Book Reviews

Witness to World Christianity: The International Association for Mission Studies, 1972–2012.


No one is better placed to tell the forty-year history of IAMS than Gerald Anderson, who was a founding member of the executive committee, served as vice president (1978–82) and president (1982–85), and has been an honorary life member since 2001. As a leading missiologist and missionary statesman himself, Anderson is able to highlight key developments, identify key figures (truly a Who’s Who of mission studies), and assess the significance of the decisions made. He is also able to set the founding and functioning of IAMS in a wider mission-historical context.

In keeping with the nature of the organization, Witness to World Christianity is structured around the IAMS conferences, beginning in 1972 and numbering twelve to date. As well as reporting on these, the book gives comprehensive information about the activities of the Association in the intervening years. Additionally, it is prefaced with a revealing look back over the years to 1951, when the first proposal of such an association—by the great Norwegian missiologist Olav G. Myklebust—met with a rather mixed response. The volume also includes comprehensive reports by leaders of the three long-standing IAMS study group projects, which have each produced significant work in between the main events: Documentation, Archives, Bibliography, and Oral History (DABOH), Biblical Studies and Mission (BISAM), and Healing/Pneumatology. Appendices giving details of IAMS conferences, officers, membership, and the constitution complete the historical record. Selected photographs and an index are also included, making this account more readable and accessible.

The focus of IAMS is on Christian mission, but as Anderson shows, it is a product of a postcolonial age in which mission is multidirectional and theology is intercultural. In many ways Anderson’s approach to the topic epitomizes the ecumenical breadth and openness of IAMS. He is careful to represent diverse points of view, and his own particular concerns are not allowed to dominate the history. Particular attention is given to representation in IAMS of the world outside the West, and of gender diversity. One of the most striking things about the IAMS story is that, as a “society for the study of mission” rather than a “missionary society” (p. 11), it has had full Catholic participation in membership and leadership almost from the beginning. Anderson, who co-edited the series Mission Trends with Thomas Stansky, C.S.P., in the 1970s, is himself a prime example of such partnership.

Much of the material in this book has been painstakingly collected from archival materials and checked with officers and other members. We are greatly in the debt of Anderson and his colleagues for making the history of this key scholarly association for the study of mission more widely known, and for presenting it in an appropriately scholarly way.

—Kirsteen Kim

Kirsteen Kim, a contributing editor, is Professor of Theology and World Christianity, Leeds Trinity University College, England. Originally from Britain, she has lived in South Korea (1987–92), the United States (1992–93), and India (1993–97).

Faith and Order in the U.S.A.: A Brief History of Studies and Relationships.


This small book is in many ways an ideal entrée into the history of the Faith and Order (F&O) movement in the United States. First, it rightly emphasizes the regional aspects of the movement rather than simply discussing it at the global level. Second, it is written by an expert who knows all the ins and outs of the movement, having worked in various capacities, first as director of F&O studies of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and then as ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church. Finally, in writing the history, the writer draws on materials available, along with his own service experience.

The book is divided into three chapters. The first covers the period from 1957, the beginning of F&O in the United States, to 1971, dealing with regional aspects such as the characteristics of the United States as an immigrant nation, the ecclesiological significance of councils of churches, sociopolitical and gender contexts, and local ecumenism. Chapter 2 reveals “many voices” in the movement after 1971, such as the F&O texts and projects Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (1982), Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community (1990), and Toward a Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today (1982). The final chapter is a kind of postscript, “Looking Back/Ahead.” An appendix contains findings of the F&O colloquium “Salvation and Life,” which is a landmark event in American ecumenical history.

While successfully taking account of the regional aspects of F&O in the United States and considering them in the wider perspective of the world ecumenical movement, this book offers little concerning its relationships with other regional, particularly Majority World, ecumenical movements. Similarly, the book does not deal adequately with subjects that show the interrelatedness between F&O and Life and Work and that reflect the reality of the Majority World, such as Koinonia and Justice, Peace, and Creation: Costly Unity (1993) and The Nature and Mission of the Church (2005).

—Kyo Seong Ahn

Kyo Seong Ahn, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea, served as a missionary in Mongolia (1992–2000).


From Ireland to Minnesota, one of the most significant Christian developments of recent years is the expansion of African churches to the West. African Christian Presence in the West, a collection of essays by leading scholars in the field, provides an essential introduction. Key sections review theoretical or framing issues around religion and migration, case studies and comparisons from both North America and Europe, and both theological and biblical reflections on migration. The appendixes introduce some of the conversations that churches and leaders are having about African Christianity in the West.

Overall, one finds coverage of an ecumenical field of congregational life, attention to particular practices such as singing and preaching, an integration of theory and concrete models, and sociological and theological reflection.

