American author Elbert Hubbard is credited with the comment that “life is just one damned thing after another.” But even if this were true, who can function in everyday life with such a cynical outlook? Rather, we need to find ourselves in some narrative, for each human being is, quite literally, “words made flesh.” Without stories—stories about ourselves, about our families and ancestors, about our social groups, tribes, nations, and religions—there can be no self-consciously distinctive human existence. Stories are integral to human identity, providing one with a sense of location vis-à-vis everything and everyone else. It is our participation in these stories that makes us “we” and the rest “they.” Personal and communal identity means participating in the selective common memory of a uniquely delimited group.

The precise shape, content, and interpretation of historical recollection can be highly controversial and is not easily controlled. Some people and groups stubbornly insist on versions of memory that are viewed as seriously distorted, deliberately falsified, or even potentially threatening to the preservation of the social status quo. The recent assassination in Istanbul of Hrant Dink—editor-in-chief of Agos, a bilingual Turkish and Armenian weekly newspaper—is a reminder of how loath a people are to be reminded of their trespasses. One of Turkey’s most prominent Armenian voices, Dink enraged Turkish nationalists in October 2005 by writing about the slaughter, exile, and disappearance from Asia Minor of nearly two million Armenians between 1915 and 1923. Because the official government report admits to only

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war-related “relocations” and some “untoward incidents,” he was charged under article 301 of Turkey’s penal code with insulting Turkish identity and was given a suspended sentence. Dink, but not the memory of Turkish atrocities, is now dead.

Sadly, this tragedy is not exceptional. Human beings experience and interpret events so variously that their stories must, it seems, always be in conflict. Since our stories are inevitably incomplete, one-sided, and only partially true, the custodians of more self-flattering narratives must do their utmost to silence or discredit alternative versions. As George Orwell famously observed, “The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them.”

The question posed by Stanley Skreslet in his lead essay (whether there is a missiological approach to the history of mission), then, is as natural as it is legitimate. One understands at once that he will make a case for missiological historiography—for recorded memory, that is, in which Christian mission occupies a special place. The accompanying articles hint at the ecclesiastical and national diversity of missionaries whose imaginations were animated by the common conviction that they were part of a story much grander than themselves or even than their great nations. To their minds, this conviction laid upon them the inescapable necessity of replacing indigenous stories with their inherited understanding of God’s redemptive work in the world.

It went without saying that when the “heathen” were invited to take their place as active participants in this story, they should eagerly do so, with gratitude. Not surprisingly, whether it was Catholic Mission Sisters in New Zealand, Orthodox missionaries in central Asia, or Protestant missionaries in Africa and the Pacific, all reveal themselves in retrospect to have been prisoners of their own and often of their nations’ self-serving stories. But there was more at work, for within their stories lay at least the seeds of a more humble self-awareness that would one day enable their heirs to both see and acknowledge, without rancor or defensiveness, the deficiencies of their spiritual forebears and yet to learn from them.

Robert Smirke’s commemorative painting above, with its highly stylized depiction of “civilized” missionaries and partially clad Tahitians, speaks volumes more than could have been realized at the time. To the modern eye, the picture symbolizes the crude, ethnocentric propaganda of a bygone era, revealing little of what actually happened, but much about the sensibilities of the missionary supporters for whom the picture was crafted. Despite such distortions, the story brought by these flawed messengers was grasped by the Tahitians, to such an extent that now, two centuries later, some 85 percent of the inhabitants of French Polynesia embrace the Christian story as their own.

So, can history be read missiologically? Can missionaries, with their self-interested participation in what they regard as God’s mission, be trusted to produce coherent, persuasive, significant history? Skreslet provides a thoughtfully affirmative response to this question, and the other essays in this issue lend modest but compelling support to his contention. For Christian scholars, at least, history is not simply “one damned thing after another.”

—Jonathan J. Bonk

Front cover: The Cession of Matavai to Captain James Wilson, by Robert Smirke, RA. The painting was commissioned by the Directors of the London Missionary Society in 1798 to commemorate the grant of land to build a mission in Tahiti. CWMPA.
Thinking Missiologically About the History of Mission

Stanley H. Skreslet

Is there a missiological approach to the history of mission? Prompting this question is the fact that the history of mission is no longer the special preserve of those who support and participate in missionary activities. Now a growing legion of scholars is being drawn to the study of mission history, among whom we find specialists in politics and economics, Marxists, feminists, historical anthropologists and other kinds of social historians, and Americanists as well as researchers focused on non-Western societies, not to mention religious historians of every stripe who make it their business to study the world’s burgeoning collection of faith communities and traditions. All these and more have found in the history of Christian mission a virtually inexhaustible supply of data with which to fuel their various research projects.

Missiologists who study the history of mission share many overlapping concerns with these other scholars, not the least of which is the requirement to practice good historical technique. Some common aims likewise drive much historical work on missions today, and missiologists may find themselves working alongside other scholars who are also seeking to understand the dynamics of cultural and religious change, the emergence and diffusion of modern ideas, the art of apologetics, and the conduct of interfaith dialogue, plus the nature of the church and its place in the world. Mutual interests are thus a part of what needs to be discussed in connection with the question posed above. But this essay also goes on to address the more difficult issue of particularity: do missiological investigations add anything distinctive to these other scholarly efforts?

Common Concerns

With respect to methods, missiologists have no special set of procedures to apply to the problems of history. They must follow the same rules of evidence that pertain to everyone else who studies the history of mission or indeed any other kind of history. If widely recognized scholarly standards of verification in history are ignored, then accuracy suffers, and what purports to be description or analysis slides instead into the category of mere speculation about the past. Therefore missiologists, like other historians, must be concerned about what (if anything) constitutes an objective fact, about how material evidence can be used to buttress or disprove the claims of texts, about the problems of agency and causation in history, plus the need to differentiate between perceptions of an event and the historical event itself.

No scholar has all the evidence that he or she would like for solving the conundrums of mission history. The data are always fragmentary. The memories we have are faulty and sometimes contradictory. The archives are not only incomplete but skewed. On the matter of archives, missiologists working today who specialize in the history of mission are challenged as scholars by the fact that foreign missionaries dominate the accumulated reserve of texts at our disposal. The documents so avidly produced by missionaries and their sending agencies in the past can assume an inordinate degree of authority for us today simply because they often are the only written sources for this history we now possess. This imbalance in the record is a serious methodological problem to be negotiated and overcome, which explains why investigators of every kind (including missiologists) are eager to recover lost voices and to retrieve the contributions of lesser-known actors in the history of mission. Material evidence of indigenous missionary activity, oral history, and other forms of nonliterary self-representation are among the means available to scholars to recover more of what may otherwise be missing from what we know of the history of mission. Filling in the gaps is not the whole story, however. Equally important is the fact that such techniques can enable the living legacies of earlier missionary efforts, the new communities of faith that came into being as a result of Christian mission, to participate more directly in the writing of what is their history too.

Another area where the requirements of competent historical practice are bound to apply equally to missiologists and their counterparts in related fields concerns the way in which the environment of mission is studied. More and more, missiologists are striving to assemble “thick” descriptions of interfaith encounter and Christian witness, rather than simply transcribing stories of heroic missionary action. As Karl Marx famously put it, individuals may make their own history, but they must do so in circumstances not of their own choosing. This point means taking into account large-scale social patterns of which the missionaries themselves may have been only vaguely aware. It means asking about the ways in which factors like geography, economics, organizational theory, and politics not only influence missionary choices but also perhaps shaped evangelistic outcomes. It means seeking to understand how missionaries could have been unwitting agents of far-reaching but sometimes subtle changes in cultures not their own by reason of birth. Missiologists as a group continue to resist the urge to explain mission exclusively in secular terms (more on this below), but they are more likely than ever before to pay heed to what the eminent Egyptologist Jan Assmann has called the hidden face of history: “History has two faces, one turned toward us, the other averted. The face turned toward us is the sum total of event and remembrance. It is history recalled by those involved in it, as shapers or witnesses, doers or sufferers. The hidden face of history is not what we have forgotten, but what we have never remembered, those products of imperceptible change, extended duration, and infinitesimal progression that go unnoticed by living contemporaries and only reveal themselves to the analytic gaze of the historian.”

Distance and Perspective

At first glance, missiologists do seem to face at least one special problem of interpretation when functioning as historians of mission. Many more of them, I suspect, will have previous or current missionary service in their résumés than is true for the rest of the history profession. Is this a disability, a reason to discount the scholarly output offered by missiologists who study the history of mission? I would argue that we have here a slightly different

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permutation of a persistent scholarly dilemma. Historians have long argued over whether participants or more detached observers are better placed to write accounts of the past. Participants have the advantage of direct personal experience, which could be a means to access otherwise poorly documented aspects of the events in question or to gain a “feel” for the time and situation one is attempting to describe. But detachment can serve a purpose too, especially if it enables researchers to avoid telling their stories in ways that inflate their own importance.

The larger question at issue here concerns the different ways scholars more generally relate to their subjects. Missiologists are by no means the only ones obliged to examine their motives for writing history. Biases and partisan concerns threaten to intrude every historical questions are posed and answered, since no researcher can begin to work without them. In this respect, sound practice in missiology closely resembles the habits of good history. Confessional commitments must be scrutinized, to be sure, but so must all other forms of personal, institutional, or ideological loyalty. Complete objectivity is certainly beyond our grasp, but a measure of transparency regarding intentions and interests can be achieved. Only so may our historical work hope to earn any degree of lasting respect from present and future generations.

A final common expectation that missiologists necessarily share with other students of mission history concerns the written results of their research. As Robert Frykenberg has demonstrated so well, the discipline of history is exceedingly complex. The science of history not only has a distinctive methodological and largely agreed-upon rules with which to evaluate evidence, but it also is practiced as a form of philosophy insofar as it prompts deliberation over questions of language, perception, human experience, and the nature of social change over time. In addition, history is an art. That is to say, it has a creative element, which leaps to the fore as soon as it becomes time to present to the public or to the profession what one has learned about the past.

In this latter respect, we may mention three requirements of good historiography. First, one’s written account must be coherent, in the sense that a logical interpretive argument is constructed on the basis of plausible data supported by reputable sources of authority. Second, it should be persuasive, which means putting forward a case that is not just credible but that can move readers to agree with the author’s conclusions, even when alternative explanations are given a fair hearing in the presentation. Perhaps the most daunting test of history’s contemporary narratives is posed by the question of significance. At the end of the day will anybody care? Probably not, if the product of one’s labors is presented in dull, uninteresting discourse. Missiologists, no less than any other historian of mission, would do well to reach for prose that sings if they would hope to create and hold an audience for their work.

What Thinking Missiologically Does Not Mean

Before considering what might constitute a missiological perspective on the history of mission, it could be helpful to clarify briefly what I believe is not implied in this way of looking at things. As suggested above, the goal of mission history is not to celebrate missionary heroes. I say this knowing full well that the record is replete with examples of extraordinary dedication and cultural sensitivity, faithfulness, and creativity on the part of Christian missionaries in a variety of very difficult circumstances through the ages. My point is that mission history as a part of the discipline of missiology cannot be fully realized as a form of devotional literature focused on the figure of the missionary. Nor should it be reduced to a kind of cheerleading for “our side” in the global competition of religions.

The reasons for caution here are essentially two. The first, already noted, is that individual missionaries always operate in specific social contexts, and so the circumstances within which they act must be considered in order to appreciate the totality of their effects on others and their surroundings. A too-narrow focus on the person of the missionary may obscure the importance of crucial situational factors. Second, honest missiologists will readily admit that the historical record is full not only of courageous triumphs and self-sacrifice but also of faults, miscalculations, and transgressions—by more than one kind of ethnocentrism and by every manner of unfaithful self-interest. If mission history is made to serve an apologetic purpose, its integrity as a science is undoubtedly put at risk. Put more positively, a mature field of study will reward the investigation of both success and failure, because each of these aspects of missionary experience can shed light on the deepest questions of meaning that mission history inevitably raises. It follows that missiology is not primarily about producing “insider” histories for the purpose of stimulating enthusiasm for contemporary missionary challenges. Nor should practical considerations (e.g., a desire to know “what works” in mission) be allowed to dictate how missiologists approach the history of mission.

Another limitation to be avoided is the misconception that mission history is an unvarying story of missionary initiative followed by indigenous response. Such an assumption—that foreign missionaries acted, but natives could only react—grounded much historical writing on the modern Protestant missionary movement until quite recently, which led to no end of West-centric treatments of mission history. A missiological perspective on the history of mission must be broader. The movements and decisions of expatriate actors are certainly part of what we want to know, especially at the beginning of any new effort to preach Christ where that name is virtually unknown. But no missionary undertaking can be sustained unless indigenous enterprise asserts itself as more than just a reaction to what other, more fully self-aware subjects are doing. As a rule, the earlier a community moves beyond foreign control, the more successful and deeply rooted any new expression of Christian faith is likely to become. Missiologists are accustomed to see in this moment of transition an indispensable act of faith appropriation, on a par with every other attempt to claim the story of God in Jesus as a community’s own, reaching all the way back to the first generation of Gentile Christians.

A missiological reading of mission history also must resist the temptation to affect an omniscient point of view with respect to the processes of world evangelization. In other words, missiologists must admit their inability to attain a God’s-eye perspective on the history of mission. Methodologically, this constraint means

To be avoided is the misconception that mission history is an unvarying story of missionary initiative followed by indigenous response.
giving up the use of providential frameworks for interpreting the past, which is not always an easy thing to do, especially if one affirms a biblical mandate for Christian mission and believes, as I do, that the church properly responds to the nature of God’s Word, which wants to be known, by giving forthright witness to its truth in the world. The danger here lies not in having such convictions but in letting them overrule the demands of sound historiographical practice by subordinating one’s account of mission history to a theological point of view. What Andrew Walls has to say about church history applies equally well to missiologists who might hope to write the history of mission: “The church historian cannot present bad history under the plea that it is good theology.”

As Paul Kollman has noted in his just-published dissertation on slave evangelization in East Africa, it is also possible to subject the writing of mission history to a telos that does not claim a divine origin for itself.8 His example is the postcolonial nation-state in Africa and how, in particular cases, scholars of African Christianity have cast their stories of mission primarily in terms of whether the foreign missionaries involved either helped or hindered the new national entity to come into being. Or the secular end in view could be a conjectured phase of higher development in the history of humankind, such as a post-Christian future for hyperindustrialized societies in the West. In any event, whether religious or secular, it is quite possible for an ideological criterion to undermine the quality of scholarly judgments, especially if ideology is allowed to govern the selection of evidence or in some other way constrict the interpretive freedom of the mission historian. Good missiological technique with respect to mission history will not allow a hoped-for outcome to dominate historical method by guiding the research process to a premature conclusion.

The Missiological Angle on Mission History

What does a missiological approach to the history of mission entail? My argument is that missiologists bring to the study of mission history several important investigative habits or ways of thinking about mission that, when taken together, define a distinctive point of view. I do not propose that missiologists are the only scholars who attend to each of the elements to be discussed. Nevertheless, in the aggregate, I believe we can identify an approach to mission history that grows out of and is intimately related to the field of missiology as it is now conceived and practiced. My essay concludes with a metaphor that suggests how missiologists may be thought to look at the history of mission when it is approached as an integrated whole.

A multivariable approach. We may begin by noting that missiology is, at its heart, relentlessly multivariable. How could this not be the case? Christian mission is a global phenomenon. Given the history of mission over the past two centuries especially, it is now normal for the church to find itself in conversation with the broadest possible array of religious traditions and living cultures. These engagements take place across the full spectrum of human experience, ranging from the cognitive to the material, with the result that the theory and practice of mission are not easily separated. Adding to this complexity is the fact of Christian diversity. Multiple approaches to outreach are to be expected from a worldwide Christian community that has no organizational center or universally shared philosophical framework. In some cases of missionary encounter, competing priorities and disagreements over methods may be traced back to theological differences. In others, the defining issues are more contextual and social.

On the whole, missiologists are not different from other historians when it comes to reckoning with the multifaceted character of Christian mission. The interdisciplinary demands of history weigh equally on all who would hope to study the record of missionary action. As the scholar of comparative religion Eric Sharpe has phrased it, “The ideal missionary historian will be to some extent a social, political, and economic historian; a geographer, ethnologist, and historian of religions; as well as a Christian historian in the more usual sense.” A difference arises, however, in the way matters of faith are typically treated by missiologists when compared with their treatment by other scholars of mission history. Simply put, the ethos of missiology encourages its practitioners to take spiritual realities very seriously, even when the researcher does not share the same worldview as those whose history is being studied. Thus, it is not the custom of missiologists to bracket out of their analyses factors of religious conviction. This is the extra variable that often distinguishes the historical work of missiologists from that produced by many secular historians and most social scientists.

A look at two studies of mission will serve to illustrate the point. The first is a pioneering work of historical anthropology produced in the 1990s by a pair of distinguished University of Chicago ethnologists, John and Jean Comaroff. Their massive study of Nonconformist British missions among the Southern Tswana in the nineteenth century, Of Revelation and Revolution, interprets these activities within a larger effort to colonize much of southern Africa in the name of Great Britain. The professors of the authors is to show how agents of the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society functioned as “harbingers of a more invasive European presence” that eventually sought to dominate the Tswana in every possible way.10 According to the Comaroffs, the missionaries’ special preparative role was to shape the collective consciousness of the natives in advance of direct imperial rule, to colonize their minds, as it were, by contriving a new conceptual reality for them that owed as much or more to post-Enlightenment values as it did to the Christian Gospel. In this way, the missionaries became not only “vanguards of imperialism” but also “human vehicles of a hegemonic worldview;” whose civilizing axioms “they purveyed . . . in everything they said and did.”11

Of Revelation and Revolution is a formidable scholarly project that successfully presents a deep, thick study of missionary encounter in a particular time and place, which also sheds considerable light on larger issues, like the relationship of modern missions to European imperialism. Students of nineteenth-century missions ignore this work at their peril. Nevertheless, one can find blind spots in the methodology used. Several anthropologist critics, for example, have taken the Comaroffs to task for reduc-

Good missiological technique will not allow a hoped-for outcome to dominate historical method by guiding research to a premature conclusion.
To think missiologically about the history of mission means to practice a form of critical empathy with one’s subject.

twentieth-century Independence, eventually came to practice “a humanist faith, a faith centered on inspired social action.”

Perhaps. But when none of the proffered explanations seems to match up with what the principals involved had to say about their own motivations, missiologists will want to ask: are these the only options?

For purposes of comparison, a glance at some recent work by Mrinalini Sebastian on nineteenth-century missions in India may prove instructive. As an Indian feminist scholar of religion and culture, with a particular interest in postcolonial literary criticism and subaltern studies, Sebastian wants to read old missionary texts in new ways, just as the Comaroffs have done. Like them, she wants to understand the corruptive influence of colonialism on European missionary action in the modern era. She does not stop there, however, preferring instead to go on to ask what past evangelistic encounters may have meant to the natives whose stories were captured and represented in missionary narratives. In particular, her article on how to read missionary archives from a postcolonial feminist perspective nicely illustrates the kind of methodology that could support or complement a fully missiological approach to the history of mission.

In her essay, Sebastian focuses on the native Bible women who worked for the Basel Mission in India. She shows how their work was obviously shaped, if not distorted, by Victorian-era missionary ideas about “the Christian home” that only partly rested on Gospel values. A commitment to feminist concerns pushes Sebastian to explore the liberative potential of missionary education for women in India, which connects to her primary topic insofar as these native missionaries, that is, the Bible women, promoted literacy through their activities. She also considers the possibility that the Bible women were among the earliest examples of professional women in India, thereby investing their work with emancipatory significance. Up to this point in her essay, about three-quarters of the way through, I see Sebastian tracking very closely with the approach of the Comaroffs, albeit not at the same level of detail. But then a turn in her investigative strategy comes, which Sebastian describes as follows: “In my engagement with the histories of the Bible women so far, I have tried to present a secularized view of their work. I deliberately have not dwelled too much on either their faith or their attempts to convert other women to Christianity. Yet the primary motive for their becoming Bible women, for their inadvertent transgression [across caste boundaries] was their faith. And the primary purpose of their visits to other women’s houses was to communicate the message of the gospel.”

A very personal reason lay behind the decision to introduce the factor of faith into Sebastian’s scholarly discussion of mission history. As she explains, her own grandmother was a Bible woman in India long before this article was conceived and written, and so she asks: what moved my grandmother and so many other native Christian women to share the story of Jesus with their neighbors in the day-to-day context of Indian village life, sometimes over the course of a lifetime? By raising such a question, Sebastian has chosen to pitch her researcher’s tent squarely on missiological ground. Without resorting to a providential framework to explain the workings of history, she has nevertheless allowed the realm of faith to begin to receive a measure of the same consideration so freely given by countless academics to the realm of sight. As historian Mark Noll has observed, this is what missiologists do. They operate somewhere between the “functional atheism of the academy” and the “functional gnosticism of sending churches,” which can blind those churches to historical realities. Thus, to think missiologically about the history of mission means, in part, to practice a form of critical empathy with one’s subject. A degree of empathy makes it possible to resist the strong modern urge to dismiss—with a Comtean wave of the hand—religious convictions as unimportant. At the same time, a willingness to be critical commits one to a methodology that is suitably rigorous and scientific.

A bias toward the dynamic. Related to the persistently variable disposition of missiology is its particular interest in the dynamic character of Christian history. That is to say, there is an inbuilt bias in missiology to concentrate on those points in Christian history where the community acts less like a custodian of tradition or repository of settled answers to familiar questions than as a source of energy for fresh engagements of the Gospel with the world. Missiologists are drawn especially to circumstances of change within Christian history. Efforts to plant the church where it has not previously existed obviously qualify, as would any struggle to understand the Gospel story in new cultural terms. Missiologists also have a special affinity for those parts of the Christian story where conversions into the community, growth, development, and critical self-examination are considered normal aspects of church life rather than the exception.

