Book Reviews


Stanley Skreslet opens his Comprehending Mission with “a fairly representative sample (Winter, Karotempres, Vadakumpadan, Jongeneel, Walls, Bosch, Verstraelen, Muller, Verkyl) of the most widely used contemporary introductions to missiology” (p. 9). For this volume he adopts Andrew Walls’s definition of missiology as “the systematic study of all aspects of mission” (p. 12) but expands on it, stating that his own conception of missiology as “an integrative, multidisciplinary academic” discipline in some respects resembles the position taken by Louis Luzbetak (p. 14). “Missiology . . . properly encompasses every kind of scholarly inquiry performed on the subject of mission without necessarily subordinating any group of studies to any other” (p. 15).

Skreslet seeks to “describe an academic field of study,” “show how the field of missiology has developed over time,” and “communicate enthusiasm for missiology as a field of study” (pp. 17–18). This threefold aim is developed in six chapters—“Bible and Mission,” “History of Mission,” “Theology, Mission, Culture,” “Christian Mission in a World of Religions,” “The Means of Mission,” and “Missionary Vocation.” These cover the breadth of mission down through the ages, ecumenically and expansively.

Writing with a clear, compact style, Skreslet admirably achieves his three aims, providing an excellent introduction to the field of missiology in a short monograph. The chapter “History of Mission,” for example, encompasses “Luke the Historian, Ecclesiastical History, Hagiography, Early Modern Ethnography, Historical Missiowissenschaft, Critical Ethnography, Current Trends in Research, and Forward in Mission History” (p. v). In summary, Comprehending Mission deserves to be placed high on the list of contemporary volumes introducing missiology.

I conclude with a criticism, namely, that Skreslet makes no reference to Eastern Orthodox missiology. This is especially surprising, since James Stamoolis’s Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today (2001), like Skreslet’s volume, appears in the American Society of Missiology series.

—Marvin D. Hoff

Mission in Context: Explorations Inspired by J. Andrew Kirk.


I love books created to honor someone who has influenced others in advancing the Gospel around the world. I like such a book because it gives the reader a wonderful collage of snapshots of the one being honored, gathering in one place information about the honoree and her or his friends, colleagues, and peers.

John Corrie (Trinity Theological College, Bristol) and Cathy Ross (Regent’s Park College, Oxford) have masterfully compiled this book, gathering reflections from significant thinkers in theological reflection on mission—or, as Andrew Kirk would emphasize, missiological rethinking of theology. The book is organized in four sections, the first biographical, concerning Kirk as a person and as a mission theologian. Part 2 deals with the relationship between mission and theology, and part 3, with mission in a pluralistic world. Part 4 includes references to a number of areas to which mission theology may make important contributions: culture, education, and religious studies. The book coheres admirably.

This work is a testimony to the profound influence that Andrew Kirk has had on many of us. To my knowledge, no one in missiology has made a more compelling case for the missiological transformation of theology than Andrew. An example of this, mentioned by several in this book, was Andrew’s wisdom and clear thinking during the heyday of reflection in Latin America concerning liberation theology.

I am glad to see this tribute to Andrew Kirk, in whose debt I stand; his writings had a great impact on my own mission theology. This book is important reading for pastors, students of mission, mission practitioners, and mission teachers. Here we all are granted the joy of meeting Andrew and his friends once again.

—Charles Van Engen

Mission History of Asian Churches.


Mission History of Asian Churches emphasizes how churches in seven Asian countries are being de-Westernized “in order to allow for a Christian fulfillment of Asian selfhood” (p. 3). Arising from the Second International Forum of the Asian Society of Missiology, held in 2009 in Semarang, Indonesia, the book contains brief mission histories of churches in China, India, Indochina, Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, and Singapore. Reflecting on their own historical, cultural, and ecclesiastical contexts, Asian church historians and missiologists examine their churches as a “new force in world mission” (p. xi).