Special recognition should be given to the editors and organizers of the conference on which this book was based: Frieder Ludwig and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. A vital mission challenge or opening to the churches of the West runs throughout the essays. Yet as the contributors indicate, much work remains to be done, in both research and engagement. As a reference point for the field, African Christian Presence in the West is a benchmark.

—Mark R. Gornik


Mission and Culture
The Louis J. Luzbetak Lectures
STEPHENV.B. BEVANS, editor
American Society of Missiology Series, Vol. 48

Significant issues addressed by outstanding experts including noted missiologists José M. de Mesa, Darrell L. Whiteman, Aylward Shorter, John Kirby, and Angelyn Dries, anthropologists Linda E. Thomas, Anthony J. Gittins, and Philip Gibbs, and theologians Gemma T. Cruz and Robert J. Schreiter.

“Each lecturer has honored Fr. Luzbetak with their careful scholarship, vast experience, and passion for mission.”

—from the Introduction by Stephen B. Bevans

978-1-57075-965-9 280pp $48 pb
women who are trying to bring into unity their traditional axis mundi (i.e., the axis around which the kosmos turns), centered on the spirit world, and the Christian teaching that Jesus of Nazareth is the true axis mundi.

I visited Yohai several times in the mid-1970s and learned to appreciate what Mantovani and his neighbor James Knight, S.V.D., were doing to include rather than exclude Melanesian worldviews. I know of no book that surveys and analyzes so well the practice of listening, learning, and taking seriously a people’s world. Mantovani is currently working on his theological approach to articulating Christ as the axis mundi, drawing on Melanesian proverbs and stories. Mission: Collision or Dialogical Encounter? is excellent in its own right, but when his forthcoming book is published, one will understand its background in the life of one of the most significant figures in the Catholic missionary world.

—William R. Burrows

William R. Burrows, Managing Editor Emeritus of Orbis Books and an IBMR contributing editor, is Research Professor in the World Christianity Program at New York Theological Seminary.

History from the Underside: The Untold Stories of Black Catholic Clergy in South Africa (1898 to 2008).


This book of biographies by George Mukuka, a research associate at the University of the Witwatersrand, lifts the veil on the frustrations of South Africa’s early generations of indigenous priests who, for the first half of the twentieth century, labored within a paternalistic missionary church. His later personalities are selected from the decades following the Second World War, in the context of South Africa’s escalating liberation movement.

The first African priest, Edward Muller Kece Mnganga, returned in 1898 to the Mariannhill Diocese, Natal, after eight years’ education in Rome. Small numbers followed in his footsteps until South Africa’s segregated seminaries gathered strength. These pioneers of an autochthonous church ran up against white clergy who, with some exceptions, had absorbed colonialism’s smug sense of racial superiority. The result was cultural misunderstandings, humiliation, and suppressed anger. In Fr. Mnganga’s case, this led to an outburst of violence, followed by unjust incarceration in an asylum for seventeen years.

A happier experience was that of Andreas Mdontswa Ngidi, who returned from Rome with a doctorate. Recognized as a Zulu linguist and a defender of African traditions, he and Fr. Bernard Huss of Mariannhill worked to establish rural Christian settlements where communal values might flourish.

Later biographies reveal how undercurrents of discontent within a rigidly segregated church and the consolidating racism of apartheid erupted in 1976, when St. Peters Major Seminary was closed after its students and Old Boys Association confronted their white faculty and the Conference of Catholic Bishops—just as the black consciousness movement was being brutally repressed in the wider South Africa. Their challenge, in the words of Gobi Mikoka, was to the “hierarchy’s predilection to support the settler regime actively at the expense of the indigenous clergy and laity, and the oppressed and exploited community at large” (p. 277). Shocked by these events, the bishops reopened St. Peters in 1981 and belatedly integrated all their seminaries. Mukuka’s final biography is that of Themba Mngoma, installed in 1981 as the first African bishop of Mariannhill Diocese.

While limited in its contextual analysis, History from the Underside is a perceptive and meticulously researched text—a pioneering work that needs to be followed up with more detailed biographies, particularly of current church leaders.

—Peter Walshe

Peter Walshe, a native of South Africa, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana. His publications include Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa (Pietermaritzburg, 1995).

Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and Work of Andrew F. Walls.


Festschriften are the Rodney Dangerfields of academic publishing; they get no respect. Publishers do not want them, journals resist reviewing them, and scholarly readers do not expect to find much in them. Make no mistake here; this is not an ordinary Festschrift. Its authors form a “who’s who” of the study of missions, theology, and Christian history today. It is a lively account of one of the most revolutionary Christian thinkers of our time, and a vivid demonstration of the power of his ideas.

