Syncretism—the combining of two apparently incompatible things to produce a third entity—is an everyday occurrence. Across much of Africa and Latin America, for example, horses and donkeys blend their DNA to generate the mule—a unique and extraordinarily versatile animal combining the sure-footedness of the latter and the strength of the former. Political, social, racial, chemical, and biological syncretisms occur so frequently that we are scarcely aware of them. It is religious syncretism that startles us.

This is surprising, in some ways, since the Christian faith itself springs from the most astonishing syncretism conceivable—God becomes a human being; the eternal becomes temporal; omnipotence yields to powerlessness. This audacious syncretism scandalized the custodians of Judaism in Jesus’ day, and it scandalizes non-Christian monotheists still. After two full millennia of puzzling, it continues to far exceed the intellectual compass of even the most penetrating theological minds.

In missiological discourse, syncretism has been largely confined to the vocabulary, formulations, symbols, and systems of Christendom-forged doctrines and practices. “Syncretism,” Harold Turner wrote in his masterful summation of the subject four decades ago, “arises in the course of presenting Jesus Christ as the sole Lord and Saviour to men of other religions living in cultures not moulded by the biblical revelation. By translating the gospel into local languages, and adapting or accommodating to local ideas and customs, these are absorbed into the life of the church. Many such elements

Continued next page
have, however, been intimately related to another religion, and it is often difficult to incorporate them without also absorbing their previous religious associations and meanings.” He goes on to note that “when Christian elements are themselves interpreted and transformed in a pagan direction, it becomes again a pagan religion, although now enriched by Christian borrowings” (Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission [1971], p. 580).

The essays in this issue of the IBMR point up the endur-

ning challenge of ensuring both the fidelity and the relevance of Christian faith across the shifting boundaries of time, languages, cultures, and institutions. Throughout most of the “Christianized” world, such concerns are most explicitly the domain of theological seminaries, whose mandate is the transmission of sound apostolic teaching “to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Tim. 2:2). But concerns with revelatory fidelity and cultural relevance are implicit at multiple levels across the frontiers of Christian witness, where the letter and, it is hoped, the spirit of biblical teaching is articulated, appropriated, and applied within cultural settings and through languages worlds removed from those of the theologians and missionaries who have systematized and standardized this “sound teaching.” In either case, the line between relevance and syncretism can often be exasperatingly variable, difficult to discern, and controversial. Such concerns are reflected in Dale Irvin’s elucidation of the issues facing mission in an age of global cities. He observes (quoting Edward Said), “‘No one today is purely one thing.’ Our hybrids are proliferating and, contrary to nature, are multiplying exponentially.” As Todd Hartch relates in his article, Ivan Illich was convinced that American Christianity was so utterly and irredeemably syncretized as to disqualify its citizens from authentic missionary vocation. He did everything in his considerable power to undermine his own church’s missionary efforts in Latin America.

Jonas Adelin Jørgensen’s lead article shows how Christian witness on cultural-religious frontiers raises fresh questions about bewilderingly complex and constantly evolving issues of contextualization and syncretism in predominantly Hindu and Muslim societies, where the word “Christian” has long been associated with the worst that the West has to offer. In such environments, identifying oneself as “Christian” suggests the jettisoning of basic personal integrity. In such cultures to be a follower of Jesus is one thing; to be a Christian quite another.

The man whose short obituary appears in this issue did more than most to help remove doctrinal blenders that have long ensured the theological myopia of Christian missions. Ralph Winter opened our eyes to indisputable evidence of God’s salvific grace outside and beyond inherited Christendom theologies and ecclesiologies. The constructive missiological dialogue on “insider movements” fostered by his International Journal of Frontier Missiology has reminded readers of Gospel verities that have been too readily set aside: that salvation is not about Christianity but about Christ, and that it is not orthodox but orthoprax that ultimately distinguishes sheep from goats on judgment day. Tjolhbitsay, the Flathead chief who had “a reputation for kindness that extended even to his enemies,” could not possibly pass the Christianity test, but his welcome of Ignace Partui, the Iroquois evangelist whose story John Mellis relates, places him securely in our Lord’s “Well done!” category, according to Matthew 25.

No human system of thought, language, and behavior can do full justice to the mystery of God revealed through history, through a people, through events, through human languages, through the Word made flesh. The treasure we carry is indeed entrusted to limited, earthen vessels.

—Jonathan J. Bonk
The emergence of numerous indigenous forms of Christianity as a consequence of its globalization is a well-known and widely studied phenomenon in missiology. A debate concerning criteria for discerning authentic inculturation/ contextualization and illegitimate syncretism has accompanied these studies right from the start and has remained a fundamental concern among missiologists. This debate is not surprising, for the discussion of contextualization and syncretism occurs exactly where faith and culture interact. Despite the continuing discussion, however, no common theoretical approach to syncretism exists, and no criteria for authentic inculturation or contextualization have yet been agreed upon.

This article presents the results of two field studies of the interaction between faith and culture in the lives of believers in Jesus Christ from a Muslim background in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and from a Hindu background in Chennai (formerly Madras), Tamil Nadu, India. The results suggest that we should not be hasty in judging indigenous forms of Christianity as either authentic contextualization or illegitimate syncretism but, rather, should examine carefully the interreligious hermeneutics at work. Such a use of interreligious hermeneutics could provide the theoretical basis necessary for theological and missiological discussion of the relation between Christianity and other religious traditions.

I conclude by discussing how empirical studies might inform missiological perspectives on Christian identity and its relation to other religious traditions in our globalized world.

Jesus Imandars in Dhaka, Bangladesh

As an independent nation since 1971, Bangladesh in its cultural and social life continues to be deeply influenced by Islam, which is the religion of more than 85 percent of its population. While there are 12 percent Hindus and 0.6 percent Buddhists, Christians number only 0.3 percent of the approximately 150 million Bangladeshis. Although the majority of Christians are converts from Hinduism, Islamic culture is the background for Christianity in Bangladesh.

During my fieldwork in Dhaka, I established acquaintance with a number of Bangladeshi men and some women from Muslim background who attended small groups of Īsā imandars, or “those faithful to Jesus.” The groups, which the imandars termed jama’at (fellowship), met in private homes and functioned as gatherings for worship, prayer, sermons, and social interaction. In this condensed report, I focus on their liturgy, religious ideal and identity, and theological reflection. Taken together, these three areas provide a rough outline of what it means to be an imandar (literally, “faithful [one]”).

Jama’at liturgy. A typical meeting in Mehrab’s jama’at took place in his office, which was connected to his apartment. On Fridays a small signboard announcing “Jama’at” was placed on the front door; all furniture was removed, and mats covered the office floor. The meeting started in the late afternoon as the last rays of the sun disappeared behind the houses across the small street. As members of the jama’at arrived, each was handed a copy of the Kitab ul Mughaldesh (the Bible in Musalmani Bengali translation) and a homemade collection of iste–songs. After five or six imandars had gathered, Mehrab welcomed everyone and announced a song, either a translation of a classic Western hymn or a local composition drawing heavily upon the Bangladeshi style of music known as baul gan (folk song). In principle women were welcome but in reality their attendance was limited to the women living in the household where the meeting took place. This means that the jama’at groups in practice tended to follow the somewhat patriarchic religious culture in Bangladesh. Reading, especially recitation of long passages in the Kitab ul Mughaldesh, was part of every meeting. The Zabur (the Book of Psalms) and the apostolic letters were often recited. In veneration of the Holy Book it was placed on a wooden bookstand in front of every imandar. Mehrab, who called himself imam (leader of the prayer), would occasionally read aloud a text himself, but he usually restricted himself to preaching the sermon, commenting on and developing the texts. There were always common prayers after the sermon. In contrast to the highly ritualized mosque prayers, the imandars did not follow any particular ritual, but everyone was free to pray. From time to time the imandars celebrated Communion. The ritual was simple and devoid of pomp and circumstance: Mehrab simply read the well-known verses from 1 Corinthians and distributed bread and fruit juice.

As a whole, the liturgy thus seems to consciously adopt a Bangladeshi and Islamic style of worship in several aspects. On the material level, the straw mats covering the floor and the wooden bookstands are expressions of Islamic style, found in every mosque or Qur’an school. With folk songs, recitations, and expositions of God’s deeds by the leader, the style of the meeting itself clearly draws on the popular South Asian milad style of religious meetings, which are commemorative religious gatherings held to celebrate birth, marriage, or funerals. Recitation of sacred texts is widely used in Islamic religious culture to evoke the sacred reality of divine revelation. In identification with this practice, the imandars recite the Bible. In contrast to Islamic practice, however, they recite the text in the vernacular. In so doing, they seem to be shifting emphasis from the Islamic ideal of correct recitation to the Christian ideal of correct understanding. Interestingly, the baul gan is not simply music but also a religious sect known for its unconventional behavior, poetic freedom, and spiritual spontaneity. Baul is not limited to one religion but has attracted followers among Hindus as well as Sufis. Adopting and identifying with this style of music, the imandars transcend the borders of structured religious life and

*Jesus Imandars and Christ Bhaktas: Report from Two Field Studies of Interreligious Hermeneutics and Identity in Globalized Christianity*

Jonas Adelin Jørgensen
point to the key role of personal relation and inner commitment. Another interesting feature is the role of prayers; the value of ritualized namaz prayer in Arabic is played down, in contrast to individual and personal prayers in Bengali. When it comes to Communion, rituals are stripped down to a minimum. The jama’ats are thus not simply Islamized Christian churches but are consciously more intimate and “spiritual,” in contrast to institutional and “religious” mosques and churches.

Religious ideal and identity. The word iman (faith) is not just etymologically related to “imandars” but plays a fundamental role in the imandars’ self-understanding as “faithful.” According to the emic, that is, the imandars’ perspective, faith is not abstract knowledge or belief but must be existential and relational, expressed first and foremost as faithfulness. According to the imandars, iman involves a personal totality, “heart, mind, and strength,” and becoming a Jesus imandar means to fix one’s iman on Jesus, that is, to enter a relation with Jesus, who as a spiritual master will mediate the divine and transform the believer through his very presence.

Besides prayer and reading, the imandars enact their faithfulness ritually in baptism, which is spoken of as turiqa (binding) of oneself to Jesus. This binding is said to be a public witness to a loyalty and faithfulness that transcends all other boundaries, religious and social, because it first and foremost is an individual, personal commitment. Given this background, it seems strange and almost paradoxical that the majority of imandars continue to practice and argue for public baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. However, the concepts of iman and the notion of baptism as turiqa might be reconciled: turiqa stems from the Sufi tradition, where it refers to the mystical path in faith. As a concept utilized in connection with baptism, turiqa seems to emphasize a personal and emotional bond between the subject and Jesus, a radical interiority expressed ritually. The imandars’ reinterpretation of Christian baptism enlarges the meaning of baptism, for it becomes a ritual enactment and public confession of an inner transformation.

A fundamental question is to what degree this commitment to Jesus is compatible with the life of the wider Muslim community, and the question frequently arose whether the imandar was still a Muslim. The imandars themselves were divided on this question. Although most agreed that a newly baptized imandar could continue participating in the local mosque, roughly half the informants no longer identified themselves as Muslims, while the other half accepted Mehrab’s line of argumentation that identifying oneself as Muslim is significant, even if it takes some historical and textual exegesis: specifically, a Muslim aims to submit to the will of God, and so does the imandar. According to the apostle Paul, inner transformation is needed for a believer to do the will of God (Rom. 12:2). When the imandar becomes faithful to Jesus, inner transformation is initiated, and the result is a regenerated Muslim who does the will of God from the heart by following Jesus’ example, and who transcends divisions between institutional Christian churches and Islamic mosques. According to some of the imandars, this understanding allows for participation in any mosque (or church) because mosque prayers are simply outward and hold only relative value.

In the mosque liturgy, a crucial point in which social and ritual identity come together is the collective confession, tawhid, that is, the utterance of the Islamic creed, which implies a ritual recognition of Muhammad as prophet of God. According to some imandars, they simply stop after the first half of the creed, which affirms the sovereign status of God. Instead of adding “Muhammad is the Prophet of God,” they silently add “Jesus is the Spirit of God.” The theological heterodoxy of this statement is clear, and those imandars who argue for such a step also acknowledge that the majority of Muslims do not agree with this substitution. With this understanding, participation in namaz prayer in mosques might be tolerated by majority Muslims but could hardly be said to be welcomed.

Theological reflection among imandars. Even if the imandars insist on their Islamic identity, there are marked differences with the Bangladeshi Muslim community at large. We see this clearly in their Christological reflection, which is suspended between the notion of Jesus’ prophethood and his sacrificial death.

The notion of Jesus’ prophethood emphasizes his embodiment of spiritual and ethical qualities such as nonviolence, compassion, and vicarious suffering—that is, his nispap (sinlessness). Like a popular wandering, saintly Sufi pir (Muslim saint), Jesus is therefore “spiritually powerful” and able to act as intercessor for the imandar. From their New Testament readings, they furthermore affirm Jesus as “messenger of truth,” just like Muhammad. A basic concern among the imandars is that Jesus is “alive”—a fundamental fact that both Islamic and Christian tradition agrees upon, according to the imandars. The spiritually powerful and continuous life of Jesus both depends on and demonstrates the unique relation between Jesus and God. Therefore Jesus is not just a prophet but the prophet par excellence, it is argued. Even if the conceptualization of Jesus’ prophethood emphasizes similarity with Muhammad’s as “messenger of truth,” Jesus is viewed as hierarchically superior to Muhammad on the basis of his spiritual power and continuous life.

Interestingly, the unique relation between Jesus and God is revealed in the imandars’ understanding of Jesus’ death as simultaneously gift and sacrifice. The imandars use the Urdu theological term qurbani to describe Jesus’ death. The term corresponds somewhat to the English “sacrifice,” but it also means “offering.” To view Jesus’ death as a sacrifice mainly highlights mediation or reconciliation, an idea well known from Christian theological tradition. But if Jesus’ death is also considered an offering, it becomes a gift. According to their own logic and values, this divine gift to the imandar makes a return obligatory; without a return, the value of the gift diminishes. The imandar is not able to offer himself completely, but he must act as if he was sacrificing himself. In this way, the imandar accepts the mediation between God and himself through the death of Jesus, and he also returns the divine gift. The return of the gift is conditioned by love, that is, by the intimate personal relation between the imandar and Jesus.

Summing up, it is clear that the conceptualization of Jesus’ significance to a large degree has counterparts in popular Bangladeshi Islam: the notion of prophethood, intercession, spiritual power, moral innocence, and mediation by a pir of the divine. For the imandars, to become “faithful” refers to an Islamic theological virtue, and to become a Jesus imandar is a Bangladeshi style of religiosity—but it has a Christian subject matter, which becomes clear in the presentation of the imandars’ Christology. The meaning of the imandars’ Christology transcends the Qur’anic universe, and the notion of Jesus’ being superior to Muhammad distances the imandars from Islamic theology. Ultimately, their interpretation of Jesus’ death as gift and sacrifice most clearly distances the imandars from the majority of Muslims and definitively transcends Qur’anic Christology. From my point of view, this ultimately places the imandars outside the Islamic theological universe and within the broader Christian tradition.
Christ Bhaktas in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

According to the popular history of Christianity in South India, Mylapore (now located in modern Chennai) is the place where the apostle Thomas was martyred and buried in the first century. His witness was not in vain, and Christianity has long been present in the region. Whereas the majority of India is Hindu (80.5 percent) and Muslims make up a large minority (13.4 percent), more than 24 million, or 2.3 percent of India’s population, belong to one of the various Christian denominations. Interestingly, Christianity is to a high degree an urban phenomenon in Tamil Nadu, and among the megacities of the Indian subcontinent Chennai holds a solid lead when it comes to the number of mainline as well as charismatic churches, revival rallies, and public prayer halls. Furthermore, the majority of Christians in India are of humble origin, in terms of both caste and economic status.

In contrast to the typical urban, poor, and low-caste Christians, the group of Christ bhaktas (devotees of Christ) that I had the chance to follow during my fieldwork were all from a higher-caste Hindu background. A large part of the material I gathered deals with the fact that the bhaktas consider themselves to be doubly estranged, both in relation to their Hindu birth communities and in relation to Christian communities. Caste questions and Hindu cultural background deeply influence the form of faith the bhaktas express. I focus here on how bhakti (devotion) is understood and utilized as communal ritual, personal ideal, and theological method.

*Bhakti liturgy.* The group of Christ bhaktas met irregularly in a private home, but the meeting included a number of basic elements. In contrast to the *jama’at* meetings, women were welcome not only in principle but also in practice, and several women attended the bhaktas’ meetings. After having met one of the participants a number of times, I was invited to participate in the group’s devotional meeting. Sarasvat, the leader of the group, was an elderly gentleman who dressed in saffron robes. He prepared the room for the evening’s meeting by removing all the furniture and by drawing a large *kolam* (a traditional Hindu geometric pattern) on the floor with white rice flour. He also placed a traditional brass lamp on the floor and arranged a small pot with incense sticks, betel leaves, coconuts, bananas, milk, flower garlands, and a small book stand with a Bible on top. After lighting the lamp, the living room was completely transformed into a room for *pujá* (worship).

After several participants had arrived, Sarasvat announced the first *bhajan* (devotional song), which could be a simple chorus repeating “sharanam, sharanam Deva” (surrender, surrender to God). Other bhajans praised with equally simple poetry Jesus as *muktsava* (giver of salvation) and *sathyaguru* (true teacher), or they simply mentioned names and descriptions of Jesus—as Sweet, Love, Healing, Comfort, Auspicious, Holy, Beauty, and so forth. After an ample time of singing meditative and melodious bhajans, Sarasvat would normally give a sermon, often in the form of a *darshan* (literally, “sight,” here “beholding” of a deity). He would, for instance, ask the bhaktas to imagine walking to a temple in early morning, sitting down at Jesus’ feet, adoring his loving and beautiful face, touching his hands, asking him to see the reflection of his face in their hearts. This “experience of Jesus’ love” was often pointed to as the goal of all bhakti. Coconuts, milk, and bananas were used by the bhaktas to celebrate Communion. Sarasvat would distribute bananas and milk or break the coconut, collect the coconut milk, and show the white interior to the bhaktas, announcing that “Christ was broken for you.” The banana or coconut and milk would then be distributed among the bhaktas so that they could receive Jesus’ *mahaprasad* (literally, “large gift,” here meaning spiritual nourishment in physical form).

Although rather exotic at first glance, with its extensive use of Hindu elements and symbols, the bhaktas’ liturgy is also very familiar in its focus on Jesus as Christ. The *kolam* drawn on the floor is a cosmological map popularly known as a demon trap because the intricate design confuses the feverishly active but stupid demons. In connection with the religious ritual, it serves to sanctify the space by keeping away demons. The singing of bhajans draws on a Hindu devotional form of ancient origin. Bhajans are simple but often soulful songs expressing in emotional language the relation between the devotee and the divine. They typify the bhaktas’ approach to the divine, for bhakti, as an all-Indian form of religiosity, emphasizes devotion in contrast to *jnana* (philosophical knowledge) or *karma* (meritorious deeds). Also, the use of coconuts and bananas in Hindu religious practice is well known, for the breaking of one’s hard shell and the offering of one’s innermost sweet is ritually enacted in every temple visit by breaking coconuts and offering bananas. Coconuts and bananas are offered to the god, and the temple priest offers them back again to the devotee, now as a *prasad* (divine gift) to be enjoyed for spiritual renewal. By receiving the divine *prasad* in Communion and consuming the sacrificial death of Christ, the bhakta is transformed and purified.

* Bhakti as personal devotion. In order to obtain a fuller understanding of bhakti among the bhaktas, it is helpful to look into how bhakti is viewed in terms of personal devotion and interior reality. As a personal form of piety, bhakti is primarily pictured in relational terms: genuine surrender must be “clearly felt” and must be “inward,” it is often said. The bodily metaphors found in bhajans convey an ideal of intimacy: one should feel the “touch” of Jesus Christ, “see” him, “sit” in his presence, preparing one’s body, mind, and character for him, “touching his feet” in respect and adoration. The underlying logic of the *darshan* reveals the same tendency, for it teaches that one develops a genuine spirituality.
not “outwardly,” through religious rituals, but only “inwardly,” through experience and intimacy with the divine.

In a discussion Vinod, one of the bhaktas, argued for a distinction between selfish and unselfish spirituality. Whereas selfish spirituality is characterized only by a quest for individual experience of God and individual liberation, unselfish spirituality includes knowledge (jnana) and action (karma) in the wider community. The institutional forms of religion tend to cater to selfish spiritualities, he argued, while the bhaktas opt for a warm and unselfish spirituality outside of structured religious life. This is completely in line with the all-Indian concept of bhakti, which distinguishes between a lower, impure type of bhakti and a higher, purer type, characterized by absolute affection for the perfect, untarnished by selfish motives. Even if it is clearly the bhaktas’ own ideal, it might be questioned whether bhaktas in fact display a higher and purer type of bhakti than occurs in the institutional Christian churches. We cannot overlook the fact, however, that the choice of bhakti as an authentic Indian religious style in itself is a critique of the institutional Christian churches and their Western theology.

The bhaktas are also critical of Hindu culture and especially of Hindu ritual life. The daily ritual practice of Hindus depends on caste and birth community, but all bhaktas report problems because of lack of observance of daily family rituals. Critique of idolatry is harsh, and the Hindus’ naive understanding of the nature of divinity is criticized; nevertheless, several of the bhaktas report that they feel free to participate in certain family rituals because the others “don’t understand” the Sanskrit slokas (two-line verses from the Bhagavad Gita) and because the ritual is “meaningless.” The non-sense, or emptiness, of the traditional Hindu rituals thus sanctions the bhaktas’ participation. The bhaktas’ relation to Hindu ritual and Hindu social identity might therefore be characterized as highly syncretistic and, at the same time, subject to the bhaktas interior relationship with Jesus Christ.

Theology of the bhaktas. Bhakti is instrumental not only in ritual and personal identity but also as theological method. Bhakti answers the question, How can one understand what is beyond understanding? Sarasvat argued that bhakti leads to sharanam (total and unconditional surrender), which in turn makes possible an intimate relation with God; this relation is fundamental for salvific knowledge because, apart from a relation, one cannot know anything about God. Thus the bhaktas grasp through devotion what is beyond intellectual understanding; that is, through bhakti they approach and “get to know the love of Jesus.” Bhakti is an inward experience with God, while theology is an outward expression of this experience.

Although the bhaktas criticize Hindu religious life, they are more positive toward Hindu philosophical terminology and theology. God is described as Supreme Being and Eternal Being and identified with Brahman, the unchanging, supreme existence, immanent and transcendent in Vedantic theology. However, the Brahman terminology is—purposefully and tellingly—stretched beyond its limits when the bhaktas in their bhajans sing of “our saving friend” Jesus Christ as “incarnated Brahman” and “incarnated divine wisdom, knowledge and compassion.”

As noted above, the bhaktas’ Christological understanding centers on Jesus as giver of salvation (muktsiṣva) and true teacher (satyaguru). As muktsiṣva, Jesus is said to be the jaya-deva (mangod) who can destroy sin’s poison, vanquish temptations, and heal all infirmities. This vanquishing and destruction take place through his “lifting up of himself,” that is, in Jesus’ death on the cross. This statement is not as trivial as it might first seem: Jesus becomes victorious through his incarnated weakness, and ultimately through his self-sacrifice. The eternal and impersonal Brahman sacrifices itself through incarnate weakness and in the suffering of the person Jesus Christ, with whom the bhakta can enter into a loving relation. This understanding seems to underlie the bhaktas’ dynamic interpretation of Communion.

A related aspect of the bhaktas’ Christology is their notion of Jesus as satyagura (literally, “guru of truth”). In Hindu tradition, a guru is needed both to to strip the cover from false knowledge and to mediate divine insight. The title “satyagura” denotes both the location of true knowledge and the imparter of this knowledge. The guru is therefore said to embody spiritual wisdom to a degree that opens up devotion to the guru. The bhaktas’ understanding of Jesus as guru thus refers to his personification of wisdom and life, which makes appropriate a devotional response, because Jesus discloses the falsehood of sin and gives eternal life to the devotee. According to the bhaktas, salvation is from ignorance, sin, and death and to a blissful union with the divine through Jesus, the personified love, life, truth, and knowledge.

Summing up, the term “bhakti” refers to a complex and manifold phenomenon in the history of Indian religions. Over the centuries bhakti has been elaborated by various theologians and spiritual masters, but all agree that bhakti is open to everyone, offers spiritual perfection, and leads to divine blessing. Bhakti thus always carries an association of enthusiasm, fervor, and love. While drawing on this well-known style of Hindu religious life, the Christ bhaktas clearly center their devotion on Jesus Christ, the incarnated divine transcendence. For the bhaktas, bhakti becomes the solution to both the social and the theological limbo they find themselves in.

Through bhakti religious style, the Christ bhaktas emphasize aspects of Christian tradition that have largely been neglected by modern, liberal Western Christianity, such as faith as devotional love, and spiritual contemplation as imbibing the beauty of Christ. In this way, the style adopted by the bhaktas might be said to translate Hindu religiosity into the Christian theological universe and thereby enlarge Christian understanding. Again, Christology seems to be the area in which the bhaktas disagree with orthodox Hindu schools: the Christ whom bhaktas make their focus of devotion is said to be the personal and immanent form of the transcendent and absolute God. Unlike monistic Hindu theology, which teaches that transmigration of one’s soul occurs through fulfillment of dharma (law; literally, “that which upholds”), Christ bhaktas teach that liberation depends solely upon their relationship to Jesus and his personal qualities. Pure and sublime bhakti is not only a means to obtain salvation but is in itself realization of transformation through intimate relation with Jesus. Whereas orthodox Hindu schools have no place for distinguishing personality in relation to the ultimate and absolute Brahman, Christ bhaktas realize transformation in relation to a distinguishable personality outside themselves—Jesus Christ.

