Book Reviews


Lamin Sanneh, pioneer of the new historiography of world Christianity, has prepared an improved and updated version of his widely acclaimed classic, which originally appeared in 1989. Into this magisterial work he has inserted a remarkably astute and insightful new chapter on the “Authorized (‘King James’) Bible,” probing both its origin and its wide-ranging impact upon world Christianity; and he has placed expanded and updated chapter bibliographies at the end, with revamped appendices. Between these two publications lie twenty years of continuously deepening reflection and fresh research.

Christian faith, initially Jewish, quickly became cross-cultural and pluralistic. On the Day of Pentecost, each listener heard rustic Galilean apostles speak “in his own native tongue” (Acts 2:6). Each, having come from some far corner of the world, understood what was said within idioms of a distinct and different culture, if not out of a unique primal religion.

Deep interpenetrations of Christian faith, beginning within the Hellenistic Greco-Roman world, were followed by encounters—to the east, with cultures of Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, India, and China; to the west, with Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic cultures; and to the south, within Ethiopian culture. Each posed a unique challenge, and each resulted in a further metamorphosis of the Gospel itself. Each later expansion of the Gospel brought unexpected and unforeseeable mutations, with distinctive ceremonials and styles of social life, creeds and doctrines, institutions and ideals, languages and literatures, and qualities and forms of artistic expression. Variations in idiom brought further localized forms of Gospel embodiment, as Gospel truths were themselves translated and reincarnated within new languages. Christianity never was, and certainly is not, more inherently European (Western) than it is Asian (Eastern) or African (Southern). The origins of Christian faith, after all, lay neither in Europe nor in Asia or Africa, but in the Middle East. Thus, while Christianity was eventually heavily colored by cultural elements native to Europe (the Celtic, Latin, Nordic, Slavic, etc.), similar colorings of Christianity have occurred within various African, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese contexts.

Two essentials stand out in stark contrast to Islam. First, true Christianity brought about the abolition of territoriality as a requirement of faith. The Jewish temple ceased to exist; God’s indwelling Spirit resided within each true believer. This new temple within each person became local, personal, and nonterritorial. The promised land was no longer a fixed place on earth. But it could also cease dwelling in any particular place if no believer remained there. Second, the essential translatability of Christian faith, ever expanding into new environments, always faced challenges. Every minority within non-Christian societies, the faith could not long remain enshrined, encapsulated, idolized, or imprisoned within any single language. Nor could any single language remain the sole preserve or vehicle of sacred utterance. Rather, God’s Spirit could move into and indwell any language and thereby transform the hearts and minds within any culture. Pentecost reversed Babel. Thus from within each language and culture, new features could be grafted into new and emerging forms of Christianity.

A pithy summary of Sanneh’s conclusions can be found in his most recent work, as explained in Sanneh’s Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity (2008): “Christianity’s engagement with the languages and cultures of the world has God at the center of the universe of cultures, implying equality among cultures and the necessarily relative status of cultures vis-à-vis the truth of God. No culture is so advanced and so superior that it can claim exclusive access or advantage to the truth of God, and none so marginal and remote that it can be excluded. All have merit; none is indispensable. The ethical monotheism Christianity inherited from Judaism accords value to culture but rejects cultural idolatry, which makes Bible translation more than a simple exercise of literalism. In any language, the Bible is not literal; its message affirms all languages to be worthy, though not exclusive, of divine communication” (p. 25).

—Robert Eric Frykenberg

Robert Eric Frykenberg is Professor Emeritus of History and South Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His recent publications include Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present (Oxford, 2008).

Opening China: Karl F. A. Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852.


Among missionaries to China, probably none is more maligned and misunderstood than Karl F. A. Gützlaff. A frequently heard story portrays Gützlaff trading opium from one side of a coastal boat and handing out Bibles from the other. In this book, Jessie Lutz, professor emeritus of history at Rutgers University, has done an admirable job of sorting out the stories and defining Gützlaff’s place in history.

Gützlaff, born in Pomerania, was an outsider most of his life. He lacked a conversion experience until doing mission studies. Working in Siam and Java, he translated the New Testament into Thai before severing connections with his supporting agency in order to work in China. He convinced the Basel and Rheinish Missions to expand work in China, resulting in the conversion of many Hakka people. His English wife taught Yung Wing, who later became the first Chinese graduate of an American university.