Nothing can substitute for reading Andrew Walls’s works themselves, so this book functions more as a “companion” reader for someone who has encountered Walls a bit and wants to learn more about the scholar himself, the influence of his work, and the ways his ideas are animating the thinking of others.

The book begins with the story of Andrew Walls. He has been a missionary teacher and scholar in West Africa, the United Kingdom, and now roving the world; he challenges Western theological, historical, and missiological conventions; he is an institutional entrepreneur; and he leads a movement to reinvent the field of mission studies and Christian history. These lively accounts are written by close colleagues, such as I. Howard Marshall, the late Kwame Bediako, and Bediako’s colleagues who worked with Walls in Ghana, Allison Howell and Maureen Iheanacho.

Four accounts follow, measuring the impact that Walls has made on the academy, notably that of Wilbert Shenk on Walls’s influence on church history and theology; Brian Stanley on the development of Walls’s major institutional creation, the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, at New College, Edinburgh; Jonathan Bonk on how Walls helped reorient and reroute mission studies into the study of world Christianity; and Moonjung Lee on Walls’s revisioning of theological education.

The great bulk of the book, however, goes to scholars who demonstrate how Walls’s reorientation of theological, missiological, and historical thinking is leading them in fresh directions. They are too many to account for completely here, but we see a Walls-ian imprint on

This mode of thinking suffuses the final section as well, where Jehu Hanciles, Kwame and Gillian Bediako, and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu all reflect on how much Walls gave to African Christianity, how much it became part of him, and how much the Christian world stands to gain from it.

Editors Burrows, Gornik, and McLean have created a work that far exceeds what we typically expect from its genre. If you want to learn more about Andrew Walls and his “fortunate subversion” of contemporary Christian thinking, you should read this book.

—Joel Carpenter


**Missional Preaching: Engage, Embrace, Transform.**


**Missional Preaching** offers a needed and engaging “theology of mission for preachers” (p. 159). This is not to say that **Missional Preaching** pays no attention to the craft of making sermons, for Tizon offers sample sermons from various persons to exemplify the missional themes of the book. He also offers a sermon evaluation guide to reinforce those themes. But as Tizon states, **Missional Preaching** does not offer a “how to manual on preaching” (p. 159). Rather, the question is “why and to whom do we preach?” (p. xvi).

These questions arise from a problem noticeable among U.S. Christians in a changing global reality—namely, that we have lost our missional identity as those who have been created in the image of a missional God. The premise of the book thus rests on two assumptions: “(1) Mission is integral to the church’s identity, and (2) Preaching plays a central role in shaping that identity.” Consequently, we have the need “to understand something called missional preaching” (p. xx).

Toward this understanding, Tizon calls preachers to read and therefore proclaim the Bible through the interpretive lens of God’s mission. Then, Tizon utilizes the bulk of the book to explore thought-fully seven goals for preaching that rise out of this missional commitment—inculturation, alternative community, holistic transformation, justice and reconciliation, whole-life stewardship, life and peace, and the scandal of Jesus.

**Missional Preaching** is a welcome contribution from the pen of a seasoned missionary and veteran professor. Even if the reader may differ at times with Tizon’s conclusions, his relevant and compelling discussions offer real help to preachers who want to biblically and credibly address the actual issues of our changing cultures in a Christ-Centered way.

—Zack Eswine

Zack Eswine is Lead Pastor of Riverside Church, Webster Groves, Missouri.


Jay Riley Case has written an exciting book with an alluring title. His thinking on the topics of American evangelicalism and world Christianity has been informed by the perspectives of Nathan Hatch, George Marsden, Andrew Wals, and Lamin Sanneh, an important group of pioneers in their respective fields. He has taken these new ideas—particularly those he gained from what he calls his “reorientation” about the missionary movement from a seminar Sanneh led, “Christianity as a World Religion”—and has written a history in this new perspective about the missionary programs of selected evangelical groups in the nineteenth century. He chose that era because the “cultural and religious patterns” of the expansive movements of world Christianity in the twentieth century took root then (p. 15).