Missiological Reflections

At this point I return to the initial missiological question of contextualization and syncretism: Do these two case studies illustrate authentic contextualization, or are they examples of illegitimate syncretism?

To sum up, faith in Jesus is experienced and expressed in concepts that we can easily identify as Islamic and Bengali, and as Hindu and Tamil. The new contextual meaning clearly emerges as a translation of elements from Islamic and Hindu culture into a Christian theological universe. On a fundamental level, the
The central concern of Diversified Theological Education, which includes Theological Education by Extension, is access. TEE and DTE models have made enormous progress in the urgent task of equipping all God’s people for ministry. Ross Kinsler has compiled in this anthology important case studies of the diverse means of contemporary theological education.

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The diversity of cultures can seem obvious, but to really understand the significance of those surface level differences, one needs to understand the deep-level assumptions on which they are based. This book helps cross-cultural witnesses learn how to discover a people's worldview, to understand it, and then present the gospel in such a way that it leads to deep worldview change.
translation might be characterized as interreligious because it takes place in the meeting between religious traditions and theological universes. The translation is not restricted to material or linguistic levels but affects liturgy, personal religious ideals, and theological understanding. It is thus accompanied by a significant recombination and reinterpretation of various elements in the interaction between Islam or Hinduism and Christianity, as epitomized in the imandars’ and bhaktas’ Christology.

Furthermore, we could term the process “interreligious hermeneutics” because it involves determination of sameness and difference between one’s own faith and experience and that of another religious universe. We can distinguish a number of hermeneutical strategies, showing how determination of sameness and difference takes place on a number of levels. It is noteworthy that, in the strategies exercised by the imandars and bhaktas, the meaning of other religious traditions is neither wholly positive nor wholly negative. Both the imandars and the bhaktas use several interpretative strategies, each in relation to certain ideas or elements of the other religious traditions. They are at the same time exclusivists, inclusivists, and pluralists, but they are so on different levels and in relation to various elements. A typology of this process would make it clear that the result of the translation is not simply “syncretistic” or “authentic.”

The translation process is clearly syncretistic in the sense that it mixes and blends concepts and meanings. We should view the outcome of the syncretistic process as perfectly authentic, however, in the sense that the centrality and exclusivity of Jesus Christ is affirmed in both cases.

From Interreligious Hermeneutics to Missiology

How do empirical studies like these inform our missiological reflection? I see fruitful results in three areas.

First, they show the significance of contextual studies. Formerly, under the influence of dialectical theology, Protestant missiology separated Christian mission from human religious experience as expressed in other religious traditions. In recent decades, however, this tendency has been criticized as demeaning, not only of other religious traditions but potentially also of other racial and social groups. The movement for contextualization in missiology, which insists that the meaning of God’s sending takes place on a number of levels. It is noteworthy that, in the strategies exercised by the imandars and bhaktas, the meaning of other religious traditions is neither wholly positive nor wholly negative. Both the imandars and the bhaktas use several interpretative strategies, each in relation to certain ideas or elements of the other religious traditions. They are at the same time exclusivists, inclusivists, and pluralists, but they are so on different levels and in relation to various elements. A typology of this process would make it clear that the result of the translation is not simply “syncretistic” or “authentic.”

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Notes
1. The field studies reported in this article are presented and discussed more thoroughly in Jonas Adelin Jørgensen, Jesus Imandars and Christ Bhaktas: Two Case Studies of Interreligious Hermeneutics and Identity in Global Christianity (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008).
2. The material for this article consists of data gathered by participant observation and personal interviews. I was able to observe a number of religious groups and to interview 35 men and 8 women from a Muslim background, and 18 men and 5 women from a Hindu background. The fieldwork was carried out in October–December 2002 and January–October 2004. The first part of the fieldwork was made possible financially by the Areopagus Foundation, and the second part by grants from the Danish National Council for Humanities, the Julie von Müllens Stiftelse, and the Sigurd Andersen og Hustrus Stiftelse.
4. Namaz (Urdu) or salat (Arabic) is one of the pillars of Islam.
5. Cf. Arabic qurba and Hebrew korban (see Mark 7:11).
6. The percentage of Christians in Tamil Nadu State is significantly higher: 6.1 percent, or nearly 3.8 million out of a total population of 62 million, according to the official Indian 2001 census. For details, see www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/religion.aspx.
The Church, the Urban, and the Global: Mission in an Age of Global Cities

Dale T. Irvin

We are living in a period of enormous global transformation—that is no secret. One of the results is that cities across the globe—all cities, the city in general—are rapidly changing. A majority of the earth’s population now live in cities or megacities.1 Over the past several decades, these cities throughout the world have undergone a transformation that is closely connected to the transformation in economy, politics, and culture associated with globalization.2 The city is no longer located spatially at the center. It is becoming decentered and transcentered and—given the accelerating forces of virtual reality and virtual living—virtually immanent and transcendent at the same time.3 Cities by their very nature seek to make connections with other cities, seek to form networks, seek to facilitate contacts beyond the immediate terrain. Megacities and global cities realize these ends as never before.

Globalization has transformed many of the most basic conditions or understandings of human existence upon which notions of church and mission have historically been constructed in the modern era.

The idea of national and even geographic boundaries of identity, for instance, that gave us the “here” and “there” of missionary thinking that was famously criticized by Keith Bridston as offering a “salt-water” definition of mission—that is, that someone becomes a missionary only when she or he crosses salt water—is even more anachronistic in this day of global cities than it was when his book was first published in 1965.4 Rather, cities around the globe are becoming places of diaspora, places of passage more than places of settlement, more like thoroughfares than they are residences. City and world are converging formations. The implications for mission and ministry are enormous.

Christianity has had a long and complex relationship with the city. During its first centuries Christianity was primarily an urban phenomenon. It spread from Palestine along urban commercial trade routes to other regions of the world, going east into Asia and south into Africa, as well as north and west into what later became Europe. In each place it went, it rapidly adapted to new urban contexts, attracting members of the artisan and educated (literate) classes who quickly assumed leadership of the movement. Cities even then, though not of the size that we know them today, were defining centers of religious, social, political, and economic power. Cities were also, then as now, passageways, nodes along commercial and political nexuses of cultures and civilizations. The city was never just a particular physical or geographic configuration; it was and still is a way of being.

“...a place to live, to shop, to go out and have kids play,” says Richard Sennett.

“It’s a place that implicates how one derives one’s ethics, how one develops a sense of justice, how one learns to talk with and learn from people who are unlike oneself, which is how a human being becomes human.”5 Perhaps the Christian movement has always shown a particular affinity for the city precisely because the city is in a certain sense part of what ultimately makes us human.

But the city is a complex, multifaceted reality, capable of extremes and of forming, as much as deforming, the human. It is a process that both reveals and conceals, notes Henri Lefebvre: “Everything is legible. Urban space is transparent. Everything signifies, even if signifiers float freely, since everything is related to ‘pure’ form, is contained in that form.” He goes on, “The city, the urban, is also mysterious, occult. Alongside the strident signs of visible power such as wealth and the police, plots are engineered and hidden powers conspire, behind appearances and beneath transparency.”6 Theologically, we might say that the city, not unlike the church, is a place for sinners and saints alike, and a place where one can find signs and countercodes alike of the coming reign of God.

The City in History

Lefebvre organizes the history of cities globally into several major formations. The forms overlap, of course, and do not necessarily progress in a linear, straightforward manner. Nevertheless as an organizing schema with which to think about the urban, they can be helpful. Lefebvre’s first type of city is what he calls the political city, the polis, the capital, the place where kings and queens lived and from which they ruled in the ancient world and around the globe. The city was birthed as the semiotic world of royalty, the ceremonial religious center where temple and palace were located, the place where the divine and the human came together to shape the world.” The political city organized the countryside.
outside itself and other cities of lesser power. In its most extreme form these were imperial cities: Rome, Constantinople, Ch’ang-an, Baghdad, or Tenochtitlán. In the ancient world they were religious, ceremonial centers that brought the historical and the transcendent together in one community.

The ancient political city could arise in part because of surplus production. People could begin living together in spatial arrangements whose density was greater than what their immediate resources could meet. Cities did not grow their food inside the gates but took it from the land that they organized and controlled outside. Other items were also brought in to be sold. The marketplace emerged alongside the temple and palace. Even the most modest of kings and queens soon found that they were not satisfied with the wealth that could be produced from their immediate regions. The desire for goods that came from beyond could be satisfied only by strangers who came from afar. Cities became centers of commerce and trade, their marketplaces filled with goods of merchants from other regions and cultures. Eventually the merchants assumed control, giving rise to the commercial city, which became the engine of the global network called modern capitalism. Commercial cities were not unique to Europe, but after the fifteenth century they came to dominate European life and, through its modern colonial venture, the rest of the world as well. The productive capacities of the modern city accelerated with the industrial revolution. Meanwhile European colonialism and imperialism had reorganized the entire globe. The result was to split the city into two: the modern, where industrial goods were produced, and the colonial, where the raw materials came from and the finished industrial goods of the West were sold.6

Cities have always been places of differentiation, places where strangers became neighbors, and neighbors became strangers. One form of differentiation that they fostered and intensified was what we call “class.” The extremes of rich and poor were—and are—in fact a function of the city. Organizing these extremes was always a major urban praxis. Cities also fostered the differentiations that we call culture. They have always attracted immigrants from their surrounding countryside, but also they drew merchants who came from other cities and regions. The merchants from afar contributed much to making the urban a multicultural reality. The modern industrial city accelerated the processes of cultural differentiation by attracting immigrants from distances far away, not only to come and trade but also to come and work.

The City and Mission

Christianity in the West, which after the tenth century had become mostly organized into what we now call Christendom, found a way to accommodate itself to the first waves of urban transformation that took place under modern capitalism. The English Puritan was an early capitalist but still a figure of Christendom. Even after the period of political revolutions that began to disestablish the church politically in the West, Christendom continued in its cultural form. The parish was still very much an urban phenomenon. In the cities of Christendom in Europe and in its settler colonies, which together constituted what we call the West, a new social phenomenon called “the slums” began in the eighteenth century, posing the first sustained challenge to this organizing practice. Slums were among the first sectors of urban locations. All cities of the world are being pulled into the processes of globalization, while some have achieved the status of being what sociologists are calling “global cities.” Production in these places is no longer based in neighborhoods but can span entire regions of the globe. Consumption is likewise becoming globalized. One can find goods from virtually every region of the world in the marketplaces and malls of even modest-sized cities all around the world.

The Changing Nature of the City

The spatial structure of cities is changing. Transnational urban networks are replacing older spatial linkages. Images and attitudes that can be communicated globally through the media in real time are taking the place of city walls, natural bodies of water, interstate belt highway systems, dotted lines on a map, and other such means that have traditionally been used to define urban places. “Instead of being based on territory, communities are more often spatially extensive networks, consisting of channels through which resources flow—information, money, and social capital.”7 New processes of metropolitanization are underway, drawing urban inhabitants, commuters, and users together from
around the world in new combinations of material and virtual realities. The processes of class and cultural differentiation that historically marked the urban have accelerated in the globalizing city, intensifying the polymorphous while expanding the distance between rich and poor to astronomical proportions.13

As noted above, it is now clear that urbanization and globalization are converging historical forces, two sides of the same coin, two sides of the same cutting edge of human historical existence. Cities around the world, as noted above, have historically, even from ancient days, been populated by strangers, many of them merchants, who came from distant places to exchange goods and sometimes services.14 The city was never only a center. It was always also a thoroughfare, a node on a nexus, one link in an urbanizing network. Today this is becoming clearer than ever. Those who have dwelt in cities and those who have ruled them have always had more in view than the city they inhabited. They have also had their eyes on the ends of the earth that they sought to draw goods from, or to reach out to rule over, even if only in their imagination. Globalization has brought that imagining practice to new levels, joining together in endlessly flowing new combinations the practical and the only imaginable, the local and the global, the real and the virtual.

Implications

What are the implications of globalization and urbanization for world Christianity, and for churches that are mission minded (and for missions that are church minded) throughout the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century? What issues call out for attention? First, world Christianity since at least the fourth century has been burdened with various forms of association with particular territories and cultures. This was preeminently expressed in the identification of Christianity with the Roman imperial order and the territories that were governed by Rome or Constantinople. There were other, lesser territorial expressions of Christianity in late antiquity, such as those of the Armenian and Ethiopian traditions, but these others did not rise to the level of imperial identification and dominance attained by Rome and Constantinople, or the Latin and Greek traditions of Christendom.15

The modern missionary movement in both its Catholic and Protestant expressions was particularly plagued by territorial notions of identity and culture that were fundamentally tied to a particular place. The modern ecumenical movement did little to challenge the social reconstruction that bifurcated the world into “Christian lands” and “mission lands,” with the First World and Third World theologies and its critical discourses setting in place the West and the Rest. World Christianity as a discipline is today in danger of being reduced to what happens in the territories of the global South and East, leaving the territorial definitions of Christianity in the North and West, both evangelical and ecumenical, free to exercise dominance by being unqualifiedly “Christian.”

Globalization has now made all such territorial constructions obsolete. Spatial configurations of the personal body, the congregation, the denomination, the city, the culture, and the nation are all becoming increasingly deterritorialized and reterritorialized, resulting in new spatiotemporal configurations and combinations. Korean Christianity is now a global Christian reality, with 6 million Koreans living in a global diaspora. Prosperity doctrines and “G12” (“Government of 12,” pioneered by César Castellanos Dominguez of Bogotá, Colombia16) are picked up from their places of origin north or south and circulated rapidly in and through global Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal networks. African Christianity is a growing phenomenon in western Europe and North America. A majority of persons in the United States now identify themselves with more than one particular denominational tradition over the course of their lives. Our thinking about ministry and mission must become more conversant with deterritorialized and reterritorialized forms of Christian expression. It must take seriously the host of theological practices and beliefs that are circulating the globe, landing in unexpected places, and continuously redefining each location. It must do so, bringing them into critical and creative interaction at both conceptual and practical levels in order to be transformative.
Training people for mission and ministry in this context means attending to the traditional formations of church life from a multitude of contexts and assisting churches to engage, if not always embrace, what is different. It means attending to the new formations of religion that are taking place as well, and thinking through what preparation for ministry means in the various contexts of hypercapitalism, the Internet, megachurches, global immigration, and more. World Christianity as a whole is far more inclusive than any particular local expression of it can possibly be. Ministry that takes as its context both its own location and the global reality will move in the direction of inclusion while continuing to affirm distinct identities. The church will once again be able to cross boundaries, including those of “race,” ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, confession, and more. These identities can be played out and factored in multiple ways that are both inclusive and exclusionary. Regarding identities as such, however, we are finding more and more the words of Edward Said to be true, “No one today is purely one thing.” Our hybrids are proliferating and, contrary to nature, are multiplying exponentially.

The third implication of the convergence of globalization and urbanization in world Christianity concerns the authority of biblical texts. Not only the context but the very texts of our various theological traditions become destabilized in the rapidly changing world of globalized cities and cultures. New forms of reading biblical texts and ecclesial traditions alike are proliferating. In the midst of this proliferating difference, the Bible itself reemerges to play a critical connective role in our experiences of world Christianity in cities throughout the world. It is a common book, even when read from different locations, perspectives, commitments, and confessions and in different contexts and languages. It is a meeting place of sorts, a movable site to which is ascribed authority and from which is derived meaning. For some, biblical authority and meaning are central. For others, they are peripheral. But whether the Bible is read at the center or the margins of one’s religious identity, and whether it is read from the center or the margins of social life, it is still a common book, a site of intertextual engagement, itself a context and a pretext. The Bible remains a place, a site, a textual location marking various communities formed by liturgy, devotion, and social praxis.

In such multiperspectival readings of the Bible the temptation lurks to ascribe to the text a degree of translocality that might give it the appearance of floating free from any particular context and location, including that of the original world of its production. This is one important reason why the hermeneutics of social location must continue to play an important role in the production and reproduction of biblical knowledge in world Christian life, for such a hermeneutics helps reground biblical readings in various Christian contexts and experiences. There is always the danger that even this particular method will be seen as an avenue toward a new universalizing discourse, brought about at the cost of ignoring other authoritative sources for faith. The danger can be avoided only by keeping the Bible in community.

The fourth implication that I see for mission and ministry in the context of global cities north and south concerns the levels of engagement with other religions. Religious pluralism has long been a dominant reality for churches in Asia and Africa, beginning with the first centuries of the Christian movement. Christians who lived under Muslim rulers in the political entity of the dar al-Islam (“house of Islam”) have had centuries of experience with being religious minorities. In the West Christianity was the dominant religion, although it was never the only religion and there were always forms of Christianity that were considered to be deviant or “heretical” by the majority parties and traditions. Globalizing and globalized cities in all parts of the world today are witnessing a degree of multifaith living that seems to be unprecedented in its depth and dimensions. In Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Lagos, Dar es Salaam, São Paulo, Mexico City, New York, Toronto, and more, churches of all confessional persuasions are finding they have to learn new ways of living with their non-Christian religious neighbor.

The “New Look” for the City in Mission

Within the ecology of the new urban formations arising within the globalized city, we are finding renewed meaning in the local church and its ministry when the context becomes world Christianity. Churches from every part of the world, speaking languages and nurturing cultures that were historically born in places at a great distance from one another, are now flourishing next to one another in cities all around the world. The traditional model of parish ministry is not dead, but it is finding diverse expression in the globalized city. Ministry has also moved outside the church in new and interesting ways. The rise of the entrepreneurial model of individuals heading ministries—with their own Web pages, incorporation papers, TV programs, and various pastoral conferences—leads the way in this effort. The more traditional forms of urban and industrial ministry such as ministry in the law office, in the university halls, in prisons, and among firefighters continue.

Poverty is still a focal point in our theological reflections on ministry in the city, but it comes in multiple constructions today. We talk of anthropological poverty, political empowerment, and the need for communities of faith and resistance to gain access to information and knowledge of production. The commitment to justice has a stronger transformational dimension as our pedagogy is increasingly aware of the global cultural context in which we are living.

Global networks are becoming ever more important for engaging in mission and ministry in the world Christian context of the global city. Bilocationality and circulating patterns of migration and return are becoming more common in churches throughout the world. Powerful charismatic clergy serve widely scattered networks of congregations among the various diasporas that wrap around the globe. All of us are busy finding our way—“fumbling along,” some might say—in this new global urban experience. Contextualization was the first step in the direction in which we are heading. But it turns out to have been far too neat, far too simple a model. The real and virtual worlds of this global community of discourse decontextualize and recontextualize us constantly, calling for a more active form of transpositional theological reflection. Culture itself gets quickly transformed in the accelerated flows of globalization that we are experiencing. Even what counts as knowledge is brought into question.

The city has been on the agenda for mission studies for more than a century. Unfortunately, the manner in which the city too often has been imagined is as a place of need or despair. In many instances the city was reduced conceptually to being a function of poverty, lack, or neglect. The reduction of the city to its poorest neighborhoods has always been problematic in the theology of urban ministry. The city has always been more than just a “slum” or a “ghetto,” even in its poorest neighborhoods. Certainly preparation for ministry to, with, and of the poor ought to occupy a prominent place in the mission agenda, but urban ministry cannot be reduced to this one focus.
In all places our urban theologies are being challenged by the very nature of the city itself. A more vital and engaging form of mission and ministry in the postcolonial, postindustrial, postmodern, and, in some instances, post-Christendom city is needed. Global cities are the visible manifestations of a new global reality that has become the context of world Christianity. Our theologies unfortunately tend often to continue to conceptualize the world in territorial terms that were part of the modern and colonial frames of reference, placing various theologies in their respective geographic locations and even trying to keep them there. Korean theology is taken to refer to theology that is done on the peninsula of Korea. Brazilian theology is taken to mean theology that is done on location in Brazil and by people whose ancestors lived in Brazil. The actual world that we are living in, however, is one of transnational migrations, hyphenated and hybrid identities, cultural conjunctions and disjunctions, and global theological networks or flows. Korean-speaking Christian leaders from around the world gather outside of Korea in congresses on the global mission of the Korean diaspora. Portuguese-speaking congregations form among people who have emigrated from Brazil and engage in theological reflection in Tokyo, Newark, or Lisbon, while many who are doing theology in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro are recent immigrants from other continents to Brazil.

This new, complex global urban reality is posing a challenge to the way mission is understood around the world today. In each place this urban reality takes on distinctive features, even as the overall process of global urbanization is tying these realities together in new, complex, expanding, interlocking, differentiating networks of relations. Theology in general needs to grapple with these new global configurations and the realities they are generating, virtual and otherwise. The challenge for us is always to reflect upon and engage theologically from our various locations and perspectives, a challenge present in each place, even as we find ourselves increasingly relocated within this new global urban context.

Notes
4. Keith R. Bridston, Mission, Myth, and Reality (New York: Friendship Press, 1965). On p. 33 Bridston writes: “It would be foolish to suggest that the geographical frontier ever was, or will ever be, insignificant in the missionary activity of the church. But if the religious significance of salt water is seen in any other than a poetic and mythical way, the whole meaning of the mission of the church is in danger of being lost, or so perverted that it would be better lost. The geographical frontier, symbolized by the seven seas, only represents what the Christian mission is; it does not exhaust it. Ocean trips have never made Christian missionaries, and, in itself, salt water never will.”
5. Richard Sennett, “The Civitas of Seeing,” Places 5, no. 4 (1989), quoted in Bo Grönlund, “The Civitas of Seeing and the Design of Cities—on the Urbanism of Richard Sennett,” Urban Winds, http://hijem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Sennett_myTekst_97Kort.html. It is interesting that the Latin word urbs denoted an actual city, while the word civis referred to the manner of life of those to whom belonged its privileges; only later was it extended to be an alternative term for the city itself.
9. One can argue that the intellectual challenges of the de-Christianization of Europe that were posed by the middle class’s “cultural despisers of religion” were addressed far more successfully by Schleiermacher and others in the streams of liberal Protestant theology that followed him through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than were the challenges of the new urban working class who were gathering in the slums. On the history of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century “mission” work in slums in the United States, see Norris A. Magnuson, Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865–1920 (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977).
10. The tendency to focus or even reduce urban ministry to addressing issues of urban poverty, and in the U.S. context to ministry in the “inner city” (i.e., the slums, the ghetto, or el barrio), is apparent in even such excellent recent work on urban ministry and theology as Andrew Davye, Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), and Mark R. Gornik, To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).
13. According to the most recent U.N. figures, nearly 200 million persons, or approximately 3 percent of the world’s population, are now immigrants, living outside the territorial boundaries of their natal cultural community, most of them living in cities. In New York City alone, according to the mayor’s office, representatives from every nation on earth are now living as immigrants in the city.
14. The tradition that St. Thomas traveled to India from Palestine in the first century of the common era is quite telling for world Christian identity, for Thomas is held by some strands of the tradition to have gone to India not as a merchant but as a carpenter, recruited in a cultural community, most of them living in cities. In New York City alone, according to the mayor’s office, representatives from every nation on earth are now living as immigrants in the city.
15. It should be noted that there were always Christians within the imperial traditions who did not accept imperial domination, and many who opposed it openly. There have also always been churches of the world whose traditions lay outside the range of imperial reach, especially the churches of Asia who lived as (often persecuted) minority communities in multireligious societies. Although the imperial forms of Christendom were not universal, their impact touched in one way or another all churches and traditions. The legacy of Christendom has been felt by all churches and traditions of the
Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change

Micah Network

We present here a recent declaration by the Micah Network, whose international president is C. René Padilla (office in Surry Hills, New South Wales, Australia). In the words of Padilla, an IBMR contributing editor, this declaration “may perhaps in time be regarded as the most significant document coming out of the evangelical movement on a subject that has hardly received in the past the attention it deserves from people who confess the triune God as the God of Creation. . . . Established in 1999, the Micah Network has grown into a worldwide movement of over 500 Christian relief, development and justice organizations, churches and individuals. It includes over 330 active members and 230 associate members from over 80 countries. Its primary objective is to encourage the practice that, according to the text from which it derives its name, God requires of his people: ‘To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8)” (from foreword to the declaration; see www.micahnetwork.org/en/home).

We, members of the Micah Network,1 gathering together from 38 countries on all 5 continents, met at Limuru, Kenya from 13–18 July 2009 for its 4th Triennial Global Consultation. On the matter of Creation Stewardship and Climate Change, we sought God’s wisdom and cried out for the Holy Spirit’s guidance as we reflected on the global environmental crisis. As a result of our discussions, reflections and prayers, we make the following declaration:

1. We believe in God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit in community—who is the creator, sustainer and Lord of all. God delights in His creation, and is committed to it.2

2. In the beginning, God established just relationships amongst all of creation. Women and men—as image-bearers of God—are called to serve and love the rest of creation, accountable to God as stewards. Our care for creation is an act of worship and obedience towards the Creator.3

3. We, however, have not always been faithful stewards. Through our ignorance, neglect, arrogance and greed, we have harmed the earth and broken creation’s relationships.4 Our failure to be faithful stewards has caused the current environmental crisis, leading to climate change, and putting the earth’s ecosystems at risk. All creation has been subjected to futility and decay because of our disobedience.5

4. Yet God remains faithful.6 In Christ’s incarnation, life, death and resurrection, God is at work to reconcile all of creation to Himself.7 We hear the groaning of creation as in the pains of childbirth. This is the promise that God will act, and is already at work, to renew all things.8 This is the hope that sustains us.

