSKH and the Theology Division of Chung Chi.

The Church wanted to have a broader presence in university education, and it accomplished this in various ways. St. John's College at the University of Hong Kong was an early focus but not the only one. When Lingnan College (later Lingnan University) reestablished itself in Hong Kong, Bishop Baker, who had taught at the old Lingnan in Canton, helped get it going, as we will

1. Wickeri, "Clergy Training and Theological Education," 22.

see. Bishop Hall had been a prime mover for Chung Chi College, which was in some ways a successor of the church colleges in China. Bishop Baker hoped to continue this work, for the church presence at all of these colleges was part of the Anglican mission.

From the beginning, he had hoped to build an Anglican hostel on the campus of Chung Chi College, but this proved not possible in the early years of his bishopric. But in 1972, Bishop Baker personally organized the building and financing of a new hostel for forty university students, men and women, regardless of their religious affiliation.² The Reverend Peter Kwong (鄺廣傑) was appointed as its first warden and was also on the theological faculty of the university. The hostel was named Wen Lin Tang (文林堂), after the hostel of the Anglican Student Church where Gilbert had served as warden in wartime Kunming. The hostel never really attained what Bishop Baker hoped would be an “Anglican presence” at Chung Chi College, however, for it was costly to maintain and did not become a center of student activity or of Anglican worship. In the early 1980s, under Bishop Peter Kwong (who had been its first warden), it was turned over to the university.

Sir Murray MacLehose had arrived in Hong Kong in late November 1971, to become Hong Kong's twenty-fifth and longest-serving governor. He was the first governor to come from the Foreign Office, not the Colonial Service, and he projected a non-colonial image. The Bishop of Hong Kong was always close to the governor and stood ninth in protocol.³ Bishop Baker had been on good enough terms with Governor David Trench, an Anglican, but a very conservative colonialist. In contrast, MacLehose was a free-thinking (and hard-drinking) Scot from the Labour Party, who was not fond of the ceremonial. He was someone whom local people came to trust and who is credited for doing a great deal to improve Hong Kong and strengthen the rights of its people.⁴ His political outlook was similar to that of Bishop Baker, and he quickly struck up a close relationship with Mrs. Baker, whom he liked because she was direct, just like he was.

MacLehose took a much more positive and high-profile approach to social reform than his predecessor did. He tackled bureaucratic corruption, began

2. “Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the 30th Diocesan Synod held on Monday, 18th September, 1972 at 5:30 p.m. at the Diocesan Center,” “Attachment B: The Wen Lin Tang Hostel at Chung Chi College,” Standing Committee Minute Book, 1966–1983, HKSKH Archives. See also “Chung Chi College—Hostel (Wen Lin Tang),” File 639, HKSKH Archives.

3. By the early 1970s, both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic bishops were ninth in protocol ranking. Earlier, they had been fifth, below the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Chief Secretary, and the Commander of the British Forces in Hong Kong. Today, the bishops are ranked twelfth.

4. John Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007), 161.

to construct a welfare state, and introduced a Ten-Year Housing Scheme. At the same time, the Hong Kong economy was advancing at a breakneck speed, the GDP growing fivefold between 1971 and 1981.⁵ It was in the 1970s that Chinese billionaires like Li Ka-shing (李嘉誠) made their fortunes, but there was also a rising middle class. Free mandatory primary school education was introduced in 1971, and in 1978 free secondary school education was introduced. MacLehose tackled the corruption, especially in the police force, and appointed Jack Cater to head the newly established Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974. Government support for social welfare increased tremendously, as we will see in Chapter 6. Social reform, the improvement of living standards, and widespread access to education gave Hong Kongers a newfound sense of pride and self-confidence.

Bishop Baker realized the importance of these changes for the Church. The diocese spent much of 1972 looking at educational policy and the establishment of new schools. Archdeacon Cheung Wing-Ngok had been given responsibility for education, and he was the one who took the lead. But Bishop Baker himself was keenly interested in education as well. By the end of the decade, the Church would establish six more primary and nine more secondary schools. Diocesan involvement in tertiary education also increased through St. John's College and Chung Chi College. Education was a way of proclaiming the message of the Church, and so it would coincide with the emphasis on education in society as a whole. As we have observed, it has always been a key area of the Anglican contribution to Hong Kong.