This is a study of the missionary efforts of four American evangelical groups—the American Baptists, Methodists, AMC Church, and the Holiness movement/Pentecostals—that sent out missionaries to Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and how the development of Christianity in these various places in turn influenced the development of Christianity in the missionaries’ American homeland. The work of American Baptists in Burma, especially with the Karen people and the emergence of the native-ministry model, became an important influence in Baptist missionary work among African Americans in the U.S. South before and after the Civil War. Methodists are represented by William Taylor, who, with a vision of a color-blind ministry and democratized missionary work based on his experiences in South Africa, had a profound impact on the Holiness movement in America and was important in the emergence of Pentecostalism. The third group is the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which had extensive missionary work in South Africa. It was deeply affected by the African American Great Awakening after the Civil War, beginning with the revival and missionary work of Henry McNeil Turner, which led to the emergence of evangelicalism as “the central component of African-American religious life” (p. 163). Finally, Case discusses the Holiness movement and Pentecostals. Several evangelical missionaries, Methodists with holiness sympathies, helped solidify the Holiness movement—including Agnes McAllister, who went to Liberia, Lucy Drake Osborne, who went to India, and Amanda Berry Smith, a revival preacher in the United States who subsequently went to both India and Liberia. In addition, Pandita Ramabai, a Hindu who converted to Christianity, and her leadership of a revival in 1905 at her Mukti Mission in Pune, India, became part of the story of the emergence of Pentecostalism, often dated from the Azusa Street revival of 1906.

The thesis of this book, more complex in its details than can be told fully in the space of this review, is that Christianity, regardless of Western and American perspectives that dominated much of the past two centuries, has always been a world religion and that many of the important changes to Protestantism in the West have come as the result of developments in Christianity in other, often unexpected places in the world. Case is persuasive when he maintains that the Gospel in the context of the missionary movement has often been unpredictable.

—John F. Piper, Jr.

John F. Piper, Jr., is Professor of History and Dean Emeritus, Lycam College, Willamsport, Pennsylvania.


This is a well-presented and carefully documented history of the establishing and growth of Mennonite churches in Asia. Primarily covering Indonesia, India, Chinese-speaking communities, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, it includes an excellent introduction to the cultural and religious background of the continent and an equally reflective conclusion on the mission of the church and its prospects and problems, both of which engage with the context. The substantive chapters on each region are written by a local leader, and each in varying ways gives the cultural background and then details which church was set up when and by whom, who ran each school, and what has been achieved. It is copiously illustrated with photographs, a number of which show Christians of many backgrounds and occupations, rather more showing church plants. The book is easy to use for information about the Asian history of this family of churches, adding much to the understanding of the Mennonite experience and expansion in Asia.

It seems churlish to complain about a nice book, but using “engage Asian traditions” in the title, yet failing to do that to any depth, other than in the excellent book-ends, does rather ask for comment. The content is largely about church planting, encouraging for Mennonites and Brethren but frustrating for the non-Mennonite interested in the intersection of Mennonite nonviolence with the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist ahimsa (relevant to all areas except the Philippines) and ignorant of the finer details of splinter churches. This outsider would have been helped by a visual “genealogy” of the various churches in each region and by some judicious explaining of ecclesial hot spots. Why does the Bhatiya General Conference Mennonite Church, in India, not ordain women (p. 180) but the Mennonite Brethren accept them (p. 152)? The answer is surely obvious to those in the know—but books are not just for insiders!

Quibbles apart, the thirteen writers of this fourth volume (the most complex yet) of the five-volume history of the Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have done a valiant job in sorting out and setting down important historical and contemporary material as a resource for all interested in Christianity in Asia.

—Elizabeth Koepping

Elizabeth Koepping is Associate Director, Center for the Study of World Christianity, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh.

The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics.


The Church and Development in Africa provides a very helpful summary of the Roman Catholic approach to development in Africa. Author Stan Ilo, a Nigerian, provides critical insights into the theory and practice of African development.

Chapters 1 and 2 summarize the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI’s social encyclical Charity in Truth (2009) includes Catholic teaching on social principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, ecology, human rights, social ethics, natural law, and gratuitousness. Chapter 3 paints the present picture of Africa’s development needs and assets. Noting that “many people outside Africa often wrongly read Africa as a
single story with common problems and identity” (p. xxxiv), Ilo argues that the unique social and cultural contexts of specific development activities need to be thoroughly understood before any aid is distributed. Chapters 4 and 5 then provide general theories and principles to help guide the church, individual Christians, and charities for development activities in Africa.

The strength of the book lies in the author’s breadth and depth of vision for the kingdom of God in Africa, for which he integrates the disciplines of theology, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. He tackles a wide range of issues, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, poverty, health, homelessness, education, globalization, debt, ecology, water and food shortage, reconciliation, and cultural development. At times, though, sweeping statements may be somewhat overstated, such as calling capitalism the “mother of corruption in Africa” (p. 159), seeing globalization as the “structure of sin” (p. 172), and speaking of the causes and effects of climate change (p. 267).