Needling to support his work, Gützlaff took employment with Westerners trading along the coast, and he proselytized whenever he could. Gützlaff wore Chinese clothing, a practice that Hudson Taylor later adopted for the China Inland
Mission. With Chinese assistants he translated the Bible into classical Chinese and circulated thousands of copies (including to Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan). Gützlaff started the Chinese Union, using native workers to distribute Bibles and tracts, but many of his employees cheated him, collecting pay without making their itinerating trips. Gützlaff baptized Chinese converts without asking too many questions, assuming that in time they would come to understand their religion. Mission boards soon demanded to know why Gützlaff had so many converts, while their own missionaries had so few. While Gützlaff was in Europe, colleagues who had been sent to assist him challenged the work of the Chinese Union, resulting in its collapse. Lutz has done much to give Gützlaff the place he deserves in the history of Christian missions in China.

—Kathleen L. Lodwick

Kathleen L. Lodwick, Professor of History at the Lehigh Valley Campus of Pennsylvania State University, has written widely on Chinese mission history, including with Wah Cheng, The Missionary Kaleidoscope: Portraits of Six China Missionaries (East Bridge, 2004).


More Christians now live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America than anywhere else in the world. The demographic shift that brought this about has a complex historical background with a rich body of literature, but students of world Christianity and mission studies have not had ready access to the original source materials. Professor Klaus Koschorke and his team have accomplished the seemingly impossible in providing us with a mini-encyclopedia on the decisive turning points in the history of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America from 1450 to 1990. The first German edition was so successful that it has now been translated into English, and a Spanish edition is also planned.

This English edition arranges the source materials according to continents and chronology. It is easy to consult, and its bibliographic entries refer to the larger body of available literature. Readers gain fresh insights into how Western missionaries viewed non-Western Christians, how non-Western Christians hosted the missionaries, and how these hosts in turn became indigenous missionaries to their own peoples. Western explorers and colonialists often did not understand the native cultures and indigenous religious traditions. Their principles of "god and gold" hindered them from seeking the welfare of the non-Western peoples. Missionaries, in contrast, empowered the local peoples—through Bible translations, education, medical work, and other occupational training—to develop all aspects of their human potential.

This book bears authentic witness to the kaleidoscopic manifestations of African, Asian, and Latin American Christianity. I wholeheartedly recommend this indispensable sourcebook to every serious student of world Christianity, missiology, and all non-Western studies.

—Daniel Jeyaraj

Daniel Jeyaraj, a contributing editor, is Professor of World Christianity and Director of the Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity at Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, U.K.

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[Back to top]
Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914.


In this volume Dana Robert has assembled essays from the North Atlantic Missiology Project that recapture the passion, visions, and dreams behind the missionary enterprise, whose force reshaped the twentieth century. The essays demonstrate the changing contours of the historiography of missions and confront the deep ideological cleavages in interpreting the relationship between missions and colonialism, the profile of missionaries in the postcolonial era, and how one understands the Gospel/culture encounters in various “mission fields.”

Two rival camps oppose the hegemony discourse: Eurocentric revisionists point to the complex nature of culture contacts, the tendency toward worldview maintenance by all parties, contests between rival narratives, ambiguous relationships with colonial officers and policies, the plurality of voices within the enterprise, including European champions of indigenous cultures, and the exigencies of the mission field that compelled massive readjustment of strategies and goals. They challenge the relationship between commerce and providentialism and privilege evangelical piety. Scholars from the global South, in contrast, privilege indigenous agency, choices, translation, and multiple modes of appropriations. They point to expressions of charismatic religious genius and the resultant “Christianities” ranging beyond missionary ideals.

Daniel Jeyaraj reconstructs the Tranquebar mission. Roy Bridges insists on the missionary collusion with imperial ardor in East Africa. Andrew Porter demonstrates how the fear of Islam energized evangelism, and Peter Williams mourns the death of Henry Venn’s ideals. Richard Elphick and Dana Robert examine how the impact of racism and gender constructions shaped missionary ideals, while Eleanor Jackson, R. G. Tiedemann, and Ade Ajayi pursue aspects of indigenous agency. All are aware of the shadow that falls between the ideal, or vision, and the reality, or performance. The depth of research, breadth and balance of perspectives, and global coverage combine to recapture the enduring legacies of the visionaries, as well as the stories about the responses of communities around the world to the power of the Gospel. The authors of the essays in this volume provide arguments for all sides of the debate on the relationship between the missionaries and the padres.