In September, Bishop Baker produced a memorandum for the Diocesan Standing Committee on “The Bishop and the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao.”⁶ It is unclear why he wrote this at this time, but perhaps it had to do with the Bishop of Victoria Ordinance, which had been revised in 1972. The committee accepted the memorandum with its appreciation. Bishop Baker defined the office of the Bishop historically and theologically and wrote about the changing nature of the Bishopric in Hong Kong. He also detailed the specifics of the ordinance, which we will turn to below. The memorandum speaks of the need for unity and cooperation in the work of the diocese, so perhaps Gilbert had some concerns in this area. Unity was especially needed between the Chinese Synod and the English Conference. He concluded by saying that he was “most thankful for the spirit of co-operation which we already have” and that “he is certainly glad to listen to and discuss suggestions for the improvement of our diocesan organizations.” As we will see, the memorandum, among other things, generated an interest in the Standing Committee about

5. Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 193.

6. “Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the 30th Diocesan Synod held on Monday, 18th September, 1972 at 5:30 p.m. at the Diocesan Center,” Standing Committee Minute Book, 1966–1983, HKSXH Archives.

the various trusts and funds under the Bishop's control, something to which the Standing Committee had no access.

In November 1972, the United Nations removed Hong Kong and Macao from its list of colonial territories. The People's Republic of China had assumed its seat at the UN Security Council the previous October, and it had made this request. The UK subsequently changed the status of Hong Kong from Crown Colony to Dependent Territory, and two years later Portugal released all claims over Macao. Decolonization was still the order of the day. The people of Hong Kong and Macao saw that their cities were changing, and there was some apprehension about this. Bishop Baker and the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao would respond to these changes in new ways, as the Church always tried to do. Although the future of Hong Kong and Macao was not a matter on which the people could decide, the Church would continue to serve as the salt and light of society.

New Year's Day 1973 found Bishop Baker at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, where the annual message of Pope Paul VI was read. His theme was "Peace is Possible" and it came at a time when the destructive American bombing of North Vietnam had just escalated and when other wars in different parts of the world had intensified.⁷ Yet Gilbert agreed with the pope that peace was possible, for Christ Himself called the Church to peace and unity. The previous year, Bishop Baker and Bishop Hsü had exchanged pulpits at their respective cathedrals during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, and this in itself was an expression of peace and reconciliation between two important churches.

Gilbert remained a committed ecumenist, as did most church leaders of the time, convinced that this was not only the biblical mandate but that it was the only way the Church could make a difference in a fractured and needy world. In Britain, Anglicans and Methodists were making tentative steps toward greater unity, and although this effort produced no agreement in the end, it had been worth trying. Later that January, Bishop Baker preached at the Synod of the Chinese Methodist Church, where he reminded the assembly of the Anglican origins of Methodism, admitted that the division of the two Churches in the eighteenth century was a fault of the Anglicans, and pledged to work for greater cooperation and closer unity between the two Churches in Hong Kong.⁸ This ecumenical spirit was not shared in the same way by Hong Kong bishops before or since although there has always been cooperation and goodwill among the churches of the territory.

The Bishop of Victoria has historically had a singular and unique position in relationship to the government of Hong Kong. In February 1849, the Diocese of

7. "The Bishop's Letter," *St. John's Review* 40 (February 1973): 21.

8. Baker, "The Assembly under the Holy Spirit: Sermon Preached at the Synod of the Chinese Methodist Church," *Bishop Speaking*, 57–59.

Victoria (present-day Hong Kong Island) was created by Royal Letters Patent, and the Reverend George Smith was consecrated as Bishop of Victoria that May. The Bishop of Victoria Ordinance (Chapter 1004) was enacted in 1925 and established “The Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong” as a corporation, with perpetual succession.⁹ By this ordinance, the Bishop of Victoria Corporation was a legal institution and a sole Trust, which meant that the holder of that office was accountable to no one other than the government. He presided over the Diocese, but in a certain sense he existed alongside of it, with specific authority over the Bishop’s House compound. This became important for the Standing Committee in the 1970s, because it also had to do with the various trusts and funds held by Bishop Baker as the incumbent.

The Standing Committee had wanted to see greater centralization of assets and resources of the Diocese and had asked Bishop Baker to provide them with a list. Bishop Baker was not required to do so. It should be said that this was an issue of long standing. The Bishop was under no obligation to disclose the funds under his control, because he was accountable under the ordinance only to the government.