Ilo surveys on a wide range of development activities but presents no detailed case studies. The general guidelines and “Ten Commandments” he offers are helpful, although those looking for in-depth applications for development in Africa will be disappointed. The thorough, broad perspective he provides on development in Africa, particularly from a Catholic perspective, makes this book an invaluable resource. It is a significant contribution to development literature. The author’s outlook is starkly realistic and refreshingly hopeful for the future of Africa. —W. Jay Moon

W. Jay Moon, Professor of Intercultural Studies at Sioux Falls Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was an SIM missionary in Ghana focusing on water development and church planting from 1992 to 2005. He previously worked as an engineer in the Virginia State Health Department, Office of Water Programs.


Until now, a substantive chapter on Protestant Vietnam has been missing from standard histories of Asian continental Christianity. No longer, thanks to the work of Reg Reimer. Written to celebrate the hundred-year saga of Vietnam’s evangelical, the volume provides a spare but articulate history of Vietnamese Christianity as seen through the eye of a trained missiologist.

The book’s first half recounts the beginnings of Vietnam’s evangelical church in 1911, when Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) missionary Robert Jaffray pioneered out of South China. Against background essays about Catholic missions and indigenous religions, Reimer traces the advance and trials of the CMA mission and its church during three wars: Japanese occupation (1941–45), the war of independence from the French (1945–54), and the Vietnam/American war (1964–75).

The second half of the book is devoted to the adversities and endurance of the churches in the south, whose multidenominational constituency of 160,000 came under Communist rule after 1975. Government policies closed all social service agencies, shuttered churches, imprisoned pastors, and confiscated 300 properties, taking a heavy toll on morale and internal church life.

During the “Dark Decade” (1975–85) all church communities were forced into hiding. After the 1986 policy of Doi Moi (reform), churches grew, but stagnation was pervasive until a Spirit-powered renewal and revival spawned a nonaffiliated house-based movement, which grew to 250,000 followers by 2009. Today the Protestant church as a whole is believed to number 1.4 million, a growth of 900 percent since 1975.

The largest growth has been among Vietnam’s 60 ethnic minorities, especially the Hmong of the northwest mountainous provinces. Out of a Hmong population of 800,000 it is believed there are now upward of 350,000 believers. Starting in 1987, sparked by Gospel radio broadcasts, this phenomenon of religious conversion is arguably the world’s most significant mass movement to Christianity in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Gripping and highly readable side-bar-like personal stories supplement the book and include that of Kim Phuc (“the napalm girl,” subject of a Pulitzer Prize photo), Mennonite believer Miss Lien, . . . because we love the brethren.
lawyer Dai (converted after defending a house-church leader), and Mrs. Sung (intrepid evangelist among Stieng tribals). The book’s closing chapter addresses the crucial issue of religious freedom in Vietnam, the world’s thirteenth most populous country.

—James F. Lewis

James F. Lewis, Professor of World Religions, Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota, served in Vietnam and India with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Readings from the Edges: The Bible and People on the Move.


Readings from the Edges considers the ethics of liberation, draws attention to the perspective of diaspora peoples, and looks at the reading and interpretation of Scripture. Here, ethical emphasis upon the “preferential option for the poor” critiques academic understanding of what it means to read and apply Scripture to life and liberation.

To avoid a “narrowly framed liberationist hermeneutics,” Ruiz turns to lived experience as a source of diverse and relevant theological reflection and to communities defined as “people of the Word,” not merely a “people of the Book.” Emphasis upon the Word allows for the theological, pragmatic, and practical interpretations of “people on the move.” They bring a hermeneutical edge to the preferential option for the poor as the excluded, the alienated, and the marginalized read and interpret, embrace and apply the Word in an alternative voice.

Ruiz wishes to displace academic “private reading” with the older practice of “reading with” the community gathered in worship. This should be a public act and subject to public comment and accountability.

The second half of Ruiz’s book looks at actual texts and their interpretation. Each in its own way exemplifies how context shapes the reading and interpretation of texts, ranging from comparison of interpretations of Nehemiah in modern Brooklyn, to Christopher Columbus’s interpretation of Revelation in light of the expanding empire of Spain.

Ruiz’s work serves as a good text for those interested in alternative ways to read and interpret Scripture that takes the perspective of the reader and the poor as primary to diverse and alternative interpretations of Scripture. It resonates deeply with Fernando Segovia’s claim that “all exegesis is ultimately eisegesis.” For many this will be deeply disturbing, but for Ruiz it represents “the new normal.”

—Thomas A. Harvey


This book is a posthumously published collection of articles by German missiologist Werner Ustorf, focused on the time of
his decade-long work at the University of Birmingham in the area of mission studies. Ustorf’s thinking focused on the critical study of mission, especially on “how, when, and where and in which way one can speak with responsibility of God and the Gospel,” and was deeply influenced by the thinkers of the Frankfurt School, especially Walter Benjamin (p. 10). For Ustorf, missiology manifests itself as a form of historical analysis and intercultural theology. The collection of essays is introduced by Roland Löffler, a former student, as a “tour d’horizon” (p. 14) of Ustorf’s life and work. The Robinson Crusoe of the title is a trope familiar from Ustorf’s writing and a metaphor for the encounter between North and South (p. 14).