—Ogbu U. Kalu

Ogbu U. Kalu is the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, and Director of the Chicago Center for Global Ministries, Chicago.

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Twenty years after the death of Orlando Costas (1942–87), his legacy continues in this Festschrift compiled by his colleagues in the Boston Theological Institute. In his short life Costas left an indelible mark, having earned four academic degrees, pastored four churches, taught at three seminaries, lived in five countries, published ten books (in both English and Spanish), and contributed to many ecumenical endeavors.

Orlando Costas’s missiology is characterized by several themes: non-Western Christianity, evangelization from the periphery, concern for the poor and oppressed, ecumenism, and theology “on the road.” This collection of essays commemorates these themes in three sections: “Global Realities,” “International Theological Voices,” and “Holistic Mission.” The first section examines the recent shift of Christianity to the non-Western world, a movement of which Costas was among the vanguard. The second section is notable because the twenty-one contributors come from seven countries and varied ethnic and denominational backgrounds. Many agree with Costas’s theology but write from their unique perspectives, which is concrete evidence of Costas’s global impact and cross-cultural resonance. The third section is vintage Costas; there could be no finer tribute to him than expounding the Gospel in all its fullness.

“Antioch” is a suitable image for encompassing these themes, as it was the...
first multiethnic/multicultural church community outside Jerusalem. It emerged from the periphery to rival the powerful churches established earlier, and it retained its vision of mission.

Unlike many multiauthor volumes, this book has a strong coherence because it focuses on the theology of one person. It pays homage to Costas’s contributions to missiology while adding its own voice, giving a glimpse into what Costas might have been saying had he lived another twenty years. Costas was not merely a Latino Baptist missiologist; the legacy he left as a holistic ecumenical theologian clearly belongs to the world.

—Allen Yeh

Allen Yeh, Assistant Professor of Theology in the Torrey Honors Institute at Biola University, La Mirada, California, has had mission experience in Asia and Latin America.

—Christoffer H. Grundmann

Christoffer H. Grundmann is the John R. Eckrich University Professor in Religion and the Healing Arts at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. Before joining Valparaiso in 2001, he taught for four years at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in Madurai, India, and was theological consultant to the German Institute of Medical Missions, Tübingen.

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A.H. MATHIAS ZAHNISER
Zahniser focuses on one of the particularly divisive issues separating Christians and Muslims—differing views of the mission and death of Jesus. He finds that a close study of the Qur’an reveals surprising grounds for mutual understanding and suggests that “our pilgrimage together will reveal that the force of differences will appear less by looking more closely at normative sources.”

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This ambitiously titled and carefully worked study by Sonya Grypma, a historian of nursing, documents a period in the history of medical missions in China involving Canadian nurses working in Henan who were members of the so-called North China Mission of the former Presbyterian Church (since 1925, the United Church) of Canada.

The author presents her material in seven chronologically arranged chapters, each concluding with a summary. These summaries actually have the most to offer the ordinary reader, for here the material is put into broader context and perspective. The core of the individual chapters, in contrast, hardly ever goes beyond a sometimes trivial patchwork of mostly (auto)biographical snippets and mission-log data, with a special focus on nursing personnel and the development of the profession.

This case study succeeds, however, in clearly showing the complex administrative relationships of these nurses to their home board—the Toronto-based Foreign Mission Board, via the Woman’s Missionary Society, which supported only single, unmarried women for a contracted period of time—and it documents their personal efforts to combine professional commitment and evangelistic activity. This focus led them to identify the children of missionaries, the “mishkids,” as a significant cohort of recruits for this particular career (pp. 90–94; 221–22). The book also gives an idea of the enormous difficulties the nurses faced, caused by frequent antiforeign turmoil, the Sino-Japanese War, and China’s transformation from empire to people’s republic, resulting finally in the expulsion of the missionaries. The trauma of expulsion was experienced by the nurses as “failure” (pp. 216–18) that effectively silenced them. Grypma is to be thanked for lifting such a veil of forgetting, giving names and (by inserting photographs) faces to the otherwise anonymous nurses, Canadian mainly, but also Chinese. Five appendixes and an elaborate index enhance her detailed account.

