Celebrating the Church Mission Society, 1799–1999

The year 1999 marks the bicentenary of the Church Missionary Society, now the Church Mission Society (CMS). There will be a celebration on Clapham Common, London, May 29, an exhibition in Liverpool, and a sponsored walk from Oxford to Cambridge, June 22–27. In this issue, the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN makes its own contribution to the CMS bicentennial year.

The CMS was born on Friday, April 12, 1799, at a tea party in the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldersgate Street, London. On that occasion John Venn, vicar of Clapham, together with fifteen other evangelical clergy and nine laypeople, founded “The Society for Missions to Africa and the East, instituted by members of the Established Church.” Since then more than 9,000 men and women have served under the auspices of the society.

William Wilberforce and Charles Simeon were among the founding members, and from the inception of the CMS issues of social justice and evangelism have been partners in mission. Significant mission strategists and theologians have served as general secretaries of the CMS: Henry Venn, 1841–72, Max Warren, 1942–63, and John V. Taylor, 1963–74. In this edition of the IBMR there are two articles by more recent general secretaries: Simon Barrington-Ward, 1975–85, who sets out his “Pilgrimage in Mission,” and Michael Nazir-Ali, 1989–94, who offers “Martyn and Martyrs: Questions for Mission.”

Missions scholarship, ecumenical partnerships, and indigenization have been hallmarks of CMS. The mission legacy of CMS historian Eugene Stock is critically considered by Kevin Ward, who, with Brian Stanley, has edited the bicentennial volume CMS and World Christianity, 1799–1999 (Eerdmans and Curzon Press, 1999). Louise Pirouet writes on Ludwig Krapf, a Lutheran from Württemberg and pioneer CMS missionary to East Africa. Jacob F. Ade Ajayi, in recalling the struggle of the CMS over the relationship of church and mission, considers the first African Anglican bishop, Samuel Crowther, and Graham Kings describes the significance of Abdul Masih, the second ordained Indian Anglican clergyman. Kings, a contributing editor of IBMR, has given special assistance in planning this celebratory special issue.

For further information about the CMS bicentennial celebration, see the society’s website, www.cms-uk.org

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From Mission to Church: The Heritage of the Church Mission Society

J. F. Ade. Ajayi

The Evangelical Revival in England, of which the Church Missionary Society, now Church Mission Society (CMS), was a product, was initiated by a number of clergymen in the Anglican Church, among whom John Wesley was the best known. From different backgrounds and approaches, they challenged the Anglican Church, among whom John Wesley was the best known. was a product, was initiated by a number of clergymen in the Anglican Church, among whom John Wesley was the best known. was a product, was initiated by a number of clergymen in the Anglican Church, among whom John Wesley was the best known. was a product, was initiated by a number of clergymen in the Anglican Church, among whom John Wesley was the best known.

From different backgrounds and approaches, they challenged the worldliness of the clergy and sought to kindle in the body of the church a sense of sin and the enabling grace of Christ to save the repentant sinner.

Like all revivalists, they had to face the issue of whether to work within the existing churches, particularly whether to work with the existing leaders and liturgies, some of which they criticized and wished to change. Working within the existing structures, they could concentrate their effort on their mission of saving souls and leave the politics of church organization to others.

Alternatively, they could emphasize doctrine, secede from the existing churches, formulate new liturgies, and constitute their followers into new churches. With this approach, however, they ran the risk of losing the momentum of the movement for saving souls and changing lives; they soon might find themselves settling into the routine of church organization.

Finally, the revivalists were also grappling with a problem that is at the heart of evangelization—the relationship between preaching and pastoring, fishing and shepherding, mission and church.

John Wesley himself wished to reform the Anglican Church from within; he refused to secede or become a dissenter. However, by 1791, when he died, three groups had emerged among those referred to variously as Methodists or Evangelicals:

1. The Wesleyan Methodists, who had become a distinguishable denomination, with their emphasis on the singing of hymns, the preaching of the Word, and the simplicity of their places of worship, which had to be licensed as dissenting chapels, distinct from the parish churches of the established church.

2. The Calvinist Methodists, led by George Whitefield, whose powerful preaching and emphasis on the doctrine of predestination brought in the masses, while the patronage of Lady Huntingdon brought in some of the aristocracy and the funds. In spite of themselves, they became known as the Huntingdon Connection—in essence, a branch of the Methodist Church.

3. The Evangelicals, who insisted on operating from within the Anglican Church and within the context of the existing liturgies, episcopacy, and the links of the church with the state. They became known as the Low Church, distinguished from the Anglo-Catholic High Church, and even from the intervening Broad Church that evolved later. This meant that individual clergymen of Evangelical persuasion carried their congregations along and sought to extend the acceptance of Evangelical principles in the church. It was not until 1849—when the Privy Council decision in the Gorham case, which ruled that the Evangelical views on baptism were not inconsistent with the liturgy and that the bishop could not refuse to ordain a clergyman on the grounds that such views were unsound—that the Evangelicals were assured that they could not be legally expelled from the church and did not need to secede.

In deciding to work within the Anglican Church, the Evangelicals weighed the advantages and disadvantages. Knowing they were unlikely to change the whole Anglican Church to Methodism, they were satisfied to have their views accommodated as consistent with the basic principles of the church as enunciated at the time of the Reformation. Where Anglo-Catholic relics of the Reformation proved an immovable obstacle, they fell back on the Bible and the practices of the early church as constituting a greater authority than the compromises made at the Reformation. Once the Evangelicals were found to be acceptable within the church, they reckoned that they would have the influence of the whole church and its connection with the state to try to change society and that they would therefore be more effective socially than they would have been outside the established church. In this way, they balanced their emphasis on the Christian responsibility of saving individual souls with the collective responsibility of Christ—and of the Christian church—to save the whole society and, ultimately, humankind. In the work of evangelization in foreign missions, while tolerating the constraints that episcopacy and state power constituted, they were able to exploit the state connection, and they became champions of royal patronage and imperial expansion.

Although the conversion of John Wesley to Methodism began in 1735 when he was a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in a British colony in America, the Evangelicals did not initially show much interest in foreign missions. Their focus was on evangelization in England, Wales, and Scotland, particularly among the urban poor and in the rural areas. The SPG and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) kept the torch of missions burning feebly within the Anglican Church, but they concentrated on British colonies in America, the West Indies, and, through Danish missionaries, to a limited extent also in India. In converting to Evangelicalism in 1786, William Wilberforce vowed to devote his energies to the abolition of the slave trade. He thus joined the Clapham Sect, a small group of clergy and influential laymen who formed a fellowship meeting at the rectory of Clapham presided over by the Reverend John Venn. The members included Charles Grant of the East India Company, Thomas Clarkson and Zachary Macaulay of the Sierra Leone Company, and Lord Teignmouth, a former governor-general of India. It was a combination of their interests in India, Africa, and the antislavery campaign that moved them to favor a rekindling of the fire of foreign missions, and the establishment in 1799 of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, soon to be known as the Church Missionary Society.

The CMS thus was founded by a group of sixteen individual clergymen and nine laymen at the time when the Evangelicals were few in number and their influence in the Anglican Church was limited. The Baptist Missionary Society had been founded in 1792 and the London Missionary Society (LMS), a

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The founders saw foreign mission as a strategy to awaken the spiritual life of the Anglican Church.

Initially, the attitude of the archbishops and the bishops, particularly the bishop of London, to the CMS was, at best, cautious or lukewarm. Ordained clergy were not willing to volunteer to go abroad as missionaries, and the bishops hesitated to ordain missionaries who would be under the direction of a lay-dominated missionary society. Thus the CMS found it difficult to recruit suitable missionaries, and most of their workers in the 1820s and 1830s were German Lutherans trained and ordained at the Basel or Württemberg seminars. Not until 1841 was an agreement formalized between the society and the church hierarchy, when, on the suggestion of the bishop of London, the society agreed to add a clause to its rules and regulations to the effect “that all questions relating to matters of Ecclesiastical Order and Discipline respecting which a difference shall arise shall be final.” The archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishop of London, and the other bishops then joined as members of the society. The society had always appointed a member of the royal family as patron, and it now designated the archbishop of Canterbury as vice-patron, with the bishops and a few other lords as vice presidents. It was against this background that the
Evangelicals secured victory in the Gorham case at the Privy Council in 1849. Nevertheless, the committee of the CMS ensured that the agreement to cooperate with the church hierarchy did not in any way undermine the autonomy of the society in the direction of its missionaries in the field.

The Anglican Church as an established church is regulated by acts of Parliament. The powers of the clergy and the bishops, their relationships with the laity, rights over property, qualifications and requirements for appointment, discipline, and so forth are all regulated by law; disputes, as a last resort, are resolved through litigation. The extension of the church overseas must therefore also involve legal issues. No one did more than Henry Venn, the general secretary of the CMS from 1841 to 1872, to reconcile the legal, doctrinal, and practical issues involved, and yet ensure that the effective control over CMS missionaries abroad remained in the hands of the society.

Venn set out and elaborated his plan for the operation of missions in three memoranda issued as instructions to missionaries in 1851, 1861, and 1866. These quickly became recognized, and were widely adopted, by other missionary societies as the clearest, most authoritative statements on the

Venn's “three-self” formula was widely adopted as the clearest, most authoritative statement of mission theory.

matter. Venn's approach was based on the dual nature of the objectives of the mission—to preach the Word and to gather out the ecclesia as a part of the visible body of Christ. Missionaries must concentrate on the first, but as they gather the converts into a congregation, they must seek to make it self-supporting, self-propagating, and eventually self-governing. Toward this end, missionaries must pay particular attention to the selection, training, and appointment of local leaders of the congregation, and to the contribution of each convert, in money or in kind, for the sustenance of such leaders. It is among such leaders that catechists, deacons, and pastors should be appointed. The missionary should superintend the growth of the congregation but should avoid the temptation to remain its pastor. The danger of paternalism, which stultifies growth, was recognized from the start. The task of organizing a number of self-supporting congregations into a settled community of Christians, that is a church, belongs not to the missionary as such but to a bishop and a church council or synod dominated by laypeople from the congregations, acting independently of the missionary society. At that point the missionary should hand over superintendence to the bishop and move on to new fields, a process that Venn described as the euthanasia of the mission.

In the Anglican constitution, the bishop occupies a central position. While the clergy admit new members through baptism, the bishop has to lay hands on them to confirm them as communicants. It is the bishop who selects, examines, and ordains the clergy, first as deacons, then as pastors. In Britain, each bishopric is endowed, and the bishop becomes a member of the House of Lords and participates in lawmaking. The appointment of each bishop requires the issue of letters patent by the state to authorize the archbishop to consecrate the particular individual as bishop. It took several years to work out the legal basis for creating Anglican bishops overseas, first within English colonies, then in other places as well.

It was realized that the powers of Parliament and the archbishop to create bishops could not simply be extended overseas, not even in British colonies. In colonies of British settlement, the growing constitutional powers of local legislatures needed to be recognized. So also the presence of "natives" among whom CMS missionaries worked. Then there were colonies where the church was not established or endowed by the state, and the constitution of the church had to be based more on the consensus of the members than on legal prescriptions either of the British Parliament or of the local legislature. Usually the CMS worked out formal agreements under which their missionaries cooperated with the colonial bishops, while at the same time lobbying to have the major say in the selection of the individuals to be made bishops.

While working out the constitution of the colonial church, it was necessary to deal with the problem of the Anglican Church in areas outside colonial territories, the areas that interested Henry Venn and the CMS most. In 1839 Mohammed Ali, an Albanian general of the Ottoman Empire who was sent as governor of Egypt, where he asserted his independence, invaded Syria and seemed bent on toppling the Ottoman regime. This did not please the major powers, who combined in an operation that drove him out of Syria. Prussia then suggested a combined Lutheran Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem, which was to work not only for the conversion of Jews but also for the return of Israel to the Holy Land. Though some lawyers hesitated about its legality, an Anglican Lutheran bishop on Mount Zion appeared to be too good a prospect to miss. On the grounds that Parliament had the powers to legislate whatever it wished, it passed a law empowering the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, assisted by other Bishops, to consecrate British subjects, or the subjects or citizens of any foreign kingdom or state, to be bishops in any foreign country and, within certain limits, to exercise spiritual jurisdiction over the ministers of British congregations of the United Church of England and Ireland, and over such other Protestant Congregations as may be desirous of placing themselves under the authority of such bishops. Under this law, known usually as the Jerusalem Act, Dr. Michael Solomon Alexander, a Jew, born in Breslau (Prussia) and converted in England, and who had worked in Ireland and had become professor of Arabic and Hebrew in London University, was consecrated Anglican bishop of Jerusalem in 1841.

With this possibility of creating Anglican bishops in non-British territories, Venn's missionary plan envisaged that the work of the CMS would result in the extension of the English church. Venn instructed his missionaries in areas outside British colonies of settlement to restrain racial pride and arrogance. . . . Study the national character of the people among who you labour and show the utmost respect for national peculiarities . . . respect the national habits and conventionalities . . . Let a native Church be organized as a national institution.

At the time when Venn was drawing up his plan, the island of Lagos had become a British colony, but no one envisaged a colonial Nigeria. Henry Venn intended that on the mainland a national church would emerge from the Yoruba and Niger missions. Most practicing missionaries regarded Venn's prescriptions as the impractical ideas of an armchair critic. Could the distinctions between preaching and shepherding be so sharp? As one missionary countered, "So long as it is necessary to send missionaries . . . so long must they be the teachers, counsellors, directors and leaders of the people." Venn initiated the implementation of his plan, especially with the consecration of
Samuel Crowther in 1864 as bishop of “Western Equatorial Africa in regions beyond the Queen’s Dominions.” But as Nigeria with the rest of Africa moved into the colonial era, racial pride and arrogance took over, and the prospects of organizing the “native” church as a national institution receded.

The Sierra Leone Model

In spite of the terrible rate of mortality in Africa among the Europeans in the 1820s and 1830s, there was little emphasis on training Africans for leadership roles in the Sierra Leonean church. The German Lutherans, both in Africa and in India, showed a greater tendency toward paternalism than even the English. Progress began to be made when Venn assumed the secretary-generalship of the CMS in 1841 and Crowther published the journal of his 1841 Niger Expedition, emphasizing the correlation between the high mortality rate and the need for developing an African agency. Crowther was invited to the Islington Training Institution in 1842 and was ordained in 1843 (ultimately becoming, two decades later, the first African to be appointed a bishop). George Nicol and Thomas Maxwell followed in 1849. The CMS Grammar School in Lagos was started in 1845, and Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone was revived and its new building opened in 1848.

CMS pressure for a colonial bishopric in Sierra Leone eventually yielded fruit in 1852. The CMS drafted “Articles of Arrangement” between the society and the bishopric for constituting a Sierra Leone church, but because of the death of three bishops in rapid succession—Vidal in 1854, Weeks in 1857, and Bowen in 1859—the plan could not be ratified by the archbishop of Canterbury and implemented until 1860–61 under Bishop Beckles. By then, Bishop Vidal had confirmed 3,000 communicants; Bishop Weeks confirmed 1,400 others and ordained three Sierra Leoneans and a Jamaican for work in the Sierra Leonean interior; Bishop Bowen ordained two, and Bishop Beckles three others. Vidal had in 1854 constituted a school maintaining the Grammar School and Fourah Bay College. The colonial administration also paid a small subvention until 1875, when it was withdrawn and the church disestablished. However, the greatest weapon of the CMS was its hold on all properties of the church—the land, the church buildings, schools, parsonages, and so forth—on the grounds that they were still to be maintained and repaired from church funds.

In New Zealand, where the CMS initiated such a policy, it claimed the necessity to hold on to the properties in trust for the Maori, who owned the land before the European settlers came. In Sierra Leone, and later in Nigeria, the policy of retaining control over the properties was clearly a weapon of control and a diminution of the principle of self-government. Moreover, as long as the bishops were Europeans, the CMS was consulted as to whom to appoint, and the bishops were closer to the European missionaries than to the African pastors or their congregations.

Beyond the Queen’s Dominions

In 1842, when Henry Townsend landed as the first CMS missionary in the Yoruba mission, little remained of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century missionary efforts in Benin and Warri, not to mention the even earlier possible spread from Nubia to Borno. Townsend found Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist Missionary Society in Badagry, and they celebrated Christmas together in keeping with the cordiality that existed between the Methodists and the Evangelicals of the Anglican Church. They both extended the same cordiality to the Baptists when they arrived in Abeokuta. This cordiality extended to the Presbyterians, but not to Roman Catholics because of the fear of popery, which had not died down in Evangelical circles in Britain. However, in 1884, this did not prevent Bishop Crowther from welcoming Catholics to Onitsha at the start of their remarkable work among the Igbo. For Crowther, Christianity was a force for creating a new society, and he welcomed all those willing to make a positive contribution. When Robert Delany, a black Canadian, led a mission to acquire land on which to settle black Americans in a back-to-Africa venture, Crowther persuaded the Egba to agree, but Henry Townsend, who feared that the CMS might not be able to control the settlers, frustrated the plan.

All the different missionary societies shared in the CMS heritage of close association with the state. When, for example, a parliamentary committee recommended in 1849–50 that the naval patrol in West Africa should be withdrawn on the ground that it was ineffective in comparison to the loss of lives and other resources, the CMS summoned Crowther to Britain. They arranged for him to meet with the prime minister, Lord Palmerston, and for the colonial secretary to take him to meet the queen and Prince Albert. It was a dramatic and highly successful intervention. Not only was the naval patrol retained, it was asked to provide ammunition to help the Egba resist a Dahomey invasion, and it was used at the end of 1851 to drive Oba Kosoko from Lagos so as to install Akintoye in his place as a missionary protégé. Thereafter, the various missions moved to the island of Lagos and established themselves in the choicest parts.

The CMS allied not only with the state but also with various merchants and traders in opening up the Yoruba country, the Niger-Benue waterways, and the Niger delta to European trade. For example, the CMS in the 1850s constructed a road from the landing on River Ogun so as to take carriages to convey cotton gins and other machinery into Abeokuta. Although some of the Evangelical missionaries, notably Charles Gollmer, a German of Lutheran background, grumbled that so much attention to secular
issues was a danger to spiritual life, it remained a cardinal part of the CMS policy until the 1870s to use Christianity, commerce, and civilization to open up the country. The Niger Mission was begun after three government-sponsored or government-supported Niger expeditions, and only on the basis of the introduction of a mail steamer, sponsored by an Evangelical merchant and receiving a government subsidy for carrying mails, going up the river at least once a year during the rainy season. After agents of the Niger Mission and their Sierra Leonean friends and relations had opened up the Niger to trade, Sir George Goldie (an avowed atheist) proceeded to amalgamate all the British companies and sought a royal charter to establish a monopoly. In the process, he found Bishop Crowther and his all-African staff an embarrassment. He joined the cry of European missionaries to have Europeans take over from Crowther, rather than extend Crowther’s jurisdiction to the Yoruba mission or allow James Johnson to take charge of the Yoruba mission (as had been widely anticipated).