The volume is organized in four parts, covering the different aspects of Ustorf’s work spanning historical studies and contemporary debates. It collects his work over the last decades of his life and makes it accessible to readers of English. Some chapters have been published before, but not all in English. Part 1 features historical studies that discuss the locations (Bremen, London, Weimar) and persons (Rudolph Dulon, Olaudah Equiano, Johann Gottfried Herder) interacting in these places with questions of belief, cultural and racial identities, and Gospel. Part 2 focuses on the multidisciplinary aspects of colonial mission, exploring the “missionary self” ambivalently perched between enlightenment and empire, between teacher and scholar, and produced by the missionary history of Protestantism. Part 3 adds a fascinating angle to missionary history: nationalist and totalitarian attempts to discredit and discard Christian heritage in favor of nationalist, or “muscular,” ethnocentric rearticulations. Part 4 then brings us into the present with essays that consider Philip Jenkins’s work and how to view “reverse mission” of Africans in Europe, Christianity in a post-Christian Britain, European discoveries of primal religion, and the landscapes of an increasingly multireligious Europe.

Ustorf’s keen insights are powered by his multidisciplinary approach, his grounded historical work, and the sharp questions he asks about the past, present, and future of Christianity in societies both European and beyond. His critical vision of missionary history does not obscure what he assumes will continue to be an unfolding, fragmented, and continually transforming presence of Christianity in Europe and elsewhere.

—Marion S. Grau

Marion S. Grau, Associate Professor of Theology, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, a member of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, is the author of Of Divine Economy: Refinancing Redemption (T. & T. Clark, 2004).
is intriguing at two levels. First, Porter discusses the transformation of state socialism from 1949 to the present. Neither a reproduction of the Soviet Union model nor an incarnation of the Confucian empire, the Communist state distinguished itself in its extensive use of power to remodel society, economy, and culture. The state created numerous institutional mechanisms to enforce policies at all levels and dominate political, socioeconomic, and cultural domains. But the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), which set out to activate popular radicalism in support of Mao, almost brought down the state. The state survived only by suppressing the popular outpourings that Mao had encouraged. Since then, Communism as a belief system collapsed and pragmatism prevailed under Deng Xiaoping and his successors. From the 1980s onward, economic growth has become the people’s hope and desire, and thus the road to the Communist Party’s legitimacy.

Second, Porter highlights the growing tension between state and society in Reform China. Combining the transformative power of market economy and the enforced stability of authoritarian rule, the Communist leadership adapts certain tenets of capitalism such as opening up to foreign investment, deregulating its labor market, and building infrastructure, while maintaining firm control over government, military, public security, and information. But accompanying the economic miracle are authoritarianism and domestic conflict. Because of explosive grievances exacerbated by the state’s aggressive development strategies and reluctance to liberalize its authoritarian system, a rising China that denies its citizens what they desire—such as job security, health care, gender equality, and freedom—pushes discontented sectors to mobilize themselves for collective action to find security, solace, and justice. Such a shaky political foundation suggests that unprecedented growth gave China only a temporary reprieve, for the state is still trapped in a perpetual cycle of discontent.

Overall, this book critically reviews China’s latest development, giving those unfamiliar with the country a sense of its dynamics and change. It should be of interest to a wide range of readers. —Joseph Tse-Hei Lee

Joseph Tse-Hei Lee is Professor of History at Pace University in Lower Manhattan, New York.

City of Tranquil Light: A Novel.


Novels and biographies based on missionaries have been a mixed lot. The hagiographies that dominated the field in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have long been discredited. Somerset Maugham entertained his readers with caricatures of missionary foibles. More recently, novelists have depicted the missionary as a misguided zealot.

City of Tranquil Light is set in the China of the first three decades of the twentieth century. The Boxer Uprising ushered in the new century. In 1911 the Qing Dynasty was overthrown. A few years later famine struck the land. The 1920s were roiled by the emergence of new revolutionary forces and civil war. Social and political instability were never far away.

Will Kiehn and Katherine Friesen meet for the first time when they board a ship in Seattle bound for China in 1906. Both are products of tight-knit communities in the American Midwest. Both have been recruited for missionary service in China while still in their twenties. Will has a high school education; Katherine for medical services, early death of their only child, maneuvering through official red tape, coping with flood and famine, and the ever-present corruption. In all seasons, their love and loyalty to the Chinese remain steadfast, and the Chinese reciprocate. The Friesens’ spirituality is unostentatious but integral to their identities.