5. We confess that we have sinned. We have not cared for the earth with the self-sacrificing and nurturing love of God. Instead, we have exploited, consumed and abused it for our own advantage. We have too often yielded to the idolatry that is greed.9 We have embraced false dichotomies of theology and practice, splitting apart the spiritual and material, eternal and temporal, heavenly and earthly. In all these things, we have not acted justly towards each other or towards creation, and we have not honoured God.

6. We acknowledge that industrialization, increased deforestation...
“A well-balanced emphasis on spiritual life and high academic standards distinguishes the quality of this scholarly community . . .

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Dr. Lalsangkima Pachuau
Associate Professor of History and Theology of Mission
Director of Postgraduate Studies

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tion, intensified agriculture and grazing, along with the unrestrained burning of fossil fuels, have forced the earth’s natural systems out of balance. Rapidly increasing greenhouse gas emissions are causing the average global temperature to rise, with devastating impacts already being experienced, especially by the poorest and most marginalized groups. A projected temperature rise of 2°C within the next few decades will significantly alter life on earth and accelerate loss of biodiversity. It will increase the risk and severity of extreme weather events, such as drought, flood, and hurricanes, leading to displacement and hunger. Sea levels will continue to rise, contaminating fresh water supplies and submerging island and coastal communities. We are likely to see mass migration, leading to resource conflicts. Profound changes to rainfall and snowfall, as well as the rapid melting of glaciers, will lead to more water stress and shortages for many millions of people.

7. We repent of our self-serving theology of creation, and our complicity in unjust local and global economic relationships. We repent of those aspects of our individual and corporate life styles that harm creation, and of our lack of political action. We must radically change our lives in response to God’s indignation and sorrow for His creation’s agony.

8. Before God we commit ourselves, and call on the whole family of faith, to bear witness to God’s redemptive purpose for all creation. We will seek appropriate ways to restore and build just relationships among human beings and with the rest of creation. We will strive to live sustainably, rejecting consumerism and the resulting exploitation. We will teach and model care of creation and integral mission. We will intercede before God for those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change, and will act with justice and mercy among, with and on behalf of them.

9. We join with others to call on local, national, and global leaders to meet their responsibility to address climate change and environmental degradation through the agreed intergovernmental mechanisms and conventions, and to provide the necessary resources to ensure sustainable development. Their meetings through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process must produce a fair, comprehensive, and adequate climate deal. Leaders must support the efforts of local communities to adapt to climate change, and must act to protect the lives and livelihoods of those most vulnerable to the impact of environmental degradation and climate change. We recognize that among the most affected are women and girls. We call on leaders to invest in the development of new, clean technologies and energy sources and to provide adequate support to enable poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups to use them effectively.

10. There is no more time for delay or denial. We will labour with passion, persistence, prayer and creativity to protect the integrity of all creation, and hand on a safe environment and climate to our children and theirs.

For those with ears to hear, let them hear. —Micah Network Fourth Triennial Global Consultation Limuru, Kenya, July 17, 2009

Notes
1. Micah Network is a global network of Christian agencies and churches involved in relief, development and advocacy, and responding to poverty and injustice.
5. Romans 8:20.

ARIS Reports U.S. Roman Catholic Population Shift to Southwest

The Roman Catholic population of the United States has shifted away from the Northeast and toward the Southwest, while secularity continues to grow in strength in all regions of the country, according to a study by the Program on Public Values at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. “The decline of Catholicism in the Northeast is nothing short of stunning,” said Barry Kosmin, a principal investigator for the American Religious Identification Survey (www.americareligionsurvey-aris.org). “Thanks to immigration and natural increase among Latinos, California now has a higher proportion of Catholics than New England.” Conducted between February and November 2008, ARIS 2008 is the third in a series of large, nationally representative surveys of U.S. adults. The percentage of Christians in America, which declined in the 1990s from 86 percent to 77 percent, has edged down to 76 percent. Ninety percent of the decline comes from the non-Catholic segment of the Christian population, largely from mainline denominations.
Ivan Illich and the American Catholic Missionary Initiative in Latin America

Todd Hartch

In 1966 Ivan Illich sent the National Catholic Reporter an antimissionary article, but it was returned to him as “needlessly polemical.” Having declined the magazine’s offer to resubmit a milder version, Illich sent the article to the Jesuit journal America, which not only accepted the article as written but also timed its publication to coincide with the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP), a conference designed to foster American Catholic support of the church in Latin America. Illich arrived at CICOP with 3,000 copies of “The Seamy Side of Charity,” enough for every participant to read his indictment of the American Catholic missionary initiative in Latin America.1

The article succeeded admirably in provoking controversy, just as Illich hoped. First, he condemned the American hierarchy for starting a missionary program “on an impulse supported by uncritical imagination and sentimental judgment.” Second, Illich attacked the results of the initiative. Foreign “aid” drastically increased the costs of the Latin American churches and made these churches dependent on foreign funds and personnel, resulting in a “patently irrelevant pastoral system” that was impossible to sustain. Third, Illich confronted American missionaries about their self-deception. They were “pawns in a world ideological struggle” and “a colonial power’s lackey chaplains.”2

From the podium of the conference, Louis Luzbetak of the Society of the Divine Word characterized the article as “profoundly misguided and contended that missions was beneficial to both the United States and Latin America because “cultures tend to grow in proportion to their exposure to cross-fertilization.”3 Cardinal Richard Cushing, who had advocated sending Americans to Latin America, denounced the article as an attack on the pope that constituted “a grave injustice” to those who were laying down their lives for Latin America.4 Around the world, bishops, priests, religious sisters, and missionaries read the article and reacted with surprise and anger but also, in some cases, a surprising degree of agreement. Whether they agreed or disagreed, Catholics interested in Latin America could not avoid responding in some way: “After the article appeared, few people, if any, could carry out their assignments without re-examining what they were doing, without asking themselves if, perhaps, there was something after all to what Illich was saying.”5 The article then spread to mainline Protestant groups and became an antimissionary classic.

“The Seamy Side of Charity” brought Ivan Illich to the attention of many missionaries and church leaders and remains one of his main claims to fame, but few remember today that the article represented a final, public stage in a campaign that Illich had been waging, mostly in private, since 1961. After Pius XII and John XXIII had called for a major program of aid to Latin America in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Catholic bishops in the United States organized a Latin America Bureau in their organization, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and began a serious missionary effort in Latin America.6 John Considine, the head of the Latin America Bureau, chose Illich to train these missionaries because of Illich’s successful ministry among Puerto Ricans in New York City and his apparent commitment to training missionaries. What Considine did not realize, even as Illich was setting up the Center for Intercultural Formation (CIF), a missionary training center in Cuernavaca, Mexico, was that Illich’s interest in the program stemmed primarily from his desire to subvert it.

Born in 1926 in Vienna to a Croatian father and a Jewish mother, Illich earned master’s degrees in theology and philosophy and a doctorate in history by age twenty-four; he was adept in German, Yiddish, Italian, French, Serbo-Croatian, Latin, Greek, English, Spanish, and Portuguese.7 He came to the United States in 1951 to study at Princeton University, but his fascination with New York’s Puerto Rican population led him to a position as a parish priest in a Puerto Rican neighborhood. Cardinal Francis Spellman greatly appreciated Illich’s efforts with the Puerto Rican community, gave him the title of monsignor, and then gave him the position of vice-rector of a Catholic university in Puerto Rico itself. While spending most of the 1960s and 1970s in Cuernavaca, Mexico, Illich became a prolific social critic who enjoyed mainstream success with books such as Deschooling Society, which characterized public education as part of “a global process of degradation and modernized misery.”8 He lived with colleagues in Germany in the years before his death in 2002.

Training Missionaries to Go Home

As Illich prepared his missionary training center in the spring of 1961, he understood that two popes had called for massive aid to Latin America, but he believed that missionary work by Americans for Latin Americans would be harmful for both groups. Most missionaries that he had encountered were “stunted, or wholly destroyed” by their work; all they accomplished was “to impede the revolutionary changes needed” in Latin America. “The projected crusade had to be stopped,” he thought. Therefore, Illich ensured that the Center for Intercultural Formation had impeccable credentials that would attract many would-be missionaries. It was affiliated with Fordham University and enjoyed the support of Cardinal Spellman of New York, of the Latin America Bureau, and of Cardinal Cushing of Boston. “Through our educational program for missionaries we intended to challenge them to face reality and themselves, and either refuse their assignments or—if they accepted—to be a little bit less unprepared,” Illich later admitted.9

Thirty-five lay Catholics and twenty-seven clergy attended the first session in 1961, and similar numbers attended two four-month sessions each year during most of the 1960s.10 The training began with language instruction of the highest quality, designed to produce fluency in Spanish by the end of the course. A team of local teachers gave the trainees five hours a
day of instruction in classes of no more than four students: three hours in guided drills, an hour in the language laboratory, and another hour in directed conversation. Not surprisingly, the rigor of the five-hour-per-day language classes stressed some students to the breaking point. “It was so intensive that you’d have people almost breaking down,” remarked one. “This was Illich’s approach, of course. If you cracked, fine; he’d either build you back up or he’d lose you.”

Comments from the language staff on some of the trainees in the first session gave a hint of their attitudes toward their charges. One young man, for example, was judged to be “neither articulate in any language nor will he learn Spanish too well.” A young woman was seen as “psychologically unfit to the adaptation necessary to learn any language well.” Another candidate was believed to lack “capacity to accept another language.”

The stressful language classes softened students up for classes specifically focused on missions, history, and culture, as well as for conversations with the staff. Many of the ideas that Illich presented were similar to those he had developed in Puerto Rico (for priests and sisters he had trained to work with Puerto Ricans in the mainland United States), but warnings and negative examples assumed a larger role. He affirmed the mystical nature of missionary service, especially its connection to Christ’s incarnation through suffering; but he spent much of his time drawing out the dangers of faulty missionary preparation. In doing so, he inevitably suggested to many “neo-missioners” that they were unqualified and ill-prepared.

For example, Illich emphasized the high level of academic preparation required by prospective missionaries. Candidates needed “increased receptivity for the poetic, the historical, and the social aspects of reality.” If they had this prerequisite, they must use the “conceptual instruments” of social scientists, including “role, status, function, community versus society, self-image versus expectation; public opinion and social pressure; movement and organization; institutionalization and charismatic leadership,” to gain a sociological, anthropological, political, economic, cultural, and historical understanding of the societies in which they wished to work. He believed that “today it would be folly to try to think of the Church and its growth without reference to these aspects which relate it to any society or community.” He did not say it directly, but he strongly implied that prospective missionaries had to be not only intelligent but also well educated before they began training; if they passed this hurdle, they had to become experts on Latin America in several different areas. How many trainees could meet these standards?

One visitor admitted that Illich might produce a missionary elite but lamented, “The Monsignor is aiming high, too high for me and others of my capacity.” Another asked, “Is rigor needed today, or sanctity coupled with skills?” Complaints that Illich was being too tough on his charges also came from Cardinal Cushing and the papal nuncio in Peru, Romulo Carboni, perhaps the two most important leaders in the church’s efforts to send United States personnel to Latin America, but Considine, still in the dark about Illich’s real goals, defended the “masterly job” that Illich was doing.

**Use of Controversy**

Another element of Illich’s approach was controversy, or what some called “the shock-treatment approach.” He liked to surprise earnest sisters and young priests with semiscandalous ideas, for instance, yelling “I hate Yankees!” at a nun, or claiming that an ideal missionary “may have little pastoral feeling for his people” and might merely assist “in a cold and technical way.” He also enjoyed presenting difficult or challenging ideas in forms attributed to others, for example, by quoting a Latin American bishop who allegedly said, “I need to ordain many of my older married men to the priesthood.” In another instance he mentioned a scholar’s idea that the church was the foundation of aristocracy in Colombia. Time reported, “Illich and his staff deliberately make the students angry, start arguments, challenge cherished beliefs.”

In one instance, a group of sisters came to Illich “in great distress” because a speaker had told them not to share their God with Latin Americans and that their God could not be adopted by Latin Americans. In another case, Illich asked his students if they loved “Pedro,” a hypothetical migrant to Mexico City from the countryside. “Do you love him for himself, for what he is? Or do you love God in him? If you love him because you love God in him, you are wrong. There is no worse offense. It is a denial of the natural order.” In both cases, Illich could cluck at their lack of insight and explain what he or the other speaker really meant, but both the scandal of the near-heresy and the seed of doubt planted by Illich’s explanation would remain.

Even intelligent and mature students who had devoured the literature of the social sciences and mastered the ethics of intercultural communication faced a gauntlet between two terrible dangers. On one hand was the risk of holding onto one’s own culture. Now Illich added the corresponding hazard of “identification with a group in process of being marginalized.” Improper identification with host cultures could result in “marginalization of Church” and in “destruction of the church from within.” Illich did not explain how one could avoid holding too tightly to one’s own culture while simultaneously avoiding improper identification with host cultures; these two challenges seem designed more to scare off potential missionaries than to help them adapt to the mission field.

**An Exclusionary Agenda**

What was the poor neo-missioner to do with these high expectations? Many of them, Illich hoped, would realize that they were not equipped to be missionaries, that “not every man can be a missionary.” In fact, Illich listed seven types who should learn to recognize their unsuitability for missions: (1) those fleeing home in a sort of “psychological escapism,” (2) aggressive nationalists, (3) missionary adventurers with “sensuous dreams of a jungle or martyrdom or of growing a beard,” (4) the “ecclesiastic conquistador” devoted to “heap ing up baptisms,” (5) those more interested in “apostolic tourism” than in self-sacrifice, and (6) the unreflective missionary who introduced “songs, and stories, and folklore” from the home country, resulting eventually in the alienation of the host culture from its roots; this last type was “particularly dangerous.”

The seventh group, the one that Illich found most objectionable, was the Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA), the major lay component of the missionary initiative in Latin America. Theoretically, lay Catholics would volunteer their expertise to meet specific needs for periods of two to five years, but in practice many of the 177 volunteers who were serving by March 1963 did not offer needed skills, and few had any clear idea of what they would be doing in the region. To Illich, the program’s goals for its short-term lay missionaries were “irrelevant, misleading, and even offensive” because Latin America did not need unskilled volunteers looking for short-term spiritual highs; rather, it needed highly trained professionals. Why, then,
give them any space at CIF? The answer was, “They are on their way, with or without a CIF course.” He continued, “Painfully, we have learned how to help such volunteers shed their misguided missionary zeal. . . . They are welcome guests on equal footing with all other students.” Unspoken was the fact that being on equal footing with other students meant being equally subject to Illich’s attempts to send them home.

When the PAVLA director warned a volunteer named Sue Maloney that she would have to reimburse PAVLA the cost of her time in Cuernavaca if she did not accept her assignment to Lima, Peru, Illich objected that this action was “against all academic, ecclesiastical, and human traditions.” Illich then presented an interesting definition of the CIF as “a place where volunteers for missions do make up their minds, to find out if they are suited.” “You have no right in any way to construe the tuition and travel paid for Sue as an amount you can ask back from Sue if Sue decides not to act for you,” he insisted. To him it was a matter of principle, but it was also a matter of his goals for the center. If volunteers with second thoughts could be pressured into Latin America, all of his tactics would amount to little.

Illich also believed that many prospective missionaries did not know their own hearts. They saw themselves as “sacrificing” for the church, but instead they were merely seeking fulfillment and adventure. “Please do not imagine yourself a saint or a ‘missioner’ because you ‘volunteer’ your services to the Church!” he begged. To one such volunteer who appeared to Illich to be on an adventure, on her own terms, for her own satisfaction, he stated, “The principal danger I can see in your decision to accept employment by the Church under the conditions you seek it is that you fool yourself, that you believe yourself to be what you are not: a totally dedicated, totally consecrated woman.”

Gradually Illich’s vision for the center became more and more evident. A signal of a new, more public chapter of Illich’s antimissionary work came when he announced proudly on the pages of the New York Times, “We are not training missionaries. We are training people to have a deep sense of humility, who will seek to make their faith relevant to the society in which they will be working.” Later, astute observers, such as journalist Francine du Plessix Gray, recognized that the center “was not so much designed to train missionaries as to keep all but the most progressive of them away [from Latin America].”

Therefore, in late 1966, when Illich first sent out “The Seamy Side of Charity,” he was beginning the last phase of his campaign against the missionary initiative in Latin America. He believed that CIF had succeeded in subverting the missionary initiative among “the educated groups” in the American church through its training programs and its publications, and he calculated that less than 1 percent of American and Canadian clergy had heeded the papal call to Latin America, far from the desired 10 percent. Still, he detected continuing support for the initiative among the hierarchy and “uneducated Catholics” because of “an intense public relations campaign” by the Latin America Bureau. The combination of the upcoming CICOP gathering and news of an imminent exposé in Ramparts of the CIA’s infiltration of student groups in Latin America convinced him that the time was right to stop the “enthusiasm” once and for all. “Under these circumstances,” he argued, “public and intensive controversy had to be sponsored.”

In the end, Illich and his center played a major role in the failure of the Catholic missionary initiative in Latin America, which never achieved the numbers or impact envisioned by the Vatican. As his center attracted more and more negative attention, in 1968 Illich was summoned to Rome for a trial by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (successor to the Holy Office). Although he was not convicted of heresy, Illich renounced his priestly powers and privileges in 1969 and lived more or less as a layman for the rest of his life. The center in Cuernavaca became a sort of secular think tank that attracted intellectuals from around the world. Seeking to avoid entangling the church in controversy, he focused his intellectual energies on social issues and won widespread acclaim for his critiques of education, economic development, and medicine. He became an itinerant intellectual, teaching at American and German universities in the 1980s before settling with friends and disciples in Bremen, Germany, where he stayed until his death in 2002. Few understood that his criticisms of the West’s major institutions were a form of apophatic theology, laments for the corruption of the church.

### Explaining Illich

In the context of Illich’s comprehensive antimissionary program and continuing denunciations of the church, it is important to note that he never saw his project as antichurch or anti-Christianity and that he could conceive of missionary activity in a positive sense. In “Mission and Midwifery,” a speech to other missionary training directors in 1964, for instance, he spoke insightfully about mission as “the growth of the Church into new peoples” and “the interpretation of the Word of God through its expression in ever new languages, in ever new translation.” He always believed that he was “serving” the church through anti-missionary work at CIF. The atmosphere that he engineered there, with its nearly impossibly steep intellectual challenges and confrontational tactics, was designed to weed out as many neo-missionaries as possible, but not to turn them away from God. In fact, he offered spiritual solace to his students from morning to night and framed their studies in a pervasive Catholic spirituality. He scheduled daily Masses at 6:15 and 6:45 each morning, offered an hour for adoration of the sacrament every night, and on Thursday nights had his colleagues volunteer for one-hour shifts so that students could adore the sacrament all night.

Throughout his life Illich loved the mystical, universal body of Christ and tried to serve it as best he could. Much of his own ministry was cross-cultural—as a Jewish-Croatian working with Puerto Ricans or Irish Americans or Mexicans, it could hardly...
be otherwise. What was the problem, then? What was the root cause of his passionate, ongoing, semideceitful crusade against the American Catholic missionary initiative in Latin America?

At the heart of it lay his own imposing example, his views of Americans, and his fear that too many of the latter could destroy the region he loved. He was brilliant simultaneously as theologian, philosopher, historian, scientist, and priest, one who could pick up a new language in weeks and who quickly imbibed the history, literature, poetry, art, culture, and philosophy of any society that attracted him. He related easily to churchmen, intellectuals, politicians, students, peasants, and whoever else came across his path because of his powers of perception and understanding. In fact, delicacy, an ability to perceive nuance and to respond with appropriate subtlety, was one of Illich’s highest values and one of his great abilities. For instance, Illich taught about the “time and effort and delicacy” needed by missionaries as they learned to speak a foreign language—and learned how to be silent, “to communicate delicately through silences.” He portrayed “growth in delicacy” as one of the sure signs of missionary maturity.31

The problem Illich saw in American volunteers, therefore, was not selfishness or even lack of preparation but a lack of delicacy. For example, he mentioned a South American bishop who was “rightly frightened of a group of fine, well-prepared, generous Americans messing up his very delicate operation.” In the same vein, he unleashed one of his most venomous speeches at a group of American volunteers for the sin of an “abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy.”32 Consequently, when he imagined Americans at work among Latin Americans, he cringed with embarrassment for the church that he loved.

In many cases he was right to cringe. Those Irish American priests in New York City whom he first started working with and their brother priests in Puerto Rico did butcher the Spanish language and had little appreciation for Puerto Rican poetry, and those religious sisters did come to Peru with all sorts of cultural baggage that would take decades to work out of them, if it ever did get worked out of them. But Illich, for all his learning, had a limited understanding of the dynamics of the missionary encounter. He did not spend much time with missionary letters and journals and reports, all of which show us the deeply transformative nature of missionary experience on the missionary and on the host culture alike. He does not appear to have read Paul’s letters with missionary eyes, nor did he give missionary biography the attention that he gave to medieval philosophy or to Latin American anthropology. Ultimately, Illich did not have enough trust in the Gospel message, which can transform cultures regardless of missionary ineptitude and can bring even American missionaries to Pauline humility.

In many cases he was right to cringe, but, for all his learning, Illich had a limited understanding of the dynamics of the missionary encounter.

Notes
6. Pius XII called for more attention to Latin America in his apostolic letter “Ad Ecclesiam Christi” of June 29, 1955. The first inter-American Episcopal Conference on strengthening the Latin American Church was held November 2–4, 1959. In 1961 Pope John XXIII’s representative Agostino Casaroli called for U.S. major superiors to send 10 percent of their personnel to Latin America within ten years.
10. “Students According to Their Superiors” [CIF, 1961], National Catholic Welfare Conference Papers, Latin America Bureau section, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as CUA), box 186, file 63.
Until recently Nepal was the world’s only Hindu kingdom.1 The mighty Himalayas and the fact that Nepal was a closed land until the middle of the twentieth century excited many, but from 1881 to 1925 only 153 Europeans are known to have visited Nepal and none became a resident.2 This tiny mountainous country, sandwiched between India and Tibet, had resisted the might of the British Empire since King Prithvi Narayan Shah from Gorkha (hence “Gurkhas,” the renowned soldiers) unified the country into one kingdom in 1769. From 1848 until the middle of the twentieth century, the country was controlled by the Rana prime ministers, who had usurped the monarchy and had vested interests in keeping the world out. Their century of control was ended by an Indian-facilitated coup on February 16, 1951, that placed King Tribhuvan Shah in power.

The earliest recorded entry of Christians into Nepal was the visit of a Father Cabral, a Jesuit priest, in 1628. Capuchin monks were given permission by the Malla rulers to reside in the Kathmandu valley in 1715, but they were forced to leave by Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769. The few national Christians, expelled at the same time, migrated to Bihar, India.3 For almost two centuries Nepal was totally closed to any Christian presence or influence.

The revolution in 1951 was a turning point in the country’s development and in its openness to the outside world. Surprisingly, part of this story, the founding and growth of the church in Nepal, which is among the fastest growing anywhere in the modern world, has been recorded in only a handful of books.4 From just a single secret Christian residing in Nepal in 1951, the number of Nepali Christians grew to about 40,000 baptized believers by 1990 and has increased more rapidly since then.5 Estimates of the number of Nepali Christians vary widely, and government census figures have been unreliable. The most comprehensive survey of churches and Christians in Nepal was conducted by the Nepal Research and Resource Network. Begun in 2001 with the results published in 2007, the survey covered all seventy-five districts of the country. It showed a total of 2,799 churches and 274,462 members.6 Although in 1950 only 2 percent of Nepalis were literate, Christian literature had been used sporadically during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to penetrate the border, despite laws that prohibited its sale, possession, or use within Nepal.

Second, as the map on page 190 illustrates, from the later nineteenth century numerous Protestant missions and missionaries in northern India were poised to enter Nepal when the opportunity came.7 Prior to 1950 all the towns underlined (and more) had ongoing mission work among the itinerant Nepalis who crossed the Indo-Nepal border. Four accounts, from among many more, underscore the high degree of anticipation and vision present during what Cindy Perry calls the “century of preparation.”8

Darjeeling, on the eastern border of Nepal, was developed by the British, and a large community of Nepalis settled there to labor in the tea plantations. William MacFarlane, a Church of Scotland missionary, began the Eastern Himalayan Mission in 1870, a work active in education, Christian literature, Bible translation, and village evangelism. All were important foundations for the future as the Darjeeling and Kalimpong region became the main center for the nascent Nepali church.

Another group was the Australian Nepalese Mission (ANM), which began in a prayer meeting in Fitzroy, Melbourne, in 1911.9 Founding missionary John Coombe with his wife, Lillian, and two children in 1917 established a base in Ghorasahan, Bihar, near the Nepal border. Although not one of the small band of ANM missionaries ever entered the closed land just across the border, their focus for three decades was on Nepal. They were typical of other missionaries and groups that, though seemingly insignificant, served faithfully in anticipation of Nepal’s border opening.