By the late 1880s the logic of close relationship with the state overturned Venn’s missionary plan and brought the Yoruba and Niger missions into an era of colonial tutelage. Young, intemperate European missionaries from the Keswick Convention were drafted into the Niger Mission. They discredited Bishop Crowther’s staff en masse and accused the aging bishop of being a weak disciplinarian, lacking in the highest spiritual qualities. Crowther resigned control of the Niger Mission to them in 1890 but planned to constitute the Niger delta into a self-governing pastorate independent of the CMS. It was a futile struggle against the rising tide of the empire. Crowther’s episcopacy itself had been an important factor in bringing the areas from without into the queen’s dominions.

Crowther’s episcopacy was so well celebrated and so central to Venn’s missionary plan that we would never know whether it ever crossed his mind that it was probably a mistake that he did not recommend Crowther as bishop of Sierra Leone in 1860 instead of Beckley, who turned out to be an absentee bishop. Crowther was reserved for work among his own people and on the Niger, at the head of an all-African staff. But from the start, the terms of Crowther’s appointment were in contradiction to, rather than in accordance with, Venn’s missionary plan.

Crowther’s consecration in 1864 was accomplished under the terms of the Jerusalem Act. The vast area assigned to him included Liberia and areas in the Senegambia outside the colonial enclaves. But he was not a bishop over a “Native Church organized as a national institution,” but a missionary bishop to preach the Word and seek to create afresh a church that could only be an extension of the Anglican Church. He was an agent of the CMS, paid by the CMS. So were his staff, most of whom were from Sierra Leone and who therefore usually communicated with their congregations through interpreters. He was hedged around explicitly and by implication with restrictions both as to his ability to interpret doctrine and the liturgy and as to his jurisdiction. He was excluded from the Yoruba mission because the European missionaries there would rather be under the jurisdiction of the European bishop of Sierra Leone. Even when, in 1869, the Egba expelled the European missionaries from Abeokuta and Europeans were unable to move about in the country for twenty-four years, the European missionaries in Lagos frustrated any attempt to bring the Yoruba Mission under Crowther’s jurisdiction, even though he continued to live in Lagos as the most central part of his immense diocese. He had direct access to the archbishop of Canterbury, but this hardly increased his independence of the CMS, since the archbishop was unlikely to decide on any matter in dispute without reference to the CMS.

For example, the two social issues that troubled the mission most in West Africa were polygamy and domestic slavery. In a memorandum drawn up by Henry Venn in 1858, the CMS committee had pronounced on the matter. Both polygamists and slaveholders were unacceptable in the church, but the CMS went further to indicate that they took a more severe view of polygamy than they did of slavery. Polygamy, they argued, is condemned by express words of the Bible and therefore admits of no amelioration, while slavery is condemned only by implication in the Bible, and not expressly, and therefore could be given time to be eradicated gradually from the society. Neither Crowther nor any African leaders of the church argued, as some laymen did, that polygamy was approved in the Old Testament and not expressly forbidden in the New. None could question the CMS order of priority without calling in question his own morality, or avoid the charge of being in bondage to the “racial weakness” of Africans. Because the missions came to West Africa on the wave of the anti-slave-trade campaign, they might have been expected to take a more severe view of slavery. But the missionaries discovered that, for the sake of promoting trade in palm oil, groundnut, cotton, and other items to replace slave trade, an increase in domestic slavery had to be tolerated. However, by the 1870s, when the British were pushing the frontiers of empire into the interior, colonial authorities justified invasion and conquest on the basis of freeing domestic slaves (to provide recruits for the colonial armies) and ending the holding of slaves by African rulers. In fact, at the Lambeth Conference of 1888, the bishop of Exeter and some European CMS agents plead that slavery was worse than polygamy, but neither Crowther nor other African church leaders were willing to question the 1858 formal ruling of the CMS. Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther had, in fact, argued at a conference in Libreville that the church need not lose sleep on behalf of the divorced wives of the converted polygamist, because they were not really wives, but slaves.

The search for a native church as a national institution could make no headway under foreign superintendence or formal colonial tutelage such as ensued. Following the Berlin Congress, Goldie obtained a royal charter through which Nigeria was recognized as a sphere of British influence. By 1900 Goldie’s charter was revoked, and Nigeria came under the control of the Colonial Office. Crowther died in 1891. The bishopric of Lagos was at last created in 1894 to oversee the Yoruba Mission, the Niger Mission and Lower Niger, and the Niger territories of northern Nigeria. The bishopric was to be filled by European nominees of the CMS, while their African nominees were to be assistant bishops. There were schisms and secessions leading to the formation of the United Native African Church in 1891 and the African Church Bethel in 1901. There was to be no African diocesan bishop until Akinyele was appointed to the Ibadan Diocese in 1952 in the era of decolonization.

Venn’s plan was overturned, and the Yoruba and Niger missions entered into an era of colonial tutelage.
The CMS Heritage

As we contemplate the CMS heritage in Nigeria, two different strands emerge. First, there is the Evangelical heritage of a socially committed and responsible church. Its roots were laid in the Evangelical revolution itself that accompanied the Industrial Revolution in England and that made such a tremendous difference to social discipline and the reform of manners. It roused the nation to care for the poor, to extend education and later the vote to the lower classes, and to recognize the rights of trade unions. It roused public opinion to prohibit the African slave trade and take measures, including the extension of Christianity, to stop the trade. It was in order to participate effectively in this movement for social reform that the Evangelicals established the CMS in Nigeria largely through the work of Bishop Crowther and the other Western-educated Nigerians whom he inspired. These included T. B. Macaulay, his son-in-law, who founded the CMS Grammar School in Lagos in 1859 against the opposition of European missionaries. The whole emphasis that Crowther put upon education as the most effective tool of evangelization was part of the tradition. The Holy Ghost Fathers at Onitsha took up the tradition just when the CMS European missionaries were turning away from it, until after the Roman Catholics had used it to establish a hegemony among the Igbo. The tradition of social commitment was evident in the refusal of James Johnson and others to join the African church in 1901 in the belief that they would still be more useful within the Anglican Church. It was evident also in those products of Fourah Bay College who moved out of Lagos to take the grammar school into other parts—Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Ondo, Ille-Ife, and Ilesa (the Aionian Schools)—until their example forced some European missionaries to try to do better and establish such excellent schools as Dennis Memorial Grammar School, Onitsha; Enitona High School, Port Harcourt; and Igboi College, Lagos.

The second strand of the CMS heritage was represented by European missionaries in the field who distrusted Venn’s plan and proceeded to undermine it. They urged greater supervision and tutelage. They would rather send African evangelists ahead, with no formal Western education but well versed in the Scriptures and cowered into subservience to the white man. This was the tradition of the Sudan Interior Mission, the Sudan United Mission, the Dutch Reformed Church, and others in northern Nigeria. It was also similar to the pattern that evolved for rapid evangelization under the CMS in places like Ijebu and Ekiti. European missionaries then followed to constitute the converts into settled Christian communities and try to use the powers of the state to minimize harassment from the traditionalists.

The church in Nigeria should examine more closely the interaction of these two strands of the CMS heritage along the lines of some studies carried out by the International Missionary Council in the 1950s, in the era of decolonization, such as The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission by Peter Beyerhaus and H. Lefevre, and Processes of Growth in an African Church by John V. Taylor. When Christianity came into Nigeria in 1842, it would have been difficult to imagine that it could be so apparently successful and yet be so ineffective against Islam, against the forces of internal division, and against social evils of indiscipline and self-centeredness. The failure to achieve a native church as a national institution or to have even clarified in what sense the Anglican church in Nigeria is a Nigerian Church are but symptoms of the ineffectiveness.

If the Venn-Crowther strand of the heritage tends toward the emergence of responsible selfhood, the other strand tends toward social disengagement, and disengagement seems to be still the more dominant tendency. In his 1958 pamphlet based on a thorough field study of the church in Uganda, John Taylor warns against four dangers of disengagement that might result from prolonged European tutelage.

Paternalism. This delays, if it does not destroy, the emergence of a socially responsible national church. What contribution this made to the failure of church union in Nigeria is a matter that needs study. Venn had envisaged in 1866 that “as the native church assumes a national character it will ultimately supersede the denominational distinctions which are now introduced by foreign missionary societies.” The failure to move in that direction certainly led to the separation of the African church, reflected in the Aladura movement, Cherubim and Seraphim, Christ’s Apostolic Church (1925–35), and others. The growth of freedom has produced the more responsible national churches of today.

Clericalism. The European clergy, apart from oppressing the African clergy, suppressed African laymen and laywomen; the African clergy learned from the Europeans and stepped into their shoes. Although we have nothing to equal the example of Sierra Leone in the 1890s, there are enough conflicts and litigations between pastors and congregations to drive the point home. Perhaps things are beginning to change in that many laypeople are exercising more influence without the pressure that one must take clerical orders to have a voice in the church.

Centralization. This danger follows from clericalism. Even when one creates more and more dioceses and archdeaconries, the hierarchy of the clergy dictates centralization, unless the divergent voices of influential laypeople have a rightful place.

Specialization. Even after the European missionaries had conceded some authority to African diocesan bishops, they retained control over the best schools and hospitals. The tasks of the church became divided into specializations, as if the schools and the hospitals were no longer integral to the ultimate purpose of the church. The church later turned over the schools and the hospitals to the state, and the sense of social responsibility within the church seems to have been thereby undermined.

In conclusion, we can add that the CMS heritage in its diverse ways, and even with the dual opposing tendencies that we have underlined, has created an agenda for the church in Nigeria for years to come. Whatever the criticisms we make, there is no way we can celebrate 150 years of Christianity in Nigeria without a sense of gratitude to God for the many men and women from whose vision, labor, and supreme sacrifice we derive that heritage.

Selected Bibliography


Martyn and Martyrs: Questions for Mission

Michael Nazir-Ali

The life of Henry Martyn raises important questions about martyrdom in the Christian church. In the New Testament martyrria does not mean simply “being killed for faith”—though it does mean that. Broadly it means “bearing witness” to all that God has done in the life and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to all that God has done in the church and in our lives. But in the course of history, it has come to bear a particular meaning in relation to bearing persecution in the name of Jesus Christ and of being willing to lose one’s life for his sake.

Martyn’s Attitude, Experiences, and Actions

Born in 1781 in the relative obscurity of Truro, Cornwall, Martyn emerged in 1797 at St. John’s College, Cambridge. Rather lost at first, he gradually found his feet, mastered his subjects, and ended up as senior wrangler in mathematics. At the same time he came to commitment to the Christian faith, with all sorts of questions arising in his mind about his vocation. He went on to be elected a fellow of St. John’s College, he was also a curate at Holy Trinity Church with Charles Simeon, and he had charge of a village church in L colormap, near Cambridge. If we are going to think of Martyn as a martyr, we need to begin first of all with what was going on in his life, beginning with key attitudes he developed during his years at Cambridge.

Attitudes. Martyn resolutely determined to give up the things that young men might regard as their right to have. For example, he chose to give up wealth and the chance of making money. He was willing to give up the “comfort of married life,” an expression that he himself uses. And he was willing to give up the possibility of a glittering academic and clerical career. Here was an attitude of mind that is most important in our understanding of him.

Experiences. Martyn’s experiences were equally important, things that he did not determine himself but that he had to undergo. First of all was the loss of his family fortune. Nearly all that the family had was lost, and Martyn, after the death of his father, became responsible for the care of his younger siblings. This was a responsibility that he took very seriously and that prevented him from being a missionary with the Church Missionary Society because CMS did not pay enough and Martyn needed the money for family responsibilities. That was one reason why he accepted a chaplaincy with the East India Company. So the loss of the family fortune played a great part in the direction that Martyn took.

There was also the loss of family members. Both he and others of his brothers and sisters had inherited from his mother what was called “a delicate constitution,” and many of his siblings died even before him; he himself, of course, died very early, at the age of thirty-one. So there was the loss of his family, particularly of his younger sister, which was quite crucial in determining his mind-set.

Then there was the refusal of the one he loved, Lydia Grenfell, to be his fiancée, eventually to marry him, and to come out with him to India. From his correspondence we can see that, while he struggled against this attachment to some extent, it also dominated the scene. Quite a lot of what he did was influenced by desires either to get close to Lydia again or to run away from her.

Finally, among the things that happened to him was his failing health. As we trace his career from Cambridge to India into the Arabian Gulf and into Persia, we find again and again episodes of serious ill health. Sometimes mission historians have been anachronistic and have suggested that the deterioration of his health had something to do with being in India or the Gulf or Persia. Charles Simeon’s testimony is quite important on this point, because he reports that Martyn frequently said to him, and to Lydia, that, for people who had his sort of health, India was just as healthy, if not healthier, than Britain. In those days there was not the contrast in terms of health care between Britain and countries in Asia as there is today. In the end, it was Martyn’s ill health, not his living conditions in the East, that killed him.

Actions. Martyn’s actions demonstrate that he was anything but a passive individual. He drove himself, even in Cambridge when he was a curate at Holy Trinity. He drove himself in the study of the Scriptures, in reading, in visiting his people, in taking tremendous pains in preparation of his sermons, even when he knew the parishioners would pay little attention to them. He drove himself on the voyage to India; he went by way first of Latin America and then South Africa—a total of nine months in all. As soon as he arrived, he was into his labors, the extent of which is quite astounding. Consider the number of languages with which he grappled—not only Indian languages but the ancient languages of the Bible. He was corresponding with people in French and also trying to learn Arabic and Persian. He felt that he did not have enough Hebrew to do Arabic, so he first learned Hebrew before he went on to Arabic. All this while he served as a chaplain in the East India Company.

Martyn traveled all over India. He arrived first in Madras, then went to Calcutta, and from there to Cawnpore (Kanpur). He traveled by sea, by river, by land, and then by sea again to the Arabian Gulf, and then overland across Persia. He was a great traveler, always driving himself forward.

He was also a great preacher. He took services not only in English but also in what was then called Hindoostani (similar to

There was not much fruit in terms of numbers, but in terms of quality Martyn’s efforts were first rate.
modern Urdu). In Cawnpore he developed a congregation with Hindoostani as the language. He was busy in evangelism. The wonderful portrait of one of his converts, Abdul Masih, who became one of the first Anglicans to be ordained in the Indian subcontinent, adorns one of the walls of the director’s study in the Henry Martyn Centre, Westminster College, Cambridge. Although Martyn’s evangelistic efforts did not bear much fruit in terms of numbers, in terms of quality we can say his efforts were first rate, for they produced some leaders for the Indian church in the early years of the nineteenth century.

He was always pressing to finish his translations into Urdu, Persian, and Arabic, and always wanting to get on to the next thing. Martyn’s actions—the way he drove himself in all these areas—affected his health and hastened his death.

Was Martyn a Martyr?

Was Henry Martyn a martyr? He certainly was a martyr in the sense that he bore witness to the Gospel in places where, at the time, it had not been heard very much or at all. I often tell people the story of his encounter with the Persian prime minister, who was trying to obstruct the conveying of Martyn’s Persian translation of the New Testament to the Shah. The prime minister told Martyn what Muslims believed about the Qur'an, and then he said, “What do you believe about the Bible?” Martyn made the famous retort, “The words are of men, but the sense is of God.” He was a faithful witness to the Word.

He was a martyr also in the sense that he endured hardships and even persecution for the sake of the Gospel. The persecution, one must add, was often that of delay and harassment by overbearing people whom he encountered. He was, after all, in a privileged position, for he was often seen as a British official, associated with the East India Company at a time when the empire was just beginning to gain power. Still, while we do not see in Martyn’s time the kind of persecution that Christians were to encounter later on in that part of the world, there was nevertheless hardship and persecution, marks of the faithful witness or martyr.

Beyond the ways in which he qualifies as a martyr, Martyn’s life raises wider questions about martyrdom and mission in the modern era. But first, by offering a brief overview of the history of martyrdom, I want to encourage a wider perspective than Christians living and educated in the West generally seem to have.

Martyrs in the Roman Empire

If we look at the history of martyrdom in the Roman Empire, we see that Christians were martyred for different reasons at different times. In the earliest period they were martyred because it was thought that they committed what the Romans called flagitia, or crimes. Among other crimes, Christians were accused of incest and cannibalism. They were martyred not only for such crimes but also because they were thought to have brought misfortune to a particular place. A natural disaster would be seen as due to the crimes the Christians supposedly committed.

Later on, they were martyred merely for naming the name of Christ, proper nomen ipsum, where it was simply that the magistrates asked them, “Are you a Christian or not?” and the answer determined their fate. I am reminded here of something that Lesslie Newbigin said in The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, that the victory over the Roman Empire was not won by Christians through political struggle but it was won when the martyrs to be knelt down in the arena and prayed for the emperor who, a few moments hence, would be responsible for their death. The courage with which Christians bore their suffering was decisive.

We cannot think of martyrdom in the Roman Empire, however, as something that went on without stopping until Constantine was suddenly converted. It was sporadic. There were long periods of peace for the church. Sometimes martyrdom was part of a policy of a particular emperor, sometimes it was quite arbitrary. An emperor would be tolerant for some time, and then suddenly there would be a phase of persecution.

For at least sixty years after war broke out between the Roman Empire and Persia, there was fierce persecution of Christians in Persia.

Martyrs in the Persian Empire

The history of the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire is paralleled by the spread of Christianity in what was then the Persian Empire, the other great superpower of that era. While we know a great deal about the Christian movement from Jerusalem to Athens to Rome, we know relatively little about the spread of early Christianity in the East. If we are to consider the history of Christianity in the Persian Empire, we would have to know Syriac, Pahlavi, and some Turkic languages. The fact that most people in the West do not know these languages has given a bias to Christian knowledge about how the church spread.

If we look at the spread of Christianity within the so-called Persian Empire—which included Mesopotamia, central Asia, Afghanistan, and northwest India (what is now Pakistan)—we discover quite a different history. At the same time, it also had its similarities to Christian history in the west, particularly in the fact that Christianity spread in the teeth of an organized empire that had an official religion—Zoroastrianism. The Persian Magi, who were very influential, were opposed to the spread of the Christian church, and we find persecution breaking out from time to time, incited by different religious groups hostile to the spread of the Christian church.

In the earliest period—the Parthian—we find that, while there was a great deal of local persecution and persecution incited by groups like the Magi, the state was hardly ever involved. The Parthians were replaced by the Sassanids, and they at first repeated the pattern of the Parthians, so that the church was allowed to grow. There was local opposition but no state-sponsored persecution. In some cases the church actually received a welcome because it was being persecuted in the Roman Empire (on the principle that the enemy of the enemy must be a friend).

Then Constantine was converted, and when one of the Persian kings, Shapur II, sent an embassy to Constantine, Constantine responded with a letter saying, “I profess to the Most Holy Religion [Christianity]... Imagine, then, with what joy I heard news, so much in line with my desire, that the fairest provinces of Persia...” Lesslie Newbigin said in The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, that the victory over the Roman Empire was not won by Christians through political struggle but it was won when the martyrs to be knelt down in the arena and prayed for the emperor who, a few moments hence, would be responsible for their death. The courage with which Christians bore their suffering was decisive.

