SEANET SERIES VOL. 12

PAUL H. DE NEUI, EDITOR

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

# SEEKING the UNSEEN

## SPIRITUAL REALITIES IN THE BUDDHIST WORLD



*Seeking the Unseen: Spiritual Realities in the Buddhist World*

Copyright © 2016 by Paul H. de Neui
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except brief quotations used in connection with reviews in magazines or newspapers.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptures quotations marked "ESV" are taken from The English Standard Version® (ESV®) copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. ESV Text Edition: 2011.

Scripture quotations marked "NKJV" are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "NRSV" are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "RSV" are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1952 [2nd edition, 1971] by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "GNT" are from the Good News Translation in Today's English Version- Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission.

Published by William Carey Library, an imprint of William Carey Publishing
10 W. Dry Creek Circle
Pasadena, CA 91104 | www.missionbooks.org

Melissa Hicks, editor
Brad Koenig, copyeditor
Josie Leung, graphic design
Rose Lee-Norman, indexer

William Carey Library is a ministry of Frontier Ventures
Pasadena, CA 91104 | www.frontierventures.org

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: De Neui, Paul H., editor.
Title: Seeking the unseen : spiritual realities in the Buddhist world / Paul H. De Neui, editor.
Description: Pasadena, CA : William Carey Library, 2016. | Series: SEANET series ; Volume 12 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2015039610| ISBN13: 9780878080465 (pbk.) | ISBN10: 0878080465 (pbk.)
Subjects: LCSH: Missions to Buddhists. | Christianity and other religions--Buddhism. | Buddhism--Relations--Christianity. | Spirituality--Buddhism.
Classification: LCC BV2618 .S44 2016 | DDC 266.0088/2943--dc23
LC record available at
http://lccn.loc.gov/2015039610

23 22 21 20 19 Printed for Worldwide Distribution

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

# CHAPTER 1

# MOVING BEYOND WARFARE: BIBLICAL IMAGERY AND THE CONDUCT OF MISSION[1]

DWIGHT P. BAKER

Poets may be, as the nineteenth-century Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley declared, the unacknowledged legislators of humankind; deeper still, imagery and images are the unrecognized wellsprings of thought and action. They are fecund, vivifying, and energizing—and they have entailments. They touch the deepest roots of human motivation; an image aptly chosen moves us more profoundly than can either command or axiom. And the imagery we invoke speaks volumes about who or what we conceive ourselves to be.

Throughout history, Christian mission, sad to say, has often been pleased to be the beneficiary of overt warfare and the course of empire. Though few evangelicals today might care to embrace a territorial conception of the church or endorse war as a means of advancing the faith, in recent years seriously intentioned evangelicals have possibly been the most avid in embracing warfare terminology for articulating their understanding of Christian doctrine and Christian mission. They engage in spiritual warfare. They seek out prayer warriors. In mission they plan campaigns, develop strategies, establish beachheads, and target peoples. They call for a wartime lifestyle. They create manuals, even encyclopedias, of spiritual warfare. They view ordinary disappointments and setbacks of life through the lens of spiritual battle, seeing

1 This chapter is a modified version of the article "Beyond Warfare: Biblical Imagery and the Conduct of Mission," *Covenant Quarterly* 49: 3–4 (August–November 2011): 79–94. Used with permission.

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

in them evidence that spiritual forces have singled them out for direct personal attack.

Warfare terminology and imagery is widespread in the evangelical mission enterprise. The late Ralph Winter, cofounder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, Pasadena, California, advocated adoption of "a wartime, not a peacetime, lifestyle" (Winter and Hawthorne 2009, 210). In speaking to USCWM staff in 1999, he evoked the experience of Admiral Spruance in sending pilots to near certain death during the decisive World War II battle at Midway, using this story to elucidate the weight he felt as a mission leader who had to make decisions regarding mission personnel. The well-known pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, John Piper (1993, 41), writes that "prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church" that invests the church with "the significance of front-line forces." Earlier, L. E. Maxwell (1977), longtime president of Prairie Bible Institute, titled his book *World Missions: Total War*. Before him Orville D. Jobson (1957) published *Conquering Oubangui-Chari for Christ*, an incongruous title for a Brethren missionary. More recently, Peter Wagner expounded the "power of strategic-level spiritual warfare" (1996), conjuring up an image of a squadron of high-flying B-52s, while Stephen Womack, in recruiting for the Wycliffe Bible Translators, keeps his feet on the ground by calling for "a participating, active, stepping-out-in-faith, *invasionary force of militant priests* in joint enterprise with Almighty God" (2000, 8; italics added).

Imagery plays a vital role in the New Testament documents, and this includes warfare imagery. Warfare and militaristic imagery is used to depict the activity of God against Satan and everything tainted by him, to speak of the struggle between God's Spirit and evil desires deeply embedded in the human heart, and to indicate the vigilance Christ's followers should exercise against Satan's attacks and the fortitude with which they should bear hardships and burdens in Christ's service. But two observations: first, that is about the sum total of the New Testament's use of warfare imagery. Second, the question posed below is whether the military model is optimal for describing the organization of the church and the lines along which its activities should

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

be conducted. Specifically, are the organizational structure and ethos of mission agencies best patterned along military lines?