The effect of these biases on a missiological approach to mission history can be profound. Missiologists have learned, for example, that mission history is not simply a matter of extension and expansion from metropolitan centers to distant peripheries. Thus, they do not expect missionaries to function as mere chutes through which liquid concrete from abroad is poured into forms fashioned out of local materials. Truly missionary encounters in history are intense moments, full of unpredictability but also of promise. Old certainties about what is essential to Christianity may be tested and found wanting in these engagements. New understandings of Gospel truth sometimes emerge out of inter-cultural and interreligious exchange. In any event, when contemporary missiologists reflect on mission history, they are likely to look for evidence of Christianity as a movement rather than as a set of institutions or a collection of fixed doctrines.
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An approach that is both local and global. Next to this interest in the dynamic character of the Christian tradition is a strong tendency within missionology to think about mission history in both local and global contexts. The local side of this equation receives attention whenever issues of contextualization are brought into focus. As Werner Ustorf has observed, the Christian faith is by nature “fides semper incultranda,” and nowhere is this quality more apparent than in the history of mission when multiple contemporary contexts are studied side-by-side. The idea of translation is another means by which missionologists explore the local dimensions of Christian outreach. By translation I mean not only the rendering of Scripture into new languages but also the creation of vernacular Christianities that make sense within the context of their particular cultural settings.

The global dimension of missionology is expressed in a variety of ways. One thinks here of the geographic development of Christianity into a truly global religion, and also about the birth of a worldwide ecumenical movement in the heyday of modern Protestant missions. Less often appreciated, perhaps, is the way in which the history of mission itself is stamped with the indelible mark of global interconnectivity. Many eighteenth-century churchgoers in the West, for example, eagerly awaited the latest news of their own missionaries but also began to pray fervently for the spread of the Gospel by others. Acting on the same impulse, the missionary societies founded just before the turn of the nineteenth century sought new ways to share intelligence gained from around the world among themselves and to inform the public of their activities, hence the creation of the missionary magazine at about the same time. Most intriguingly, we find far-flung modern-era missionaries trying to learn from each other despite the challenges of geography, while also thinking about their work in increasingly global terms. Jennifer Selwyn has provided a wonderful example of this phenomenon in her recent study of early modern Jesuit missions in Naples.

The history of mission itself is stamped with the indelible mark of global interconnectivity.

As she shows, the Kingdom of Naples became a kind of proving ground within the Jesuit system for would-be missionary candidates to the New World. Coincidentally, theorists in the Society of Jesus considered how certain techniques and ideas learned in one place could be adapted for use elsewhere. In a striking conceptual move, Jesuits assigned to Naples in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came to refer to their mission field in southern Italy as “our Indies” or the “Indies down here.” This is language that clearly points to a globalized project of evangelization.

Missiology as a scholarly context. Finally, a missiological approach to the history of mission is inevitably affected by and related to everything else that missionologists study. In other words, the rest of what is encompassed by the term “missionology” forms a special scholarly context for studies of mission history undertaken by those who would call themselves missionologists. Missionologists are not unique in this respect. Their situation is parallel, for example, to that which obtains for biblical scholars who study mission in the Scriptures. Should we not expect the exegetes to be influenced by the habits of their guild as they examine the biblical materials pertaining to mission? Likewise for social scientists and other specialists who for one reason or another are drawn to mission-related topics. It would be strange indeed if they went about their work without paying heed to the salient trends and critical research needs that beg for attention in their particular academic patch.

In the case of missionology, the other items on our disciplinary agenda certainly include questions about how Christian mission fits into an increasingly pluralistic world, about the means of outreach most likely to be effective and faithful in our era, about the perennial interface of theology with culture, and about the special vocation of mission service. Missionologists who study the history of mission need not subordinate their investigations to any of these topics, but an awareness of the implications our historical research might have for these and other questions of pressing concern to students of mission is appropriate. When one puts the study of mission history into such an intellectual context, it then becomes possible for the history of mission to function properly, in my view, as a foundation for other work in missionology.

A Riverine Perspective

To conclude, we may imagine the history of mission as a river, a great flow of ideas, events, personalities, and human encounters taking place over time. Theologically, its headwaters could be identified in the nature of God, the One who sends the Son and the Spirit and in other ways has sought to be known by human-kind. Historically, the beginnings of Christian mission might be traced back to the earthly ministry of Jesus or the occasion of Pentecost, with roots in the story of Israel. Where does the river of mission history end? A natural terminus, the particular body of water into which this rushing confluence empties, lies beyond the power of physical sight. Yet, we do have a scene of cosmic consummation described in the Book of Revelation (7:9–12; 22:1–5), with the river of the water of life flowing unceasingly from God’s heavenly throne, around which persons from every tribe, tongue, and nation stand praising God and the Lamb.

It is our lot to live downstream, but somewhere before the end of the story. This is the only location now available for those who wish to study the history of Christian mission. But where exactly do we stand to engage this history? Missionologists will not be content to helicopter in every now and again to take a bucketful of water to nourish some parched ground of scholarly labor located far away. Nor can we rely on satellite imaging alone, even though a distant point of view can yield valuable insights.

To adopt a missiological perspective on this history implies a choice to live close by one’s subject, taking into account all the elements of approach described earlier. Along the strand one can feel the force of the river, its dynamic aspect, so powerful that it can cut new pathways through rugged and resistant landscape. If a turn is taken at navigating the rapids, direct experience may teach the same lesson, but with greater urgency. A willingness to range far and wide within the watershed will bring to light the rich complexity of a multivariable and extensive riparian environment. On route one can begin to appreciate how various features of the natural world may have shaped the river’s course through time, while also giving thought to the human engineering projects that either succeeded or failed to widen the water’s reach. An enduring interest in the local and global dimensions of mission pushes the missiologist further to think about this river
as a kind of huge interconnected ecosystem with many different microenvironments. Finally, in our mind’s eye, it is impossible to ignore the lush vegetation and diverse wildlife that crowd the riverbank, with each species finding both strength and vitality in the refreshing water. Evidence of life so abundant cannot fail but to remind one of the fundamental significance of this history, not only for the rest of missiology but also for the present and future of the Christian tradition as a whole.

Notes
1. This essay is based on Stanley H. Skreslet’s inaugural lecture as F. S. Royster Professor of Christian Missions, Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Virginia.
2. I wish to thank historian Heather J. Sharkey for her careful reading of an earlier draft of this article.
12. In their introduction to *Dialectics of Modernity*, pp. 35–53, the Comarrofs offer a spirited rebuttal of their critics.
13. Ibid., p. 107. What follows in the next few sentences is a very compact summary of the argument presented in this second volume of the Comarrofs’ project.
18. On the merits of empathy for the study of religious history more generally, see Richard Elphick, “Writing Religion into History: The Case of South African Christianity,” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 21 (1995): 1–21. Ogbu Kalu’s comment on the importance of respecting faith commitments when trying to write the global history of Christianity is also pertinent here: “It is difficult to tell the story of the church by rejecting its essence.” See Kalu, “Clio in a Sacred Garb: Telling the Story of Gospel-People Encounters in Our Time,” *Fides et Historia* 35 (2003): 27–39. Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was a French social philosopher who theorized that academic disciplines had to progress through religion and metaphysics before reaching their fulfillment in scientific positivism, at which point knowledge associated with these earlier stages of social development would become irrelevant. Ironically, Comte never completely let go of his own religious sentiments, choosing instead to channel these into a more scientific “religion of humanity” that he thought would one day replace Catholicism.
21. An influential model for this new kind of church periodical was provided by the *Evangelical Magazine*, published in London from 1793. By 1796 the *Missionary Magazine* had made its appearance in Edinburgh. The *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* and *New York Missionary Magazine*, the first American examples of this genre, followed in 1800.
Czarist Missionary Contact with Central Asia: Models of Contextualization?

David M. Johnstone

Years ago I asked field-workers from the central Asian republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics why there was not greater cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church in attempts to establish indigenous churches among the Muslim peoples of these regions. Their immediate reply was that the Orthodox were too heavily enmeshed with czarist imperial policies.1 Orthodox involvement would be too great a liability. Memories of Orthodox priests marching before the czar’s armies were still too vivid for many central Asian Muslims.

The czars had pursued aggressive expansion projects; the Orthodox Church acquiesced to the imperial will. This was a simple interpretation of history. Yet was it fair to condemn and so completely dismiss such an enduring church community?

Despite the long history of enmity between Russians and their Muslim neighbors, there were also high points in the history of Russian Orthodox relations with the Muslims of central Asia. Although the Western church knows little of these ventures, Russian Orthodoxy in fact has a rich missionary heritage.2 There have been instances of great courage, passion, and cultural sensitivity in Orthodox attempts to bring the Gospel to the Muslim peoples. I outline here some of the context and features of these missionary endeavors.

Historical Background

Russia’s long history of interaction with Islam began with the Mongol conquests of Russian territory (ca. 1240). It was from this period that the Russians and Europeans knew Mongols as the Tartars (or sometimes “Tartars”).3 Over time, the Mongols, or the Golden Horde, became predominately Muslim, and thus the words “Tatar” and “Muslim” became synonymous in the Russian mind. The Russians endured as Tatar vassals. Occasionally they rebelled, but most of the time they acquiesced, for they knew that destruction awaited any act of disobedience.

Eventually deviation was unavoidable. It arose not in response to disobedience but due to the Tartars’ ferocity. Timur the Great (1336–1405), or Tamerlane, conquered central Asia and dreamed of restoring the glory days of Islam. As a fanatical Muslim he longed for the destruction of the infidel, eventually wreaking havoc over much of the land lying between China and the Mediterranean.4 His trademark became great pyramids of victims’ skulls that he built outside the towns he vanquished.5

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries the Golden Horde divided into numerous principalities, eventually becoming the separate ethnic groups known as the Crimean Tatar, Volga Tatar, Uzbek, Kazakh, and other peoples.6 During this same period, the Russians began to centralize their strength and to assert their own military prowess.7 Not until 1480, however, could they finally cast off the Tatar yoke. From out of the ashes of Tatar occupation arose Muscovite Russia.

With Ivan IV (1533–84), known as the Terrible, there was a reversal of the trend of losing territory to the Tatars. Russian troops began penetrating the open steppes and occupying Muslim soil. Ivan’s first major contest was to attack the crumbling Tatar power still entrenched on the banks of the Volga. In 1552 he led two campaigns in which he captured Kazan and “brought the whole Volga basin down to the Caspian Sea into the Russian Empire.”

In 1554–55 the Tatar stronghold of Astrakhan was overthrown, and by 1581 the conquest of Siberia was under way.9

Elsewhere, a century earlier, the Ottoman Turks had stormed and finally conquered Constantinople (1453). After this Orthodox loss, there developed among Russians the popular view that Muscovite Russia was to take responsibility for the leadership of Orthodox Christendom. The grand prince of Moscow began to be seen as the agent of God on earth. Muscovite Russia was to have a vital place in the history of Christendom: “Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands fast; a fourth there cannot be.”10 The notion of divine favor encouraged subsequent princes to call themselves “czar,” the equivalent of the Byzantine basileus and the Roman caesar. This action further advanced the assertion that Moscow had become the Third Rome.11

Ivan IV became the “militant representative of the idea of sacred autocracy.”12 The true czar was to be the “preserver of the holy Orthodoxy Christian faith . . . [keeping] vigil over the Christ possessing people.”13 This assertion implied that all clergy were to subordinate themselves to the sovereign’s will and, by insinuation, made the czar responsible for the ultimate care and direction of both church and nation.

This new posture of the state came into direct conflict with the church in 1568. At this time, Philip, metropolitan of Moscow (1566–68), publicly rebuked Ivan for his ongoing killing and oppression of innocent people. Philip’s call for repentance was perceived as a direct challenge to the czar’s authority. Within six months Ivan had Philip deposed, imprisoned, and murdered.14

One of the severest blows to the Russian Orthodox Church came from Peter the Great (1682–1725). Peter believed that the head of the church, the patriarch of Moscow, “posed a serious obstacle to his vast reforms . . . of Russian life.”15 Upon the death of the patriarch in 1700, Peter did not convene a council in order to elect a replacement. Within a few months he dissolved the ecclesiastical courts and bureaucracy. After decades of maneuvering and scheming, in 1721 Peter established the Reglament, or the Holy Directing Synod.16 In establishing the synod, Peter asserted that “as the supreme Sovereign, [he] had the divine authority for establishing and correcting the faith, and therefore he undertook to put order in the Russian Church by the present statute.” As czar, he believed that he was to have “absolute control, or jurisdiction, over all spiritual interests.”17

Appointments to ecclesiastical positions were decided by power politics and had very little to do with the spiritual condition of each candidate. Catherine II (1762–96) appointed men to the position of procurator of the Holy Synod who were openly hostile to Christianity. She appropriated vast tracts of monastic and church lands. More than half of the monastic houses were closed, and the number of monks was strictly limited. When bishops rose up in protest, many were defrocked, imprisoned, or murdered.18

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Beginning of Orthodox Missions (1550–ca. 1800)

From the sixteenth century the Russian Empire became more assertive and expansionist. The conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan opened the door to localized evangelism among the people of Siberia by exceptional men. History begins to identify pioneer missionaries who initiated work among the Tatars and their kin. It was difficult work that encountered (1) the cultural diversity of numerous languages, lifestyles, and belief systems; (2) the vast barren lands of Siberia; (3) the nomadic life of the Tatars; (4) the rigors of the climate; (5) the hostility of a conquered people; and (6) the depression and frustration of long periods with little success. Despite these obstacles, these pioneers persevered in presenting the Gospel.

In 1555 Bishop Gouri was sent to work in defeated Kazan. In nine years of labor, Gouri saw “thousands of Tatars” converted to Christianity. His methodology was to teach in both church and home, build monasteries and churches, establish schools, and provide refuge and protection to the oppressed. His associate and successor, Germanus (d. 1569), who had been taken captive by the Crimean Tatars, knew their language and faith well. Germanus is said to have “dedicated his life to the conversion of the Tatars.”

Russian expansion into the Crimea and central Asia linked conversion with colonization. Converts were extended favor and benefits by the government. A system of bribery was established that was not conducive to creating mature believers. Under Peter the Great, church initiatives were placed under state restrictions. In 1685 Peter endorsed the extension of a mission to the Chinese, as well as encouraged the establishment of further missions to Muslims. Some have suggested that his encouragement was “politically rather than religiously motivated.” Peter was in the process of building a buffer zone between Russian territory and the threats from the Ottoman Empire. As he expanded into the southern steppes, missionary work was used as a way to assimilate and penetrate the new regions.

In 1743, under orders from Elizabeth (1741–62), 418 of the 536 mosques in Kazan were destroyed. “In 1744–1747, 838 conversions from Islam were reported, and in 1748–1752, 7,535.” The circumstances of these conversions are suspect, for in the reigns of Elizabeth and Catherine II, there was an increasing domination of the church by the state in forcing it to be a “civilizing” factor in the newly colonized regions.

In 1773 Catherine adopted a new policy toward the Muslims of her empire. Trying to avoid rebellions, she sought to win the goodwill of her Muslim subjects. Reversing earlier imperial policies, she had new mosques built, and benefits were no longer offered to new Christian converts. This change led to a mass exodus of superficial converts back to Islam.

Eugene Smirnov identifies the period from 1756 to 1824 as a period of stagnation for Russian missions. Missionaries lacked knowledge of the indigenous languages, and new converts were enticed by rewards of money or exemption from taxes. Missionary efforts lacked an overall organizational structure and there was no coherent theory to guide their endeavors.

Nineteenth-Century Missionary Ventures

In 1828 the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church became quite concerned about the apostasy that was widespread in regions where the government was using “Christianization to produce Russification.” Konstantin P. Pobiedonostsev (1827–1907), chief procurator of the synod, wrote toward the end of the nineteenth century:

The conversion of the Tatars and natives to the Orthodox faith en masse having been only outward and ceremonial, did not at first present any difficulties... The efforts of the Government for the confirmation of the faith was limited to outward measures of prescripts, rewards and punishments. Meanwhile, in the course of time Mahometanism grew stronger in the Tartar settlements, with a fully developed system of dogmatic teaching, and with a complete organization of clergy and schools near mosques; the spirit of fanatical propaganda increased under the influence of intercourse and contact with the Central-Asian centres of Islam. A falling off en masse of the old-baptized Tartars commenced, they having nothing in common either in spirit or custom with the Orthodox Church, but, on the contrary, being connected in both with the ordinary conditions of the Mussalman population.

Lack of interest on one side, compounded by Muslim growth on the other, caused the Holy Synod to become concerned. It thus began appealing for missionaries.

Makarii Glukharev. One of the most unlikely candidates was Makarii Glukharev (1792–1849). Although he seemed physically unsuited for any frontier missionary work, Glukharev chose to go to a particularly difficult region—the mountainous terrain of the Altai Range. Born the son of a devout parish priest, Glukharev excelled scholastically all his life. His outstanding record provided him with entrance into the Ecclesiastical Academy. In 1817 he took a professorship at the Ekaterinoslav Seminary, and in 1821, at the age of twenty-nine, he became rector of Kastroma Seminary.

While at the seminary in Ekaterinoslav he encountered monks who were disciples of Paissy Velitchkovsky (1722–94),
of Moldavia. Velitchkovsky was notable in initiating a major spiritual revival within the Russian Church in the Hesychast tradition. Glukharev’s encounter with this movement was a major crossroads for him. Resigning his position as a rector, he withdrew into the monastic community at Kiev. Not finding enough seclusion at this place, he gradually moved further into the deserts. It was there that the 1828 appeal from the Holy Synod found him.

Responding quickly, Glukharev was in the Altai Mountains of southwestern Siberia by 1830. His team drew up a compact, modeling itself on the early Christian community in Jerusalem: "Let it be our rule that we should possess everything in common, money, food, clothes, books and everything else, and let this be a means of facilitating our inspiration towards unanimity." This goal has been described as being "an apostolic rather than a monastic ideal." The unanimity of vision displayed by this small team became part of their strategy for reaching out to the tribes of central Asia.

Initially they spent their time learning the languages of the warlike, nomadic Tatar, Kalmuk, and other tribespeople. Glukharev himself soon began to master the Telengut dialect, the most prevalent conversational language of the region. He also busied himself translating the Scriptures and portions of the liturgical books in order to perform services in the vernacular. Traveling for many months at a time, he frequently visited the nomadic villages. His simple approach was "to preach to large gatherings about the main events of salvation." Yet there was little response from the Altaic tribesmen. Glukharev later wrote: "A faint-hearted missionary would have concluded that these people were not ready for Christianity. Who am I to judge a people’s unreadiness to receive the universal faith in Jesus Christ, who shed His blood on the Cross and tasted death for all men and for their salvation? No people exist among whom God does not recognize His own; there are no depths of ignorance or darkness which the Lord cannot penetrate.

Convinced of his call and determined to persevere, Glukharev set out to change his methodology. When preaching proved to be inadequate, he set out to become a servant to the nomads, especially in the areas of medicine and hygiene. In this manner Glukharev eventually introduced the smallpox vaccination to the Altai peoples. In terms of hygiene, he not only taught through words but also modeled what was important. By going into local homes and doing the cleaning himself, he began to demonstrate the very theology of mission that he valued. "To sweep the floor as a humble servant is to identify oneself with Christ, to bear witness to Him in a way which is more authentic than speeches."

In 1839 he published a volume outlining his theology and incorporating some of his ideas on missionary training. This document, Thoughts on Means of the Most Successful Expansion of the Christian Faith Among the Jews, Mohammedans, and Heathens in the Russian Empire, charted his thinking on the creation of a missionary study center in Kazan. At this facility he recommended a program that included medicine, nursing, and agriculture. He himself had been prepared by taking university courses in natural science, anatomy, and botany.

On the field, Glukharev was very cautious in admitting the nomadic tribesmen to baptism. This was a time when rewards were once again extended both to new converts and to the missionary who performed many baptisms. Glukharev was not interested in prizes or in numbers. Over the course of thirteen years he baptized 650 adults. Yet Glukharev saw baptism as only the start of his responsibilities. As Smirnoff explains, "He constantly maintained that ‘the work of conversion only begins with baptism’ and therefore took even more care of a convert after baptism than before."

Because of the hostility of unbelieving family and neighbors, Glukharev established Christian settlements for the new converts, with hospitals and schools also being founded under his initiative. By the turn of the century there were 25,000 converts, 188 Christian villages, 67 churches with services entirely in the vernacular languages.

The Altai mission continued to flourish under the oversight of Vladimir Petrov and other successors. By Zernov’s estimate, "Twenty-five thousand of the forty-five thousand inhabitants of the Altai region became Christians."

Makarii Glukharev was a man of stature equal to many of the great pioneer missionaries of the Protestant movement. His courage, tenacity, and creativity enabled him to impact a region that was not only spiritually a challenge but also physically harsh and merciless. He followed wise missionary principles that were widely emulated by others. Glukharev was a man with a passion for God and longed to see his own people, the Russians, reaching out to those around them with the Gospel. Unfortunately, he came to realize that "the Russian masses were only superficially Christian, and therefore inadequate for the great apostolic task God had in store for them."

Nikolai Ivanovitch Ilminskii. A younger contemporary of Glukharev’s, Nikolai Ilminskii (1822–91) had a penetrating effect on Russian Orthodox mission strategy. Though more of a scholar than a field-worker, he did not shy away from the dynamics facing those trying to reach the Muslims of Russia. As a theorist, linguist, orientalist, and layman committed to and supported by the established church, he outlined principles for cross-cultural evangelism that appear to be amazingly relevant to the modern period.

As early as 1847 he began to reflect upon the principles he later formulated and developed. At this time he began to translate portions of Scripture and other liturgical works into the colloquial languages of the Tatars. The previous year he had graduated from the Ecclesiastical Academy of Kazan and was offered the position of professor of Oriental languages. Unfortunately, the local archbishop questioned his loyalties and suspected him of Islamic inclinations. Ilminskii was dismissed and headed for the frontiers, where he took up a clerkship. This position enabled him to improve his growing linguistic skills and deepen his knowledge of languages used among the Muslim peoples.

Ilminskii continued his translation work, having been chosen to be part of a committee translating the Russian Scriptures and liturgical books into Tatar. The committee’s underlying principle was to eschew use of the local vernaculars and to translate into a literary language indebted to qu’ranic Arabic. In 1851 he set out for the Near East in order to perfect his knowledge of Arabic. He resided for many months in Constantinople and Lebanon and even enrolled clandestinely in a Muslim university in Cairo in order to expand his knowledge of Arabic and Persian.