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were at peace, but in the year that Constantine died, war broke out between the Persians and the Romans. This resulted in sixty or seventy years of the most violent persecution of Christians in the Persian Empire, at least as extensive as any persecution that occurred in the Roman Empire. Mashiha Zakha, historian of the Assyrian Church of the East (as the Persian Church came to be called), claims that there were at least 190,000 people killed in that persecution. We do not know how many were made homeless, deprived of their property, exiled, and so forth. The Greek historian Sozomen, writing in the fifth century, also points out that the Assyrian Church of the East had a martyrology of 16,000 names, comparable therefore to Roman martyrology.

Martyrs in the Islamic World

There is also a history of Christian martyrdom in the Islamic world. The Coptic Church in Egypt claims that it has always lived in persecution. The whole history of that church is one of oppression, first by the Romans, then by the Persians, and then by Muslims. This has not stopped at all, even during the time that Christian Byzantium ruled Egypt. Because the Copts were regarded as heretics, Byzantium persecuted the Copts as much as the pagan Romans had. One reason why many of the cities in the East, like Alexandria and Damascus and even Jerusalem, surrendered to the Muslim armies was because they thought Muslim rule might be better than the rule of Byzantium. At first, the conquering Muslim Arabs were few in number and most of their energies went into consolidating their holdings. However, as the Muslim population grew, and as Islamic law was codified into its various schools, the place of minorities such as Christians and Jews became more and more difficult.

In the lifetime of Muhammad, Christians and Jews lived peacefully in peninsular Arabia. For a great part of his life the Prophet had friendly relations with the Christians; he even concluded treaties with them. In the constitution of Medina the Jews were given nearly equal rights with the Muslims. But after Muhammad’s death a claim was made that he had said that there should be no other religion in Arabia but Islam, and so, under the caliph ‘Umar, both Jews and Christians were expelled from peninsular Arabia.

Later on, in the other countries that had been conquered, the development of Islamic law imposed a particular condition on Jews and Christians; they were regarded as dhimmi, as protected people for whom the Muslims had a responsibility. To some extent this arrangement was an advance on much that happened elsewhere. For instance, there was some recognition, however grudging, that Christians and Jews had the right to live in the Dar al Islam, the house of Islam. It is true that, in periods of greater tolerance, with enlightened caliphs, the Christians and the Jews, and also the Zoroastrians, made a notable contribution to what came to be Islamic civilization. However, we cannot forget that the dhimmi status imposed severe conditions as far as life for Jews and Christians and Zoroastrians were concerned. From time to time persecution broke out, and there were massacres; but even when this was not happening, Jews and Christians were denied what we would call basic rights as citizens. They had to live in a humiliating manner, they had to pay a special tax for being Jewish or Christian, and there were all sorts of institutionalized forms of discrimination against them, some of which have survived to this day.

This status of being a dhimmi largely disappeared in the Islamic world under the Ottomans, under the pressure of Westernization and modernization. As Kenneth Cragg has said in The Arab Christian, Christian Arabs played a very important part in the development of Arab nationalism. But recent movements in the Islamic world have made attempts to return minorities to the state of dhimmi, to this kind of protected status that deprives religious minorities of equality as citizens and imposes strict conditions for their life and witness.

Reasons for Martyrdom

There are various reasons for martyrdom, including, tragically, Christian prejudice toward fellow Christians. In addition to the example of the Copts and Byzantium, there is also the case of the Jacobites in Syria. Think also of the venerable Fathers Athanasius and Chrysostom. Chrysostom, by the way, was exiled and forced to march, a march that nearly killed him, very near to the place where Henry Martyn was forced to march by Hassan, his escort. Both died near Tokat, an Armenian center, in the cause of Christian witness on a forced march.

As we have seen, naming the name of Christ, in itself, has often been a reason for martyrdom; or even simply being a Christian. This was true not only in the Roman period but it remains true today in some parts of the world for some kinds of people. All a person needs to do to attract persecution and martyrdom is to receive baptism or confess the name of Jesus Christ. A second reason often is the propagation of the faith. In the Persian Empire, even during the period of greatest tolerance, if a Christian converted a Zoroastrian, the Christian and the Zoroastrian who had been converted were both killed. This was also true in the Islamic period, and remains true today in many parts of the world. Confessing the name in the sense of bearing witness over a long period of time, of having pastoral responsibility, especially responsibility for those who may be converts, also attracts persecution and martyrdom.

Another reason for martyrdom is the feeling among those who are rulers that Christians are somehow disloyal. Taking the Islamic world again, there seems to me to be no punishment in the Qur’an for apostasy, or indeed for blasphemy. But apostasy became punishable by death in the Islamic world, as it did in other parts of the world, because it was seen not only as apostasy (a religious crime) but as rebellion (a political crime). We find often in the course of Christian history that Christians are martyred because they are seen as disloyal, as intruders. As has been said about the martyrs of the South Pacific, they were martyred simply because they were outsiders.

Kinds of Martyrdom

What kinds of martyrdom are there? In the Orthodox Church there are three kinds: white, green, and red. White martyrdom is giving up all of one’s wealth for the sake of the Gospel and becoming a monk or a hermit. Green martyrdom, while less radical, nevertheless entails living an austere life so that one can...
experience God more deeply and share God with others. Red martyrdom is the martyrdom of shedding blood. Kallistos Timothy Ware, in his book on the Orthodox Church, observes that the Orthodox had not experienced martyrdom of the blood for a long period until the advent of Marxism. In earlier centuries, however, when Orthodox communities were under the Ottoman Empire, there was much martyrdom of blood.

In today’s world we have to say that there are also other kinds of martyrdom that Christians undergo. First is the loss of their status as citizens simply because of their faith, either a loss outright or a reduction in their legal status as citizens with equal rights. We find situations where special laws are applied to them, where they are excluded from the electorate, for instance, where their testimony is not acceptable in a court of law, and so on. In this situation Christian women are often at a greater disadvantage than Christian men. Then there are the legal penalties that accru in being a Christian, in practicing the faith, in evangelizing. Once again we find that these penalties are now more and more on the statute books, and even if they are not on the statute books, there can be administrative malpractice or popular prejudice. For example, the way in which church building is regulated in Egypt, or the way in which popular sentiment prevents Christian practice in Pakistan, the way in which an evangelist can be tried in Iran, or the complete prohibition of Christian worship in Saudi Arabia.

I was asked during the recent Lambeth Conference to be interviewed on the BBC radio program “Today,” along with a Muslim anthropologist, Akbar Ahmed of Cambridge, with whom I was delighted to appear. What neither of us knew was that a third party would appear, a Filipino who, while working in Saudi Arabia, had held worship meetings in his house, and had been arrested and tortured for this. That was the most difficult interview that I have ever done!

Persecution and martyrdom can occur in various ways and at different levels. They can occur, for instance, in the family. The family is the most dangerous place sometimes for a new Christian. People can be poisoned or stabbed to death. Esther John, one of the martyrs commemorated in Westminster Abbey, was probably killed at night by a relative, someone she very probably knew. Then there is hostile sentiment in the local community. Again and again, we find many cases in history when townspeople came against some of their number because they had become Christians, and they were persecuted, driven out, or killed. Then there is institutionalized persecution or martyrdom at a national or supranational level.

Christian Motives for Martyrdom

If we go back to Henry Martyn and consider his motives, with which we began, we are led to ask about the motives of Christians who accept persecution or martyrdom. Here one must combat certain views. Voltaire and his modern expositor Robin Lane Fox say that Christians in the Roman Empire were martyred because they were intolerant and fanatical. One might accept that if it were not for the propter nomen ipsum kind of martyrdom, where the martyrdom had nothing to do with what the Christians had done or said; they were killed simply because they were Christians.

Nevertheless it must be said that there have been occasions when unwise behavior and almost a death wish have led to martyrdom. Two examples come to my mind. One is of the patriarch Shim’un of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Sassanid period. The emperor got very angry with the Christian community and imposed a tax on them that he asked Shim’un to collect. Shim’un refused. He was arrested and brought to the emperor. He then refused to prostrate himself, and the emperor asked why he was not doing this, since he had always done it before. And Shim’un said, “Because you are now anti-Christ.” This retort led not only to his martyrdom but to five hundred bishops, priests, deacons, and other faithful being martyred with him. William Young, historian of the Persian church, asks, Was this a necessary martyrdom? I would agree that we must ourselves ask the question.

The other example is that of certain Christian ascetics in Muslim Spain who persisted in deliberate public abuse of the Prophet so that they would be arrested and killed. This led to the odd situation that the Muslim judges did everything to prevent it. They tried to make out that the Christians were insane, or drunk. But the Christians insisted they were perfectly sane and still abused the Prophet, thus compelling the judges to pass the death penalty. There may be a pathological element in some martyrdom, even a death wish. I sometimes wonder whether Martyn had a death wish. Certainly his writings indicate that he wanted to burn out. If he had been a bit more circumspect, not traveled so much, worked at a slower pace, maybe he would not have died at the age of thirty-one. There may be a rather dubious element in martyrdom that, for the sake of fairness, we need to note.

Questions for Mission

What strikes me most about Henry Martyn and his readiness to suffer is the way in which he was prepared to cross cultural and linguistic divides, almost forgetting himself in the process—enormous cultural and linguistic divides that were likely greater for him than they are for us today. Yet a readiness for cross-cultural commitment is something that we do not generally see today in the Christian church. We do not see it in the West, in Africa, or in Asia. People are content to be Christians with their own group; they do not have any desire to cross barriers. This is a formidable obstacle to mission, not only for global mission but also for local mission. As a diocesan bishop, I am well aware of the number of clergy who want to go to nice areas that they like and are used to. We have difficulty in encouraging people to go to areas of problems, of high population density, with a great deal of development taking place—nobody wants to go there. The whole idea of church is very romantic. People prefer to go to traditional-looking churches. So this is certainly a question for mission today, both global and local—are we willing to cross barriers as Martyn most certainly was?

Second, one reason for martyrdom in today’s world is not just confessing the faith, not simply living in a Christian community, but the struggle against injustice and oppression. Many of the martyrs of Latin America of recent years have been martyred not because they were confessing the faith—people have been doing that for four hundred or so years in Latin America. They...
were very cruelly murdered. Can we speak of such people as martyrs, and if we can, to what extent? Where is the line between martyrdom for the cause of Christ and suffering for political and social beliefs? More and more Christians are taking up particular social and political positions; if this causes them suffering, is it martyrdom? Or must there be a specific sort of odium fidei dimension to persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom? I do not know the answer to this.

Third, the post-Enlightenment churches in the North and West are increasingly facing a situation where a moral agenda is being forced on them in the name of human rights, in the name of community, in the name of participation in national life, and so forth. When and if the church begins to resist this imposition of an agenda on it, will it result in martyrdom (at least in its broader definition, including persecution, marginalization, and neglect)? I think this is beginning to happen already.

A fourth question for mission has to do with how we support churches that are suffering and that are experiencing martyrdom today. I believe there is too little information about Christians and churches that are suffering. There is too little advocacy of such Christians and churches, too little action to support them. Sometimes it is very difficult to do so, particularly in terms of the logistics of the exercise. I am glad to see the beginnings of change; even governments are now taking an interest in what is happening to Christians and other faith communities.

Finally, persecution and martyrdom are not simply a Christian experience. People of other faiths also face persecution. In Pakistan, for instance, the most persecuted community is not the Christian, it is the Ahmadiyya, a heterodox Muslim sect. In Iran, I believe the Baha’is have sometimes experienced even more persecution than some of the Christian churches. So we need to remember that there are other people also who are willing to suffer and die for their faith.

We should remember also that sometimes people of another faith are persecuted by those who call themselves Christians. This is happening, at present, in the Balkans. We should be clear in our condemnation of such acts and reach out to the oppressed with love and a willingness to be their advocates.

In conclusion, I believe the legacy of Henry Martyn demands of us a rigorous assessment of our commitment to Jesus Christ. Just how far are we prepared to go in faithfulness to the good news of Jesus and the extension of his kingdom of justice and peace? Martyn set a standard that does not let us off easily.

My Pilgrimage in Mission
Simon Barrington-Ward

Once, when I was with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), of which I was general secretary from 1975 to 1985, I was in Jerusalem, staying with a small, radical Christian community, led by an impressive, holy man. His route along the via dolorosa took us underneath the surface of the city, the clutter of centuries of spiritual conflict, and through the Roman Pavement to the dungeon under Caiaphas’s house and so to Golgotha.

Then, finally, we went to Bethlehem and into the cave stable under the great church in Manger Square. As we knelt before the presence holding our little world and all its inhabitants and, in intimate railings were removed to be melted down, and the shadow spread over the park, as air raid shelters started to be dug there. The sunlight came in through the small windows above, as my mother told me of that overarching theme of breaking and remaking was central to my pilgrimage in mission, and always would be.

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Shadow over Regent’s Park

I suppose the first breaking and remaking for me had been in early childhood in the 1930s. The Eden into which I was born, coming into a cream-colored, Regency terrace house, was Regent’s Park in London. It’s a lovely place. It was there that God shone for me first, through the pattern made by street lamps on my bedroom ceiling, as my mother told me of that overarching presence holding our little world and all its inhabitants and, in the nearby zoo, the animals I could hear being fed each morning. The enlightenment of this presence was enhanced by my parents’ imparting a sense of secure, rational modernity and human progress that would always prevail over all else. In response to glimpses and hints I picked up, through a newsreel in a cinema or on the wireless, of people being bombed in China, of marching in Germany, my father, an informed journalist on the Times who had himself fought in the trenches of World War I, assured me that there would be no more war for us.

But the breaking in of darkness began, the shadow spread over the park, as air raid shelters started to be dug there. The immediate railings were removed to be melted down, and the sirens started to sound out over our neighborhood, just for practice, “in case.” When I went off to the boarding school, from which I was to see the sky glow of Coventry being bombed, and the family was evacuated to the village where we would await the threatened invasion and listen to Churchill growling that we would “fight on the beaches,” modernity and progress were finally shattered. But even then, at school, after my father’s unbelievable death, not long after the war, and when I entered

national service in the RAF and then came to Magdalene College, Cambridge, I trusted in some kind of spiritual framework. That framework had sustained those “Western values” cherished and defended in wartime Britain. Later, I thought of entering the Christian ministry to serve people within such a framework. Its basis was a bit shaky, however. The breaking was still there. The remaking was a little less clear.

Out of the Ruins

After Cambridge, in 1953, I went to Berlin, with a duty, some suggested, to go and impart those same “Western values” of democracy and the rule of law, as a lecturer in the new Free University in West Berlin. But the “breaking” here for me was immediately palpable. The sight, even from the air, of that moon landscape of ruins to the horizon, with the Brandenburg Gate in the middle, looking like a door from nowhere into nowhere, was itself devastating. There I struggled to teach students older than myself, many of whom had lived through nightmares. I argued daily with my fellow lodger, who had been recruited as a teenager to the “defense” of Berlin, been inspected by a sullen, still electrifying Hitler, and then fled later to and from the East. He used Nietzsche to pulverize my tentative idealism. I would go with him to watch Brecht’s plays, acted in the Eastern sector, or wander on lonely walks in the ruins.

But then I was drawn into a small group that met in a nearby pastor’s house. I was asked first to attend a poetry reading. But this soon became a Bible study such as I had never experienced before. In this group of all ages and backgrounds, confessed former Nazis and those who had always been resistant to Hitler, but all of them forgiven and forgiving, I was confronted with a vision for the city and the world, a genuine “third way.” It reached beyond the totalitarian oppressiveness of the Stalinallee in East Berlin and the brash vulgarity of the newly emergent Kurfürstendamm in West Berlin. As we went together to work at helping people in refugee centers or to attend political meetings and to worship in the Dahlem Dorfkirche, I met, as never before, with the living God in Christ. I was grasped by Christ the Mitmensch, alongside us in the tragedy and the ruins. God was here in a wounded, broken human being alongside us, One with whom we could be made united in brokenness and the beginnings of wholeness.

I returned to Cambridge to prepare for the ministry. Then, to my amazement, I found myself starting off as a young chaplain at my former college. I worked in the vacations in a “New Town” filled with people taken from the bombed areas in the East End of London. In both I saw a striking response to the message and the Master that had laid hold of me. His “new love” could be the key both to college life and to the uphill attempt to create a community out of scattered, lonely people in raw housing estates.

Ibribina

But the move that gave my whole life its real direction came when, at the instigation of one of our professors, I went out to teach church history (I had always been a historian) in the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. So I came to be plunged into that rich world beyond Europe (or the West!). In Africa there was so much to learn and relearn. Ibribina saw in “Jesu Krisi” the possibility of a new people, a fellowship of the unlike, bonding together all tribes, all ethnic groups, both black and white into a new society. Here the rich would care for the poor and the strong for the weak in what was to be a new heaven and a new earth. Other leaders joined her, and eventually thousands of people flocked in. It was wartime in Europe. Only one inspired young missionary could make occasional visits. The movement thus grew vastly, drawing in the young of all ethnic groups and provoking conflicts with the elders until well after the war. Then white missionaries came in to tidy it all up and regularize things. Ibribina was assigned a role as a college matron, which she never seemed to resent. Many of the inspired leaders, however, were sacked for having more than one wife. The CMS shaped and trained the new church to fit in with the wider colonial world. A much more individualized, spiritualized faith seemed appropriate along with a largely utilitarian education.

Yet who really understood the Gospel better—Ibribina, or the missionaries? Ever since her time African prophets and new church movements in that area have been trying to recover her original version of Christ’s model for humankind.

An Agape Revival

I returned to Magdalene, Cambridge, with my wife-to-be, Jean (a Scottish doctor, a former CMS missionary, who had been our university medical officer in Ibadan. Together, in Nigeria, we
had struggled to bring healing and wholeness to the students as we worked together with other Christians on the staff. But while we had been away (1960-63), our own whole society at home had changed. In Cambridge I was broken again, and well nigh despairing of ever being able to get through to the students at all! It was only after my encounter with David Watson the evangelist, then a curate in the city, that we met with the beginnings of the charismatic renewal, and once again, now at the hands of David Du Plessis on a missionary visit to London, I received a further “remaking,” an in-filling of the Spirit. Gradually, in that strangely utopian culture, I was able to see the meaning of our Nigerian experience in this setting and to develop a form of chapel community that seemed to offer to many the “Ibribina” possibility. I tried to point their generation to the hope of a new humanity, a new way of being God’s people in the Spirit.

Then came a further opportunity of working this out. John V. Taylor, whom I had come to know at CMS, where I had chaired the Africa committee, invited me to go and start a new CMS training college at Selly Oak, in Birmingham, which we called Crowther Hall, after the great Nigerian bishop consecrated under CMS auspices through Henry Venn’s farsightedness in 1864.