Caldwell mined the archives of her maternal grandparents, long-serving missionaries to China, to create her main characters, Will and Katherine. She maintains fine artistic control over her materials, allowing her characters to speak authentically. The result is a memorable portrait.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Wilbert R. Shenk, an IBMR contributing editor, is Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture, Fuller Graduate School of Intercultural Studies, Pasadena, California. He lives in Elkhart, Indiana.

Reverse Mission: Transnational Religious Communities and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy.


Scholars rarely give missionaries the attention they deserve, but they give even less attention to the role of missionaries in their home countries. In Reverse Mission Timothy Byrnes helps to rectify this situation by examining the influence of three American Catholic religious communities on U.S. foreign policy from the 1970s to the 1990s. He concludes that their influence was significant and that it directly reflected the transnational identities and distinctive vocations of each community.

American Jesuits, for example, reacted swiftly and decisively when the Salvadoran army, which was heavily financed by the United States, murdered six members of the Society of Jesus and two women at Central American University in 1989. Almost immediately the presidents of Jesuit universities around the United States began protesting the murders and the U.S. policies that funneled money to such unscrupulous killers. Some of these presidents then traveled to El Salvador to meet with President Cristiani, other Salvadoran officials, and the American ambassador. When the one witness to the murders was threatened by Salvadoran officers while supposedly being protected by the U.S. State Department, it was Paul Tipton, president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, who both sheltered the witness in a hidden location and began a public relations campaign against U.S. policy in El Salvador. In the
end, Byrnes concludes, the Jesuits played a major role in obtaining a grant of $10 million for Central American University and in pushing the Salvadoran government toward the negotiations that resulted in the peace agreements of 1992.

The other two communities, the Maryknoll sisters and Benedictine monks of the Weston Priory, were not as single-minded or as obviously successful as the Jesuits in lobbying, respectively, for the end to military aid to Nicaraguan contras or for new economic policies toward Mexico. Nevertheless, Byrnes does a strong job of demonstrating that these religious communities, because of their simultaneous ties to Latin America and to the United States and because of their specific religious charisms, were surprisingly effective in their attempts to sway public opinion and government policy.

—Todd Hartch

Todd Hartch teaches Latin American history at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky.


Recognized Pentecostal scholar Amos Yong, the J. Rodman Williams Professor of Theology at Regent University School of Divinity, Virginia Beach, Virginia, thoughtfully explores the intersections between theology—in particular, Pentecostal theology—and science. He examines possible Pentecostal contributions to current conversations between theology and science, mentioning glossolalia, the gift of tongues, a significant charism in Pentecostal theology, as a kind of leitmotiv for the diversity that could genuinely inform theological dialogues rooted in pneumatology.

Yong argues convincingly that Pentecostalism, which has emerged in the context of the modern world, can offer a distinctive response to that world through more vigorous Pentecostal scholarship. Factual data from the scientific study of the universe pose questions to theology, suggesting deeper insights into the mystery of God, especially the incarnation and the resurrection.

Yong develops a pneumatic theology of emergence, beginning with primordial creation, the emergence of life, election of and covenant with Israel, and the incarnational and Pentecostal events. His analysis is carried forward by his insight that God’s actions in the life and resurrection of Jesus anticipate the final redemption and point toward the communion that all things will experience with the triune God. The church, as it develops as a community, can be understood as an emergent entity through which God’s redemptive work in Christ and in the multifaceted event of Pentecost increasingly becomes known.

This careful study, grounded in gracious openness, presents challenging possibilities toward developing pneumatological approaches in theological conversations with scientific data about the nature of the universe and its ongoing creation. Yong’s work moves toward a new way of seeing into the mystery of God’s Trinitarian action in the process of creation.

—Mary Motte

Mary Motte, F.M.M., a contributing editor, is Director of the Mission Resource Center of the U.S. Province of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Saving the World?

The Changing Terrain of American Protestant Missions from 1910 to the Present

In 1910 over a thousand Protestant missionaries, theologians and church leaders from around the world gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland for an unprecedented World Missionary Conference. This 32-minute DVD from Wheaton College’s Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) chronicles the assumptions and expectations that Protestants carried into the 20th century and highlights some of the major -- and unexpected -- developments in the hundred years since that meeting in Scotland.

Saving the World? offers an informative analysis of the effect of the seminal Edinburgh event. Recommended. –Video Librarian

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Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Unto the Ends of the World.


Volume 40 in Brill’s series “Studies in Christian Mission” is a wide-ranging collection of writings roughly grouped together under the rubric of transnationalism. Several local venues are featured in these essays, with particular attention paid to Norwegian mission efforts in Madagascar, but the overall emphasis here is on large-scale issues of globalization, empire, secularization, intercultural encounter, and organizational dynamics. With half of the contributors engaged as academics in either Denmark or Norway, the volume sheds light on a number of research trends now evident in Scandinavian missiology.