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the volume, laying out broad themes of an emerging de-Westernized new Christianity and the concomitant rise of indigenized denominations and spontaneous indigenous missionary movements, as well as a call to current Asian missionaries and mission leaders to have flexible mission strategies for the future success of the church. While...
contributors focus primarily on churches established by evangelical faith missions, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches are also considered as part of the historical investigation.

The essays present brief country overviews, then show how indigenous church movements have reached not only their own people but often moved beyond national borders through diaspora communities. Replete with statistics (showing church growth, numbers of missionaries, and numbers of churches) and heuristic charts, the essays discuss the history of evangelical missionaries, mission structures, and the mission networks and partnerships that extend both within and outside of the Western world. The book would benefit from definitions for nonspecialists (e.g., of varnasharma dharma), a better spell-checker, and a conclusion that would highlight broader Asian ecclesiological and missiological trends.

Park’s judicious selection of contributors makes this book a strong contribution to understanding mission both inside and outside of Asia. I would highly recommend it to students and scholars who seek to learn about the mission impact of Asian churches worldwide.

—Charles E. Farhadian

Charles E. Farhadian is Associate Professor of World Religions and Christian Mission at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California. His most recent book is Introducing World Christianity (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).


At a recent seminar I attended, a renowned anthropologist summed up the shift in the social and cultural study of Christianity over the last decade by saying, “Today it is impossible to throw a stone into even a modest group of young anthropologists without hitting one or two studying Christianity.” He was referring to the rapidly growing interest in Christianity across cultural contexts outside of traditional mission study circles. What students of Christian mission history have long held to be their speciality—Christianity outside of the Western world—has now caught the attention of scholars ranging from historians of religion to social historians and cultural anthropologists.

In the present volume David Lindenfeld, a historian, and Miles Richardson, an anthropologist, have furthered the larger scholarly discussion of Christianity outside the Western world, especially focusing on how Christianity interacts with heterogeneous religious traditions across various contexts.

Through nine chapters the larger discussion of the contrast between the microcosm of a traditional village society and the macrocosm of the wider world and of world religions surfaces repeatedly: Should conversion, for example, to Christianity, be viewed as the victory of more supreme spiritual beings over lesser spiritual beings? Or is it the case that whenever cultural and religious worlds meet, people engage in a process of distinguishing and connecting these worlds, maintaining a dynamic tension between them? Generally, the


The Role of the American Board in the World contains fifteen essays, half of them written for a conference hosted by the Congregational Library in Boston on the 200th anniversary of the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

As coeditor Clifford Putney notes in his helpful introduction, the ABCFM was the first American organization to sponsor overseas missions and the largest American foreign missions organization of the 1800s. Its goals and strategies deeply influenced the modern missionary movement. Between its formation by Congregationalists in 1810 and its integration into the missionary arm of the United Church of Christ in 1961, the ABCFM sent to the field nearly 5,000 missionaries (p. xv).

The essays in this book concentrate on the ABCFM’s first century or so of existence and, with only a few exceptions, its efforts in Asia and Hawaii. Many chapters expose internal disagreements, most significantly over the balance between evangelism and other activities. By the early 1900s, the ABCFM had rejected its initial emphasis on preaching and was prioritizing what Sharon Taylor calls “cultural redemption” through education and medicine (p. 24). The shift is memorably depicted in Alice Hunsberger’s examination of changes across three generations of an ABCFM family in India.

Given the emphasis of recent missions scholarship on indigenous appropriation, there are surprisingly few non-Western actors in these pages. With notable exceptions in essays by Char Miller, Hamish Ion, and Regina Pfeiffer, there is little explanation of how the ABCFM was shaped by the groups among whom it ministered. One also wishes for more about the Board’s influence on America, a line of inquiry followed with valuable results in Taylor’s study (chap. 2) of theological controversy and Virginia Metaxas’s discussion (chap. 5) of missionary efforts to publicize the Armenian genocide.

This book will appeal most to readers interested in exploring the developing theology and missionary philosophy of the ABCFM and the details of ABCFM efforts in a variety of far-flung locations. Thomas Oey sheds new light on missionary David Abeel in China, and Donald Philip Corr does the same for Titus Coan in Hawaii. Essays by Timothy Roberts and coeditor Paul Burlin illustrate the relationship between religion and commerce, while other essays examine ties with politics and diplomacy.