A third group was the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU), along with the Raxaul Medical Mission. Work by RBMU commenced in Bihar in the late nineteenth century, but the missionaries’ eyes were fixed on Nepal. The railhead border town of Raxaul, directly south of Kathmandu, was chosen as the site for Duncan Hospital, established in 1930 by Dr. Cecil Duncan (son of a missionary in Darjeeling). The site was well chosen and Duncan Hospital subsequently played a vital role in the entry of both church and mission into Nepal.12

Finally, mention must be made of Dr. Kitty Harbord, the
Nepal Evangelistic Band (NEB) at Nautanwa, another railhead, and the Nepal Border Fellowship (NBF). Harbord, of the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission (later Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship, and now Interserve), opened a dispensary at Nautanwa in 1927. She recruited Dr. Lily O’Hanlon and Hilda Steele, who in 1943 founded the Nepal Evangelistic Band (now the International Nepal Fellowship). NBF was later, in 1952, to pioneer the move into Pokhara, west of Kathmandu. Harbord’s article “The Closed Land of Nepal: A Modern Jericho” (1939) influenced many, including Jonathan Lindell, and—building on conferences organized by Cecil Duncan in Raxaul in 1934 and 1937—led to the formation of the Nepal Border Fellowship. The NBF was a loose association that brought various missions along the Nepal border together for encouragement, planning, prayer, and cooperation in terms of a Statement of Aims (May 17, 1948), a literature committee, and an advisory council. Later mission collaboration in Nepal grew from seeds sown in these conferences.13

Nepali Christians and the Darjeeling Church

Key Nepali men and women became Christians during the “century of preparation.” One was Chandra Leela, the daughter of the Brahmin priest to the royal family in Kathmandu. Born in 1840, married at the age of seven, widowed at nine, and orphaned at fourteen, she became a sunyasi (Hindu holy woman) and for seventeen years searched the depths of Hinduism in her quest for solace and peace. Eventually she abandoned her quest but soon after met a young girl with a Bible. After reading the Bible she became a Christian and went back to Kathmandu to speak of her new faith. She baptized her older brother shortly before he died, but then returned to India as an itinerant evangelist until her death.14

Another early Christian was Ganga Prasad Pradhan, who was born into a wealthy Newar family in Kathmandu in 1851. When he was ten his father took him to Darjeeling to join his older brother in MacFarlane’s school, where Ganga Prasad was educated and converted, which led to a remarkable life of Christian service. He was “the first ordained Nepali pastor, translator of the Nepali Bible (completed in 1914 after forty years of labor—he was made a life governor of the British and Foreign Bible Society), missionary, and owner of the first Nepali press.”15 In 1914 Ganga Prasad returned with his extended family to Kathmandu to establish a Christian presence there, but they were expelled by the Rana rulers with the words, “There is no room for Christians in Nepal!” A great legacy of Ganga Prasad was a hymn he wrote that for fifty years expressed the expectant prayers of the waiting clusters of missionaries and exiled Nepali Christians—“Prabhu arji suni leu, Gorkhali le mukti paune dhoka kholi deu . . .”

Lord, hear our prayer, open the door of salvation for the Gorkha-lis. . . .

Show us the way by a cloudy, fiery pillar. . . .
There are cities—Thapathali, Bhatgaon, Patan, Kathmandu,
Our prayer is to make them your devotees.
Up, brothers, we must go, leaving wealth, home, people, and comfort,
To do this holy task.16

Forty-three years after Ganga Prasad had been expelled, his great-grandson Rajendra Rongong, Robert Karthak, and a small group of Darjeeling Christians entered Kathmandu with a strong sense of missionary calling instilled by RBMU missionary Elizabeth Franklin. And forty years later, in 1997, Rajendra Rongong and Robert Karthak were the key persons to lead one of the earliest Nepali missionary teams into Myanmar, where they helped establish the Myanmar Gurkhal Christian Fellowship.17

Buddhi Singh, a humble watchmaker from eastern Nepal who was converted in Darjeeling by Ganga Prasad, was for many years an itinerant village evangelist with the Gorkha Mission, an indigenous Nepali mission founded by Darjeeling Christians in 1892 to evangelize Nepalis. In his later years he influenced the young David Mukhia, who in 1952 became the first pastor in Nepal, at the Ram Ghat Church in Pokhara.18

Colonel Nararaj Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana was a member of the Rana aristocracy who retired from the army and lived in the Terai region, not far from Raxaul. He visited Duncan Hospital with his sick grandson, met Ernest Oliver (then field leader of RBMU but later a founder of the United Mission to Nepal and its first executive secretary),19 and became a secret believer. The Colonel Sahib (as he was known) was baptized by Oliver on Easter Sunday, 1952, and was instrumental in hosting the first church services in Kathmandu in his home there in April 1953. He was also a major contributor to the revised translation of the entire Nepali Bible, published by the Bible Society in 1977.20

The First Generation (1951–90)

When King Tribhuvan opened Nepal’s borders in 1951, he invited the world to assist in Nepal’s development. It was then, by almost any criteria, one of the world’s poorest countries—and it still is. Three distinct groups converged to contribute to the formation of the church in Nepal.
Chronologically, the first group consisted of foreign Christians entering from India, beginning with Father Moran, a Jesuit priest working in Patna, Bihar, who established St. Xavier’s School on the edge of the Kathmandu valley in July 1951. In 1952 the Nepal Evangelistic Band in Nautanwa was given permission to establish medical work in Pokhara, and in October Dr. O’Hanlon and Hilda Steele, with four expatriate colleagues and five Nepali Christians, including David and Premi Mukhia, trekked for nine days from Nautanwa to reach Pokhara. The “Shining Hospital” soon became renowned, and the mission later developed into the International Nepal Fellowship (INF). Its work continues to be primarily medical, but it has spread and diversified through many parts of western Nepal.21

Formation of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) came about through several remarkable coincidences. During the 1951 revolution, fighting took place just over the border from Raxaul, and wounded combatants from both sides were treated at Duncan Hospital. As a result of this service, after the revolution Dr. Trevor Strong and Ernest Oliver were invited by His Majesty’s Government of Nepal (HMGN) to visit Kathmandu to explore the possibility of mission work. They were told that medical and educational work would be welcome, but open preaching would be prohibited.22 These discussions dovetailed with a separate approach made by authorities in Tansen, a large hill-town west of Kathmandu and halfway between Nautanwa and Pokhara, to American missionaries Bob and Bethel Fleming (Methodist) and Carl and Betty Friedericks (Presbyterian). Contact had been made earlier as a result of ornithological trips into Nepal in October 1949 and in the winter of 1951–52, during which medical assistance had been given to the people of Tansen. Eventually, permission was granted to open a hospital in Tansen and clinics in Kathmandu.

Lindell rightly refers to the foundation of the UMN as “some of the finest missionary statesmanship that has been exercised in the modern missionary movement.” Influential Methodist bishop J. Wascom Pickett circulated HMGN’s letter of invitation to other missions in conjunction with the National Christian Council (NCC) of India, with a view to “establishing a Christian mission in Nepal on the widest possible cooperative basis, a combined interdenominational and international approach.”23 The NCC endorsed Pickett’s proposal, and the United Christian Mission to Nepal was founded in Nagpur in March 1954.24

There were eight founding missions; Pickett became the founding president of the board and Ernest Oliver the first executive secretary. The Flemings had already commenced medical work in Kathmandu in January 1954, and the Friederickses began work in Tansen in June 1954, but the work quickly expanded and diversified to include education, engineering, and rural development. The activities of the UMN were defined and reviewed in a series of five-year agreements with Nepal’s government. There have always been clear prohibitions on proselytizing, but the Christian nature of the UMN and the personal faith of its workers are known and accepted. “The Mission takes the terms seriously . . . and has learned that its stay in Nepal rests on a mixture of invitation, permission and mutual agreement; that it is temporary . . . [and] that it is in partnership with Nepali society.”25 At the time of the 1990 revolution, the UMN comprised 39 member missions, 420 expatriate missionaries, and over 2,000 Nepali staff.

The second group contributing to the formation of the church in Nepal consisted of Nepali Christians, including a small but significant contingent from the Darjeeling-Kalimpong region. While the foreign missions were constrained from evangelizing and church planting by the terms of their agreements with the government, the Nepali Christians began to engage in Christian outreach and to form small congregations of believers. Nepal’s first church was formed at Ram Ghat, Pokhara, in 1952 with David Mukhia as pastor. Others followed in the Kathmandu valley. Tir Bahadur became the pastor at Bhaktapur in 1954. Rongong and Karthak’s small group that arrived from Darjeeling in 1956 appointed Robert Karthak as pastor the following year. This group developed into the Nepali Isai Mandali, commonly known as Gyaneshwar Church, which today is the largest congregation in Nepal. Other Darjeeling Christians became an integral part of the work of the UMN in remote projects and were instrumental in establishing small congregations that have continued. Many have grown into substantial churches, and several have multiplied.

A third, smaller group consisted of four Christians from the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, South India, who arrived early in 1953.26 They were led by C. K. Athyali, whose mother had been so challenged at the Kerala Marama convention in the 1920s by Sadhu Sundar Singh’s accounts of his trips through Nepal to Tibet that she dedicated her unborn child to be a missionary to Nepal. The group joined with the Colonel Sahib, who hosted worship services in his house in central Kathmandu. Later, he helped them purchase land in Putali Sadak, close to the parliament buildings, on which Kathmandu’s first church building was constructed.27 Over the years many Christians from Kerala have given exemplary, lifelong service to Nepal, especially in the fields of education and medicine.

During this early phase (1951–61) numerical growth was gradual, but three important features should be noted. First, Nepal’s constitution and legal code prohibited conversion to another religion. The flow of converts was only a trickle during these early years and only a few baptisms took place. Second, although the NEB and the UMN were not engaged in church planting and were not officially linked to any of the churches, a symbiotic relationship between the churches and the missions did exist with mutual benefit and encouragement as the church was being established. Third, the independence of the churches from the missions was fully evident: the leadership was entirely Nepali, the churches were self-funding, and there were no denominations. Each congregation was autonomous.

Two important events marked the end of the first decade: the outbreak of state persecution and formation of the Nepal Christian Fellowship. The first official persecution by the state took place following baptisms in Nepalgunj (1958) and Tansen (1959) by Pastor David and in 1960 by Pastor Prem Pradhan. In November 1960 Prem Pradhan and six baptized believers (three married couples) were imprisoned in Tansen, and the Supreme Court convicted them a year later: the women were sentenced
for six months, the men for twelve months. Prem Pradhan was sentenced for six years (though he was released by royal pardon after four and a half years). Pastor David was included in the conviction, but he escaped across the border to Nautanwa and returned only in 1969. Sporadic arrests, which became the pattern for the next two decades, occurred elsewhere. Vilification and ostracism by families and communities were common responses to baptism.  

Although the congregations were independent of the missions, the initiative of Ernest Oliver resulted in formation of the Nepal Christian Fellowship (NCF) in 1960, something that he regarded as “the most significant event in the first ten years of the church.” Pastor David from Pokhara was appointed president, and during his time in Nautanwa the NCF met there in 1962 and 1963. In 1966 Robert Karthak was appointed president; thereafter the NCF met biannually in Nepal and was “the means of uniting almost all of the [Protestant] Christians in the country until the late 1970s.” 

For the church’s first ten years (1951–61), there was not much growth in numbers, but a strong foundation was laid. During the 1960s churches were established in key areas and wherever mission groups were working, even though government restrictions ensured that church and mission would remain officially distinct and that evangelistic activity would be done only by itinerant evangelists, and that the churches would remain non-denominational though they were united in fellowship and purpose. Perry observes, “The Nepali church was clearly set on establishing the autonomous young churches together for fellowship and mutual encouragement. . . . This was an effective means of uniting almost all of the [Protestant] Christians in the country until the late 1970s.” 

Freedom and Expansion (1990 to the Present)  
The dramatic events of the first half of 1990 marked a watershed both in the history of Nepal and in the growth of the Nepali church. The bloody Democracy Revolution in February/March 1990 culminated on April 6 with King Birendra’s announcement of a return to multiparty democratic government. A year passed before general elections were held and six months more before the new constitution was promulgated, but a new atmosphere of freedom and hope replaced the repression of the previous three decades. 

It took months for the country to recover from the postrevolution upheaval. At that time there were about 60 Christians in jail, and 200 cases against Christians were pending in the courts. The general amnesty granted by King Birendra on June 2, 1990, heralded a new era of freedom for Christians and the church. Still, though Section 19 of the 1990 constitution gave every religious community the right “to maintain its independent existence . . . and to manage and protect its religious sites and trusts,” Christian organizations experienced difficulty obtaining official recognition and registration. And although “freedom to profess and practice [one’s] own religion” was acknowledged, prohibition of conversion continued, with penalties of three to six years in jail specified by the Civil Code. Nevertheless, churches found ways of owning land and buildings, and public worship was open and without threat, although individuals continued to face persecution at personal and social levels, and sporadic cases of state persecution continued through the 1990s. 

Following 1996 Nepal’s attempts to establish democracy were destabilized by the activities of the Maoist “People’s War.” The massacre of King Birendra and his family in June 2001 stunned Nepal and the world and gave rise to suspicions of treason within the country. After the February 2005 sacking of the government by King Gyanendra, political upheaval led to further unrest and instability until peace talks, brokered by the United Nations, led to an interim government that included the Maoists. The general election in April 2008 resulted in a Maoist-dominated coalition government with P. K. Dahal, popularly known as Comrade Prachanda, as prime minister. On May 28, 2008, Nepal’s Constituent Assembly, in a virtually unanimous vote, abolished the monarchy, establishing a federal democratic republic, and on July 23 Ram Baran Yadav was sworn in as the country’s first president. 

At present Christianity is recognized publicly in many ways, a change foreshadowed by inclusion of “Christian” as an option in the religion category of the 1991 census. Christians regularly hold public meetings and processions at Christmas and Easter, to which senior politicians and dignitaries are invited. Ramesh Khatry states that during the People’s War “the government had the Maoists to deal with full time, thus the church grew unhindered,” and now with the change to democracy Christians have “boldness to make their demands known to the government. . . . Political instability remains despite the elections held in 2008, but Nepal has been declared a secular state and freedom of religion is now guaranteed.” 

But there have also been less salutary developments. Denominationalism has entered Nepal, often by infiltrating existing churches. Alongside this development, the NCF has fragmented into various groups (e.g., National Churches Fellowship of Nepal, Agape Churches, and Four square). Still, in many places fellowship and cooperation continue between the churches. On the positive side, a large number of parachurch organizations and Christian NGOs, both national and international, have emerged, including the National Council of Churches, Nepal (NCCN; known in Nepal as Nepal Rastriya Mandali Parisad), founded in 1999. K. B. Rokaya, who became the NCCN general secretary in 2003, was actively involved in the political peace negotiations, and the NCCN initiated an interfaith Peace and Reconciliation process. 

Mission organizations have had to rethink both the nature of their own work and their relationship to the Nepali churches. The UMN and the INI have undertaken significant restructuring, which has entailed a degree of confusion and misunderstanding among some sectors of the Nepali church, but relationships overall continue to be strong and cordial. 

A dearth of trained leadership arising from inadequate opportunities in Nepal for pastoral and theological training is a matter of concern. Only a handful of Nepalis possess advanced training in theology. Ramesh Khatry was the first Nepali to earn a Ph.D. in New Testament studies, from Oxford University. He founded the Nepal Bible Ashram and heads the fledgling Asso-
cation for Theological Education in Nepal, which commenced a B.D. program under Serampore University in July 2005. He also writes commentaries in Nepali.

The Nepali church continues to grow outside Nepal as well. The Nepali diaspora is estimated at 10 million, and Nepali congregations meet in many cities of India and in other countries. Cindy Perry and colleagues in Himalayan Ministries (now HIM-Serve), based not far from Darjeeling, pioneered work among the Nepali diaspora.

Factors Contributing to Growth

Parallels between the first generation of the Christian church—which grew rapidly despite being situated within a hostile Roman Empire—and the first generation of the church in Nepal are apparent and have been explored elsewhere. From just a single believer residing in the country in 1950, the number of Christians in Nepal has grown, by a conservative estimate, to 2 percent of the population.

Several factors present during the three decades 1960–90 helped to form the character of the Nepali church and contributed to its growth and spread. First, there was an unprecedented degree of cooperation among various Christian groups, including those from Darjeeling and Kerala, together with expatriate missionaries. The NCF promoted unity and the church remained nondenominational.

Second, rapid development in Nepal, encouraged by His Majesty’s Government of Nepal, resulted in openness among the common people to new things. The expansion of missions, especially the UMN, into remote corners of Nepal inevitably resulted in new fellowships and churches springing up. At the same time the restrictions and constraints imposed by the government on missions and missionaries ensured the independence of these churches, and this independence was intentionally encouraged by mission leaders.

Third, the prohibition of conversion and the reality of persecution from the outset prevented nominalism and kept the church strong. Oppression of Christians increased in the late 1980s, along with widespread political agitation against the government.

Fourth, most converts were young, vigorous, and vibrant, with a keen sense of evangelistic outreach to the majority society. Also, family conversions were not uncommon, and mass conversions occasionally took place among tribal groups (e.g., the Tamangs of Dhading District).

Fifth, retired Gurkha servicemen who had converted to Christianity while in the Indian or British army returned to their villages and established small Christian communities.

Sixth, new Christians were trained in India at Mirik Bible School in Darjeeling and Union Biblical Seminary in Pune to fill the need for pastors and church leaders. Locally, the NCF sponsored short-term training schools and conferences.

Seventh, several parachurch groups, especially student and youth organizations, worked alongside the churches to spur evangelism and to support new Christians. The women’s movement of the early 1980s resulted in the first nationwide women’s conference in 1985, more than 300 women’s prayer groups, and gender-segregated seating on the floor, often in ordinary village homes.

In 2004 Betty Young, UMN archivist, added the following: “A very widespread means which God has used in the rapid spread of the Gospel is healing, not in any dramatic way, but quietly, one to another—there must be thousands who have come to the Lord through healing. Another answer given by Nepali Christians to explain why the church was growing so quickly was because it was a praising, worshipping church.”

Conclusion

The growth of the Nepali church in numbers and spiritual depth can be attributed to a mix of factors—historical, theological, and missiological. The “century of preparation” included Christian literature, translation of Scripture, and development of Nepali songs. Key Nepalis became Christians, and missionaries were strategically placed around the borders, ready to enter the country. Expatriate missionaries and Nepali Christians showed wisdom, humility, and foresight to ensure that known errors in mission practice were not repeated. Nepali Christians showed great courage in the face of persecution, which in turn refined and purified the church in the early decades. Factors external to the church, such as the political revolutions of 1951 and 1990 and the presence of the Nepali language as a lingua franca within the country (as Greek was in the first century), have been additional catalysts in the church’s growth.

Another factor in its growth is that the church represents the whole spectrum of Nepali society. There is no more dramatic demonstration of the Gospel’s power to transcend the entrenched social barriers of caste and to unify disparate and segregated groups in the mosaic of Nepali society than the practice of the Lord’s Supper in a Nepali church, as men and women, young and old, high caste, tribal, and Dalit break bread together and share a common cup.

Perhaps the most significant factor—and certainly the single most recurring theme in the short history of the Nepali church—is the place of prayer.
the Spirit of God in prayer, he will answer those very prayers in permitting us to occupy Nepal." The truth of these words is seen in all of the following: Ganga Prasad’s prayer-song and the Darjeeling Nepali Christians who prayed for their closed land for decades; the NEB prayer groups across Britain spawned by Kitty Harbord’s enthusiasm; John Coombe’s prayer group in Fitzroy, Melbourne; the NBF (and later NPF), which prayed for decades in anticipation of Nepal’s borders opening; Ernest Oliver and Trevor Strong praying as they overlooked the Kathmandu valley in April 1951, Elizabeth Franklin, who prayed for twenty-three years before entering Nepal; and the Kerala mother who, like Hannah, prayed for a son and then dedicated him to be a missionary in Nepal. The list is too extensive to record, and it continues to grow today.46

The church in Nepal today stands as a testimony to those prayers. In November 2007, at the fiftieth anniversary of Nepali Isai Mandali, Nepal’s largest church (Gyaneswar Church in Kathmandu), my father and I were among thousands of Nepali Christians singing Ganga Prasad’s prayer song, “Prabhu arji suni leu, Gorkhali le mukti paune dhoka kholi deu . . .” (Lord, hear our prayer, open the door of salvation for the Gorkhalis . . .). Less than forty years after Ganga Prasad was told in 1914, “There is no room for Christians in Nepal,” the Rana regime was ousted by the Shah dynasty. Today, less than 100 years after Ganga Prasad was turned out of the country, King Gyanendra has abdicated and the Shah dynasty itself has been abolished, but the church is firmly established and growing in Nepal.

Notes
1. This article is based on work done at the Bible College of Victoria in 2003 as part of an Australian College of Theology D.Min. course on church growth. Extensive reference was made to archival documents in the Nepal Church History Project (NCHP), Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, New College, University of Edinburgh.
3. Details of these early visits are recorded in ibid., pp. 1–37; and in Cindy Perry, A Biographical History of the Church in Nepal, 3d ed. (Kathmandu: Nepal Church History Project, 1990), pp. 1–9.
6. For example, Bhab Ghale, e-mail to author, August 2, 2007.
8. Only 4,500 copies of the whole Bible were printed. Until the new BibleSociety translation of 1977 was published, there were hardly ten copies of the whole Bible extant in Nepal (Perry, History, p. 41).
11. My paternal grandparents were founding members of this group; see note 44.
13. Perry, History, pp. 86–89.
15. Perry, History, p. 29.
17. Cindy Perry, e-mail to author, June 16, 2005.
20. For the stories of key Nepali Christians in the formative years after 1951, see the works by Lindell, Perry, Kehrberg, and Arnett cited above.
21. For the story of the NEB/INF, see Lindell, Nepal; Perry, History; and most thoroughly, Arnett, Himalayan Vision.
24. In 1956 the name was changed to the United Mission to Nepal (ibid., p. 181).
26. These four were graduates of the Union Biblical Seminary, Yeotmal (now in Pune).
31. Ibid., p. 85.
32. The words in quotations are from Section 19 of the Constitution of Nepal 2047 B.S. (1990).
34. In addition to the Roman Catholic Church, the Assemblies of God and Seventh-day Adventists were present before 1990. There are now several denominational churches, including Presbyterian, Baptist, and Foursquare, as well as groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons.
37. The following points have been adapted from a paper by Howard Barclay presented to the UMN Annual Conference, 1980, NCHP AO215010043000.
39. The NBF had earlier established the pattern of collaboration, and indigenous leadership of the church was another imperative for the founders of the NEB and UMN.
40. Perry documents the many sources of Christian literature and the process whereby the organizations combined resources (History, pp. 119–23).
41. Nepali Khristiya Bhajan; a comprehensive revision by Loknath Manaen, Ron Byatt, and others, was published by NCF in 1985 (NCHP A1010010007000) and again in 1996 and 1999.
42. Betty Young, UMN archivist, e-mail to author, March 1, 2004.
43. Guinness, Quest, pp. 116–17.
44. Elizabeth Barclay, a founding member, prayed for forty years until Nepal’s borders opened, and for another forty years until she died in 1990 at the age of ninety-seven.
45. Pritchard, For Such a Time, p. 91.
My Pilgrimage in Mission

David Dong-Jin Cho

I was born on December 19, 1924, near the Yalu River, at the Korean border with China. I was the eldest son of a prominent Korean resistance leader against the Japanese military regime, which had occupied Korea since invading it in 1905. My father received Christ as his Savior when he was ten years old, and I was raised as a Christian from childhood. I was baptized as an infant by Donald A. Swicord, a missionary from the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Divine Calling

My calling came to me in December of 1945 at a revival meeting at the small rural church where I was serving as a deacon. The revival meeting was led by an evangelist who had spent seven years in prison for refusing to bow to the Shinto shrine of the Japanese. On the third day of this revival meeting, I was broken down by the Spirit and confessed and repented of all the iniquities, falseness, and sins I had committed and concealed since my childhood. I wept and prayed for three days and three nights without sleeping, eating, or drinking. I took an oath to obey my calling to be a servant and witness of the Lord, and the pastor of the church and the speaker of the revival meeting laid their hands on me. I later took an exam to become a candidate for pastor in the synod.

Training in Theology and Evangelism

I fled from the Communist rule of North Korea into South Korea, where I studied at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. I graduated in June 1949 with honors in theology. Immediately after graduation I married Shin Bock Rah, a seminary classmate of mine. I began to evangelize in order to plant a church, but I failed to reach nonbelievers. I soon realized that my seminary training had not taught me how to evangelize the unreached. I then decided to study evangelism.

In 1956 I went to the United States to pursue studies in mission and evangelism. In the 1950s the Korean government did not allow people studying abroad to take along their families, and so I was alone until 1960, when I finished my training in the States. I began at Providence Bible Institute, Providence, Rhode Island, then went to the WEC Missionary Training Center in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, and later to Bethany Missionary College in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I continued my studies under J. T. Seamand (mission) and Robert Coleman (evangelism) at Asbury Theological Seminary, in Wilmore, Kentucky, where I received a Th.M. in mission in 1960. I later received two honorary doctor of divinity degrees: from Belhaven College, in Jackson, Mississippi, and from my alma mater, Asbury Theological Seminary. Finally, in 1993, I earned a Ph.D. in international development at William Carey International University, in Pasadena, California.

From 1960 to 1978 I served as the senior minister of the Hoo-Am Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea. Beginning in 1961, I advocated for mission studies courses at seminaries in Korea. I began to teach mission and evangelism at the Presbyterian Seminary, the Methodist Seminary, and the Holiness Seminary in Seoul. In 1963 I established the International School of Mission in Seoul, which later, in 1973, expanded to become the East-West Center for Missions Research and Development. It was the first missionary training and research institute in the non-Western world.

My wife, who passed away from cancer in 1992, was a wonderful coworker in my various ministries. When I was pastoring, she sought out and comforted those in the congregation who needed special care. She became an effective counselor and a good listener, especially for those who were isolated or hidden in our church, which eventually had several thousand members. When I was concentrating more on missionary training, she cared for missionary candidates and their wives as though they were her own children. When I visited mission fields, she traveled with me and was especially attentive to the needs of the wives and children of missionaries. The Lord gave us a son and four daughters, each of whom has been a cooperating supporter of my ministries over the years. Currently my daughter Helen is executive director of the Global Mission Society of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The latter is Korea’s largest mission organization, with over 2,000 missionaries now serving all over the world.