Nevertheless, at their January meeting, Bishop Baker offered a partial list of trusts, some of which were under ordinance, together with statements of accounts and explanations:

- Vincent Stanton Fund
- Dupuy Fund
- Bishop’s Special Discretionary Fund
- Old People’s Assistance Trust
- Bishop’s Vocational Training Fund
- Bishop’s Church Extension Fund
- Bishop’ New Project Fund
- Alford Endowment Fund
- Clergy Holiday Endowment Fund
- Bishop’s New Projects Fund
- Several Scholarship Funds
- St. Christopher’s Home Trusts

There was in addition the Bishopric Fund Trustees, but they only decided the income spent on the Bishop’s stipend and related expenses. The trustees were appointed by the Bishop.

9. “Appendix A, The Interim Paper Proposed by Roland Chow,” undated, ca. 1974, HKSKH Archives. Roland Chow was the Chancellor of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao in Bishop Baker’s time. Chapter 1004 was subsequently amended, most recently in 1972, but without significant changes to the original ordinance. The original ordinance, No. 4 of 1925, is accessible in online Hong Kong government records.

In Retirement, 1981–1986

There do come times when we must choose—between life and death, darkness and light. Some choices go by forever but others recur, and Jesus who was tempted as we are in his mercy gave us another chance. So continue to wrestle with the Lord like Jacob till he gives you a blessing. You may feel that the Lord has an unfair advantage, dislocating your plans as he dislocated Jacob's thigh. But don't let go; for in the end it is not your choice but His. "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you that you may go forth and bear fruit in His Name."

St. Peter's College, Oxford (1986)

Gilbert and Joan retired to Dorking in Surrey, to a comfortable home that had been in the Baker family since 1968.¹ Gilbert's son David had lived in this house until 1972, and he sold it to his parents. They rented it for some time, but this was also the house in which they lived for one or two summers. It was a small-sized home on Orchard End, Nower Road, in an affluent neighborhood, with stunning views of the Surrey Hills. Dorking was a short train ride from London, close to Little Bookham, where Gilbert and Patty had lived in the 1950s and 1960s, and not far from Bromley, where Gilbert grew up. Gilbert was most comfortable in the places he had known. After arriving in late April and waiting for the things they had shipped, the Bakers visited family and friends before they moved into their home. They spent the early part of the summer getting their house into shape, redecorating, installing a new heating system, and arranging the house with their furniture, books, and possessions.

Gilbert settled into a more relaxed life, reading, writing, going on walks, and entertaining friends. Gilbert did not have a particular hobby or sport that was the focus of his attention, nor did he play a musical instrument. Yet he was always ready to offer a verse or two from Gilbert and Sullivan, sung with gusto, to the delight of those around him. He did not settle into a life of leisure, for he still received speaking or preaching invitations, and sometimes he went to London or other cities to attend meetings. No longer assisted by the amahs and

1. Joan and Gilbert Baker, Circular Letter to friends, November 1981, Baker Letters, 1979–1981, HKSXH Archives.

servants they had had at Bishop's House, he and Joan shared household chores such as shopping, cleaning, and gardening.² Joan did most of the cooking, but Gilbert helped with the dishes.

Joan had a small cottage in Yorkshire, which was where she had grown up. Her parents, then well into their eighties, lived nearby, and they looked after the cottage when Joan and Gilbert were not there. Joan's three children were much younger than Gilbert's. Clare was in England and stayed with Gilbert and Joan for six weeks that summer. Her daughter Anne was teaching English in Hong Kong and had returned in March, before her mother had left. Clare and Anne were both to be married in 1982. Mark, the youngest, began reading theology at King's College London in October 1981.

The Bakers attended the reunion of the HKDA at the end of June. Gilbert was the main speaker. He reviewed the situation in Hong Kong and the renewal of the Church in China and urged continuing prayers and support for the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao.³ Precisely because he was Hong Kong's last English Bishop, he was also the last who emphasized the tradition of the HKDA. Founded by Bishop Duppy as the Victoria Diocesan Association in 1920, the organization drew its membership from among old Hong Kongers, now in the UK, who wanted to continue a relationship with Hong Kong. It met in regional groups and held a yearly reunion. The HKDA was a creation of the colonial era, with all its attendant attitudes of helping impoverished brothers and sisters in a distant land. At one time, the association contributed a great deal of money to the Diocese. But by the early 1980s, its membership was dwindling, its support decreasing, and its purpose unclear. When Bishop Peter Kwong spoke to the HKDA the next year, he urged members to combat the narrow and provincial attitudes about Hong Kong that persisted in the UK and emphasize reconciliation and a widening of horizons in all churches.⁴ He was trying to show them that times had changed. His words were more challenging to the HKDA than anything they had heard before. The organization came to an end a few years later.