ABCFM official Rufus Anderson declared in 1848 that America, “more perhaps than any other nation,” existed for “the benefit of the entire world” (p. 28). This book does a helpful service by tracing some of the mixed results of this potent cocktail of self-importance and benevolence.

Andrew Witmer is Assistant Professor of History at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Complexities of Money and Mission in Asia.


The title of this book indicates clearly its contents. Mission and money are two subjects that should not be separated from each other. The book focuses on Asian countries, where more than 50 percent of the world’s population lives, the majority of whom are not Christians. And the handling of issues related to money and mission in Asia are complex indeed. The contributors of the book’s seven chapters come from the United States, Canada, South Africa, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Australia. Most have had experience in Asian countries.

Because Asians place such strong emphasis on shame, face, and honor, it is very interesting to consider how they cope with receiving financial support from Christian-majority countries. In his chapter “Speaking of the Unspeakable: Money and Missions in Patron-Client Buddhist Cultures,” Paul DeNeui explains the meaning and impact of money, as well as the implications of patron-client relationships.

G. P. V. Somaranta’s comparison (chap. 1) of the Buddhist concept of giving for public good and the Christian view of charity is very helpful for understanding an Asian mentality. In chapter 5 Mary Lederleitner, who had twelve years’ experience as a financial manager in Asia, emphasizes the importance of dialogue in each stage and throughout any partnership. Together they present typical Asian Buddhist perspectives on Christians’ use of funds and financial aid (e.g., still holding Christianity accountable for its preeminent position in colonial power structures).

Recently, several Christian organizations have poured funds into Sri Lanka to help in natural disaster, poverty, and development programs. Buddhists worry that the operations of well-funded evangelical Christian groups will eventually reduce the Buddhist religion to minority status in the country, as happened in South Korea over the course of the twentieth century, where an 80 percent Buddhist population has been reduced to less than 40 percent because of Christian evangelism and resulting conversions.

One challenge raised by Alex Smith (chap. 2) is the missionary dilemma of when to give and when not to give, whom
to support and whom not to support, and how to give and yet still keep a balance. As a missionary to Thailand, he points to Caucasian missionaries’ lifestyles that are like those of rich businesspeople—living in securely guarded palatial housing, having nice limousines, and maintaining membership in expensive, exclusive clubs on the field. His practical principles are good advice for missionaries, giving guidance in money matters and principles for fund-raising.

In chapter 3 Andrew Thomas introduces the idea that use of funds is for empowering believers, not to enslave or control them, stating that the central principle of using money is love.

And in chapter 4 Jonathan Bonk, author of Missions and Money (expanded ed., 2006), introduces topics such as an affluent Western society and human greed; missionaries and the abundance of possessions; and strategic, relational, and theological implications of wealth. For Bonk, while the beginnings and endings in Buddhist and Christian theological understandings are very different, they have some things in common. Their views of materialism, self-discipline, and moderation as a way of life are similar. He offers biblical references and suggests principles of economic justice, raising awareness of the inherent dangers of wealth.

I recommend this book for those interested in Asian countries and especially for those interested in mission to the Buddhist world.

―Chang Ju Kim

Chang Ju Kim, a Korean Presbyterian pastor, serves as a mission coworker to FJKM (The Jesus Christ Church in Madagascar), teaching at the Faculté de Théologie in Ambohitrarivo, Antananarivo, Madagascar.

The Religious Question in Modern China.


This is an ambitious and thought-provoking book that addresses a vast subject—religion in modern and contemporary China (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore)—spanning over a hundred years of history, from 1898 to 2008. Adopting a theoretically informed historical approach, Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer have surveyed the evolving relationship between Chinese religions and politics and society. Their panoramic portrayal scans the creativity and reinvention of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This is accompanied by a strong focus on religious policies, discourses, practices, and trends in the different ages of imperialism, revolution, nationalism, modernity, and globalization from the late Qing, through the warlord government, to the Guomindang and Communist rule. Other topics covered include utopianism, ethnic identities, and the heritage movement.