Efforts for Partnership with Western Missions

I dreamed of building a partnership with Western missions to develop leadership for the newly emerging Asian missions. I began making contacts at the Asia Pacific Congress on Evangelism, held in Singapore November 5–13, 1968. While there, I visited the Overseas Missionary Fellowship headquarters, located in Singapore, and shared with the chief executives my vision for cooperating to train missionaries of the Korean mission agencies. After a short discussion, however, they coldly refused my proposal.

I continued to contact Western missions operating in Asia, asking for their cooperation with the newly emerging Asian missions. I traveled to the United States and contacted the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) mission in New York, where I met Louis King, general secretary of the C&MA board, and proposed that they work together with Korean missionaries in Vietnam. Vietnam was a major mission field of C&MA in Asia, and a number of Korean missionaries had recently begun mission work there. After a long discussion, however, they gently declined my proposal of partnership with Korean missions. I next went to Wilmington, Delaware, to meet the CEO of the World Presbyterian Mission and propose a partnership, but they also refused. I then went to Wheaton, Illinois, to meet the head of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), as I had been heavily involved in the mission’s attempts to open the Word of Life Press and a mission radio station in Korea. I was also responsible for much of their progress in literature and
Inter-Asian Network and East-West Cooperation

I decided to build an Asia-wide network first and then later pursue contacting Western missions. In 1971 I traveled to twelve Asian countries, meeting with Akira Hatori in Japan, Philip Teng and Timothy Dao in Hong Kong, David Liao in Taiwan, Witchean Watakai Charowen in Thailand, Chandu Ray in Singapore, G. D. James in Malaysia, and Greg Tingson in the Philippines. I also contacted Doan Vau Mieng in Vietnam and met Samuel Kamalesson and Theodore Williams in India, Bashir Jiwan in Pakistan, and Sabuhas Sangma in Bangladesh. All were major leaders of the Asian missionary movement in the 1960s. They unanimously agreed to help launch a network of Asian missions and to cooperate in fostering mutual relationships among partners. We finally reached a consensus to call the All-Asia Mission Consultation, which would take place in Seoul in August 1973.

In September 1971 I attended the Green Lake Conference of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA; now CrossGlobal Link) and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA, later the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies and now The Mission Exchange), where I announced the upcoming All-Asia Mission Consultation planned for August 1973 and gave an open invitation to the leaders of Western missions. Responses came from the following mission professors and executives: Arthur Glasser, dean of Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission; James in Malaysia, and Greg Tingson in the Philippines. I also contacted Doan Vau Mieng in Vietnam and met Samuel Kamaleson and Theodore Williams in India, Bashir Jiwan in Pakistan, and Sabuhas Sangma in Bangladesh. All were major leaders of the Asian missionary movement in the 1960s. They unanimously agreed to help launch a network of Asian missions and to cooperate in fostering mutual relationships among partners. We finally reached a consensus to call the All-Asia Mission Consultation, which would take place in Seoul in August 1973.

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As the executive director of the Continuation Committee, I initiated the formation of the Asia Missions Association (AMA), which became the first regional missions association in the world. AMAS's inaugural meeting met from August 28 to September 1, 1975, at the Academy House in Seoul, with delegates from thirteen Asian countries: Bangladesh, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam; and with Western fraternal delegates from Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The inaugural convention of AMA affirmed the Seoul Declaration on Christian Mission, which I drafted and which became a counterpart of the Wheaton Declaration of 1966 and the Frankfurt Declaration of 1970.

AMA grew quickly and was influential even beyond Asia in Africa and Latin America. The Africa Evangelical Missions Association was formed by Panya Baba, who attended the second triennial convention of AMA in Singapore in 1978. The Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions Agencies was formed by Jonathan Santos, who attended the third triennial convention of AMA in Seoul in 1982. In addition, the Third World Missions Association was launched in May 1989 as an intercontinental network of missions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Many Western mission leaders took notice of these ventures. I was invited by Billy Graham to join the Preparatory Consultation for the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, and I was honored to serve as chairperson at the congress. In my paper at Lausanne, entitled "Innovation of Mission Structure for the New World," I stressed the need to move away from the one-way mission of the Western world to a two-way approach to missions. I also emphasized that both East and West have needs and resources, and input and output must therefore come from both sides. The East and the West should join hands in order to research and analyze the availability of resources and the areas of need, and in this way to produce new forces for mission from both worlds.

In these ongoing efforts, the Lord gave me a number of loyal partners from the West to fulfill my dream of East-West cooperation in missionary leadership development. The first was Donald McGavran of the Fuller School of World Mission. He encouraged me in an article he wrote in 1972 in his *Church Growth Bulletin*. Even though I had not had opportunity to meet him personally, he had heard about my efforts to stimulate the missionary movement in Asia and spoke highly of my labors. He came to Seoul in 1974 to teach at the Summer Institute of World Mission, which I had started in 1973. He advised me in my work toward developing Asian leadership in mission. Until his death, he was a loyal supporter of my efforts to bring East and West together in mission cooperation.

The second was Ralph Winter, one of my mentors and a partner in East-West cooperation of mission leadership development. For thirty-six years, from 1973 until his death in May 2009, he was associated with my activities of missionary leadership development and the networking of Third World missions. I often requested him to join me in mission work—in Seoul, Manila, Thailand, Moscow, Ephesus, and elsewhere—and he never said no. He also never hesitated to write to North Korean leaders, inviting them to William Carey International University for my peace mission movement with North Korea.

The third special partner in mission has been Dale Kietzman. He was the U.S. director for Wycliffe Bible Translators and became vice-president of the East-West Center for Missions Research and Development in Seoul, assisting my efforts for East-West cooperation. He has served with me since 1974. While he was serving as executive vice-president of William Carey International...
University, he visited North Korea with me three times as my fellow worker for the mission to North Korea. Ralph Winter, Dale Kietzman, and I were all born in 1924 and have ministered together for the advancement of mission from the non-Western world.

Ministry of Teaching Missiology

In 1974 I was appointed as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship (now World Evangelical Alliance). As a member of this committee, I convened its inaugural meeting in Seoul in August 1975. Beginning in 1979 I also served as a professor and, from 1983 to 1989, as director of Korean studies at William Carey International University; in the Korean Program at Western Seminary, in Portland, Oregon; and as a visiting professor at the School of Intercultural Studies of Fuller Theological Seminary from 2002 to the present.

In 1988 I called Third World mission leaders to a consultation in Portland, Oregon. The outcome of that consultation was the formation of the Third World Missions Association in 1989 at Western Seminary. I was elected as the chairman of the association and served until 1995.

Since 1988 I have also been a major speaker at the Korean World Mission Conference, held every four years at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. I have lectured at various missiological schools in the United States, including Wheaton College Graduate School; Moody Bible Institute, Chicago; Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois; Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia; Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas; and Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi.

Mission to North Korea

Between the years 1989 and 2000 I visited North Korea over twenty times on peace and reconciliation missions, hoping to open the door for Christian ministries in North Korea. Several times I met personally with Kim Il Sung, the former leader of North Korea. I officially and publicly donated, in the name of William Carey International University, 2,700 Christian books on theology, biblical studies, and church history to the library of Kim Il Sung University. In recognition of the official donation, Kim Il Sung signed each volume. Kim Il Sung University opened a religion department to teach Christianity and other religions, and I was appointed as a visiting professor at both Kim Il Sung University and Pyongyang Seminary in North Korea. Whenever I visited North Korea I also preached regularly at two newly opened churches in the capital, Pyongyang.

In June 1991 I accompanied Han Shi Hae, the North Korean ambassador to the United Nations, to the Georgia home of former president Jimmy Carter in order to extend an invitation from Kim Il Sung to Carter to come to Pyongyang. I made the arrangements for Carter’s visit in 1994, as well as for a visit to North Korea by Billy Graham in 1992.

Mission to Russia

From 2000 to 2003 I served as a missionary in Russia. I established the Russian Institute of Christian Leadership Development in Moscow and formed the Moscow Synod of the Church of Christ, Russia, in 2002. I hosted the eighth triennial convention of the Asia Missions Association, which was held in Moscow in September 2003. I also formed the Asian Society of Missiology, which in 2007 elected Timothy K. Park as its first president. In November 2006 the ninth triennial convention of the Asia Missions Association was held in Ephesus, Turkey. The theme of the convention was “Mission, the Apostolic Way.”

David Cho Missiological Institute

In 2004, thirty-six younger mission scholars who are following in my footsteps in developing Asian missiology gathered in Seoul and decided to establish the David Cho Missiological Institute and the World Mission History Museum and Library. They also resolved to continue and to reshape the East-West Center for Missions Research and Development that I had founded in 1973. They elected Timothy K. Park, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of Intercultural Studies, as the new general director of the East-West Center.

It is hoped that these ventures will carry forward my endeavors to lead Asian missions back to the biblical way of mission and to restore the apostolic way of mission within the Asian missionary movement.
“The PhD in Intercultural Studies program trains students to be both theologically astute and anthropologically sensitive, so that they can better apply the Word of God critically in any human or cultural context. The faculty are all experts in their own right, and they contribute to the richness of the program not only by their theological insights but also by their years of significant intercultural experience. The diversity of the students, both in terms of their cultural background and their cross-cultural ministry experience, creates a unique community where theological and missiological thinking is forged in a highly stimulating context.”

— Doctoral student How-Chuang Chua came to Trinity after four years of church planting work as a missionary in Japan.
Thirty Books That Most Influenced My Understanding of Christian Mission

Gerald H. Anderson

When I was a graduate student, my interests developed in the areas of mission history and ecumenics, then focused on the theology of mission and the theology of religions, with particular orientation toward Asia. There my wife, Joanne, and I worked for nearly a decade.

The first books that captured my interest and attention were Kenneth Scott Latourette’s *History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 vols., Harper & Brothers, 1937–45) and William Richey Hogg’s *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth-Century Background* (Harper & Row, 1952). At the Bossey Ecumenical Institute we had a seminar devoted to Hendrick Kraemer’s recently published book *Religion and the Christian Faith* (Lutterworth Press, 1956), which challenged my theological views at that time, especially in discussions with students from Asia.


I recognized the importance of Dutch and British mission scholars. So I studied Dutch and for several years in the Philippines I subscribed to two Dutch mission journals: *De Heerbaan* (The Lord’s Highway—Protestant) and *Het Missiewerk* (Mission Work—Roman Catholic), and I always read Max Warren’s CMS Newsletter with great interest and benefit. Johannes Blauw, secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council, wrote *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (Lutterworth Press, 1962), which was much needed.

Teaching in the Philippines during the 1960s was an exciting time to be in Asia, especially in a Roman Catholic country while the Second Vatican Council was going on. *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter M. Abbott (Guild Press, 1966), with an introduction to each document by a Protestant or Orthodox scholar, was required reading. The 1960s was also a time of great turmoil and transition in many Asian countries. For me, *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution*, by M. M. Thomas (SCM Press, 1966), was the most profound and provocative book on the subject by an Asian churchman.

The “Three Ns” were authors who became very important and influential in my understanding of mission: D. T. Niles, Stephen Neill, and Lesslie Newbigin. Each of them wrote many important books, but I mention here only one from each. At the request of the World Council of Churches, D. T. Niles held a series of consultations around the world in preparation for writing *Upon the Earth: The Mission of God and the Missionary Enterprise of the Churches* (Lutterworth Press, 1962), which gave an overview of the state of mission and the theological challenges at a time when the International Missionary Council had just been integrated with the World Council of Churches.

I first met Stephen Neill in Singapore in the summer of 1963, when he was lecturing at a study institute for those of us who were teaching church history at seminaries in Southeast Asia. He asked three of us to help him proofread his latest book, *A History of Christian Missions* (Penguin, 1964), which is still a classic textbook. In his preface he commented that he had received valuable help in the correction of the proofs “from three distinguished missionaries of the younger generation,” and then mentioned our names. So my friends and I are perpetually “of the younger generation!”

Lesslie Newbigin wrote so many influential books that it is hard to choose one. For my purposes, however, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Eerdmans, 1978; rev. ed., 1995, The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission) was particularly important, because it was profoundly biblical and balanced in its treatment of the subject.

Water Buffalo Theology (Orbis Books, 1974; 2d ed., 1999), by Kosuke Koyama, written when we were both teaching in Southeast Asia, set a new standard for doing theology from the rice-roots of Asian society. It was the first in a series of books that he wrote with his unique perspective as an Asian missiologist.


Two books on the history of women missionaries that have been valuable for me are Dana L. Robert’s *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Mercer Univ. Press, 1996) and Ruth A. Tucker’s *Guardians of the Great Commission: The Story of Women in Modern Missions* (Zondervan, 1988).

Contemporary Missionology: An Introduction (Eerdmans, 1978), by Johannes Verkuyl, is a masterful textbook by the leading Dutch missiologist after World War II. Another valuable text from a Dutch missiologist is *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (2 vols., Peter Lang, 1995–97), by Jan A. B. Jongeneel, a work that is encyclopedic in its scope and detail. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Orbis Books, 1991), by South African David Bosch, was probably the single most important textbook in missiology in the late twentieth century. All of these have been influential in my work.

I admired Alan Neely’s skill in using case studies for teaching courses in mission, and students have always responded with appreciation when I have used his book *Christian Mission: A Case Study Approach* (Orbis Books, 1995) in my classes.

Because of my special interest in Asia, I am indebted to San-


Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture, by Lamin Sanneh (Orbis Books, 1989; 2d ed., 2008), was a landmark book that helped many of us to understand better the remarkable relationship of the missionary enterprise with cultures.

The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (Orbis Books, 1987), edited by John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, is an example of radical theological relativism, which, as one of the authors says, “has devastating theological effects.” He believes the results to be desirable, but such relativism would actually be a form of theological cancer for the Christian mission.

The writings of Kwame Bediako from Ghana, such as Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience (Orbis Books, 2004), have helped me to better understand a theological response to the Gospel from an African perspective.

The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History, by Angelyn Dries (Orbis Books, 1998), is essential for understanding the contribution of American Catholic missions. For mission theology and practice, Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation, edited by William R. Burrows (Orbis Books, 1993), provides commentary and discussion about two of the most significant official Catholic statements on mission in our time, which have been important for my understanding.

Missionary biographies and autobiographies have always been of special interest to me. Many have been influential and inspiring, and if I had to choose only one biography, it would be To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson, by Courtney Anderson (Little, Brown, 1956); and the one autobiography would be Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography, by Lesslie Newbigin (Eerdmans, 1985; updated ed., Saint Andrew Press, 1993).

As I was involved in editing two mission dictionary projects, I developed great admiration and appreciation for the accomplishment of the Encyclopedia of Missions, edited by Edwin Bliss (2 vols., Funk & Wagnalls, 1891; 2d ed., 1904). It is a massive global project with historical information of enormous value.


For my special interests, there is one book that has never been written: a comprehensive history of Christian attitudes and approaches to people of other faiths, from the early church to the present. To my knowledge, such a comprehensive study has never been published in any language. If I were starting over, I might try to do it myself—but now I wait and wish for someone else to undertake it!

The Legacy of Philip Beach Sullivan

Jessie G. Lutz

Philip Beach Sullivan (1898–1957) was part of a trend toward professionalization among the China Christian colleges during the 1920s. The institutions, most of them originally founded as aids to evangelism, were by the 1920s giving greater emphasis to the academic aspects of their work. In order to compete with the Chinese national universities, they needed to raise their standards and expand their curriculum; so in recruiting teachers, they sought individuals with higher education in the academic disciplines. These educators were not necessarily expected to be religious proselytizers, though of course they should be committed Christians. A devout and active Episcopalian, Sullivan did not go to China as an evangelist; instead, he went to fill a temporary position in the Department of Economics at St. John’s University in Shanghai. There he met his future wife, Bess Lipscomb, a microbiologist who had gone to China to visit her sister. The two married and decided to remain in China, and for twenty years Philip Sullivan was a member of the St. John’s economics department. As home and family responsibilities permitted, Bess worked as a medical technician at Margaret Williamson Women’s Hospital.

Philip Sullivan may also be viewed as representative of those missionaries who had a dual career. Because missionaries acquired language facility and knowledge of the local culture and society where they were stationed, they were frequently called into government service, either temporarily or permanently. Accordingly, after Sullivan was interned by the Japanese and then exchanged for Japanese prisoners and repatriated in 1943, he worked for the United States government, first as an educator and then as a labor adviser with the Department of State. In recognition of his service to church and country, upon his death in 1957 his ashes were placed in the Washington National Cathedral.

Birth and Training

Philip Sullivan was the third son of Daniel Peyton Sullivan and Elizabeth Gay Beach. He was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where his father was a businessman and an accountant. The family soon moved to Wyandotte, Michigan, and then to Detroit. Aclosely-knit family, the Sullivans participated in both the Episcopal church and a mission society in Detroit. Bess’s mother had been general secretary for the Women’s Missionary Society of the Southern Methodist Church, and Philip’s sister went to China in 1921 to serve as secretary to Frederick Graves, bishop of the Diocese of Shanghai of the Anglican Church in China. As a high school student, Philip was active in the YMCA and in sports, particu-
larly basketball. A brief stint in the army, from September to December 1918, preceded his college career, first at Wayne State University and then at the University of Michigan. Immediately after graduating with a degree in economics in 1922, he left to teach basic economics and business courses at St. John’s.

Bess Lipscomb left the same summer for Shanghai, where she worked as a laboratory technician, trained Chinese as medical technicians, and established the first modern medical laboratory at Margaret Williamson Women’s Hospital. Bess and Philip were married on July 31, 1924, and settled down in a house on St. John’s campus. They had three children: a daughter, Elizabeth, and two sons, Daniel and McDonald.

During the 1920s and 1930s, St. John’s students came primarily from the Westernized upper middle class of urban China. Despite the political turmoil, this was an era of economic growth and rationalization. Both Chinese and Japanese entrepreneurs established factories in Shanghai, particularly for textile manufacture. Attempts to regularize the banking and currency system met with some success, and the building of railway and communication links went on apace, many under foreign auspices. China needed businessmen, engineers, bankers, and other professionals. To help supply trained personnel, Philip Sullivan worked steadily to expand and upgrade St. John’s department of economics and business administration; by 1928 he had become chair of a department offering a wide gamut of courses and attracting increasing numbers of majors. During furloughs, Sullivan also upgraded his own training, obtaining an M.A. in economics from the University of Michigan in 1928.

Sullivan had become interested in the Shanghai labor scene, for China’s economic growth and the political competition between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party made the 1920s a time of labor unionization and upheaval. Impressed by the need for organized labor to protect workers, Sullivan wrote his master’s thesis on the labor movement in China and continued his research on Chinese workers for his Ph.D. dissertation. He never received the doctorate, however, for although he completed all his coursework, copies of his dissertation were lost when he was interned by the Japanese in 1943.

Stalwart at St. John’s, Shanghai

During Sullivan’s twenty-year tenure at St. John’s, over half of its graduates in arts and sciences majored in economics and business administration, and the institution gained national recognition as a major center for training future business leaders of China. Song Ziwen (T. V. Soong), governor of the Central Bank of China and a member of the Guomindang inner circle, was one of St. John’s eminent alumni. Song not only served on the St. John’s Board of Directors but also was a major supporter of the institution. His financial aid and political protection greatly aided Sullivan in strengthening the economics department, while alumni connections facilitated employment and rapid advancement for St. John’s graduates. An analysis of Who’s Who in China for 1933 indicates that 21 percent of those listed had attended a parochial school; of these, one-third had studied at St. John’s. Since the Who’s Who was oriented toward the coastal regions, the statistics accentuate the prominent role of St. John’s alumni in the modernizing sector of the economy.

St. John’s, largely located in the International Settlement, was able to continue academic work after the Japanese captured Shanghai in 1937, and Sullivan remained at his post. When most of the national and Christian universities fled to the interior, refugees and students from coastal China flocked to St. John’s, Fu Ren in Beijing, Lingnan in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, and the few other institutions able to continue operations in occupied China. Enrollment at St. John’s reached a peak of 1,571. Crowded conditions prevailed, textbooks and materials were in short supply, and classes could be interrupted at any time by warfare, but teachers continued to meet with their students.

During the civil war between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party, from 1946 to 1949, St. John’s staff and students split into factions, and the Communist Party gained control of the student union. Strikes broke out, classroom work was disrupted, and students devoted much time to political protests and demonstrations. The victory of the Communists in 1949 and the closing of St. John’s in 1952 by the People’s Republic of China scattered its students and alumni. Some remained on the mainland, but many emigrated to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Canada, the United States, and elsewhere. Again, the bonds formed at St. John’s helped many émigrés in building industrial and banking empires in their new overseas homes.

Former teammates of St. John’s basketball and baseball teams were particularly notable for their loyalty to their alma mater. Philip Sullivan, ever fond of sports, had early assumed the position of basketball and baseball coach at St. John’s. He himself played center on the Shanghai YMCA basketball team. Sports and physical training had not been a part of traditional Chinese education, and when the Christian colleges and the YMCA first introduced them, Chinese students were less than enthusiastic. By the twentieth century, however, physical and military training had become closely associated with national strength, and the performance of Chinese athletes became linked with national pride and the international status of China. The St. John’s basketball teams coached by Sullivan won championships in the Chinese collegiate circuit, and St. John’s initiated the first international basketball game in which Chinese teams participated; this inaugural competition was held in Japan in December 1923. In 1927 the St. John’s basketball team was the Far Eastern collegiate champion, a matter of pride for St. John’s students and for the whole Chinese nation. A record of the St. John’s teams coached by Sullivan and pictures of the 1924–25 and 1926 teams are now in the American Basketball Hall of Fame, and a picture of the first jump ball between China and Japan, in Kobe in 1923, is included in James Naismith, Basketball, Its Origin and Development.

As a coach, Sullivan established a personal relationship with his players, and dinner at the Sullivan home was a gala affair. Former teammates of St. John’s basketball and baseball teams were particularly notable for their loyalty to their alma mater. Philip Sullivan, ever fond of sports, had early assumed the position of basketball and baseball coach at St. John’s. He himself played center on the Shanghai YMCA basketball team. Sports and physical training had not been a part of traditional Chinese education, and when the Christian colleges and the YMCA first introduced them, Chinese students were less than enthusiastic. By the twentieth century, however, physical and military training had become closely associated with national strength, and the performance of Chinese athletes became linked with national pride and the international status of China. The St. John’s basketball teams coached by Sullivan won championships in the Chinese collegiate circuit, and St. John’s initiated the first international basketball game in which Chinese teams participated; this inaugural competition was held in Japan in December 1923. In 1927 the St. John’s basketball team was the Far Eastern collegiate champion, a matter of pride for St. John’s students and for the whole Chinese nation. A record of the St. John’s teams coached by Sullivan and pictures of the 1924–25 and 1926 teams are now in the American Basketball Hall of Fame, and a picture of the first jump ball between China and Japan, in Kobe in 1923, is included in James Naismith, Basketball, Its Origin and Development.

As a coach, Sullivan established a personal relationship with his players, and dinner at the Sullivan home at the conclusion of the basketball season was a gala occasion. Alumni of basketball and baseball teams and of the economics department, in letters to Sullivan’s son, relate fond memories of their association with Philip Sullivan, especially the celebratory dinners at his home. Sullivan’s sports activities contributed to the popularization of
team sports, to the association of sports competitions with national pride, and to the long-standing loyalty of St. John’s alumni. Branch alumni associations have been established in several countries, and in 1986 the Beijing St. John’s Alumni Association invited representatives of the Hong Kong branch to visit. Hosting them was honorary president of the Beijing alumni, Rong Yiren, head of the China International Trust and Investment Corporation.

Since then, several international meetings of St. John’s alumni have been held. Despite the association of St. John’s graduates with capitalism and Westernism, their business acumen and investment capital have been welcome in China since China began to open up to a market economy. Professor Xu Yihua (Edward Xu) of Fudan University and McDonald Sullivan, son of Philip Sullivan, are currently engaged in a study of Philip Sullivan’s tenure at St. John’s, the curriculum of the Department of Economics and Business Administration, and the careers of the economics majors. This study is only one example of a renewed interest among Chinese scholars in the legacy of the Christian colleges, which has generated several conferences, the cataloging of archival materials, and studies of specific institutions. The role of the colleges in the modernizing of China has received particular attention.

**U.S. Government Trainer and Labor Specialist**

Sullivan’s second career was in the service of the U.S. government, and it drew on both his experience in East Asia and his knowledge of economics. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the U.S. entry into the Pacific war, the Japanese placed Sullivan and other Americans under house arrest. In February 1943 the American prisoners were interned at Pootung Internment Camp, and in September 1943 they were exchanged for Japanese prisoners in the United States and returned home on the SS Gripsholm. Even while interned, Sullivan taught economics to his fellow inmates, writing his own textbook. He was reunited with Bess and their three children in New York in December 1943. At this juncture the American government was already preparing for the possible invasion of Japan and postwar occupation of the country, and it needed personnel who were fluent in spoken Japanese and broadly informed about Japan’s politics and economy, social mores, and culture. These specially trained officers were to staff the temporary occupation government of Japan. Sullivan was called on to supervise a program being set up at the University of Michigan, the East Asia Area and Language Army Specialized Training Program. New intensive language courses for rapid mastery of spoken Japanese had to be devised, and courses covering a broad spectrum of subjects, rather than specific disciplines, had to be developed. A twelve-month program with emphasis on contemporary conditions was envisioned.

