The longer I follow Jesus and study Christian mission, the more sense it makes to live in light of both the big picture of the missio Dei and the small, daily opportunities right in front of me. The apostle Paul conducted his missionary service this way. For example, at a particular historical moment he encouraged Gentile Christians to contribute on behalf of famine-stricken Judean believers by appealing to God’s larger purposes for Israel and the world (Rom. 15:25–27). Perhaps even more pointed is the way Jesus was ever conscious of God’s macro plan of salvation, but was all the while responsive to micro-level needs and interruptions. Just prior to his crucifixion and resurrection, knowing that “the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God,” Jesus served his disciples through the menial task of washing their feet (John 13:1–5).

Jesus’ disciples heard him teach about life and about God’s macro relation to Israel and the world for three years, all the while watching him serve, perform miracles, and otherwise relate to various specific people. At their final gathering with the risen Jesus, the disciples asked him perhaps the most macro question they could muster: “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). These heirs of Israel’s heritage were articulating their national longing for the restoration of King Solomon’s splendor after a millennium of division, exile, and subjugation. The macro expectation that gripped the disciples both fueled their imagination about the larger meaning of Jesus’ life and filtered their expectations for who this Nazarene was in relation to their own particular lives. It seems that we human beings inevitably carry compelling visions of deity and the world that affect how we live our daily lives.

Jesus gave his disciples a combined macro/micro answer. He noted how, on a macro level, God alone knows when and

**Mission Macro and Micro**

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how the historical developments about which they were asking will take place. On a micro level, Jesus’s followers, empowered by the outpouring of God’s Spirit, would serve him in all sorts of situations in Jerusalem and elsewhere, events of which we learn through Christian mission history.

The undertow of almost any Christian’s sense of the missio Dei is that God has acted decisively in Jesus Christ to re-create this world that went wrong. In light of the Christ event, God’s people participate with the Holy Spirit in his mission in a myriad of micro-level situations throughout the world. Our particular Christian traditions variously depict the contours and hues of the macro missio Dei and its particular components. But no matter how we might emphasize different aspects of the big picture, we all as Jesus’ followers—mission analysts included—must engage people in micro contexts of mission. Just as Jesus focused on the people right in front of him, we all must interact with the real, live people whose concrete situations we share in life. It does no good to contemplate the vastness of the ocean of life if we neglect the immediate conditions of our own rowboats, the surrounding waves and weather, and, most important, our fellow passengers in the boat, with whom we struggle to row forward in our particular locales.

Thankfully, the International Bulletin of Missionary Research has a running tradition of combined macro/micro focus. The breadth of God’s “international,” millennia-lasting mission is the scope of its interests. At the same time, as a “bulletin of missionary research,” the IBMR examines particular people and situations—whether in Japan, eastern Europe, southeastern Nigeria, or Indonesia, to highlight some of the contexts considered and situations—whether in Japan, eastern Europe, southeastern Nigeria, or Indonesia, to highlight some of the contexts considered by articles in this issue. The eight-page insert “Christianity in Nigeria, or Indonesia, to highlight some of the contexts considered and situations—whether in Japan, eastern Europe, southeastern

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Emerging Missional Movements: An Overview and Assessment of Some Implications for Mission(s)

Rick Richardson

In contemporary interchanges in the United States on the theology of the church and praxis of ecclesiology, “missional” has become a code word for a claim to the moral high ground. But what does it mean to be genuinely missional, to have the missio Dei, or mission of God, as the core to the identity of the church? Are there varieties of missional church today? If so, what are their distinctives? Is the missional shift in ecclesiological discussion a harbinger of a missional shift in structures and practices, especially in relation to the church as it is found in the West? Or is it just another conversation that helps to sell books and to make a new group of leaders and writers prominent but that will leave little lasting change in its wake? In this article, which builds on my previous study of the topic, I suggest a fuller typology of missional church and raise critical issues that must be addressed if these emerging missional streams are to endure and to have a lasting impact.¹

What does it mean to be missional? In a recent book Craig Van Gelder suggests the following four theological distinctives that mark missional churches (in italics; the comments on each in regular type are mine):

- **God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world.** This sending is rooted in the sending by the Father of the Son and the sending by the Father and the Son of the Spirit. This action of God takes place within the very being of the Trinity. This sending energy or force is part of God’s identity. The church is the people of God indwelt by the presence of God, and so this sending DNA is constitutive of the identity of the church. The church should not be seen as having a missions program or component. Instead, God’s mission has a church. The church in its core identity is simultaneously sent and sending.

- **God’s mission in the world is related to the reign (kingdom) of God.** This reign encompasses all that God has planned since the beginning for extending his rule through human beings to the entire earth, begun in Genesis 1, challenged in Genesis 3 and 11 with the declaration of human autonomy from God’s rule, pursued by God through the election of Abraham and Israel, inaugurated through Jesus’ death and resurrection and the gift of the Spirit, and fulfilled in Jesus’ return and in a city in which nature and culture are blended, completed, and filled with the presence and glory of God.

- **The missional church is an incarnational (versus attractional) ministry sent to engage a postmodern, post-Christendom, globalized context.** The missional church is not just a Western church, either. In its many global and glocal expressions, the church engages its context incarnationally and contextually.

- **The internal life of the missional church focuses on every believer living as a disciple engaging in mission.** The church is not only the gathered church but is also the scattered church, infiltrating every sphere of society, every geographic and economic location in a community, and every node and network in an interconnected world.²

The difference in orientation between the missional church and attractional churches is fundamental, though the two outlooks are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Churches can and should be scattering and gathering. But missional churches move toward challenging the secular, individualistic, consumer-oriented, therapeutic-style, business-imitating, market-driven, building-dominated church of the West. They seek to model an alternative kingdom community oriented toward service and mission and to be the incarnation-like extension of Jesus’ ministry, values, and presence into the world. In contrast, the attractional church of the West tends to think of people as consumers, reinforcing the pervasive practice of church shopping and turning pastors into commodities paid to provide the religious goods, services, and experiences that congregants can consume.

**Emerging Missional Movements: A Typology**

The impulses finding expression in the missional church have given rise to a new generation of torchbearers for missional theology and practice. The most recent expressions include at least five streams, which I think will be dominant in the first decades of this century. To the four identified by Tom Sine in The New Conspirators—the Missional Stream, the eMerging Stream, the Multiethnic Stream, and the Neo-Monastic Stream—I add a fifth, the Multiplying Stream.³ I identify each one briefly, giving examples of leading spokespersons and often a representative publication.

**The Missional Stream.** Influenced by the writings of Lesslie Newbigin,⁴ a group of Christian scholars founded the Gospel and Our Culture Network and began calling for a missional and prophetic engagement with Western culture. This stream’s books The Church between Gospel and Culture and especially The Missional Church have stimulated missionally oriented renewal in many mainline churches.⁵ Its leaders include Darrell Guder (Princeton Theological Seminary), George Hunsberger (Western Theological Seminary), Lois Barrett (Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary), Craig Van Gelder (Luther Seminary), and Alan Roxburgh (The Missional Network), each of whom has written additional books building on the foundation of The Missional Church that have deepened and extended the influence of this network or stream.⁶

This missional stream has influenced the other four streams of this typology in a profound way, though the influence has not always been direct.⁷ At the same time, different ecclesiasti-
cal traditions are adapting missional-church ideas to their own traditions, creating a new synthesis that both reinforces their tradition and also expands it in somewhat new directions. The more the traditions lean toward conservative and evangelical perspectives, the more the missional emphasis is on evangelism. The more the traditions lean toward mainline and liberal perspectives, the more the emphasis is on justice and the betterment of society. Some observations:

- While conservative evangelicals emphasize attrac-
tional strategies for evangelism, they are becoming more focused on how to extend evangelism through their members into the world as a result of the missional conversation. Nevertheless, their focus remains firmly on the priority of evangelism in the mission of God.
- Church-growth-oriented evangelicals integrate their emphasis on church growth with an emphasis on every member being a missionary and every social and geographic location and network being a mission field. These groups, influenced by Australians Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost (coauthors of the influential book *The Shaping of Things to Come*), are also doing more to come to terms with the increasing social marginaliza-
tion and political pressures the church is facing. They go beyond conservative evangelicals by emphasizing holistic ministry and impact, but they still maintain a very strong accent on church growth as a crucial result.
- Mainline groups tend to emphasize the compas-
sion, relief, and justice aspects of the mission, rooted in a theology of the kingdom of God that is open to a strong focus on social activism. These traditions are being influenced by the missional conversation toward more intentional witness in the world, but maintain their social and systemic focus.
- Academic leaders press the theological agenda of developing an adequate theology of the Trinity and of the missio Dei as the root of any and every particular expression of missional ecclesiology and practice in the world. These leaders also emphasize God’s agency as primary and have worked to develop this idea in richly theological directions. They keep the activists in the broader missional conversation from becoming human centered and exclusively pragmatic. At the same time, as the primary initiators of the missional conversation, they have needed to respond to the ques-
tions of practitioners, supplying models and principles of practice in order to be heard more broadly and to have an impact on how churches and Christians actually live.

*The Emerging Stream.* Since the early 1990s, a group first of young British and now increasingly U.S. and Australian leaders have engaged postmodern culture. They are relational and experiential, involved in the arts, more inclined toward narrative theology than propositional theology. They are also focused on local and incar-
national expressions of mission. Leaders include Brian McLaren (author of the initial influential book *A New Kind of Christian*), Tony Jones (blogger and theologian in residence at Solomon’s Porch, a church in Minneapolis led by Doug Pagitt), Dan Kimball (pastor of Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California, and author of *They Like Jesus But Not the Church*), and Spencer Burke (creator of the influential blog site TheOoze). Separately, a more Reformed and less theologically radical stream of emerging churches stands as a case by itself. Mark Driscoll’s Mars Hill Church in Seattle and the Acts 29 national network of churches is an expression of this Neo-Reformed tributary. Telling its story adequately and assessing its importance would require a separate article. Initially part of the Emergent group of leaders, Driscoll helped to propel all things “emerging” into prominence.

The emerging church has fragmented into three streams with different trajectories: Relevants, Reconstructionists, and Revisionists. Relevants are theologically conservative but culturally innovative and liberal. Dan Kimball and Mark Driscoll would tend to embrace this stance.

Reconstructionists are seeking not just to redefine strategy, but to redefine ecclesiology, often emphasizing the church as alternative community in a more Anabaptist direction, or the church as a community being restored to its biblical roots as illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles. Darrel Guder (Princeton Seminary) and George Hunsberger (Western Seminary) have championed the more Anabaptist direction, and Michael Frost (Morley College, Sydney) and Alan Hirsch (Forge International) have championed combining missional incarnational ideas with church growth and church multiplication ideas, emphasizing restoring the church to its roots as pictured in Acts.

Revisionists are rethinking the basic theology and ethics of the church, using more postmodern, socially constructionist epistemologies and operate with greater awareness of issues of social location and social power. Brian McLaren (author and speaker), Tony Jones (theo-
logical blogger), and Nadia Bolz-Weber (House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver) would tend to cham-
pion this approach. This revisionist stream has been the most frequent object of criticism by conservative evangelicals. I acknowledge that the revisionists are asking fundamentally important questions but hold that they are also drifting away from primary Protes-
tant and evangelical understandings of atonement, the cross, and the authority of Scripture.

*The Multiethnic Stream.* A growing number of multiethnic, urban-oriented churches are embracing a Gospel based on the theology of the kingdom that sees evangelism, justice, and reconciliation as core to the Gospel. Leaders include John Perkins and Wayne Gordon (coleading the Community Christian Development Association), Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson (authors of the *Hip Hop Church: Connecting with the Movement Shaping Our Culture*), Erwin McManus (Mosaic Church in Los Angeles), Brenda Salter McNeil (Seattle Pacific University), and David Gibbons (founding pastor of New Song Church in Los Angeles). Though they can overlap somewhat, two smaller streams are tributaries to the multiethnic stream.

- The tributary that I call Community and Leadership Development Churches focuses on developing leaders from within the community who contribute toward the spiritual, economic, social, and physical growth and well-being of their neighborhood and community. They pursue activities as diverse as preaching the Gos-pel, growing the church, rehabbing and selling homes,
starting businesses, launching health clubs and health clinics, and running drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers. John Perkins and Wayne Gordon (cofounders of the Community Christian Development Association), and the late Glen Kehrein (Circle Urban Ministries in Chicago) have been key leaders for this tributary.

- Multiracial churches focus on issues of racial reconciliation. These churches, often located in urban settings near universities and businesses, frequently consist of young urban professionals. They tend to choose locations where they can have some community development ministry and can easily attract diversity. Mostly educated and middle class and consciously focused on diversity issues, these congregations are often predominantly Asian American and white American, though some of them focus more on the African American/Anglo divide in society. David Anderson (Bridgeway Community Church in Maryland), Mark DeYmaz (Mosaic Church, Arkansas), and David Gibbons are key leaders in this tributary.13

The Neo-Monastic Stream. More diverse in age and ethnicity than the other four streams, the Neo-Monastic stream is presently being fueled by the growing interest of young people in global justice issues. For instance, Scott Bessenecker, in The New Friars,14 deals with the rapid increase of youth movements focused on more radical and communal involvement with the poor, such as among the communities connected to the Cairo garbage dumps. These groups take their inspiration from past monastic movements. They are forming communities that adopt a rule of life and often live among the poor. Leaders include Shane Claiborne (The Simple Way in Philadelphia), John Hayes (Inner Change in London), and Pete Greig (24/7 prayer and boiler rooms in the United Kingdom, United States, and spreading elsewhere).15

The main differentiation to be made between various expressions of this stream derives from when they were founded.