The book is divided into two parts—
Global Mission: Reflections and Case Studies in Contextualization for the Whole Church.


A fascinating kaleidoscope, Global Mission combines missional scholarship and practice, offering a testimonial that the Gospel of God spans the globe across cultures, languages, and religions, even in the twenty-first century. Editor Rose Dowsett has skillfully assembled essays, case studies, and reflections that demonstrate how the life-giving Word is at work, transforming people’s lives both from within and through sociopolitical and religious structures.

The book focuses on contextualization. Prominent missiologists present their views on the topic, building on personal expertise and complementing the wisdom of veteran missionaries such as Lesslie Newbigin, Ralph Winter, and Paul Hiebert. All contributors are committed to a common goal: “to make clear the gospel to people in a way that demands a response which will lead to conversion and sincere and candid Christian discipleship” (p. 90).

Global Mission invites readers to become fearless risk-takers in the service of the Gospel, which transforms both unreached peoples and hands-on missionaries (p. 104). Cross-cultural communication requires “mature collaboration” (p. 105). We read about four different models for explaining wholeness to the Wolof of Senegal (chap. 12), and we have an eight-page description connecting biblical shalom with the concept of maupay held by the Waray of the Philippines (chap. 20). The missionary challenges are relentless!

Today’s whole world is a mission field, ripe for the Gospel. The various conversations the book offers—on small-group ministry, house churches, emerging church, incarnational ministry, an attractional model, nonbaptized believers, churchless Christians, and
Nigerian Immigrants in the United States: Race, Identity, and Acculturation.


Nigerian Immigrants in the United States is a refreshing read. The book focuses on the experience of Nigerian immigrants in the United States and their interpretation of this experience, an approach the author refers to as phenomenological, or one of qualitative social research (p. 53). It is based on case studies of individual immigrants who discuss why they left Nigeria, what their experiences in the United States have been, and whether they see it as a good decision to have come to the States.

The central question of the book is, How do the immigrants themselves interpret their experiences in their new society? Answering this question generates others, such as, Who are these Nigerians who have left their homeland? What has been their experience? and How has their experience shaped them and their understanding of the immigration process? Finally, it asks, “What can we learn from this experience?” (p. xi). The case samples include Nigerians who have come as students, as spouses, as permanent visitors, and as visa lottery winners.

The author discusses lessons learned in these case studies in the context of historical, theoretical, and general principles of immigration to the United States. These lessons, which help us see how Nigerians have adapted to and integrated into American society, also reveal the various human services used to support their adjustment.

Ette makes clear the varied motivations for emigration to America, as well as the important role that social networks continue to play in the immigrants’ experience. Education is one of the strongest motivators for coming to the United States. Once in the States, the immigrants tend not to move to new locations. Like most other immigrants, Nigerians maintain close contact with their homeland. Most still hope to return some day to Nigeria, and some are acquiring property there for that day. “Nigerian immigrants, like other immigrants, chose a new land because the old was no longer supporting their desires and plans. They chose this new land because they were looking for a way to make their lives better” (p. 174).

—John T. Nwangwu

John T. Nwangwu, originally from Nigeria, teaches infectious diseases and epidemiology at Southern Connecticut State University and at Yale University, both in New Haven, Connecticut. He is a consultant for the World Health Organization and has been a missionary in Nigeria, India, Bangladesh, and Sierra Leone.
Religion and Development: Ways of Transforming the World.


The wording of the title, Religion and Development, may sound rather paradoxical to many postmodern scholars in the West, but noting what ordinary people do on the ground, Gerrie ter Haar brilliantly demonstrates that religion uniquely and effectively contributes to world development.

This book, divided into four parts, is the fruit of eighteen contributors from various backgrounds. Part 1 is conceptual in nature. It affirms the centrality of religion in international affairs and the important contribution of faith institutions. In the last chapter of this section, Louke van Wensveen shows why scholarly communities are reluctant to “cooperate in efforts to enhance the instrumental use of religion for mechanistic development purposes” (p. 108).