Philip Sullivan’s evaluation of the first year of the program is a frank discussion of its challenges, difficulties, failures, and successes. Among the problems were the lack of texts and skilled teachers for both the intensive language and the area studies courses, and the fact that recruits had not volunteered but had been drafted for the training, with the result that some had little interest in studying Japanese. The students were under military discipline, and the demands of the military training in combination with a heavy course load meant that they had inadequate time for home study and little or no leisure time. Yet there were some successes. The staff devised new techniques for teaching a foreign language in which the emphasis was on mastery of the spoken language rather than reading of character texts. Students were required to carry on conversations and engage in dialogues and discussions, despite their limited vocabulary. So that the students would learn to think in Japanese as soon as possible, no English was allowed in the classroom. Drills in sentence patterns were an important component of the training, and extensive use was made of recording machines. Fluency was more important than complete accuracy. This methodology, modified and refined, has since been widely adopted in foreign language training in many university departments. Area studies, also an innovative approach to the study of civilizations, has gained acceptance and has been expanded to include American as well as many other cultures. At the University of Michigan and other schools where the army had language training programs, the area study programs became the foundation of major centers for East Asian and Southeast Asian studies.

In April 1945 Sullivan accepted a position as chief of the Far East Section, Labor Problems Branch, Division of Labor, Social, and Health Affairs, Department of State. For the remainder of his career he would work as a labor adviser with the Department of State; generally, he concentrated on providing policy information papers rather than on research studies. He and Bess transferred their residence to Arlington, Virginia, where they were active in St. Mary’s Episcopal Church. Bess resumed work as a medical technologist and served as president of the Arlington Council of Church Women and secretary of the Board of Managers of the Overseas Mission Society of the National Episcopal Church.

Convinced that strong labor organizations were major forces for democracy and social stability, Sullivan encouraged the government of the Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan to foster the formation of independent labor unions, and a draft document of his (SWNCC#92) became the basis for SCAP’s labor program there. In addition, he guided SCAP in the formulation of labor legislation, the design of labor administration agencies, and the development of employment.
and unemployment policies in Japan. In his position as labor representative for the State Department, Sullivan maintained contacts with labor leaders in the United States, both the AFL’s Victor Reuther and George Meany, and the CIO’s Philip Murray, Michael Ross, and Walter Reuther. He was thereby able to keep both the labor leaders and the State Department informed concerning the impact of the labor policies of U.S. companies abroad on the international image of America. He also represented the United States at meetings of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and other international organizations. On his overseas trips he often met with St. John’s alumni and labor leaders of Japan and other Asian countries. He helped select and train labor attachés for American posts in East Asia, and he arranged for key labor figures from foreign countries to come to the United States to meet with American union leaders and learn about the American labor movement.

In 1952, however, the cold war, the new Republican administration, and John Foster Dulles’s doctrine of containment brought policy changes. To strengthen Japan as a counterweight to the People’s Republic of China, the State Department became more concerned with restoring Japan’s industrial base than with fostering Japan’s labor movement. The interests of the former zaibatsu (lit. “wealthy clique”) leaders, rather than those of labor, came to the fore, leading to the abolishment of the position of Far East labor adviser. Sullivan, however, a fervent believer that the needs of labor should be a concern of the State Department, fought for reinstatement of the position. He was successful, and within a few months he was back at his old post.

Through his China contacts, Sullivan kept abreast of events in the P.R.C. Having observed the Communist infiltration of Chinese labor unions and their utilization of the unions in their drive for power, he deplored the use of labor unions in Japan for political rather than economic purposes. He was distressed by the purges carried out by the Chinese Communist Party during the anti-Rightist campaigns of the early 1950s, the confiscation of property, and the mistreatment and even execution of individuals labeled Rightists. Some of his own friends who were Christians had been arrested in “people’s courts.” Sullivan often assisted former students in finding a safe haven. He became an outspoken advocate of the Chinese Nationalist government, for he thought that recognition of the P.R.C. would enhance the Communist role in Southeast Asia to the detriment of free labor, and also of private enterprise, much of it in the hands of overseas Chinese. He sought to assist the Guomindang government in retaining its seat in international labor organizations. In working on the agenda for ILO conferences, he urged that the ILO concentrate on such issues as child and slave labor, freedom of association, labor standards, and trade union rights, while avoiding politics insofar as possible.

In combination with a meeting of the ILO in India in 1957, Philip and Bess planned a visit with their daughter in Tokyo and with Bess’s sister in Hong Kong. On November 9, however, Pan American Flight 7, which they boarded in San Francisco, went down in the Pacific Ocean between California and Honolulu, Hawaii. Though Philip’s body was recovered, Bess’s body was never found. Philip’s remains were cremated, and his ashes were placed in the Washington National Cathedral; Lloyd Craighill, former bishop of Anjing, China, presided over the memorial service. In memory of Philip and Bess, their three children presented the cathedral with an English Yorkshire oak table, which is placed in the center of the cathedral as the “Holy Table” at large public services of Communion.

Assessment

Though Philip Sullivan did not perceive himself as a Christian evangelist, he expressed his Christian faith in his lifestyle and in his relations with his students and colleagues. He was dedicated to providing Chinese students with a quality education that would contribute to their economic welfare and moral integrity, as well as to the modernization of China. These facets of the Christian college experience are frequently cited by alumni of all the colleges, and they tell us much about the contribution of Christian higher education to China. Though alumni infrequently mention the overt Christian instruction, the worship services, or the courses on the Bible and Christian doctrine, they speak with nostalgia about the personal interest that their teachers took in them and the inculcation of an ideal of social service and personal integrity. Chinese scholars today have increasingly come to recognize the role of the parochial schools in the modernization of education in China, especially the expansion of the curriculum to include formal education in professional and vocational subjects. Even if they criticize the foreign domination of the institutions, they see them as instruments for change, which was essential for a strong China able to take its place in the international arena.

As a civil servant, Sullivan helped to devise new approaches to teaching foreign languages and to introducing students to foreign cultures. He had perhaps less success in achieving his goals as labor adviser in the Department of State. The strong, independent labor movement that Sullivan envisioned for Japan did not become a reality; nevertheless, the foundations for Japanese labor unions were laid, and legislation guaranteeing basic protection for workers was put in place.

Notes

1. McDonald W. Sullivan, “A Genealogical History of the Family of Philip Beach Sullivan” (unpublished MS, Seattle, 1998). I am grateful to McDonald Sullivan for making available to me materials about his father. Most of the papers of Philip Sullivan are held by his descendants. Some correspondence and other materials are located in the Archives and Historical Collections of the Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas; the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; and the Shanghai Municipal Archives. The picture on p. 203 is from James Naismith, Basketball: Its Origin and Development (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1996; orig. 1941), opposite p. 158.
Biola University is pleased to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Cook School of Intercultural Studies.

“For me, the professors’ missions experience has helped me better understand how I can use my passion to teach English as ministry, and further the Great Commission.”

Mark Herbst
(MA, TESOL)

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Mission to Nowhere: Putting Short-Term Missions into Context

Brian M. Howell

Short-term missions have experienced explosive growth in the past two decades. In addition to the many parachurch organizations promoting such trips, for many congregations this sort of “mission” has become a key component of youth group activities. In the United States short-term mission trips are widely promoted as a key means through which average church members can become involved in mission outreach and by which they can make a direct, even sacrificial contribution in the foreign missions work of the church. Today more than 1,600,000 adults and young people from the United States travel abroad yearly on short-term mission trips, most for two weeks or less duration.

A phenomenon of this scope certainly merits social-scientific observation, as well as missiological reflection. My expertise is as an anthropologist. Over a two-year period I observed a high school mission team in their preparation and visit to the Dominican Republic. My research uncovered multiple ways in which the group’s preparation, travel, and return narrative served to minimize the contextual specificity of the trip’s destination in favor of a more generic “short-term mission” experience. The language of short-term mission (STM) too easily becomes an all-engulfing category, subsuming a wide variety of trips by creating a discursive commonality between disparate places and experiences.

In this article I focus on four elements of short-term mission practice that contribute to decontextualization. First, participants in short-term missions strive rhetorically to present what they are doing as something distinct from tourism, with the unintended consequence of losing focus on the context to which they are going. Second, the language of “missionary call” as understood in short-term mission practice works against engagement with the specific realities of a particular location. Third, the meaning of mission embedded within short-term mission too often leads to a mission based on plight and need. Fourth, post-trip pictorial representations of short-term mission trips meant to connect the sending congregation to the experience of STM become, paradoxically, a means of distancing the Other and decontextualizing the place visited. In these ways, the mode of travel unique to short-term missions can create a sort of “missionary gaze” (akin to the “tourist gaze”) that serves to homogenize locality.

After identifying these tensions in a bit more detail, I show how they played out in the experience of one STM group. Finally, I suggest steps that can be taken to bring context intentionally to the fore in STM trips in ways that have the potential to reshape the experience of participants on both sides of the exchange.

Rhetorical Positioning

The Web site of a Christian short-term “leadership” mission organization declares in the large print that, for their organization, trips are “not about the destination.” The text that follows goes on to distinguish the organization’s trips from tourism that emphasizes “a photo album filled with snapshots and maybe some deepened friendships.” Instead, they hold out the promise of “a trip that will challenge your students to make a difference in your youth group.” This promotional message illustrates a tension present for participants in short-term missions generally and certainly for those of my research: it is important to distinguish STM trips from “mere” tourism. In this way, seemingly ego-focused motives are rejected in place of ones that have theological significance and that hold out long-term benefits for both the receiving and the sending groups.

An unintended consequence of this emphasis, however, is that short-term missions become decontextualized. In marginalizing touristic impulses and elevating the theological/missiological significance of these trips, short-term mission organizers often de-emphasize the particularities of the location and context in which the trip will take place. Instead, a generic STM language and practice emerges that serves to make STM trips the same for participants, regardless of the specific location they visit. A particular place becomes transformed into a typology of place: Europe is the secular Other; developing countries are undifferentiatedly “poor”; urban life, particularly black urban life, is the chaotic “inner city.”

Sense of Call

The rhetoric of mission is often rooted in the individual motive for travel. Although STM participants are recruited and encouraged to sign up for particular trips, the “correct” motive is framed as a missionary call. Sacrifice and a sense of calling have a long history in the discourse and theology of missions; as recounted below, both call and sacrifice remain central for short-term missions and for the manner in which many people speak about their motivation for going on an STM trip. But use of sacrificial mission language discourages trip participants and STM leaders from placing emphasis on or expressing enthusiasm about the educational or cultural benefits to be gained from the trip. Focus on the specifics of the location is seen, whether consciously or not, as virtually incompatible with the language of call, of service, and ultimately of mission as embraced by short-term missions.

The Meaning of Mission

The dynamics involved in the formation of STM teams and the distinctive character of STM trips serve to reinforce a particular


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construal of what mission is or means. In my research a valued quality on the part of potential team members was openness in regard to the group of which they would be a member, the task to which they would be assigned, and the destination to which they would go. The meaning of “mission” came to be a kind of sacrificial availability for carrying out an assigned task and a lack of connection to any particular place. Together, sacrificial availability and nonspecificity of location worked to position every trip as first and foremost a journey to accomplish a specific task and to meet needs “out there.” The language used privileged activity over destination and reinforced seeing a relationship between the need for missions (both long-term and short-term) and the necessity of “bringing” something to a place where there was some demonstrable lack. Because every trip was “mission” and all missions involved meeting needs or accomplishing projects, every trip, regardless of destination, became a movement from plenty to want, from have to have-not, from wealth to poverty. Mission became, in the words of Native American church leader Craig Smith, “plight-based ministry.”

Pictorial Representation

Most U.S. Christians are familiar with at least one feature of short-term missions: the slide show. Though these mission reports now tend to be PowerPoint presentations, the idea is the same. Members of STM trips return with a pictorial narrative of their trip as a way of giving testimony to the efficacy of the money spent, often money donated by the larger church body. These representations require a great deal more analysis than can be provided here, but it is clear that they became another site where the paradox of “decontextualized Otherness” is produced. What is remarkable is the picture shows’ degree of standardization. Typically, the slide shows proceed chronologically, beginning with candid shots of team members during the stages of preparation. These are followed by staged group pictures reflecting departure and arrival, pictures of or from the airplane, particularly with shots of the approaching “field” (often a literal field around the airport). Next come pictures of luggage being moved, the home where the team stayed, and the team working, ending with multiple pictures of the team surrounded by those served, particularly groups of smiling children.

A great deal of research in the anthropology of tourism has focused on the role of photography in creating constructed versions of sites and cultures, showing how photographic representations are framed in ways that serve the purposes, expectations, and contexts of those who take the photos, as well as how those images shape the experiences of subsequent travelers to those sites. I cannot reproduce the entire discussion, but the idea that photographs reflect the interests and issues of the photographer, rather than some objective state, is of relevance here. There is no question that student members of STM trips are looking to highlight the kind of poverty, need, and otherness for which they initially prepared and which their audience expects. At the same time, as an experience of travel, there are tropes and images that come directly from a touristic genre, in spite of the explicit rejection of such impulses as appropriate motivation. Images of (usually) white faces surrounded by (generally) brown children, smiling with arms interlocked, suggests the centrality and importance of the project and the “missionary.” At the same time, pictures of small, rural, or decrepit urban homes (often with a short-term missionary in the foreground, as if visiting a site of touristic interest), or shots of bathrooms considered unhygienic or primitive—alongside images of the team working to improve conditions for the inhabitants—become stock tropes of the short-term mission presentation.

The standardization of these presentations turns all the specific images of rural Ghana, urban Mexico, the periurban setting of the Dominican Republic, or even the Chicago metro area into a general field of “mission.”

Recontextualizing Short-Term Missions

The various elements—preparatory linguistic practice, field projects among the poor, and subsequent presentations about the trips—conspire to reduce the particularities of the places involved and to blend STM travel into a generic “short-term mission” experience. Even those who have never gone on an STM trip, through exposure to the images and discourse of the trips, find themselves constructing a view of the “mission field” as an undifferentiated place of generic spiritual and material need—and find themselves with a corresponding inability to delineate the myriad political, economic, and cultural specificities involved. This “missionary view” of the world corresponds to the “tourist gaze” described in the anthropology of tourism. This “gaze,” writes John Urry, is “often collective and depends on a variety of social discourses organised by professionals, including photographers, travel writers, travel agents, tour operators, TV presenters, and tourism policy-makers.” To this list we might now add youth workers and STM leaders.

What is significant, for present purposes, about the “gaze” as it is constructed in contemporary tourism is its potentially homogenizing effect on the varieties of experience tourists actually have. For the short-term missionary, as for the tourist, ability to perceive the experience of travel outside the preformed grooves of the gaze becomes difficult at best. The result for the tourist may be a lamentable but ultimately innocuous blandness in which real human connection is lost in favor of an “experience.” For Christian missionaries, whose goals both religious and humanitarian depend on the host country inhabitants’ perception of their actions, lack of connection would certainly pose significant problems.

In a study of short-term mission trips to Ecuador, education scholar Terry Linhart noted that “without substantive knowledge and reflection, the trip possessed a spectacle quality with a curricular hope that students would somehow positively grow from the formative encounters.” Lack of growth and a “spectacle” quality, I would suggest, are directly connected to decontextualization, something that is frequently found both during trip preparation and throughout the trip. Rather than removing barriers, STM packaging too often makes it difficult for students to examine history, context, and culture closely.

One Short-Term Mission Experience

These tensions gain concreteness and specificity when viewed through the lens of their outworking in the experience of one church’s youth program. The following material draws on research I conducted over a two-year period. During that time I joined a high school mission team in their preparation and STM visit to the Dominican Republic.

STM trips have been integral to the mission program of Central Christian Church (not its real name), a large nondenominational Midwestern congregation, for ten to twenty years. With the visibility and institutional prominence given to STM programs, not surprisingly the current high school students—the majority
of whom have attended the church their entire lives—are well acquainted with the Global Challenge Project (GCP), an STM program specifically for their age group. Of the twelve students on the Dominican Republic team, five had older siblings who had gone on a prior GCP trip, either to the Dominican Republic or to another country. In the previous year two of the team had been to the very site of our planned visit.

Linguistically, the practice of short-term missions is structured and expressed in many ways in the congregation. For the point at hand, I want to focus on one principal semantic element, the idea of what constitutes a “mission.” The GCP trips are explicitly intended to provide students with insight into career missions. Fund-raising and public vision for the trips are framed in terms of helping career missionaries supported by the church through the work the youth would be doing, thus making the trips “real missions” themselves. Leaders and trip organizers frequently framed the educational benefits of the trips in opposition to the real purpose of the trips, which was to “do missions.” In one GCP board meeting, a member pointedly interjected, “It’s important that the kids are learning, right? But they’re doing real missions. People need to see that these kids are with the missionaries, working alongside them. There is real benefit; these are real missions.”

Student members of the team also expressed the importance of placing the educational benefits of the trip as secondary to the “mission” or “ministry” work, understood primarily as that which benefits the long-term missionaries, as well as what benefits the local people, including direct evangelism. One student’s response in a pre-trip interview about her motivations expressed themes echoed by all the students at various points: “I’m excited to just help people. I don’t know so much about missions, you know, but we’ll be working with the missionaries doing real missions work, like sharing Christ and, you know, the Gospel.”

To the question, “Are there any other reasons you want to go?” she continued, “Well, . . . I want to see what it’s like. I’ve never been to the D.R., so I just want to see what it’s like. I’ve never been to the D.R., so I just want to see what it’s like and stuff. But that’s not really why I should go, just to see, right? I mean, it’s

Noteworthy

Announcing

The Association of Polish Missiologists, Stowarzyszenie Misjologów Polskich (SMP), was formed in 2007 and now serves thirty-three missiologists from the major universities and seminaries of Poland, including members from Katowice, Warsaw, Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Opole, and Olzyn. With leadership from president Jan Górski (Katowice) and vice president Wojciech Kluż, O.M.I. (Warsaw), SMP promotes interdisciplinary collaboration in the study of missiology and is the local affiliate of the International Association for Mission Studies and the International Association of Catholic Missiologists. Each year the association publishes Studia misjologiczne, an academic journal that focuses on mission history and theology, portions of which are now being published in English, Italian, and German. For additional information, go to www.misjologia.pl.

Urban mission is the theme of the American Society of Missiology–Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Mission annual meeting, November 6–7, 2009, at Maryknoll Mission Institute, Ossining, New York. Doug Hall and Bobby Bose, respectively president and global urban ministries education coordinator of the Emmanuel Gospel Center in Boston (www .egc.org), will be among the speakers. For conference information, visit www.asmef.org.

The Sociology of Religion Study Group (SOCREL, www .socrel.org.uk) of the British Sociological Association will hold a conference April 6–8, 2010, at the University of Edinburgh on the topic “The Changing Face of Christianity in the Twenty-first Century.” Brief proposals for papers and panels are being solicited until October 31, 2009, particularly if these are focused on “contemporary Christian performance and belief, world Christianities and migration or Diaspora Christianities, (or) Christianity in the public arena.” The University of Edinburgh Institute of Geography and the New College School of Divinity are cosponsors. The conference organizers include Afe Adogame (a.adogame@ed.ac.uk), New College lecturer in world Christianity.

The Andrew F. Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity, Liverpool Hope University, will hold its third annual world Christianity conference June 11–13, 2010, on the topic “Christian Unity in Mission and Service.” Brief proposals for papers and panels are being solicited until December 18. Center director Daniel Jeyaraj is professor of history of missions and an IBMR contributing editor. For more information, contact conference coordinator Ursula Leahy, leahyu@hope.ac.uk.

An international conference on the theme “Politics, Poverty, and Prayer: Global African Spiritualities and Social Transformation” will convene July 22–25, 2010, at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Kenya. The conference will “provide a platform in which researchers on African and African-derived religions and spiritualities encounter practitioners of religious traditions and communities firsthand” and will provide “information on beliefs and practices of religious/spiritual traditions and how they impact their communities and the larger society.” For details, contact program organizers Afe Adogame (a.adogame@ed.ac.uk), Ishola Williams (isholawilliams@yahoo.com), Grace Wamue (gwamue2000@yahoo.com), and Mark Shaw (markshaw2020@gmail.com).

Indian missiologist Siga Arles has announced expansion of the scope of the Consortium for Indian Missiological Education and the Indian Institute of Missiology Research Centre through the launching of a postgraduate research study centre—the Centre for Contemporary Christianity, Bangalore. The center will offer master of theology and doctoral of philosophy degrees in missiology and in holistic child development, with accreditation from the Asia Theological Association and in cooperation with the Global Alliance for Advancing Holistic Child Development. Arles, editor of the Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology, is also developing a journal called Contemporary Christian. For additional information, e-mail Arles, sigaarles@gmail.com.

Historical records, including financial reports, correspondence, committee memos and minutes, articles, and newsletters related to the work of the Evangelical Committee on Latin America are available at the Billy Graham Center.
really about missions, and I think it’ll be, I guess, fun or good. Yeah. . . it’s just like a chance to do missions.”

The emphasis on “missions” and the explicit connection of these short visits to the long-term work of missionary societies supported by the congregation gave theological, social, and institutional validity to trips that are certainly open to criticism as “religious tourism.” Like pilgrims visiting a religious holy site, the members of these teams reject the idea that the purpose of their trips is principally the opportunity to visit sites, see sights, have fun, or otherwise engage in what can be portrayed as tourism-like activities. The girl quoted above articulated that, in doing “real missions,” motives of seeing the Dominican Republic were clearly secondary, if not even in tension with what it meant for her to “do missions.”

The strategy of downplaying the relevance of location in favor of “mission work” and a specific attitude toward that work began in the earliest stages of team preparation. During prescreening interviews, questions never went into the specifics of culture or context beyond practical issues such as allergies or relevant skills (e.g., language). Rather, the focus was on putting together teams that could effectively accomplish the tasks (the “mission”) the various groups would undertake. In one interview with a prospective leader for a trip to Costa Rica, it became obvious that the candidate was not informed about the country. The committee, however, did not suggest to her that it would be necessary for her to learn about Costa Rica herself. Rather, they spent more time on her “gifts” and the sorts of work she could do in helping the team prepare for and accomplish their specific projects. The chair did comment that she would learn what she would need during the preparation phase of the trip, although follow-up interviews made clear that little if any time was spent on Costa Rican history, culture, or economic information.

**Openness**

Related to the logistic need for flexibility was a theological significance of “openness,” that is, being willing to go wherever the

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**Personalia**

**Appointed.** Graham R. Kings, 55, vicar of St. Mary’s Church, Islington, London, as bishop of Sherborne, U.K., effective June 24, 2009. After ordination Kings served as a curate in inner city London for four years. In 1985, as a Church Mission Society mission partner, he taught theology for seven years at St. Andrew’s College of Theology and Development, Kabare, an Anglican Church of Kenya affiliate. An **IBMR** contributing editor, Kings moved to Cambridge in 1992 to become the first Henry Martyn Lecturer in Mission Studies in the Cambridge Theological Federation, founding director of the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity, and affiliated lecturer in the university’s Faculty of Divinity. He founded Fulcrum (http://fulcrum-anglican.org.uk), a network and online journal for evangelical Anglicans seeking to renew the center of the evangelical tradition within the Church of England. Kings served on the Mission Theological Advisory Group of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion Network for Interfaith Concerns.

**Died.** H. Eugene Hillman, C.S.Sp., 84, missiologist, author, and Congregation of the Holy Spirit member, in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, August 5, 2009. A native of Boston, he worked for eighteen years in the missions of East Africa in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia, as well as in Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia. In 1965 he attended Vatican Council II as a guest of Misereor Foundation. Beginning in 1974 he taught for over twenty-five years at the Institutes of the University of San Francisco, St. John’s (Jamaica, N.Y.), Yale Divinity School (New Haven, Conn.), Weston (Mass.) Jesuit School of Theology, Maryknoll School of Theology (Ossining, N.Y.), Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, Pa.), Salve Regina University (which included the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I.), Nairobi’s Institute for Development Studies, and Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies (Providence, R.I.). He was the recipient of many fellowships and awards and the author of numerous books and articles, especially in the fields of missiology, ecclesiology, and social ethics. His noted books include **The Church as Mission** (1966), **Polygamy Reconsidered** (1975), and **Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied** (1993).

**Died.** James Hudson Taylor III, Sinologist and theologian, in Hong Kong, March 20, 2009. The great-grandson of missionary pioneer J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission in 1865, he was born August 12, 1929, in Kaifeng, Henan, and was raised in China. In June 1955 Taylor and his family arrived in Kao-hsiung, Taiwan, to join the staff of Holy Light Bible School, founded that year by his father. The younger Taylor worked there as a lecturer before succeeding his father as principal in 1960. In 1970 he became president of the new China Evangelical Seminary in Taipei. From 1980 to 1991 Taylor served as general director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, now OMF International, the mission founded by his great-grandfather. He was the first Taylor descendant in this role, and under his leadership OMF saw growth in Japan, Philippines, and Hong Kong, as well as in publishing. In 1994 he formed Medical Services International, now MSI Professional Services, to bring teams of Western professionals into China to work on health and community-development projects. He is coauthor of a book on the life of Hudson Taylor’s father-in-law, **Even to Death: The Life and Legacy of Samuel Dyer** (OMF, forthcoming).
leadership deemed it necessary or, phrased more theologically, where God calls. Although the prospective travelers were invited on the application to give their preference for the team on which they wished to serve, in most of the interviews the panel asked the students some version of “How would you handle it if we wanted you to go on another trip?” In none of the interviews I observed did the applicants define their desire to go in terms of a specific location. Rather, all answered as did this high school girl: “Oh, it’s not really important to me where I go. I mean, I’d like to go to the Dominican, because I’ve heard so much about it and how it’s a great trip, but I just want to go where God wants me.”