Bishop Crowther had died of a broken heart, after being deeply hurt by a new, arrogant generation of young missionaries, at a time when the CMS had forgotten much of its earlier vision. In Selly Oak, I was to lecture on how the CMS had started in 1799 as a movement of reparation for the evils of the slave trade and East Asian commerce, to bring the hope of a new gospel life to Africa and the East, and how after Venn’s death it lost its way. Venn’s vision of the euthanasia of mission—that is, of bringing mission-agency control of the African church to an end—was neglected. The CMS itself became a vehicle of white dominance over the churches it had helped to found.

But then again, under the more recent leadership of Max Warren and John Taylor, the society had begun once more to work out a definite mission of reparation, this time perhaps for some of the sins and failures of Western missions in the first half of the twentieth century. How I hoped that we could now, at Crowther Hall itself, start an Ibribina-style revival community of the Spirit in which to train a new generation of mission partners!

But that was not quite how it worked out. My first fellow

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Readers’ Response

To the Editor:

Many thanks to Paul E. Pierson for his article “Local Churches in Mission” (October 1998). I would like to suggest, however, that the root issue behind impatience with traditional missions agencies is not anti-institutionalism and a lack of trust in institutions. Rather, I suggest the cause is actually a positive one: an increasing desire to place missions as central to church life.

Post-denominational churches emphasize strong leadership and vision. More than most, their central vision is to see all members actively involved in ministry. To do this, missions, evangelism, and discipleship are made absolutely central to their reason for being.

The problem is that if too much of the vision and impetus for missions is left to outside agencies, then it is no longer a central tenet of the church. To work, any such outside agency must be closely related to the local church. To work within this framework, mission agencies must accept the new role of facilitating local churches in missions. And above all, they must clearly and regularly communicate a vision for missions to the churches.

Anthony Ware
Missionary with Assemblies of God World Missions Australia
Bangkok, Thailand

Author’s Reply:

I applaud the focus on mission in the “post-denominational” churches and see it as a very positive development. Would that all churches saw mission as central! However, important as they are, such churches are still relatively few in number.
staff member had come back to Britain from the experience of the East African Revival. Early on, she began to confront me about certain failings in the organization of the new college and in its inner relationships. A Ugandan pastor who came to stay challenged me deeply. As the community developed, I began to discover whole new facets of the action of the Holy Spirit. *Metanoia,* turning to God, conversion, and being forgiven opened the door not only to the initial knowledge of God in Christ but also constantly and continuously, seventy times seven, to growth into life in the Spirit at every stage. The charismatic and the East African Revival were fused. The Dove was released through the cross, wholeness through repeated brokenness. Indeed, the real test of the presence of the Holy Spirit was whether there is genuine growth in costly love.

We began to grasp more of the lessons the Corinthians had to learn about power in weakness. The fullness of the Spirit is here and potentially available, but yet it is also still incomplete. We have as much to receive through our own frustrations and sufferings as through any triumphant miracle. One of our number, a remarkable community health worker, who afterward gave her whole life to the poorest of the poor in India, now began to urge us out into the inner city not far away. We were to learn from the poor in the city. In central Birmingham we started to work with a community development agency alongside people of many races, coming closer to them through sharing their struggle for better housing and services than we ever would through distributing tracts. As we became friends with them and allies, heart spoke to heart. As we learned just how small was our capacity for sacrificial loving—"long term loving," as Max War­ren had called it—we were tested and thrown back more deeply on grace, grace both in our own mutual relationships and in being enabled to receive hints, touches, of the coming of God’s kingdom. The goal that Ibribina had glimpsed would begin to be reached only along the way of the cross. And yet a sense of resurrection breakthrough and of the release of the Spirit’s healing kept being rediscovered among us.

We began to sense more of the meaning of the notion of what we called an agape revival, its symbol the dove and the cross, emerging only through continuous forgiveness and repentance.

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**To the Editor:**

I read with interest and some disappointment the review of my book, *Christian Voluntarism: Theology and Praxis* (October 1998). I wish to respond to the reviewer’s comments.

First, I did in fact go to great lengths (pp. xvii–xx) to define voluntarism and lay out the problems in the literature from which one can establish a workable definition. Second, I believe a reference to the American Heritage Dictionary does little justice to the growing treatment of voluntarism, available for over a century for scholarly use. Third, there is no reference in the review to the second half of the book, which deals with implications of voluntarism for a wide-ranging span of Christian endeavor from local congregations to parachurch and mission organizations.

Readers of the book will be rewarded with data not found easily elsewhere, as well as biblical and theological suggestions that warrant serious reflection. Further, I believe my overall thesis is worth sober consideration and debate. From an organizational perspective, as well as its missiological implications, voluntarism can be a useful tool in understanding the evolution of evangelical and humanitarian impulses in the Christian community, and it offers a possible theological explanation for the proliferation of "good works" and renewal inside the church, among nonconformists, and for those lately espousing a post-modern critique. In better understanding the voluntary impulse, we draw strength from a variety of spiritual energies not readily available to us in old confessions and categories. I urge a second look in the missiological community and invite dialogue on this important topic.

**William H. Brackney**

McMaster University Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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**Reviewer’s Reply:**

Principal Brackney in his brief but wide survey has indeed offered “a useful tool in understanding the evolution of evangelical and humanitarian impulses in the Christian community.” But he has not, for this reader, clarified distinctions between voluntarism as the process by which churches have emerged, and the *volunteerism* that characterizes local congregations and parachurch associations.

In the introduction he declares, "...the voluntary impulse is as old as Scripture and as broad as Christianity” (p. xx) and “all Christian churches have been transformed by the voluntary impulse in the past three centuries” (p. xvii). Of course both statements are true within the author’s comprehensive treatment, but their relation is not clearly developed.

In using a dictionary definition, this reviewer was not ignoring “the growing treatment of voluntarism, available for over a century for scholarly use,” but simply indicating a layman’s confusion over terms which Brackney uses interactively, if not interchangeably.

Similarly, part 2 on Praxis contains useful discussions of the major role of voluntarism in developing missions and education, both within the churches and by parachurch organizations. But the voluntaristic role of "vows" and sacraments, for example, in both evangelical and institutional churches, is only briefly touched upon.

Principal Brackney has indeed offered “biblical and theological suggestions that warrant serious reflection,” but for this reader he provides more questions than answers, more problems than guidelines.

**Creighton Lacy**

*Durham, North Carolina*
The Redemptive Process

The sudden sense of bereavement when John Taylor left CMS, and the summons to me to attempt to step into his and Max Warren’s giant shoes as general secretary, unexpectedly gave me the opportunity to explore more of the universal implications of the Crowther Hall experience. As the CMS had grown smaller in numbers and had deepened its relationships with fellow Christians and church leaders, in parts of the world both familiar and new to it, we had steadily come out from under our dangerous heritage of power. Yet we had to recognize the inherent contradictions of the global market. We were at the mercy of its pressures. We could never really escape the continuing concealed colonialism. But at least we must recognize now, wholeheartedly, that in so many ways we must decrease that others may increase. The world missionary task must be tackled by Christians from all the churches acting together and no longer by one-sided initiatives from or within the West. Further ‘reparation’ was called for.

At the CMS we worked at attempts to receive, here in Britain, through what we called the “interchange” of people, gifts, and insights, still always having to acknowledge our endemic condition of economic and cultural one-sidedness. We sought as openly and transparently as possible to build on the rich relationships we had been given through history to introduce a genuine mutual challenge across the world to repentance and forgiveness throughout every church, to an agape revival, to shared renewal worldwide, to the building up of an equal “fellowship of the unlike,” as the only true means of living out and communicating the Gospel in a plural world. We wanted to use our wide network to link growth points in mission worldwide. What we still lacked, then as now, were international teams that would witness to the grace of Christ among all faiths by their very being and that would be accountable to an international missionary movement in all churches.

We knew we must be smaller and more selective. But our goal was to help send, bring, and place the most creative and redemptive “people in mission” we could find in situations where they could open the way to a deeply pervasive, spiritual renewal. Only people who are constantly being changed can bring change to others. Through them the message of the wounded Servant God in Christ might become “a story whose hour has come.” We are moving toward a melting pot of all cultures and ethnic groups in the next millennium, a kind of breaking and remaking of humanity, in the midst of which the cross can gently but surely be planted to spring up as a tree of life for all faiths.

But those who present that message must be people who are humbled, gentle, profoundly spiritually motivated, radiant, more of a Celtic than a Western imperial spirit. My greatest experiences at CMS were encounters with such people, pilgrims often on the edge of many different worlds of faith, spiritual pioneers, Iribin-like figures, leading small, growing companies of fellow seekers into the way of the cross. They were “watchers on the walls” not ceasing to cry out, as it were, “Jesus have mercy.” Indeed it was then that I first began to learn to use the Orthodox Jesus prayer and to sense with many others, scattered throughout the world, that we were being drawn into a universal rhythm, a hidden cosmic redemptive movement at work. Wherever people prayed, suffered, and lived out “faith active in love” it seemed, “Love will out.”

When I went to be bishop of Coventry, in that great broken and remade cathedral with its theme of reparation and reconciliation, this was the message that overseas Christians whom we invited brought home to us. They urged upon us a movement of prayer, of openness to transformed relationships of mutual repentance, forgiveness, and, in the Spirit, the release of each person’s gift.

Everywhere the theme seemed to be leaping out of forgiveness and repentance: At Stratford, where, as a trustee for Shakespeare’s birthplace, I preached on Shakespeare’s development of this theme, especially and wonderfully in his late plays. At Warwick University, where the then professor of social thought, Gillian Rose, helped me to explore the movement of what she called “failing towards,” continuous metanoia, in Hegel and Kierkegaard. Tragically, she was struck down with cancer, which she fought bravely, and in the course of the struggle worked through her own insight until the point at which I had the privilege, on her death bed, of baptizing her. I sought to develop across the diocese a movement of prayer, mutual forgiveness, release of our gifts, and the drawing together of rich and poor, town and country, North and South, long divided, and a commitment to world mission, using the cross of nails and our ancient, Celtic, Mercian cross. If we ourselves were broken and remade, we could then offer to our broken world a quality of forgiveness, the freedom to keep “failing towards” God’s goal for us of a just, loving, and sustainable society.

For me this is a theme to be pursued in Cambridge, where I am now back in my old college. Here I want to turn more and more to the study and the contemplation of this task now confronting the world missionary scene. In the whole world church we have to learn how, through continuous personal and social repentance and forgiveness, we can go on being changed and bringing change, until that day when the kingdoms of this world are transformed at last into the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.
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Abdul Masih: Icon of Indian Indigeneity

Graham Kings

Who is this seated Indian so serene and calm? What is he reading, with concentrated meditation, that is so evidently precious? What are those books and bottles in the background? Why was he celebrated with such a commissioned portrait? Who is this man who spans the centuries, speaks to us in his silence, and draws us into studying what he himself is reading?

There is no written clue on the front of the painting, but on turning it over the words can be seen in ink: "The Revd. Abdul Masseeh. Henry Martyn's one convert—ordained by Bishop Heber. Revd. G. E. Corrie, Jesus Coll: Cambridge. Luggage Train."

I first saw this portrait in 1993. Graham Cray, the principal of Ridley Hall, the evangelical Anglican theological college in Cambridge, discovered it in a cupboard in the principal's lodge. Next to it he also found framed prints of Charles Simeon and Henry Martyn. I had previously seen the magnificent oil painting of Abdul Masih in the headquarters of the Church Mission Society in London and recognized his face in this fading watercolor, which is set in a walnut frame with gilt edgings. Bishop Heber I knew to have been the second Anglican bishop of Calcutta and great hymnwriter. G. E. Corrie was new to me, and I assumed that he must have been related to Daniel Corrie, Martyn's friend, who had encouraged Abdul Masih as a new disciple and evangelist.

The portrait, kindly on loan from Ridley Hall, now hangs above the mantelpiece in my study at the Henry Martyn Centre in Cambridge. It is a watercolor and (opaque) body color over graphite on medium-weight, wove paper; its painter, date, provenance, history, and acquisition by Ridley Hall are all currently fascinating mysteries. Next to it hangs the print of his spiritual father, Martyn, and opposite is the print of Martyn's father-in-God, Simeon. It is a continual inspiration to me because students and visitors regularly ask questions about it and its subject. This famous, early, dignified convert from Islam became a medical missionary and evangelist among his own people. He was the first Indian to be employed as a catechist (evangelist) by the Church Missionary Society and in 1825 became the second Indian ordained Anglican clergyman. The portrait directs attention to the particular items that relate to Masih's significance as an icon of Indian indigeneity: his turban, his open Scriptures, his books, and his medicine bottles.

The Turban: A Muslim Convert

Shaikh Salih chose the name Abdul Masih, Servant of the Messiah, at his baptism in the Old Church, Calcutta, on the day of Pentecost, 1811. He was converted to Christ through the preaching and life of Henry Martyn (1781–1812) at Cawnpore (Kanpur) in northern India. In a fascinating critical study, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, Avril A. Powell comments: "He is significant to this study because he became the agent, in turn, for the conversions, though in many cases very short-lived, of some fifty Muslims and Hindus living in the vicinity of Agra, and because of the steps he took, although largely unsuccessful in his own lifetime, to engage the attention of Muslim scholars in both Delhi and Lucknow."

Salih was born in Delhi about the year 1776 into a well-respected Muslim family, became zealous in devotion, and was recognized as a scholarly religious teacher in Lucknow. When working for an officer of the East India Company, he even induced a Hindu servant to become a Muslim. In considering Salih for ordination in 1825, Bishop Heber remarked: "His rank, previously to his conversion, was rather elevated, since he was Master of the Jewels to the Court of Oude, an appointment of higher estimation in Eastern Palaces than in those of Europe, and the holder of which has always a high salary."

In 1810 Salih was at Cawnpore, where he heard Martyn preach to the poor who assembled at his door on Sunday afternoons to receive alms. Salih, in his own words, went "to see the sport." He was struck by Martyn's exposition of the Ten Commandments and wanted to hear more. In the end he was engaged to work with Martyn's cantankerous and erratic assistant, Sabat, as copyist of the Persian New Testament translation.
The Open New Testament

When Martyn had finished his Hindustani New Testament translation, the book was given to Salih to bind. In the words of the Missionary Papers: "This he considered as a fine opportunity; nor did he let it slip. On reading the Word of God, he discovered his state, and perceived therein a true description of his own heart. He soon decided in favour of the Christian religion." It is probably an edition of Martyn’s Hindustani New Testament that is being held so reverently by Masih in the portrait and that forms its, and his, ultimate focus. Masih is not looking out at us (as in the oil painting in Partnership House), but down at the Scriptures that convicted him, translated by the man who convinced him. Our eyes are also drawn to that point, as we perceive ourselves to be witnesses of the biblical devotion of one bound to Christ, and so ultimately Christ-bound, by his binding of the Scriptures. He seems to have taken to heart the words of the Anglican collect for the second Sunday in Advent—to “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” the Holy Scriptures.

However, disappointment was lurking in the timing of his baptism. When Martyn was about to leave Cawnpore for his mission to Persia, Arabia, and eventually an untimely death in Tokat, never being sure of his convert’s conversion. He handed him over to two friends and fellow Cambridge missionaries in Calcutta. David Brown baptized him five months later, and Daniel Corrie (who later became the first bishop of Madras) taught him the Anglican collect for the second Sunday in Advent—to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" the Holy Scriptures.

Persia, Arabia, and eventually an untimely death in Tokat, never being sure of his convert’s conversion. He was attracting large numbers of patients and became known as the Christian doctor.

After eight years of employment as a catechist, it seemed appropriate that Masih should be ordained. Unfortunately the first bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Middleton (1769-1822), a strong High Churchman, did not license CMS-ordained missionaries in his diocese, nor was he willing to ordain "native" clergymen because he was convinced that his letters patent did not give him such authority. Masih was therefore ordained as a Lutheran by the Lutheran missionaries of the CMS. He continued to do some traveling around the upper provinces, but frequent illnesses prevented much journeying. The Missionary Register excelled itself with a delicate description, which has some backing from the portrait itself: "latterly, an unnatural tendency to corpulency rendered long journeys irksome."

When Bishop Reginald Heber succeeded Middleton, he did agree to Masih’s Anglican ordination, though without asking him to renounce his Lutheran orders. Masih was introduced to him during the bishop’s stay at Agra, in January 1825. The bishop remarked of him: “Abdool Messeeh’s present appointments, as Christian Missionary, are 60 rupees a month, and of this he gives reasonable long journeys irksome.”

On November 30, 1825, in Calcutta, Heber thus ordained Masih as the second Anglican Indian clergyman and ordained him
priest the following month, on December 21, in the presence of Daniel Corrie, then archdeacon of Calcutta. Perhaps this is a clue to the mystery of provenance—was it an ordination portrait, commissioned by Corrie? Masih's age and Heber's description would match such a suggestion.

Masih then moved on to Lucknow to set up a permanent mission there. Reasons for this were that his aged mother (who remained a Muslim) and family were there, it was a center of Muslim scholarship, and just prior to his ordination he had had an encouraging encounter and dialogue with a leading local scholar, Subhan Ali Khan. Sadly, this promised new phase of activity was cut short when Masih suddenly fell ill. He died on March 4, 1827, aged fifty-one.

As mentioned above, no trace of the portrait has yet been found in the official histories and archives of Ridley Hall or of the CMS, nor is it mentioned in the various biographies related to the life of Masih. Its provenance and history remain a mystery.

However, in the archives of Ridley Hall, soon after the discovery of this portrait, I did find an old piece of paper with a hymn on it; it had a note added at the bottom: “Translation of a hymn in Hindoostane composed by Rev. Abdool Meeseeh, and sung by him just before he expired. Thos Thomason 5 June /28.” The hymn by Masih matches the iconic portrait in manifesting the profound evangelical devotion and trust of this elderly Indian saint:

Beloved Saviour, let not me
In thy kind heart forgotten be.
Of all the plants that deck the bower,
Thou art the fairest, sweetest flower.
Youth's morn has fled—old age come on,
But sin distracts my soul alone.
Beloved Saviour, let not me
In thy kind heart forgotten be.