- Several communities were founded in the 1950s as part of a post–World War II rethinking of the relation between Christ and culture, including the L’Abri community (founded in Switzerland in 1955, L’Abri had significant impact in the United States) and Reba Place Fellowship (founded in Evanston, Illinois, in 1957).
- Many communities were founded around the time of the Jesus Movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. Most of these communities no longer exist, but the Jesus People USA (Chicago) and the Word of God community (Ann Arbor, Michigan, and elsewhere through the Sword of the Spirit association of churches) are two examples of communities that live by a rule of life, share possessions in common, and seek to be engaged in the neighborhoods that surround them. They have survived and at points even thrived. The movements founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s tended to suffer from skepticism toward previous leaders and earlier movements. Often they were unable to accept lessons that leaders of earlier movements had learned through experience and could have shared, contributing to a high level of unsustainability and failure.
- Newer communities—especially those connected with the 2004 meeting in Durham, North Carolina, where an agreed-upon rule of life entitled the “Twelve Marks” was written for use by new monastic communities—are not tied to a particular model of sharing possessions and purses but are driven by a desire to create various forms of community and to be engaged in significant ministries of compassion. Some emphasize community more, some emphasize social engagement more. The community oriented ones are often more pastoral, sectarian, and stable; the social engagement oriented communities are often more immersed, prophetic, and fragile.16 Rutba House and Simple Way are two examples of this newer wave of communities, and their leaders, Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, have been the most widely influential within the movement. These communities have tended to be far more open to learning from leaders of earlier movements, and that openness has contributed to greater potential for longevity and sustainability.

The Multiplying Stream. This stream displays considerable continuity with the seeker church (Bill Hybels and Willow Creek Church) and purpose-driven church (Rick Warren and Saddleback Church) movements, though many in this stream define themselves in opposition to their “parents.” More than the seeker church movement, the Multiplying Stream focuses on multiplying congregations through reproducing leaders. Though many in this group demonstrate theological continuity with traditional evangelical theology, they are influenced by postmodern culture in their understandings of leadership, team, and the power of the Internet for communicating ideas and distributing resources. For example in relation to team,
two years, the conference has grown in attendance (5,400 church planters in 2013, with 40,000 more connected via webcast) and maintained a strong focus on missional leaders and models. Three tributaries join to form this last major stream.

- Church planters form the largest number of leaders, with church planting emphases and church planting resources and conferences increasing in number and impact for many denominations and groups. Many of these leaders are being influenced toward becoming missional through the largest church planter conferences, such as Exponential Conference (www.exponential.org) and Verge (www.vergenetwork.org).
- Multisite leaders are an influential group within this larger stream because they have developed a model and methods for growing their churches through the multiplication of sites and leaders. The multisite, multiple-leader model avoids some of the barriers to building large megachurches, such as funding for immense buildings, finding land, and negotiating zoning issues. Younger leaders embrace multisite models since they provide oversight, mentoring, and resources for planting new works. In other words, they provide a context of church planting “with the training wheels on,” as some younger planters like to say.
- Leaders embracing a vision of exponential growth call for reproducing not just churches but networks of churches through the leadership of “apostolic” people. These leaders cast a compelling vision of networks, churches through the leadership of “apostolic” people. These leaders attract younger leaders, are gifted church planters themselves, and communicate well. Neil Cole (Cell Church) and Dave Ferguson (New Thing Network) are just two examples.17

**Implications for Mission(s)**

What are the implications of these fresh expressions of church and mission for missionaries, mission agencies, sending denominations, and sending congregations? What new forms of mission must be developed? How can mission boards attract the most creative emerging leaders to work with them in cross-cultural mission?

Emerging leaders are flowing to the fresh expressions of church and of mission, but they are generally not as avid to serve with established mission boards and agencies. Established (or perhaps “legacy”) boards and agencies tend to attract young people who have grown up in conservative churches, attended Christian schools, and too often are somewhat isolated from the most creative expressions of church and mission today. Mission boards, however, that are able to attract the brightest among emerging leaders are the ones that will have the creative capacity to reinvent and renew mission thinking and practice for the furtherance of the Gospel in the coming fifty years. At present, even the word “missionary” and the image evoked by traditional mission boards are more liabilities to be overcome than strengths to be built upon. Most younger leaders do not think that traditional organizations are pursuing forms of mission appropriate for today, and they are concerned that mission boards and leaders are not flexible enough in their thinking and planning.

In the remainder of this article I summarize five changes that are crucial for global mission today. For clarity, I phrase my recommendations in contrast to twentieth-century evangelical attitudes and convictions. Doing so is important, for many leaders in the various emerging missional streams are themselves reacting to the reductionism and cultural captivity of their own background in evangelical churches, mission agencies, denominations, and parachurch movements. The stance of being in reaction against a circumscribed evangelical past is met frequently within all the missional streams, but it is especially clear in Revisionist Stream leaders (see, for further explanation, Deep Church, by Jim Belcher).18 At present, these leaders from an evangelical background are exercising a disproportionate level of influence throughout the missional conversation, and generally their outlook regarding the role of historic mission boards and leaders is reserved or negative.

In addition to challenging mission boards (which need, where appropriate, to embrace the newer missional insights and language), I wish to challenge the emerging missional leaders in the various streams to seek for balance in their reaction to their past. Can new syntheses that transcend past and present debates be found that will better prepare mission boards and their leaders and missional church leaders and the various emerging missional streams to collaborate with God in his mission in the world?

**Overcoming dichotomies.** In the past century, evangelicals overemphasized verbal proclamation and underemphasized deeds of love and signs of God’s presence and power. Nineteenth-century evangelicals, in contrast, wed words and deeds well (though they were not necessarily attentive to signs of God’s power). Under the influence especially of Latin American evangelicals Samuel Escobar and René Padilla at Lausanne in 1974, evangelicals in general have been gradually recovering integration of word and deed (if not of sign). Contemporary missional leaders, sometimes in response to their evangelical past, tend to overemphasize acts of compassion and mercy and underemphasize boldly challenging people to enter the kingdom and trust and follow Jesus. Only the Multiplying Stream avoids this tendency, but even the Multiplying Stream can be seen to jettison the word “evangelism” so as to escape its historical baggage.

We need to get beyond the evangelism/social action (or word/deed) dichotomy, rooted as it is in Enlightenment polarities such as spiritual/material, sacred/secular, and private/public, and to embrace an integrated holism in which the church lives its faith and shares its life instead of treating these two as though they were separable, dichotomized activities. Mother Teresa, with her prayer to be given “souls” (of the dying) and “saints” (of the serving) as she cradled the dying in her arms, resonates with this generation more than does Billy Graham.

Missional churches and leaders that proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God in word, deed, and sign toward the transformation of whole people in their whole social context will have far more cachet with the emerging generation than will evangelistic groups that distinguish strongly between “saving souls,” “healing bodies,” and “redeeming communities.” More important, groups that are more holistic in outlook will also be more biblically balanced and therefore more holistic in impact.

**Relating to culture.** Evangelicals in the past century and missional movements in the present century tend to embrace monolithic views toward whatever is the dominant culture.19 In the past century, evangelicals embraced the rationalistic and empirical orientation of modernity, seeking to prove the existence of God and to develop logico-propositional formulations of the Gospel, defenses of the faith, and systems of theology that were put forward as being as authoritative as the Scriptures. Conversely, some contemporary missional leaders show themselves able to
embrace a philosophical postmodernism that dissolves truth into experience, word into imagination, and conversion into community. At times, some Multiplying Stream leaders pursue a pragmatism that is more reflective of philosophical perspectives articulated by Richard Rorty than they might realize or intend. Contemporary missional leaders need to reflect more deeply and with discernment on the culture in which they minister and the degree to which that culture has coopted their paradigms and practices.

Many religious conversations about culture have tended to be monolithic, one-size-fits-all, rather than being discerning and responding to specific cultural trends and practices on a case-by-case basis. Rather than responding to cultures monolithically—whether they be modern, postmodern, or post-Christendom—we need to embrace a nuanced and integrated vision of the ways Christianity and cultures interpenetrate. Missional stream leaders such as Guder, Hunsberger, and Van Gelder have understood this necessity, but others have yet to address adequately the need to relate to cultures in discerning ways.

**Seeking epistemological humility.** Twentieth-century evangelicals often claimed epistemological certainty about their objectivity and grasp of the truth, extending at times to minute theological and subcultural distinctives and details. Such certainty was often the basis for splitting churches and movements. But no person has a God’s-eye view of reality or of the Scriptures. In contrast, some missional and emerging leaders, especially emerging revisionists, embrace a theological and ethical relativism and a thoroughgoing perspectivalism that undermines any passionate conviction about even the most basic truths of the Gospel (e.g., that God’s kingdom has been decisively inaugurated, that Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins, that he was raised bodily for new life, and that Scripture is an authoritative word for all times and all peoples in all cultures). At the same time, many of the missional movements, including some Reconstructionists and Neo-Monastics, tend to underestimate propositional kinds of truth and overemphasize ethical obedience to Jesus as the primary critical mark of faithfulness to the Gospel.

We need to get beyond the conservative/liberal split regarding epistemology that pervaded the church in the West during the twentieth century. George Lindbeck, in his influential book *The Nature of Doctrine*, characterized this dichotomy as the contrast between the cognitive propositional approach of the conservatives and the experiential expressivist approach of the liberals. Instead, we need not only to recognize with humility the particularity of the cultural linguistic worlds in which we live and interpret and understand truth, but also to embrace a confidence in the canon of Scripture that can guide our interaction with our tradition and shape our communication of truth so that our word is not just true for us alone but is truly a word for the world.

**Affirming basic convictions.** Twentieth-century evangelicals emphasized Jesus’s birth, death, and resurrection, drawing on the Pauline epistles for their interpretation, while minimizing their focus on Jesus’ life, teachings, and ethics in the formation of their theology. Conversely, missional church leaders today—sometimes in reaction to their conservative past—tend to emphasize Jesus’ proclamation of God’s kingdom, his ethical teachings, and his missional lifestyle, sometimes giving minimal emphasis to Jesus’ death and resurrection and to the Pauline and historic theological interpretation of these events. We need to get beyond the Paul-versus-Synoptic-Gospels dichotomy that is prevalent in emerging and missional church debates, and to embrace an overarching eschatological framework that integrates the Christ of Paul with the Jesus of the Synoptics. Emerging missional movements have wondered how the proclaimor (Jesus) became the proclaimed, and how a person (again Jesus) became so many propositions. They want to recover his fresh and radical commitment to forging a community in which he restored God’s rule to the blind, lame, poor, least, and lost. They wonder how a church that proclaims Jesus and his death and resurrection seems in its life and ethic and in its forms of mission to look so little like Jesus. The doctrinal language about Jesus has become for many younger leaders dead language because it seems so often not to result in lives that look like Jesus.

As we recover the ethics and mission of Jesus, we need, however, to stay rooted in the profound theological and eschatological reflections on the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection that especially Paul explored for us. Let us not forget that Paul and Jesus lived in very similar ways, with the result that Paul’s proclamation about Jesus was never severed at all from his call to live like Jesus, counting others better than himself, looking to their interests, reaching needy people everywhere. Similarly, Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom always looked forward to his death and resurrection to ransom the world and to inaugurate the life of the age to come. Both Jesus and Paul preached a radical Gospel of the rule of God, inaugurated in Jesus, carried on by the Holy Spirit, and fulfilled in the return of Christ. This eschatological lens helps us integrate Jesus and Paul, story and proposition, life and word. We need healthy theological integration of soteriology and eschatology. We need to work out our salvation on the basis of the eschatological work that God has uniquely accomplished in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection and in the gift of the Spirit. These are all end-times events that have been inaugurated in the middle of God’s anticipated rule over all of history.

**Renewing ecclesiology.** In recent decades evangelicals, influenced by church-growth thinking, have emphasized attractional ministries based on substantial resources, paid clergy, and access to buildings and land. In contrast, missional leaders tend to emphasize incarnational forms of ministry, no professional clergy, and the church scattered rather than gathered. Here missional leaders are providing a way forward for all of us. We need to get beyond our pervasive Christendom forms and patterns of church, with their emphasis on buildings, political influence, resource control, cultural imposition, Western leadership styles, and Western expertise. In place of these we must seek to become a movement of exponential growth, led by local apostolic and evangelistic leaders filled by the Holy Spirit.

Mission leaders in every generation need to come to terms with their own inevitable obsolescence, with the necessity of devising lower-cost models of mission that put power in the hands of local leaders sooner rather than later, and with fostering multiplying movements of cells and churches under the direction of younger leaders.

**Most younger leaders are concerned that mission boards and leaders are not flexible enough in their thinking and planning.**
ultimately of the Holy Spirit. The new models called for will not just emphasize the scattered church but will also suggest new forms for the gathered church that are not dependent on the West or on immense resources and elaborate buildings. In addition, we need some mission leaders to engage with the accelerating marginalization of the Western church in Western society so as to show a new future in which the Western church will operate without all the economic and political power it has previously held. We need to become less supportive and aligned with the powers that be and more adept at prophetic engagement. This lesson from the Neo-Monastic movement is drawing the attention of many young people today and is modeling biblical forms of alternative community that can survive and thrive in situations in which the church finds itself marginalized. At the same time, missional movement thinkers can too easily embrace a naive Restorationism, claiming an ability to foster forms of church that skip back over centuries of diverse cultural, linguistic, and theological traditions that necessarily have shaped the church and contextualized the Gospel in diverse and often good ways. We cannot erase twenty centuries of the Holy Spirit’s (and the enemy’s) work in and through the church—and we ought not to want to. Instead, we must seek to reappropriate the diversity of ecclesial traditions and practices and to reorient them in accord with a core missional identity, leading to a multiplicity of contextualized missional expressions and impact. Indeed, God’s mission does not have a one-size-fits-all restorationist church that can be cut whole cloth from the early pages of the Book of Acts. Instead, God’s mission has a multitude of churches from almost every cultural-linguistic family on earth, each hammering out theology and practice on the anvils of its unique physical and cultural environment.

As mission board and emerging missional stream leaders together pursue these syntheses, instead of living in the inherited dichotomies set up by our modernist past and our overreactions to that past, they have the opportunity to collaborate with God in renewing our evangelistic witness and our missional impact. Mission leaders can anticipate a harvest of laborers raised up from among the cream of the crop of emerging adults. As we pursue an integral holism of word, deed, and sign, as we nuance our responses to the cultures with which we are engaged, as we combine epistemological humility with canonical confidence, adopt an eschatological (kingdom) lens in our soteriology, and embrace a contextualized diversity of more missional and more modest models of church structure, resources, and power, the potential for a new Reformation of the church in which the ministry of the Gospel is truly carried forward by all the people of God becomes ever more imaginable. May God make it so!