The second section explores the role of religion in economics, arguing that religion plays a role in “enhancing economic development” (p. 11). It is worth noticing that the last two chapters of this section bring Islamic perspectives into the discussion, which is valuable, given the current global religious context.

Part 3 acknowledges the role of religion in achieving the U.N.’s Millennium Development Goals. It is clear that religion is built into people’s life and worldview and that many religious figures are already making a difference.

The last part deals with religion and social change. The highlight of this section is the statement by Christiaan Hogenhuis that “development is about material, social and spiritual transformation, with the various aspects supporting and reinforcing one another. Putting up fences between them harms the integrity of the entire process” (p. 359). The statement stands as a valid summary of the book.

According to an African proverb, “Even if the rabbit is your enemy, you must acknowledge that he runs faster than you.” This invitation to objectivity is badly needed in today’s academic literature on development. As James Wolfenson states in the preface, “If development is to succeed, development policies must truly be integral in scope. Religion, therefore, cannot be excluded from the debate” (p. xviii). Theoreticians as well as practitioners in development studies must take this excellent book seriously.

—Moussa Bongoyok

Cultural Encounters at Cape Farewell: The East Greenlandic Immigrants and the German Moravian Mission in the Nineteenth Century.


This important book collects nine essays on the interactions among missionary, commercial, colonizing, and indigenous interests at Cape Farewell (Danish: Kap Farvel; Greenlandic: Uummannarsuaq), the southernmost point of Greenland. The authors, two of whom were born in Greenland, describe the arrival in the nineteenth century of large numbers of eastern Greenlandic indigenous people at the German Moravian mission station of Friedrichshal, located near Cape Farewell. The integration of these people into the life of the mission—through baptism, instruction, commerce, and other cultural interactions—is the main concern of the volume.

Hans C. Gulløv reviews the history of the first inhabitants of this part of Greenland. Einar L. Jensen next examines the history of “contacts and colonisation” during the eighteenth century, focusing on the relations between East Greenlanders and West Greenlanders. Jensen also devotes two long chapters to European traders and missionaries, phases of internal Greenlandic immigration, and conflicts within the mission field. His work is especially thoughtful in its assessment of conflicts between the state monopoly Trading Company and the Moravian Brethren mission, as well as competition between the Danish Lutheran mission and the Moravian Brethren. In their chapter “Greenland in Herrnhut,” Kristine Raahauge and Hans Gulløv catalog many of the Greenlandic objects preserved in the Moravian Völkerkundemuseum at Herrnhut, Germany.

Readers with little familiarity with nineteenth-century Greenlandic history will appreciate the careful use of German, Danish, and Greenlandic words for places, individuals, and terms. A large number of helpful maps, charts, and photographs well document the Moravian missionary experience in Greenland.

The authors fail to situate Moravian-Greenlandic interaction within the literature of other circumpolar missionary efforts. (One thinks particularly of the work of Frédéric Laugrand, Jarich Oosten, and François Trudel on contemporary Anglican missionary activity among the Inuit of Canada’s Baffin Island.) Nevertheless, Cultural Encounters at Cape Farewell is an attractive and interesting book that deserves a wide audience. Despite occasional unidiomatic English, it offers a refreshing exploration of missionary activity and influence in a particular time and place.

—Richard J. Mammana, Jr.

Richard J. Mammana, Jr., a candidate for the M.A.R. (History of Christianity) degree at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, is founder and director of Anglicanhistory.org.

The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858.


The tension between Christianity and imperialism remains a central issue in the history of missions. Daniel O’Connor contributes to this ongoing historiographical discussion by focusing on the activities of the East India Company chaplains working in India over a 250-year period. O’Connor, formerly a college chaplain in India, notes that the book is intended to be a “preliminary sketch” rather than an exhaustive study (p. 3). The work is organized into six thematic and chronological chapters (Company, Voyage,
Factory, City, Garrison, and Empire), which together summarize the experience of the chaplains in the Company’s history.