Notes

1. This is the accepted modern version of his name; other transliterations in missionary literature include Abdool Meeseeh, Abdool Masseeh, and Abd al-Masih.
2. CMS, before its renaming in 1995, stood for the Church Missionary Society. The oil painting in Partnership House, London, shows Masih as a younger figure than this watercolor. It was commissioned by Thomas Thomason (an East India Company chaplain who translated the Old Testament into Hindustani), who sent it to his mentor in Cambridge, Charles Simeon, who sent it to the CMS. See Eugene Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men, and Its Work, 3 vols. (London: CMS, 1889), 1:183. Rosemary Keen, former CMS archivist, was delighted to hear of the discovery of this portrait of the older Masih, unknown to the CMS.
4. I am very grateful to Celia Withycombe, paper conservator at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, for her generous advice and enthusiasm concerning the portrait.
5. F. W. B. Bullock’s History of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1941–53), made no mention of it, and archival research has not yet been fruitful. However, see n. 28 below.
7. Some of these questions led to a BBC Radio 4 program on the portrait, broadcast from my study in July 1997.
8. Eugene Stock, and some others following him, claimed him as the first ordained Indian. He pointed out, with perhaps a look over his shoulder at the SPG and SPCK, that Masih’s was “the first Anglican ordination of a Native of India. But Heber had already ordained, in India, a Native of Ceylon, a student at Bishop’s College, Calcutta, named Christian David” (Stock, History, 1:191). However, George Corrie, in his biography of his brother, clearly stated that David was a “native of Malabar” who had “for many years been engaged as a catechist in Ceylon” by the SPCK (G. E. Corrie and H. Corrie, Memoirs of Daniel Corrie, LL.D., First Bishop of Madras [London: Seeley, Burnside & Seeley, 1847], p. 363). David’s Indian Tamil origin is corroborated by Laird (Bishop Heber, p. 27).
10. Biographical notices appeared in the CMS Missionary Register for July 1813 and an obituary in October 1827, both written by Daniel Corrie. These were summarized in Missionary Papers for the use of the weekly and monthly contributors to the Church Missionary Society, no. 62 (Midsummer 1831), and subsequently published in The Quarterly Papers of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East from their Commencement in 1816 to Christmas 1848 (London: Seeleys, 1849). Corrie also translated Masih’s journal over the years 1812-27 from Hindustani (Urdu) into English, and extended extracts from these were regularly published in the Missionary Register. A few manuscript translations for the years 1820-25 may be found in the CMS archives, University of Birmingham, together with letters from the same period. Powell also notes that “polemical tracts compiled by Muslims in the 1850s contain some references to discussions held with Abd al-Masih in the 1820s” (Muslims and Missionaries, p. 111 n. 32).
11. Heber’s journal for January 12, 1825, cited in Laird, Bishop Heber, p. 246. In commenting that no Muslim accounts have been found to corroborate Masih’s versions of his conversations and disputations, Avril Powell points out: “The one-sidedness of the extant accounts is important, because Evangelicals were always anxious, as in the case of Sabat [Martyn’s assistant] to stress Abd al-Masih’s ashraf [well-born, respectable] origins” (Muslims and Missionaries, p. 111).
12. It is significant that, just as the campaign to allow missionary work among the population of India was gathering strength in England with the renewal of the East India Company’s charter in Parliament due in 1813, Martyn, a chaplain of the company, was in fact quietly, indirectly thus engaged. From this “good news to the poor” a strategic influential conversion resulted.
13. George Smith, in his otherwise fine biography of Martyn, erred in saying that this was the Persian New Testament (Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar: First Modern Missionary to the Mohammedans, 1781-1812 [London: Religious Tract Society, 1892], p. 286). Missionary Papers makes it clear that it was the Hindustani translation, and Stock and Powell correctly followed the information given in Missionary Papers.
The Legacy of Johann Ludwig Krapf

M. Louise Pirouet

The legacy of Johann Ludwig Krapf, first Protestant missionary to East Africa, has long been a matter of discussion.1 His first posting was to Ethiopia, but the mission was forced to leave before it was properly established. In Mombasa and its hinterland he and his companions made only a tiny handful of converts, the mission he established became a backwater, and his grand missionary strategy proved a nonstarter. This lack of apparent success gave the Church Missionary Society (CMS) pause for thought: “It was natural that some discouragement should be felt at the result so far of the large designs formed for the evangelization of Africa; but after the most anxious and careful review of all the circumstances of the Mission, the Committee felt that the disappointments hitherto met with must be regarded rather as a trial of their faith than as an indication of God’s will that the enterprise should be abandoned.”2

The evaluation of Krapf’s work has continued to exercise historians. “These....sad and other-worldly men achieved no great evangelistic success among the scattered and socially incoherent Wanyika tribesmen,” wrote Roland Oliver; but he added, “Krapf and Rebmann, if they were somewhat impractical, had vision, tenacity and boundless courage.”3 C. P. Groves, in his pioneering, if now superseded, Planting of Christianity in Africa, ends his account of Krapf’s work on a negative note;4 and Krapf is barely mentioned in Adrian Hastings’ monumental Church in Africa, 1450-1950.5 However, the major study by Roy Bridges, which forms the introduction to the Cass reprint of Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years’ Residence in Eastern Africa, discusses Krapf’s legacy at length and concludes that, in spite of all, “Krapf was a remarkable pioneer, a good man, and a notable figure in the history of nineteenth century Africa.”6 Trained as he was by the Basel Mission, Krapf himself may have been unsurprised that he and his colleagues made only slow progress. Basel missionaries in West Africa found their work equally slow at first; the emphasis was on faithfulness rather than on spectacular results.7

Krapf was one of a number of Lutherans trained at the Basel Missionary Institute who worked for the CMS in the early part of the nineteenth century. Born in 1810, near Tübingen in largely Protestant Württemberg, he was immersed in Pietism. In Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours in East Africa he tells us little about his family except that his father was a comfortably-off farmer and that he was one of four children. He seems to have been an overserious child; he suffered a six-month-long illness following a severe beating for a fault he did not commit, and

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M. Louise Pirouet lectured in church history and African Christianity at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, and Nairobi University, Kenya, before returning to Britain, where she lectured in religious studies at Homerton College, University of Cambridge, until her retirement.

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reported, “Left to myself my thoughts dwelt much upon eternity; and the reading of the Bible and devotional books became my delight.” He might never have gone beyond elementary schooling, but as the result of a chance encounter by his sister, he was sent to the Österbergschule in Tübingen, where he received an education that prepared him for university. At school he quickly caught up with his contemporaries and then outstripped them, soaking up languages like blotting paper. He learned Latin and Greek and made a start on French and Italian; when he decided to go to the Basel Missionary Institute, he prepared himself by learning Hebrew and before long had “read the greater portion of the Old Testament in the original.” He spent from May 1827 to May 1829 at Basel but then came to doubt his missionary call, and he returned to Tübingen to spend the next five years studying theology. He was ordained in the autumn of 1834. After less than a year’s not altogether happy parish experience, he met Peter Fjellstedt, a Basel-trained Swedish missionary, who rekindled his missionary call and encouraged him to offer to the CMS. He returned to Basel, where, in 1836, he met Dandeson Coates, lay secretary of CMS, and was accepted by that society. When assigned to Ethiopia, he set to work to study “Aethiopic,” properly known as Ge’ez, the archaic language of the church, and Amharic, the modern speech of the Christian Amhara people, besides studying some Arabic. He also read the History of Ethiopia by the great seventeenth-century German scholar Hiob Ludolf.

Vision in Ethiopia

Krapf’s first posting was to Ethiopia, where he worked from 1837 to 1842, when he was forced to return to Cairo. Here he made his first long overland journey, and armed already with some knowledge of Ge’ez and Amharic, he set up to master the Cushitic speech of the Oromo people (whom he knew as the Galla), the dominant people throughout much of central and southern Ethiopia. His first publications date from this period, with translations of the Gospels of John and Matthew into Oromo, as well as a first grammar and vocabulary. In 1842 his pioneering linguistic achievements were recognized when he was awarded an honorary doctorate at Tübingen University. He became obsessed with the idea that the Oromo, whom he described as “the most intellectual people of Eastern Africa,” were the key to the evangelization of the continent, and when driven out of Ethiopia, he determined to reach them via Mombasa. The Journals of the Rev. Messers Isenberg and Krapf, Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society was published in 1843. It consists of edited extracts from Krapf’s journals with much shorter additions from Isenberg’s letters, and although not in the first rank of writings on Ethiopia, it contains valuable information about the theological controversies that were raging in the Ethiopian church at that date, as well as about the people and politics, and the land itself and its geography.

Krapf saw the Oromo, the most “intellectual” people of eastern Africa, as the key to the evangelization of the continent.

The Mombasa Years

Having experienced the imperviousness of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians to his Protestant and Pietist interpretations of Scripture, and their unreadiness for a reformation, he turned to the Oromo, convinced that they were the key to the conversion of Africa. When his position became intolerable in Ethiopia because of political machinations, he made his way down the East Coast of Africa to Zanzibar and then across to Mombasa, in order to try to reach the Oromo by another route. Yet oddly he stayed in and around Mombasa for years, not seeming to realize that his inland journeys would not take him anywhere near the Oromo, who lived far to the north. The idea that they would be the key to the evangelization of Africa proved to be pure fantasy.

For the next eleven years, 1844–1855, Krapf worked in the coastal area of modern Kenya, first in Mombasa, where his wife, Rosina, and her newborn child both died, and then at Rabai, on a ridge a few miles inland. Of all the missionaries sent out to work with him, only Johannes Rebmann, who joined him in 1846, and who outstayed him by many years, remained for any length of time. It was not long before Krapf was engaged in language study, working first on Kiswahili (he quickly recognized its debt to Arabic), and then on Kinika (Kirabai), the language of the
people now known as the Mijikenda. Vocabularies of other East African languages, including Maasai, followed. However, it was Rebmann’s translation into Kiswahili that was eventually printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, even if it was Krapf’s orthography that was adopted and Krapf who saw it through the press.  

Both missionaries became widely known, not for their missionary work or for their work in translating the Bible but for their journeys into the interior, the maps which they published showing great inland lakes of which they had been told, speculations about the source of the Nile, and their sightings of the snow-covered peaks of Mounts Kilimanjaro and Kenya. British geographers who had never been near Africa argued fiercely as to whether these peaks were snow-covered. Krapf’s Reisen in Ost-Afrika in two volumes was published in Stuttgart in 1858, and the shorter one-volume English edition, Travels and Researches, two years later. Both this and the earlier Journals were of sufficient importance to scholarship to be reprinted in the 1960s, as was his Swahili dictionary.

It was in fact Rebmann, not Krapf, who first sighted a snow-capped mountain on his second inland journey in April to June 1848. The following year Krapf made his first long inland journey when he reached Ukambani, sighting both Kilimanjaro and Kenya. The journey to Ukambani was particularly difficult because he had to traverse the almost waterless thorn scrub that stretches some two hundred miles inland from the coast behind Rabai. He was entirely dependent on the goodwill of those whose land he traversed, and he was not always welcome. A second journey to Ukambani followed in 1851, from which Krapf had to turn back because of the hostility of the Kamba. The missionaries had had no more success earlier in locating a mission in Usambara further to the south. In spite of these setbacks Krapf remained determined that the correct missionary

### Noteworthy

**Announcing**

A joint celebration was held in Cambridge, England, on October 12, 1998, to mark both the centenary of the Henry Martyn Library and also the transfer of the archives of the SPCK (founded in 1798) to the Cambridge University Library. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali’s centenary lecture is published in this issue of the International Bulletin. On that occasion, the Henry Martyn Library formally became the Henry Martyn Centre. Since 1995 it has been based at Westminster College, in the Cambridge Theological Federation. The Director is Graham Kings and the web site is [www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk](http://www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk).

The Pew Charitable Trusts has awarded Cambridge University a grant of $950,000 for a three-year research project on the growth and impact of non-Western Christianity entitled Currents in World Christianity (CWC). The project brings together an international team of scholars led by Brian Stanley and Mark Hutchinson to continue and expand the work begun by the North Atlantic Missiology Project (NAMP) and the International Project on Evangelism and Globalization (IPEG). CWC aims to uncover the historical processes that have transformed Christianity during the twentieth century into a truly global religion. For further details of CWC see the project web site [www.cam.ac.uk/carts/cwc](http://www.cam.ac.uk/carts/cwc).

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held June 18-20, 1999, at Techny (near Chicago), Illinois. The theme is “The New Millennium and the Emerging Religious Encounters.” The keynote address will be given by Archbishop Marcello Zago, O.M.I., Secretary of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and formerly Secretary of the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions (now the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue).

J. Dudley Woodberry, Dean of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, is the ASM president. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 17-18 at the same place. Brian Stelck of Carey Theological College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, is president of the APM. For further information and registration for both meetings, contact Darrell R. Guer, Columbia Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 520, Decatur, Georgia 30031-0520 (Fax: 404-377-9696).

### Personalia

**Latin America Mission (LAM),** with headquarters in Miami, Florida, has chosen David R. Befus as the new president, effective February 1, 1999. He replaces David M. Howard who has retired. Befus is a graduate of Wheaton College and the University of Michigan, and has a Ph.D. from the University of Miami. He served as an LAM missionary in Costa Rica, and has held management positions with World Relief, Opportunity International, and World Vision.

Fuller Theological Seminary has appointed Sherwood G. Lingenfelter as Dean of the School of World Mission, and Professor of Intercultural Studies, effective July 1, 1999. He takes the place of Dudley Woodberry, who will return to the faculty following a sabbatical at the Overseas Ministries Study Center, where he will be a Senior Mission Scholar for the fall term 1999. Lingenfelter comes to Fuller from Biola University in La Mirada, California, where he has been Provost and Senior Vice President. An anthropologist with field experience in Micronesia, his publications include Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission (2nd ed. 1998).

**Died.** Roger Hooker, 64, Church Mission Society missionary in India (1965-78), scholar of interfaith issues, and son-in-law of Max Warren, January 11, 1999, in Birmingham, England. A graduate of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, he taught at Bareilly United Theological College and then moved to Varanasi (Benares) where he studied Sanskrit at the Hindu University. After returning to the U.K. in 1978 he served on the staff of the CMS training college at Selly Oak, Birmingham, and from 1982 he was a mission partner among Smetwick’s Asian community, and was Adviser on Inter-Faith Relations to the Bishop of Birmingham.

**Died J. Christy Wilson, Jr.,** 77, Professor Emeritus of World Missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, February 8, 1999, at Duarte, California. After serving on the staff of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship from 1943 to 1947, Wilson was a missionary in Afghanistan from 1951 to 1974, before joining the faculty of Gordon-Conwell.
strategy was to establish a chain of mission stations at fifty-mile intervals to link East Africa with the already established missions in West Africa, but in this he did not have the support of Rebmann or of Johann Erhardt, also Basel-trained missionaries. They both became discouraged by the lack of response of the coastal peoples. But Krapf stuck to this idea doggedly. In 1863 he was still convinced that the CMS would soon reach the Oromo and the same year he was thinking in terms of a chain of missions from Jerusalem to Abyssinia.

In September 1853 Krapf left Rabai for reasons of health for the last time and spent a year in England before revisiting Ethiopia, at the request of Bishop Samuel Gobat of Jerusalem, to assess the possibilities for reestablishing mission work there, before finally settling back in Germany at Kornthal, a center of Pietism, which became his home for the rest of his life. He married again in 1856, his second wife being Charlotte Pelargus, the eldest daughter of a city councilor of Stuttgart; they had one daughter, Johanna. Charlotte Krapf died in 1868, and the following year Krapf was married for the third time, to Nanette Schmidt von Cannstatt, who had been his housekeeper. Their marriage lasted until Krapf’s own death in 1881.19

A New Phase of Missionary Activity

The move back to Germany marked the beginning of a new phase of Krapf’s missionary activity, not his retirement from it. He became an adviser to others on mission work in eastern Africa, making several further visits to Africa in this connection, of which the 1853 visit to Ethiopia in connection with Bishop Gobat’s mission was the first. In the years that followed he did what he could to raise support in Germany for this mission. The most significant of his African visits was that to East Africa in 1862 to help Thomas Wakefield of the United Methodist Free Church to found a mission there. He chose a site for the mission at Ribe, not far from Rabai, and it was both men’s hope that this mission would be a stepping stone to the Oromo. Indeed, Methodist missionaries did make contact with some of the more southerly migrant Oromo, but this was not the breakthrough that had been hoped for.20 The Methodist Church in Kenya dates back to this pioneer mission. Roy Bridges has pointed out that Krapf’s influence in Germany was greater than in Britain. Several Lutheran missions that took up work in East Africa, including the Bavarian Evangelical Lutheran Mission founded in response to his death, owed something to the inspiration of his life and work.21 These later missions were to work under colonial rule, which broke open the self-containment of precolonial societies that had proved such a barrier to Krapf and his companions.

A final visit to Ethiopia took place in 1867–68, when Krapf accompanied the expedition led by Sir Robert Napier, which ended in the battle of Magdala. Krapf was forbidden to engage in evangelism, though it was accepted that he might discuss religion with the Ethiopians if they raised the subject. Presumably he agreed to go with the expedition because he could not resist the opportunity of seeing Ethiopia once again, but he had to be invalided back to Germany after only three months.22

A second major activity of these years was his work on languages and translation and the task of seeing translations of Scripture through the press, a topic that occupied so much of his later correspondence. His linguistic range was extraordinary, including two of the Semitic languages of Ethiopia (Amharic and Tigrinya), a Cushitic language (Oromo), Maasai, which is often classified as Nilo-Hamitic, and several Bantu languages. His observations on these and on the relationships and contrasts between them laid a basis for further ethnographic studies. Translations into Oromo, Kinika, Kiswahili, and Kikamba had appeared in the 1840s. In the next decade he compiled A Vocabulary of Six East African Languages, and a vocabulary of Maasai, as well as writing a preface to a Maasai vocabulary by his colleague Rebmann. The 1860s saw him editing Debreta Matteos’s Gospel translations into Tigrinya. At the end of the decade came his own Oromo translations of Luke and John. Next came work on Amharic, with Abba Rukh’s translation of the Old Testament, which Krapf saw through the press, a major undertaking, in part because a special font of type had to be cut for the printing of the Amharic syllabary. There followed Psalms, Genesis and Exodus, and the New Testament in Oromo, which Krapf worked on with an Oromo student, Rofso,23 and at last in 1876 the parallel edition of the New Testament in Ge’ez and Amharic that he had advocated for so many years.

From 1859 onward there is a series of letters, covering almost twenty years, between him and the British and Foreign Bible Society, whose archive is now held by Cambridge University library. Some ninety manuscript letters from Krapf covering the years 1826 to 1858 are held in the Basel Mission Archives, in addition to the huge collection of his writings in the CMS archives in Birmingham University.24 The German Reisen in Ost-Afrika ausgeführt in den Jahren 1837–55 is in two volumes and is considerably longer than the English-language Travels and Researches. There is, then, a vast collection of writings, his major legacy, which modern scholars continue to trawl through, for Krapf was a good observer at a time when there were few around, interested in every detail he could learn about the peoples of eastern Africa, their customs, and their countries.25

There is no modern biography of Krapf. In spite of the mass of writings that he left, the man remains rather remote. We can agree with Roland Oliver that he was “other-worldly” and “somewhat impractical,” but that, on the other hand, he had “vision, tenacity and boundless courage,” and that Bridges is right in concluding that he was a “remarkable pioneer, a good man, and a notable figure in the history of nineteenth century Africa.” It is also apparent that he was deeply imbued with the spirit of Pietism and had been molded by the discipline and religious seriousness of the Basel Institute. His letters and journals are full of religious comment that rises above mere platitude by reason of the difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances in which they were written, even though expressed in somewhat clichéd terms. But the man himself is difficult to discern; to some extent he is masked by his words rather than revealed through them.