Notes
7. Seeking to trace this influence, Van Gelder and Zscheile have suggested a typology in Missional Church in Perspective based on the way different groups imagine God’s presence to work in and through the church. Several of the people the authors describe (e.g., Alan Hirsch; personal conversation) do not agree fully with Van Gelder and Zscheile’s characterizations of them.
11. See, for instance, D. A. Carson, Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), and Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, Why We’re Not Emergent: by Two Guys Who Should Be (Chicago: Moody, 2008).
13. For Anderson and DeYoung, see David A. Anderson, Gracism: The Art of Inclusion (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2007); Mark DeYoung, Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).
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Mennonite Mission Theorists and Practitioners in Southeastern Nigeria: Changing Contexts and Strategy at the Dawn of the Postcolonial Era

R. Bruce Yoder

During the twentieth century, Western understanding of both Christianity and Christian mission underwent significant change. Participants in the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh shared the assumption that Christianity was something that Western missionaries introduced and cultivated in lands where it was not the yet present. The conference sought to enhance missionary collaboration for the completion of that task and encouraged them in use of “rigorous methods of modern social science.”1 By the time of that conference’s centennial celebration in 2010, mission and the context in which it is practiced had changed dramatically. Mission no longer happens in the context of colonialism, but of globalization.2 Religiously, Christianity has ceased to be a Western religion. African, Asian, and Latin American theologians have long proposed theologies that they consider to be more appropriate for their contexts than those offered by Western missionaries. Demographically, Southern Christians had, by the early 1980s, surpassed their Northern counterparts and are predicted by the year 2100 to do so by a ratio of more than three to one.3 Post–World War II migrations have brought an influx of Southern Christians, who have introduced North Atlantic populations to an increasing diversity of the faith.4

By 2010 new centers for the study of world, or global, Christianity had been established, but decades earlier Western missionaries working in the Global South were among the first to call attention to these religious shifts. This article analyzes the conversation between Mennonite missionaries, mission administrators, and members of African Initiated Churches (AICs) in southeastern Nigeria from 1958 to 1967, highlighting the shifting conceptions of Christianity and of mission evident there. Use of a comparative approach demonstrates the importance local political conceptions of Christianity and of mission evident there. As a couple, the Hostetlers were often pioneers, being the first MBMC missionaries assigned to a new field in Bihar State, India, the first (along with two others) to serve in Ghana, and the first on the scene in Nigeria. In India their labor to plant the first congregations had been slow and arduous. Success came a few converts at a time, not by large groups, as had been the experience of some other missionaries there.5 In Nigeria the group S. J. Hostetler visited provided a list of sixty congregations. He found the prospect of immediately taking in nearly 3,000 members—and the schools and medical work he envisioned as associated with this “bigger church than any we have on any mission field”—to be “thrilling.”6

Mass Movements

In India the slow process of conversions and church growth had been frustrating for the Hostetlers and their fellow missionaries. There, early twentieth-century group conversion of castes or villages had become a significant part of missionary expectation and strategy.6 The Mennonite missionaries working during the century’s second quarter were severely disappointed not to experience similar mass movements toward Christianity in their districts.7 A 1938 survey, called by John Lapp “one of the most sober, penetrating critiques of the American Mennonite Mission ever produced,” outlined the meager results of their efforts.8 One response to the missionaries’ sense of failure was to open a new field in Bihar with the hope of doing better there, and the Hostetlers were assigned as the new field’s first missionaries. Alas, the rate of conversions and the establishment of new congregations in Bihar were not remarkably better.9 But in Nigeria, the large influx of new Mennonites that had eluded the missionaries in India would, it seemed, finally occur. An exciting prospect indeed!

The Indigenous Nature of the Church

When the Hostetlers arrived in Ghana, they planned to collaborate with Ghanaian George Thomson, who had learned of the Mennonite Church while traveling in Europe. Upon returning to his homeland, he had organized a Ghanaian Mennonite Church. In order to encourage indigenous agency, Hostetler and his colleagues intended to enter an unoccupied field in the north of Ghana, leaving the southern work in Thomson’s hands. Finding, however, no unoccupied fields in the north, they settled in the south and attached themselves to a number of Thomson’s projects: a girls’ hostel, a school, and a program of Bible study by correspondence.10 But they still desired to minimize missionary control and foreign subsidy in order to ensure indigeneity.11

Close proximity brought disagreements. Thomson’s hostel and school, envisioned by him as self-sustaining, were not, and conflicts with coworkers and creditors ensued. When a creditor
sued for nonpayment, the Ghana Mennonite Church was named as codefendant. Hostetler eventually took control of the church in order to protect its good name, and Thomson soon left. Rather than collaborating with the church, the missionaries were now in charge.

In Nigeria similar concerns about maintaining the indigenous nature of the church were foremost in Hostetler’s mind. His plan was to encourage local leadership and to assist with schools, medical facilities, workers, and other needs that might arise. How to do so was not immediately clear; it was a matter, he wrote, “to be found by counsel and trial and error.” He nevertheless recommended formalization of an agreement between

MBMC and the Nigerian group that would incorporate “policies of indigenous church building.” When Hostetler received permission from MBMC in December 1958 to start accepting the Nigerian AIC congregations into a new Mennonite Church Nigeria (MCN), the Nigerians had already preempted him, having a month earlier identified themselves as such without waiting for MBMC’s approval.

The new year of 1959 brought cause for caution. Wendell Broom, a Church of Christ missionary serving in Nigeria, wrote to Hostetler questioning the character of A. A. Dick, the Nigerian leader of MCN. Broom claimed that Dick was already affiliated with another denomination and that he often made promises of material assistance to congregations so that they would join his group. This information caused Hostetler to raise the possibility of, as in Ghana seven months earlier, taking “the church much more in our own control than we had expected.” While he mulled over the question of whether to intervene to safeguard the integrity of MCN and MBMC or to take a hands-off approach to protect the church’s indigenous nature, MCN acted on its own initiative, ousting Dick for fraud and naming a new leader.

Over the next months Hostetler traveled periodically to Nigeria, visiting congregations and accepting them into MCN. He would preach and explain Mennonite doctrine during a worship service. If the congregation was in agreement, he would officially receive it into the denomination via a form outlining twenty doctrinal beliefs that he and the local leader would sign. In June 1959 he reported that twenty-seven congregations had been formally received into MCN and that many more were waiting to join.

Ecumenism

Although Hostetler strove to maintain good relations with other denominations, he recognized that by 1958, churches in southeastern Nigeria no longer followed the strict comity agreements of earlier days. The major Protestant mission churches in the region had a legacy of comity agreements, but new churches and missions, both foreign and local, were active. Competition was rife; Hostetler saw things as “quite evidently a free-for-all.” He thought that MBMC should feel free to establish a Mennonite Church alongside the others already present.

The main strands of Hostetler’s approach to mission are clear. His experience in India and his awareness of mass movements to Christianity there had primed him for the possibility that Nigerians might enter the Mennonite Church en masse. His concern for the indigenous nature of the church is evident. He sought to keep subsidies at a minimum and preferred to allow indigenous leaders to control the church. He was ready, however, to intervene when it seemed that the integrity of the church was at stake. Finally, he seems to have been largely unconcerned about mission comity agreements and the ecumenical impulses upon which they rested.

Edwin and Irene Weaver

Hostetler’s work forms a backdrop for appreciating the sharp changes in outlook and direction taken by Edwin and Irene Weaver. Like the Hostetlers, they had previously served as MBMC missionaries in India, arriving in Nigeria in November 1959. Over the course of that year Hostetler had been forming some of the AIC congregations that had invited MBMC to Nigeria into the new Mennonite Church Nigeria by accepting them one by one into the church. The Weavers were expected to continue that process and to facilitate the establishment of needed educational and health-care institutions for the church. Instead, they stopped the process of accepting new congregations into MCN, assisted with the development of a Presbyterian affiliated hospital, worked with and studied the multitude of AICs in the area, and placed North American Mennonite personnel in Presbyterian and government schools, hospitals, and agricultural projects. While their relationship with MCN was at first ambiguous, a constructive rapport evolved over time as they balanced attention to AICs with MCN’s desire to appropriate a Mennonite identity.

Mass Movements

Although expectation of mass movements to Christianity had been significant for MBMC missionaries in India, the Weavers, who served three terms there, seem to have been largely unaffected by those concerns. Hostetler expressed exasperation about their lack of concern for the growth of MCN, writing to MBMC administrator John Howard Yoder that the Weavers were ambivalent about the existence of MCN and that they had expressed the view that if MBMC “must have a church,” then let it be ‘a small one!’

J. D. Graber, who as executive secretary of MBMC supervised both the Weavers and Hostetler, followed the work of Donald McGavran closely and consulted with him about strategy for MBMC’s work in Ghana. Graber sought to base the mission’s approach there on what he described as McGavran’s opinion that “in Africa we should be able to Christianize whole tribes of
people.”22 McGavran drew on his own experience as a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) missionary in India and the work of J. Waskom Pickett to advocate reorienting missionary resources from a centralized mission station approach to one that focused on identifying the likelihood of people movements and quickly bringing them into the church. There would be time later to assist converts in deepening their faith, a process McGavran called “perfecting.”23

In May 1960 Graber suggested to the Weavers that McGavran had written Bridges of God with the African situation in mind. He surmised that the independent churches in southeastern Nigeria were in McGavran’s “first stage” and needed the assistance of missionaries to progress to the next stages of “perfection.” He recommended McGavran’s How Churches Grow to the Weavers as “a very up-to-date philosophy of mission and church growth.”24 With respect to Bridges of God, Edwin responded, “It is my impression that Uyo does not quite fit what [McGavran] is trying to say in that book, the thesis of which I would wholeheartedly accept. . . . In any case principles good in themselves must not be taken per se to fit into and apply exactly the same in every situation. The history, the background, the culture, and so many things must be taken into consideration in applying principles to any given situation.”25 In India the Weavers had felt limited by supervisors who did not understand the situation they faced in the field. In Nigeria, however, MBMC gave them more freedom to work as they wished, and they resisted centralized and deductive approaches.26

Graber did not belabor the mass movement point. After he visited Nigeria the following December, his report to MBMC was upbeat. It lauded the Weavers’ work with MCN, applauded their involvement in the Presbyterian hospital ministry, and recommended sending additional North American personnel to work in Presbyterian medical and educational institutions. He did propose the establishment of an MBMC secondary school but was silent with respect to McGavran’s mass movement theories.27 In January 1961 Yoder reported to Edwin that he had spoken to McGavran about the strategy of assigning teachers to mission schools. McGavran cautioned against that approach, making a connection between a similar practice by mission agencies in the Congo and the lack of growth in the churches there.28 Again, the Weavers chose not to be diverted from the path that seemed to fit best with the needs they observed in Nigeria. With so many denominations already present in the region, the addition of another one and its subsequent growth, even if it was Mennonite, was not a priority for them. MBMC appointed a total of fifty-four people to the Nigeria field between 1959 and 1967, the majority assigned to work in schools and medical institutions affiliated with other missions.29

Working with Indigenous Churches

Like Hostetler, the Weavers were concerned to protect the indigenous character of the church, seeing indigenous ownership as an important priority. Early in their service in India they came to question mission structures that allowed missionaries to maintain control of the church. At first hesitant to express their views, with experience they felt freer to voice their opinions.30

On furlough in 1943, Edwin finished a degree at Biblical Seminary in New York City. Invited by MBMC to India for a second term, he wrote:

Personally I am not sure but that a temporary decrease in personnel in the Indian field is not a good thing. It will force the mission to relegate certain types of work more and more to the Indians. . . . Native Christians and churches want missionaries to come back, provided they come without a feeling of superiority, etc., etc. They more and more want greater recognition and greater responsibilities. Perhaps the present crisis has helped to bring about some of these adjustments in a more natural way without strain on either side. In regard to India the problem of our relation to our churches is going to become more real.31

Edwin’s observations were to prove prophetic. In 1946 he became bishop of the Mennonite Church of India and argued for transfer of control from missionary structures and personnel to Indian hands, as well as for increased Indian self-support. The idea was not new; discussions about transferring control had been ongoing in the previous decades. Although some missionaries argued that the Indian believers were not yet ready, everyone agreed that ownership must eventually pass to Indian hands. Significantly, in the same period the country achieved political independence in 1947. While Edwin was bishop, these questions caused such serious conflict that collaboration between the missionaries and Indian church leaders broke down.32 Eventually Graber visited India, December 1950 to March 1951, and worked with a unification commission to outline the structure of an amalgamated mission and church that allowed for greater Indian control of the work. MBMC agreed to assign its missionaries to the service of the Mennonite Church in India, and on July 1, 1952, the American Mennonite Mission ceased to exist as a separate entity.33

When the Weavers arrived in Nigeria at the end of 1959, they found similar impulses for greater independence, both in the national political realm and in the churches. Formal Nigerian independence would not take effect until October 1960, but the process toward independence was already under way. The AICs that had joined MCN were themselves a manifestation of the desire for increased Nigerian agency in ecclesial structures. The experience of the Qua Iboe Mission, which from the late nineteenth century had been the primary mission in the area and which had collaborated with the colonial government, provides a revealing instance. A spiritual revival started at the Qua Iboe mission station north of Uyo in 1927, but the revival overflowed the bounds of the mission-established churches and resulted in large numbers of converts and the establishment of AICs outside of Qua Iboe structures. Given the collaboration between the mission and the government, resistance to the mission and the establishment of competing AIC structures were ways that a repressed people could embody resistance to political and religious authorities.34

Within the Qua Iboe Mission itself friction arose between missionaries and indigenous Christians. Some church members resented what they considered to be rigid moral codes that missionaries imposed, including monogamy and a ban on mission-employed teachers living with their sisters and other female relatives. Although they were few and were often absent on leave, European missionaries monopolized leadership positions. Habitually short of funds, the mission required its churches to buy kerosene from its supply, even when it was cheaper elsewhere. This friction, along with a feeling that the missionaries were holding back information and not sharing their secrets of success with the Africans, could not but increase resentment.35 Such resentment on the part of the Qua Iboe church members made it more likely that they would initiate or join new AICs.

