

# RESEARCH REPORTER



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**Associate Professor of Business and Management Stuart Strother and Mrs. Barbara Strother's**

*Moon Living Abroad in China* (Emeryville, CA: Avalon Travel Publishing, 2006) is a joy to read! Their clear, upbeat style, wide range of knowledge (from China's historical dynasties to the etiquette of eating with chopsticks!), keen sense of humor, and transparent sincerity make this an appealing book for those teaching about China, seriously preparing for travel to or residence in this huge country, or vicariously imagining themselves abroad while recognizing that they may not yet be ready for the cultural challenges vividly described by this courageous young couple.



Just gazing at the splendid photographs (many taken by Barbara Strother) both stimulates the imagination and anchors the reader in this foreign culture which is in the process of absorbing elements of the West. (One photo shows the Strothers' twins enjoying a Starbucks treat beneath the windows announcing the café in both English and Chinese!) The text is well organized around key topics including "Gender Roles", "Sports and Games", "Sample Itineraries", "Employment Laws", "Banking", "Renting a Home", to name only a few. The content under these headings is consistently clear, sincere, and often entertaining. For example, the Strothers poignantly

describe "Xiao Huang Di: Little Emperors": "One, child, two parents, four grandparents: China's one-child policy has resulted in the unforeseen effect of having spoiled kids doted on by six admiring adults. Many families in China are raising Xiao Huang Di, or Little Emperors—a Chinese term to describe children who have never had to learn to share their toys with their brothers or sisters and never had to get along with their cousins." Obviously this text exceeds the usual travel

book content and offers something of interest to a wide range of readers!—  
Carole Lambert

*Our apologies for the late arrival of this month's Research Reporter! Illness has temporarily kept us down but not out, and we are looking forward to introducing two new regular contributors in the February version of our newsletter---Eds.*

**Professor of Doctoral Studies in Education Patricia J. Bonner** describes the remarkable transformations of attitudes and skills of two local bilingual math teachers and their students in her “Transformation of Teacher Attitude and Approach to Math Instruction through Collaborative Action Research” (*Teacher Education Quarterly* 33 [3] [Summer 2006], 27-44). Frustrated by the students’ low math achievement test scores, particularly in the area of word problems, the two math teachers, with their principal’s support, sought Dr. Bonner’s help which resulted in a close collaborative research project lasting over a year. Unlike “training models” such as one day “in service” workshops, this project was customized to meet the needs of the teachers and their students, being shaped over the school year as new data surfaced and was thoughtfully analyzed. Both she and the two teachers were able “to jointly question what was happening, to make changes, and to assess those changes” with the positive outcomes resulting in papers that both math teachers presented at a state conference and which were subsequently published in the symposium proceedings.

The key factors necessary for the documented improvements in teaching, learning, and improved attitudes toward math were teacher autonomy; time within the workday and over the school year for implementation of the research and collaboration with colleagues; an ongoing culture of inquiry with an emphasis on objectivity and multiple sources of data; and reflection on teacher behavior and student responses, all of which are described in detail in this article.

The results are impressive: “marked improvement in their students’ performance on the MAPA (Mathematics Application Performance Assessment)”, self-confidence gained by the participating teachers, and joy in doing math problems experienced by the students. Dr. Bonner’s clearly written, well documented, and hopeful article demonstrates how “teaching and teachers can be changed individually, almost one at a time. . . through the transformative learning that is possible in action research.”—Carole Lambert

**Professor of Global Studies Paul Hertig** in “The Magical Mystery Tour: Philip Encounters Magic and Materialism in Samaria: Acts 8:4-25” carefully demonstrates the dangers of seeking spiritual powers without having matured in Jesus Christ. Confessing to having almost succumbed to this temptation himself as a college student, he now affirms: “In the name of Jesus’ should indicate authentic reverence and submission to Jesus, not a magic formula. Popular forms of Christianity often move into the realm of magic when they misinterpret the basic tenets of Christianity by bypassing the cross and moving directly into a resurrection experience of instant success.”

This affirmation is founded upon his study of how Philip, following in the footsteps of the martyred Stephen, and Simon of Samaria receive and use spiritual gifts. Philip’s ministry to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian leader in the desert expands the Gospel’s outreach to Gentiles: “Philip’s preaching, exorcisms, and healings were mutually reinforcing.” Simon seeks Philip’s power without understanding his Gospel. Simon’s followers are fascinated by *him* while Philip’s listeners are touched by *his message*. Hertig notes that “Simon Magus is accustomed to power manifested through money and greatness” while Philip has been a waiter of tables in Jerusalem before the dispersion resulting from Stephen’s martyrdom. “In contrast to Simon, Philip seemed prepared to deal with power. He focused on the kingdom rather than on himself.”

Hertig believes that “[t]his text [Acts 8:4-25] is not far removed from present-day life.” His wise, thought provoking essay is found in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context* (ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, Orbis Books, 2004, pages 103-113).—Carole Lambert

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