Upon his return in 1853 and the publication of these newly
translated works, Ilimskii realized that the intended objective of the new Scriptures would not be realized. He concluded that the literary languages used by the Tatars and their neighbors, which were permeated with Arabic words infused with Islamic meaning and Qur’anic imagery, were inappropriate for communicating the Gospel. In 1858 Ilimskii wrote that “in order to serve effectually for Christian enlightenment of the Tartars, the translations ought to be made in a language entirely comprehensible to them, that is in a conversational language, because they have no written language. . . . In order to sever completely the tie between the Christianized Tartars and Mahometanism, the alphabet itself employed in question should be Russian, adapting it to the Tartar sounds.”

Ilimskii believed that creating a new written script for the Tatar languages would enable translators to use words that did not lead the reader back to Islam. He was convinced that “the slow progress of the Gospel among the Tartars was due to the use of the classical language into which both the Scripture and other works were translated. They could not follow or understand them and, surrounded by masses of Muslims, they lapsed.” In the situation Ilimskii faced, the liturgical services among the Tatar were in Slavonic. Their Scriptures were in a different but also unfamiliar language. Compounding these factors was the lack of any native Tatar clergy. The Tatar were, as Stamoolis writes, “ripe for Muslim counterpropaganda.”

Once again Ilimskii returned to central Asia, and in 1861 he was offered the chair of Turkic languages at the University of Kazan. With others, he began laying out his strategic plans for reaching the Muslims of the Russian Empire. Ilimskii’s first assertion was that a mission must preach to each tribe in its common conversational language. Accordingly, the Scriptures and the Orthodox liturgical books must be translated into the vernacular of each people.

By using the colloquial speech of the Tatars both in translation of the Scriptures and in the liturgy, Ilimskii set out to break the link with Islam. He produced a phonetic script easily accessible by the common people. Then, using Russian characters, he eliminated the use of Arabic script. Setting out to verify the impact and relevance of his thesis, he presented some of his new vernacular translations to local Tatar boys. They “understood his translation of the Gospel narrative of the Pool of Bethesda, and even corrected some of his expressions. A white-haired old man amongst the baptized Tatars, hearing the prayers in his native tongue, fell on his knees before the icon, and with tears in his eyes thanked God for having vouchsafed to him at least once in his life to pray as he should.”

In his quest to produce high-quality material, Ilimskii sought the direct aid of the indigenous peoples. “It is essential that the final touches should be put to the translations, with the assistance of natives by birth, because a Russian, as I know by my own experience, having occupied myself with Tartar translations for about thirty years, cannot know all the subtleties, shades and psychological depths of a foreign tongue.” He was not just trying to create new and intelligible translations; his aim was “the formation of a specific Christian Tartar language in opposition to an Islamic one.”

Related to this literary strategy was the establishment of a network of schools with lessons carried out in the indigenous languages of the tribes. From his Near Eastern experience and his intimate knowledge of Tatar daily life, Ilimskii discerned that the strength of Islam lay in its system of mosque schools, in which Tatar and other Muslim boys were taught the essentials of Islam. His schools provided an alternative to the Muslim educational system. Because of the needs for highly fluent teachers and priests, Ilimskii recommended that indigenous educators and clergy be trained. These individuals would be brought in with the intention of replacing the Russians as quickly as possible. In response to these needs, the missionary brotherhood of St. Gouri was established in 1867 in order to publish the newly translated works and to establish schools.

Alongside his call for the use of the vernacular and the use of indigenous clergy and teachers, Ilimskii set forth one more radical principle of missionary work: each mission should work toward no longer being reliant on Russian funds and missionaries. As indigenous clergy were trained and the Russians withdrawn, the mission should learn to become self-sufficient. This was a strong challenge to the status quo, for the Russian missionaries tended to respond to the nationals “as children to be educated as long as possible.”

Ilimskii was able to see remarkable success. The schools opened under his direction were deemed of high enough caliber for the graduates to be accepted for ordination. Forty-four Tatar, ten Chuvash, nine Cheremi, and two Votlak were ordained in his lifetime. The Orthodox divine service was translated into Tatar, which proved to be one of the most effective missionary methods.

The movement initiated by Ilimskii survived his death. Many others successfully implemented his methodology, slowing the tide of converts toward Islam. Ilimskii provided a sign of hope in a time when the church was facing many problems, both at home and on the frontiers.

Other Orthodox missionary activity. Orthodox monks and priests also penetrated other regions of the empire’s frontiers. In these regions the work among Muslims tended to focus heavily on education and the creation of “asylums” of refuge for orphans and other oppressed individuals. The educational aspects of each mission played a major role in their attempt to present the Gospel. According to Smirnoff, “The entire history of Russian missions is in reality nothing else but the history of the Christian instruction of the natives in Russia.”

The establishment of the Russian Missionary Society in 1865 further consolidated the work of the Orthodox Church. It provided guidance and materials for the individual missions and tried to awaken the interest of Orthodox Russians in their church’s missionary enterprises.

Part of Ilimskii’s legacy was his emphasis on the preparation of missionary candidates. In 1854 the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy created a missionary department. It was a partial fulfillment of Gloukharev’s dream for a missionary training school. However, because the course of work was mingled with the general academic requirements of the institution, missionary preparation became unfocused and inadequate. In 1889, because of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, Professor V. V. Mirovortzeff of the academy established a two-year missionary program. By
1897 it was meeting in the Spaso-Preobrazhensky (“Transfiguration of Our Savior”) Monastery in Kazan, forming a separate educational facility.85

The nineteenth century was a high point for Russian Orthodox missionary activity. In spite of the aggressive work by the czars of empire building, many desired to genuinely present and offer the good news of Christ to the unbelieving peoples of Russia.

Conclusions

The tenacity, perseverance, and courage of these Orthodox missionaries to central Asia become even more incredible when we consider the obstacles they faced.86 First, the topography was unbelievably vast, with a climate to match its size. In some regions one missionary would be responsible for traveling circuits of over 1,000 kilometers.87 They would journey in the extremes of freezing temperatures of the Altai or in the scorching heat of the Uzbek deserts. This itineration was part of their attempts to minister to highly nomadic tribes. The vast territories covered by these nomadic tribes sometimes required the missionaries to literally hunt the nomads by following their tracks.

Second, the diversity of languages and cultures posed a tremendous challenge. The numbers of Muslim people groups within the Russian sphere was (and still is) numerous. As a sampling, there were Tatars, Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kirghiz, Karakalpaks, Uighurs, Altai, and Tajiks, all needing the presence of indigenous churches.

The third significant obstacle was specific to those working among Muslims. Muslim propaganda was highly organized and could become extremely violent. Regions such as the Caucasus and the Khanate of Bukhara were especially strong, with highly organized Sufi movements and Islamic training centers. While martyrs among missionaries were rare, violence directed at converts was always a possibility.88

The fourth major hurdle was the scarcity of mission stations, resources, and manpower. If one considers that among the 800,000 Kirghiz, there were only nine stations with twenty-eight work-

ers, it is easy to imagine the challenges. To further complicate matters, the missionaries were responsible for the spiritual care of the Russian congregants of their diocese as well. For instance, the Kirghiz regions of Semipalatinsk and Akмолinsk had 2,853 Orthodox congregants. Of these, 2,503 were Russian, while 350 were indigenous to the region.89 These scenarios multiplied the burden and taxed the material, spiritual, and emotional resources of the missionaries. Despite these challenges, the Orthodox missionaries persevered and "laboured greatly and seriously for the enlightenment" of the peoples in the Russian Empire.90

In evaluating the actions of the pre-Revolutionary Russian Orthodox missionaries and strategists, one must remember that these concepts were created without the cross-pollination present in the Western missionary movements of the same era. In the West, men such as Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, and later John Nevius, Robert Speer, and others provided much innovation in missionary thinking and strategy. The Orthodox were not a part of this creative interaction. This fact alone makes men such as Makarii Glukharev and Nikolai Ilminksi more impressive.

The historical enmity between Russians and many of the Muslim peoples persists in certain regions. As tradition plays a major role in the Russian Orthodox worldview, however, the Orthodox should be encouraged to reflect upon alternate ways of responding to Muslims. As believers they should be challenged to examine their heritage and emulate the kindness extended to Muslims modeled by Gourt, Glukharev, Ilminksi, and others. Traditional enmity could be transformed through attempts to reflect Christ’s character through reconciliation and grace.

Finally, we must recognize that non-Russians contemplating work in the former Soviet central Asia cannot remove themselves from contact with the Orthodox Church. Knowledge of significant historical Orthodox figures and their thinking will be of great assistance in developing relationships and appreciation for Orthodoxy. Orthodox missionaries have blazed many of the trails currently being penetrated by other field-workers. We would do well to remain humble and learn the wisdom that these earlier missionaries gathered from their journeys.

Notes

4. Once when I was with a group viewing Tamerlane’s tomb in Samarkand, the Intourist guide related to us that in the early 1940s Soviet archaeologists desired to open his tomb in order to verify the authenticity of the remains. The Uzbek people arose in great fear, cautioning the authorities that a curse lay upon the tomb that threatened to release Tamerlane’s spirit, spreading destruction over the earth. Scoffing at this superstition, the archaeologists received permission from Stalin himself. The day they opened the tomb, Hitler’s armies invaded the USSR.
11. This notion of a third Rome was revived in the early periods of the nineteenth century to provide a foundation for justification of the empire’s policies of civilizing and Christianizing Siberia. See Kozhtzeff, “Ruling Siberia,” pp. 274–75.
16. See ibid., pp. 216ff., for the details regarding Peter’s intrigue.
17. Ibid., pp. 219, 222.
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  Leadership and Education
- Robert J. Priest, PhD  
  Anthropology and Intercultural Studies
- Tite Tiéneau, PhD  
  Theology of Mission, Ethnicity
21. Though he was not writing for an academic audience, Eugene Smirnoff asserts that most careful attention was given to data verified from “the Reports of the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Synod, in the yearly reports of the Orthodox Missionary Society, and the reports of individual missions and missionary establishments” (A Short Account of the Historical Development and Present Position of Russian Orthodox Missions [London, 1903; repr., Willits, Calif.: Eastern Orthodox Books, n.d.], p. 11).

22. Ibid.
23. Zernov, The Russians and Their Church, p. 60.
28. This role was to be maintained for the next century where the church was seen as a practical administrator of the colonized regions. See Kobtzeff, “Ruling Siberia,” pp. 276–79.
30. Lapidus, History of Islamic Societies, p. 423.
32. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 15; Znamenski, Shamanism and Christianity, p. 4.
34. Stamoolis, Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, p. 29; Collins, “Colonialism and Siberian Development,” p. 54. Many clergy were actually supporting this apostasy; see Znamenski, Shamanism and Christianity, p. 65.
35. Smirnoff, Short Account, pp. 28–29.
36. There seems to be some disagreement over Makarii’s date of death: Stamoolis (Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, p. 28); Gorodetsky (“Missionary Expansion,” p. 407), and Zernov (Eastern Christendom, p. 181) suggest 1847, while Nikita Struve (“Macaire Gloukharev, a Prophet of Orthodox Mission,” International Review of Missions 54 [1965]: 314) suggests April 18, 1849.
38. Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 163.
43. This language learning was reflective of the priority that the Orthodox Church has given to “indigenization of the faith.” See Ion Bria, “Introduction,” in Martyria Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today, ed. Ion Bria (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1980), pp. 10–11.
44. Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 181.
46. Makarii Gloukharev, quoted in ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 312.
50. Florovsky, “Russian Missions,” p. 148; Struve writes that it was 674 over fourteen years (“Macaire Gloukharev,” p. 312).
51. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 18.
52. Stamoolis, Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, pp. 30, 31.
57. By the end of his life Ilimniskii was able to speak Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Tatar, Cherimis, Chuvash, Mordvin, Kirghiz, Yakut, and several other Siberian languages. See Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 183.
58. Latourette, Expansion, 4:122.
59. Stamoolis, Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, p. 32.
62. Quoted in Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 33.
64. Stamoolis, Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, p. 32.
66. Florovsky, “Russian Missions,” p. 154. One of Ilimniskii’s Tatar assistants won a large following through the use of the vernacular. Latourette mentions that this man banded his listeners together in order to form choirs singing Christian hymns (Expansion, 4:122).
68. Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 183.
69. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 33.
70. Ilimniskii, as quoted in ibid., p. 34.
73. Stamoolis, Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology, p. 32.
74. Znamenski, Shamanism and Christianity, p. 63.
78. Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 183.
80. Zernov, Eastern Christendom, p. 183. According to Johannes Reimer, the Mordvin, the Chuvash, and the Cheremi are still considered to be primarily Orthodox in faith, though highly nominal (Operation Soviet Union: How to Pray for the 160 People Groups in the USSR [Fresno, Calif.: Logos, 1988, 1990]).
81. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 70.
82. Znamenski, Shamanism and Christianity, p. 60.
83. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 52.
84. Znamenski, Shamanism and Christianity, p. 60.
85. Smirnoff, Short Account, pp. 52–53.
86. See ibid., pp. 62–74, for his more detailed outline.
87. Ibid., p. 63.
89. Smirnoff, Short Account, p. 62.
90. Ibid., pp. 69–70, 73.
In the Shadow of the Missionary Captain: Captain James Wilson and the LMS Mission to the Pacific

Kirsteen Murray

In promoting its activities, the London Missionary Society (LMS) openly acknowledged the importance of the late eighteenth-century enthusiasm for the adventures of Captains Cook, Bligh, and Wallis. What has received less attention is the extent to which the mission emulated these great navigators. The influence was so pervasive in the planning and execution of their first mission, to the Pacific, that Captain James Wilson actually dominated decision making, even on issues of doctrine and church government. It was also Wilson, a man who did not settle or even preach in the islands, who was the focus of LMS publicity at home, in particular through his book *A missionary voyage to the southern Pacific Ocean*. Wilson’s leadership caught the public mood in Britain and engaged the Polynesians; ordinary members of the mission, however, were left struggling to emerge from his shadow and to receive the respect of the society.

In Britain in the 1790s the case for mission itself was new. One argument advanced by the founders of the LMS was that the recent voyages of exploration had providentially opened an entirely new field before them and issued a challenge to Christians who remained comfortably in Europe: “Cook and other navigators have voluntarily exposed their lives in unknown tracts, in fields of ice, and in abodes of savages. Our merchants venture into the burning and frozen regions, and trade with men of every colour and clime, for uncertain riches. And are there not yet among us numbers of ministers and pious youths, who would gladly fly to the ends of the earth, bearing with them the glad tidings of salvation?”

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William Carey had also made a reference to the new possibilities opened by Providence in his *Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*.

Thomas Haweis and LMS Mission to the Pacific

One man particularly influenced by the publication of the voyages was Thomas Haweis (1734–1820). Haweis was educated at Oxford and in 1764 became rector of Aldwincle, Northamptonshire. In 1774 he accepted a position as personal chaplain to Selina, countess of Huntingdon (1707–91), a strong supporter of George Whitefield and founder of the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion, a network of Calvinistic Methodist chapels. Shortly before her death, Haweis persuaded the countess to fund a mission to Tahiti. Two missionaries were to travel with Captain Bligh on his return there to complete the duties that had been interrupted by the mutiny of the crew of the Bounty. Haweis met Bligh in London and persuaded him to carry two young men from the college affiliated with the Connexion, Michael Waugh and Richard Price. The missionaries were given a course of preparation but in 1791 refused to sail without receiving episcopal ordination. It was denied by Bishop Porteous of London, and the project collapsed.

Three years later Haweis was responsible for one of the two pieces printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* that prompted the foundation of a missionary society in London. In September 1794 David Bogue’s “Address to Evangelical Dissenters who practice infant Baptism” appeared. It was followed in November by Haweis’s review of Melville Horne’s *Letters on missions: addressed to the Protestant ministers of the British Churches* (Bristol, 1794). As a result, a corresponding committee was formed, which led to the foundation of the society on Monday, September 21, 1795. This event was followed by three days of preaching attended by 200 clergy, including Anglicans, Independents, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

Haweis presented the idea of a mission to the Pacific to the first general meeting of the society in his sermon “A Memoir on the Most Eligible Part to begin a Mission” (1795). An article for the *Evangelical Magazine*, “The Very Probable success of a proper mission to the South Seas,” also in 1795, made a similar case. Haweis linked the duty to spread the Word of God with what he saw as Cook’s timely and providential discoveries in the Pacific. Haweis saw the South Seas, of all the potential fields, as presenting the least difficulties and greatest chance of success. The advantages he suggested included the climate, the settled life of the people, the simplicity of the language when compared with the languages of India or China, and the absence of any absolutist government that might persecute the missionaries. The people of the South Seas, Haweis believed, would have fewer prejudices than those of China and India, where “civilization hath long obtained.” Those in an uncivilized state would be more struck by the benefits to be derived from the mechanical arts and trades and more easily convinced of European superiority in all things, including religion.

James Wilson, Volunteer Mission Captain

The LMS found its equivalent to Cook in the person of Captain James Wilson (1760–1814). Wilson’s dramatic conversion and life story provided a gripping tale of danger, escapes from death, and redemption. Wilson fought with the British army during the American War of Independence and then served nine years with the East India Company. While in India he was captured by Hyder Ali and, after a daring bid for escape, was imprisoned in the black hole of Seringapatam. After his release he continued service as a captain and, despite illness and further dangerous missions, accumulated sufficient resources to retire. Throughout it all, Wilson remained fast in his irreligious opinions. While living in England with his niece, however, he was converted to an evangelical faith. He felt called to volunteer for missionary service after reading the *Evangelical Magazine*.

Haweis did not know Wilson before receiving a letter volunteering his services in the Pacific. His skills and newfound devotion seemed perfectly suited to the situation, and Haweis saw him as “God’s Man.” In 1801 Haweis published a history of the Christian church in which he devoted forty pages to a narrative of Wilson’s inspirational life. A serialized account of Wilson’s life based on the same source was published in 1802 by *Methodist Magazine*. Captain Wilson was a natural figure around whom publicity about the voyage could revolve; such a strategy was well suited to the tastes of the public.

The South Seas were selected as a mission field, and on September 28, 1795, the LMS appointed a committee to inquire

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into the best means of conveyance for an unspecified number of missionaries.\textsuperscript{33} The possibilities before them were to obtain passage for missionaries in a whaler, to charter a ship, or to buy one. The very same meeting, however, unanimously accepted the offer of service from Captain Wilson, which Haweis had put before the society amid the excitement of the first annual meeting. In December Wilson set a proposal for the purchase of a small ship before the board.\textsuperscript{16} It was eventually decided that the society would buy the Duff, a ship of 264 tons.

The outcome of the purchase of a ship was the decision that a substantial number of missionaries should be sent. Joseph Hardcastle argued that a small mission at such a great distance would be too vulnerable to deaths in the party. He hoped that a sizable group, made up principally of artisans, could be self-sufficient in the trades required to support a community and would give a “complete exhibition of a Christian and Civilized community.”\textsuperscript{17} The missionaries would settle not only at Tahiti but also, if circumstances proved favorable, at Tonga and the Marquesas.

**Expectations of the Mission Work**

The composition of the large group was determined in part by those who were prepared to volunteer but also by definite opinions about the best kind of men to send. Haweis, perhaps as a result of his previous experience, did not favor the sending of educated men but preferred missionaries of firm faith who would preach the simple message of Christ crucified.\textsuperscript{18} The public appeals for missionary recruits stressed that “serious mechanics,” that is, sober and pious men, were required.\textsuperscript{19} Thirty men were selected, five of whom were married. Their occupations were predominantly skilled manual work.\textsuperscript{20}

The ministers too had humble origins, and three received ordination only as a result of their participation in the mission.\textsuperscript{21} A fourth had been ordained in November 1795 in the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion.\textsuperscript{22} The missionaries were all of inferior social status to the ministers and laymen on the Board of Directors. Wilson, in contrast, had been “connected with us in the direction of the affairs of the society” and was “fully appraised of the design and nature of the expedition.”\textsuperscript{23}

The background of the missionaries chosen by the LMS was similar to that of the missionaries who had been used successfully by the Moravians. Haweis’s friend Christian Ignatius LaTrobe, secretary of the Moravian Foreign Missions Department, advised that education was not an essential for a missionary and also calmed fears about the sending of wives into the mission field.\textsuperscript{24} The Moravians were sent out under strict discipline and were expected to support themselves and to work to pay for their passage.

It seems from the reactions of the LMS directors to later events that they expected a similar degree of obedience and lifelong service from their own agents. Robert Bourne, for example, received a rebuke for retreating to New South Wales because of his wife’s illness. The directors noted that a man of far higher social rank would not expect to have his passage paid when his wife was ill if he was unhindered in carrying on the work.\textsuperscript{25}

While the missionaries were the social inferiors of the directors, Captain Wilson was considered a gentleman. Haweis’s version of Wilson’s life, for example, underlines the hardship he suffered on the way to Seringapatam, denied the company of his fellow officers and chained to a common soldier.\textsuperscript{26}

The instructions for the mission emphasized the role of the captain. There were two sets of instructions to the missionaries: one printed by the LMS in a pamphlet,\textsuperscript{27} and another published by Haweis, which in parts agreed word for word with the official document.\textsuperscript{28} The former recommended formation of a committee to be elected monthly on board ship and thereafter every six months, or longer if that was better suited to ideas of government in the Pacific. Haweis’s suggestions show a greater emphasis on fixed hierarchy within the mission. He urged that the most aged preside in each location where a mission settled and also recommended a council of four or five elders to include the surgeon and Captain Wilson.

The instructions given to Captain Wilson emphasized that he was responsible for the mission, not only for discipline on board ship in temporal matters, but also “with full and complete authority for the management of its concerns in relation to the voyage; but also to commit to your care and superintendence, during the same period, the more important charge of the mission itself, and especially of those faithful brethren who accompany you therein.”\textsuperscript{29} The result of this emphasis upon the person of Wilson and the apparent distrust of the missionaries was that there was never a clearly defined authority over the mission from within the missionary group.

Wilson’s role in decision making went far beyond choice of sites and division of stores. No decision had been made about who was to be a preacher before the Duff departed. On December 31, 1796, Wilson asked each of the men to preach in turn before him so that he could decide how to divide the missionaries.\textsuperscript{30} At the same meeting Wilson convened a committee of eight to draw up a code of church government and articles of faith for the use of the missionaries at their destination, again chaired by himself.\textsuperscript{31} The decision of the LMS not to favor any one form of church government had precluded any such instructions being given in London.