O’Connor emphasizes the role of Christian piety in the founding of the East India Company, which resulted in an ongoing relationship between the English ecclesiastical leadership and the Company. According to O’Connor, this explicit interconnection between Christianity and commerce “made the appointment of chaplains inevitable” (p. 145). The chaplains worked broadly among sailors, merchants, officers, soldiers, wives, children, and the indigenous population. Chaplains operated in a variety of capacities, from being military chaplains, pastors, and missionaries to serving as educators, translators, and social reformers. In addition to their pastoral duties, some chaplains sought personal wealth, while others supported “a sacralized version of the imperial vision” (p. 98). O’Connor highlights several chaplains, such as Christian Friedrich Schwartz and James Gray, who made distinctive contributions to the Company. He also provides insight into the Company’s complicated relationship with Roman Catholics, and he notes the influence of various Christian groups and missionary organizations on the religious work carried out under the auspices of the Company.

This book offers an excellent overview of the chaplaincy in India and makes a valuable contribution to the study of Christianity, imperialism, and the East India Company. The work should, as the author intends, provoke more in-depth study.

—Darin D. Lenz

Darin D. Lenz is Associate Professor of History at Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, California.

Book Series: Resources for Reconciliation

Dowans Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2008–. Paperback, $15 each.


2012. Making Peace with the Land: God’s Call to Reconcile with Creation, 182 pp., by Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba.

The seven volumes to date of InterVarsity’s Resources for Reconciliation series represent a partnership between InterVarsity Press and the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School. The result is a remarkable and worthwhile contribution to the ongoing conversation concerning the proclamation of the Christian Gospel and social justice. The initial volume, by series editors Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, includes a helpful preface that defines the scope and intent of the project. Their pairing of a (mainly) academic contributor and a grassroots practitioner as authors, who are allowed to contribute more or less equally, is what makes these books so useful in the commitment of the church to balanced speaking and acting.

Space does not allow for comments on each book. A couple observations about the most recent volume, Making Peace with the Land: God’s Call to Reconcile with Creation, must serve as an appetizer for the series. Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba are competent guides to this complicated, urgent subject. Too often, readers are hammered with statistics that, while true, tend to confuse and overwhelm. In this case, however, statistics are absolutely necessary and are used judiciously—in no small measure because of the high level of expertise of both authors. (Bahnson is a permaculture gardener, and Wirzba is an accredited theologian, specializing at Duke in ecology and rural life.) One statistic: The 1 billion hungry people in the world today is now equaled by the number of obese people, “which means that nearly one in three humans suffers from the ill effects of a poor diet.” The lamentable

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result is that today “we know more than ever about the science of nutrition and yet we have not yet been able to move the needle on healthful eating” (p. 89).

The helpfulness of each book comes when readers take the pains to place themselves within the framework of the topics under discussion. The cross-disciplinary approach the editors chose also carries risks, but the wisdom of making good use of thinkers with different backgrounds has resulted in insights from a wider perspective. That the contributors come from a variety of nationalities and ethnicities, as well as a mixture of theological perspectives (Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative evangelical), makes for a treat.

Highlights of the series include the contributions by Katongole and Rice, Marsh and Perkins, and Jones and Musekura. Five of the seven volumes include study guides. Each book can be profitably read, if not fully digested, in one sitting.

To understand the entire project, one must begin by reading the first volume. Otherwise, the rest of the collection can be read in any order. I benefited greatly from my own reading of the books and recommend them highly for classroom use, as well as use by local churches seeking direction for being more strategic in thinking and ministry.

—John Nyquist

John Nyquist is Professor Emeritus of Mission and Evangelism, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

British Missionaries and the End of Empire: East, Central, and Southern Africa, 1939–64.