—Christoffer H. Grundmann
African Pentecostalism: An Introduction.


This book by eminent African church historian Ogbu Kalu, a Nigerian and Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, will fascinate all observers of world Christianity. Its insights arise from the author’s personal experience, extensive travel, and erudite mind. Drawing from multidisciplinary perspectives, Kalu displays an impressive grasp of a vast amount of literature and the subject itself. His engrossing style brings a critical yet sympathetic perspective that is uniquely African.

Kalu begins with what he calls the “precedents” from the 1900s to the 1960s. He considers that the question of origins of Pentecostalism should be studied from a multicontextual perspective of a people’s past and not just from that of the “change agents” (in this case, foreign missionaries and media), which is a unidirectional perspective (p. 17). Later, Kalu differs somewhat from my approach to African independent “Spirit” churches. I would debate his referring to my “gyrations” in definitions and would challenge his tendency to read all African “Spirit” churches in Nigerian categories. He refers to them all as “Aladura” (pp. 70–71) and conflates them with both Zionists in Southern Africa and messianic movements like Kambanguism and the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (p. 79). Some of his own illustrations from Southern and West Africa (pp. 71–75), however, actually confirm that the “Spirit” churches in Africa are intimately related to Pentecostalism. Even the new kinds of Pentecostalism have “Spirit” church links in Nigeria (pp. 72–73). Perhaps we should speak in Wittgensteinian terms of “family resemblance” when referring to different expressions of Pentecostalism. This debate should not detract from the importance of this study as an in-depth analysis of a multiform African movement that has changed the course of Christian history.

—Allan Heaton Anderson

Allan Heaton Anderson is Professor of Global Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham, in England. He is British-born but has lived and worked in Christian ministry in Southern Africa for forty-three years.

Contextualization of Christianity in China: An Evaluation in Modern Perspective.


The eleven essays in this timely collection, written by noted Chinese and Western scholars across the disciplinary spectrum, illuminate the intersection of missionary Christianity and Chinese culture and the importance of contextualization to the creation of Chinese Christianity. The book is ably edited by Peter Chen-main Wang, a respected authority on this important topic.

Since the Jesuits first arrived in China 450 years ago, thousands of missionaries have devoted themselves to evangelism (both spoken and written), sacred music, medical missions, and education. Though the missionaries did attempt to accommodate the indigenous culture to some degree, true contextualization was impeded by most missionaries’ reluctance to fully root the Christian message in Chinese soil. Nor did Chinese evangelists, desiring to be both Chinese and Christian, go much further, largely because they kept Christianity lashed to its Western denominational moorings, even as antiforeignism swept over pre-Mao China.

In 1949 Mao expelled the missionaries, but Christianity survived his Cultural Revolution. An estimated 12 million Catholics and 40 million Protestants now far outnumber the missionaries’ converts. Yet the state’s efforts to control religion, which originated in early imperial times and intensified in today’s People’s Republic of China, have inhibited progress toward further contextualization. Even the legendary Wang Mingdao (1900–1991), who was pastor of Beijing’s independent Christian Tabernacle and languished in Mao’s gULag for advocating an indigenized church after 1949, stopped well short of full contextualization. Hence, one author concludes that only in a later generation
will there emerge a leader who is able to “produce a contextualized theology that is equally conversant in Chinese culture and thinking” and in “Christian biblical studies and systematic theology” (p. 222).

These remarkable essays help us understand the indispensable role of contextualization in creating global Christianity, which now encompasses one-third of the human family. The Beijing Olympics shined the world’s spotlight on China, leading many to wonder what role the liberalizing forces of globalization may play in empowering the Chinese church to become truly authentic, unfettered by Party interference and safeguarded by a legal infrastructure. If so, Professor Wang may one day edit a book about a fully contextualized Chinese Christianity.