Theological debate ensued, with the result that Rev. Jefferson and Mr. Cock were accused of Arminianism in January 1797.\textsuperscript{32} Wilson was called in and held a series of meetings, at which the men were examined and finally excommunicated on the basis of his assertion that the directors’ theology was Calvinistic.\textsuperscript{33} Wilson’s judgment overrode the views of one of the ministers and settled a matter on which the LMS board had refused to rule. He acted as the directors had instructed him and preserved the unity of the missionaries. Lovett’s *History of the LMS*, written in 1899, actually celebrates this incident as a significant step in the theological definition of the society.\textsuperscript{34} The two were persuaded to revise their views and were readmitted. The final version of the code was signed by all on February 21.

**Initial Work in the Islands**

The Duff arrived at Tahiti on March 5, 1797. The settlement at Tahiti of twenty of the missionaries, five of them with wives, and two children gives further examples of the role of the missionary captain.\textsuperscript{35} A pattern of intercourse had already been established by other voyagers, according to which the captain of a vessel would take the leading role in meetings. It is therefore
not surprising that the focus of the chapter describing the arrival is on meetings between significant island figures and Captain Wilson. For example, Mane Mane, a “high priest” from Mo’orea, sought Wilson as a tayo, or friend, not Jefferson, the president of the missionaries.

Wilson exchanged gifts with the highest-ranking Tahitian chiefs: Tu and his wife Tetua, and Pomare and Iddeah. Pomare was entertained at dinner on board. Wilson received permission for the missionaries to stay and for them to use the “British House,” a building that had been erected for Captain Bligh in the belief he would return. In this type of negotiation the prominence of the captain was clearly useful.

Again, at a ceremony on March 16, 1797, Captain Wilson represented the LMS. Mane Mane made a long oration naming the gods, districts, and chiefs of Tahiti and Mo’orea and also naming all the captains who had visited. He concluded with a “formal surrender of the district of Matavai: observing that we might take what houses, trees, fruit, hogs, &c. we thought proper.” At this time the missionaries believed that this was the “cession” of Matavai and that they had been given the territory.

Previous Tahitian experience was of beachcombers who had been absorbed into Tahitian society as specialists in various useful trades and of parties who had landed for short periods from ships for recuperation, preparation of provisions, or scientific measurement. In the former instance individuals had deferred to Tahitian authority; in the latter superior arms and ample supplies of trade goods had allowed the groups to maintain their separateness. The missionaries fitted neither pattern. The mission at Tahiti had a brief taste, while the Duff remained with them, of the generosity and respect that the protection of a ship fostered.

The Tahiti missionaries were nervous about being left on the island and attempted to persuade the whole party to settle with them for protection. Captain Wilson and the missionaries on board thought their fears ill-founded and suspected beachcombers of frightening them with false reports. The Duff departed first only for a few days to see whether the mission party would be well treated. The ship then sailed for Tonga and the Marquesas, where the remaining missionaries settled. As planned, the Duff returned to Tahiti in July, and a final leave was taken on August 4. While the missionaries expected to soon receive supplies and further recruits, it was to be four years before they had any further direct contact with the society.

Mission Work Without Captain Wilson

Sailing away in the Duff, Wilson reported on the cordial and apparently deferential relationships he had witnessed. The Duff and the missionaries had been amply supplied with pork and breadfruit during their stay. Work had been carried out on the mission house. Furthermore, it appeared that the missionaries had received not only the house as a gift but also the produce and labor of an entire district. An engraving The missionary house and environs, Matavai Bay 1797, showing a scene of missionaries and Tahitians in tranquil cooperation, was printed in Wilson’s Missionary voyage.

After the departure of the Duff the Tahiti missionaries were forced to adjust their view of the relationship with the islanders and appreciate their dependence upon goodwill. An attack on four members of the mission, who were stripped naked, led to a crisis and the withdrawal of eleven to New South Wales in March 1798. Their letter of explanation claimed that this incident was the culmination of a series of threats from the islanders to seize their wives and property. This was a bitter disappointment to LMS and to Haweis in particular, who found it difficult to reconcile Wilson’s judgment with that of those who had withdrawn.

The division of the mission at this point highlights a further problem that issued from reliance upon Wilson. The committee structures outlined in the instructions and the lead that the captain had taken in the decision making left the mission at Tahiti without an authoritative leader. The members of the mission, who were a great distance from the LMS board and all other sources of advice, were not prepared to defer to one of their own number. In the face of disputes, the group splintered.

In May 1798 the excitement that followed news of the safe arrival of the Duff at Canton led Haweis to hope that one of the directors would go out to the mission. Instead, the LMS relied for its information on interviews with returned missionaries and letters from Samuel Marsden, Anglican chaplain in New South Wales. The missionaries themselves were isolated both by the infrequent contact with London and by the lack of understanding of their situation. It was not until after a wave of conversions in 1815 following the victory of the Christian chief Pomare II at the battle of Fei Pi—when the entire island of Tahiti adopted the Christian faith, destroyed ritual objects, abandoned human sacrifice and infanticide, and showed enthusiasm for learning to read the Bible—that a deputation was sent from London to examine the situation on the ground.
The Mission in Its Social Context

The early coverage of the South Sea Mission drew on many of the representations that had already been popularized by the publication of Cook’s voyages and other material about the Pacific. The official account of the first mission appeared in 1799, under the lengthy title *A missionary voyage to the southern Pacific Ocean, performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson, compiled from the journals of the officers and the missionaries; and illustrated with maps, charts, and views drawn by Mr William Wilson.* . . . It was placed firmly within the tradition of the voyages of discovery by an introduction compiled by Samuel Greatehead that described previous European contacts with the Islands and an appendix “including details never before published of the natural and civil state of Otaheite.” The main narrative was taken from Wilson’s journal, with additions from his son and a journal kept by the missionaries during the period when the *Duff* was away from Tahiti at Tonga. Wilson dominated the events recorded in the narrative. He is seen to take the principal role in negotiating with chiefs, touring the islands, and settling differences between the missionaries. Wilson’s view of the missionaries is occasionally exposed, for example, in disapproving of their nervousness at remaining at Tahiti or in questioning their assessment of Pomare’s character.13

The visual images of the islands were very similar to those of the artists who had traveled with Cook. The painting *The Cession of Mataceau* (1799; see front cover of this issue) came to represent the mission to Tahiti.44 It depicted a large crowd of Tahitians with Chief Tu and his wife in the foreground meeting a smaller party of missionaries led by Wilson and his son. The missionaries later appreciated that Tahitian custom did not actually allow for transfer of land in this way, though it took some time for them to convince the directors in London of this point. Comparison of preliminary sketches with the final painting shows that the landscape has been deliberately created to conform to British imagination of the Pacific.45 The Polynesians are classically posed, and the landscape is exotic and romantic. The captain and his son are center stage, not the missionaries. Indeed, it was commissioned by the directors as a gift for Wilson and was to show the captain prominently “attended by some of the missionaries.”46

The timely offer from a pious and heroic captain became fused with a particular reading of voyage literature that came to dominate the planning of the South Sea Mission. The LMS directors viewed Wilson as an equal who could be trusted to supervise their group of socially and educationally inferior missionaries. Resort to a strong captain suited expectations at home and, indeed, in the South Seas. The extent of Wilson’s success in fulfilling the directors’ expectations, however, proved to be a flaw in the longer term. Wilson, a layman, exercised his authority in all aspects of the mission, despite the presence of four ordained ministers and a mission committee. Reliance upon the captain as decision maker and arbiter of disputes undermined the development of internal leadership. The immediate advantages of the focus on the captain in publicizing the mission also had consequences. It proved difficult for directors and public alike to reconcile the narrative of the missionary voyage with the later accounts of the missionaries themselves. Misunderstanding between mission field and London overshadowed the mission at Tahiti until the conversions of 1815 and beyond.

Notes


3. George Burder, “Sermon II. Jonah’s Mission to Nineveh: Preached at Rev. Mr. Seven’s Meeting House, Crown Court, Sept 22, 1795,” in *Sermons Preached in London, at the Formation of the Missionary Society, Sept. 22, 23, 24, 1796, to which are prefixed memorials respecting the establishment and first attempts of that society* . . . (London, 1795), p. 35. In same volume, see also sermons by David Bogue (p. xvi) and Thomas Haweis (p. 12).


11. Ibid., p. 170.

12. Ibid., p. 165.


15. The committee members were Thomas Haweis, Josiah Wilson, Joseph Hardcastle, and James Steven.


17. Hardcastle, Plan of disposing the first mission, addressed to the Country Directors, Home Office Extra 1, CWM.


21. The three men ordained were Cover, Eyre, and Jefferson. See John Owen Whitehouse, *A Register of Missionaries and Deputies from 1796 to 1877* (London: Yates & Alexander, 1877).

22. The fourth was Thomas Lewis (see ibid.).


24. Report on November 9, 1795, Board Minutes 1, CWM.

25. Hankey and Orme to Marsden, November 14, 1827, Marsden Papers, vol. 4, ML.


Maori and Mission Sisters in New Zealand Since 1865: Changing Approaches

Susan Smith

Between 1838, when Bishop Pompallier and the first Catholic missionaries journeyed to New Zealand (hereafter NZ), and February 1865, when the first Mission Sisters arrived,¹ significant changes in the country’s economic, political, and social landscape had occurred. These changes affected the mission of the Catholic Church, and therefore the work of the first Mission Sisters. Initially, Pompallier had focused attention on Maori, who outnumbered the few Europeans then resident in the country. The increase in settler numbers following the Treaty of Waitangi (1840),² however, meant significant changes in the relation between Maori and settlers. Economic control of resources, particularly control of land, was shifting from Maori to the European settlers. The 1852 Constitution Act meant that political power likewise passed to the settlers. The growing settler need for land was resolved by two means: war and legislation, both of which benefited the settler community at the expense of Maori.

The Land Wars of the 1860s posed a challenge for the church, given the change of loyalties that the prior influx of European settlers had caused. Whereas the first missionaries had directed their ministry toward Maori, the ever-growing number of settlers meant that priests now undertook ministry to the settlers. T.S. Grace, a nineteenth-century commentator, stated that this new focus did not bode well for Maori. “The present is perhaps the most critical period of [Maori] . . . history. Outwardly they have embraced the Gospel, but ere there has been time for it to become rooted and grounded in their hearts, colonization has burst upon them with all the evils which in modern times it has brought upon the different aboriginal races.”³ The land wars and legislation that followed worked in favor of the settler population, and with few exceptions, the church’s policy likewise reflected a bias in favor of the settlers. In this article I examine the changing attitude of one Catholic group, the Mission Sisters, toward Maori between 1865 and 2005.

Arrival of the Mission Sisters in 1865

Even though Euphrasie Barbier, founder of the Mission Sisters, had emphasized foreign missions understood as the education of women and children, “above all in infidel and non-Catholic countries,”⁴ church authorities had already begun to shift from mission toward Maori to pastoral care of Catholic settlers as a small group of Mission Sisters prepared to sail to New Zealand. By the time the sisters arrived in 1865, priests who had previously served as missionaries to Maori were increasingly becoming “preoccupied with meeting the needs of the largely Irish settler community.”⁵

This shift from a mission of evangelization to a mission of retention is clear in the comments of Bishop Viard, Catholic bishop of Wellington (1850–72). As a young priest he was tortured by the thought of “thousands of savages who were lost and plunged into hell for lack of priests to instruct them.”⁶ By 1860, however, the growing numbers of Catholic immigrants meant that Viard was seeking Catholic sisters to staff schools for the children of Catholic settlers in the Wellington diocese. Some of this concern to concentrate limited church resources on Catholic settlers was influenced by the relatively small number of Catholic Maori in the diocese, although two important Maori mission stations had been established at Otaki and Pakipaki. The Catholic population in the diocese consisted of a small group of English Catholics from the gentry class and a larger number of poorer Irish immigrants.⁷ Some of these Irish settlers, based in Hawkes Bay, were attached to the British 14th and 65th Regiments and engaged in war against Maori over land. It was the children of these settlers whom the Mission Sisters were to teach. Unlike the Irish immigrants in the United States, those in NZ tended to settle in a dispersed fashion among the numerically much larger Protestant population, a situation of pastoral concern to the hierarchy.

Viard was convinced that Irish settlers “wished to have priests of their own nationality.” Although “the French priests

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30. Journal of William Henry, South Sea Journals 1, CWM.
31. The committee included three of the four ordained missionaries: Cover, Jefferson, and Lewis.
33. Wilson, Missionary voyage, p. 48.
34. Lovett, History of the LMS, p. 49.
35. Two of this group did not stay at Tahiti. Nobbs settled in Tonga, where ten single men were landed, and the surgeon Gilham returned in the Duff. Of two men intended for the Marquesas, only one, Crook, stayed; Harris rejoined the larger party at Tahiti.
36. Wilson, Missionary voyage, p. 56.
37. This exchange happened on June 10, 1797. See Wilson, Missionary voyage, 69.
38. Hauwha to LMS, August 1798, Home Office Extra 1, CWM.
39. Wilson, Missionary voyage, p. 76.
40. Only Jefferson, Eyre, Bicknell, Nott, Lewis, Broomhall, and Harris remained.
41. Hauwha Papers, vol. 3, ML.
42. The deputation journal was published as Journal of voyages and travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, deputed by the London Missionary Society, to visit various stations in the South Sea Islands, China, India, etc., between the years 1821 and 1829, ed. James Montgomery (London: Fredrick Westley & A. H. Davies, 1831).
43. Wilson, Missionary voyage, p. 64.
46. July 23, 1798, Board Minutes 2, CWM.
had won the affection of the colonists,” Viard doubted whether they would “retain it when the colonists were more numerous.”

Nevertheless, he was enthusiastic about inviting the French sisters to his diocese. In fact, there was no evidence that Irish Catholic settlers were concerned about French sisters teaching their children. L’Abbé Coulomb, the first biographer of Euphrasie, reports that “before the end of the month [presumably March 1865] over fifty children, Protestants as well as Catholics, were attending the school.” So successful were the sisters that Father Forest was obliged “to build a second school for the little girls of the better class.”

**Ministry to Maori.** Despite the sisters’ involvement in education of settler children, there was a generous response in 1867 to Father Reignier’s request to take responsibility to teach in the Providence (later renamed St. Joseph’s Maori Girls’ College), a vocational school for Maori girls in Napier. Reignier, parish priest of Meanee, conscious that the education of Maori and mixed-race children was neglected, had sought and gained financial assistance from the government to establish a school for such children. Maria van der Linden believes that the Mission Sisters “saw in this response a step in the right direction, for they felt their missionary vocation was covered only by a genuine mission when they worked with native people.”

There were two categories of students at the Providence: a minority of girls from the families of chiefs and a larger number of children of mixed parentage. As government policy required that Maori be assimilated into the European settler culture, the sisters were obliged to follow an English-language program. They did so, though with some misgivings. Euphrasie wrote to Father Reignier that the sisters would ensure that students spoke English only, not Maori. She pointed out, however, that “these children cannot be expected to hold a conversation on any subject whatsoever particularly in a language like English so difficult for foreigners.” Euphrasie required that the girls would “first of all be trained to virtue, an enlightened, simple, solid and practical virtue. . . . Care will also be taken to give the children a knowledge of the sciences, especially those which are essential to their state of life e.g. reading, writing, grammar and arithmetic, etc. The children will also be trained in crafts suited to women, e.g. knitting, sewing etc. They will help in the kitchen and in the different employments of the house so as to be trained in order and cleanliness and all that appertains to the domestic economy.” It was unlikely that the sisters recognized the extent to which their mission was culturally conditioned and how this bias informed the education they provided in the Providence.

Catholic authorities approved such policies, which is evident from a letter Bishop Pompallier wrote to Maori chief Te Mammage in 1856: “You ceded the helm of the vessel to the White people.” Maori academic Ranginui Walker argues that “the Catholic Bishop Pompallier thought that Maori were infidel New Zealanders” and that “driven by such attitudes, the missionar-

ies were the advance party of cultural invasion.” He believes Catholic schools were party to such “cultural invasion.”

It is difficult to assess the attitude of the first Mission Sisters toward Maori. An examination of nineteenth-century Mission Sisters’ Archives does not mention the settler-initiated wars with Maori chief Te Kooti and his followers that were raging throughout the central North Island when the first girls arrived in Napier. What makes this omission even more remarkable was that many of the European pupils whom the sisters taught in Napier would have been the children of soldiers of the 14th and 65th Regiments. However, Euphrasie’s ongoing efforts to ensure that the Providence was adequately financed, along with Father Reignier’s decision “to hand over in perpetuity the entire administration and direction of the Providence” to the Mission Sisters, indicate their commitment to the education of young Maori women.

In 1901 eleven young Maori girls began to board at St. Joseph’s School in Opunake. In 1944 the school was relocated to nearby Waitara. The house diary reports that in January 1944 “the first boarders began to arrive. The first pupil was Polly Taputa, a young maid of twelve who had never been to school before.” The school was closed in 1961 because government finances were not available to pay for a new building, and the boarders returned to Opunake, which in turn ceased to operate two years later. In addition, throughout the first six decades of the twentieth century, Mission Sisters undertook to teach in parish schools situated in more remote parts of the country where there were significant Maori populations, and they often were involved in catechetical camps for Maori primary school pupils during the school holidays.

**Attitudes.** But what did such ministry say about the sisters’ attitudes toward Maori? Some insight may be gleaned from two theses written before World War II. The first, by Marjorie Leach (Sister Mary Florienne) in 1932, mentions “numerous stories of these early days [that] illustrate the ferocity, covetousness and revengefulness of the uncivilized Maori.” When Ngati Haua chief Wiremu Tamihana (1802–66) converted to Christianity, it was “the result of conviction, not merely of custom, had a pro-

Maori Students, The Providence, Napier, ca. 1870
found effect upon his character and provided him with a standard of conduct by which he scrupulously regulated all the actions of his life.”27 Her thesis explores Tamihana’s peace-making efforts during the troubled period of the Land Wars of the 1860s. As Tamihana’s death approached, she described him as “full of a pathetic melancholy, unselﬁsh as he had ever been, one of Nature’s noblemen, a true and simple-minded Christian.” Her thesis highlights her compassion for Tamihana, coupled with gratitude for his conversion to Christianity, but there is little critical appreciation of the cultural, economic, and political diminishment experienced by Maori as the settler population grew.28

Ellen Murphy (Sister Mary Simeon) completed a thesis on Bishop Pompallier in 1932. In it she commended him for “the good he did among Maori, not only in evangelizing but in teaching them the art of civilization” (italics mine).29 Like Leach, she recorded that Maori were thought to be “bloodthirsty natives.” Though sympathetic toward the plight of Maori in the face of increasing numbers of settlers, she was accepting of the church’s right to engage in ministering to “spiritual needs of the colonists” as the struggle for land further alienated Maori from the church.30 Writing at a much later period, Moana Maniapoto-Jackson, a student from 1974 to 1977 at St. Joseph’s Maori Girls’ College, stated that she did not think that “the nuns had a deep cultural understanding and there was only one Maori nun there.” At the same time, she comments that the sisters “emphasized Maori culture—mainly through action songs and language.”31

In 1950 the ﬁrst young Maori woman sought admission into the Mission Sisters, followed eventually by seven others. With one exception, all entered religious life before 1965. Two died at a relatively young age, four left, and two have remained. Anecdotal evidence suggests that before Vatican II they were expected to ﬁt into the dominant French/Irish Catholic culture then characteristic of Mission Sisters, often at great personal cost. From the 1980s onward, when the Mission Sisters moved toward biculturalism, there was a greater emphasis on recognizing the culture and place of Maori sisters in the community of the Mission Sisters.

This brief overview of the Mission Sisters’ relationship with Maori suggests that before Vatican II the sisters had a genuine concern about Maori, but their attitude was probably best described as maternalistic. Furthermore, they would not have recognized the serious injustices incurred by Maori through settler-initiated legislation that deprived them of land and a political voice and that seriously threatened their culture.

**Relationship with Maori After Vatican II**

Vatican II (1962–65) taught that the renewal of religious life was dependent on “a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community,” as well as “an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times” (Perfectæ caritatis, no. 2).32 This teaching allowed the sisters to reassess their ministry in NZ. For example, the 1966 Provincial Chapter recommended that work with Maori should be encouraged. The chapter report stipulated that “each year some free places may be offered to Maori pupils in our secondary schools. Communities should visit and take a special interest in some Maori families. Arrangements to be made at local level.”33 Though it was possible to discern in the call for more involvement with Maori elements of a maternalistic approach, it nevertheless also suggested a change in apostolic priorities and a recognition of the deteriorating situation of urban Maori.

The impact of the methodology of liberation theology was also signiﬁcant, particularly its insistence that theology had to confront history with all its contradictions and injustices. In 1976 the New Zealand Bishops’ Conference sought to assess the strength of racist attitudes in the European Catholic population, but even though the 1976 Arbuckle Report highlighted the reality of racism in the church, there was no effective follow-up.34 By the late 1970s, Maori activist groups began challenging the dominant European society to reassess its role in NZ’s history. Various Maori and European activist groups, along with some church organizations, undertook the difﬁcult task of educating the wider church about the history of Maori land loss. The controversy engendered in New Zealand by the 1981 visit of the Springbok rugby team from racially segregated South Africa further conscientized some Mission Sisters as to the racist nature of European society.

**Biculturalism.** Biculturalism, which is difﬁcult to deﬁne, emerged as a movement by Maori to assert their own cultural, ethnic, and material identity. Furthermore, as Maori are the tangata whenua, or indigenous people, their culture has a greater signiﬁcance than that of other ethnic groups who settled later in NZ. There is Maori culture, and there are other cultures, hence the expression “biculturalism.” If NZ is to be bicultural, then honor and respect are owed Maori as the indigenous peoples. Many Europeans, however, because of their numerical superiority and cultural dominance, found it difﬁcult to accept Maori claims in respect of biculturalism. Biculturalism meant that Maori rejected the European claim that Maori were a minority ethnic group in NZ.