British Missionaries is a carefully researched, broadly focused, and pleasantly written account of missions at the end of colonialism. Chapter 1 focuses on missionary opposition to the “color bar” in Africa. Despite widespread desire for change, few missionaries publicly campaigned for justice, preferring instead to lobby officials behind the scenes. A similar protocol was followed during the controversy surrounding the marriage of Seretse Khama (heir to the Bangwato throne) and an English woman named Ruth Williams, discussed in chapter 2. The London Missionary Society failed to offer Khama unambiguous support when the Colonial Office blocked his succession, which had ramifications in the religious sphere. Chapter 3 recalls the short-lived course of the Central African Federation (made up of the current nations of Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), one of the most important political issues of the 1950s (p. 75). Though many clergy (especially within the Church of Scotland) openly criticized the scheme, chapter 4 records how their stand was all but ignored by Africans (who identified with nationalists) and deeply resented by the British colonial government. In East Africa the Mau Mau fought against the same kind of disregard for African concerns exhibited in the federation. Chapter 5 explores missionary involvement in the rehabilitation of captured Mau Mau, but also their growing criticism of government’s handling of the crisis, especially the maltreatment of detainees. The final years of empire witnessed fundamental shifts, including the rise of NGOs, the decline of British missions, and the redefinition of “mission,” which are all discussed in chapter 6.

British Missionaries is an important
contribution to the field. Stuart has penetrated the complexities of colonial life and explained the spectrum of positions taken by missionaries. Activist missionaries were sympathetic to African concerns and inhabited a middle ground between governments and nationalists, but their ability to influence politics was radically diminished in such partisan times. Missionaries won few victories in their efforts to curb colonial abuses, and gradually lost their coveted status as the favored representatives of African interests.

—Thomas W. Higgins

Thomas W. Higgins recently earned a Ph.D. in African Christianity from the Center for the Study of World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh. He has conducted mission-focused research in Nigeria and Kenya.

The Ethiopian Prophecy in Black American Letters.


Most scholars working in the field of black church studies are familiar with Psalm 68:31, the “Ethiopian Prophecy”: “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (KJV). The Ethiopian Prophecy in Black American Letters chronicles various interpretations of this prophecy by David as found in African American literature from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Roy Kay begins by distinguishing between Jewish and Christian readings of the verse. Starting with George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), he organizes the book chronologically, focusing on various individuals within each chapter. Fox interprets the verse from an evangelical and missionary perspective, stating that Ethiopia here represents the Gentile church. John Marrant, one of the first African American missionaries in colonial America, likens Ethiopia not simply to individuals of African descent but also to Native Americans. African Methodist Episcopal Church founder Richard Allen asserts that this Scripture foreshadows the emancipation of black slaves in the Americas. Other authors—from Phyllis Wheatley to Absalom Jones—view the verse as a call to Christianize Africa. Abolitionist Prince Hall sees it as a prophetic proclamation that speaks of the deliverance of Africans from slavery. The most secular reading that Kay analyzes is that of W. E. B. DuBois, who sees Ethiopia as a female suffering servant who has been repeatedly raped by imperialist Westerners. Finally, Kay examines the narrative configuration and gives exhaustive figural analysis of the verse, synthesizing various allusions to and interpretations of Psalm 68:31.

The book has limitations. The historical descriptions offered can become overwhelming. Although Kay gives readers a glimpse into the thoughts of some of the best-known writers in American

WITNESS TO WORLD CHRISTIANITY

The International Association for Mission Studies, 1972–2012

Gerald H. Anderson
with John Roxborough
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Gerald H. Anderson is director emeritus of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, and was editor of the IBMR.

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further analysis. Indeed, it is a must-read for anyone interested in exploring the ways in which the “Ethiopian Prophecy” has been used by black intellectuals over the past three centuries.

—Charles L. Chavis, Jr.

Charles L. Chavis, Jr., is studying the black church in the African diaspora at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, Tennessee. In 2011 he published “Yared (Saint, 505–571 AD),” on the sixth-century Ethiopian pioneer of musical notation, in BlackPast.org, an online reference guide to African American history.

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Portraits of a Radical Disciple: Recollections of John Stott’s Life and Ministry.


Thirty-four authors celebrate their friendship with John Stott in this warm and affectionate book. The book spans all of Stott’s life, including ministry in London as curate and rector at All Souls Church, his global reach, and his life with study assistants.