During one interview an applicant told the committee, “I really just want to be a servant. I don’t care where I go or what I do. I’d be happy just holding kids or washing dishes or anything. It’s really just about missions.” Given this rhetorical link between, on the one hand, true missions as willingness to be flexible and available and, on the other hand, an indifference to the destination, it becomes difficult for members of the teams to ponder the contextual particularities of a trip or to think about reasons other than meeting spiritual or physical needs why they might choose one country over another.

**Plight-Based Mission**

The STM team I accompanied traveled to the Dominican Republic to build a second story on an educational center. The center was run by a North American Christian development group (sponsored by Central Christian Church), which also hosted our trip.

*You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart*

The center provided after-school care and Christian education to local children in an impoverished neighborhood. This particular organization has developed an extensive program of hosting STM teams, which in turn provide the labor and materials for the work. Each person on the team provided approximately $200 toward the general operating expenses of the ministry, plus paying for the materials used in the construction. The team was often told that the various buildings were erected by North American teams and how invaluable their work was. “It is only through the work of teams like this,” the missionary told us, “that any of this exists.”

Even for GCP teams traveling to wealthier (First World) countries, mission was framed in terms of poverty and need. In the case of trips to Spain and the Czech Republic, the poverty was framed more in terms of spiritual need than material need, but the language of poverty remained. One leader on the Czech Republic trip, noting the Reformation history of the country, saw the trip as “bringing some hope” back to a country that was “spiritually desolate.” Similarly, those traveling to Spain framed the work in terms of “the lack of any Christian presence” and the need for the team to bring a Christian witness to a country where there was “total spiritual poverty.”

By framing the GCP trips in terms of poverty (material or spiritual), all five trips gained a commonality that not only obscured significant differences between the teams but also obscured dynamics within particular contexts. Several months after the trip to the Dominican Republic, I interviewed team members about the experience, asking each person some version of the question, “What do you feel you’ve learned about Dominican culture?” A few mentioned something about the importance of family or community, but each person described the culture as “poor.” One girl, when asked to characterize Dominican culture, said, “I just learned that Dominicans really live with, like, nothing. They just have to make do with almost nothing. I mean, I know America is well off or whatever, but when you compare our cultures, it’s just so amazing that Dominican culture is just totally poor.”

Aside from the confused conceptual issues of culture versus economics (not surprising, given the age of the respondent), the comment is striking given that the team spent its time in a mountain town that serves as a summer getaway for wealthy Dominicans. The team bus regularly passed massive summer homes and elegant neighborhoods where Lexus SUVs and Mercedes sedans sat in the driveways. Many students commented on these at the time, but in retrospect, their memories of “Dominican culture” became paved over with the gloss of “poverty.” Given that the stated purpose in going was to meet the needs of “the poor,” it is not surprising that the entire culture would become characterized as poor, providing little in the way of language or conceptual framework for identifying or recalling the evidence of economic inequality. Few of those reinterviewed months after the trip made any comments about the middle-class and professional life they encountered (if briefly) in visiting a Protestant church, during time in tourist areas, or through the Dominican teachers and other workers at the ministry where they served.

**Team Preparation**

By this point it will not be surprising to learn that pre-trip team preparation focused on attitudes and ministry tasks and contained virtually nothing about the location and context to which the team was going. After selection or assignment, each team was expected to meet at least monthly to prepare for the trip. The Dominican Republic team chose to work through a curriculum titled Before You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart. The booklet provided twelve lessons in the form of inductive Bible studies on everything from goal setting and defining a purpose for the trip (lesson 1), to cultivating the right attitude (lesson 3), to identifying cultural patterns of U.S. behavior and thought (lesson 5), to developing good team dynamics (lessons 10 and 11.) The team did not go through every lesson, although it did several, including lesson 5, about identifying cultural patterns. What the guide could not accomplish, of course, was to provide information specific to the context of the Dominican Republic.

One team—one going to the Czech Republic—did have a twenty-minute PowerPoint presentation on Czech history and culture given by a church member who had traveled there on a previous mission trip. The Dominican Republic team watched a video about the ministry in which it would serve, which included some information about the country, but it was largely ministry-specific without much context.

In addition, the teams were encouraged to attend a workshop on evangelism given one evening by the church’s pastor of evangelism. This workshop, open to the entire congregation, was not specific to the short-term mission teams; rather, it was geared toward church members generally. The message was particular
to the North American context, without giving a sense that this would need to be adapted to another cultural context. That is not to suggest that those on the trips were not expecting cultural difference (generally), but such workshops served to further mute the cultural specificity of the trips—not only between the different trips, but even between ministry in the U.S. context and the sorts of adaptations that might be necessary in the places to which the teams would go.

Four Suggestions

How, then, might the most glaring shortcomings of current modus operandi for short-term mission trips be ameliorated, and the trips’ positive potential be reinforced and enhanced? The suggestions below, framed as questions, seem congruent with experiential education thought generally. They seek to encourage reformation of the ongoing discourse around short-term missions.

- Would it not be advisable to spend more time in the preparatory phase focusing on, for example, the history, politics, and religious context of the trip’s destination, rather than giving attention solely or primarily to preparation for the trip’s “project”?
- Could not the return presentation be made more constructive by deliberately selecting photos that depict local Christians and others in positions of authority and power, rather than focusing exclusively on the short-term team members themselves?

Conclusion

These are simply suggestions. It has not been my intention to suggest that short-term missions are fatally flawed or irredeemable, theologically or pedagogically. The comparison to tourism may suggest I have a negative view of these trips, but as an anthropologist who encourages my students to travel and experience cultural difference, nothing could be further from the truth. In order, however, for STM trips to meet the goals of sending bodies and for them to be beneficial to the receiving communities, a minimal requirement is surely that the trips foster real connections with real places throughout the world.

Notes

2. This figure comes from the Global Issues Survey conducted by Robert Wuthnow. See Robert Wuthnow and Stephen Offutt, “Transnational Religious Connections,” *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 2 (2008): 218. Other researchers, however, have put the figure far higher, as Wuthnow’s data do not include high school students, nor do they necessarily track those who have participated through parachurch or college trips. Cf. Priest et al., “Researching the Short-Term Missions Movement.” See also A. Scott Moreau, “Short-Term Mission in the Context of Missions, Inc.,” in *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right!* ed. Robert J. Priest (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 2008), pp. 1–33.
10. The theory of linguistic practice as a structuring force of social life is most fully developed in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990), and anthropologists such as William Hanks, “Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice,” *American Ethnologist* 14 (1987): 668–92. Although I refer to and rely on the theory here, space constraints prevent a fuller explanation of these ideas.
Ignace Partui: Iroquois Evangelist to the Salish, ca. 1780–1837

John C. Mellis

It is perhaps amazing that Christianity has survived at all among the indigenous peoples of North America when one considers the pain, abuse, and broken promises brought by so-called Christian civilization over the past five hundred years. A prominent native leader once quipped, “We accepted Jesus but got the church!” Yet as native Christians and their respective churches struggle to find healing, there are surprising signs that the Good News of Jesus has not been rejected. Rather, the healing of past hurts is being sought from deep within Christian and traditional sources. In that search, the congruity between the Christian message and traditional teachings, which first attracted many First Nations of this continent to Christian faith, is being explored with renewed interest.

Ignace Partui exemplifies this natural, perhaps spontaneous, transmission of the Gospel among indigenous peoples of North America. Ignace was an Iroquois storyteller and voyageur whose fervent commitment to the Christian faith sparked the interest of an entire nation years before any European missionaries had ventured into the headwaters of the Missouri and Snake Rivers. Scattered references to him are found in diaries and journals that, when put together, tell quite a story.

Iroquois Voyageurs

Sometime around 1816, not long after European explorers (e.g., Lewis, Clarke, Fraser, and Thompson) first traversed the continent of North America, twenty-four Iroquois fur trappers came to settle among the Flathead Salish in the Bitterroot Valley of present-day southwestern Montana. These trappers, under the auspices of the North West Company, came from villages near Montreal. They were led by Ignace Partui, whose nickname La Mousse (Big Ignace) suggested something about his stature and supported his reputation for being both honest and gentle. Although little is known about his early life, he became known among the Salish for the wealth of stories he would recall from his childhood spent in the Jesuit village of Caughnawaga—stories about God, the beautiful ceremonies, and the black-robed teachers who taught him those stories.

The Flathead chief at that time, Tjozhitsay, had a reputation for kindness that extended even to his enemies. He welcomed the Iroquois and listened intently to all that Big Ignace said, often long into the night. Ignace’s references to black-robed teachers even echoed a number of Salish legends that anticipated their request for Christian instruction had been delivered.

The Search for Black Robes

Motivated by Ignace’s stories, the two tribes chose six people (three from each tribe) to make the arduous pilgrimage to St. Louis to try to make contact with the Black Robes. At the last minute another young Nez Percé man volunteered as well, enlarging the group to seven. Although the three Salish returned before reaching their destination, the other four members of the party arrived in St. Louis early that fall. Sadly, two of them died shortly after their arrival, and another died on the way home. The young man who had volunteered at the last minute was the only one to make it back to his tribe to recount the story. Nevertheless, the request for Christian instruction had been delivered.

The seed in fact fell on fertile soil—though not initially with the Jesuits. General William Clark, who had traveled through Salish territory in 1805 and 1806 with Meriwether Lewis, took a great interest in the delegation from the mountains. Despite the language barrier, he seemed to understand the spiritual nature of their quest and introduced them to both Catholics and Protestants in St. Louis. The two who died there did so in the care of Catholic priests at the cathedral. On the basis of their devotion to the crucifix during their illness, both were baptized and given full Christian burials. Fascinated by their presence and quest, Protestants published their story in the Christian Advocate (March 1, 1833) as a “Macedonian call,” which in turn sparked widespread interest.

During the next few years both tribes eagerly waited for a response. Evidence from missionary diaries suggests that Big Ignace and Chief Insula of the Salish both attended the Rendezvous in...
1834, where they met the Methodist missionaries Jason Lee and Daniel Lee (Jason’s nephew). The Lees, however, did not accept their invitation to accompany them home, despite assurances of an openness and desire to learn. The next year, at the Rendezvous in 1835, Chief Insula and an older shaman named Chalax met two Presbyterians, Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker. Although Whitman and Parker chose to settle further west among the Nez Percé, Insula and the other Flatheads joined the escort for them on their own way back home, at least as far as Pierre’s Hole, on the border of present-day Idaho and Wyoming.\(^8\)

Meanwhile Big Ignace made plans to take his two sons to St. Louis to be baptized—plans alluded to in his conversation with Jason Lee in 1834. The trio did make the trip in 1835, arriving on December 2 at the Jesuit seminary in Florissant, near St. Louis. In his journal Father Ferdinand Helias described Ignace as “very tall of stature and of grave, modest, and refined deportment.” He estimated Charles’s age as fourteen, and Francis Xavier’s as ten. Helias instructed the boys in French while Ignace translated for them into Salish. Ignace then knelt with them during their baptism, tears of joy and thanksgiving streaming down his face.\(^9\)

Following the ceremony Ignace shared his whole story. He told Helias about the seven tribes, with a combined population of six thousand, who asked him to bring a Black Robe to them. Twice he asked that the boys might stay at the college, and offered of six thousand, who asked him to bring a Black Robe to them. But nothing came of either request. After Twice he asked that the boys might stay at the college, and offered of six thousand, who asked him to bring a Black Robe to them. After

Nonetheless, Big Ignace decided to accompany Gray and Tjolzhitsay’s two sons on their trip back east. Two other Flatheads and a Nez Percé nicknamed “The Hat” went with them. Against the better judgment of others, Gray decided not to wait for the caravan that was returning to St. Louis for supplies. Instead, he pressed on ahead with his own little group. At Fort Laramie he was warned to wait, since some hostile tribes had recently killed a man nearby. Gray would not listen and went ahead. Just a few days out, at a place called Ash Hollow, he asked two of his companions to investigate what looked like buffalo. Instead of buffalo, however, they found a Sioux warrior who began circling them on his horse, a signal to his companions, who quickly arrived at full gallop. The warrior ordered Gray’s group to accompany them to their village. Gray refused, and he and “The Hat” broke for the river, followed by the others. Although they all made it across, so did the warriors, and, once on the other side, Gray’s horse was shot from under him.\(^11\)

As Ignace and the others prepared to make a stand, Gray set his rifle aside and walked forward to talk. The warriors kept firing, which forced him to retreat. Suddenly, a Canadian trader traveling with the Sioux appeared. He asked how many whites were in the party. Gray answered “three” and was told that the three should step forward immediately or all would be killed. Gray asked to meet the trader halfway and told Ignace and the two whites to accompany him while the rest stayed back. The two followed Gray, but Ignace refused to leave his comrades, especially the sons of Chief Tjolzhitsay. Then, while Gray and the trader were still talking, the warriors suddenly rushed past them toward Ignace and his companions, who defended themselves as best they could. The small band killed three of the Sioux warriors, but soon Ignace, “The Hat,” and all the Flatheads, including the chief’s two sons, lay dying in the prairie grass.\(^12\)

**The Search Continues**

As a result, William Gray never did establish a mission among the Flatheads, nor did he ever quite live down the reputation he acquired for abandoning those entrusted to his care. Chief Tjolzhitsay, together with the whole tribe, mourned the death of his two sons and of Old Ignace, who had been so eager to have black-robed teachers. Despite the loss of his sons and his friend Ignace, Tjolzhitsay, a deeply spiritual man and no stranger to hardship, enlisted help from the remaining Iroquois as he continued his quest for the Black Robes, unwavering in his desire for their teaching that Ignace’s stories had awakened in him.

Of the original twenty-four Iroquois who moved west, only four remained among the Flathead. In the spring of 1839, two of them, Pierre Gauché (“Left-Handed Peter”) and Le Jeune Ignace (“Young Ignace”), volunteered for yet another mission to request a black-robed teacher.\(^13\) From the Rendezvous, they accompanied the fur traders down the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. Near Council Bluffs (on the Missouri River, in western Iowa) they visited the Jesuits living among the Potawatomis. There they met Father Pierre De Smet, who listened intently to their story and gave them letters to present to his superiors in St. Louis. In his diary he wrote, “I have never seen any [tribes] so fervent in religion. By their instructions and examples they have given all that nation a great desire to have themselves baptized.”\(^14\) A month later, when Pierre and Young Ignace were in St. Louis,
The Iroquois fur trader and storyteller played a pivotal role in introducing the Salish people to the Christian faith.

settlement in Westport. There Ignace spent the winter waiting for the Black Robe’s promised arrival and the departure of the spring caravan to the mountains. Pierre, however, immediately started for home, hoping to reach the tribe in time to arrange a welcome for Young Ignace and the Black Robe at the summer Rendezvous on the Green River.

A Joyful Welcome

By the time Pierre arrived home in the Bitterroot Valley, it was too late to arrange for the entire camp to meet the Black Robe at the Rendezvous. But Chief Tjolzhitsay sent ten warriors to meet him and escort him back to Pierre’s Hole for a proper welcome. Meanwhile, Father De Smet met Ignace in Westport as promised and traveled west with him in the caravan. At the Rendezvous of 1840, the warriors greeted De Smet with tears of joy and gratitude, eagerly recounting how miraculously they had been delivered during a five-day battle with two hundred Blackfoot warriors. De Smet responded with prayers of thanksgiving and protection.16

A week later he arrived at the summer camp in Pierre’s Hole to another enthusiastic welcome. Hardly was his tent in place before men, women, and children began arriving to shake his hand. Elders wept and children leaped with excitement as he was led to the chief’s tent. All grew quiet as Tjolzhitzay spoke:

Black Robe, you are welcome in my nation. Today Kyleneeyou has fulfilled our wishes. Our hearts are big, for our great desire is gratified. . . . We have several times sent our people to the great Black Robe at St. Louis that he might send us a priest to speak with us. Speak, Black Robe, we will follow the words of your mouth.17

For the next month De Smet accompanied the Flathead as they moved north on their annual buffalo hunt. Each time they camped, he called them together, four times a day, for prayer and instruction. Before leaving he baptized nearly six hundred people, including the two elderly chiefs. The aging shaman Chalax spoke before being baptized:

When I was young, and even as I became old, I was plunged in profound ignorance of good and evil, and in that period I must no doubt have displeased Kaikolinzoetin; I sincerely implore pardon of him.18

Chalax was baptized “Peter,” and Tjolzhitsay, “Paul.”

When the time came for De Smet to return, three chiefs and seventeen select warriors escorted him through Blackfoot country to meet the caravan on the Yellowstone River. Outside his tent, in the early morning light, De Smet led them once more in the morning prayers, urging them to serve Kaikolinzoetin faithfully. Chief Tjolzhitsay then rose to his feet and offered a heart-felt farewell:

Black Robe, may Kaikolinzoetin accompany you in your long and dangerous journey. We will pray evening and morning that you may arrive safe among your brothers at St. Louis. We will continue to pray until you return. . . . When the snows disappear from the valleys, after the winter, when the grass begins to be green again, our hearts, so sad at present, will begin to rejoice. As the grass grows higher, our joy will become greater; but when the flowers appear, we will set out to come and meet you. Farewell.19

The following year (1841) De Smet returned with five Jesuit companions. Four years after Ignace Partui’s death his dream was fulfilled. His adopted family the Flatheads now had Black Robes living among them. Not only were Ignace’s sons baptized, but many others as well—nearly 200 on the feast of St. Francis Xavier (December 3, 1841), including Chief Insula, who was named “Michael” for his brave and gentle spirit. On Christmas Day 150 more were baptized. Within that week, the great chief and shaman Chalax, “Peter,” received last rites, becoming the first Flathead to receive Communiation. As he requested, he was wrapped in the red prayer flag he raised each Sunday and was buried at the foot of a large cross standing on the site chosen for the new church, St. Mary’s.

Unless a Seed Fall to the Earth . . .

For five years the Flathead made great strides incorporating both the Gospel and the Black Robes into the life of their tribe. By 1846 a number of other Salish tribes had also embraced the Good News brought by the Black Robes. Even some Blackfoot tribes responded by asking for their own Black Robe. But just when things seemed to be going so well, they began to fall apart.

Settlers and traders were now pouring into the area, claiming land and bringing strange new diseases and other adverse influences, including new access to vices that undermined the moral fiber of the culture. Jesuit missionaries arriving later refused to accompany the Flathead on their extended hunting expeditions. Upset with the inevitable skirmishes with other tribes who competed with the Salish for a dwindling supply of buffalo, these missionaries tried to advocate a more sedentary (and “civilized”) agricultural life for the Flathead. Also, if the Black Robes were to have joined the hunt, the tribe members in the village would have been left without their moral and religious support for significant periods of time. And without warriors in the village, those who remained were vulnerable to enemy raids. The Flathead elders, especially one named Victor, remained loyal to the Black Robes, but he found himself increasingly alienated from a younger generation of leaders. Finally in 1850, following some devastating enemy raids, the Jesuits decided to abandon what they had established as the St. Mary’s Mission.20

Although the seed planted among the Flathead seemed to die, it continues to live, there and throughout the Salish nation. The Coeur d’Alene tribe still hosts an annual pilgrimage on August 15—the Feast of St. Mary—at the Cataldo Mission to celebrate their cultural heritage, their Christian faith, and, as foretold in their legends, the arrival of “a black-robed man with crossed sticks” who would bring “news of . . . a savior of the world.”21 Today we rightly celebrate the lives of missionaries like Father De Smet and the other Jesuits who generously responded to the
Salish request. But in many respects it was their privilege to reap the harvest already sown by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of Chief Tjolzhitsay and his people through Old Ignace.

For the Salish people, the Iroquois fur trader and storyteller Ignace Partui played a pivotal role in introducing them to the Christian faith and to the black-robed teachers of whom their ancient legends spoke. In the process Ignace traveled half a continent to assure that his own sons were baptized. And he gave his life trying to protect the lives of Chief Tjolzhitsay’s sons. No doubt the time has come to honor Ignace Partui, not only as an evangelist to the Salish, but as one who lived and proclaimed the faith that drew him as a child and that he loved as an adult.

Notes
3. In 1839 two of the Iroquois, nicknamed Le Jeune Ignace (“Young Ignace”) and Pierre Gauché (“Left-Handed Peter”), told Bishop Rosati of St. Louis that twenty-four of them had settled with the Flathead Salish around 1816, led by Ignace La Mousse (“Big Ignace”) (John Rothensteiner, “The Flat-Head and Nez Pece Delegation to St. Louis, 1831–1839,” St. Louis Catholic Historical Review 2 [1920]: 188).
5. For further reference to these legends about Circling Raven (Coeur d’Alene) and Shining Shirt (Flathead), see Mellis, “Coyote People,” pp. 53–59.
6. According to Mengarini the Flatheads referred to white people as saiapi (Recollections, p. 173). Francis Haines thought that saidpi was likely a variation on the Nez Percé word sayappu, meaning “crowned ones” or “people with hats” (The Nez Percés: Tribesmen of the Columbia Plateau [Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1955], p. 27).
12. Gray seems to have included Ignace among the whites in his count. One later report suggests that the Sioux would have spared the group had they known they were Flatheads (Mellis, “Coyote People,” pp. 130–31).
13. Le Jeune Ignace is clearly a different person from Ignace Partui, who following his death became known as Le Vieux (“Old”) Ignace. Both of them were among the twenty-four Iroquois who settled among the Salish, making them somewhat contemporary, though the nicknames were likely used to distinguish them from each other, perhaps also indicating Partui as the elder of the two.
17. These events and the speech are based on three different accounts by De Smet, two in Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, 1:223–24, 263, and one in E. Laveille, The Life of Father De Smet, S.J. (1801–1873), trans. Marian Lindsay (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1915), p. 108.
18. Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, 1:226. The addition in brackets is from Laveille, Life, p. 110.
20. For further analysis of the circumstances leading to the closing of St. Mary’s, see Mellis, “Coyote People,” pp. 200–209. For current information on the historic St. Mary’s Mission, see www.saintmarysmission.org/FatherDeSmet.html.
Book Reviews


The Edinburgh missionary conference of 1910 has achieved iconic status in Protestant historical consciousness. It provides a unique snapshot of the modern European and American missionary movement at the height of its power and self-confidence. As the centenary approaches, it is appropriate that Brian Stanley, director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at Edinburgh University, should have written this account of the origins, proceedings, and impact of Edinburgh 1910. It is a magnificent labor of love, beautifully written, based on painstaking research in archives scattered throughout North America and Europe, and replete with acute observation and analysis.

Given the centrality of this event in the birth of the modern ecumenical movement, Stanley notes how ironic it is that questions of faith and order were rigorously excluded from the agenda of the actual conference. This was essential to secure Anglo-Catholic participation. Joe Oldham, the organizing secretary, was successful in gaining the wholehearted and positive participation of such Anglican High Churchmen as Bishop Charles Gore and Walter Frere. But there was a price to pay: not only the formal exclusion of questions of church unity, but the actual exclusion of Protestant mission work in South America and the division of the world conceptually into “Christian lands” (largely European) and “the mission field” (all the rest).

One of the great values of Stanley’s work is to show how, even in 1910, this triumphalist imaginaire was already collapsing. Notoriously, Edinburgh 1910 was a conference of “foreign” missionaries; indigenous Christians were regarded by cash-strapped mission societies as a “dubious and expensive luxury” (p. 104). Nevertheless, eighteen delegates from Asia (China, Japan, Korea, and India) did attend. One of the most fascinating sections of the book consists of the biographies of these men—the Korean delegate, Yuin Ch’Iho, for example, was subsequently arrested for his participation in the Christian nationalist movement that opposed the Japanese occupation of his country. Stanley magnificently shows the profound importance, theologically and practically, of the contribution of these fascinating and outstanding Christian statesmen, theologians, pastors, and educators.

Africa was much talked about at the conference, but only one delegate from that continent, Christian Casely-Hayford, actually attended (though there were some African Americans). Africa, according to the dominant racial categorization, was deemed to be at a “lower” stage of development than the civilizations of Asia. But Stanley’s book rightly shows how the time-bound goals and aspirations of the missionary movement were already being redirected and subverted, even as they were celebrated in Edinburgh.

This book is essential reading for all who, one hundred years later, wish to understand the worldwide scope and mission of contemporary Christianity.

—Kevin Ward

Kevin Ward is Senior Lecturer of African Religious Studies in the University of Leeds. He is a trustee of the Church Missionary Society and a member of the General Synod of the Church of England. For sixteen years he was a CMS mission partner in Uganda.


This latest entry in Blackwell’s Brief Histories of Religions Series is a masterful survey of mission in Christian history from the very origins of the religion to the present. The depth and breadth of scholarship that underpin this work are worn lightly and never intrude on the narrative. This study provides an excellent starting point for further exploration of the main themes and controversies surrounding the missionary enterprise. It should be required reading for any undergraduate course on Christianity or world religions.

Most impressively for a survey text, Robert has developed a clear and compelling thesis: that mission history is not a peripheral subject but central to the history and theology of Christianity because Christianity is a “sending” religion in fulfillment of Christ’s final command to “make disciples of all nations.” Hence mission was at the core of the formation of Christianity as a religion distinct from the Judaism from which it sprang. Even more important, Robert argues that it was the actual history of missions from the fifteenth century onward that made it possible for Christianity to evolve from a Mediterranean/West Asian and European religion into a genuinely global and multicultural religion of the twenty-first century, in which the South is dominant, and yesterday’s converts are today’s missionaries. Although she discusses the many shortcomings and critiques of Christian missions, especially its role within the structures of a brutal European colonial and imperial system, hers is fundamentally a sympathetic account. She sees postcolonial discourse as providing “a new and exciting theoretical space in which to re-evaluate” missions (p. 96). She finds the concept of “hybridity” especially useful to move beyond seeing missionaries and converts as agents of colonialism instead of as the bridges to the more “indigenous” and “intercultural” world Christianity of today. This approach, which confuses means with ends, will inevitably provide for lively debate.