To encourage Mission Sisters to accept the bicultural nature of New Zealand, between 1982 and 1994 various Provincial Leadership Teams were responsible for several initiatives aimed at conscientizing them to this issue. First, Mission Sisters were encouraged to participate in antiracism seminars initiated by the Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, in 1987 the Provincial Leadership Team actively sought and appointed a Maori principal to Hātō Hohepa (St. Joseph’s Maori
Girls’ College). Throughout its 120 years’ existence, Mission Sisters had always served as principals in the school, but it was apparent as 1990 approached that it was no longer appropriate for Europeans to continue to administer a Maori college. Third, in that same year, the Provincial Leadership Team decided to send two sisters to Ruatoria, an isolated East Coast Maori community, while another sister was missioned to live and work with Maori at Kaikoura. Fourth, one of the important awareness-raising initiatives was the decision to research land titles of congregation-owned land to see if it had been confiscated from Maori after the Land Wars or had been bought at unjust prices. In 1992 the Mission Sisters recognized and apologized for past injustices at a hui (meeting) with Ngāi Tahu Maori in Kaikoura, and they donated money toward the establishment of a Ngāi Tahu archival resource. Though the sisters had worked in a variety of tribal areas since 1865, a large number of houses had been established on Ngāi Tahu land that had been purchased by the first settler governments for very little. Mission Sister Mary Martin McCort, of Tainui Maori, described the hui: “The powhiri [welcome] in the whare nui [meetinghouse] proceeded with dignity, and was followed by prayer and exchange of gifts out on the marae [sacred space in front of the meetinghouse]. We had brought a symbolic gift as well as the kōhā [gift of money]. This symbolic gift was a sapling from the oak-tree planted by Euphrasie Barbier so many years before. For myself, as a person from Pukekohe, there was a sign of unity too, in seeing the red soil of Pukekohe around the sapling being received and covered by the black soil of Kaikoura.”

In 1988 two hui were held at St. Joseph’s Maori Girls’ College for promoting bicultural awareness in the Catholic Church. The meetings were attended by parish and diocesan representatives, members of various national and diocesan groups interested in justice and peace, and representatives of the Maori and Pacific Island communities. The meetings, which were not initiated by the Leadership Team but were encouraged by it, received mixed reactions as to their effectiveness in promoting biculturalism. One journalist claimed that participants were being subjected to “the process of forcible conversion [to biculturalism] reminiscent of the Holy Inquisition,” while Manuka Henare, Maori executive officer of the Catholic Commission for Evangelization, Justice, and Development, affirmed the hui as “an opportunity for European Catholics to meet, discuss, to learn and plan for a bicultural future.” Marion Wood of the Urban Training Centre for Christian Ministry Inc. reported to the Leadership Team her concern about the hui’s male, particularly clerical, domination of the process and the lack of input from women. She believed that there was no process that enabled European participants to recognize the strength, often unconscious, of their own racism. She concluded that the process was essentially a top-down effort that would do little to foster understanding of the bicultural reality of NZ.

Work for justice. As the new millennium approached, Mission Sisters were less actively engaged in fostering biculturalism. On the one hand, many Maori now favored sovereignty rather than biculturalism; on the other, there was a lack of suitable personnel to work with Maori, and new congregational mission priorities superseded earlier goals. However, when Maori aspirations for sovereignty were frustrated by the two major political parties, their policies galvanized Mission Sisters to become more active politically. In 2004 they expressed this new commitment through their participation in the fight to ensure that Maori retained their customary ownership of the foreshore (the part of the shore between high- and low-water marks) and seabed. In the same year, some sisters met with Maori and European activists as a response to an important speech of Don Brash, the leader of the parliamentary Opposition, calling on Europeans to close the chapter on biculturalism in NZ.

This survey of the changing attitudes of Mission Sisters toward Maori highlights the impact of Vatican II and of church teaching after Vatican II that insisted that works of justice were as important as the more traditional works of charity. The methodology of liberation theology, with its emphasis on analysis of historical, economic, political, and cultural realities, provided an important tool for Mission Sisters in their reassessment of their ministries. While the ecclesial dimension of mission was still significant, it had come to mean more than a simple obedience to episcopal polities as Mission Sisters sought to reframe what mission to Maori required in the light of conciliar teaching, emerging theological developments, and, most important, the Maori call for justice.

Notes

1. Les Religieuses de Notre Dame des Missions (The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions), a Catholic congregation of women, was founded by Euphrasie Barbier in 1861 in Lyon, France. The first overseas mission was to New Zealand. In NZ they are usually referred to as Mission Sisters, a practice I follow here.

2. The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Maori chiefs and the British Crown. The meaning of the treaty has been contested since its signing. Maori believed it would strengthen their authority and enhance their sovereignty. But once the settler population outnumbered Maori, settlers tended to ignore the treaty.


5. Davidson, Christianity in Aotearoa, p. 17.


8. See Bishop Viard’s letter, July 3, 1858, to the Marist superior general, Father Favre, Society of Mary Archives, Rome.


10. In nineteenth-century industrialized France the Providencees provided vocational training for poor women and orphans. Father Reignier chose to adapt this model for Maori girls and girls of mixed-race parentage.


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World’s Religions After September 11: A Global Congress.
Montreal, Quebec, September 11–15, 2006

Frances S. Adeney

“World’s Religions After September 11: A Global Congress,” organized by Professor Arvind Sharma and his colleagues at McGill University, Montreal, began on the fifth anniversary of the terrorist bombings of the New York City Trade Towers and the Pentagon in 2001. An international group of participants—including Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian scholars, religious leaders, and laypersons—addressed the topic of religious change, especially the influence of the terrorist attacks on societies and their understanding of religion.

The Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University has been active in sponsoring events and ongoing projects that bring leaders of the world’s religions together for dialogue. In 1998 they formulated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World’s Religions, which continues to circulate among religious leaders and scholars. That declaration has been presented and discussed at numerous conferences, including the Parliament of World Religions in Barcelona in 2004, as well as the recent global congress, which devoted a number of panels and sessions to the topic of human rights and religion.

Themes
The conference revolved around four themes that were presented in opening plenary sessions, individual papers, panel discussions, and the concluding session. The first plenary session stressed the importance of (1) the search for commonalities among religions seeking peace, especially in the political arena. The presenter, Iranian lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, has spent a lifetime seeking peace among religious factions in Iran. Two other plenary speakers, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Reverend Didiji of Swadhyaya Parivar, are leaders of new religious movements. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar stressed (2) the unity we can find in our common humanity. Didiji focused on (3) the importance of nonviolent, socially engaged religion. At the final plenary session, Arvind Sharma summarized the issues of the conference, suggesting that the world congress could help move all religious persons toward (4) support for a universal declaration of human rights by the world’s religions. Religions, he said, are a negative force when they fight among themselves, but they can become a positive force when they work together.

Many of the presentations considered the connection between the political realm and religions. One topic receiving much attention was how religions could focus their resources on implementing human rights and how they could work with other religions in this area. Another was how interreligious debate could lead to forms of just-war theory relevant for the current age of terrorist warfare. The specific issue of how to protect religious groups from

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indiscriminate or dishonest proselytizing also received attention, as Hindus and others are feeling pressured by the evangelistic methods of other religious groups.

**Christian Involvement**

Christians have discussed these issues in many settings. Bringing their voice to this interreligious setting, though, provided a witness that contributed to and balanced other views. Harvard professor Harvey Cox presented a plenary on Pentecostalism in which he outlined Amos Yong’s Trinitarian view of Christian witness. Donald Posterski, from World Vision Canada, presented a Christian view of evangelism. The Interfaith Commission of the U.S. National Council of Christian Churches (NCCC) presented two panels on the topic of forgiveness—one from the point of view of ecumenical dialogue, the other, interfaith dialogue. Lyndon Harris, rector of St. Paul’s Chapel at Ground Zero in New York City, presented his plan for a garden of forgiveness at the site. Others who spoke outlined views of forgiveness and restitution from their respective traditions. Participants from the United Church of Canada met with the NCCC Interfaith Commission, which held its biannual meeting in conjunction with the global congress. They expressed appreciation for the Christian presence and presentations at the world congress.

Conferences such as World’s Religions After September 11 are becoming increasingly popular in our post-9/11 world. At such events people from different religions can learn from other traditions and can have their voices heard in a productive conversation around issues of religion, politics, and peace-seeking. It was welcome to see a stronger Christian presence at this congress than was evident in 2004 at the Parliament of World’s Religions in Barcelona. Christian leaders, mission organizers, scholars, and laypersons concerned with how religion is affecting international relations participated in the give-and-take of dialogue at this event. Christian scholars presented their views on many topics: just war, forgiveness, human rights, evangelism, and self-advocacy.

**Missiological Issues**

As Christians contribute to such events, missiologists and missionaries need to ask a further question: How does Christian mission need to change in light of 9/11 and the impact that terrorism is having on religions around the world? The answer involves three issues recurrent at the conference, issues that deserve the attention of missiologists: proselytism, religion and politics, and war and peace.

The first issue, proselytism, received a good deal of attention at the conference. The term was generally defined quite negatively, especially in the numerous questions posed to Christian presenters by Indian participants. In recent uses of this word, “proselytism” involves either coercion or deception. Christian evangelism, Islamic da'wah, and the Buddhist invitation to “come and see” need to be distinguished by proponents of these religions from coercive or deceptive “proselytism.” This task is crucial for Christian missionaries, pastors, and academics as we move increasingly into a political climate charged with religious overtones.

Some Christian sessions at the conference addressed this issue directly. Donald Posterski distinguished proselytism, which he defined as including manipulation, enticement, or coercion to get persons to change their beliefs, from Christian evangelism, which celebrates religious freedom and respects the basic right to change one’s beliefs. Another session explored the benefits that evangelistic meetings provide for Christians as they tell the story of their faith in the community. A third Christian session, arguing that self-advocacy was practiced by all religions, outlined a program of “fair practices” for advocacy that every religion could follow.

Whether presenting academic papers, working as a missionary, or doing a “tent-making” ministry in another country, Christians from West and East, North and South need to pay attention to the context in which they find themselves. Especially since 9/11, there are settings in which verbal proclamation of the Christian Gospel can irritate or even provoke dissension or violence among persons of different religious persuasions. Care needs to be taken, especially in Hindu and Buddhist areas, to avoid giving any perception of aggressive evangelism. In Muslim or Jewish areas of the Middle East, Christians must work to understand the political and religious conflicts, which may color views of Christian presence and evangelism. In post-Communist areas of China and the former Soviet Union, Christians need to be careful not to offend the house churches or put local citizens in harm’s way.

Second, Christian mission efforts must take into account perceptions of the importance of religion in the political arena. Since 9/11, political tensions between the Middle East and the United States have increasingly been described in hostile religious terms. As the fear of terrorism becomes a part of life for many around the world, religions become implicated in these fears. Questions of the role of Islam in terrorist activities and accusations against the United States, perceived as a Christian nation, of abrogating the human rights of political detainees cannot be avoided by Christians. Any idea of missionaries maintaining an apolitical stance in our post-9/11 world cannot be sustained. Christian missionary efforts, however, can be made more sensitive to take this charged political climate into account. Missionaries can become well informed, showing Christian compassion with humility and respecting the complexity of sensitive situations.

Finally, the issue of war and peace needs to be analyzed with new eyes in our post-9/11 world. The congress presented sessions on just-war theory and on peacekeeping in an age of terrorism. Sessions were held on the religious bases of human rights and on the loss of human rights in times of war. Forgiveness was discussed as a healing tool at Ground Zero, and gardens of forgiveness were proposed for other sites of conflict and terror around the world. Christians spoke out on these issues at the congress. But this is just a beginning. Analyzing terrorism as a mode of war and developing ways to counteract it are not solely the jobs of academic theologians. Missionaries who are working in areas of conflict must address the particular issues of war and peace on the ground where they are living and working.

The task of addressing these issues is not one for the timid. As these mission questions are asked, Christians need to pray, discuss, devise new tools of compassion, and depend on the power of God in communities and in the world to lead us in new directions.

As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers. Christian presence and participation in this conference furthered the cause of peace among religions, as well as contributing substantive ideas to the topics under discussion. The congress brought together people of different religions, political persuasions, and cultures around issues crucial to us all. As Christian missiologists and missionaries, we can take the next step by boldly addressing the mission issues raised by the conference.
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Willi Henkel, O.M.I.

I was born on January 17, 1930, in Wittges, a German village seventeen kilometers east of Fulda, as the third of four sons. My father, Karl, was a worker repairing streets. He died in 1961, and my mother, Mary, died in 1953. I received my primary school training at Elters (1936–43). When I was a boy about twelve years of age, a Benedictine father of the abbey at St. Ottilien tried to recruit me for their junior seminary. Since I was so young, however, my parents failed to give their agreement. Thus I received my secondary school training in Fulda at the Wnfriedschule (Realgymnasiale Aufbauschule, 1943–51).

During my secondary school I became familiar with St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, often witnessing pilgrimages to his tomb in the cathedral of Fulda, especially during the first week of June. In my heart the wish arose to become a missionary. Near Fulda, in Hünfeld, was Bonifatiuskloster, a house of studies of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, where oblates studied philosophy and theology to be sent as missionaries in many parts of the world. Also in Hünfeld is the tomb of Robert Streit, O.M.I., the well-known founder of Bibliotheca Missionum, who died in 1930.

In April 1951 I entered the novitiate of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Maria Engelport, near Treis-Karden, where I received my first oblate training. In April 1952 I was sent to study at Hünfeld.

Student in Rome and Münster

After being at Hünfeld for only a few weeks, I was greatly surprised when, in 1952, my superiors sent me to Rome to continue the study of philosophy and theology. In Rome I lived in a community of one hundred students who came from all the parts of the world. It was only seven years after the end of World War II, but I experienced a great fraternal spirit in that community. Missionaries from all over used to speak to us about their missions. We students had the great opportunity of speaking and practicing several modern languages, especially Italian, French, English, and Spanish. My first task then, however, was to study philosophy at the Gregorian University. The lectures were given in Latin, and it took me a while before I could follow them well. In June 1955 I received the licentiate in philosophy. I continued the study of theology, again with the courses in Latin, and took a greater interest in these two disciplines. Four years later, in June 1959, I earned the licentiate in theology. I had already received priestly ordination on July 13, 1958.

Having completed my studies, I opted for the Oblate mission in South Africa. However, I was asked to return to my German province of origin. In 1960 I became a member of the Oblate periodical Der Weinberg. Soon its director, Bernhard Willenbrink, O.M.I., asked me to study missiology at the University of Münster (1961–64). For my doctoral dissertation, Thomas Ohm, O.S.B., my major professor, proposed that I study the idea of conversion in John Henry Newman. I completed the dissertation under the direction of his successor, Joseph Glazik, M.S.C., and received the doctorate in February 1968.1

To my great surprise, I was asked in early 1966 to join the three-man team of editors of Bibliotheca Missionum and Bibliografia Missionaria in Rome: Johannes Rommerskirchen, O.M.I., Joseph Metzler, O.M.I., and Nikoiau Kowsalsky, O.M.I., who died in June 1966 at the early age of fifty-five.

Assistant at the Pontifical Missionary Library

Returning to Rome, I became a staff member of the Oblate international house of studies and also an assistant (1966–72) to Rommerskirchen, who was the head of the Pontifical Missionary Library. At the time the library was housed in the palace of Propaganda Fide, next door to the archives of Propaganda Fide (now called the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples). During my first year I enrolled in the School of Library Science of the Vatican Library. In July 1967 I obtained the diploma in library science. I also learned practical work in a library.

When I arrived in Rome, Rommerskirchen was working on volumes 25–30 of Bibliotheca Missionum (1916–74). I helped him and Metzler in the preparation of the indexes. At the same time I assisted him in collecting the material and preparing the indexes of the yearly Bibliografia Missionaria. I still remember quite well visiting major Roman libraries each year with Rommerskirchen and Metzler for the preparation of Bibliografia Missionaria, which made it possible to see firsthand the new publications. I became acquainted with special bibliographies, including the bibliography in the quarterly journal International Review of Mission. I also took into consideration the book references that appeared in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Many missiological journals carried book reviews, which were very useful. The ideal would have been to control every single reference, which later on was easier to do with computers.

Director of the Pontifical Missionary Library

On June 1, 1972, I was appointed director of the Pontifical Missionary Library of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, a position I held until 2000. Since its founding in 1622, Propaganda Fide possessed a library which from the outset included a good number of books on the missions. In addition, the missionary pope Pius XI (1922–39) wished to give a new impulse to the missions by planning a missionary exhibition in the Vatican during the 1925 Holy Year. He asked for a special book section on missions, and Streit was put in charge of its organization. Pius XI asked that “the greatest possible number of publications concerning the missionary apostolate and the Catholic Missions, those of the past and those of the present, as well as those books which had any connection with the subject,” be gathered together. His appeal received a generous response, as close to 30,000 volumes, written in many languages, arrived at the exhibition. The Vatican Library and the Pontifical Urban College, as well as many religious orders, sent rare and valuable books. “Never in the history of the Church and the Missions had such a treasure of missionary literature been assembled.”2

At the close of the missionary exposition, Pius XI decided that the literary section should remain in Rome as a center for missionary research housed in the palace of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. (The section of missionary art was transferred

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1 Willi Henkel, O.M.I., is the former director of the Pontifical Missionary Library.

2 International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 31, No. 2

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My overall goal was that the Missionary Library be an efficient instrument of mission research.

taught Latin American mission history at the university.) In light of these needs, Cardinal A. Rossi, prefect of the congregation and also chancellor of Urban University, proposed that the Pontifical Missionary Library be united with the library of Urban University and that a new building be constructed on the campus of the university that would house both libraries.3 The construction was finished in June 1979, and at the end of September the libraries were moved into their new premises. I was appointed director of both libraries. The official opening on October 1, 1980, was presided over by Cardinal Joseph Höfﬁner, archbishop of Cologne, with the participation of a great number of bishops who had come to Rome for the synod of bishops held that year. Höfﬁner interpreted the new library as a symbol of sciences, of peoples and cultures, and of salvation.4 The two libraries are housed on different floors and continue to maintain their respective functions.

My overall goal was that the Missionary Library be an efficient instrument of missionary research. This goal should be apparent even in the reading room, which contains a large selection of bibliographies and dictionaries. An important item is the Dictionary Catalog of the Missionary Research Library, a collection which is now located in the Union Theological Seminary in New York.

A special grant made it possible to acquire 50,000 microfiches. This acquisition includes much invaluable information from the Council for World Mission Archives, 1775–1940; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London); the IMC/CBMS Archives; the Primitive Methodist Society, London; and the Catholic Church in Indonesia: Archives of the Archbishopric of Batavia/Jakarta, 1807–1949.

Bibliographia Missionaria

With my appointment as director of the Missionary Library, I became the person on the team who took over the major responsibility for Bibliographia Missionaria (BM; in 1986 we changed the title from Italian to Latin: now Bibliographia Missionaria). Previ-ously, the indexes had been prepared in Italian every four years. In 1986 I decided that the time had come for yearly indexes and for preparing the technical apparatus of the volumes in English, not Italian.

Since these were the first years after the Second Vatican Council, it was also a time of change in the concept of mission, which now seemed to require an ecumenical outlook. The changes in mission are reﬂected in the new categories and subcategories that we began using at BM, as well as in the new subjects covered in the index. Categories added included the following:

canon law and human rights
ecumenical dialogue and mission, with a subdivision on dialogue with the Jews
history of mission, which entered a new era
mission and atheism
mission and cultures (anthropology, sociology)
mission and development
mission and dialogue, with subdivisions on religions in general: Buddhism, Chinese religions, Hinduism, Islam;
later, “African Religions” was added
the missionary
missionary cooperation
missionary societies
missionary spirituality
pastoral topics: methods, evangelization, catechesis, liturgy
theology of mission, which corresponds to the former “fundamental missionary doctrine”
also: various new topics, such as art, linguistics, mass media, medicine, and schools

Additional categories deal with the continents and the mission countries, including the many new nations. The index of subjects soon included new themes, especially under theology: Third World theology, plus African, Asian, Latin American, and other local theologies. “Inculcation” first appeared in the mid-1970s, replacing “accommodation” and “adaptation.” In the 1980s liberation and the theology of liberation received worldwide attention. Missiologists now focus their attention on local churches. Ecumenical initiatives in mission appear at the international level.7 Church growth and statistics of mission receive increased attention.4 Spiritual values of non-Christian religions appeared as a discovery of Vatican Council II.

BM indicates the context of radical social change. A new period of decolonization began in the 1950s, resulting in independent, single states. Pope Paul VI took up the theme of development in his encyclical Populorum progressio (1967). “Indeed, the political, economic and technical changes had social effects of inconceivable dimensions: misery and hunger, unemployment and housing shortages, flight from rural areas and urbanization, dissolution of traditional systems and values etc. not to mention new dependencies.”

The 1974 Synod of Bishops in Rome discussed the theme “Justice in the World,” a topic of intense debate during the following years. It was presented in the apostolic exhortation Evangelii nuntiandi (1975) as well as in the plenary gatherings of the Latin American Bishops (CELAM) in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979). Many ecumenical conferences also dealt with justice and the demands it makes on missionaries. Bangkok 1972/73 was especially important (a conference on mission and evangelism of the World Council of Churches), as well as the WCC Assemblies at Nairobi (1975) and Vancouver (1983).
BM reflects a changing theology of mission worldwide. There is now intense interest in the Trinitarian aspects of mission as they are expressed in the missionary command of Christ (Matt. 28:19–20). Christology is now presented in a missionary context. One can find anthropological links between mission and the strivings of human nature; missionaries should impose nothing that does not correspond to their own deepest human reality. A new awareness of dialogue arose in mission, and thus missionaries propose the Christian message while respecting the free will of non-Christians. The role of missionaries is reconsidered in their service. Writers discuss local missionaries and their formation. These changes and many more, as well as a mood of crisis at the end of the 1960s and 1970s, were taken into consideration by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical Redemptoris missio (1991).

Through BM I was able to establish contacts with many missiological centers. Their publications opened my horizon and stimulated my work. I consider it a great privilege to have been able to meet many persons whom I first knew from their publications; some of them became close friends. In 1980 I hosted an important consultation of invited specialists at the Pontifical Missionary Library to discuss “the structural problem” in mission studies, which is “of major concern in the electronic age of the ‘new information superhighway.’” These and other concerns of “Documentation, Archives, and Bibliography” were studied and “sponsored by the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS). This consultation was so successful that the entire IAMS came to Rome for a major conference in July 1988.” This support encouraged me to computerize the data of BM, which began in 1991.