Whatever the success or otherwise of his work, the Anglican Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), which celebrated its first century and a half of existence in 1994, looks back to him as its founder. In the volume produced to mark this occasion, Rabat to Mumias, Krapf and Rebmann and their companions occupy most of the first eleven pages of chapter 1. Photographs of both men are
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included. That they were Lutherans rather than Anglicans is barely mentioned. It is important to the CPK that these early missionaries did not high-handedly condemn African customs without understanding them and that their standard of living distanced them from ordinary Africans. For modern Kenyan Christians, without understanding them and that their standard of living Krapf was an outstanding missionary pioneer.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Paul Jenkins and Patricia Purtschert (Basel Mission Archives), Alan Jesson (Bible Society Archives, Cambridge Univ. Library), and Professor Roy Bridges for help in preparing this article.


9. Krapf refers to this as the Anatolian School. The school was named after the Osterberg, a hill east of Tübingen. This school taught Greek as well as Latin, hence the name was sometimes given as Anatolische Schule (Greek en to anatolē, “in the east”). I am grateful to Dr. H. Ehmer of the archives of the Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg for elucidating this point for me.


15. Krapf to Coates, copied to BFBS, February 20, 1841, BSA, Foreign Correspondence Inwards 3.


19. Bächtold, 1866. Basel Archives. By this time Krapf seems to have lost touch with the CMS.


23. Krapf to Secretary of the BFBS, February 21, 1867, BSA, Editorial Correspondence Inwards 5.

24. Because his letters were sometimes copied by one society to the other, they may figure more than once.


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Works About J. L. Krapf


The Legacy of Eugene Stock

Kevin Ward

Eugene Stock was neither foreign missionary nor mission statesman. His whole working life was spent in England. Unlike Henry Venn, who had dominated the work and strategic planning of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) for a whole generation (1841–72), Stock was never the sole, nor indeed the major, influence on the policy of the mission society whose servant he was. His lasting importance consists in his great work as historian of the CMS over its first hundred years. It is an outstanding achievement, an important piece of historical writing in its own right, about one of the most important mission societies of the modern era. The society had been established in 1799 as the “Society for Missions to Africa and the East” by a group of Evangelical laymen and clergy of the established Church of England. It was to celebrate the centenary that Stock’s history was commissioned.

Early Life

Stock, born in 1836, was a layman and a Londoner. He wrote of his early life, “My father was a gentleman of position and wealth who resided much in France, and whose fortune was entirely lost through speculation on the French Bourse.” It was a personal misfortune that affected the whole family, for his mother’s property was also swept away in the bankruptcy proceedings; furthermore, she was widowed when Eugene was ten. Stock was thus prevented from going to university, and he started work as a clerk in a merchant’s office in London. He rose to chief clerk, but the vagaries of nineteenth-century capitalism again caught up with him. The firm collapsed in the recession of 1873, and at age thirty-seven Stock was left with no visible prospects for his future. It was at this point that he joined CMS, in the immediate aftermath of the retirement and death of Henry Venn. Stock was a member of the parish church in Islington, an important center of CMS support in London. Daniel Wilson had been vicar in the early years of the century, a strong CMS supporter, and then bishop of Calcutta. The CMS Training Institute, which prepared men to go out as missionaries and where people from overseas like Samuel Ajayi Crowther had studied, was nearby.

In 1862 Stock had married Eliza Mann, the daughter of a naval officer. Eliza died in 1882, without children. In 1884 Stock set up home in the Haverstock Hill area of London with his own two unmarried sisters, Geraldine and Caroline, and the two unmarried sisters of his wife, Maria and Fanny Mann. This group of women was actively involved in voluntary social work. The Mann sisters managed a boys’ home for “waifs and strays,” while Caroline Stock worked among the poor in the East End of London. Stock’s experience of the way in which his sisters practiced their Christian vocation in London was to be important in his realization of the need for a much greater role for women missionaries in the CMS.

In 1902 Stock remarried. His second wife was a widow, Isabella Fiennes, whose first husband had had aristocratic connections, and whose sister-in-law was a missionary of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. Stock retired in 1906, in his seventieth year, having served CMS for more than three decades. He not only kept up his CMS contacts during retirement but also provided a fourth volume for his History, bringing the account up to 1916. He died in 1928, in his tenth decade.

Increasing Role in CMS

The CMS was proud of its voluntary status—indeed, for many years it was regarded with some considerable hostility by the establishment of the church precisely because of its voluntary nature. It was one of Henry Venn’s achievements to overcome that suspicion and persuade the Church of England to value the society as playing a vital role in the missionary task of the established church. Venn occupied the position of “Honorary Clerical Secretary”; the position was for a clergyman of private means who did not receive remuneration. A succession of able men occupied this role—Josiah Pratt from 1802 to 1824, Henry Venn from 1841 to 1872, and, during Stock’s years, Henry Wright (1872–80), Frederic Wigram (1880–95), and Prebendary Henry Fox (1895–1910). While Pratt and Venn had exercised a strong personal direction of the society, giving it a single vision, during Stock’s years the CMS operated more as a collective leadership.

In addition to the clerical secretary there were a varying number of secretaries (some five or six on average), who did receive a salary. Stock began his service with the CMS in a fairly mundane position. He was employed to edit the numerous letters from missionaries in the field, with a view to their dissemination in annual reports and in the society’s missionary magazines (the most prestigious in Stock’s time being the Intelligencer), important for sustaining intelligent interest in mission among supporters in the parishes. In 1875 Stock’s competence, as well as the importance of the task, was recognized by his being appointed “Editorial Secretary,” and in 1881 he became a full secretary, with a growing voice in the general running of the society. R. N. Cust described how in 1887, while Wigram was on a world tour, there had been “a vacuum in the Committee Room: and the Editorial Secretary, whose position is a humble one... stepped forward and has not gone back.” Cust, a retired Indian civil servant, was a committee member of CMS (that is he served in a voluntary capacity). His caustic, not to say hostile, comments about Stock were written during the Niger crisis over the succession to Bishop Samuel Crowther, when Cust (with good reason) feared that Venn’s principles of a self-governing church were under attack.

The Christian service of his sisters influenced Stock to seek a greater role for women in the CMS.
The Venn Legacy

Stock, like most of his colleagues, stood in awe of the Venn legacy and claimed to continue it. But Peter Williams has shown how in practice a central plank of Venn’s mission strategy (the aim to create independent and culturally sensitive native churches) was gradually undermined by other aims and objectives that seemed more relevant to an age of colonialism, given the leading role of European culture and personnel. Williams sees Stock as being particularly important in reshaping these goals and objectives, in trimming the Venn ideal so that it could fit into what was an overriding concern for Stock: the need for the CMS to participate in the growing sense of Anglicanism as an ecclesiastical communion with a common worldwide identity. This was, in itself, a perfectly laudable goal. The idea of a global Anglican communion owed much of its vigor to the new sense of catholicy inculcated by the Oxford movement, to pioneering missionary bishops such as Augustus Selwyn of New Zealand, and to the sense of episcopal collegiality imparted by the early Lambeth Conferences. Stock was right to want to ensure that the society did not simply adopt a negative attitude to these developments, and indeed he could with justice regard a positive and cooperative attitude to Anglican ecclesiastical structures as part of the Venn legacy. Unfortunately, the institutional development of an Anglican communion had become intertwined with other things that ran counter to much of what Venn had argued for: the development of local autonomy and initiative, and the creation of distinctive native churches and local leadership. By the age of high imperialism these ideals seemed all too often in practice to be set aside.

Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the cause célèbre for the CMS in the 1890s: the crisis over the management of the Niger diocese in West Africa and the succession to Bishop Crowther. Crowther, a freed slave brought up in Sierra Leone, had been persuaded by Venn to become bishop on the Niger in 1864. He was the first African Anglican bishop, and the appointment was regarded as the touchstone of Venn’s policy of the “euthanasia of the mission.”

The Niger Crisis

Stock, while not having had the chance to go to university himself, had wide-ranging contacts with universities that made him particularly responsive to new trends in Christian spirituality, particularly in Oxford and Cambridge. Revivalism and the Keswick movement were having a growing impact in the 1880s. Unfortunately, the intrusion of this group of young, intolerant men into an area that certainly had problems, both structural and spiritual, but that had a long history of African missionary initiative and enterprise, proved a disaster. Their intemperate criticisms of Bishop Crowther and his African coworkers on the Niger led to overt criticism of Venn’s legacy. Stock was in an invidious position. His liberalities of spirit had made him warm to the Keswick missionary enthusiasts, and he had at first sympathized with them when they had sent back alarm signals about the state of the diocese, but their dogmatic strictures were hardly the kind of approach with which Stock, the archdiplomat, was likely to sympathize. It is one of the great weaknesses of Stock’s History that he adopts such a bland view of this, perhaps the greatest, crisis in CMS history. It is reasonable to suppose that Stock was reluctant to stir up a controversy that had been raging only ten years previously, that had hardly died down even in 1899. It is difficult, however, to forgive Stock for almost writing out of his history the story of the outstanding African Anglican leader of his generation, James Johnson, the natural (and widely expected) successor to Crowther. Stock shows little awareness of the views and perspectives of the West African Christian community and of how traumatic the conflict was for that community. The following is the nearest he gets to a recognition that they had a genuine case:

Their [the Keswick missionaries’] campaign against the evils on the Niger undoubtedly alienated the minds of many West Africans from the CMS, and it was long before confidence was restored. Yet, after all, there are times when severity is necessary, and when alienation must be risked. . . . They were not perfect instruments, but they were instruments used of God to accomplish his own purposes.

It is symptomatic of Stock and the CMS’s general defensive- ness at this time that he should quote Bishop Creighton of London contrasting “the six generations of Christianity in England which produced a Venerable Bede with the single generation of Christianity in West Africa which had produced a Bishop Oluwole.” Isaac Oluwole was the assistant bishop whose appointment had caused such an outrage in West Africa; it was a slap in the face for West African Christians, who were urging the appointment of James Johnson, not merely as a “half bishop,” but as a full diocesan.

The fact is that, however much he may have come to regret the intemperance of the young enthusiasts, for Stock the outcome was very much in line with his own policy of integrating CMS missions more closely into a developing Anglican structure, in which he inevitably saw Europeans as playing a leading role. Stock’s own understandings and sensibilities were primarily and overwhelmingly directed toward Christian opinion in England, and he lacked the experience or the sensitivity truly to sympathize with the depth of feeling of West African Christians.

At the time of the centenary in 1899, Stock was responsible for a memorandum that decisively channeled CMS policy for the next half century in regard to institutional development of the church, which in effect jettisoned or sidelined many aspects of Venn’s concerns for the development of a native church, in effect sacrificing native responsibility and empowerment on the altar of a universality judged by European criteria.
Despite these strictures, the Keswick movement should not be simply typecast as part of the new imperialism. It may have produced arrogance and racist attitudes on the Niger, but it also produced imaginative and sympathetic missionaries such as George Pilkington and George Baskerville in Uganda, Temple Gairdner in Egypt, and Donald Fraser, the Free Church of Scotland missionary in Malawi.

It is also to Stock’s credit that he so strongly supported the opening up of missionary work to women. Stock believed rightly that the CMS, which had in some ways been at the forefront of encouraging women to a missionary vocation in the very early years of the century, had fallen seriously behind. Between 1820 and 1885 only 99 women missionaries were sent out by the CMS (apart from women who went out as wives), compared with 1,018 men. In the last fifteen years of the century 485 women were sent (again not including wives) compared with 581 men. Yet there was a heavy price to pay for this great upsurge of numbers, which naturally seemed so positive to those who attended the centenary celebrations. It too often served further to undermine the self-confidence and freedom of maneuver of the local churches.

Stock’s Centenary History

Stock was in fact the third person to be approached to write the centenary history of the society. It was intended that Charles Hodge should produce a comprehensive work in four or five volumes, but he was too fastidious, and with half his allotted time exhausted, had covered only the first fifteen years. Then the China missionary W. P. Mears agreed to write it but had to abandon the task because of ill health. It was decided to fall back on Stock, who was relieved of his normal editorial duties for the task and told to write something “on a smaller scale.” The result was The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men, and Its Work, in three volumes. Volume 1 covers the first fifty years, 1799–1849, in 504 pages; volume 2 covers 1849–72 in 659 pages; volume 3 treats 1872–99, in 832 pages. Stock apologized to those who might complain of the size: “It may perhaps be pleaded that if biographies of individual men of the century required three and four volumes—Bishop Wilberforce three, Lord Shaftesbury three, Dr Pusey four—a History, which contains in a condensed form materials for a hundred individual biographies is not unduly exacting in demanding three.”

Despite the solidity of this great project, something of the vulnerability and fragmentariness that one might say is of the nature of missionary work does come through again and again in Stock’s narrative. Stock is certainly concerned to emphasize the distrust and scorn with which the pioneers of the society had to contend. Nevertheless, the project is conceived by Stock as an institutional history. As one of Stock’s sternest modern critics puts it: “His great History is the story of English missionary structures at work at home and abroad. The non-English elements emerge only occasionally from the shadows and then to illustrate the work of English missionaries.”

Despite this limitation, the work is a very great achievement, with its vivid portraits of the missionaries and its encyclopedic industry of collecting, assimilating, and sorting. But Stock also has the ability to present his material in a coherent and interesting way, so that the text does not become a boring list of forgotten names and obscure places. He has a particular skill in putting the life of the society in the context of English church politics and theological disputes. This, rather than the situation in India or New Zealand or Africa, is the “environment” of which he speaks in the title. His style is precise and unfussy, a model of clarity. His fluency was legendary—he is said only once to have had to write out a page a second time.

In the earlier part of the work, the pen of the historian is most in evidence, sifting and exercising his considerable critical faculties in a judicious way. But in the later part of the book Stock is an actual player, with his own need to justify his view of the development of the society. In general he is scrupulous in honoring the leaders of local churches, in recording their names and activities; the story never reads as simply, or indeed primarily, the activities of foreign missionaries.

The History faithfully reflects the priorities of his age. Positively, this was an age when CMS’s rather narrow and negative reaction to Anglicanism (conceived by many supporters of the CMS as hostile to pure evangelical principles) was replaced by a much greater readiness to cooperate and to work with diocesan structures overseas. For example, Stock was embarrassed by the CMS missionary conflicts with Bishop Copleston in the 1870s and underplays the issues at conflict, in the interests of emphasizing the readiness of the CMS to play its part within the Anglican communion.

Stock’s History came after a generation of increasingly confident, not to say jingoistic, imperialism. There was little of popular jingoism in Stock, but he was not at odds with the imperialist spirit of the age. To take just one example, the campaign launched in the 1890s by Bishop Tucker and given tacit support by the CMS for the British government to assume direct responsibility from the Imperial British East Africa Company is presented by Stock as unambiguously a blessing for Uganda: “Thus Uganda was saved...”

At the Bicentennial

Eugene Stock as missionary strategist and historian embodied many of the good features for which the CMS is often admired. He was not narrow in his conception of the missionary task and its objectives. His sense of the need to develop the structures of the church through diocesanization might in the early part of the twentieth century have been developed in paternalistic ways. But an ecclesiology more akin to Venn’s vision of the separation of the native church so that it can develop along its own lines can also be turned in profoundly retrogressive and stultifying directions. Colonial theories of “indirect rule”
were rightly challenged, not least by educated Christians. And in places like Kenya and Uganda and Nigeria, Anglicans from the CMS tradition were often at the forefront of these protests. As the editorial secretary and then as historian of the society, Stock did much to ensure that a high priority was put on the "center" that preoccupied Stock seems so much less interesting than the "periphery." It was a harsh judgment but difficult to dissent from. It is no longer possible to "believe" in mission societies in the way that Stock did. The "peripheries" must be written about in their own terms. The Church Missionary Society itself is just one small factor in the development of Christianity in Nigeria or India, New Zealand, Japan, or China. These Christian communities have their own histories, their own particular interactions with their societies, their own mission, which mission history narrowly conceived cannot begin to elucidate. Yet the history of Christianity is also not simply about the history of particular Christian communities in their own contexts. The fact that Christian faith is always called back to its mandate to communicate outside its own structures, to witness in a world of diverse religious and secular ideologies, and to examine its own life in the light of that witness means that the history of Christianity as mission must always have an important role. Stock demonstrated that role superbly in his own way in his history of the CMS in the nineteenth century. At the centenary celebrations of that society, James Johnson of West Africa, whose admiration for the society seemed remarkably robust, gave this eulogy:

"It was once the fashion to speak of the negro as a being that was only a link between the brute creation and humanity, a being whom to seek to educate, to Christianize and civilize, was a useless task. This was said frequently before the Church Missionary Society undertook its work in West Africa. And had the Society not had a strong faith in God's word, a strong faith in the oneness of the human family, and in the power of the Gospel to renovate the heart of the black man as it will renovate the heart of the red or the white man, it would not have gone to Africa, or would have failed to sustain the labour there as it has done through the trials as well as the difficulties which it had to contend with."

This faith in humanity and the power of the Gospel comes through vividly in Stock's great account.

Notes

3. The connection between "the practice of benevolence" outside the domestic circle that Evangelicalism encouraged among middle-class women and the growth of women's participation in mission societies has been explored by F. K. Prochaska in Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
4. Gollock, Eugene Stock, p. 34.
7. Williams, The Ideal.
11. Ibid., p. 685.
12. See Williams, The Ideal.
16. In addition there was the Centenary Volume of the Church Missionary Society, published in 1902, containing the speeches and sermons surrounding the centenary celebrations, statistics, and useful directories of the 1,602 men (clerical and lay) who had gone out with the Society, the 584 women (not including wives), and the 623 "native" clergy connected with the society between 1799 and 1900.
20. Williams, The Ideal, chaps 2 and 3.
21. The Boer War began in October 1899, some six months after the end of the CMS centenary.

23. Generations of modern researchers have reason to be thankful for the dedicated work of Rosemary Keane, the CMS archivist, and Jean Woods, the librarian, over so many years. They arranged for the transfer of the archives to the University of Birmingham.


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**Selected Works by Stock**


1916 *The History of the Church Missionary Society, Supplementary Volume the Fourth*. London: CMS.

1921 *Uganda, an Old Story Retold*. London: CMS.

1922 *Some Lessons from Past Times*. London: CMS.

1922 *The Story of the C.M.S., 1799-1922*. London: CMS. (Repr. from *Church Missionary Review*.)

1923 *The Recent Controversy in the CMS*. London: CMS. (Repr. from *Church Missionary Review*.)

**Selected Works on Stock and the CMS**


**Other Sources**

Stock was editor of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* for many years and contributed much of its contents (often unattributed). Key articles include:


“Native Churches and the Episcopate: A Brief Historical Sketch of the Society’s Views and Actions in Regard to the Native Churches and the Episcopate,” *Intelligencer*, April 1901, pp. 258-70. (There is a proof of this in the society’s archives [G/C 8/2] that is significantly more frank than the final printed version.)

Other significant articles are noted in Williams, *The Ideal*, pp. 273-74.

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**Book Reviews**

**Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality.**


Church historian Geoffrey Wainwright has said that when the history of the church in the twentieth century comes to be written, Lesslie Newbigin will be considered one of the ten or twelve most influential figures. The significance of Newbigin’s legacy can already be gauged by the number of Ph.D. dissertations in process that deal with his thought.