Antagonistic relationships between mission churches and the multitude of AICs in the region become sharper as the years progressed. Early in 1960 Edwin described the relationship between the two camps as one of “deep friction, jealousy, com-
petition, [and] resentment.”38 In December 1959, just weeks after the Weavers’ arrival, Qua Iboe missionaries advised them that adding the presence of MBMC in the region would only increase the confusion.39 The AICs that had taken on a Mennonite identity had other ideas. Earlier in the year they had communicated their opinion of missionaries from the mission churches, warning,

"Beware of the dogs that bark and bite. . . . By these dogs we mean certain missionaries from other denominations who will volunteer to backbite, ensnare, ill-advice and discourage you in whatever plans you have for our country. . . . These are hypocrites who twist the Bible teachings . . . in order to intimidate the people and exploit them; these are the brand of missionaries who fear any new church establishing in this country. . . . These are the brand of missionaries who make a thousand and one promises but fulfill none, these are the brand of imperialists and their stooges who find it impossible to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of Nigeria.38"

Adamant in their rejection of the current ecclesial structures, the African Christians sought for the churches the same move toward independence as they saw happening in the wider Nigerian political context. Members of the newly formed MCN wrote: “It will be difficult for you [missionaries] to work in our midst if you will not be able to appreciate our efforts and difficulties, and be prepared to stand firm by us, and support us in every way possible, to retain our independence on a balance as we have already marched to its threshold.”39

Having experienced the move toward increased Indian agency in the Mennonite Church of India, the Weavers accepted that the AICs in the region would not return to the Qua Iboe Mission. While they continued to work with the already established MCN, they did not use their authority as MBMC missionaries to add congregations to it. Instead they developed a mission program that sought both to strengthen all AICs and to encourage constructive relationships between them and the mission churches. The movement toward a more indigenous church meant recognizing AICs as legitimate, autonomous expressions of African Christianity.

A second concern for the Weavers related to the creation of institutions. In India, missionary schools and hospitals had sometimes become a financial burden for churches with insufficient means to support them. The Mennonite Church in India could not easily find the resources to continue such structures, which retarded indigenous agency and perpetuated dependency on foreign funds.36 Determined not to repeat the mistakes of India, the Weavers did not establish traditional mission compounds, buy property for the mission, or give significant subsidies to the church. Although they established a scholarship fund for school students and arranged for regular, symbolic financial contributions to MCN, no subsidies were made to establish traditional educational or medical institutions.41 An added incentive not to embark on the creation of mission schools and hospitals was that many such institutions were already present in the region.32

Not that the Weavers did not see the value of medical and educational institutions; they supported them when they were convinced that there was good reason to do so. When MBMC missionary involvement in southeastern Nigeria ended because of the Biafra War (July 1967–January 1970), the Weavers were seeking to purchase land upon which to build a permanent home for the Bible college they had helped create for AIC leaders. They organized the placement of many North American teachers and medical personnel in existing mission institutions during their eight years in Nigeria. For the Weavers this strategy was both an expression of Christian mission and a way to build trust with the established missions that had at first resented their entrance into the Nigerian field.41 The institutions MBMC workers did support were connected with established missions and received significant ongoing government support. Hence, the dangers of dependency and lack of sustainability were thought to be minimized.

A third concern was the need for culturally appropriate expression of the Gospel in the Nigerian context. For the church to be truly indigenous, it needed to find locally meaningful expressions of the faith, its theology had to speak to its particular context. Referring to MCN, the Weavers wrote to Hostetler, “We cannot give them our Mennonite faith and say: Here is what you are to believe. This is what we do. This is what we believe. You must follow us.”44 The need for younger churches around the world to interpret the Gospel message for their own time and culture was for them a basic indigenous principle.45 Edwin argued that Nigerians’ use of dance in worship was as appropriate for that context as was the singing of hymns in North America. He expressed on film his convictions with respect to mission, culture, and theology: “Isn’t it too bad that we as Western Christians can’t present the Gospel to other cultures so that they can fit it into life as they understand it? . . . In any country the religious life is a part of the culture of the people. . . . This has been the problem in Nigeria. . . . We missionaries have tried to squeeze our converts into a mold rather than give them freedom to express Christ in their own way of life.”46

In February 1964, in order to facilitate theological reflection on the part of AICs, the Weavers initiated, along with fellow MBMC missionaries and a group of four AICs, the Uyo United Independent Churches Bible College. There AIC leaders could increase their biblical and theological literacy without affiliating with a Western denomination. From 1964 until 1967, when the Weavers evacuated because of the war, ten different AICs sent leaders to be trained. This experience convinced the Weavers that collaborating with AICs in initiatives of theological education was a fruitful missionary strategy.47 In the larger twentieth-century missionary movement, theological education was a priority, as evidenced by formation of the Fund for Theological Education by the International Missionary Council in 1958.48 The important step the Weavers took was to provide such training for groups outside the umbrella of Western denominations, not just for mission churches.49

**Ecumenism**

As shown by Mennonite mission administrator and historian Wilbert Shenk, the confused, competitive, and divisive ecclesial situation in southeastern Nigeria led the Weavers to identify ecumenical reconciliation between mission churches and AICs as a primary missionary duty. They took the initiative, in consultation with Yoder and AIC observer Harold Turner, to foster dialogue characterized by respect, openness, and collaboration within the divided church community.50 Other people in MBMC, notably Hostetler, gave less priority to ecumenism. He suggested that the Weavers should have concentrated on building up MCN instead and seemingly found their lack of concern for the growth of MCN a source of frustration.31

At first Graber also appeared to be sympathetic to a more denominational and less ecumenical approach.52 But as in the case of McGavran’s mass movement theories, Graber was willing to allow missionaries to interpret the situations in which they found themselves and to configure their missionary strategies accordingly. By the time of his visit in December 1960, he was supportive, even enthusiastic, about the Weavers’ ecumenical
focus.33 Their ecumenical endeavors did not mean that they ignored MCN. As they gained the trust of the mission churches, they planned to give more attention to nurturing development of MCN, seeking balance between identification with Mennonite churches and work with AICs.34

Though a major step for MBMC, the Weavers’ ecumenical approach was not without precursors. Indeed, the comity arrangements that grew out of calls for collaboration voiced by the 1910 World Missionary Conference, the International Continuation Committee that succeeded it, the International Missionary Council formed in 1921, and eventually the World Council of Churches (WCC, 1948) can be seen as such. These arrangements, however, were largely limited to Western Protestant churches and the mission churches they had created. What was significant about the Weavers’ approach was their inclusion of AICs as partners in ecumenical conversations. Until he left Nigeria, the Inter-Church Study Group Edwin initiated in 1962 provided representatives from mission churches and AICs a setting in which to meet, exchange perspectives on Christian faith, and dialogue. Slowly the AICs began to take their place as authentic Christian churches in conversation with both the Western missions and the mission churches they had birthed.35

Conclusion

Both McGavran and the Weavers sought an alternative to the mission-station approach that they associated with colonialism, both took the local social and cultural context seriously, and both sought to shift focus from traditional mission structures to indigenous groups. But in other respects they diverged sharply. In the India experience of mass movements, McGavran sought a framework that could be applied in other fields. The Weavers demurred, preferring open-ended engagement that tailored missional approaches to specific contexts. MBMC as a mission agency moved in the latter direction of flexibility, an inductive approach, a dialogical method, a multilateral stance, and a grassroots orientation.36 Subsequent work in West Africa by MBMC focused largely on collaboration with AICs.

On the larger scene of world Christianity, the shifts visible in this case study did not happen systematically or uniformly, but irregularly in different places and to different degrees over extended periods of time. This larger story includes the shift from conceiving of Christianity as a Western religion to seeing it as a religion at home in multiple cultures and with particular vitality among its adherents in the Global South. Although MBMC missionaries in southeastern Nigeria were not the first to encounter and adapt to changing contexts, the compatibility of the outlook they espoused with the continuing evolution of the postcolonial context allows their experience to serve in some degree as a microcosm of these wider developments. On the smaller stage of Mennonites in mission, the Weavers’ story highlights the importance of local actors and contexts for missiology in general; more specifically, their experience set the course for MBMC work in West Africa for decades to follow.

Notes

6. S. Jay Hostetler, We Enter Bihar, India (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1951), 6–7.
10. Lapp, The Mennonite Church in India, 214; Pickett, McGavran, and Singh, Christian Missions in Mid India, 24–33.

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26. Irene Weaver, Reminiscing for MBM, transcript of a recording made by Irene Weaver (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1993), 20, 36; Irene Weaver, interview by Bruce Yoder, March 14, 2011, Hesston, Kans.; letter from Weavers to Graber, Jan. 16, 1962, Box 2, Folder 4, Edwin and Irene Weaver Papers, Hist. Mss. 1-696.
29. Edwin and Irene Weaver, The Uyo Story (Elkhart: Mennonite Board of Mission, 1970), 103.
30. Irene Weaver, Reminiscing for MBM, 7, 9, 18-20, 25-26, 28; Irene Weaver, interview by Bruce Yoder, March 14, 2011, Hesston, Kans.
37. Letter from Weavers to Yoder, Dec. 24, 1959, Box 4, Folder 39, Weaver Papers.
38. Welcome Address from “The People of Ibibio to Mr. and Mrs. Hostetler,” Feb. 15, 1959, Box 3, Folder 21, Hostetler Papers.
39. Ibid.
40. Lapp, The Mennonite Church in India, 173–75; Irene Weaver, Reminiscing for MBM, 26, 28; Irene Weaver, Interview by Bruce Yoder, March 14–15, 2011, Hesston, Kans.
41. Irene Weaver, Reminiscing for MBM, 44; Irene Weaver, Interview by Bruce Yoder, March 15, 2011; Letter from Weavers to Yoder, Dec. 24, 1959, Box 4, Folder 39, Weaver Papers.
42. Letters from Weavers to Yoder, Dec. 9 and Dec. 24, 1959, Box 4, Folder 39, Weaver Papers.
43. Letter from Weavers to Graber, Jan. 16, 1962, Box 2, Folder 4, Weaver Papers.
44. Letter from Weavers to Hostetler, Dec. 1959. The date is missing but the Hostetler letter of response is dated Jan. 4, 1960, and refers to the Weavers’ letter which had arrived “a couple of days ago.” Box 3, Folder 22, Hostetler Papers.
46. Edwin Weaver, Africa in Three Dimensions, DVD (converted from 16mm film), written and directed by Ken Anderson (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1967).
47. Edwin and Irene Weaver, The Uyo Story, 73–74, 89–90.
49. The Weavers were not the first MBMC missionaries to set aside a traditional denominational approach for one that supported indigenous churches. In 1954, after ten years of labor, missionaries in the Argentine Chaco decided to forgo the establishment of a Mennonite Church in order to avoid dependency and reinforce an autonomous Christian movement among the Toba people. The Weavers seem to have been unaware of that initiative during their time in Nigeria, only learning of it and visiting the Chaco field years later. See Willis Horst, Ute Mueller-Eckhardt, and Frank Paul, Misión sin conquista: Acompañamiento de comunidades indígenas autóctonas como práctica misionera alternativa (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairós, 2009), 41, 65, 84, 193–97; and Wilbert R. Sherk, Changing Frontiers of Mission (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 59–68. Graber, as MBMC general secretary, did know about the Chaco work. For his and Hostetler’s observations, see letters from Albert Buckwalter to Graber, Nov. 13, 1958, and from Graber to Buckwalter, Dec. 19, 1958, Box 2, Folder 30, IV-18-13-02; letters from Graber to Hostetler, Dec. 19, 1958, and from Hostetler to Graber, Dec. 30, 1958, Box 4, Folder 46, IV-18-13-02.
50. Sherk, “Go Slow through Uyo.”
51. Letter from Hostetler to Yoder, Jan. 9, 1960, Box 10, Folder 25, IV-18-13-02; Letters from Hostetler to Yoder, March 17 and 21, 1960, Box 4, Folder 45, IV-18-13-02. Hostetler’s notes report a conversation in Ghana with Christian G. Baëta: “He also said that the old time ideas of strict geographical comity can hardly continue to hold any longer, because people are moving and churches are perforce becoming interspersed, and anyway there is more evangelism to do than the present forces can get done, and so there is no reason that others should be kept out” (“V. Mission Philosophy Ghana 8, Feb. 6 1960 Jay to JHY,” Box 2, Box of index cards, Hostetler Papers).
52. A similar dilemma of denominational versus ecumenical approach arose in 1961 in Brazil, where missionaries were likewise questioning the advisability of planting a Mennonite church. Frustrated by the indecision this caused, the MBMC South American field secretary asked Graber for a “very clear word” from the mission administration on the issue. In response the MBMC Overseas Mission Committee approved on Jan. 23, 1962, Action XI, calling for the missionaries in Brazil to develop a Mennonite Church in Brazil “as a Church in its own right.” For Graber, however, the issue seems to have been a matter of ongoing reflection. In 1966 he wrote to the missionaries in Brazil regarding Action XI, asking “how far the ideas of January 1962 have materialized and to what extent the philosophy expressed then is still valid,” letter from Graber to MBM Missionaries in Southern Brazil, Jan. 27, 1962, Box 2, Folder 4, Weaver Papers; letter from Graber to Missionaries in South Brazil and Argentina, Nov. 11, 1966, Box 5, Folder 75, IV-18-13-03. See also letters from Graber to Weavers, Dec. 25, 1959, and Jan. 26, 1960, Box 2, Folder 3, Weaver Papers.
54. Letter from Weaver to Graber, Oct. 11, 1966, Box 2, Folder 5, Weaver Papers.
55. The Inter-Church Study Group and other initiatives that sought to bring reconciliation between AICs and mission churches were possible because some missionaries of the older missions agreed that such work was necessary. For example, Robert McDonald, secretary of the Eastern Region Committee of the Christian Council of Nigeria and a Scottish Presbyterian missionary, lent his support to the Weavers’ work (Edwin and Irene Weaver, The Uyo Story, 29, 51).
Separated Peoples: The Roma as Prophetic Pilgrims in Eastern Europe

Melody J. Wachsmuth

Since the Middle Ages, migrating groups of people, one of the largest groupings of which are now most commonly called Romani, have elicited various responses from their host communities in Europe, ranging from being honored musicians and craftsmen to facing forced assimilation, banishment, slavery, or death. Throughout the centuries, elements of each host culture, language, and religion became tightly interwoven into their own culture, with each Roma village or group of villages differing in terms of religious expression, dialect and language, and cultural practices. Differences from village to village prevent a homogenous conceptualization of Roma culture, yet commonalities of culture and language still remain. One of the primary markers of shared identity is an awareness of separation from non-Romanies (the godži)—an awareness cultivated by the Romanies’ unique cultural and linguistic framework and fostered by centuries of prejudice.