Readers who may be familiar with Timothy Dudley-Smith’s two-volume biography (John Stott [InterVarsity Press, 1999–2001]) may be wondering what else there is to add. Undoubtedly, the uniqueness of this volume is the variety of voices: from Michael Green, Dick Lucas, Michael Baughen, and Richard Bewes, to Stott’s longtime secretary, Frances Whitehead. Stott’s global family is also well represented by Ajith Fernando, Samuel Escobar, René Padilla, David Gitari, Michael Nazir-Ali, and Peter Kuzmič. Not surprisingly, there is uniformity of agreement on the usual themes: Stott was diligent in Bible study and delighted in bird watching; he defended the faith firmly, yet with grace; he exercised ruthless self-discipline and lived a simple lifestyle. Even for those who followed Stott closely, Frances Whitehead’s revelation that Stott emptied her office wastebasket every day for many years may come as a surprising example of Stott’s humility. We also learn that, when Stott sensed that Anglicanism was facing grave dangers, he convened a group of like-minded pastors so that they would be a source of strength for each other within the Anglican Church.

In a life that spanned almost a century, it is difficult to choose a highlight, but these words of Peter Kuzmič identify perhaps Stott’s greatest contribution: “It was at Lausanne [1974] that the world recognized John Stott as the apostle or, to put it in more secular terms, the chief engineer of evangelical unity in theological essentials and holistic mission. In his plenary presentation John laid foundations for the theme of the strategic gathering and provided definitional clarity, while resisting all temptations to evangelical triumphalism” (p. 151). Probably the final word should come from Keith and Gladys Hunt: “It’s enough to say that we know God better because of knowing John Stott” (p. 111).

—Casely B. Essamuah


Was Christianity a means of deafricanization and social control of slaves? Johnson Ajibade Adefila tackles the complex matter of comparing the impact Christian missionaries made on the religious and social activities of free West Africans living in their native lands with the impact of Christian preachers and teachers on enslaved Africans living in the United States.

The author clearly states his intention to “test the limits of the slaveholders’ culture and ideological hegemony over the slaves” (p.2) as a means of arguing that the institution of slavery did not deprive any slave of his or her personality or completely eradicate the slaves’ cultural identities. Chapter 1 focuses on free West Africans’ cultural and religious backgrounds and the continuation of these backgrounds in the experience of enslaved Africans. Eighteenth-century European Christian missionaries regarded West Africans as animists with no belief in a Supreme Being. The author refutes this premise, stating, “West Africans (or for that matter, all Africans) are, in their traditional lifestyles, deeply religious” (p.16). By the nineteenth century, European missionaries were observing and recording the ethnological differences among the Yorubas and Igbo of southwestern and eastern Nigeria and noting recurring themes of “God” or “Deity” as a “Supreme Being” (pp.17–22). The author’s own words, however, weaken his argument that the worlds of the free West Africans and enslaved Africans in the United States were comparable: “The reality is, among West Africans, Christianity largely was adapted to meet people’s mundane needs … and African American slaves, on the other hand sought to make Christianity their most pressing need—the achievement of freedom here in this world” (p.136).

As much as I like this work and consider it an interesting contribution to the field, the topic chosen is too broad and too complex to be addressed through library research alone. Because the conditions and circumstances of free West Africans and enslaved Africans in America were fundamentally different life experiences, the comparisons are not accurate. Even in areas where white and black preachers both sermonized “obey your Master,” the reactions of the slaves varied dramatically. The majority of slaves may have internally questioned (but seldom verbally did so) whether the reference was to the God of Christianity or to the mortal white master who owned, beat, and killed them at will. Adefila has not been to the United States to review the narratives written by and about slaves or even to contact the descendants of plantation slaves who suffered continual physical and psychological trauma for over 250 years of institutional slavery here. It is ludicrous to portray enslaved Africans in the United States as counterparts on an equal footing to free West Africans practicing their cultural and religious traditions on their African soil, even though Christian missionaries were present with them.

—Darnell Alanda Morehand-Olufade

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