*Bearing the Witness of the Spirit* is a pioneering work that examines Newbigin’s missionary theology. Hunsberger is professor of missiology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, and coordinator of the growing Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. In this book Hunsberger uncovers a “theology of cultural plurality” implicit in Newbigin’s writings. I believe Newbigin may have responded to this proposal in a way similar to the remark he made upon hearing that a Dutch philosopher had written a paper entitled “Newbigin’s Philosophy of Culture”: “I became rather alarmed because I didn’t know I had a philosophy of culture.” However, Newbigin’s ad hoc and contextual theology has always issued from a sound theological foundation. Hunsberger has exposed that theological foundation for cultural plurality by examining themes essential to Newbigin’s missionary theology: the missionary, significance of the doctrine of election, Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God as the clue to the meaning of universal history; conversion and the boundaries of the community called church; and the relationship of the Gospel as “secular announcement” to other religions. The concluding section exposes Newbigin’s theology of culture by employing a triangular model with culture, Gospel, and church at the three corners, and examining the three axes of Gospel-culture, Gospel-church, and church-culture.

The book is clearly written, highly nuanced, and brimming with insight into the structure of Newbigin’s theology and into a number of significant issues discussed in missiology today. This book is a (slightly revised) publication of Hunsberger’s 1987 doctoral dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary, with a new opening chapter that shows its relevance in the present context. As such, it does not contain any assessment of Newbigin’s writing in the last ten years of his life (about eighty items, by my count), including perhaps his most important book, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society.* However, this does not at all detract from the valuable contribution this book will make to missiological discussion today.

—Michael Goheen


If missionary biography is a means to understanding mission history and strategy, then Everett Wilson’s important new book is a significant doorway through which one can enter into the ethos of the Assemblies of God (AOG), the prototype denomination of the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement. Everett Wilson is the president of Bethany College in Scotts Valley, California, and director of CINCEL—the Latin America Language and Research Center in San Jose, Costa Rica—both of them AOG institutions.

Being an insider of the denomination and an obvious admirer of J. Philip Hogan makes it difficult for Wilson to offer an objective analysis of Hogan or a critique of his own missions organization. Nevertheless, the author is to be credited for bringing the far-reaching contributions of Hogan into wider circulation.

Hogan, who had served the Assemblies in pre-Communist China (Ningpo, Chekiang Province, East China) and Taiwan, was AOG director of the Division of Foreign Missions during the turbulent and transitional years of 1960-90. Wilson presents him as a rugged individualist who combined a passionate heart with a singular tough-mindedness. Hogan, typical of his generation of Pentecostal leaders, was more of an activist missions promoter/strategist than one provided with the luxury of time for reflection and writing. Yet, the samples of various quotations from Hogan’s writings (mostly informal articles from denominational publications) invite further inquiry and dialogue. Perhaps this is a project whose time has come—a missions-specific compilation of biographical legacies autobiographical reflections and bibliographic resources from the twentieth-century Pentecostal missions community.

—Grant McClung

**God-Mystery-Diversity: Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World.**


Gordon Kaufman presents a forthright challenge to the traditional Christian understanding of world mission. He forcefully argues that truth is not
monolithic but pluralistic, that truth emerges through open dialogue as opposed to being revealed at a particular time and place in history. According to Kaufman, we should abandon the task of finding a conceptuality capable of explaining the diversity of religious phenomena and instead content to live with a certain measure of ambiguity, thereby creating a climate for tolerance and mutual respect.

Kaufman is adamant that the claim that Christianity is absolute or final is "an intrinsically unstable position" (p. 18). An absolutist stance on religious questions offers "religious legitimation for dangerously parochial social and ethnic movements and practices that, in their divisiveness and destructiveness, are a threat to all humanity" (p. 191). Yet Kaufman himself argues in an absolutist fashion that all ideas are relative and that pluralism is the only viable way of understanding religious truth. He contends that matters of ultimate import and concern are best grasped through "democratic interaction" (p. 203). For faith in Jesus Christ he substitutes faith in interreligious dialogue. He champions "unrestricted openness" in the discussion of fundamental questions. All positions should be accepted in interfaith discussion on "equal terms" (p. 214). Here we see the bankruptcy of a liberalism that ineluctably leads into postmodernism, thus subverting the claims of historic Christian faith.

—Donald G. Bloesch

Donald G. Bloesch is Emeritus Professor of Theology, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

A Bag of Needments: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion.


Those who, like myself, were privileged to know and work together with Geoffrey Parrinder in the United Kingdom in the period from about 1965 to 1976 remember him with affection, not untouched with a shadow of envy. A more likable person it would be hard to imagine. The envy was generated by what seemed to younger colleagues to be the effortless ease with which he produced book after book—and had them all published! In those years Parrinder was the comparative religiousist who was read by people who did not as a rule read comparative religion, not because he was a great stylist (he was not), but because he had the knack of telling people in simple and straightforward terms what they wanted and needed to know about the wide world of religion. He had begun as an Africanist, and some, myself included, think that his experience in Africa, between 1933 and 1956, stimulated him to produce his best work, Religion in an African City (1953) being particularly good.

In 1958 Parrinder returned to London, where he taught at King’s College until his retirement in 1977; he continues to live near London. From Africa his attention turned more and more to Asia, as Asian immigration was becoming an increasingly important factor in the religious demography of the United Kingdom, and the mainstream churches seemed at a loss to know how to react to it. As far back as the late 1950s Parrinder had been writing popular books about Asian religions and how the Christian might assess them, and he followed this line throughout the remainder of his long and fruitful career. His best non-African book was no doubt Avatar and Incarnation (1970).

"Lesslie Newbigin was one of the great seminal Christian thinkers of the twentieth century. The merit of this study is that it identifies the theological bedrock on which Newbigin based his engagement with the burning issues facing the contemporary church. Newbigin was a passionate thinker who boldly engaged the issues of the day affecting the life and witness of the Christian church. It is instructive to see how these core convictions reliably guided him. Implicitly, Hunsberger’s elaboration of Newbigin’s thought calls us to a recovery of conviction, hope, and passion for the gospel, precisely in a radically pluralist world.”

—WILBERT R. SHENK

"A pioneering assessment of Lesslie Newbigin’s legacy.”

—GERALD H. ANDERSON

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In fairness, it must be said, however, that he broke little or no new ground, his methods and approaches being those of an older generation of Christian liberals.

Martin Forward’s book, a revised version of his Ph.D. thesis, is a careful and sympathetic survey of Parrinder’s career and work as a missionary, educator, and writer and will be welcomed by all who owe its subject a debt of gratitude—among whom this present reviewer is happy to count himself.

—Eric J. Sharp

Eric J. Sharp is Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney.

1999–2000 Senior Mission Scholars

OMSC welcomes into residence for the fall 1999 semester Senior Mission Scholars David A. Kerr and J. Dudley Woodberry. Beginning his career in the Middle East, Dr. Kerr is known for his expertise in the area of Christian-Muslim relations. He has taught at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, and now at Edinburgh University, where he directs the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World. Dr. Woodberry is the retiring Dean and Professor of Islamic Studies, School of World Mission, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, California. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), for several years he pastored churches in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is editor of Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road (1989).

In the spring semester of 2000 OMSC’s Senior Mission Scholars will be Samuel Wilson and T. Jack Thompson. Dr. Wilson is Professor of Missions and Evangelism, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, Ambridge, Pennsylvania. He served for a number of years as a missionary with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Peru, and then directed the MARC division of World Vision International, where he worked alongside Dr. Raymond Bakke in organizing evangelism and church planting workshops around the world in major urban settings. Dr. Thompson is seconded by the Presbyterian Church of Ireland to the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Edinburgh, where he is Lecturer in Mission Studies. A former missionary in Malawi, he is the author of Christianity in Northern Malawi: Donald Fraser’s Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture (1995).

In addition to providing leadership in OMSC’s Study Program, the Senior Mission Scholars are available to OMSC residents for counsel regarding their own mission research interests.

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A Legacy Remembered: A Century of Medical Missions.


Here is a fine account of the medical mission work of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian Church. It covers the period from 1881, when the PCUS appointed its first missionary physician, to 1983, when the PCUS united with the United Presbyterian Church to form the Presbyterian Church (USA). Sophie Montgomery Crane is well qualified to tell this story, for as the daughter of PCUS missionaries in China, she married Paul Crane, M.D., and the two served from 1947 to 1969 as PCUS medical missionaries in Korea. The book arose from a trip that she and her husband took in 1985 to visit Presbyterian medical missions in ten countries in Asia and ten more in Africa. This account is based on research in historical archives, plus interviews with seventy-five persons involved in PCUS medical mission work.

The bulk of the book is given over to the PCUS medical mission record in three countries (China, Korea, and Belgian Congo/Zaire), with shorter but very gripping accounts of six other lands (Mexico, Brazil, Japan, Taiwan, Bangladesh, and Haiti). The writer gives outlines of how PCUS mission work began in each country and of the beginnings of medical missions in particular. Then she tells of the work of individual hospitals or medical centers and of the medical personnel that worked there. She reminds us that “the financial support for the PCUS medical programs always hung by a slender thread because the needs and opportunities far exceeded the resources provided by the PCUS community” (p. 11). Yet the medical workers persevered, generally starting with the immediate problems of the treatment of disease, but going on to provide for the medical training of local people, as well as for programs of community health through primary health care. After World War II there were great advances in drugs, vaccines, and medical technology, but also enormous challenges from chaotic political and social conditions in many areas. “The mission medical staff had to try to practice a high quality of medicine in the face of inadequate supplies, primitive facilities, volatile political conditions, and ever-increasing regulations from local governments” (p. 17).

Along the way, the text is enlivened by striking stories. In Chonju, Korea, the author’s husband initiated a nationwide parasite eradication program (1958-64) that contributed to the energy of the
Korean people and their economic advances (pp. 144-69). In Zaire, Dr. John K. Miller sparked an innovative nutrition program for the treatment of children malnourished due to kwashiorkor disease (pp. 318-22).

Some readers might find the text a bit chopped up by its varied sections, with constantly changing locales, persons, and historical eras. Yet for those who have valued Christian medical personnel and their work as a vital part of Christian mission in many lands, this book is an invaluable resource.

—James M. Phillips

James M. Phillips, a contributing editor, served as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea (1949-52) and in Japan (1959-75) and as associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center (1983-97).

Down Trodden: The Struggle of India’s Dalits for Identity, Solidarity, and Liberation.


James Massey is an important Dalit Christian scholar and activist. He has been the honorary secretary/director of the Dalit Solidarity Programme and is also the Christian member of the National Commission for Minorities of the Government of India. He is the author of three important books on Dalits (untouchables)—Roots (1991), Towards Dalit Hermeneutics (1994), and Dalits in India (1995)—and has edited one of the best collections of Dalit theology available, Indigenous Peoples: Dalits (1994), all of which were published in India. In Down Trodden he uses the essence of these to provide the non-Indian reader with the best introduction available to Christian reflection on the Dalits.

The book has six chapters. “Terminology” deals with the Indian and, more interestingly, the biblical roots of “Dalit.” “History” provides an overview of 3,500 years of Dalit oppression and colonization. “Struggle” reviews that history by describing Dalit resistance to the injustice and indignities imposed upon them. “Theology” sets a theological agenda for Christian Dalits in which solidarity plays a central role. “The model of solidarity we find in God’s incarnational act in history challenges us as Dalit Christians to follow it, so that the experiences we share with the Dalits in general should become the basis of an authentic Dalit theology” (p. 61). “Church” calls the Indian church to a new identity in which it affirms its Dalit roots. Finally, “Liberation” outlines four stages Dalits must pass through before achieving full liberation: establishing a common identity, becoming conscious of their state, being in solidarity, and entering into the process of liberation.

There are a couple of factual errors (the great Dalit emancipator was Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar) and some questionable historical interpretations, especially concerning missionaries and Dalits, but this is a solid, original, and authentically Dalit work.

—John C. B. Webster

John C. B. Webster, a Diaconal Worker of the Presbyterian Church (USA) assigned to India, is editor of the Dalit International Newsletter, author of The Dalit Christians: A History (Delhi: ISPCK, 1994) and The Pastor to Dalits (Delhi: ISPCK, 1995), as well as coauthor of From Role to Identity: Dalit Christian Women in Transition (Delhi: ISPCK, 1997).
The Liturgy After the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective.


Ion Bria, until his retirement in 1994, was a Romanian Orthodox theologian on the staff of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for over twenty years. In this brief volume he has provided a compendium and digest of Orthodox missiology over the last quarter century. Drawing on the various consultations sponsored by the WCC and its mission conferences (Bangkok, Melbourne, and San Antonio), Bria presents the Orthodox liturgical perspective as the motivation, means, and content of mission. The stated purpose is to encourage mission dialogue between the Orthodox and other members of the WCC.

For those unacquainted with the ethos of the Orthodox Church, the book starts with an explanation of the liturgy. Bria demonstrates the mission elements of the liturgy with its focus on the world. He does not shy away from the difficult contradictions when speaking of the “liturgy after the Liturgy,” in which the life of the believers reflects their worship in God’s presence. In spite of Orthodox mission principles, there are situations where the liturgy is not celebrated in the vernacular. Nor does Bria think that the social and political implications of theosis have been worked out. One of the best chapters is entitled “Gospel and Culture and Liturgy.” This could have been expanded to explore some of the implications Bria touches on, especially his call for assistance in evangelizing the former Communist countries. While he speaks of assistance and cooperation, he raises the issue of Uniatism (Christians who use the Byzantine rite but have been united to Rome since the late sixteenth century).

This is a useful introduction to many key issues, not only in the Orthodox understanding of mission but also in ecumenical relationships.

—James J. Stamoolis

James J. Stamoolis is Executive Director of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. His missionary service was in South Africa.

The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg’s Christian Vocation to Islam.


No Christian scholar in the past forty years has had a greater impact on Christian understanding of Islam than Kenneth Cragg. Therefore the present volume is a welcome analysis and assessment of Bishop Cragg’s voluminous contribution to the field.

Christopher Lamb, secretary for interfaith relations for the General Synod of the Church of England and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, starts by showing the formative influences on Cragg in his evangelical Anglican roots, study of theology, and missionary service and teaching in the Arab world.

The author then moves on to the theological themes Cragg has emphasized, such as the need for communication and relationship between God and humans and between humans. These themes led him to focus on aspects of Islam, such as
God's knowability, which were not central in mainline, historic Islam, and to interact with Muslim thinkers of similar mind whom some considered marginal.

Next, Cragg's mission to Islam is reviewed. Lamb shows Cragg's eclectic approach that combines loyalty to Christ and belief that conversion is inherent in the Gospel with a "hospitality" to others and their beliefs and practices. Some of Cragg's interpretations of Islam were considered somewhat idiosyncratic when he sought to maximize the pro-Christian emphases he found in the Qur'an and elsewhere in Islam. This effort led to charges by some, though denied by him, that he read Christian meanings into Islamic ideas. Actually he took Islamic self-definition seriously, even as he questioned whether it dealt adequately with the human condition and the worship of God.

Even though the reader may not always agree with Lamb's assessment, Lamb has done a masterful job of analyzing Cragg's thought with appreciation while also raising criticisms that he and others have had with some of its conclusions. This volume provides a very helpful portrait of the current dean of Christian interpreters of and to Muslims.

— J. Dudley Woodberry

J. Dudley Woodberry is Dean and Professor of Islamic Studies, School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He served at the Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi, Pakistan (1968–71, 1972–73), and as pastor of the Community Christian Church of Kabul, Afghanistan (1971–72, 1974–76), and the Riyadh International Christian Fellowship, Saudi Arabia (1976–79).


This doctoral thesis was written when its author served as assistant at the Institute of Comparative Religions and Missiology in Heidelberg. It is a pioneering study of the concern for mission and non-Christian religions in German Protestant systematic theology during this century.

The author divides his survey into two parts, the former covering the first half of this century and the latter the second half. He selected five main representatives for each period, with other theologians receiving less attention. The names treated for the first epoch are Martin Kahler, Ernst Troeltsch, Paul Althaus, Karl Barth, and Paul Tillich. Representing the second epoch are Wolfhart Pannenberg, Helmut Thielicke, Jurgen Moltmann, Michael von Brück, and Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt.

In a final section of the book the author summarizes his results by singling out and interpreting crucial aspects of the Christian encounter with other religions and cultures. As the main thrust of his own concept of mission, he proposes what he characterizes as "hermeneutics of the Strange (viz. the stranger)." In doing so, he underlines the principle by which he analyzed and evaluated the thought patterns of his ten chosen theologians individually and categorically. His decisive question is: How far does the Christian witness attempt to understand the addressees in order to be able to communicate the Gospel understandably to them? The author expresses his conviction that divine revelation and blessing (which he distinguishes from...


This book belongs in a category all of its own. Rarely has the theory of evangelism received such detailed attention. For years to come, any graduate level course on evangelism will need to take this book seriously. Walter Klaiber is a bishop of the United Methodist Church. The German original of the book was published in 1990. The index of authors, containing approximately 500 names, and the fifty pages of notes (chap. 3 alone has 233 notes!) reflect what sort of book this is. These notes are not second thoughts on the text but almost pure documentation. This gives the reader some idea of the breadth of research that Klaiber has put into this book. But the book is not an anthology. The biblical exegesis is detailed. Every option is explored, and often it is not immediately clear where the author himself stands on the point under review. The four-page index of biblical texts is a valuable feature.

The first chapter, on the meanings and meaning of evangelism, is brief. A long chapter follows on three major topics that make up evangelistic preaching: the kingdom, the cross, and the incarnation. Then chapter 3, the longest in the book, explores how evangelism relates to a wide variety of situations and the ramifications of evangelistic preaching in those situations. The next chapter looks at the relationship between the human presentation, the response, and the divine element in evangelism. Then the topics of faith, grace and free will, and their relationship to evangelism are examined under the theologian's microscope. A surprisingly short chapter (just nine pages) follows on conversion, briefly surveying the biological, psychological, and sociological (but not the theological) dimensions of conversion. The last chapter, which addresses the practical aspects of evangelism, may be skipped. It includes a frank paragraph in which the author regretfully acknowledges that he knows little about the practical part of evangelism. The book has one minor and one major blemish. The minor one is the absence of a topical index, a surprising omission in this age of technology. A detailed table of contents compensates in some way for this omission. The major blemish is the quality of editing. The translation is stolidly literal. An excessive number of misplaced prepositions, redundant conjunctions, and convoluted sentences make for difficult and slow reading. In spite of that I predict that this book will become a standard addition to the required reading list for a number of missiology courses.

—Brian L. Fargher

Brian L. Fargher, Executive Director of the Leadership Training Centre in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, served for twenty-nine years in Ethiopia with SIM International.


Pieter Jansz (1820–94) was a pioneer. At age thirty-one Jansz and his wife left the Netherlands for the Dutch East Indies. They were the first missionaries commissioned by the fledgling Dutch Mennonite Missionary Society (founded in 1847). Upon arrival in Indonesia, Jansz decided to settle in Jepara, a small coastal town in north-central Java. This proved to be a challenging situation inasmuch as this was an area of strong Islamic influence. Response to the Christian message was slow, and Jansz early concluded that people were not free to choose because of the strong control Islam exercised over them. Social sanctions were quickly applied against anyone who deviated from Islamic practices. In 1874 Jansz published a book in which he proposed the formation of Christian colonies as safe havens for converts to Christianity.