—P. Richard Bohr

P. Richard Bohr is Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, in St. Joseph and Collegeville, Minnesota. He is author of Famine in China and the Missionary (Harvard Univ. Press, 1972).

“Providence Has Freed Our Hands”: Women’s Missions and the American Encounter with Japan.


This book is primarily a study of the impact of the American women’s missionary movement on American society. The writer, Karen Seat, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Arizona, focuses on the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She examines its activities in the United States and Japan, paying particular attention to Elizabeth Russell (1836–1928) and the girls’ school that she established in Nagasaki in 1879.

Seat emphasizes the “ways in which the American women’s foreign mission movement undermined the very ideals that forged it” (p. 3). She thus shows how single female missionaries fitted traditional models of suitable women’s behavior through their lives of selfless service. At the same time, however, they challenged these models by rejecting the Christian home in favor of independent action and leadership overseas. In addition, she notes that the experiences of missionaries in non-Christian countries often led them to question one of the core assumptions of the nineteenth-century missionary movement: the idea that Western civilization, being based on Christianity, was superior to any other form of civilization. As a result, missionary literature played an important role in challenging existing racial stereotypes.

The strength of the book lies in its attention to both the home and the foreign sides of missionary activity. However, this wide scope is also its weakness. Seat has consulted few Japanese-language works, does not always provide sources for her quotes (pp. 76, 77, 114, 115), and does not always support her assertions with evidence. For example, she stresses that the special aim of Russell’s school was to prepare girls for work outside the home rather than for marriage (pp. 81, 103), but the reader is given only anecdotal information (pp. 16, 83), not an analysis of the destination of graduates compared to those of other women’s schools.

—Helen Ballhatchet

Helen Ballhatchet is a professor in the Economics Faculty, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. She is British and specializes in the intellectual history of modern Japan, including the role of Christianity.

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ISBN 978-0-8028-3180-4 • 384 pages • paperback • $45.00
Black Robes in Paraguay: The Success of the Guaraní Missions Hastened the Abolition of the Jesuits.


How could it be that a Roman Catholic order filled with extraordinarily gifted men who sacrificially extended the outreach of the church, literally to the ends of the earth, should eventually be dissolved on papal authority? Black Robes in Paraguay explains this enigma. The author, William Jaenike, shows that the very success of the Jesuits, particularly of their missions in Paraguay, contributed to jealousy and mistrust among other orders and clashed with the baser economic and exploitative elements of colonial Spain and Portugal in Latin America.

Black Robes in Paraguay constitutes a much more detailed explanation of the conflict portrayed in the memorable 1986 film The Mission. The film depicted the historic accomplishments of Jesuit missionaries between 1587 and 1768 among the Guaraní Indians along the border of Paraguay and Brazil above Iguacu Falls. The Jesuits opposed slave traders entering the area from Brazil to enslave the natives, whose amazing talent for building and art had been developed by the missionaries. Conflicting interests in Latin America, combined with a growing distrust of the Jesuits in Europe, led to the dissolution of the order by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. This followed their expulsion from all Spanish domains, including Paraguay, by 1768.

Jaenike, a retired business executive, felt compelled to investigate this tragic ending of a heroic missionary effort, but he admits that his work is one for amateur historians more than for scholarly researchers. It is nevertheless a very readable and compelling account.

The Jesuit order was reconstituted in 1814, too late to save the Guaraní and restore the majestic but ruined missions of Paraguay.

—Michael Pocock

Michael Pocock is Department Chair and Senior Professor of World Missions and Intercultural Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas. Earlier he and his wife served in Venezuela with The Evangelical Alliance Mission.


Christian-Muslim relations today can be understood only against the background of fourteen hundred years of difficult relationships across the Mediterranean. Hence the title of this book, Sea of Faith, in which American journalist Stephen O’Shea tells the story of how the two faiths battled for supremacy over this great sea and the lands adjoining it in the thousand years between the mid-seventh and the mid-sixteenth centuries.