In a recent European Union document entitled “Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020,” the EU estimates there to be 10–12 million Roma in Europe, making them Europe’s largest ethnic minority. Twelve Eastern European governments declared 2005–2015 to be the “Decade of Roma Inclusion.” However, few tangible gains have become evident at the local level. The Roma remain largely marginalized in terms of economic status, education, and political clout.

Today in Croatia and Serbia, the Serbian Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches have little interaction with nearby Roma villages. This sense of separation is reflected in the recent words of Aleksandar Subotin, a Roma pastor: “Nobody wants to accept the Roma, not the traditional [Serbian Orthodox] church, not the Protestant church . . . so now is the time we can make our own church for the Roma.” This religious and social exclusion may be one factor contributing to the growing movement of God among the Roma over the last decades. Roma are coming to Jesus through dreams, visions, and miraculous healings. Their spiritual worldview, their acute physical needs, and their identity pockmarked by centuries of discrimination have allowed many, at least initially, to “come easily to Jesus,” the God who accepts them as they are.

On the surface, it appears that God’s mission in eastern Europe takes place in two separate spheres: the Roma and the rest. And yet, what if God’s activity in the margins of society could be dynamically linked with the center of society? Could a Roma village being transformed under the power of the Gospel have any impact on the historic separation between the majority culture and the Roma? If, as many have said, God’s self-revelation often manifests itself in the margins, then God’s activity among the Roma may not be just for the Roma but may also have the potential to bless the dominant culture and become the vehicle of healing and peace between the two. In order to provide a context for this discussion, I (1) summarize historical themes related to this separation and present the contemporary situation, (2) reflect on the relevant research from five Roma villages in Croatia and Serbia, and, finally, (3) offer four missiological implications.

Historical Themes and Contemporary Issues

Roma history is complex, unevenly patterned with discrimination, fear, idealization, and a certain mystique—all of which makes it difficult to trace and understand the virulence of anti-Roma sentiment today. As Roma scholar Ian Hancock notes, “We are, after all, a people who have never started a war, who have never tried to take over a foreign government . . . In fact, if anything typifies us as a people, it is our desire to keep to ourselves.”

Idealized nomad or thieving beggar: two polarizing images of the “other.” European attitudes toward these traveling groups of people were not always hostile. Although scholars note the eleventh century as the earliest possible Roma reference in the western Byzantine Empire, the twelfth-century documents a more substantial presence, and by the fourteenth century, the Roma were widely established on the Balkan Peninsula. The religio-cultural landscape of the Middle Ages allowed care for wandering pilgrims to be viewed as a “privileged duty.” Their craftsmanship and musical abilities were often a recognized asset and sometimes even a coveted ability in the royal courts throughout a number of centuries. Roma groups participated in the Serbian uprisings against the Turks in the early nineteenth century and in the Bosnian peasant revolt against the Turks in 1875, and they fought with the Serbians in World War I.

Nonetheless, historical accounts also emphasize their otherness. Many accounts describe the Romas’ physical appearance as “black like Tatars” and mention their adornment of silver earrings and clothes like blankets, features that immediately pointed to their separateness. In fifteenth-century Switzerland a historian described the Gypsies as “outlandish and very dark people; they had their dukes and counts, and said they come from Little Egypt.”

David Crowe speculates that the alluring mystique of the traveling groups in the Middle Ages worked in their disfavor when the Turkish conquests increased fear of dark-skinned outsiders. Although they contributed unique aspects of craftsmanship to society, the Roma were kept at a distance “through the creation of an array of stereotypical myths . . . that became an integral part of the social fabric.” According to Crowe, their nomadism was not just a reaction to the prejudice they encountered but was also part and parcel of their unique cultural and economic values, which few outsiders attempted to, or were allowed to, understand.

Hancock notes that “antigypsyism” has taken many forms throughout the centuries. Institutionalized measures aimed at controlling or eradicating Roma have ranged from forced assimilation, economic penalties, and kidnapping children to “civilize them,” to torture and death. Slavery began in the fourteenth century in an area that partly overlaps present-day Romania and

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was not abolished until the mid-nineteenth century. Afterward, little was done to help the former slaves become reoriented into society. The most organized form of Roma persecution took place during the Holocaust, referred to in Romani as Baro Porrajmos, “the great devouring.” Estimates of Roma deaths range from 200,000 to 1.5 million.10

The church has often been complicit in perpetuating hostility and suspicion toward the Roma. Throughout history the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches have demonstrated scant interest in inviting Roma into their midst, seeing “little contradiction in both keeping them at a distance and condemning them as irreligious.”11 In Christian folklore, Romanies were accused of “forging the nails with which Christ was crucified”; their fundamental sin was seen as their refusal to offer shelter to the Holy Family when it fled to Egypt.12 The spirituality of the Roma, often involving spirits, magic, palmistry, and fortune-telling, was abhorred by the church.13

Not until the nineteenth century was there any evident interest in Roma souls. In 1952 a religious revival beginning in France spread Pentecostalism among Roma in Europe. Roma missionaries were instrumental in spreading this revival, first to western Europe and then to eastern Europe by the 1970s. The Gypsy Evangelical Church (started in France in the 1950s) baptized over 70,000 individuals in its first three decades of existence. Fraser characterizes its success as a result of the special identity and social solidarity it created for people. In addition, he notes that it put radical claims on an individual’s lifestyle, such as abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, cheating, and theft, while promoting literacy and education.14

Contemporary issues. Today, there are more active Romani organizations working on behalf of their people than ever before. The decade of Roma inclusion and the EU framework for Roma integration illustrates a significant international commitment to

### Noteworthy

**Announcing**

**SIM and African Christianity, 1893–2000**, will be the theme of an international conference hosted by SIM International, in collaboration with SIM Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 9–13, 2013. For further information, contact Tim Geysbeek, tim.geysbeek@sim.org.

The **Sixth Annual China Theology Symposium** will take place August 20–23, 2013, at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford. The symposium will examine modern ideological trends and their impact on Christianity in China, with particular emphasis on neo-Confucianism, neo-Liberalism, and neo-Leftism. For further information, contact Thomas Alan Harvey, academic dean, OCMS, tharvey@ocms.ac.uk.

The **North American Mission Leaders Conference 2013** will take place in Dallas, Texas, September 19–21, sponsored by Missio Nexus, the Evangelical Missiological Society, and the Alliance for Excellence in Short-Term Mission. General sessions are entitled “STAND up for the Gospel,” “STAND Together with the Global Church,” “STAND Firm in the Face of Opposition,” and “STAND Fast in the Grace of God.” For more details, including information about accommodations, see [www.missionnexus.org](http://www.missionnexus.org).

An international and interdisciplinary conference titled “Politics, Proverty, Poverty, and Prayer: African Spiritualities, Economic and Socio-Political Transformation” will be held at the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana, October 21–23, 2013. Issues of transparency, accountability, and equity will be addressed as the participants consider how religious/spiritual communities in Africa and the African diaspora can combat poverty and foster probity and sustainable development. For further information, contact one of the conference organizers: Afe Adogame, a.adogame@ed.ac.uk; Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, rosem.etego@googlemail.com; Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, kwabena.asamoahgyadu@gmail.com; or Cephas Omenyo, comeny@hotmail.com.

Under the title “Evangelicals and Contextualization: Oxymoron, Uneasy Relationship, or Energetic Experiment?,” the joint meeting of the American Society of Missiology–Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Mission will be held November 1–2, 2013, at Maryknoll Mission Institute, Maryknoll, New York. The meeting will feature A. Scott Moreau presenting lessons learned in writing [Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models](http://livestone.library.ucla.edu/1871diary) (2012), with invited responses and discussion. For information, contact Daryl Ireland, direland3@gmail.com.

The full text of the **1871 field diary of David Livingstone**, British abolitionist, missionary, and explorer of Africa, has been made available by the collaborative, international David Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project. The electronic edition of this fragile source can be accessed at [http://livestone.library.ucla.edu/1871diary](http://livestone.library.ucla.edu/1871diary).

**Personalia**

Honored. Desmond Tutu, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, and an IBMR contributing editor, with the 2013 Templeton Prize, which is awarded to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension. Announcing the award, the judges recognized Tutu’s “life-long work in advancing spiritual principles such as love and forgiveness which has helped to liberate people around the world.”

Appointed. Charles Amjad-Ali, to the Desmond Tutu Chair for Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation in Africa, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, Republic of South Africa, as a visiting professor, from July 15 to August 30, 2013. Occupants of this rotating chair, established in 2010, provide innovative academic leadership in the fields named in the title of the chair. Amjad-Ali is Martin Luther King Jr. Professor for Justice and Christian Community at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Appointed. Joshua Bogunjoko, as international director of SIM (Serving in Mission). From Nigeria and members of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Bogunjoko and his wife, Joanna, became full members of SIM in 2001. Deputy international director for Europe and West Africa since 2006, Bogunjoko has degrees in pharmacology and medicine from the University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Nigeria, and an M.A. in leadership and management from Briercrest Biblical Seminary, Caronport, Canada. He began

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“socially include” the Roma. In response to centuries of trying to “solve the Roma problem” without consulting the Roma, the vision leans heavily on Roma participation to bring about

### In 1952 a religious revival beginning in France spread Pentecostalism among Roma in Europe.

the decade’s goals with the catchphrase: “Nothing about us without us.”

Despite such aims, it is difficult to see any improvement at a local level in the countless Roma villages scattered throughout former Yugoslavia. In fact, in eastern Europe some problems have grown worse since the fall of Communism, under which the Roma had easier access to housing, health care, and jobs. The wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s displaced peoples of all ethnic backgrounds, but the Roma, often without proper documents, were in a particularly vulnerable position. The growing economic crisis of the last few years has begun to deepen anti-Roma sentiment again, resulting in violent attacks, forced eviction and relocation, and political and economic scapegoating. Discriminatory practices continue to be manifest at the local level through segregated schools, unequal health care, and segregated neighborhoods and villages, which are substandard in terms of sanitation, roads, running water, and electricity.

While presenting his March 2012 final report, Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe's Commission for Human Rights, called for a “Truth Commission in Europe” to address the atrocities committed against the Roma people. Significantly,

a five-year term as international director of SIM on June 1, 2013, succeeding Malcolm McGregor, who had served in the position since 2003.

**Appointed.** Johannes G. J. (Jannie) Swart, as associate professor of world mission and evangelism, at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 1, 2013. Swart, who in 2010 received a Ph.D. from Lutheran Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, served as senior pastor of Fontainbleau Community Church in Johannesburg, South Africa (1998–2005), and as pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Oil City, Pennsylvania (2010–13). At Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Swart fills the position vacated by Scott Sunquist in 2012, when he became dean of intercultural studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

**Died.** Emilio Castro, 85, pastor, ecumenist, and missionary statesman, April 6, 2013, in Montevideo, Uruguay. Castro grew up in Montevideo and studied at the theological faculty in Buenos Aires, Argentina, before serving Methodist congregations in Uruguay and Bolivia. In the 1960s he participated in ecumenical activities that paved the way for the formation of the Latin American Council of Churches in 1979. During the severe political and social unrest of the 1970s, he was involved in fostering dialogue between political groupings. Castro joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) as director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1973, and then from 1985 to 1992 he served as general secretary of the WCC and was editor of the *Ecumenical Review*. Castro received a doctorate from the University of Lausanne in 1984. His publications include *Freedom in Mission: The Perspective of the Kingdom of God—an Ecumenical Inquiry* (1985), *When We Pray Together* (1989), and, in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, “Liberation, Development, and Evangelism: Must We Choose Mission?” (2, no. 3 [1978]: 87–90), and part 1 of “Mission in the 1990s” (14, no. 4 [1990]: 146–49).


**Died.** John A. Gration, 85, missionary and educator, January 29, 2012, in Carol Stream, Illinois. Gration grew up in Princeton, New Jersey, and served in the navy during the Second World War. He and his wife, Dorothy, worked in the field with African Inland Mission (AIM) for fifteen years, as Gration served as principal of Bible schools in the Belgian Congo (1952–64) and near Nairobi, Kenya (1964–67). In 1967 Gration returned to the United States to serve as associate home director of AIM. In 1974 he earned a doctorate from New York University, New York City, and the following year joined Wheaton College Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois, where he taught missions courses and laid the foundation for the graduate program in intercultural studies. Gration retired from Wheaton in 1995.

**Died.** Louise Pirouet, 84, scholar of Africa, educator, and social justice advocate, December 21, 2012, in Cambridge, England. Pirouet was born to missionary parents in Cape Town, South Africa, but her family returned to England, where she was educated and entered the teaching profession. She returned to Africa with the Church Missionary Society, teaching at a girls’ school in Kenya before completing her Ph.D. at the University of East Africa, Makerere, Uganda; her thesis was published as *Black Evangelists: The Spread of Christianity in Uganda, 1891–1914* (1978). Pirouet subsequently taught at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and from 1978 to 1989 in the Department of Religious Studies at Homerton College, University of Cambridge, where she continued her work on African history. She was also a committed campaigner for social justice; her publications include *Whatever Happened to Asylum in Britain? A Tale of Two Walls* (2011).
he identified the root problem today as the "attitudes among the majority population." One young Roma man in southern Serbia wrote that he felt like a "second-class citizen, a perfected animal, but not quite a human being." Such layered and complex issues within multiple spheres of human existence continue to maintain and even deepen the separation between the Roma and majority cultures.