**URBE: An Electronic Network**

In January 1993 the Library of the Urban University joined the Roman electronic network URBE (Unione Romana Biblioteche Ecclesiastiche), which was officially inaugurated in May 1994. With some extra help, most of the data of the Pontifical Missionary Library were put on computer. Since the library offers material in many languages, a new catalog of topics was developed in order to facilitate research. In 2004 we made 100,000 records available. This number includes many articles that were published in multi-author works and in periodicals, whose authors sent them to the Missionary Library. As for the languages, the data of the Chinese catalog were the first ones to be made available on computer. It is hoped that other non-European languages will soon follow. This work was made possible with the intelligent help of generous collaborators, to whom I am deeply indebted. Their generosity helped the library to offer more user-friendly service.

In December 2000 Marek Rostkowski, O.M.I., was appointed as my successor, becoming director of the Pontifical Missionary Library and editor of BM. With him arrives a new generation that is more familiar with computers. I conclude with the wish that IAMS and the International Association of Catholic Missiologists may continue to give their benevolent attention and strong support to bibliographic work in the new electronic age.

**Notes**

11. I would like to mention that the entire bibliography of the *International Review of Mission*, from 1912, is now available online, which enables research by author, title, topic, or keywords from some 70,000 records. See Anderson, “The Role of Bibliographia Missionaria,” p. 436.
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The Legacy of Melvill Horne

Suzanne Schwarz

The following poem published in the *Evangelical Magazine* in September 1795 celebrated the formation of the interdenominational Missionary Society and the new opportunities it presented for spreading the Gospel of Protestant Christianity to the globe:

O! that from Britain now might shine
This heavenly light, this truth divine!
Till the whole universe shall be
But one great temple, Lord, for Thee!

The legacy of Melvill Horne (1762–1841), a contemporary of William Carey (1761–1834), lies principally in his role as a missionary advocate and publicist who helped to foster this renewed phase of overseas Christian expansion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Horne’s *Letters on Missions; Addressed to the Protestant Ministers of the British Churches*, published in 1794, stimulated extensive debate on the nature and purpose of overseas missions and provided the main catalyst for the formation of the Missionary Society (later renamed the London Missionary Society). Although building on the work of his Continental predecessors, Horne moved debate in new directions by calling for a pan-evangelical response to missions. Horne’s account of his experimental missionary praxis in Sierra Leone also offered guidance that informed the organization of later missionary ventures to the South Seas and Africa. He was regarded as an important source of intelligence by both the Missionary Society and the Society for Missions to Africa and the East Instituted by Members of the Established Church (later known as the Church Missionary Society). The republication of *Letters on Missions* in America in 1797, 1815, and 1834 reflects the popularity and continuing relevance of his work. An edition published in London in 1824 asserted that the book “at the time of its first publication . . . was eminently instrumental, in first kindling and extending the flame of missionary zeal that has since that period spread so widely through our country.”

Although *Letters on Missions* enjoyed a far wider contemporary circulation than Carey’s celebrated *Enquiry of 1792*, Horne has received comparatively little attention in the historiography of missions. His work helped to erode contemporary prejudice against missions and created a culture in which the moral imperative to convert heathen nations became an accepted and respectable feature of religious activity in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Horne was aware of this changing climate of opinion. In a sermon preached before the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in June 1811, Horne observed that missions, which were “at first treated as wild and romantic, begin now to be considered feasible, as well as laudable.”

Development of a Missionary Impulse

Horne was born in Antigua in 1762, and the family moved to England following his father’s death. His family background and early education in the West Indies may have influenced his later predilection for missionary work. He was the nephew of Nathaniel Gilbert III (ca. 1721–74), who, inspired by a meeting with John Wesley, introduced Methodist preaching among an estimated three hundred slaves on his Antiguan plantation. Horne was admitted on trial as a Methodist itinerant preacher in the Liverpool circuit in 1784 and subsequently preached in the Chester and Wolverhampton circuits. Ordained to the ministry of the Church of England in 1786, Horne became curate of Madeley in Shropshire following the death of John Fletcher.

Horne’s Arminian eschatology and acceptance of the Wesleyan view of a world parish are reflected in his decision to undertake a mission to the west coast of Africa. In March 1792 Horne explained to his parishioners that he was obliged “to forsake all I hold dear, and to encounter all I esteem dreadful in life, if peradventure, the wretched sons of bleeding Africa may be brought to flee for sanctuary under the wings of the God of Israel.” Horne’s correspondence with his parishioners indicates that his missionary impulse was long-standing in nature. His network of evangelical contacts included Thomas Coke, whose enthusiasm for overseas missions had been articulated almost a decade earlier in his *Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions Among the Heathens* (1783). Coke had attempted to organize a mission to Africa in 1778, and the development in 1787 of the “Province of Freedom” at Sierra Leone as a colony for freed slaves revived his interest in an African venture. Coke informed Ezekiel Cooper of Horne in November 1791, writing that “we are going to send missionaries to Sierra Leone in Africa, where the English are establishing a very capital settlement. The Company has chosen two chaplains. One of them is a zealous Methodist preacher of my recommendation.” The other chaplain was Nathaniel Gilbert (1761–1807), who traveled out to Sierra Leone in advance of Horne, his cousin.

Despite a conviction that his mission was divinely sanctioned, Horne expressed anxiety about the perceived trials that awaited him in Africa. He compared his African mission to a descent into the “burning-fiery furnace,” and this reference to Daniel 3 may have reflected his hope that he would emerge unscathed from the ordeal. Embarking for Africa without any training or practical preparation, Horne prayed that his work would be sustained by “wisdom, patience and fortitude.” When he sailed for Africa in July 1792, he expressed sadness at parting from his wife, Nelly, and his infant son, Edward. It was planned that they would join him after a short period.

A Mission to Sierra Leone

Horne accepted the appointment as chaplain to the colony at Sierra Leone as a springboard for his missionary work. As one of the stated ambitions of the Sierra Leone Company was to diffuse “European light, knowledge, and improvement” to Africans through “religious and moral instruction,” Horne may have expected a close and harmonious relationship between his missionary plans and company objectives. He intended to combine his duties as chaplain at Freetown with a missionary role among the Tenne people of Sierra Leone. Prior to his departure for Africa he considered the possibility that he would “go farther into the country among the natives, build myself an hut, and try what living among them will do.”

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The Court of Directors of the Sierra Leone Company provided John Clarkson, superintendent of the colony, with a glowing appraisal of Horne’s qualities and his anticipated usefulness in the colony. He was introduced to the settlers at divine service on September 9, 1792, and preached to a “crowded congregation” in the afternoon. Contrary to his original plans, Horne was required to take over all the duties as chaplain, as Gilbert had returned to England on company business. His cure included a number of European company employees and over one thousand self-liberated slaves from Nova Scotia divided among Baptist, Arminian Methodists, and Calvinistic Methodist congregations. Horne’s entanglement in the fraught and highly politicized relationship between company officials and settlers weakened his influence, particularly as he was openly critical of the settlers’ behavior. He complained to Mary Fletcher, widow of John Fletcher, that he was required to be “an instrument of civil government” as well as a minister of Christ, and that “what with the religion and the politics of the colony, I am ready to throw the business up in despair and to take a hasty leave of the place.”

Within a short period of Horne’s arrival at Freetown, tensions arose between the demands of the chaplainship and his missionary ambitions. In November 1792 Clarkson complained that Horne neglected the instruction of the Nova Scotian preachers and spent too much time “amongst the natives who do not understand English.” Horne felt constrained by the demands of regular preaching and complained bitterly that he was unable to itinerate among local Africans. He became so demoralized that he managed to preach only one sermon to Africans, through an interpreter. This sermon, preached at Signor Domingo’s town at Royema in January 1793, was dismissed as futile by two contemporary observers, Anna Maria Falconbridge and Isaac DuBois. However, the publication of the sermon entitled “We Preach Christ Crucified” in the Baptist Annual Register of September 1795 was influential, as it helped to promote British evangelical interest in the cause of heathen conversion in Africa. By February 1793 Horne was convinced that he had been misled by his own enthusiasm and began to doubt whether he had the piety to sustain this “apostolick warfare.”

**Horne’s Missionary Advocacy**

Unfulfilled in his missionary ambitions, Horne returned home after fourteen months. Although bitterly disappointed by the failure of his mission, he used his experience to compose a series of nine letters advising prospective candidates about the purpose, design, and conduct of overseas missions. He was sanguine that an exposition of his dismal missionary record would support the efforts of “men wiser and better than myself.” His main intention was to raise awareness of the urgency of the global commission and promote an active missionary culture. He challenged the lethargy of the clergy and their apparent indifference to the spiritual plight of heathen peoples. He berated his fellow ministers for their materialism and neglect of the apostolic commission. Horne reiterated Carey’s argument that a minister was a “servant of God” and duty bound to preach wherever God commanded. Displaying a postmillennial eschatology, he argued that “latter ends of the world are fallen upon us.” He was optimistic that preaching the Gospel would usher in an age when Christianity was the faith of all nations and peoples.

The originality of Horne’s missionary legacy lay in his appeal for interdenominational cooperation among Protestant ministers to facilitate the global spread of the Gospel. He appealed to “liberal Churchmen and conscientious Dissenters, pious Calvinists and pious Arminians” to “embrace with fraternal arms” and to concentrate on making Christians rather than converts to particular denominations. In the context of bitter sectarian division in late eighteenth-century Britain, this appeal for ecumenism in missions was groundbreaking and controversial. When the society best known as the Baptist Missionary Society was formed just two years earlier, it was asserted in the contrary that, “in the present state of Christendom, it seems that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a mission.”

In other aspects of his work Horne made no claim to originality. His writings were important in drawing attention to the missionary practice and advocacy of a number of his predecessors. He recommended Carey’s *Enquiry* to his readers, particularly as “that gentleman has given to his precepts the force of example, by actually embarking in a mission to India.” In common with Carey, Horne acknowledged the tradition of missionary work that was already well underway in continental Europe. In particular, he highlighted the outstanding piety, perseverance, courage and self-sacrifice of Moravian missionaries. When Horne visited Bristol before his departure for Africa, he was given a copy of A. G. Spangenberg’s *Account of the Manner in which the Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren, Preach the Gospel and Carry on their Missions Among the Heathen* (1788). Horne’s knowledge of Moravian practice strongly influenced his views on the organization and conduct of missions, which is evident in his recommendation that missionaries should avoid contested points of doctrine and concentrate on preaching the Gospel of Christ crucified. His argument that men “learned and unlearned” could contribute to the cause of missions reflected Moravian practice, but it was also a pragmatic response to the apathy of British clergy. Although his *Letters on Missions* was influential in fostering a missionary identity associated with the artisan classes, it was not Horne’s intention to create such a narrowly defined identity. He wished to inspire missionary vocations among ordained ministers but conceded that “we must be content, for one man of letters, to receive twenty, who have no pretension to learning.”

Horne’s writings also sparked debate on the place of European women in missions. Drawing on his experience in Sierra Leone, Horne was insistent that missionaries should be single, as married men “will always have it in contemplation one day to return to England.” He recommended intermarriage with indigenous women, as he considered that a local female convert could play an active part in the conversion of indigenous populations and withstand hardship better than a European woman. This recommendation met with little contemporary support.

**The Development of Voluntary Societies**

Horne was an early advocate of the formation of voluntary societies, recognizing that they could provide a flexible structure for
the recruitment and support of missionaries. The main practical legacy of his missionary advocacy can be traced in the formation of the interdenominational Missionary Society in September 1795. The Reverend Thomas Heavis and other founder members of this society were impressed by Horne’s plea for ecumenical cooperation. As Roger Martin recognizes, it was Horne’s powerful appeal that provided the key source of inspiration for the formation of the society. Heavis corresponded with Horne shortly after his return from Africa and approximately ten months before Heavis’s favorable review of *Letters on Missions* appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine* in November 1794. The sermons preached on the formation of the Missionary Society in September 1795 echoed Horne’s plea for a pan-evangelical response to missions. David Bogue’s sermonizing on the “funeral of bigotry” encapsulated this new spirit of ecumenism. Bogue, struck by the innovative nature of the interdenominational Missionary Society, claimed that “this is a new thing in the Christian church.”

Horne’s appeal in 1794 for recruits to come forward in large numbers was predicated on the view that the “missionary spirit has not yet warmed the bosom of the Church.” Three years later, when Horne was appointed a director of the Missionary Society, his sermon “The Unsearchable Riches of Christ” again emphasized the shortage of candidates. This problem was still more acute for the CMS, as they lacked a single candidate for missionary service during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Horne accepted an invitation to become a country member of CMS in 1800, a position that accorded more closely with his status as an evangelical minister of the Church of England. Although he had supported the interdenominational Missionary Society from its inception, the dominant influence of Calvinistic dissenters in the society was at odds with Horne’s increasing conformity with Anglican church order and discipline.

Horne expressed concern about the fragile support for missionary work in the Anglican Church. In 1811 he used his anniversary sermon for CMS to challenge the apathy of Anglican clergy and their failure to volunteer for service overseas. He was critical of the reliance on German recruits and pointedly questioned, “Have you, my honoured Brethren, in Africa, or in the East, one English Clergyman, who serves as A MISSIONARY?” He contrasted their reluctance to volunteer with the enthusiasm for missions displayed by the pious laity and was at pains to stress that the demands of the mission field necessitated the service of the most able men.

Horne emphasized the importance of developing a home

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**Personalia**

President George W. Bush awarded the 2006 National Humanities Medal to historian Mark A. Noll and eight other distinguished Americans for their contributions to the humanities. At a White House ceremony on November 9, 2006, the president honored Noll for his “academic concern [for] the interaction of Christianity and culture in 18th- and 19th-century Anglo-American societies,” according to the National Endowment for the Humanities news report. Noll is professor of history at the University of Notre Dame and author of numerous books, including *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (2002). When he taught at Wheaton (Illinois) College, Noll cofounded the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism.

Steve Moore, founder and president of Keep Growing, Inc., Lawrenceville, Georgia, whose background has been in young leader development with a focus on international ministry, was appointed president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, Atlanta. Paul McAughan, president for nearly fifteen years, left the leadership position in December 2005 to become ambassador at large.

On July 7, 2006, the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration, Chennai, conferred a Doctor of Divinity on Daniel Jeyaraj, professor of world Christianity, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts. The academy recognized his groundbreaking research contributions to the study of the first organized Protestant Danish-Halle Mission, in Tranquebar, India. Andover Newton trustees promoted Jeyaraj, an IBMR contributing editor, to full professorship.

Christopher J. Anderson has been appointed Methodist research librarian at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He was previously lecturer in history and religion at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey, and Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

**Announcing**

A conference will be held November 22–24, 2007, in Louvain, Belgium, to consider “research on the architectural staging and spatial implications” of world Christianity, with emphasis on “missionary architecture and space not so much as a backdrop for the missionary encounter, but as an essential part of this encounter in itself.” *Spatializing the Missionary Encounter: The Interaction Between Missionary Work and Space in Colonial Settings* will focus on missionary work of all denominations in colonial settings (1800–1960). Papers exploring new methodologies will be presented from the fields of architectural history, history, mission history, anthropology, geography, and cultural studies. For details, visit www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=153499, or e-mail Bram Cleys, Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, bram.cleys@asro.kuleuven.be.

The Boston University School of Theology and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in November announced a joint doctor of theology (Th.D.) program in missiology. The first students will be admitted for the fall 2007 semester. The degrees for the joint program, designed to prepare professors of mission studies, will be granted by Boston University. Faculty will include Dana L. Robert, M. L. Daneel, and Bryan Stone from Boston University, and Timothy C. Tennent, Peter Kuzmič, and Moonjung Lee from Gordon-Conwell. Robert, codirector with Daneel of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission at Boston University, is an IBMR contributing editor.

To address what he calls the “critical lack of scholarly work recording the historical presence and cultural contributions of Christianity in the region,” chief editor Roger E. Hedlund has been completing the *Dictionary of South Asian Christianity*. A one-volume ecumenical reference work, the forthcoming publication (see www.dharmadeepika.org/dictionary/dictionhome.html) will include contributions from Catholic,
Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal, and indigenous independent writers and editors. In November 2006 Hedlund’s colleague and successor, Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj, was installed as director of the Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies, Chennai, India, which sponsors the dictionary and publishes Dharma Deepika: A South Asian Journal of Missiological Research.

Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches and author of Called to the One Hope: A New Ecumenical Epoch (2006), will speak on the theme “Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity,” April 27–28, 2007, at New College, Edinburgh. The conference will be the latest event in a series of meetings and consultations held in advance of the 2010 Centenary Convention (visit www.towards2010.org.uk) in Edinburgh, which was the venue for the historic World Missionary Conference of 1910. Papers presented at previous conferences are available online (visit www.towards2010.org.uk/papers.htm).


The Boston University School of Theology Library is using an interactive Web site to make classic texts in missiology available. The Boston University Digital Research Archive Christian Mission collection currently contains more than 250 digitized books. View the index of resources at http://digilib.bu.edu/dspace/handle/2144/33; for information on the Center for Global Christianity and Mission, visit www.bu.edu/sth/cgcm/.

The United States Catholic Mission Association recently relocated to the Hecker Center, Washington, D.C. The USCMC will hold its 2007 mission conference October 28–30 in Austin, Texas, with the theme “Are Not Our Hearts Burning? Spirituality of Mission in the 21st Century.” For details, see www.uscatholicmission.org or e-mail meetings@uscatholicmission.org.

View the Web directory, Sources for Research: Missions and World Christianity, at www.library.yale.edu/div/MissionsResources.htm. Suggestions to augment the Website’s listings may be sent to Martha Lund Smalley, Yale Divinity School Library (Martha.Smalley@yale.edu).
holding out the possibility that the collaborative efforts of missionaries with piety, passion, and appropriate practical skills could facilitate the global spread of Christianity. Horne was among the first generation of missionaries in the British phase of revival in

The originality of Horne’s missionary legacy lay in his appeal for interdenominational cooperation to spread the Gospel.

the late eighteenth century,4 and Letters on Missions provided an instructional guide for early mission strategists. The directors of the Missionary Society considered that Horne had provided a valuable service by using his “painful experience” to draw attention to mistakes in the design and conduct of missions.5 A practical legacy of Horne’s writings during this early phase of the modern missionary movement was to encourage a concentration of missionary efforts on the west coast of Africa.

After the failure of his brief African venture, Horne did not attempt any further missions overseas, and for the remainder of his career he developed his missionary advocacy in conjunction with a number of appointments in English parishes. His dual commitment to heathen conversion at home and abroad is reflected in his parish ministries. His concern to promote “real” Christianity is evident in his frequent sermonizing and pamphleteering on issues of spiritual and moral reformation, and his support for the British and Foreign Bible Society reflects his continuing commitment to missionary activity. Horne, in common with Charles Simeon, developed an interest in the conversion of the Jews and in 1812 preached before the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews.6 When he wrote Letters on Missions he found it necessary to refute a wide range of contemporary objections to overseas missions. By the time of his death at Ashbourne in Derbyshire in 1841, the climate of opinion had shifted markedly with the emergence of a strong missionary consciousness in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Horne was a key figure in promoting reform, and his “passion for missions”7 ignited the missionary fervor of a number of his contemporaries.8

Selected Bibliography

Works by Melvill Horne

Many of Horne’s published works are held at the British Library and at the John Rylands University Library, Manchester. Horne’s correspondence with Mary Fletcher forms part of the Fletcher-Tooth archive at John Rylands University Library.


1795 “A Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Melvill Horne.” Baptist Annual Register, September, pp. 249–55.


1811 A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne, Blackfriars, on Tuesday in Whitsun Week, June 4, 1811, Before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East. London: L. B. Seeley. This sermon was reprinted on a number of occasions: Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 2d ed., 1811; Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 3d ed., 1811. The sermon was included in Claudius Buchanan, Christian Researches in Asia, 2d ed. Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1811.


1820 An Address Delivered by the Rev. Melvill Horne at a Public Meeting of the Macclesfield Auxiliary Bible Society Held in the Assembly Room of the Macclesfield Arms Hotel on Wednesday the 30th of August, 1820. Macclesfield: E. Bayley.

Works with Detailed Reference to Horne


Notes

6. Melvill Horne, A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew by

International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 31, No. 2
Respecting the Establishment and First Attempts of that Society (London: T. Chapman, 1795), pp. 172–73. The editor of the 1824 edition of Letters on Missions noted that “the experience of missionary societies has led them not to throw any impediment in the way of the marriage of their missionaries” (p. 104).


41. Ibid., p. 130.


43. A country member was someone resident outside London who was kept informed about society affairs. There was an expectation that country members would contribute to fund-raising and dissemination of information in their localities. Horne to T. Scott, April 22, 1800, Church Mission Society archives, Univ. of Birmingham, G/AC 3/1/20.


45. Horne, Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, pp. 36, 39–42.

46. Ibid., pp. 27–29.


49. Theological Magazine 2, no. 3 (Jan./Feb. 1797): 237–39; Theological Magazine 2, no. 5 (July 1797): 387–88; Christian Observer, Conducted by Members of the Established Church 10, no. 7 (July 1811): 451–53.

50. Printed in 1810 by Galen Ware, Andover, Massachusetts.


57. Horne stressed that candidates must have “a passion for missions” (Letters on Missions, p. 80).

58. I would like to thank Kathryn Ellis and Andrew Wals for their valuable comments on a draft of this paper. I am also grateful to Peter Forsaith, Robert Glen, Brian Stanley, and John Vickers for their helpful correspondence on Horne. Material held at the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, is reproduced courtesy of the director and librarian, John Rylands University Library, Manchester. I am grateful to Regent’s Park College Oxford for permission to use materials from the Angus Library. I am also grateful to the Church Mission Society for permission to use the CMS archives in Special Collections, University of Birmingham.
The Legacy of Yohanna Gowon

Musa A. B. Gaiya

Pa Yohanna Gowon (ca. 1880–1973) was one of the earliest Ngas converts to Christianity. Christian contact with the Ngas people (plural Ngasmwa) began in 1907, when missionaries belonging to the Cambridge University Mission Party (CUMP), an affiliate of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), arrived on a survey trip at Kabwir, one of the leading Ngas cities. Kabwir is in central Nigeria, in the Kanke local government area of the Plateau State. (Eight years earlier, the Ngas people had been brought under the control of the British colonial authorities in their attempt to gain control of northern Nigeria. The British district officer had his residence in Pankshin, which was on a hill west of Kabwir.