Seven decisive battles are described: Yarmuk in 636 (marking the end of Byzantine rule in Syria), Poitiers in 732
(where the Muslim advance into France was halted), Manzikert in 1071 (marking the defeat of Christian Anatolia), Hattin in 1187 (where Saladin routed the Crusaders), Las Navas de Tolosa in Spain in 1212 (altering the balance of power between the Christian north and Muslim Andalusia), the capture of Constantinople in 1453 (leading eventually to the Ottoman Empire), and the siege of Malta in 1565 (marking the end of Turkish supremacy in the Mediterranean).

Interspersed between the battles, however, were several periods of genuine and highly fruitful convivencia (Spanish for “coexistence”), notably in Córdoba, Palermo, Toledo, and Istanbul after 1453. Another significant ingredient in the improvement of relationships between the two faith communities was the development of trade. We can be thankful that “Christian” and “Muslim” armies no longer face each other on the battlefield—though the present “war on terror” is often perceived as the Christian West engaging in a crusade against the Muslim East. But O’Shea’s account of a millennium of conflict and convivencia should help both Christians and Muslims to reflect on their shared history and perhaps exorcise some of the ghosts in their collective subconscious.

—Colin Chapman

Colin Chapman, an ordained Anglican, now retired, worked for seventeen years in the Middle East (mostly in Egypt and Lebanon) and taught at Trinity College, Bristol, and Crowther Hall, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

Bishop Stephen Neill: From Edinburgh to South India.


Dyron Daughrity is to be commended for this badly needed book from the hands of a responsible researcher. It takes Neill from his birth in Edinburgh in December 1900 through a rootless childhood into schooldays at Dean Close, where he excelled as athlete and scholar, winning hundred-meter races and, even more frequently, academic prizes. At Trinity College, Cambridge, he achieved first-class degrees in classical and theological courses, again won many prizes, and was awarded a fellowship in 1924. While a schoolboy, Neill experienced conversion (p. 47). He trained for ordained ministry but offered for India as a lay missionary in 1926, working as an itinerant evangelist and learning from E. Stanley Jones. Ordained in 1928, he became warden of the theological seminary at Nazareth, Diocese of Tinnevelly, of which he became bishop at the age of thirty-eight.

His autobiography, an indispensable source, was well described by the late Jocelyn Murray: “In some ways this book conceals more than it tells of the author” (p. 238). Two major episodes, glossed over there, are responsibly explored here. The first is Neill’s time at Dohnavur, a clash of titans between Amy Carmichael and the brilliant young man. Sadly, Daughrity was denied access to private papers at Dohnavur, which might have cast further light on this period. The second episode was the sad end to Neill’s five-year episcopate. Strain, sleeplessness, and distance from psychiatric help in England exposed a tendency to physically punish those in his care. Foss Westcott, who had hoped Neill would succeed him as metropolitan, finally had to demand his resignation.

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Dr. Edith L. Blumhofer is professor of history at Wheaton College and director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton, Illinois. Her research interests focus on the history of Christianity in post–Civil War America. She is also interested in the religion of ordinary people and has recently been exploring the history of Protestant hymnody. She is preparing a set of Web-based resources to facilitate the teaching of Pentecostal studies. Dr. Blumhofer, author of People of Faith: A History of Western Christianity (2007), is writing Evangelicalism: A Very Short Introduction (forthcoming from Oxford University Press).

Dr. Kevin Ward
(Spring 2009)

Dr. Kevin Ward, senior lecturer in African religious studies at the University of Leeds (U.K.), spent twenty years working in East Africa as a teacher and theological educator. He did his original research in Kenya, examining the problems of Protestant Christian ecumenical cooperation in colonial Kenya. He has continued to have a strong interest in East Africa, focusing on the history and spirituality of the East African Revival, church-state relations in Uganda, and the religious basis of conflict in Uganda. He is author of A History of Global Anglicanism (2006) and coeditor with Brian Stanley of The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999 (1999).

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Highland Indians and the State in Modern Ecuador.


The final chapter of this excellent book notes, “Ecuador as a small country on South America’s Pacific Coast often receives little attention in broader works on Latin America” (p. 249). We therefore welcome the publication of the fourteen essays in this volume, which explore the condition of indigenous peoples and the changing ways in which they have related to a changing state during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though the book focuses on Ecuador, three chapters take a comparative approach, looking also at the native populations in Mexico (chapter 12), Bolivia (chapter 13), and Peru (chapter 14).