Research in Croatia and Serbia

Preliminary research, ongoing since June 2011, was conducted primarily through participant-observation of churches and village life and informal and semistructured interviews with pastors and Roma Christians. Although the research primarily focuses on one village in Croatia and four in Serbia, it also draws on information from other villages in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Darda, a Croatian village, has around 1,000 Roma and one baptized Christian couple. The four Serbias villages are as follows:

- Despotovo: 70 Roma families; the church has 25 baptized members out of the 35 that attend.
- Kucura: 282 Roma families; the church has 50 baptized members.
- Apatin: 4,500 Roma; the church has 50 baptized members out of the 60+ that attend.
- Leskovac: 8,000–10,000 Roma; two churches have a combined total of around 1,000 baptized.

Beginnings. The interviewees most often talked about coming to Jesus as a result of a vision, dream, healing, or healing testimony. Young churches. The spiritual openness in the villages does not immediately translate into a steady pace of discipleship and transformation. In Leskovac, Pastor Šerif Bakić notes: "It is easy to work with Roma because they are so quick to receive Christ ... but then sometimes they also quickly go." In Kucura, Subotin estimates that out of the fifty baptized, only ten exhibit any active change and intentional growth. In Apatin, Zvezdan Bakić estimates that only around thirty of the sixty who regularly attend are active in their faith.

The reasons for this slow growth are complex, but a few prominent themes emerged from the interviews. In villages such as Darda and Kucura, adult illiteracy is extremely high, and tools such as audio Scripture and videos have had no visible results. Consulting "magic men" continues to be an ongoing problem when the people become sick. Zvezdan Bakić claimed that the people of his village have a "spirit of witchcraft" and are visited by the occasional "false prophet," so church leaders must carefully control and monitor people’s visions, since not all of them are from God.

There are also vast cultural barriers inhibiting non-Roma who minister in the villages. Many Croats and Serbs know very little about Roma culture and language, not realizing the extent of its variance from their own. There is little recognition of the need for cultural study, which could lead to a more contextualized mission approach from non-Roma to Roma.

Socioeconomic factors also contribute, for normally the Roma focus the majority of their time and energy on day-to-day economic survival, health concerns, and family needs. Finally, the deep areas of brokenness in villages—pastors highlight fractured relationships between neighbors, violence, alcoholism, sexual and physical abuse, theft, and witchcraft—require patience and perseverance to overcome.

Church as advocate and mediator. In many Roma villages, Roma themselves are unaware of their rights or how to access those rights and the opportunities that are open to them. Since political authorities have done little to fulfill promises, the Roma pastors understand that their role extends into many spheres of life, ranging from urging young people to wait until eighteen for marriage and children, to helping their people obtain proper documents. Miodrag-Miša Bakić, one of Leskovac’s rising generation of young...
leaders, wrote that he believes the church and a handful of other “spiritual authorities” are the only institutions that can help his people on a global level—in fact, he believes that the church has been given divine authority for this purpose. Subotin noted that he is not just a pastor but also “lawyer, advocate, nurse. . . . [God] gave me these people and I must serve them, work with them, encourage them, help them . . . not only to preach the Gospel, but to . . . help them have normal lives.”

Pastors also urge parents to keep their children in school and advocate for equal, nonsegregated education. Before the existence of the church in Kucura, only half of the children attended school; now all the families in the church send their children to school. Before the revival in Leskovać, around five youth per year would finish high school. Now, pastors estimate that around 40 percent finish high school, most of whom are in the church. Miodrag Miša Bakić points to education as a key factor if his people are to prosper. His vision is that the church must help equip the Roma to represent their people in “every area of life in our country.”

Changing attitudes. The church’s role as an advocate in Roma communities has improved the relationship between the Roma and the local authorities. In addition, in Apatin, Kucura, and Leskovać, a marked decrease in domestic violence, alcoholism, stealing, prison sentences, witchcraft, and fights between households has been noticed by the outside community. Saitović noted, “Lately the [Serbian] police have been bragging that they don’t have any problems with their Romanies. Serbs cause them bigger problems now.” Olivić related that if there is an incident between Romanies and Serbs, the church is called by local authorities to help mediate the conflict. Because the church has been recognized as caring for all aspects of Roma life, the pastors in Kucura and Leskovać were asked to take over the official role of “Roma coordinator.”

In addition to changing attitudes from the authorities in a given town, a few non-Romanies who have been visiting villages have noted ways in which Roma ministry has expanded their own perception of God and mission. One Croatian man in conversation with the author shared that his blossoming relationships with Roma were “destroying” his prior theological views, forcing him to wrestle with a more holistic Gospel as he faces the deep poverty and brokenness in the villages. One woman expressed astonishment when a Roma woman insisted on confessing her sin and asking for forgiveness after throwing this non-Roma out of the house a month earlier. She commented that she had never seen that kind of open humility in the Croatian churches of which she had been a part.

Serbs have begun attending a few Roma churches; Apatin, for example, has fifteen Serbs who attend regularly. Perhaps the most dramatic shift of attitudes, however, can be seen in Leskovać, as it has been solidly established for more than twenty-five years. Not only do the pastors enjoy a better relationship with local authorities, but Roma attitudes toward the Serbs are also changing. Šerif Bakić noted the importance of not just forgiving the Serbian people but being concerned for their seeming indifference to God and the growing drug problem with Serbian youth. He recognizes, however, that Serbs would not be receptive to Roma people unless there was radical evidence of transformation. He noted:

We are using [ways] just like Paul did when he did mission. He first went to the synagogue and witnessed first to the Jews and then went to the non-Jewish. The Roma can forgive and work with all people. But the Serbs are not going to receive you . . .

The two churches in Leskovać have sent missionaries to plant churches in five different towns and numerous adjoining villages. In addition, representatives travel into Croatia and other countries in order to encourage and strengthen Roma believers and advise non-Roma working with Roma.

Missiological Implications

Both the Bible and church history display numerous themes that are theologically illuminating for Roma history. God has often chosen the migrant, the dispossessed, the weak, and the despised either to fulfill a special commission or to become a vessel by which God reveals himself. Whether it is the stammering Moses speaking to Pharaoh (Exod. 3–7) or the Samaritan woman who leads many to Jesus (John 4:1–42), in such accounts we see God’s character and the nature of his mission. Indeed, the “migrant model” of the incarnational Christ, who chose alienation and exile, emphasizes the “weakness and non-dominance of the Missio Dei.” Jesus’ ministry to the socially exiled profoundly shocked his followers but was often joyfully received by those kept separated on account of gender, race, or socioeconomic status. The miracles and signs among such people were a radical witness to the holistic and counterintuitive nature of the kingdom. Within this framework, four implications emerge from this preliminary research.

First, the Roma churches are both indigenous and pilgrim in nature. The churches established in Leskovać approach church life, worship, mission, and interpreting the Bible in a way that flows out of the distinctives of their worldview. They have no country that would compete for their loyalty, nor can they be comfortable in the countries they live in because of their relative powerlessness and poverty. This weakness compels them to be in a state of constant movement toward God, living in the “already, not yet” tension of the kingdom of God. William Cavanaugh explores the meaning of “pilgrim” in its ancient sense as being a continual journey toward the center—communion with God. The medieval pilgrimage required a “stripping away of the external sources of stability in one’s life. The pilgrim’s way was the way of the cross.” Curiously, medieval pilgrimages were the social location for some of the first encounters between European peoples and the Roma. Today, however, even as those pilgrim encounters eventually resulted in separated peoples, the Roma as a pilgrim church traveling toward God are positioned to become a powerful catalyst of reconciliation.

Second, the Roma as a pilgrim church acts as a sign and
It is time for the majority-culture churches to pay attention to God’s presence in the margins of their own society.

wholeheartedly to these signs. The challenges of holistic discipleship are formidable and complex, and yet when the church finally becomes established, it acts as a prophetic witness regarding the holistic nature of the kingdom.

Third, the transformation of a Roma village can act as a centripetal, or “come and see,” type of mission to the majority culture around it—a process already beginning in Apatin, Leskovac, and Kucura. The movement from the center to the periphery in order to witness the transformation in villages has the potential to bridge the formidable separation, potentially empowering Roma to then be “sent” to the center. The pastors in Leskovac have articulated this connection between centripetal and centrifugal mission, and although there is no certainty that other Roma churches will embrace this missional impetus, the missionaries they send have tremendous influence in Roma communities throughout Croatia and Serbia.

Finally, another kind of reverse mission is possible for Christian Croatians and Serbs who are willing to enter the Roma’s world. Gioacchino Campese writes about God’s presence among the poor and the Christian call to journey away from his or her center of power to the periphery. In such a place the “insignificant” are the missionaries as they demonstrate a communion of dependance with God and therefore “prevent us from becoming sedentary people” in faith. This reverse mission has the capacity to transform the “sent” in a way that means they are sent back to their own people with a broader understanding of God and his mission.

In light of these implications, it is critical for Roma Christianity in eastern Europe to be studied in relationship to the majority-culture churches. Several Roma pastors and individuals who work with Roma have said, “Now is the time for the Roma.” If indeed Roma families and villages continue to be transformed by the power of God and Roma churches continue to spread throughout eastern Europe, then it is also time for the majority-culture churches to pay attention to God’s presence in the margins of their own society. The Roma church has a critical role in facilitating holistic healing and integration for its own people. But perhaps also God’s mission among the Roma will be integral to a new kind of mission that reaches beyond the Roma village and becomes the primary vehicle through which peace and reconciliation can heal an entrenched separation.

Notes

1. In this article, I use “Roma” as an umbrella term for groups of people that have some related cultural characteristics and that speak or use to speak Romani. Although “Roma” has gained international acceptance, some groupings of people with related cultural characteristics do not identify with this word, either because their cultural/language grouping is too different or because of the stigma attached to that identity. It is also important to note that in the areas where this research was conducted, there is often a discrepancy between how the majority culture identifies a given village and how the village identifies itself. This is usually because the majority culture knows little about the cultural/linguistic relationships of a particular group.


3. Interview with author, Kucura, Serbia, June 22, 2011.

4. Ian Hancock, We Are the Romani People (Hatfield, Eng.: Univ. of Hertfordshire Press, 2002), 32.


6. Fraser, The Gypsies, 63.


8. Quoted in Fraser, The Gypsies, 67, 68.


10. Hancock, We Are the Romani People, 17–28, 34.

11. Fraser, The Gypsies, 185.

12. Hancock, We Are the Romani People, 57, 58.

13. Fraser, The Gypsies, 129.

14. Ibid., 184, 316.


16. The most recent forced relocation was in Belgrade, Serbia, in April 2012.


20. The following section contains quotes from interviews conducted between June 2011 and June 2012 in the villages of Kucura, Apatin, Leskovac, Despotovo, and Darda.

21. E-mail to author, June 15, 2012.

22. Ibid.

23. Each Serbian township has a “Roma coordinator” to act as a mediator, advocate, and voice in the local government. Both pastors declined the offer, fearing that politics and corruption would compromise them.


Dr. Jonathan J. Bonk retired July 1 as executive director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center and editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Anticipating that leadership transition, the OMSC Board of Trustees in 2012 launched a substantial scholarship initiative—the Jon and Jean Bonk International Fellowship Fund.

Dr. J. Nelson Jennings, OMSC executive director as of July 1, says the initiative “will enable beleaguered Christian leaders to come to OMSC from challenging situations. Currently we have to turn away many worthy candidates due to lack of funding.” The fund will provide friends of the Bonks, OMSC alumni from around the world, and others who have admired their ministries from afar a “concrete way of honoring Jon and Jean on the occasion of their retirement,” adds Jennings. Jon and Jean have wanted to find a way after they retire and return to Canada to perpetuate their longtime commitment to serving marginalized church leaders and missionaries who live and minister in places where it is extraordinarily difficult and sometimes dangerous to be a follower of Christ.

Working alongside Jon and Jean Bonk has been such an honor and inspiration. Their leadership, vision, compassion, strength, and patience, a rare combination of traits, have served the Bonks and OMSC very well. The Jon and Jean Bonk International Fellowship Fund—www.omsc.org/bonkfellowship—is a crowning glory to their ministry. In keeping with their humble spirit, this fellowship is a benefit to others. It will enable those who serve the risen Christ in difficult, oppressive, and challenging circumstances to enjoy the unique opportunities for renewal offered by OMSC. I invite you to join many good people who are truly grateful for the Bonks by making this dream come true.

—Dr. David Johnson Rowe, president, OMSC Board of Trustees

Read the Jon and Jean Bonk International Fellowship Fund newsletter and view the video online. For details, go to www.omsc.org/bonkfellowship or contact Dr. J. Nelson Jennings, Executive Director.
**The Legacy of Peter Parker, M.D.**

**Gerald H. Anderson**

Born in Framingham, Massachusetts, on June 18, 1804, Peter Parker was the fifth of six children, the son of a poor farmer. There was no reason to imagine that he would become one of the American pioneers in developing relations with China in the nineteenth century.

As a teenager in a pious Christian family, he had a religious conversion experience, which led him to feel that God was calling him to the ministry. He preached his first sermon on November 2, 1826, on the text Luke 21:30 (“As soon as [fig trees] sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near”). The following year, at the age of twenty-three, he was ordained to the ministry. He preached his first sermon on November 2, 1826, on the text Luke 21:30 (“As soon as [fig trees] sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near”).

The basic issue was over the relation of a ministry of healing to a ministry of evangelism: did the task of healing have its own role or was it a handmaid to the gospel? The issues of relating healing to evangelism, and the relative priority of each, would be defining instructions, with competing demands, would create for him—and for the American Board—in the years ahead, primarily because the role of “medical missionary” was only beginning to emerge, and he would be caught in the process of clarifying that role. The basic issue was over the relation of a ministry of healing to a ministry of evangelism: did the task of healing have its own integrity as a form of Christian mission, or was it only a means to an end—an instrument for conversion? Parker was instructed to do both, but what did it mean to say that “his medical and surgical knowledge” should be employed “only as they can be handmaids to the gospel”? The issues of relating healing to evangelism, and the relative priority of each, would be defining issues for Parker’s missionary career.