Let's be clear: there *is* a war going on. God is at war, whether Gregory Boyd (1997) has all the angles quite right or not. There is war, not just on earth, but in heaven also (e.g., Rev 12:7–17). And as "Onward, Christian Soldiers" shows, martial images and music stir a response. But does the church's core identity really lie with war? What about other New Testament images for the Christian life, other images for the nature of the church, and other metaphors for the conduct of mission endeavors? If there are advantages to warfare rhetoric, what disadvantages or deficits come with militaristic imagery? Very importantly, does war rhetoric inherently constrain, in undesirable ways, the affective stance of those who use it within the missionary enterprise?

What follows consists of four steps: first, a reminder that, in our handling of it, mission's relation to war has been diverse and not always seemly; second, a reminder that war itself has worn different faces at different times and in different places; third, a look at imagery used for the church in Acts through Revelation; and, fourth, a set of reflections that question reliance upon military organization and ethos as models for the organization and conduct of mission agencies.

## MISSION IN RELATION TO WAR

Mission or missions and war is a huge topic, as is the related topic of mission and empire (e.g., Stanley 1990; Porter 2004). All that can be done here is to place some markers to indicate high points of the terrain to be covered. (The specter of crusade as mission—often buttressed by appeals to the Hebrew Scriptures and to the church as the new Israel—raises another large cluster of topics. They deserve extended attention, but unfortunately will have to be left to another occasion. Suffice it to say that the church has not been given a mandate to impose obedience to the gospel by political triumph and still less by military conquest.)

### Heavenly War

As mentioned, there *is* a war on a cosmic scale, dramatized in the book of Revelation. All of heaven and earth becomes the stage on which the battle is fought. The forces of God and Satan, good and evil, crisscross the tableau as scene follows scene in this first Christian drama. In this

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

heavenly war, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world stands victorious. He is our champion. We participate as followers in his train, exulting in his victory.

### War Expanding the Frontiers of Christendom

The banner of Christendom down through the centuries has too frequently matched progress with the ensigns of war and imperialism, sometimes profiting from the tides of battle, sometimes spurring war on.

To pick a "successful" example, in "the most naked use of armed force for the spread of the faith which Christianity had yet seen," Charlemagne spent more than a quarter century in "converting" (that is, subjugating) the Saxons. It became deadly dangerous to be a Saxon and remain unbaptized (Latourette 1975, 350; Neill 1986, 68–69). Church growth advocate Donald McGavran apparently was able to contemplate Charlemagne's "crude" but ultimately effective methods sanguinely: they worked, did they not? (1972, 62). Or did they? Wilbert Shenk (1995, 54), citing studies conducted by Emmanuel-Célestin Suhard, bishop of Paris, reminds us that in France the very areas of forced conversion are the ones that today are the most resistant to the gospel.

Spain and Portugal's drive into Central and South America, carried out in the name of gold, glory, and the gospel, planted a pre–Counter Reformation version of Roman Catholicism there at the expense of the native inhabitants. Happily, some Christians such as Bartolomé de las Casas protested the extermination and enslavement of the local inhabitants (Wright 1970; Rivera 1992). Russian Orthodoxy rode eastward across northern Asia on the back of ethnic Russian military conquest and imperial expansion. Bribery and coercion, mixed with "heroic zeal, apostolic simplicity, willingness to suffer and to die," marked the church's advance to the Pacific. Neither story is wholly edifying, to speak kindly (Neill 1986, 181–87).

Europe's wars of religion can be viewed as a drawn-out contest to see whether various patches of Christendom would end up Catholic or Protestant—and, therefore, as not strictly missions—but it is worth remembering that the extended battle zones of Europe's post-Reformation conflicts over religion mark the fault lines along which the worst outbreaks of the European witch craze erupted. "That this recrudes-

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

cence of the witch-craze in the 1560s was directly connected with the return of religious war is clear. It can be shown from geography" (Trevor-Roper 1972, 143).

Military, commercial, political, and missionary factors intertwined in the penetration and partitioning of Africa. The story is covered with sweeping strokes by Roland Oliver (1952) in *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* and, for colonial and missionary penetration along the Congo and Ubangi Rivers, in more fine-grained fashion by William Samarin (1989). Examples are unending. The question to be raised is whether the church has even yet sorted out the consequences of "linkage"; that is, seeking to capture an advantage for the gospel through conjunction with military conquest and as a partner to strategies for gaining political and commercial advantage.

## Military Models for Mission Organizations

Linkage between mission and war can take another tack. Should mission organizations be structured after a military model? Some, following the lead of Ralph Winter (1974), would strip the church down to two structures, a parish modality and a mission sodality, that derive, respectively, from Roman civil administration and military organization. In this understanding, medieval Christendom's diocesan structure was adapted from the basic territorial unit of Roman civil administration, while its monastic and mission structures copied a nonterritorial, freely shifting, commander-centric, Roman military model of organization. But even if this reading of their pedigree is correct, does a military model provide the best pattern for mission organizations today and in the future? Even enthusiastic advocates would, I think, quickly find limits. The Knights Templar may have been slandered when they were suppressed in 1307 (Froude 1972), but the record of those orders that took the adjective "military" to heart is not wholly encouraging.

## Issues of Motivation

John Kotter and James Heskett (1992), writing in *Corporate Culture and Performance*, stress the need for business leaders to create a sense of crisis if leadership is going to move a body of people in a particular direction. Later, Kotter identifies "establishing a sense of urgency" as the *sine qua non* for leading change (1996). What better image of crisis

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.

Thank you for reading this preview.
To purchase a copy of this book, visit:

**https://missionbooks.org/products/seeking-the-unseen-seanet-12**

William Carey Publishing. Copyrighted content.