Topics addressed include the formation of identities, the development of the state, attitudes of the non-Indian population, gender ideologies, and ethnic discourse. A tragic thread running through these chapters is the incredible degree of oppression the Indians suffered, which changed little since the conquest by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. We see also the painful formation of Indian movements such as the Confederación de Naciones Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), which became a decisive factor in Ecuadorian politics, especially during the four-year period between 1997 and 2001, when the country saw six different governments.

Though no single chapter focuses on religion, there are numerous references to the role of missionaries. Of special interest for the missiological reader is the role that some Catholic orders played in the service of the state in the effort to control and “civilize” the native population. Javier Erazo says in chapter 11, “Jesuit
missionaries in particular devised methods of extracting labor, gold, and pita fiber from the indigenous population, much as colonial and state agents had done, until they were banished from the Americas in 1767 and then again after their return in 1869. In the intervening years, parish priests took over their posts and were among the worst exploiters of Indians, exacting tribute and charging exorbitant prices for ecclesiastical services” (p. 179). There are also references to the role of evangelical missions. In chapter 14 José Antonio Lucero and María Elena García refer to the surprising evolution of the Council of Indigenous Evangelical Peoples (FEINE), which represents an important number of Protestant Indians: “FEINE has moved from being considered a conservative and apolitical organization to being an active participant in the politics of protest. FEINE has succeeded in ‘Indianizing’ Protestantism” (p. 238). The bibliography, as well as the valuable “Bibliographic Essay” by Marc Becker (pp. 249–59), is a useful complement for those interested in enriching their understanding of Ecuador, its social evolution, and the role of Indian populations.

—Samuel Escobar

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News of Boundless Riches is the fruit of collaboration on several levels. The editors, Max Stackhouse and Lalsangkima Pachuau, worked with the Center of Theological Inquiry of Princeton and United Theological College of Bangalore. They in turn brought together scholars from the West and from Asia representing a variety of disciplines and denominations. The contributors met together four times over two years in India and the United States to present, critique, and revise their papers, with the goal described in the subtitle, Interrogating, Comparing, and Reconstructing Mission in a Global Era.

While not limited to one geographic area, the study is situated in Asia and India as the primary test-case. In their excellent forty-page introduction, the editors present the historical and sociopolitical context and the key missiological and ethical issues for India in particular, and colonialism/postcolonialism in general. Then, after describing the methodology, Stackhouse and Pachuau provide an excellent overview of the individual contributions. Two articles were added from outside the process of discussion to include other key perspectives: a European view of mission in secularized societies,
and a “biblical holism” view, representing “a critical refinement of earlier evangelical views” (p. xxvi).

Each volume contains two parts of six or seven chapters each. Part 1 of volume 1 engages the missiological foundations of this project. Jayakiran Sebastian proposes “a mission to God” theology in dialogue with “a mission of God” theology (Darrell Guder). Alternatives are proposed for mission in Europe (Michael Welker) and a theological understanding of other religions (Mark Heim). Anthony Kallath analyzes “liberative dialogue” in Catholic missiology, while Bal Krishna Sharma examines the foundational themes from a Pentecostal view, and F. Hrangkhuma from that of “biblical holism.” Part 2 is a very interesting and insightful study of what can be learned from and critiqued regarding the attitudes of other religions to conversion and proselytism. There are two articles each on Hinduism (Sebastian Kim and Sharma), Islam (Mark Swanson and Ng Kam Weng), and Buddhism (Atul Aghamkar and Heim).

In the second volume, part 1 focuses on reconstructing mission approaches with marginalized peoples in urban areas (Aghamkar) and those victimized by poverty (Joh Mohan Razu and Kim), gambling (Mok Chan Wing Yan), prostitution (Pushpa Joseph), and violence (Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar). Part 2 charts new directions, both historically and theologically-ethically, for an intercultural theology of reconciliation (Pachuau), acknowledging contributions of women and indigenous leaders in mission (Mary Schaller Blaufuss), an intercultural and interreligious theology of the cross (Sathianathan Clarke), the transformation of diaconal and professional ministries into social action (Jesudas Athyal), and the role of hospitality in mission (Swanson).