In September and October, Gilbert and Joan went to the US on a holiday. The Chinese Christians who had attended the Third World Conference on Religion and Peace were invited to the Interchurch Center in New York (475 Riverside Drive). Gilbert met them there in early September, some of whom he was seeing for the third time that year. But for most of their time in the US, Gilbert and Joan were visiting friends and family. Joan had a cousin in Maine, and they stayed with her for a time. They enjoyed the beautiful autumn colors in New England. Gilbert was in touch with all of Patty's relatives, even nieces and nephews, and they apparently welcomed Joan as part of the extended

2. These personal details are from the letter just quoted and from *Flowing Ways*, 174ff.

3. Gilbert Baker, "The Reunion Address (22 June 1981)," *Outpost* (Autumn 1981): 4-9.

4. "The Bishop's Address," *Outpost* (Autumn 1982): 5.

Back in Dorking in late October, they began to adjust to life in England. Both Gilbert and Joan were active in their local parish, St. Martin's, which shared space with the Methodists. Joan and Gilbert liked this ecumenical arrangement, and they both took part in activities at the Christian Centre. Joan volunteered there, where she helped in the restaurant and with the mother and toddler group. Gilbert preached once a month at St. Martin-in-the-Fields and stayed on for the Chinese service in the afternoon. He also went to London from time to time for meetings with the Archbishop of Canterbury or for events related to the ecumenical China Study group, then directed by Bob and Maggi Whyte. Sometimes, visitors from Hong Kong came to see them, most notably Bishop Peter Kwong.

Gilbert was appointed Assistant Bishop of Guildford in 1983. Guildford was a relatively new diocese, formed in 1927 from part of the Diocese of Winchester. As Assistant Bishop, he did confirmations around the diocese and was invited to preach in area churches. With the exception of his time at St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, which was a special case, Gilbert had never been a vicar in an English parish, but now, nearing the end of his career, he was becoming acquainted with parish life in a church that had changed considerably since he last worked in London. He seemed to like visiting rural and urban parishes, most of which were within driving distance from Dorking, or a short train ride away.

In addition to his duties in Guildford, he lent his support to the Movement for the Ordination of Women, where he carried considerable authority because of his own ordinations in Hong Kong. He followed what was happening in Hong Kong and Greater China and continued a regular correspondence with friends in the diocese. He enjoyed seeing Hong Kong visitors when they were passing through London, but there were not many of those. He also wrote short pieces for various newsletters, often about Christianity in China.

Gilbert devoted new attention to the book that he began after Patty's death, about their lives together in China. He had tried to interest Oxford University Press in the project, but they turned him down. The editor wrote to say he was "trying to combine the objective and historical alongside the personal and biographical" and that these two approaches were not complementary in what he had submitted.⁵ This rejection may have put Gilbert off writing a major book. He was a writer of short pieces, but he had never done a book-length study and he was not trained in historical research. What his writing achieved in accessibility, it lost in the clarity of approach needed for sustained historical reflection.

As a scholar, Gilbert saw himself as a historian more than a theologian. He had received his BA in modern history at Oxford, and he taught mainly history during his years in China. He only spent one term reading theology at Wescott

5. M. C. Campbell, Oxford University Press, to Gilbert Baker, April 11, 1979, BFA.

House in 1934, before going to China, although he continued his theological studies in Canton. There is no evidence that Gilbert was ever interested in liturgy. His interests were more practical. He saw Church and society issues viewed historically as more important than the liturgy and paid little attention to the revived Anglo-Catholicism that was then in vogue among some intellectuals and others.

His historical interest came to focus quite naturally on Christianity in China. There are several pieces he wrote about Church history in China, most of which were written in his last years in Hong Kong or his early years in Dorking. While still in Hong Kong, Gilbert had written a three-part essay on the history of Christianity in China for the *St. John's Review*.⁶ This essay offers an overview of Christianity from its beginnings up the present, with an emphasis on the development of the CHSKH and on the Church's social concerns. In its original form, it was a lecture prepared for the summer course at Ming Hua College.