A few essays may be highlighted as a way to invite consideration of the whole. Methodologically intriguing, for example, is Hilde Nielssen’s analysis of two scholarly ethnographies, written contemporaneously in the late nineteenth century about the same local population and culture but in quite different ways. According to Nielssen, powerful national ideals and aspirations subtly shaped these two scientific texts by inclining their British and Norwegian missionary authors to look for contrasting qualities in Malagasy society. Similarly insightful is a pair of articles that examine the rise of humanitarian NGOs in the twentieth century and their missionary roots. Thus, Deborah Gaitskell focuses on the interesting life of Dora Earthy, who extended her missionary career in the 1930s by joining the research staff of Save the Children Fund, an international charity organization. Astill strong commitment to a life-giving Gospel is part of what Earthy brought to her philanthropic work on behalf of women and children in Africa, alongside her expertise in the field of anthropology. For her part, Ruth Compton brought to her philanthropic work on popular Christian art, including folk art, and Christian content. With the decline of the Mogul Empire, Christian themes also diminished in Indian art for about 250 years. The British with their “company art” and even the famous Danish-Halle Mission produced very few works of Christian art. With the rise of the Bengal Renaissance (1895–1905), Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) founded an art school in Shantiniketan on the property of his family. His nephew Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), who taught at a British art school in Calcutta that was founded around the same time, developed the “wash technique” that became characteristic for this group of mainly Hindu artists depicting Christian themes. Adequate space is given to Jamini Roy, who, similar to the European expressionists, took a strong interest in the local folk art instead of the religious and court art preferred by his colleagues.

The book has a chapter on non-Christian artists who utilize Christian themes. The separate chapter on South Indian artists covers both Christian and non-Christian artists, who do not always identify their religious affiliation. Chapters on popular Christian art, including folk art, and church architecture conclude this rich volume.

Some will question the decision of...
Taiwanese material. James Rohrer’s essay argues this point at length. We know something about what Mackay said, but not much about what the Taiwanese heard. The second point is crucial to understanding the beginnings of the North Taiwanese church. We hope this gap will be filled at the next conference, planned for 2012 in Taiwan.

—Geoff Johnston

Geoff Johnston is a retired Presbyterian minister with experience in Nigeria and the West Indies.

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Dr. Michael J. McClymond

Fall 2012

Dr. McClymond is professor of modern Christianity, Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, and president of the Institute for World Christianity. During the last twenty-two years at four institutions, he has taught a range of courses in the fields of theological and religious studies, the history of Christianity, and comparative religions. Dr. McClymond’s book Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards (1998) received the 1999 Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize from the American Society of Church History as the best first book on the history of Christianity.

Dr. Tite Tiénou

Spring 2013

Dr. Tiénou is senior vice president of education, dean, and professor of theology of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. Prior to coming to Trinity in 1997, he was president and dean of the Faculté de Théologie Évangélique de l’Alliance Chrétienne in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, and taught for nine years at Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyaack, New York. Earlier, he was founding director and professor of the Maranatha Institute in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. Dr. Tiénou’s areas of expertise include mission, theology, and the church in Africa.

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emerging field. A substantial volume with short and accessible chapters, it aims to be a handbook for missionary action by making theory and methodology accessible to students and practitioners, and by providing case studies of communities from China, Ghana, and Vietnam and from Jewish, Muslim, and Hispanic communities in the United States. It sets a framework, provides biblical exploration, and gives thorough bibliographies and tabular explanations. The chapter on interdisciplinary research methodology gives guidelines for scoping the field to aid those embarking on their own study. Wan, who writes about half the chapters, and most other contributors speak from diaspora experience.

For this reviewer, some of the most interesting chapters on Old Testament and modern Jewish Diaspora are also the most tendentious, precisely because they, and related chapters, attempt to frame the wider subject. Missiology must take account of the Jewish experience, and the Jewish Diaspora has set terms of inquiry for diaspora studies. However, diaspora missiology might be better understood as a large subset of a wider migration-missiology paradigm. A focus on exile, group consciousness, regretful memory of homeland, and social solidarity is important, but it closes down inquiry regarding migrations that have different patterns and suggests a tie to land and ethnicity that is questioned in the New Testament and in some historical trajectories of mission.

The shifts in world Christianity impact missiology. This book is to be welcomed because it connects practice with theory, and social observation with mission theology. In an area of study and practice that moves as rapidly as those with whom it engages, it is unlikely to be the last word.

—Emma Wild-Wood