The study is divided into two parts: the survey history and three thematic chapters. The themes are mission and politics/empire, women in missions, and conversion and Christian community. Her theses are most fully developed in the thematic part, and throughout she draws most heavily from her expertise on Africa. While understandable, that choice
is sometimes limiting. For example, as a balance to the discussion of missionaries as agents of imperialism, she describes their role in the antislavery campaign. Inclusion of the more complex and tortured history of China missionaries and the opium trade might have provided a more nuanced picture. Yet in itself this example shows how this text can be most fruitfully used to teach a topic that remains contested.

—Margo S. Gewurtz

Margo S. Gewurtz is Professor Emerita of Humanities, York University, Toronto. She has published numerous essays on Canadian missionaries in China and their Chinese coworkers.

Transformation After Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective.


Tizon is assistant professor of evangelism and holistic ministry at Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, and director of Word and Deed Network. His book discusses the understanding and practice of Christian mission promulgated by a group of evangelicals who coalesced during the 1970s and early 1980s and became enormously influential in the decades that followed. The argument at Lausanne and afterward about the meaning, nature, and breadth of Christian mission has been largely successful, something that was not a foregone conclusion at the time.

There are heroes to Tizon’s story. Significantly, they came largely from places thought in the mid-twentieth century to be on the margins. The villains on stage are few. Tizon provides informed interpretation of pivotal conferences, organizations, internal communications, proclamations, and confrontations that occurred along the path.

Transformation in this account is multivalent. It has to do with mission that transforms the bearers of the missionary message, as well as those to whom it is directed. And it involves transforming truncated conceptions of mission. Not at least, it concerns the founding of the journal Transformation and related entities as vehicles for expressing the new perspective.

By the time Tizon comes to present the Philippine context, where he served for a decade as a missionary in the 1990s, he has already established a pattern of interflow between the local and the global. As René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Tito Paredes, and many others brought understandings of

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the Gospel nurtured in local settings to global conventions and shared them, and as they took enriched perspectives back to be put into practice in their own locales, only to return to other regional and global convocations with an understanding of the Gospel and mission enlarged and deepened by further experience at the local level, so did Philippine mission leaders. In illustrating as it does the way that mission as transformation is grounded in local experience, even while being enriched through global reflection and discernment, the Philippine account integrates and anchors the argument of the work.

Transformation After Lausanne is a substantive study of a significant theme and movement. I strongly recommend it.

—Dwight P. Baker


This is an exceptional book for at least two reasons. First, it succeeds in summarizing the entire sweep of Buddhism’s historical development. The story begins in India (Nepal) with Siddharta Gautama (the Buddha) and spreads to Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Mongolia, Europe, and the West. Second, the authors manage to give readers an accurate summary of basic Buddhist teachings: the Four Noble Truths, then Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, and Vajrayana. It is especially strong in summarizing what Buddhism has become, and is becoming, in the West.

For a short book to be able to summarize the history and teachings of a world religion as complex as Buddhism is a remarkable accomplishment. The approach Yandell and Netland take is especially satisfying for its Christian audience because this is what Christians value most in their own tradition—history and doctrine. Buddhists themselves perhaps would consider practice—especially meditation—to be a more important focus. But this book, as the title indicates, is a Christian exploration and appraisal of Buddhism.

Which brings us to the most remarkable contribution of this introduction to Buddhism. In the genre of introductory books on Buddhism, one can find scores of religious studies books that succeed to one degree or another in summarizing the buddhadharma. And one can find quite a large number of missional books aimed at critiquing Buddhism from a Christian point of view—and even suggesting ways a Christian might talk about his or her faith to a Buddhist. This book is rare in that it manages to do both and do both well. It is an accurate, fair, respectful presentation of Buddhism. But the authors both sincerely believe that Christianity is the better religion. They say that also, fairly and accurately, and in a way that does not diminish the picture painted of Buddhism. That is to say, this is an honest book all the way around. Highly recommended.

—Terry C. Muck


“What, in fact, has been the American role in creating the new shape of world Christianity and what is now the relation of American Christianity to world Christianity?” (p. 67). These are the questions that Mark A. Noll, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, considers in his insightful and provocative
The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith. Noll’s thesis is straightforward: recent transformations in Christianity around the world are not the result of direct American influence. Rather, global Christianity increasingly resembles American Christianity because much of the world “is coming more and more to look like America” (p. 189).

While acknowledging that American military, monetary, and missionary efforts have had substantial effects on the development of global faith, Noll insists that the *history* of American Christianity is far more significant for understanding how Christianity is taking shape in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These regions, Noll argues, are undergoing social and cultural changes similar to those that marked American experience during the nineteenth century. As globalization continues to transform conditions in the non-Western world, Christians in nations like India, South Korea, and Brazil are embracing forms of the faith that reflect the new realities of their increasingly competitive, market-oriented, and modernizing societies. Just as nineteenth-century Americans fashioned a Christianity that fit with the individualistic, entrepreneurial, and egalitarian spirit of the fledgling United States, so too are Christians in the Majority World stressing the importance of personal choice, innovation, and voluntarism.

Taking this argument a step further, Noll suggests that churches (and missionary programs) that adopt and promote the “voluntary pattern”—becoming self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing—are more likely to flourish than those that assume a necessary link between church and state.

Noll’s cogent study carefully nuances interpretations of missions history that condemn or celebrate American influence abroad, presenting a more complex picture of the emergence and development of contemporary world Christianity.

—Heather D. Curtis

*Heather D. Curtis is Assistant Professor of Religion at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.*

The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity.


The author of this book, professor emeritus of history of religions at Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, is now teaching at Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois.

Christians and Muslims have historically differed on the question of the nature of Jesus’ mission and his death. Evidence for this disagreement appears in the Qur’an and in the earliest debates between them from the ninth century. Understandably, a lot has been written on this subject. Christian positions on these
points have shifted significantly over the years from absolute disagreement to attempts to reconcile the Qur’anic position with the Christian. In the latter case, the differences have been attributed to the intervening history of Muslim-Christian relations. Recognizing the apparent impossibility of bridging the gap between the different narratives and purposes of the Qur’an and the Bible, and those of Muslims and Christians, there has also been an attempt simply to avoid these issues altogether. As intractable questions, they are seen to obstruct the allegedly higher purposes of reconciliation and pragmatic joint engagement in society.

This book is forceful in challenging this activist view and draws readers into a substantial evaluation of the fundamental differences. First, though, it considers the equally substantial common grounds, which include our shared notions of God, Scriptures, Jesus, and apostles and prophets (pp. 1–14). It then considers the verses in the Qur’an that apparently deny crucifixion (pp. 15–31), reexplores these questions in the classical and modern commentaries and the traditions (pp. 32–78), considers the question of whether someone else was crucified in place of Jesus (pp. 79–94), and reviews early marginal Christian beliefs about these questions (pp. 95–114) before proceeding to closely examine the relevant New Testament references that tell us about Jesus’ “final days” (pp. 130ff.).

This is a valuable resource for those who wish to revisit the impasse between Christians and Muslims over the questions of Jesus’ “mission and death.” Its value lies in honestly acknowledging that these differences exist and in exploring them squarely across the foundational sources of the Muslim-Christian traditions. The book was published under the Faith Meets Faith series of Orbis, which seeks to “promote inter-religious dialogue.” I do not doubt its potential for achieving this goal on a subject close to the heart of both Christianity and Islam.

—David Emmanuel Singh

David Emmanuel Singh is Research Tutor at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford.

**A History of Christianity in Indonesia.**


Historians and missiologists will want to get this superb single-volume history of Christianity in Indonesia. Guided by the editorial oversight of the doyens of Christianity in Indonesia, Jan Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, this volume, which appears in Brill’s Studies in Christian Mission series, is the first English summary of the history of Christianity in Indonesia. Making accessible for the first time a massive amount of archival and other documentary data for an English-speaking readership, the history of Reformed, Lutheran, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches is illuminated through Dutch and Indonesian scholars of the region.

Aiming to provide an “encyclopedic view of the varied history of Christians in Indonesia” (p. viii), the book is organized into three parts that combine broad historical coverage with thematic depth: (1) historical presentation, up to 1800, of the precolonial period, during which Christianity and Islam entered the archipelago; (2) focus on the “most important” Christian areas, including political, economic, and social developments; and (3) a discussion of some of the more salient aspects of Christian life, such as theological developments, ecumenical opportunities and obstacles, and Christian art and media. The book’s massive sweep concludes with the contemporary period, marked by proliferation of expressions of Islam, vigorous growth of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, and increasingly complex relationship between race, religion, and nation making.

Along the way, readers are treated to a discussion of mission methods, theology of mission, ecumenism, tension both within and between missions, pastoral-care issues, initiatives of theological training, and Christian-Muslim relations. Newcomers to the history of Christianity in Indonesia will be introduced to the more widely recognized missionaries to the region, including such notables as Frank Cooley, Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen, Albert Kruyt, Hendrik Kraemer, Carl Ottow, and Johann Geissler. These and other missionaries became experts in linguistics, Bible translation, and ethnology. Readers more familiar with Christianity in Indonesia will learn of the numerous local missionaries and church leaders who carried the weight of mission and evangelism throughout the archipelago, contending with the cultural, religious,
social, and legal contexts that helped give rise to the diversity of Christian churches and movements throughout the nation.

Some editorial oversights are understandable, given the large size of the book. Also, the designation “inner islands” and “outer islands” (e.g., p. 159) to describe the massive archipelagic nation is unnecessary and unhelpful, since such labels too easily turn Java into the cultural and religious fountainhead of the nation, making “outer islands” (e.g., Maluku, Papua) subsidiaries of nonlocal economic, cultural, and religious lifeways. Unfortunately, the book contains only a few photographs.

A History of Christianity in Indonesia makes a major contribution to the field of mission studies and missiology. It is highly recommended for libraries, faculty, and college and university students studying Christian mission, Asian history, comparative missiology, or colonial studies. The book’s dozen regional histories, along with impressive thematic chapters, such as “Theological Thinking by Indonesian Christians, 1850–2000,” give good reason for paying the high price.

—Charles E. Farhadian

Charles E. Farhadian is Associate Professor of World Religions and Christian Mission at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California. He has written Christianity, Islam, and Nationalism in Indonesia (Routledge, 2005) and The Testimony Project: Papua (Dewati Press, 2007).


As Heike Liebau demonstrates, the 140-year career of the Danish-Halle mission in Tranquebar in South India cannot be properly understood without considering the lives and contributions of workers native to the country. Since these workers are largely present only in the background of communications between European missionaries and their supervisors, Liebau has had to embark on a textual marathon, reading about these Indian intermediaries through the eyes of their employers. In several archives in Europe and India, these stories are complemented by Tamil or Telugu palm-leaf manuscripts left by Indians themselves, many of which have been found in German archives.

After an Indocentric glance at the history of the period (which included several disruptive wars and famines) and a briefer look at the Tranquebar mission in this period (including standard missionary biographies), Liebau develops her real story—namely, that Tamil workers played an important role from the very beginning. They helped Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and others learn Tamil and translate documents, including the Bible. They preached, instructed far-flung converts, ran schools, and negotiated with local rulers. The mission also employed Tamil women in many more diverse roles than were open to European women in the mission.

Liebau’s greatest achievement lies in her penetrating and sensitive treatment of Tamil leaders. Acknowledging the potential for abuse, that of (she quotes another historian here) “kidnapping the native as symbol and object of European imagination,” she notes, by way of profiles of several individual nationals, that the “full brutality” of such accusations “does not apply to the early Tranquebar mission” (p. 91; my translation). To the

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— Joseph D. Small

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contrary, these indigenous workers, especially during the 1740s, appear as true missionaries, fully equal to their European coworkers. Several were highly educated and operated with substantial independence. Furthermore, in gaining access to hinterland cities, they off-limits to the Europeans, as well as brokering relationships between and among Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities, they were missionary pioneers themselves.

Liebau has gone beyond merely introducing unknown missionary leaders: she is correcting the historical record. Several of the Tamil men and women introduced here were fully competent in working with Sanskrit, Greek, and Hebrew texts, in addition to several European and Indian languages. As the same cannot be said for many scholars who could put Liebau’s impressive research to great use, this volume truly needs to be translated into English.

—Paul Grant

Paul Grant is a graduate student in the Department of History, University of Wisconsin–Madison. He has previously worked in the Missions Department of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA. He is the author of Blessed Are the Uncool (InterVarsity Press, 2007).


The origins of this book lie in Huang’s own experience. He is at once a Lutheran and a Confucian. How can a self-cultivating Confucian be a Lutheran Christian? By comparing Lutheran and Christian ideas of salvation, Huang hopes to answer the question both for himself and for Chinese culture as a whole.

His argument is long and thorough, but the main point is straightforward. The ideas of Shangdi (Sovereign on High) and Tian (Heaven), which appear in the Chinese classics, are at least potentially monotheistic. By the time Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci arrived in China in the 1580s, however, Confucianism had become an impersonal monism. Heaven and earth were made of the same stuff; it was possible, by disciplined self-cultivation, for anyone to become a junzi, a superior person. Christianity, in contrast, teaches that there is a major breach between God and humanity, one that can be crossed only by God’s intervention in Jesus Christ. Only grace can create a superior person.

This ontological difference is serious, but Huang sees reason for hope. On the one hand, Christians were and are often disinterested gentlemen who take the Chinese classics seriously, who argue rationally, and who, in some cases, follow the Thomistic dictum that grace does not destroy nature but completes it. On the other hand, modern Confucians are inclined to take the classical ideas of Shangdi and Tian more seriously than did their predecessors.

Huang has made a useful contribution to interfaith conversations. Confucian-Christian dialogue is doubtless a good idea—if indeed there are still a significant number of Confucians around. The imperial examinations were abolished over a century ago, however, and since then, generations of Chinese have been to school with the Enlightenment. Huang’s thesis is rewarding reading, but one wonders how many people riding the streetcars of Shanghai today ever think about monism and dualism.

—Geoff Johnston

Geoff Johnston, a retired professor, taught almost twenty years at the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

Migration and Christian Identity in Congo (DRC).


This study shows how the Christian identity of a minority church in northeastern Congo has contributed to the construction of other social and cultural identities and has in turn been shaped by them. It carefully follows a century-long process, beginning with the foundation in 1896 by Apolo Kivebulaya, a Ganda mission-ary, of the mother church of the present Église anglicane du Congo. Now based in Cambridge, Emma Wild-Wood has long familiarity with a region whose history has always been that of a crossroads between ecological milieus, socioeconomic and political systems, and linguistic and
ethnic cultures: suffice it to note that we are here at a point of confluence not only of different languages but also of three unrelated linguistic groups. Today, across three political boundaries, people are still in constant flux. The decision to make the world of migration the locus of her research was thus appropriate, and her book deservedly finds its place in the Brill series “Studies of Religion in Africa.”

Resting upon a massive collection of mostly Protestant local sources, oral and written, this study is organized along two guidelines. One, chronological, follows the evolution of an Anglican identity, born in an offshoot of the Buganda church in Congo and evolving as members of the community moved through a succession of westward migrations, adapting on the way to changing contexts, up to the dramatic crises of today and the development of hybrid forms of popular Christianity. As a second guideline, the narrative follows the changing tensions and combinations between two poles, referring respectively to hierarchy and order, and to progress and joy, all felt by Anglican members to define their church. Max Weber is not cited, but we are close to his distinction between the ideal representations of institution and charisma shared by the adherents of a religious movement.

Though repetitive at times, the present study is presented with subtlety, and it carries conviction. Elsewhere, however, Wild-Wood has shown awareness that this model does not fully come to grips with the unleashing of all-round violence, which now casts a shadow over African Christianity. Though repetitive at times, the present study is presented with subtlety, and it carries conviction. Elsewhere, however, Wild-Wood has shown awareness that this model does not fully come to grips with the unleashing of all-round violence, which now casts a shadow upon Christian identities in the region. Demonstrating that both African-initiated and missionary churches share local and global histories, not only does this original book take us far from the “colonial vs. local” binary form that has marred the study of African Christianity, but it also invites us to wish for a history of Christianity that would integrate Catholic, Protestant, and “Independent” narratives.

—Jean-Luc Vellut

Jean-Luc Vellut is professor emeritus at the Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium).

Women Religious Leaders in Japan’s Christian Century, 1549–1650.


This extraordinary book seeks to demonstrate that women in Japan from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century played a leadership role, not only in already established religious movements, but also in Christianity. The writer, a self-proclaimed feminist historian who teaches church history at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, has consulted primary and secondary materials in a variety of languages, including Portuguese, Latin, and Japanese. Her dedication to her subject is beyond doubt.

There is more that I would like to say about the book itself, much of it positive. Given the number of words I am allowed, however, I must concentrate on urging caution to all readers who lack a broader knowledge of the history of Japan, including the role of Christianity, in this period. Regrettably, the writer is so determined to emphasize the role of female religious leaders that she reads more into the evidence than is actually there and neglects the wider historical picture.

The clearest example of both these tendencies is her amazing claim that “the shift in politico-religious ideology in...
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the first half of the seventeenth century [toward Neo-Confucianism] and Japan’s total rejection of Christianity was [sic] caused largely by the unprecedented apostolate of Kirishitan [Roman Catholic] women” (p. 289). This assertion is unsupported by any direct evidence or by any consideration of the work of scholars such as Ronald Toby (in English) or Ohashi Yukihiro, Murai Sanae, and Takase Koichiro (in Japanese) on Tokugawa policy regarding either religion or contacts with the outside world. There are other cases of what might be called wishful speculation (on pp. 64–66, 123–25, 206), inaccuracies regarding basic dates and other matters (pp. 75, 242, 255, 264, 346, etc.), and (astonishingly) no mention of the possible appeal to women of Catholic belief in the Virgin Mary, despite her clear importance in the beliefs of underground Christian communities.

—Helen Ballhatchet

Helen Ballhatchet, who is British, is Professor in the Faculty of Economics, Keio University, Tokyo.


China’s Christian Colleges is the product of a project entitled “The American Context of China’s Christian Colleges,” funded by the Henry Luce Foundation. The essays were presented at a conference in 2003 and then were competently edited for publication. All of the essays demonstrate extensive research in a number of archives, primarily in the United States.

In the 1960s a number of “celebratory” histories were written about the thirteen Protestant and three Catholic colleges in China. The participants in the present volume were committed to moving beyond such essays to “probe the cross-cultural phenomenon represented by these colleges.” The topics of the thirteen chapters range from the personal motivations of the 33,726 volunteers in the Student Volunteer Movement between 1893 and 1920 to the cross-cultural sources of the architecture of the colleges, the relations between the Seven Sisters (women’s colleges in the northeast United States) and China from 1900 to 1950, Anglo-American law as taught at Soochow University, the teaching of civic duty at the colleges, the plans for the colleges after the conclusion of World War II, and many others. Two essays are devoted not to China but to Japan and Turkey.
The postface describes the evolving of international scholarship on China’s Christian colleges. For some years the scholarship devoted to the colleges has been more extensive in China than in the United States. The essays produced by this project, however, make clear that U.S. scholarship on this topic is beginning to match that in China.

The volume is dedicated to Jessie Lutz, who pioneered the exploration of the cross-cultural dynamics of the colleges with her publication *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850 to 1950* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1971). The diverse essays in this volume represent an excellent contribution to the ongoing study of their cross-cultural impact, both in China and in the United States.

—Marvin D. Hoff

Marvin D. Hoff retired in December 2006 after serving for twenty-nine years as Executive Director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia.

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**Long Road to Obsolescence: A North American Mission to Brazil.**


Frank Arnold, the last general secretary of the Presbyterian Mission in Brazil, served with his wife, Hope, for thirty-three years as Presbyterian mission workers. He offers a case study of the mission structures of Presbyterian denominations from the United States over a period of 126 years, beginning with the arrival of Ashbel Green Simonton on August 12, 1859, until the formal dissolution of the mission on December 31, 1985. It is a valuable, concise account.

In his book Arnold wishes to raise critical missiological, cross-cultural questions about structures and relationships: How does one define maturity? Was the obsolescence of foreign mission structures truly an intentional goal of the missionaries? Was an autonomous parallel structure the right option over against (partial) integration? Could and should the dissolution have happened sooner? He even tackles the issue of manifest destiny and the degree to which it affected the pioneer missionaries.

Arnold’s answers are based on primary documents and personal participation in the final negotiations of the dismantling of the mission structures, as well as secondary documents. I laud my colleague for wrestling with these issues with openness and transparency and for admitting the influence of the cultural baggage of manifest destiny. Personally, I believe that it subtly continued to be present throughout the 126 years of the mission, especially seen in the resistance to more integration. I agree that, in the light of hindsight and of new missiological perspectives, Arnold’s study reveals clear mistakes made and lessons to be learned.

This book is a treasure for all of us whose stories are intertwined with the history of Brazilian Presbyterianism. It elucidates the dynamics and tensions of the former “northern” and “southern” streams and the reunited PC(USA) and of the three Presbyterian denominations in Brazil with whom we have worked. Furthermore, it shows how partnerships have now replaced parallel structures as a way of doing mission together.

—Sherron K. George

Sherron K. George is Liaison and Theological Education Consultant for South America for the Presbyterian Church (USA). She has resided in Brazil as a mission worker since 1972.

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Viewing the Atonement Through a New Lens. Dr. Mark Baker, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California, uses experience in a Tegucigalpa barrio as a lens to help missionaries view the atonement with new eyes.

January 18–22

January 25–29
Ethnicity as Gift and Barrier: Human Identity and Christian Mission. Dr. Tite Tiénou, dean, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, works from first-hand experience in Africa to identify the “tribal” issues faced by the global church in mission. Cosponsored by Black Rock Congregational Church (Fairfield, Connecticut).

February 22–26
Digital Video and Global Christianity. Dr. James M. Ault, James Ault Productions, Northampton, Massachusetts, in a practical workshop, covers how to use digital video to portray the life of faith in community.

March 1–5
Christian Faith and the Muslim World. Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali, Martin Luther King Jr. professor for justice and Christian community, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, examines contemporary Christian-Muslim tensions in the light of Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence. Cosponsored by First Presbyterian Church (New Haven).

March 15–19
Gender and Power in African Christianity. Dr. Philomena Njeri Mwaura, senior lecturer in philosophy and religious studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya, and OMSC senior mission scholar in residence, will draw on the writings of African women theologians to discuss key themes in African Christianity—for example, the Bible, women’s experience of the church, African culture, Christology, power, and decision making. Cosponsored by United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries.

March 22–26
Whole Gospel, Whole World, Whole Person. Dr. F. Albert “Al” Tizon, Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, provides an overview of the history, theology, and spirituality of the holistic missionary movement among evangelicals since Lausanne 1974. Participants will become better equipped to engage their own contexts with the full implications of the Gospel. Cosponsored by Evangelical Covenant Department of World Mission.

April 13–16
Incarcational Mission in a Troubled World. Dr. Jonathan J. Bonk, OMSC’s executive director, examines theological and ethical implications of violence, poverty, migration, and religion as contexts for Christian life and witness. Cosponsored by Park Street Church (Boston) and Wycliffe International. Four morning sessions. $145

April 19–23
Models of Leadership in Mission. Rev. George Kovoor, Trinity College, Bristol, United Kingdom, brings wide ecclesiastical and international experience to evaluation of differing models of leadership for mission. Cosponsored by Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod World Mission, and Wycliffe International.

April 26–30
Music and Mission. Dr. James Krabill, Mennonite Mission Network, builds upon insights from musicology and two decades of missionary experience in West Africa to unfold the dynamic role of music in mission. Cosponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Mission Network.

May 3–7

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Camara, Dom Helder.  
*Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings. Selected, with an Introduction by Francis McDonagh.*  

Darch, John H.  

Gallagher, Robert L., and Paul Hertig, eds.  
*Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity.*  

Heim, Joseph A., ed.  
*What They Taught Us: How Maryknoll Missioners Were Evangelized by the Poor.*  

Howell, Brian M., and Edwin Zehner, eds.  
*Power and Identity in the Global Church: Six Contemporary Cases.*  

Kerr, Nathan.  

Kriel, Lize.  
*The “Malaboch” Books: Kgaluši in the “Civilisation of the Written Word.”*  

Meja, Markina, with foreword by E. Paul Balisky.  
*Unbroken Covenant with God: An Autobiography in the Context of the Wolaitta Kale Heywet Church, Ethiopia.*  

Moon, W. Jay.  
*African Proverbs Reveal Christianity in Culture: A Narrative Portrayal of Buiisa Proverbs Contextualizing Christianity in Ghana.*  

Neufeld, Dietmar, ed.  
*The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation.*  

Pelton, Robert S., ed.  
*Aparecida: Quo Vadis?*  

Richardson, Joe M., and Maxine D. Jones.  
*Education for Liberation: The American Missionary Association and African Americans, 1890 to the Civil Rights Movement.*  

Tinker, George E. “Tink.”  
*American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty.*  

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**In Coming Issues**

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Brian Stanley

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Constance Padwick  
Peter Parker  
James Howell Pyke  
Pandita Ramabai  
George Augustus Selwyn  
Bakht Singh  
James Stephen  
Philip B. Sullivan  
James M. Thoburn  
M. M. Thomas  
Harold W. Turner  
Johannes Verkuyl  
William Vories