On June 4, 1834, Parker sailed from New York for Canton on the merchant ship *Morrison*. He went with some apprehension that he would never return or see his family again. He also went as a single man, apparently with little thought about his prospects for marriage.

Parker was not the first trained medical person to be sent overseas as a Protestant missionary, but before this time, persons with medical training were sent abroad as part of the general missionary effort to meet human needs and to care for their fellow missionaries. They were not designated as a special category and did not spend the majority of their time in medical work among the indigenous population. Whether or not he was the...
first Protestant medical missionary, “Peter Parker was clearly the first Protestant medical missionary to go to China, and the key figure out of whose sustained work China’s mission hospitals, lay clinics, and medical schools chiefly derived,” according to Edward Gulick.6

Parker, at thirty years of age, arrived at Canton on October 26, 1834, after a journey of 144 days. In Canton he was greeted by three other American missionaries: Elijah Coleman Bridgman, the first American missionary to China, who had arrived in 1830; Samuel Wells Williams, who arrived in Canton in 1833; and Edwin Stevens, a friend from Yale who had arrived in Canton in 1832.

As soon as he got settled, Parker happily began working on the language and observing local customs in the small waterfront area of Canton to which Westerners were restricted. In December 1834, after a visit and advice from Karl Gützlaff, the imposing pioneer German missionary, Parker left Canton for Singapore, where there was greater freedom of movement and contact with Chinese, to study the language for a few months. Once there, however, he soon “opened a dispensary for Chinese where more than one thousand patients were treated from January to August 1835,” which hindered his progress in language study but provided an initial opportunity to practice medicine.7

Already he was troubled by the tension of roles to which he had been assigned—between evangelism and healing—as seen in this journal entry for March 5, 1835: “I read last evening my instructions from the Board, and not without grief to find that, in the deep-grown interest I have felt for the sick and dying among the Chinese, I have in a degree deviated from those instructions, ...and have become involved in medical and surgical practice in a manner that I know not how to extricate myself.”8 The tension would never really be resolved for him.

Parker returned to Canton in September 1835, where “he opened on November 4 of the same year a hospital and dispensary” in a building secured with the assistance of Olyphant, the American merchant. As the number of patients at the hospital grew, Parker earnestly sought to recruit promising young Chinese men whom he could train to assist him. By 1837 he was instructing four young men. Thus Parker began the first class for the training of Chinese doctors for the practice of Western medicine in China.9

The Physician

Parker was now engaged in what he had come to China to do. He decided to specialize in patients with eye diseases because they were most numerous. But he could not limit his medical practice to that, as many patients with other problems sought treatment also, especially those requiring tumor surgery. Parker’s facility became known as Canton Hospital and has been claimed to be “the first hospital established in China.”10 In the first ninety days, Parker treated 925 patients, of whom 270 were women, which made him the first Western physician to perform surgery on a Chinese woman.11

Parker’s reputation as a skilled medical practitioner spread quickly and led to rapid growth of the hospital at Canton. To provide greater financial support for the hospital and to expand the work of medical missions, Parker and others held a public meeting in Canton on February 21, 1837, to establish “The Medical Missionary Society in China,” with the intent to encourage the practice of medicine among the Chinese. Parker was elected one of the vice-presidents, and later became the president.

Thus in less than four years after his arrival in Canton, Parker had been instrumental in three significant initiatives: the founding of the first hospital in China, the beginning of training students for the practice of Western medicine in China, and the formation of the Medical Missionary Society in China.

Following his voyage on an ill-fated expedition to enter Japan in August 1837, which ended when their ship was attacked by the Japanese and they barely escaped, Parker apparently suffered a nervous breakdown from the stress of the events. Remarkably, he recovered and resumed his work.12

In July 1840, with the outbreak of the First Opium War between Britain and China, during which the port of Canton was blockaded and all foreigners were ordered to leave, Parker reluctantly closed the Canton hospital and departed for America after nearly six years in China. It marked the end of the first phase of his career in China.

Home Again

Arriving in the United States in December 1840, Parker discovered that he was famous, as he received many invitations to speak in churches and to visit various dignitaries. After visits with his family, and in New Haven, where he was hosted by the president of Yale, and with the American Board in Boston, where he reported to Rufus Anderson, he went to Washington, D.C., in January 1841. There he spoke with outgoing president Martin Van Buren and with Daniel Webster, the secretary of state designate, urging the American government to establish diplomatic relations with China and to send an American minister plenipotentiary to represent American interests with the Chinese.

In the flurry of his activities in Washington, Parker met Harriet Webster, then twenty-one, fifteen years younger than Parker. After a whirlwind courtship, they were married on March 29, 1841, less than four months after Parker had arrived in the United States. Three weeks later he left his bride in Boston while he sailed for a speaking tour of England, Scotland, and France to publicize his work in China and to raise financial support for it. In August 1841, after four months abroad, he returned to the United States, where he and his wife took up residence in Philadelphia. While waiting for the end of the Opium War so they could go to China, Parker attended medical lectures to update his skills as physician and surgeon. He also had opportunity to discuss his views about developments in China with President John Tyler and Secretary of State Daniel Webster and again to urge that a diplomatic representative be sent to China.13

July 2013
Return to China

Anticipating that an end of the war was near, the Parkers sailed for China in June 1842; before they arrived, the Treaty of Nanking was signed in August 1842. It is remembered as an “unequal treaty,” especially in China, whereby Hong Kong was ceded to Britain, five treaty ports (including Canton) were opened to trade with the West, and China paid $21 million as indemnity for the war.

In late 1842 Parker reopened his hospital in Canton. In 1844 he performed the first lithotomy (an operation for removal of bladder or kidney stones) in China. This surgery was probably a new procedure that he had learned while taking courses during his home leave in America. In 1847 he introduced the use in China of sulfuric ether as anesthesia.

Parker recorded that he had performed a lithotomy, followed by the removal of a tumor from another patient’s hand, and several other surgical procedures—all successful.

He also, in November 1849, successfully introduced the use of chloroform, which he had received from New York, and it became his preferred form of anesthetic, because it was easier and safer to use than ether.

Along with medical services, worship services were offered at the hospital. In his report for 1845 Parker mentioned that “Divine service has been conducted at the Hospital for the last eight Sabbaths.” However, it was a disappointment to the missionaries and to the American Board that, despite the great success of the hospital ministry, “there was not a single convert [in Canton] until 1847, seventeen years after Elijah Bridgeman of the American Board had begun his preaching in that city. Another convert was made two years later, and then there were no converts for many years.”

The heavy demands the hospital made upon Parker, along with the negligible results in terms of converts, may help to explain a development in 1845 that was to change the course of his career and cause him great anguish. In light of the very positive response to his medical services, Parker believed that in relieving human suffering he was serving the Gospel, and it became increasingly difficult for him to limit his medical work or to make it secondary to other forms of Christian witness.

Meanwhile, back in Boston, Rufus Anderson, the secretary of the ABCFM, viewed things differently. For him, missionaries should be first and foremost evangelists engaged in preaching the Gospel; any other form of service could be justified only as secondary insofar as it served to advance the cause of evangelism. While initially supportive of Parker’s medical work, Anderson had increasing reservations as time passed and few converts emerged.

In March 1845 Anderson wrote to Parker, advising him that the American Board had doubts about the validity of his medical work as a missionary, and saying that he should find another source of support if he wanted to continue his medical work. When Parker received the letter in the summer of 1845, he was devastated. After prayerful consideration, he replied to Anderson that he regretted the board’s decision, and that he had accepted a part-time position as secretary and Chinese interpreter to the U.S. Legation to provide support for himself and his work. However, because of his dedication to the missionary cause, Parker requested that he be allowed to continue his connection with the American Board, even if they would not support him financially.

The correspondence went on for nearly two years, until finally in August 1847 Anderson wrote to inform Parker that the board had decided to terminate him as a missionary because he had accepted a paid position with the U.S. government, which was against board policy. Clearly Anderson used Parker’s paid position with the U.S. Legation as a pretext for dismissing him, the real reason being Anderson’s rejection of medical work as a valid missionary vocation.

The Diplomat

After Parker’s return to China in 1842, Caleb Cushing was appointed as the first American Commissioner to China by President John Tyler, with the assignment to secure a commercial treaty that would enable American ships and merchants to have access to Chinese ports, as did the British. As soon as he arrived in Macao on February 27, 1844, Cushing appointed Parker as “Chinese Secretary to the Mission” and as confidential adviser, at a salary of $1,500 per annum plus expenses. While lamenting that this would require him to be absent from the Canton hospital for several months, Parker felt that he had a duty to accept this “providential opportunity” to serve both countries in a position where he “might do more in a few months . . . than by all the rest of my life.” With permission of the American Board (which had not yet severed its relationship with him), he accepted this temporary position and left one of his Chinese assistants in charge of the hospital.

The Treaty of Wanghsia—the first between China and the United States—was signed on July 3, 1844, ratified by the emperor in August, and approved by the U.S. Senate in January 1845. Parker played a significant role in the negotiations, which not only provided for commercial access of Americans to the five treaty ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai, but also allowed for the building of houses, hospitals, schools, and places of worship by foreigners in each of the ports. In return, contrary to the British position, the United States agreed to support the Chinese prohibition of the opium trade. And all this was accomplished without bloodshed.

Subsequently, in response to negotiations by the French envoy Théodore de Lagrené, two imperial edicts of toleration (of Christianity) were issued in 1844 and 1846 that granted additional concessions to Christians, both foreigners and Chinese, to practice and propagate their faith in the treaty ports. Cushing, the U.S. commissioner, sailed back to America from Macao on
August 27, 1844, and Parker returned to Canton, eager to resume his medical missionary work at the hospital.

The following year in Canton, on June 22, 1845, Parker recorded that he had performed a lithotomy, followed by the removal of a tumor from another patient’s hand, and several other surgical procedures—all successful.20 It was shortly thereafter that Parker received the letter from Rufus Anderson in Boston telling him that the American Board was planning to terminate his support. It was a terrible shock.

Then a few weeks later, near the end of 1845, Parker received notification from James Buchanan, U.S. secretary of state, that he had been appointed “Secretary and Chinese Interpreter to the Mission of the United States to China,” a part-time position that would enable him to continue his missionary work.

Parker did not reply to the notice of intended termination from the American Board until January 1, 1846. In that letter he explained that he had accepted a new assignment with the American Legation, with the understanding and agreement that “it would be compatible with my continued labors in my missionary capacity.” He made it clear, however, that he had accepted the position only after “having been placed in the predicament I was” by the action of the board cutting off his support.

A new U.S. commissioner died soon after arriving in China, and several other appointees served short terms in the position over the next nine years. During this time Parker served not only in his official capacity as secretary and Chinese interpreter but also as adviser and, periodically, charge d’affaires, and—unofficially—as acting commissioner during several long periods when there was no commissioner in China. It was a turbulent period that presented significant challenges to Parker in his relations with both Chinese and American officials in the treaty ports. He had to deal with issues related to the Taiping Rebellion, the coolie trade, and various legal cases involving Americans in China, in the midst of riots, insurrection, difficult living and traveling conditions, and health problems, while trying also to continue his medical services when in Canton. The demands of his diplomatic duties necessitated extended absences from the hospital, and in 1854 the hospital was closed because of disturbed conditions and later suffered a fire that damaged the facilities.

By April 1855 Parker—ill and despondent—was in Macao with his wife, on leave from all official duties, resting and pondering his future. On May 10, 1855, having resigned all his responsibilities, he sailed for home, with little expectation of ever returning to China.

Parker arrived in Washington in August 1855, having recuperated on the long voyage home, and almost immediately was invited by Secretary of State William March to return to China as American commissioner, a post he had long hoped for. Appointed by President Franklin Pierce as commissioner of the United States of America to the Empire of China, Parker sailed from Boston on October 10, 1855, without his wife (who rejoined him later), and arrived in Hong Kong at the end of December. He established his legation in Macao, where he hired as his secretary Yung Wing, who had graduated from Yale in 1854, the first Chinese student to graduate from an American college.21

Parker’s primary assignment as commissioner was to negotiate a revision of the Wanghsia treaty of 1844 that would provide for “the establishment of a United States diplomatic resident in Peking, the free extension of foreign trade throughout China, and the removal of restrictions to the personal liberty of United States citizens.”22 When the emperor refused to see Parker or even to allow him to come to Peking, Parker proposed to the British and French envoys in 1856 that they form a triple alliance and carry out a joint armed naval expedition to demand negotiations for treaty revision. The British and French did not respond favorably to the proposal.

Undeterred, Parker suggested a more aggressive approach. In December 1856 he recommended to Washington that, if Peking persisted in its refusal to renegotiate their treaties, then, as “a last resort,” France should occupy Korea, Britain should take Chusan (Zhoushan), and the United States should seize Formosa (Taiwan).23 These territories would be returned to China only after all Western demands for favorable treaty revision were met. A few months later, according to Paul Varg, “Parker went a step further and urged that the United States take Formosa permanently,” because he believed the island would be a great asset to America.24

Parker’s notorious Formosa proposal was rejected by the U.S. State Department and probably contributed to his recall by the new administration of President Buchanan in 1857.25 The Parkers departed China on August 27, 1857, never to return. He was fifty-three years old and had been in China only twenty years (1834–57, less the time he was in the United States).

Retirement and Recognition

Parker lived the last thirty years of his life with his wife in Washington, D.C., where he was a vice-president of the American Evangelical Alliance and a regent of the Smithsonian Institution. In 1871 he was named a corporate member of the ABCFM, which had earlier withdrawn its support for his work in China. It was a belated act of rehabilitation and reconciliation. He never again practiced medicine or served in the diplomatic corps.