From the beginning, Jansz brought to his work a bias favoring the masses. His criticism of Dutch colonial government
policies in the 1850s brought him into conflict with government officials. His most important pioneering was as a Bible translator. He early saw the need for a translation that would be accessible to ordinary people, the sort who were gradually becoming a part of the Christian church in central Java.

In the early 1970s A. G. Hoekema discovered portions of Jansz’s diary stored in a cupboard of the village parsonage where Jansz died. This invaluable primary material has been carefully edited and annotated to make it accessible to the modern reader. Hoekema has added well-chosen photographs of Jansz and his contemporaries that enhance its value. This is a handsomely produced volume. It documents effectively the Sitz im Leben of a mid-nineteenth-century missionary and is a valuable addition to the corpus of primary documents of the modern mission movement.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Wilbert R. Shenk, a contributing editor, is Professor of Mission History, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He served in Indonesia, 1955–59.

Primal Religion and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and His Heritage.


This portrait of the great clergyman, theologian, Christian apologist, biblical scholar, Orientalist, Arabist, and nascent anthropologist William Robertson Smith not only helps us better to understand the man and his times but also shows itself to be quite important for our understanding of Christianity as a revealed world religion alongside the many other world religions today. In some sense it also offers in outline form a more promising approach to a more fruitful and genuine interreligious dialogue than can arise out of the sectarian, culture-bound, and tribalistic modes embedded in European Christian tradition.

The going is not easy. It is a scholar’s handiwork from the first to the last page, and despite the revisions from its original dissertation format, the overwhelming documentation and paragraph-long sentences remind the casual reader that here is a volume that will take some chewing. It is a rich sourcebook to be kept for future lectures, sermons, or deeper reflection. The reward for the patient plowman is always rich fare—at times, exceedingly so. The initial chapter on the growth of Christendom is one of the shortest, though most unflinching and thorough, treatments of this important subject I have found. In the next chapter the author leads us through the European encounter with Christianity and its understanding of its unique identity in the context of the wider world, and along with this the growth and persistence of such important concepts for interpreting history, hierarchies, and the place of Europeans in the modern world as the Great Chain of Being and the “four-stages theory.” These are all particularly important as a background for understanding Smith’s quest, which is in a sense still our’s today: how to be thoroughly modern and scientific and maintain one’s faith in revealed Christian religion.

Smith tried to fit Christianity within a sound nineteenth-century “scientific” understanding of religious evolution as a natural progression moving from the more primitive to the civilized, from immoral to
moral, from tribal to universal, from primal religion to contemporary Christianity. To Smith, in opposition to the thinking of the spiritual missing link connecting it to the Christian tradition, could be correctly moral.

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Gerald H. Anderson, Director
Overseas Ministries Study Center
New Haven, Connecticut

For Gillian Bediako and for significant others—notably her husband and colleague, the eminent African theologian and scholar of African primal religion Kwame Bediako—much more is at stake in the project of Smith than merely bettering our understanding of ourselves as Christians. They ask the question: Are Africa’s primal religions in a sense each like present-day ancient Israel’s, each beginning its own ascent toward spiritual fulfillment? And are these not legitimate and necessary starting points for nurturing a new, non-European type of Christianity? Indeed the future of Christianity—and here we must accede that Africa, which will soon have most of the Christians in the world, has a definitive say in the matter of what this future may be—lies not in imitation of Christianity’s particular European tradition and form but rather in its own seminal roots, which lie deep within African primal religion. To Gillian Bediako must go a resounding eikoo (well done) from the African continent.

—Jon P. Kirby, S.V.D.

Jon P. Kirby, S.V.D., is Director of the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, Tamale, Ghana.

Story of a Storm: The Ecumenical Student Movement in the Turmoil of Revolution.


This book is the unhappy account of the disintegration and virtual demise of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), an amalgamation of national and regional Christian student movements. This story is the sadder still because the organization’s roots reach back for more than one hundred years and its forebears and founders include Dwight L. Moody, John R. Mott, and other notables.

More significantly, the WSCF was long a main seedbed for missionaries and ecumenists. It was based on Bible study and prayer, and its organ, Student World, had on its roster many of the stalwart theological figures of the past century. Thus it assured that ecumenical dialogue would be carried on at a high level.

The “storm” took place between 1968 and 1973, while the author was general secretary of the federation, often finding himself at odds with the avant-garde. During these years the meetings became battlegrounds between reformist and radical revolutionary factions. It was a power struggle between left and right wings, of radical students egged on by radical leaders versus more moderate
forces. The church was under extreme criticism, discipleship was seen as revolutionary action, and a transcendent God was rejected. It was a time of “doing your own thing” of the “world setting the agenda for the church.” The WSCF struggle reflected events in the world: antiwar movement, Kent State, the assassination of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr., and so on.

The result was chaos. The WSCF lost its primal missionary vision. The ecumenical movement suffered a sore loss. The battle reached into the mainline churches, and the field was left to forces least equipped to sustain ecumenical fervor. Finally, both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. were wounded and have not yet recovered.

The book suffers somewhat from its insider language but is nevertheless well written. It records material essential to an understanding of what ails the church today and suggests the repentance that must be a prelude to renewal in mission.

—James K. Matthews

Bishop James K. Matthews (retired), the United Methodist Church has been a missionary to India, a mission executive, and, for the past thirty-eight years, a bishop in the United States and Zimbabwe.

A Century of Bible Christians in the Philippines.


1998 marked the centennial of the end of the Spanish occupation of the Philippines, the beginnings of American colonial rule there, and, hence, the opening of the archipelago to Protestantism. Edited by Anne C. Kwantes, an American missionary in Asia for several decades and currently teaching at Asian Theological Seminary in Quezon City, this collection of twenty essays, reminiscences, and vignettes celebrates the “Centennial of Biblical Christianity in the Philippines” (ix). Several of these edifying and commemorative accounts of individual preachers and missionaries from different denominations and mission studies—with all 16 issues of 1993–1996—bound in red buckram, with vellum finish and embossed in gold lettering. It matches the earlier bound volumes of the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, 1977–1980 (sold out), and the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, 1981–1984 (sold out), 1985–1988 (sold out), and 1989–1992 (sold out). At your fingertips, in one volume: David Barrett’s Annual Statistical Table of Global Mission, the Editors’ annual selection of Fifteen Outstanding Books, and the four-year cumulative index.

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Vernacular Christianity Among the Mulia Dani: An Ethnography of Religious Belief among the Western Dani of Irian Jaya, Indonesia.


Forty years after the beginning of the Western Dani people's movement to Christ, Douglas Hayward ably documents the "vernacular Christianity" that has emerged in the Mulia valley of Irian Jaya, Indonesia.

Hayward served there for twenty years with the Unevangelized Fields Mission and came to speak the language and know much of the culture, as well evidenced in forty pages of included folklore.

In describing the faith of the Mulia Dani, of whom ninety-five percent of the adults are now baptized Christians (p. 174), Hayward details the theological position of the missionaries there (from whom he sometimes distances himself), the traditional beliefs of the people, and their present faith. He alternately discusses past and present, but especially in chapter six, about traditional religious practices, his use of tenses becomes confusing. He describes male initiation in the past tense, but most of the rest of the chapter is in the conventional ethnographic present. A later chapter clarifies that many of these rituals are no longer practiced.

The eighth chapter accurately treats the conversion of the Western Dani to Christianity, the later involvement of many in a political rebel movement, and the recent widespread community development projects, which he terms "cargoistic movements." "Cargoism" is carefully defined here, but the term still conjures up a picture of graveside rites to bring magical deliveries of goods. "Revitalization movements" would more closely fit with the Dani foci on eternal life, autochthonous leadership and prosperity.

"Vernacular Christianity" is a well-chosen term, and Hayward's analysis is insightful. Newcomers, reading about the "cavalier generosity" expected from big men (p. 209), would better understand the expectancy and disappointment they encounter. The appended Mulia Dani's story of their conversion pictures biblical, vigorous, and truly Dani faith. Their outreach to unreached groups in Irian Jaya confirms that picture.

—Myron Bromley

Myron Bromley is a retired missionary linguist and Bible translator, who served for thirty-nine years among the Grand Valley Dani of Irian Jaya, Indonesia, with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.


In the course of his long life, the YMCA evangelist George Sherwood Eddy (1871–1963) lived through, and helped to precipitate, several of the mood swings in modern American Protestantism. As a student, he absorbed the intense evangelical enthusiasm of the Student Volunteer Movement. As a YMCA secretary in India from 1896, his stridency moderated in the face of the challenge of Hinduism. After the First World War, he became a disciple of the social gospel, calling Western capitalist society to conversion. By 1938 he had followed his protege, Reinhold Niebuhr, in abandoning pacifism for political realism. After the Second World War, he continued to travel in Asia, proclaiming to student audiences a message of international friendship.

Rick Nutt, of Muskingum College, Ohio, has written a thorough account of these successive phases in missionary enthusiasm, and rescued Eddy from unwarranted scholarly neglect. Nutt's biography is based on the Eddy papers at Yale Divinity School and his numerous published writings. It identifies the ambiguities attending Eddy's promotion of both modernization and socialism, and the difficulties caused for the YMCA by his attacks on the big business on which its funds depended.

Nutt perhaps overestimates Eddy's own role in shifting the Student Volunteer Movement toward social Christianity: his address to the Des Moines Convention in 1920, which Nutt highlights (p. 187n.) as the only one with a social gospel orientation, was in fact, as Nathan Showalter has recently shown, a last-minute response to radical student criticism of the tired slogans on world evangelization emanating from the old guard of the SVM. More could have been said about the theological shallowness of Eddy, which left him exposed to so many shifts in the prevailing wind. But the book remains a significant achievement, which all students of twentieth-century Protestant missions ought to read.

—Brian Stanley

Brian Stanley is Director of the Currents in World Christianity Project (incorporating the North Atlantic Missiology Project) and a Fellow of St. Edmund's College, University of Cambridge.


Jace Weaver (Cherokee) is an attorney and assistant professor in the American Studies Program and the Religious Studies Department at Yale University. He previously edited Defending Mother Earth (Orbis, 1996).

Religious identity is the theme running through each of the included seventeen compositions; all are by natives representing many First Nations. Some contributors are followers of traditional native religions, some are professing Christians, and still others attempt to blend the two.

Native American religions are essentially about symbol and ritual, not dogma. They influence all aspects of a practitioner's life and are centered in the land—thus making them focused in space rather than time.

Some essays are well versed in the Euro-American disciplines of philosophy, theology, and law, and are adept at addressing both native and non-native readers simultaneously.

This is a book for students of missionology among Amerindian and other primal peoples who are seeking to come to terms with the fact that for most of the last five hundred years a severe form of colonialism—political, economic, legal,
and religious—has been imposed on the first inhabitants of the American continents. This was often done with the best of intentions but proved in many cases to be very destructive. While some aboriginals are strong of faith and continue to support the Christian church, many see it as another agent of cultural genocide. A key question underlying much of this book is a difficult one: Is it possible for native people to accept and continue to practice the faith of their former, and in some cases, continuing oppressors?

-Wayne A. Holst

Wayne A. Holst is a lecturer, research associate, and consultant at the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He was a Lutheran pastor (LCA/ELCC), missionary (Trinidad, WI), and church executive for twenty-five years.

Pentecost of the Hills in Taiwan: The Christian Faith Among the Original Inhabitants.


This is absorbing firsthand reporting and scholarly research by a missionary-scholar who served among the tribal people of Taiwan for nearly twenty years. Ralph Covell lived and worked with the Sediq people, one of eleven aboriginal tribes who populate the mountain regions.

Totalling 325,000 today, the tribal peoples constitute less than 2 percent of a population largely Chinese. Yet when the Dutch East India Company occupied the island from 1627 to 1662, they constituted the majority of the population. The Dutch had little interest in Christian evangelism, yet their chaplains made 7,000 converts during their brief stay. Koxinga, a Ming dynasty general, defeated the Dutch in 1661 and brought an end to that brief missionary era.

This book is divided into periods. The First Chinese Period, 1662-1895, is one of political chaos, Chinese clan wars, rebellions, and Chinese immigration, which pushed the aborigines from the fertile plains into the mountains. It also marks the beginning of both Protestant and Catholic missionary work in the 1860s.

The Pentecost of the Hills (Protestant) began with the lowland aborigines, but progress was slow. The Japanese occupation of Taiwan (1895-1945) was both a blessing and a curse: it brought order out of chaos, allowing the mission work to go forward in peace, but it also isolated the mountain peoples inside a 300-mile-long fence. They found a people movement sparked by converted tribespeople was under way. Converts by the hundreds came to plains churches for baptism. Covell describes this movement in detail—how it spread from tribe to tribe, the work of the missionaries, the creation of written languages, and Christian literature. In his final chapter, "Crisis of Faith," he analyzes the reasons for a slowdown in conversions after 1975 and the problems the people face in the modern world.

-Donald MacInnis

Donald MacInnis spent thirteen years as a Methodist missionary in Taiwan.

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Missiologia viatorum (missiology on the way, or for the way) was the motto of Hans Kasdorf’s mission work, and it reflects his life (p. 7). Born in Siberia, Kasdorf grew up in Brazil, did most of his teaching in North America at Mennonite schools, and after retirement and a heart attack spent four years in Germany, laying the foundations for a missions program at the Freie Theologische Akademie (FTA) in Giessen.

The book under review is to honor Kasdorf on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The title reflects his conviction that mission must not be a specialized department at the fringes of a theological curriculum, because “without mission theology lacks true motivation, without theology mission lacks direction, and without the church either one lacks reason for existence” (p. 17).

The Festschrift is made up of six sections. The first, “Die Person: Beiträge zum Leben und Werk Hans Kasdorfs,” offers his vita, an assessment of his contributions to mission theology, and a selected bibliography. The second is “Die Grundlage: Beiträge zur Missions-theologie”; the third, “Die Entwicklung: Beiträge zur Missionsgeschichte”; the fourth, “Der Hintergrund: Beiträge zur Missionstheorie”; the fifth, “Der Weg: Beiträge zur Kontextualisierung”; and the final one, “Die Anwendung: Beiträge zur Missionsspraxis.” The twenty-one essays of this volume include almost all disciplines of missiology. An appendix with short biographies of the contributors and indexes of persons, subjects, and Scripture passages make it a valuable tool.

It is unfortunate that a number of spelling errors mar this impressive volume. The editors are Stephan Holthauss, dean at the FTA Giessen, and Klaus W. Müller, who will continue the work begun by Kasdorf at Giessen.

Rather than discussing various essays, a couple of general observations are in order. The breadth and number of essays reflect the wide appreciation of Hans Kasdorf and his work. The diverse national backgrounds of the authors indicate that he was not only teaching and writing about mission but was himself an emissary of Christ. The far-flung ecclesiastical and theological provenance of the contributors—Mennonite, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, both evangelical and ecumenical—demonstrates that he was a man crossing frontiers in a true missionary manner. A final observation: Each section offers one author write in English (with German summaries), the rest in German (no English summaries). Only the last section, “Application,” with three authors, is entirely in English. Does this say something about where theological and theoretical issues are pursued, in contrast to where practical issues are pursued?

On the whole, the volume demonstrates that in the German-language sphere a group of competent evangelical missiologists is emerging and that the lines of demarcation between evangelicals and ecumenicals may not be unbridgeable after all—at least in the area of missiology.

—Helmuth Egelkraut

Choosing a Future for U.S. Missions.


Choosing a Future for U.S. Missions results from the Task Force: Twenty-First Century Missions project, in which the authors met in listening sessions with people in ten cities across the United States. Experienced missionaries, the authors now are mission agency executives. Consequently, the book focuses on the question, “Where does the mission agency fit in the emerging paradigm?” (p. 32).

The Introduction reveals some of the conclusions of their listenings: missions are budget-driven, afraid of decentralization, worried about survival and control—and “the church in America just will not listen to the church around the world” (p. 1). The last disturbing indictment gets the least attention in the book.

Part 1, “The Context,” contains excellent research on global, church, and mission realities, including the poignant statement: “Past its prime, the U.S. missions community stands in need of total reconceptualization” (p. 16).

The most valuable part is the second, “Probing U.S. Mission Realities: What We Heard,” because of the method, “listening intently,” and the organization of the data. Tension comes from the new role of the local church as agency, with provocative
findings about our costly and complex models. The cutting edge of the book is the new attitude of humility, new role as listener-servant-facilitator, new relationships of less power, and new models of networks and collaboration advocated throughout for missionary, church, and agency.

Parts 3 and 4 are not very helpful. "How Shall They Be Sent?" diffuses into mission education, with consulting and marketing in a technological age highlighted. "Getting Inside the Future" has good theological research loosely strung together (without adequate documentation), but the Horizon Mission Methodology of NASA presented in one of the project's consultations does not clearly relate to the whole book. Appendix F is much more helpful in dealing with the relevant issues raised.

—Sherron Kay George

Sherron Kay George is Assistant Professor of Evangelism and Mission at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. She spent twenty-three years with the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Brazil.

The Apostolic Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Missionary.


The recently formed Lutheran Society of Missiology inaugurates its book series with this study by Robert Scudieri of early Christian understandings of the concept "apostolic." The author, who is the area secretary for North America for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod World Missions, devoted much of 1990-91 to research this theme at the Overseas Ministries Study Center and Yale Divinity School. He set himself three goals: "1. To search for the origin of the term apostolic church; 2. To examine the missionary emphasis inherent in that term; 3. To give the church a new vantage point from which to see the significance of these important words" (p. 1). Working with classic resources (von Harnack, Latourette, Hinson, Grant, as well as the Apostolic Fathers), he surveys early mission history and interprets the early church's sense of its missionary vocation ably and understandably.

His findings are summarized in thirteen short and readable chapters, divided into five sections, which move chronologically from the Jewish mission, with its (much-debated) terminology, through the New Testament usage of the term "apostolic," to the early church and the subapostolic period, ending with an analysis of the emergence of the Nicene "notes." He concludes, as indicated by the title of the book, that it is crucial that the church today, as it was for the Nicene church, to regain the primary sense of apostolicity as the church's faithful continuation of the missionary vocation of the initial apostolic community.

While the author does demonstrate the fundamentally missional character of the early church, at times he simplifies issues of ancient Christian development that are complex and much debated. Some small historical errors are puzzling (Gregory of Thaumaturgos and Constantine banning heretics). The book is to be commended as a helpful introductory framing of the discussion of apostolicity, especially for lay readers.

—Darrell L. Guder

Darrell L. Guder is the Peachtree Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, Georgia) and serves as the Secretary-Treasurer of the American Society of Missiology.
Dissertation Notices

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Mussad, Hani W. “The Muslim Debate of the Adoption of the Shari’a and Its Implications for the Church.” Ph.D., 1996.


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