In the final chapter, Stackhouse addresses globalization, “the greatest missiological issue of our time” (p. 268), a common thread through these two volumes.

The excellent results of this process of interrogating, comparing, and reconstructing mission between India and other parts of the world indicate a promising approach for world Christianity today.

—Roger Schroeder

Roger Schroeder, S.V.D., the Bishop Francis X. Ford, M.M., Chair of Catholic Missiology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, served as a missionary in Papua New Guinea for six years.


In this volume Ogbu U. Kalu, currently Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, brings together an impressive collection of essays highlighting salient concerns in African church historiography. Some of the essays have been previously published, but these are complemented by new material. Kalu takes periodization seriously and groups the essays into three sections that deal with (1) the method and context of the study, (2) African Christian agency in the context of the missionary and the colonial era, and (3) “cameos of contemporary responses in African Christianity.” This work is part of a series edited by Dana Robert of Boston University, and her foreword (pp. xii–xvii) provides a useful summary of the book.

The chapters borrow extensively from local cultural idioms. Here Clio, the ancient muse of history, performs for church historians by addressing “the process of appropriation of Christianity among African communities” (p. ix) within the last century. In the encounter between Western Christian missions and traditional African peoples, a number of things are happening. First, traditional worldviews remain resilient in the face of the Christian advance. Second, Christianity itself has transitioned from a Western into a predominantly non-Western religion. Third, engagement with the sacred, a central concern of African religious and public life, remains key to indigenous appropriations of Christianity. Kalu provides sufficient evidence to show that from the rise of Ethiopianism (chap. 6), through the proliferation of African independent churches (chaps. 7–8), to burgeoning contemporary charismatic Pentecostalisms (chap. 9), we cannot continue to overemphasize the role of non-Africans in African church historiography. African religious cultures take transcendence seriously, and Kalu establishes that, in their appropriations of Christianity, indigenous people made choices that resonated with familiar expressions of sacred-human encounters.

In his words, “It is difficult to tell the story...
of the church by rejecting its essence” (p. 9).

Kalu is a very forceful and thoughtful African church historian with considerable international experience. This work confirms that stature for those seeking to understand the contours of the history of the church in Africa.

—J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu teaches contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal/charismatic theology at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana. In 2007 he was Schiotz Visiting Professor of African Christianity at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Churches of Egypt: From the Journey of the Holy Family to the Present Day.


A number of books share a title similar to The Churches of Egypt, but this one is in a class by itself. Recent research and discoveries are reflected in the articles, but the book is remarkable primarily because of Sherif Sonbol’s breathtaking photographs. Sonbol not only brings out the mystique of modern edifices with his sense of lighting, sun and artificial, as well as focus, but also preserves the fading images that time effaces from the ancient buildings. Were any reader not a bibliophile, a number of the pictures would be cut out and framed. Some require double pages, and one demands a four-page foldout. Because the photographs treat both freestanding and monastic churches, the tome is especially rich.

The introduction emphasizes where the lists of churches and monasteries appear in important medieval Arabic histories. Gabra is a visiting professor at Claremont Graduate School. His eight-page historical summary is solid and enlightening, the best short piece on this subject that I have encountered. Hedstrom’s overview of the architecture pulls you into the plans. Both she and van Loon are independent researchers. The latter describes the art so well that you anticipate the photographs. There are articles for each church.

Footnotes, bibliographic references, a bibliography, and a glossary offer assistance. Missing are the dimensions of the church plans and their compass orientation that one finds in archaeological reports. The end maps, so beautifully rendered, might have included all the place-names mentioned.

The authors thank the many Egyptians who made their travels possible and thus indicate how delicate it is in the Middle East to get permission for the visits necessary to study churches. Carolyn Ludwig, the editor and publisher, has fine artistic judgment and knows where to get great books assembled. For any volume, being marked “A Ludwig Publishing Edition” means high quality. The paper used receives the text and the photos well.

The American University in Cairo Press has farmed this volume out to a Chinese publisher, which explains why a book of over 300 photographs can be purchased for under $45 from Amazon.com.

—Frederick W. Norris

Frederick W. Norris, Professor Emeritus of World Christianity at Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee, worked within a Christian church research institute and congregation in Tubingen, West Germany (1972–77).