The longest essay he wrote was a forty-page manuscript that combines his own experiences with his reading of Chinese church history.⁷ It traces the history from the beginning to 1949. It is engaging in the parts he writes from experience and in some of the stories he tells that contain flashes of insight. But Gilbert jumps around quite a bit, and there is no guiding narrative. This is perhaps why it was never published. What is clear throughout, and especially in the last part, is his support for the TSPM and his positive evaluation of Y. T. Wu. He sees TSPM as the culmination of what missionaries in the mainstream churches, especially the Anglicans, had intended. Y. T. Wu became the leader of the TSPM after 1949, and Gilbert endorses his approach to a Christian emphasis on social change. His historical perspective is guided by his hope for the future, as he makes clear in the concluding paragraph:

Today the Church [in China] with its long record of continuity, and by its generally steadfast character may render real service to the community and to the worldwide Church. There are welcome signs that the Church is emerging from relative isolation to take its rightful place in the ecumenical family of Christians.

In March 1983, Gilbert went to Yale Divinity School on a three-month research fellowship to continue his research and writing on his project. This is where he finished the manuscript just quoted. He brought many of his own

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6. Bishop Gilbert Baker, "Our Roots in Christ with God's People: A View of Chinese Christian History," *St. John's Review*, 44:9 (October 1977): 11; "Part II: 45:1 (January 1978): 10; and "Callousness Indifference Challenged: A Pastoral Letter to all Churches and Christian Agencies," *St. John's Review*, 45:2 (February 1978): 11.
 7. Gilbert Baker, "The Study of Church History in China," unpublished manuscript. May 1983, 40 pages. The manuscript consists of several separate but linked essays, YDS Archives.

papers to leave at the Yale Divinity School Archives. He also left at the archives clean typed copies of the letters he had written to his parents while he was in China, from 1935 to 1949.⁸ After his time at Yale, Gilbert did little more work on his book, as far as we know.

He did leave behind an outline that was adapted for the book that came out under his name, *Flowing Ways: Our Life in China*. Joan Baker believed it was her responsibility to finish what Gilbert had begun. This was not an easy task, because she was not familiar with Gilbert and Patty's time in China, which is really what the book is all about. Joan did not take up the task until 1990, when she began sorting through the writings that Gilbert left behind. She did an enormous amount of work organizing and rewriting. She contacted Gilbert's friends and family for help. Joan herself wrote a short epilogue covering the years 1951–1986. The Reverend Canon Arthur Sherman, the older brother of Patty (Sherman) Baker, wrote the preface. Bishop Peter Kwong provided financial support for publication. The book was published privately in England in 1996, and the majority of copies were sent to Hong Kong.

New Haven was familiar territory, and Gilbert and Joan were able to visit with old friends in the area. Guilford was just a short distance away, and Gilbert took Joan to visit his old church, where some of the parishioners remembered him with great fondness. He joked that he was now the Assistant Bishop of Guildford in England, so he could be their Bishop as well. This was to be Gilbert's last visit to the US although he may not have realized it at this at the time. He and Joan did not travel widely, and they spent most of their time in Connecticut so that he could concentrate on the Yale Divinity School archives.

The following January, Gilbert was on hand to welcome Florence Li to London. She had been invited by the Movement for the Ordination of Women, which had arranged a Thanksgiving Eucharist at Westminster Abbey on the fortieth anniversary of Li's ordination. Joyce Bennett had retired the previous November, and she was asked to preach. There were two women priests, both ordained in the Hong Kong Diocese, in the Church of England that had still not approved the ordination of women. The irony was not lost on the one thousand or so people who had gathered for the service. Joyce Bennett quoted Canon Max Warren, who had said of Bishop Baker's ordaining two more women as priests in 1971 as being "normal and proper for the Christian Church."⁹ Florence Li had not been given permission by the Church of England to celebrate her fortieth anniversary Eucharist, so the Movement for the Ordination of Women asked Bishop Baker to be the celebrant.

8. YDS Archives, Special Collections RG8 Series 1, Baker, John Gilbert Hindley, accessed June 9, 2020, https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/4/archival_objects/114510. The originals of the letters (mostly handwritten) are in the BFA.

9. Bennett, *This God Business*, 401–403.

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User's Note:

The arrangement of entries and sub-entries is alphabetical and letter-by-letter. References to photographs comprise page number followed by “photo” and the number of the photograph, viz: 40 photo 2.5. References to subject matter in footnotes comprise the page number followed by the letter “n” and the number of the footnote, viz: 74n2.

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