The leader of the missionary team was T. E. Alvarez, who at that time was the secretary of the CMS Niger Mission. The party met the chief of Kabwir, Bewarang Dimka. To determine the sincerity of these strange visitors and the genuineness of their message, the chief sought the assistance of soothsayers (persons whom the Ngas say have “the power of second sight”) from Tuwan, a neighboring village.2 Led by their chief, Genka, the soothsayers announced that the issue would be resolved by a yorkum (fetish bird) called kikik. If within the next three days this bird appeared at night and cooed, then the supposed Good News the missionaries had brought should be rejected. If it did not, then the missionaries must have brought the message from God, whom the Ngas called Nen. It was usual for the yorkum to appear at that period of the year, but miraculously the bird never appeared, and the Ngas were ready to welcome the missionaries.

With this breakthrough, Alvarez and his team left to make preparations to send other missionaries to the Ngas people. Having earlier opened a station in Panyam among the Mwaghavul, Ngas neighbors to the west of Kabwir, missionaries arrived in 1910 to open a station among the Ngas. What happened later was remarkable. Bewarang Dimka and his household became friends of the missionaries and began to attend a mission instruction class. In addition, almost the whole of Tuwan village, including Chief Genka, was ready to learn the white man’s “secrets” (i.e., gain a Western education).

The traditionalists in Kabwir could not reconcile themselves with the newly found faith of their chief. When Bewarang no longer agreed to perform the traditional rituals expected of him, they petitioned the colonial authority in Pankshin to intervene—lest, so they threatened, there should be a breakdown of law and order. Since Bewarang was not willing to renounce his new faith, the district officer removed him. Facing the real danger of assassination in Kabwir, Bewarang fled to Tuwan. From then on, Tuwan became a refuge for Ngas Christians facing persecution in neighboring villages.

At this time Gowon was a Ngas prince in Lur, a village near Kabwir. His father was Gofwan, the chief; his mother was not remembered by the oldest person I interviewed.2 Gofwan had at least three wives and was wealthy, owning goats and cattle. He was a hardworking man who taught his children the value of work. By the time Gowon was in his early thirties, he had distinguished himself among his peers. He had gained considerable wealth, which is clear from his marriage to four wives.

Gowon was also committed to the traditional religion of his people. As a prince he could not do otherwise. (The proper spelling of his name is Ngo-wong, i.e., one who was born “by the grace of wong,” or on the occasion of the wong festival).4 He is said to have been a great dancer at Ngas festivals.5 He also played Ngas music using the molo, a kind of guitar. Gowon was a highly respected young man and a budding leader in his community before his conversion to Christianity.

Gowon’s Conversion

The news of the mass conversion of Ngas in Kabwir and Tuwan attracted the attention of Gowon. For one thing, the words of the soothsayers were not to be taken lightly. Also, it was clear that there had been a power shift from the traditional rulers to the colonial authorities, who had imposed indirect rule over the Ngas.6 In addition, the missionaries themselves had made a favorable impression on the Ngas, for the foreigners had introduced clear improvements in the society. They had started a school that was attended by both the chiefs and the ordinary people. In 1921 they built a modern hospital, the first in northern Nigeria. Missionaries also sank wells, which meant that people no longer had to fetch water from the stream, which was sometimes contaminated.

It was the school that attracted the young Gowon to the mission compound. The early teachers in the school were two missionary agents who had been recruited from Kpata, one of Bishop Herbert Tugwell’s stations near Lokoja, on the confluence of the Benue and Niger Rivers. One was Moses Ogungbabi Olubi, a Yagba from the ruling house of Afin, a carpenter by trade; about the other, we know only that his name was Abraham.7 These two had learned enough Hausa to be able to teach in it. These young teachers, however, soon ran into trouble in adjusting to Ngas culture. They had taught the Ngas to distance themselves from their traditional background and to destroy objects of traditional worship. In their zeal, the young converts once took the law into their own hands. A group of traditionalists, including some dressed in traditional Ngas wongmtwa masquerade, once threatened some Christian women. The Christian young men reacted by overpowering one of men and stripping him of his costume. This action was highly sacrilegious and provoked a hostile gathering of traditionalists from other Ngas villages, who prepared to march against the Christians. Except for the timely intervention of the colonial authorities in Pankshin, few Christians would have survived.

There soon were other problems with these missionary agents. Moses was said to have been dismissed for immoral behavior and later died in Kaduna.8 The need arose, then, to train Ngas themselves to teach their own people the Christian message. As a result, the nascent school was expanded in 1914 to train Ngas evangelists. At this time Gowon became actively involved as a pupil, along with over seventy others. The training began with the Anglican catechism.

It was a major sacrifice for Gowon to attend this school, for he did it against the wishes of his parents. They tried to dissuade him, but he had made up his mind to give up his royal position.

Musa A. B. Gaiya, a church historian and former Head of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Jos, Nigeria, completed a Ph.D. dissertation in 1996 on faith missions work in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, with particular reference to the Jos Plateau area.

April 2007
The opposition from his parents was so intense that Gowon was forced to flee to Tuwan, leaving behind everything he owned. He took with him only Madbwir, the only daughter he had with his first wife. Gowon had previously lost one of his wives, and now his other three wives refused to follow him. In Tuwan Gowon lived with an elder brother, Dashwar, who through unknown circumstances had also become a Christian.

Gowon was baptized and christened Yohanna (John) in 1914 and was one of the twenty-two candidates confirmed by Bishop Tugwell in 1915. Gowon’s conversion resulted from several factors, foremost of which was what Kalu calls the finger of God, or the direct action of the Spirit of God.

Evangelist to His Own People

In St. Paul’s Anglican Church in Tuwan Gowon saw and fell in love with a young girl of noble birth, Saraya Kuryan. She was the daughter of Filibus and Helen Goar, who were among the first converts in Tuwan. Filibus Goar, from the royal family of Waltu, later became chief of Tuwan, between 1940 and 1948. Gowon and Kuryan were married in the church on April 26, 1923. This marriage was ultimately blessed with eleven children: Ibrahim, Peter (both dead), Rachel, Mary, Yakubu, Daniel, Bala (also dead), Kande, Moses, Dauda, and Ishaya. Four of the boys later enlisted in the Nigerian army. One of them, Yakubu, rose to become the Nigerian head of state from 1966 to 1975.

Gowon’s decision to become an evangelist was partly as a result of the death of Dashwar, who had become one of the leaders of the Tuwan church. One day after leading the morning prayers in the church, Dashwar succumbed to a freak accident. He was cutting down a dry locust tree when it fell on him, crushing him to death. This event deeply shook Gowon. He saw the fragility of life and resolved to serve God fully for the rest of his life. Soon after this experience, he and his new wife submitted themselves to be evangelists and were admitted into the Tuwan Evangelists’ School for further training beyond catechism.

The new school provided a proper theological training in its own right, with some of the best teachers of the day, both European and African. Instruction was in Hausa, but students went out to preach in their native languages. The Gowons thus had to learn to read and speak Hausa. Hausa was becoming popular among Ngas because of nearby Hausa settlements in Chika and at Lungwa in Dawaki. Students usually had one year of training and then would go for two years of field experience. The Ngas evangelists wore black cassocks and were called gofatad’ pmwaw (i.e., those who wore black gowns).

After the initial training Gowon’s first preaching site was his home village, Lur. His early converts were his cousins, who included Mwata Chindaba, Gwomgwew, Wokshit, Ngwagompwew (later christened Barnabas), and Gwongwew. Mwata Chindaba later became a pastor in the Church of Christ in Nigeria (CCOCIN), established by the Sudan United Mission (SUM), British Branch. The Gowons labored in virtually all the Ngas villages—Amper, Seri, Gugur, Krum, Garam, Lungwa, and Pankshin (then known as Ner). Of all these places the most troublesome was Amper. Here, Kuryan recalled, her husband was once slapped by an onlooker who apparently did not want to hear the preaching. But instead of retaliating, Gowon just smiled. Despite this opposition, the Amper church eventually became one of the strongest Ngas churches. A report of the mission work here as supplied by CUMP missionary Charles Wedgewood is indicative: “The work at Per and in the surrounding districts has been going steadily ahead. It has been carried during the last nine months entirely by African agents with very little supervision and reflects great credit on these men.” The evangelists used biblical texts translated into Ngas by Wedgewood: the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the first letter of John and portions of the Psalms. Also translated into Ngas were two collections of Old Testament stories, the catechism, portions of the Book of Prayer, a manual of Christian teaching, a pamphlet on marriage, and a primer.

By 1930 it was apparent that CUMP could not maintain its three stations on the Jos Plateau—at Panyam, at Kabwir, and at Boi, north of Kabwir, the location of a third station recently opened by Wedgewood. Difficulties arose as a result of a shortage of European personnel and finances. Therefore CUMP, through its parent body the CMS, approached SUM (whose own stations had almost encircled them) with the suggestion that this large field be transferred to the care of SUM.

The transfer was accomplished on April 19, 1930. SUM received forty-eight communicants from the Panyam station and one hundred from the Kabwir station, but none from the newest. This matter of transferring mission oversight was not unique. For example, in northern Nigeria SUM (British Branch) had handed over to the United Methodist and SUM (Danish Branch) its stations among Mumuye and Chamba respectively. What was unusual in this case was the Ngas reaction to this transfer. They objected to it when they noticed the sharp difference in theology and practice between CUMP, which was Episcopalian, and SUM (British Branch), which was more congregational. Although measures were taken to smooth the transition by posting two Anglicans to the stations—Lowry Maxwell to Kabwir and E. M. Webster to Panyam—the Ngas were not satisfied. Members of the Amper church, led by Amos Kwashi, the father of the present bishop of the Jos diocese, walked about five hundred kilometers to Wusasa, the headquarters of the Hausa Anglican mission, to register their protest with Bishop Alfred Smith. But the transfer was irreversible. Many of the Ngas evangelists took government jobs rather than continue to work with the new mission.

The Gowons, however, continued to work with SUM in spite of the difficulties. One immediate complication arose from the SUM policy not to pay evangelists, in strict adherence to Henry Venn’s formula of the three-sells (specifically, that indigenous churches should be self-financing). The Gowons therefore became volunteer workers.

The Gowons were posted to Garam, where Yohanna served as a catechist to a new church. To supplement his income, he resumed his old profession, farming. Before long, however, they were transferred to Pankshin. This move was difficult for the Gowons, for Pankshin was becoming a cosmopolitan town with little farmland.

This was a critical time for the Gowons, for they now had six children to take care of. They were faced with the decision either to take an appointment with the government or to retire and go back to Lur. Gowon had shared this concern with his
friend William Gotom, a member of his church in Pankshin. It was therefore a great relief when the Gowons received an invitation from Bishop Alfred Smith asking them to move to the newly established missionary station at Wusasa, near Zaria. A few years earlier Timothy Gotom, a cousin of William Gotom, had moved to Wusasa to work in the hospital. Perhaps from him the bishop learned of the Gowons’ predicament.

The CMS Wusasa Mission had been granted permission to work among Hausa traditionalists, the Maguzawa, and it badly needed African agents. Thus in mid-1936 the Gowons with their six children moved to Wusasa, Zaria, to begin evangelistic work among Hausa. Meanwhile, one of Gowon’s early converts, a cousin, Barnabas Ngwa Gompwel, had made rapid progress. He had become a cook to one of the missionaries in Tuwan. His intelligence became apparent, and he was sent to CMS Training Institute in Kpata, near Lokoja. There he learned to read Hausa and English. On his return SUM made good use of him as an evangelist. He then moved to join the Gowons in Wusasa, where he later translated the New Testament into Ngas.  

Gowon as an Evangelist to the Hausa

The story of the Hausa Anglican mission is well known. Gowon and later Gompwel began to work in the newly established mission stations of Chafe and Maska among the Hausa. They also visited other Hausa villages, such as Dusten Wai, Soba, and Ikara, all in the Zaria emirate. This was very helpful since colonial policy prevented white missionaries from preaching in Hausa villages. Before long, however, it became apparent to Gowon that he was not becoming as fluent in Hausa as he wished; in addition he was getting older. For these reasons Gowon retired in 1940 at the age of about sixty. He returned to Wusasa to begin a new phase of his life.

The Wusasa mission authorities had no specific work for Gowon to do. The mission helped as much as it could, however, granting scholarships to four of his children and assigning him manual jobs from time to time. One of his jobs was to sink wells. Gowon was skilled in this craft, for he always seemed to know where to dig to find water. The eight wells currently in Wusasa were sunk by him. In addition, he dug latrines, though he was never asked to clean them. He also dug graves and maintained the mission’s cemetery. Soon the news of Gowon’s skills spread, and people outside Wusasa also began hiring him to sink wells for them. In 1989 the Wusasa Old Students Association honored Gowon posthumously for such service, granting him the Anniversary Award for community development.

Farming, though, was Gowon’s main job at this time, on which the family depended for its sustenance. Gowon often prayed specifically that the Lord would give him the extra strength needed for this work. His son Dauda says that after praying that prayer, his father would work on the farm from morning to evening without showing any sign of exhaustion. He also had a team of helpers in his sons. After morning prayers the boys would go work on the farm before breakfast and then before they got ready to go to school. After school, they were back on the farm. The girls usually helped Kuryan at home with house chores. It is therefore not surprising that the Gowon children all grew up to be hard workers.

In Wusasa Gowon had requested a piece of land on which to farm but was given only a very rocky patch of land that the locals considered to be the worst possible land for farming. Gowon, however, would carry in dirt from elsewhere, filling in the spaces between the rocks and planting his crops, such as corn, guinea corn, and millet. Gradually he transformed his rocky land into a fruitful space. His Hausa neighbors marveled as they watched his incredible feat. As a result, Gowon became famous as a great farmer and was given the name Sarkin Noma, or Chief of Farmers. His eldest daughter, Rachel, has inherited this farmland. Another unusual phenomenon was Gowon’s ability to spin. In Hausaland only women spin. But Yohanna would spin, and Kuryan would weave the thread into Ngas gwado, or traditional cloth.

Gowon’s children best remember him for his unshakable faith in God. Rachel remembers that her father taught his children “the value of faith in God and destiny. He taught us the value of honesty in our dealings with our fellow human beings. He taught us the value of hard work and diligence in our daily endeavors. In general, we were encouraged to read the Bible regularly and to obey and practice its injunctions.” She also remembers that during family devotions Gowon would often tell them, “Ask God for everything, and he will grant you your request. Never try to get material wealth in illegitimate ways. Trust in God completely, and he will never fail you. He will reward you at last for obeying him.” He never relied on charms, herbalists, witch doctors, or anything similar for protection or for help with problems.

Gowon was tolerant of those who did not share his beliefs and was well respected by Muslims. One, Mallam Hayaki, said, “Gowon lived an outstanding life here in Wusasa. He was patient. He never fought with anyone.” Archdeacon H. O. Mohammed said that in all the time he knew Gowon, he had never seen him angry. He was always jovial, very hardworking, never pompous, and always simple.

Gowon never missed church. One of his enjoyments was singing; a favorite song was “Onward Christian Soldiers.” Even in old age, Gowon would walk to the Hausa villages around Wusasa to share his faith with Muslims. E. Umuru Julde, a Fulani pastor in Wusasa, once reminisced to Rachel about the evangelistic activities of her father in these villages. One day when Julde went to Kufena, he heard a native lament, “Since Mallam Yohanna stopped coming to us to preach, no one has come. He was the only one who used to visit us.”

Conclusion

Gowon died on January 26, 1973, a nonagenarian who “hardly ever went to the hospital for any treatment [or took any drugs] until the last two months of his life.” At his funeral service F. O. Segun, the Anglican bishop of the Diocese of Northern Nigeria, stated that Gowon gave his whole life to God with an overflowing heart, to the extent that he was able to reveal certain aspects of God to others in several ways: “First, [by] his sterling integrity which gives a glimpse of divine righteousness; second, by his purity which gives a glimpse of divine holiness; thirdly,
by his sympathy and fourthly by his tenderness. . . The work Pa Gowon did, the words he spoke, the character he built and the moral and spiritual influence he set in motion, would outlive the stars.”

Archdeacon H. O. Mohammed described him as a saint. “As far as I am concerned, I have never seen any fault in Yohanna’s life. That is why I call him a saint because of his tolerance. . . . Gowon’s character and life were enough to convert people.”

Gowon would have been shocked to see the level of later religious intolerance in northern Nigeria, which culminated in the desecration of his tomb in Wusasa in 1987.

Gowon’s significance in the history of Christianity in northern Nigeria lies in the role he, along with other evangelists, played in the Christianization of what today is called the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Evangelists such as Gowon left a legacy of inculturation, for they considered themselves to be more Hausa than Ngas, Nupe, Jukun, Kafar, or Bujju. Their children can hardly speak their mother tongues; some of them would prefer to be referred to as Hausa. These evangelists were helpful in expanding the frontiers of the church in Hausaland; they took the Gospel into areas that were prohibited to European missionaries during the colonial period.

Selected Bibliography

Works About Pa Yohanna Gowon


Notes

1. “Pa,” an honorific term for elderly persons, is often used with Gowon’s name. The ethnic name “Ngas” means “forthrightness.” Colonial documents refer to this people as Angas (plural Angasawa), which is the Hausa corruption of the name.


3. One of Gowon’s children, Dr. Dauda Gowon, says that his grandmother was Fulani, but we have no direct evidence supporting this claim. Ngasawa lived together with Fulani before the colonial period. One lingering cultural influence is seen in the Ngas rearing of cattle as do the Fulani.

4. Wong is a traditional masquerade.

5. Interview with Kashaka Lonji, the oldest man in Lur (Gowon’s birth place) when I visited there in 1990. Unless otherwise stated all interviews were done in 1990.


7. Diary of Dr. G. T. Fox, 1907–9, kept in Theological College of Northern Nigeria Archives, Bukuru, 294. Fox was the founder of the first hospital.

8. Wambutu, Study of Conversion, p. 156.

9. By the time of my research, Madbwin had died, but I met her daughter Helen, now Mrs. Paul Goar. Madbwin also had a son named David, whom I never met.


13. There were in fact a few Ngas converts to Islam; the best known is the Mohammed family from Chika.

14. A report from 1918 states, “On April 1st we started with five evangelists, four of whom had had a year’s training before going out for two years’ service” (Lightbears 14, no. 3 [1918]: 44).


16. Interview with Mwata Chindaba, Lur.

17. Interview with Saraya Kuryan Gowon, Wusasa.

18. Lightbears 14, no. 3 (1918): 44.


23. Jan Boer has noted that Maxwell was in fact a British Presbyterian layman but was ordained into the Anglican ministry to meet the present need (Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979], pp. 144–45).

24. These included Amos Kwashi and William Gotom.

25. Interview with Mrs. William Gotom, Bukuru.


28. Until the creation of the Wusasa Diocese in 1997, the problem of recruiting local evangelists and training Hausa pastors was acute, for most of the children of the original evangelists had taken up other professions. Interview with Bishop Ali Lamido, Wusasa, 2001.

29. Interview with Mallam Hayaki, Kuregu.

30. Interview with Dr. Dauda Gowon, Jos.


32. Interview with Dr. Dauda Gowon, Jos.


34. Interview with Rachel Nur, Wusasa.

35. Interview with Mallam Hayaki, Kuregu.

36. Interview with H. O. Mohammed, Abuja, now living in Zaria.

37. Interview with Mary Dimka (née Gowon), Jos.

38. Interview with Rachel Nur, Wusasa.


41. Interview with H. O. Mohammed.


43. The Middle Belt is a geopolitical area representing the Christian-dominated areas of northern Nigeria.
The second and largest section is entitled “Challenges to Ecumenism and Christian Identity.” Several essays deal with the impact of the globalization of Christianity upon European Christendom and interpret the current passage of these now largely secularized cultures with illuminating overviews and perceptive insights. Victor Westhelle’s essay, “Is Europe Christian? A Challenge to a Viking,” as well as Jens Holger Schjerring’s contribution, “Church Identity in the Nordic Countries—an International Perspective,” were a particular help to me in preparing for two recent interactions with the Church of Denmark. Most of the authors are Lutheran (six are active or former faculty at Aarhus), like the honoree, and they present a Lutheranism that both engages and is challenged by the world Christian movement in all its diversity. Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen’s essay, “Lutheran Ecclesiologies Today—Custodians of the Past or Guides to the Future?” provides an especially helpful survey of the progressive and exploratory character of current Lutheran grappling with the theology and practice of the church. John de Gruchy’s essay on Bonhoeffer’s Sanctorum Communio, in which he examines the linkage between ecclesiology and ethics in Bonhoeffer, is an especially useful overview that highlights how crucial Bonhoeffer still is for missionary theology. The final section, “God Challenging the World,” includes three essays. One of them—“Images of Christ in Latin America,” by Walter Altmann, who includes some fascinating artwork—speaks clearly from the global South.

Several essays in the book would work well in class syllabi as introductions to missiological themes, for example, Schreiter’s “Globalization, Postmodernity, and the New Catholicity” or de Gruchy on Bonhoeffer’s ecclesiology. The authors themselves demonstrate how the missiological discussion today is enriched by representatives of all the theological disciplines. Although the book is dominated by First World voices, it offers encouraging evidence of such voices listening hard and well to the global church.

—Darrell L. Guder

Darrell L. Guder is Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology and Dean of Academic Affairs, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.
sooner or later, Western missiological publications may become an appendage to what African and Asian missiologists are writing. (Already now their publications are sometimes more mission-minded and more engaging than Western ones.)

This Orbis volume is a reprint, with minor changes, of an earlier edition (Rome and Lagos: Ceedee Publications, 2005). There is a new preface by William Burrows, and an index has been added.

In the classroom, both editions could be used together. —Jan A. Jongeneel

Jan A. Jongeneel, a contributing editor, is Professor Emeritus of Missiology at Utrecht University and the author of Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Frankfurt, 1995–97; republished in 2006 in the Missiological Classics Series in Bangalore, India).

Voting About God in Early Church Councils.


Is the Christian faith intrinsically rational? This question has long figured in interreligious dialogue, and it has recently received considerable attention in the press. Ramsay MacMullen, eminent Yale ancient historian, sheds new light on this question in a disturbing book.

In Voting About God MacMullen studies the church councils between Nicaea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (451). His focus is not on theology. Rather, he is interested in what seems to him to be the irrationality, driven by fear and force, in the way that the Christian church in the Roman Empire determined its doctrine. His concentration is novel—upon the ordinary bishops who were delegates at the councils and whom the elite clergy arm-twisted to vote for orthodox beliefs. His sources are also novel—the synecographic record of the conciliar debates, which, as he demonstrates, were marked at times by name-calling and fisticuffs, and which were backed up by popular riots and military thuggery. MacMullen estimates that 25,000 people died as a result of creedal disputes. Who is to blame? MacMullen points to the Christian educated minority, who, unlike their pagan predecessors, had come to believe fervently in supernatural powers.

MacMullen may idealize the pagan elites of the early centuries of the Christian era; they, as Christians experienced them, were quite capable of snuffing out lives and sanctioning pogroms. Furthermore, the supernatural realm, which MacMullen seems to view as both illusory and destructive, may at times be both real and conducive to nonviolence. Nevertheless, MacMullen’s study of sources and narratives that Christian historians have ignored is troubling: if the Christian faith is rational, why did its creedal statements originate as they did? Not least, as we engage in interfaith conversations, MacMullen will remind us never to assume that other religions have a monopoly of things “evil and inhuman.” —Alan Kreider

Alan Kreider is Associate Professor of Church History and Mission, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. For twenty-six years he was a missionary in England with the Mennonite Board of Missions.

Las Casas: Kurzgefasster Bericht von der Verwüstung der Westindischen Länder.


Michael Sievernich has edited in German the most famous book by Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566). In 1542 Las Casas published this book, whose title in English is Short Report on the Destruction of the West Indies. He graphically described the unimaginably horrible atrocities of the Spanish conquerors against the native peoples of Latin America. Based on his eyewitness account, he requested King Philip of Spain to help these native peoples. The king, being “a just pastor,” should save Spain from future destruction by immediately saving the native peoples of Latin America from annihilation at the hands of Spanish tyrants. To emphasize his urgent message, Las Casas incorporated historical, biblical, legal, and apocalyptic themes. He described how “the wolves, tigers, and lions” (i.e., the armed Spanish conquerors) mercilessly devoured the “meek lambs” (i.e., the unarmed native peoples). Spanish greed for gold and material wealth was so limitless that
they did not hesitate to eradicate the local people as nonhumans without dignity and worth. Las Casas opposed the Spanish and advocated peace, friendship, and harmony with the Latin Americans.

Las Casas’s gripping description of the cruelty touched the hearts and minds of his readers, not only during his lifetime but over the centuries and up to the present. It is not surprising that his Short Report has been translated into sixty different languages. The report shows how Las Casas protected the native Latin Americans and worked for their liberation. His writings inspire their descendents even today to reclaim their identity. In this sense he was a reformer just as much as his German contemporary Martin Luther was for the church in western Europe. Siever’s edition, adorned with illustrations, restores Las Casas’s legacy afresh. It reads well. —Daniel Jeyaraj

Daniel Jeyaraj, a contributing editor, is the Judson-DeFreitas Professor of World Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts.

Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day.

By Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall.


This book is an excellent read as it blends the experience of a biblical scholar and a pastor. The reader becomes fully engaged with each of the fifteen chapters in a continuous dialogue, first as “Interpreting Acts as Scripture,” then “Engaging Acts for Today’s Church.” Chapter 1 sets the context for the entire book as it keeps “interpreting” and “engaging” the text—a kind of synopsis of the whole book’s main ideas. It demonstrates that Acts is a book for a postmodern church—a book to be experienced!

Called to Be Church is based on Scripture’s assumption that God’s intention is to form a people, a community. This assumption challenges the postmodern culture, which emphasizes individualism and personal spirituality. Acts is thus a timely book because it shows that the church’s greatest need is koinonia—to love one another, to offer our lives for the sake of the world, to be the body of Christ.

For reasons of practical purpose and brevity, only certain texts of Acts were selected. They deal with subjects such as leadership transition and change, the church’s mission, preaching, baptism, community, conflict resolution, the Holy Spirit, conversion and the experience of Paul, the Gospel in a multicultural world, social issues, suffering, spirituality, and church and state relations.

The book is easy to understand and rich in content. It also provides study questions at the end of each chapter. Overall, Called to Be Church is unique as it brings together Biblical theology and fresh practical applications that are vital for God’s church in today’s world. The book is mostly for pastors and theology students, but it should be used by lay leaders and missionaries as well, since it will orient them in current trends of contemporary Christianity. Such knowledge in turn becomes a bridge between past and present, facilitating the application of this understanding of Scripture into the life and mission of the church. —Wagner Kuhn

Wagner Kuhn is Associate Director, Institute of World Mission, and Associate Professor, Department of World Missions, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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A World of Books that Matter

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New Religious Movements in the Catholic Church.


This book is the product of a series of lectures on mission and evangelization offered during 2003–4 at St. Mary’s College, Twickenham, England. The book deals with the topic from the perspective of ecclesial movements. In nine chapters the following movements are dealt with: the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (Charles Whitehead), the Community of Sant’Egidio (Mario Marazziti and Austen Ivereigh), the Community of the Beatitudes (Francois-Xavier Wallays), Communion and Liberation (Javier Pradas López), Schönstatt (Bryan Cunningham), L’Arche (Christine McGrieve), Neocatechumenate Way (Kiko Argüello), Sodalitium Christianae Vitae and Christian Life Movement (Louis Fernando Figari), and the Focolare Movement (Chiara Lubich). Most essays include information about the founder, the members, and the theologians of the movements. The essays are very diverse, with some being purely descriptive and others giving an analysis of the context in which the movement emerged or a theological reflection on its foundation. They do, however, have a common focus: the call of the Second Vatican Council for holiness and an active apostolate, and therefore the need of a new evangelization.

The book starts with an introduction written by the editor, Michael Hayes, head of the School of Theology, Philosophy, and History at St. Mary’s College, and ends with an index. Unfortunately, the authors of the chapters are not introduced. It is difficult to assess whether and to what extent they write from an insider or an outsider perspective. As a first introduction to the ecclesial movements in the Roman Catholic Church, the book is helpful. In certain cases, however, some of the information given is unreliable (for example, some of the statements about Holland made in the Neocatechumenate essay).

—Frans Wijzen

Frans Wijzen, Professor of Mission Studies at Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands, worked in Tanzania 1984–88.


For thirty years C. Norman Kraus was professor of Bible and religion at Goshen College, and he regularly served on
boards and in the foreign missions of the Mennonite Church. He is known for his advocacy of justice and peace issues and for his work on understanding Protestantism in the United States, especially the Anabaptist and evangelical traditions.

This book is a wide-ranging collection of his essays. They reflect his many interests through the years, ranging from changes in the self-understanding of Anabaptist churches to contemporary issues that churches today face, issues of nonviolence, and shaping an appropriate spirituality that is faithful to Anabaptist traditions yet meets the challenges faithful Christians encounter today. The whole is framed in terms of living in a “global age”; Kraus means especially by this term the technological challenges that globalization has laid upon all of us. While there are forays into intercultural issues (with special references to his years in Japan), “global” here refers mainly to the enlarged world in which we now all find ourselves living.

Particularly helpful to many readers will be his recounting the changes that believers and churches have undergone in the U.S. context over the course of the twentieth century. The separatist stands of these churches toward the world that they brought with them from central Europe had to be rethought, not only in the context of the New World, but also as American Protestantism itself evolved from rural to urban realities. Two essays on pacifism and nonviolence will be of special interest to many readers, since the tradition Kraus represents has been the most fertile site for exploring nonviolent resistance in the American context.

—Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S., teaches theology at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He is general editor of the Faith and Cultures series for Orbis Books.

Local Religion in Colonial Mexico.


Local Religion in Colonial Mexico consists of an introduction by editor Martin Nesvig, followed by nine longer, more specialized essays, mostly by historians, and a short conclusion by sociologist William Christian. This last writer encapsulates what the previous essays attempt to portray: that there were several “catholicisms” in colonial Mexican Catholicism. On the one hand, there was the Spanish Catholicism of the criollos; on the other, there were the “catholicisms” of the local indigenous communities that melded their specific cultural traits with Iberian Catholicism.

In the first chapter, Carlos Eire sets the stage for what follows by offering a synoptic overview of the interchange between official and popular religion. Antonio Rubial García next discusses how certain Indian communities willingly accepted images of Catholic saints that could be substituted for their own gods, while rejecting others that did not fit into their culture. Nesvig’s essay focuses on a college that was established to educate Indians for the priesthood. Such training spawned a debate in Mexico and Spain over whether Indians had sufficient intelligence and ethical integrity to receive Holy Orders. William Taylor, using the memoir of an eighteenth-century Franciscan, shows how even at this late date some priests allowed their Spanish mind-set to impede their understanding of indigenous Christianity. Essays by David Tavárez, Edward Osowski, Brian Larkin,
Think on These Things: Harmony and Diversity
By Wisnu Sasongko
“I paint what I can see, what I can touch, what I can feel—a utopia of love expressed in the reality of life. All of that inspires me in my artistic way,” says Wisnu Sasongko, a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Art, Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta. This book includes “All Dreams Connected,” a 28-minute DVD about Sasongko and his art. 96 pages and a DVD, $29.95

Christ on the Bangkok Road: The Art of Sawai Chinnawong
Sawai Chinnawong, of Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, is known for portraying Christianity through a Thai graphic idiom. Sawai is an ethnic Mon whose Buddhist ancestors migrated to Thailand from Myanmar. His drawings and paintings, inspired by traditional art from central Thailand, reflect a deep Christian faith. 80 pages, $19.95

Look Toward the Heavens: The Art of He Qi
He Qi, a noted contemporary Chinese Christian artist, is a professor at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He hopes to help change the “foreign image” of Christianity in China through his art and, at the same time, to supplement Chinese art the way Buddhist art did in ancient times.
128 pages, $19.95

A Time for My Singing: Witness of a Life
by Nalini Marcia Jayasuriya
“I come from a land of rich, ancient, and diverse cultures and traditions. While I carry the enriching influences of both West and East, I express myself through an Asian and Christian consciousness with respect for all confessions of religious faith,” says Nalini Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka. Her book offers richly diverse and evocative expressions of faith from an Asian perspective. Her reminiscences are included.
128 pages, $19.95

Globalization and the Re-shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands.

Anyone who knows anything about the Pacific Islands will be aware of significant changes in religious life that have taken place over the last generation or more in this little-understood, vast, island-dotted region of the world—and will welcome this timely publication. By any measure, it is a substantial book, 866 pages about the impact of globalization on the religious landscape of the Pacific, and the product of nearly five years of careful research. Under the leadership of editor Manfred Ernst, director of projects and research at the Pacific Theological College, the contributors, who span a range of academic disciplines and church traditions, have documented over three hundred interviews and provided records from government and church resources across fourteen Pacific countries. The publication is supported by detailed references, bibliography, and index.

The book is divided into three parts. First, Manfred Ernst writes an introduction on the historic roots and recent trends in Pacific religious allegiance, and on the nature and effects of globalization and its impact in the Pacific. The second part is a report of the studies done in the fourteen countries, six from Melanesia (including two separate studies on Fiji: one on Christian allegiance and the other on non-Christian allegiance), four from Micronesia, and five from Polynesia. This section is of particular interest as it documents much information that has not previously been available. The final section

Nicole von Germeten, and Javier Villa-Flores follow. All treat similar syncretic religious themes.

The essays in this book collectively offer valuable insights into how Indians and other members of the Mexican underclasses fused an imposed “universal Catholicism” with their local traditions, thereby creating a rich, complex, and very diverse popular Catholicism that met their needs. The book should prove valuable to students of Latin American religion and those involved in Indian missionary work.

—Edward T. Brett

Edward T. Brett is Professor and Chair of the Department of History and Political Science, La Roche College, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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comprises a summary by Ernst, who draws conclusions from the case studies about the reshaping of Christianity in the Pacific and likely developments in the future.

The result is an invaluable reference book for all students and teachers of Christian mission. It also offers a challenge, especially to the mainstream churches of the Pacific, to recognize and to respond to the new and changing missionary context.

—Randall Prior

Randall Prior, Professor of Ministry Studies and Missiology at the United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne, worked for five years in the island nation of Vanuatu and is actively involved in the ongoing Gospel and Culture in Vanuatu project.

Missionaries of Christ: A Basic Course in Missiology.


This fine book is designed as a textbook for an introductory course in missiology. It is organized in twenty-one chapters for use in Roman Catholic seminaries, yet it is thoroughly ecumenical in spirit and tone. The author devotes separate chapters to Protestant missiology and to Orthodox missions and missiology.

The book starts with the question: “What is missiology?” It then moves to brief discussions of the world, mission semantics, the theological and canonical dimensions of mission, and the Catholic understanding of mission, 1911–62. The author has a useful chapter on what mission in India means today. Over the past twenty years the secularist basis of Indian democracy has been increasingly challenged by communalism. A series of eighteen questions is used to point up the issues pertinent to any discussion of mission in India today.

Crucial for any discussion of Catholic missiology are the official documents of the church, beginning with the Second Vatican Council and continuing with important papal documents by popes Paul VI and John Paul II. Mission theology in Scripture and the meaning of evangelization are treated in three chapters. Three chapters explore the meaning and dimensions of “liberation” as a theological and missiological theme and the place it ought to have in the life and witness of the church. The penultimate chapter considers the Gospel-culture nexus in terms of the development of theories of inculturation. The final chapter takes up evangelization in relation to the religions in the light of theological developments in the wake of Vatican II. A select bibliography of books and journals that students will need in order to pursue missiological study completes the book.

In addition to providing a fresh discussion of missiology designed to serve the needs of Roman Catholic seminarians, this book is an excellent model of what a basic textbook in missiology ought to cover. Such a work must of course be highly selective in order to keep it concise. This one is written in clear and straightforward prose so that students for whom English is not their first language should find it accessible.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Wilbert R. Shenk, a contributing editor, is Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture, Fuller Theological Seminary. He previously served in Indonesia and as a mission administrator.

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Mission and the Next Christendom.


Timothy Yates and the contributors to the present volume insist that though Philip Jenkins’s book The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity (2002) raises the specter of challenges facing the Christian mission and presence in the contemporary world, it is not yet a doomsday. The eleven chapters are divided into three parts: “The Next Christendom,” “Issues for Europe,” and “Global Perspective.” In the first part, the question of Christendom as an unlikely candidate for Christianity’s future is discussed. The favored term now seems to be “world Christianity in the age of globalization.” Even so, it is recognized that global Christianity is changing. How do these changes influence conflict and peace, and what shape will theological education for the emerging Christianity take? (p. 61).

In the second part, the authors battle with the struggle facing Christianity in Europe today. Should Europe seek to escape the influence of the so-called nonwhite Pentecostalism on a white continent? The Christians from the South living in the West come with their deep religiosity and spirituality, often traditional and conservative in nature. The meeting of Western liberal Christianity with this new form of religiosity from the South will determine the shape of the coming Christendom.

The last part is concerned with critique and evaluation of the postcolonial theology that has emerged from different cultural zones of the globe, but especially as reflected upon by authors from the marginalized parts of the world. The chapter “The Mission from the Periphery: The Theology of Orlando Costas,” by Allen Yeh, provides an overview of the tension existing between the Christendom of the past and the coming global Christianity.

The challenge posed by Mission and the Next Christendom is a pointer to the importance of intercultural and interfaith dialogue and of a new missionary ecclesiology that can respond to the emerging global Christianity. The volume ends with a valuable bibliography, which makes it an important book for courses on contemporary missiology.

—Francis Anekwe Oborji

Francis Anekwe Oborji, a Nigerian diocesan priest, is Professor of Missiology at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome.


The thirty contributions in this volume were for the most part presented in May 2003 at a conference entitled “Research on Nestorianism in China” that brought...
to Salzburg historians, theologians, Sinologists, and archaeologists. Reflecting the contemporary scholarship on the early strand of Christianity that grew out of Antioch, spread eastward across central Asia, and reached China during the Tang dynasty, the editors of the book avoid the term “Nestorianism” and opt instead for the expression “Church of the East.” The missionaries from that church who came to China called Christianity jingjiao—the Luminous Religion. The Christian doctrine in the writings that have survived is expressed in a vocabulary borrowed from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism but shows virtually nothing that can be conclusively labeled “Nestorian.”

The material of the collection is organized in five parts. The first part presents different aspects of past and current research on jingjiao. The second discusses jingjiao during the Tang dynasty, especially the question of the authenticity of the documents and the theology they present. The third part deals with inscriptions and ruins from the Yuan dynasty, such as those in Yangzhou and Quanzhou. Part 4 is dedicated to the Church of the East outside China proper. The last section presents an extensive bibliography (198 pp.), most of it on the Church of the East in China and in central Asia.

Roman Malek, S.V.D., directs Monumenta Serica Institute in Sankt Augustin. He is also the editor of Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, and Collectanea Serica. Peter Hofricher, professor of theology and church history at the University of Salzburg, is a member of Pro Oriente, a commission that organizes periodic ecumenical consultations with the Church of the East.

This book is not for the ordinary reader. It contains studies of inscriptions in Chinese, Syriac, and Turkic languages. Four contributions are in Chinese, and one is in German. The volume is an important contribution to the study of the coming and presence of the Luminous Religion in China, as well as to research in intercultural encounters.

—Jean-Paul Wiest

Jean-Paul Wiest is Research Director of the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies and Distinguished Fellow of the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco.

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Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Mission.


Demographic information describing population growth and movement, urbanization, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and the like has long been of keen interest to missiologists. Obtaining, evaluating, interpreting, and discerning the implications of such data, however, is a complex undertaking, demanding insight and skill if naive assumptions and superficial conclusions are to be avoided. Klaus Wetzel, who teaches at the Akademie für Weltmission in Konstal, Germany, and is a missiologist, mathematician, and former missionary to Indonesia, has provided German readers with a helpful guide for this task.

Wetzel does not seek to provide a source of demographic information in the spirit of David Barrett’s Encyclopedia of World Christianity or similar works. Rather, his goal is to help the reader understand, evaluate, and make appropriate use of such works. In the first half of the book readers are introduced to
foundational concepts of demographic research, including a discussion of numbers in the Bible, mathematical formulas in calculating demographic data, a historical overview of demographic research, and detailed descriptions of various approaches to describing populations. Particular attention is given to understanding and measuring religious affiliation and change.

In the second half of the volume, Wetzel illustrates the use of sound methodology as he discusses, by way of example, four specific topics of concern and their implications for mission: population growth, AIDS, population decline, and migration. Wetzel’s conclusions are both encouraging and sobering, particularly in light of the dramatic decline of Western Christianity.

This volume succeeds admirably in helping the reader understand not only the technical aspects of demographic research but also the steps needed to unpack and critically evaluate the usefulness of such data and interpret its implications for the task of mission. Typical pitfalls leading to false conclusions and inappropriate applications are exposed, with numerous examples. A sensible and nuanced approach is offered. The pages are rich with examples and illustrative tables in a carefully outlined format and including an extensive bibliography. Both novices and seasoned missiologists interested in demographics and mission will profit from a careful reading of this text.

—Craig Ott

Craig Ott, Associate Professor of Mission and Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, previously ministered for over twenty years in Germany. He is coeditor of Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Age of World Christianity (Baker, 2006).

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An Indian to the Indians? On the Initial Failure and the Posthumous Success of the Missionary Ferdinand Kittel (1832–1903).


Ferdinand Kittel was a gifted and productive missionary. He was also a maverick. Anyone acquainted with Jon Miller’s Missionary Zeal and Institutional Cost (rev. ed., 2003; orig. title: The Social Control of Religious Zeal) will understand what, within the Basel Mission, this trait cost Kittel. Yet while his nearly four decades of work in South India are now almost forgotten in the West, his contributions to the culture of Karnataka are widely recognized. As a linguist, he is credited with shaping the Kannada language and with strengthening the self-conscious identity of Kannada speakers. In defiance of directives from Mangalore and Basel, he followed Paul’s words to the Corinthians that spreading the Gospel called for being a Greek to the Greeks, a Jew to the Jews, someone weak to the weak, and someone poor to the poor. While the mission refused this maxim and marginalized Kittel, confining him to the mission press, such was his openness of mind, his command of India’s languages and literatures, and his spirit of cultural accommodation that he left more of lasting legacy than fellow missionaries who felt he was treading “on the devil’s own ground” (p. 11).

The dozen articles of this volume that describe Kittel’s achievements convey a sense of his humble piety, his self-demanding competence, and his comprehensive understandings. His cultural hybridity, combining the sociocultural contexts of his time, both
in Europe and India, was insufficiently appreciated during his lifetime. Scholars of Germany, India, and Switzerland here weigh his legacy, balancing his successes and his failures. They stress the importance he placed upon regional epics and music in strategies for evangelization. For the convenience of readers, an abstract, in English and in German, is appended to each article. A list of Kittel’s works, both published and unpublished, is annexed to “Kittel in India” (pp. 127–28), by Majan Mulla.

—Robert Eric Frykenberg


African Indigenous Religions and Disease Causation: From Spiritual Beings to Living Humans.


Even the title of this book by Swedish historian of religion David Westerlund is heavy going, which matches the text as a whole. Based on Evans-Pritchard’s thesis that the predominant motif in a religion is usually “to what sickness and other problems are attributed” (p. 4), Westerlund compares concepts of disease causation and treatment, as well as respective institutions for problem solving, of five African peoples. After giving an ethnographic survey in chapter 1, the author discusses in detail five people groups. Two are nomadic pastoralists: the San (Bushmen of Namibia and Botswana, chap. 2) and the Maasai (Tanzania, chap. 3); the other three are settled agriculturalists: the Sukuma (Tanzania, chap. 4), the Kongo (Democratic Republic of Congo, chap. 5), and the Yoruba (Nigeria, chap. 6).

The author compiled this detailed and excellently referenced comparison from a vast amount of published and unpublished materials not only to inform but also to show the “processes of change” (p. 203) at work in these cultures as noticeable in a shift of identifying disease-causing agents. While witchcraft does not play a role for nomadic pastoralists, except recently for certain Maasai (chap. 7), it has become the most important paradigm for explaining disease and misfortune among the settled agriculturists and within urban areas (chap. 8), for which changes in “social relations and status” (p. 202) and the “wider political context” (p. 206) are identified as dominant factors (chap. 9).

An appendix (pp. 209–15) briefly notes also natural causation of diseases known to the peoples studied, while the bibliography (pp. 217–33) and a short index (pp. 235–37) conclude this scholarly compendium. This volume best serves as an extended synopsis of its topic.

—Christoffer H. Grundmann

Christoffer H. Grundmann is the John R. Eckrich University Professor in Religion and the Healing Arts, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana.

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