In retirement Parker received numerous honors, including an honorary M.A. degree from Yale in 1858. But nothing gave him greater joy than the birth of their first child in 1859, a son named Peter Parker Jr., after eighteen years of marriage, when Parker was nearly fifty-five years old. The Parkers lived at 2 Lafayette Square, near the White House, and occasionally President Abraham Lincoln visited their home, where he would sit and hold young Peter on his lap.26

Parker died in his home with his wife at his side on January 10, 1888, at eighty-three years of age. He was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington.27 It was fifty years since the founding of the Medical Missionary Society in China, at Parker’s initiative. “In those fifty years,” says Jonathan Spence, “about one million Chinese patients had been treated in the various medical institutions under the society, scores of important medical works had been translated, and dozens of Chinese doctors trained in Western medicine.”28 Peter Parker’s vision of medicine in the service of mission was vindicated.
Selected Bibliography

Works by Peter Parker
Many of Parker’s letters, journals, sermons, and memorabilia are in the Peter Parker Collection, Archives of the Historical Library of the School of Medicine, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Others are in the American Board Archives at Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. A detailed listing is in Gulick, Peter Parker, 253–56.

Chinese Repository (1832–51), published at Canton, Macao, and Hong Kong, has numerous articles by Parker and others, reporting on their medical work, especially at the Canton Hospital.


Works about Peter Parker

Cadbury, William Warder, and Mary Hoxie Jones. At the Point of a Lancet: One Hundred Years of the Canton Hospital, 1835–1935. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1935.


Notes
1. This is a revised and abridged version of my article “Peter Parker and the Introduction of Western Medicine in China,” Mission Studies 23, no. 2 (2006): 203–38, where more details and further documentation can be found. The most important secondary sources for biographical information on Peter Parker, to which I am greatly indebted, are Edward V. Gulick, Peter Parker and the Opening of China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), and George B. Stevens and W. Fisher Marwick, The Life, Letters, and Journals of the Rev. and Hon. Peter Parker, M.D.: Missionary, Physician, and Diplomatist; The Father of Medical Missions and Founder of the Ophthalmic Hospital in Canton (Boston: Congregational Sunday School & Publishing Society, 1896). Gulick’s work is a scholarly study, whereas Stevens and Marwick’s is an authorized biography—somewhat hagiographical—that was commissioned by Yale and paid for with money from Parker, so there is nothing critical or negative in it. The portrait of Dr. Parker on page 153 is from the frontispiece of Stevens and Marwick’s biography.

2. Remarkably preserved, the manuscript for this first sermon is in the Peter Parker Collection, Archives of the Historical Library of the School of Medicine, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut (hereafter YSM Archives). In the top margin of the first page of each of his sermons, Parker noted the date and place where he preached the sermon, and he sometimes also mentioned the number of people in attendance. One of his sermons, which he first preached in New Haven in 1832, must have been his standard or favorite sermon, because he preached it at least seventeen times, including onboard the Marmora at Singapore in 1835; onboard the Marmora at Singapore in 1835; in Canton in 1835; onboard the Nàntïc on November 15, 1840 (he also gave the longitude and latitude of the ship’s location); and at Canton again on December 3, 1848.


4. The Prudential Committee’s instructions are in the Parker Collection, YSM Archives.

5. Stevens and Marwick, Peter Parker, 78.


8. Quoted by Stevens and Marwick, Peter Parker, 111.

9. Gulick, Peter Parker, 150; Wong and Wu, Chinese Medicine, 315–17.

10. William Warder Cadbury and Mary Hoxie Jones, At the Point of a Lancet: One Hundred Years of the Canton Hospital 1835–1935 (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1935), 276; Gulick, Peter Parker, 55.


12. Gulick, Peter Parker, 68–70.


14. Ibid., 111.

15. Cadbury and Jones, Point of a Lancet, 78–79.


18. Quoted by Stevens and Marwick, Peter Parker, 252.


20. For paintings of tumors presented, see “Peter Parker’s Lam Qua Paintings Collection,” http://librarymedicine.yale.edu/find/peter-parker.

21. Gulick, Peter Parker, 185.

22. Ibid., 183.

23. Ibid., 189.

24. Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats, 10.

25. Gulick, Peter Parker, 189; See also Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats, 9–10.


27. Harriet Webster Parker died July 10, 1896, and is buried next to her husband in Lot 511 East, Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, D.C. During a visit to the cemetery and the gravesites on April 3, 2006, the author was kindly provided by Ella P. Pozell, superintendent of the cemetery, with photocopies of the burial certificates for both Peter Parker and his wife.

Key Findings of Christianity in Its Global Context, 1970–2020

Gina A. Bellofatto and Todd M. Johnson

Christians around the world today find themselves in contexts that are very different from those of forty years ago. Since 1970, many societies have experienced dramatic social upheavals and severe environmental catastrophes, yet the period from 1970 to 2010 was also a time of great technological advancement and increased connections between people around the world. Such changes challenge Christians to think differently about the people among whom they live and work, the ways in which they interact with them, and the potential for future cooperation.

Christianity in Its Global Context, 1970–2020: Society, Religion, and Mission, a report produced in 2013 by researchers at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, offers a timely overview of the changing demographics of Christianity and Christians’ activities over the past forty years while looking forward to the next ten. If current trends continue, what will be the state of the world in 2020? Who will be the neighbors of Christians, and what issues will they be facing together? Here we summarize the key findings from the full report, which is available for PDF download at www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext.

Christianity in Its Global Context presents global data on the demographics of world religions, providing evidence for the continued resurgence of religion into the twenty-first century. It covers global Christianity, including Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, and offers projections for where growth of all major Christian traditions is most likely to occur in the future. The bulk of the report details the Christian, religious, and social contexts of each of the twenty-one United Nations (UN) regions and what changes have occurred or will occur from 1970 to 2020, with discussions of key social issues that are putting pressure on all residents in each region. The “Mission and Society” section of the report details the status of the worldwide missionary movement, including personal contact between Christians and other religionists around the globe, the status of unreached people groups, and the religious demographics of international migrants. The report also highlights the most pressing social issues in each of the UN regions, particularly those currently being addressed by the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Global Data: World Religions

For the period 1970–2020, several global trends related to religious affiliation are apparent.

- The percentage of the world that is religious continues to increase.

In 1970 nearly 80% of the world’s population was religious. By 2010 this had grown to around 88%, with a projected increase to almost 90% by 2020. Religious adherence is growing globally largely because of the continuing resurgence of religion in China.

- That is, projections to 2020 indicate a sustained decline of the world’s nonreligious population.

This decline is due primarily to the resurgence of Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions in China, and Christianity in Eastern Europe. If this trend continues, agnostics and atheists will be a smaller portion of the world’s population in 2020 (10.7%) than they were in 2010 (11.8%).

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• Christianity and Islam dominate religious demographics and will continue to do so into the future.

In 1970 these two religions represented 48.8% of the global population; by 2020 they will likely represent 57.2%. This has enormous implications for countries with large populations of both, such as Nigeria.

• Religious diversity is increasing in many countries and regions.

Most countries are becoming home to a greater number of religions. The Baha’i have a greater global spread than any other major world religion except Christianity. Overall religious diversity is decreasing in many countries in the Global South, however, given the growth of mainly one religion, most commonly Christianity or Islam.

Global Data: Christianity

The twentieth century experienced the great shift of Christianity to the Global South, a trend that will continue into the future.

• In 1970 less than half (41.3%) of all Christians worldwide were from Africa, Asia, or Latin America. By 2020 this figure is expected to approach two-thirds (64.7%).

Over this fifty-year period, each of the six major Christian traditions is expected to grow more rapidly than the general population in the Global South. The fastest-growing tradition on each continent is Marginals in Latin America (5.8% per year), Independents in Asia (4.8%), Anglicans in Africa (4.4%), and Orthodoxy in Oceania (2.5%). This shift to the Global South was recently reflected in the election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as Pope Francis, the first Latin American head of the Roman Catholic Church.

• Northern America and Europe were home to 57.2% of the world’s Christians in 1970. By 2010 this had dropped to 37.7%, and by 2020 it will likely fall to 34.4%.

Christianity is declining at a dramatic rate as a percentage of the population in the Global North. Birth rates in many European countries in particular are below replacement level, and populations are aging. The world’s population will average 0.97% growth per year between 1970 and 2020. In Northern America, Christians are poised to grow only 0.62% per year. For Europe, the figure is only 0.33%.

• In the years 1970–2020 and 2010–20, the growth of Christianity is greatest in Eastern Asia (averaging, respectively, 5.6% and 3.0% per year).

Eastern Asia will experience the highest projected growth rate for Christianity in part because the Christian population there is still comparatively small. Christians were only 1.2% of the region in 1970 but are poised to grow to 10.5% by 2020. Growth is particularly rapid in China and Mongolia, which are each expected to have growth rates of over 3% between 2010 and 2020.

Global Data: Evangelicals

Evangelicalism is a dynamic, diverse movement within Christianity—but how many Evangelicals are there in the world?

• The World Christian Database (WCD) estimates there were 98 million Evangelicals in the world in 1970, increasing to 300 million by 2010, with expected growth to 349 million by 2020.

The WCD utilizes a structural definition of all church members self-identifying as Evangelicals, plus Christians who are members of 100% Evangelical denominations.

• Operation World (OW), utilizing a theological criterion, estimates there were 124 million Evangelicals worldwide in 1970, growing to 550 million by 2010, with expected growth to over 650 million by 2020.

The OW estimate includes church members who affirm or practice belief in the crucified Christ, an experience of personal conversion, adherence to the Bible as a theological foundation, and active engagement in missionary evangelism.

Global Data: Pentecostals

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are best conceptualized as part of a single interconnected set of movements (which we have called Renewalists) in three distinct types: Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Independent Charismatics (for definitions, see full report available online). Renewalists numbered 62.7 million in 1970 and are expected to grow to 709.8 million by 2020.

• Between 1970 and 2010, Renewalist movements grew at nearly four times the growth rates of both Christianity and the world’s population.

In 1970 Renewalists were 5.1% of all Christians, but by 2010 they had grown to 25.8% (averaging 4.1% growth per year between 1970 and 2010). By 2020 it is expected that Renewalist movements will grow almost twice as fast as both global Christianity as a whole and the world’s population and will represent 27.8% of all Christians.
• Between 1970 and 2020, Charismatics were the fastest-growing type of Renewalists, but Pentecostals will grow faster between 2010 and 2020.

Charismatics (who are found in all major Christian traditions) averaged 10.5% growth per year over the forty-year period, with Catholic Charismatics maintaining the fastest growth (11.9%). Between 2010 and 2020, Pentecostals will likely grow at 2.3% per year, and Charismatics at 1.9%.

Composition of Renewalists by Type and Tradition, 1970 and 2020

- Renewalists were most numerous in Latin America in 2010, but Africa will likely surpass Latin America by 2020.

Renewalists grew the fastest in Asia and Latin America over the forty-year period 1970–2010 and will grow most rapidly in Asia and Africa over the next ten years. The growth of Renewal Christianity in these areas has been astounding: in Africa, going from 18.8 million in 1970 to 226.2 million by 2020; in Latin America, from 12.8 million to 203.1 million; and in Asia, from 9.3 million to 165.6 million.

Regional Trends: Africa

In 1970, Africa was 38.7% Christian (143 million); by 2020 the continent will likely be 49.3% Christian (631 million).

- The proportion of Roman Catholics worldwide who live in Africa has been increasing, and will likely continue to do so into the future.

Between 1970 and 2010 the number of Roman Catholics in Africa rose from 44.9 million (6.8% of Catholics globally) to 197.0 million (15.2%). By 2020 there will be 232 million Roman Catholics in Africa, or 18.0% of the world’s Catholics.

- Anglicanism was the fastest-growing major Christian tradition in Africa between 1970 and 2010.

Anglicans in Africa grew from 7.7 million in 1970 to 50.8 million in 2010. By the year 2000 the Anglican Church was larger in Africa than in Europe, its historic home. Anglicanism has plateaued in Europe, but continued growth is expected in Africa, where Anglincans will reach 65 million by 2020 (compared to 27 million then in Europe).

- Africa experienced the greatest religious change of any continent over the twentieth century.

By 1970 Muslims had replaced ethnoreligionists as the largest group of religious adherents, largely through ethnoreligionist conversions to Christianity or Islam. These conversions have continued, and by 2020 Africa will be 49.3% Christian, 41.7% Muslim, and 8.7% ethnoreligionist.

Regional Trends: Asia

Despite having its origins in Asia, Christianity has spread more successfully in other parts of the globe; by percentage, Asia is the least-Christian major area in the world. In 1970 there were 95 million Christians (4.5%), with growth to 420 million (9.2%) forecast by 2020.

- Christianity is expected to grow faster than any other religion in Asia between 2010 and 2020.

Christianity will likely average 2.1% growth annually in Asia, more than twice the rate of growth for the general population (0.9%). Many of these gains are by conversion, though some countries, such as Afghanistan,
have experienced fluctuations with the entrance and exit of large expatriate populations.

• **The Christian population in Western Asia is being depleted, largely because of emigration.**

Many historic Christian communities in Western Asia—notably those in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq—have been emigrating because of ongoing conflict and violence in the region. In 1970 Western Asia was 7.3% Christian, but by 2020 the region will likely be only 5.4% Christian.

• **Asia has been and will continue to be the most religiously diverse major area in the world.**

Asia is the historic home to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese folk-religion, the Baha’i faith, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity (as well as numerous New Religions and ethnoreligions). In 2010 Asia was home to 99.2% of the world’s Hindus, 98.4% of Buddhists, 75.5% of agnostics, and 69.4% of Muslims.

**Regional Trends: Europe**

Christianity is on the decline in Europe largely because of secularization, but the continent is also becoming increasingly more religiously diverse because of immigration.

• **Christianity in Europe grew between 1970 and 2010 but now is in decline.**

Christianity in Europe experienced growth between 1970 and 2010—492 million (75.0%) to 580 million (78.6%)—largely because of a resurgence of religion in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union. Between 2010 and 2020, however, the Christian population will plateau and the Christian share of the total population will decline (to 78.0%), largely because of deaths and because of individuals leaving the faith.

• **Immigration is drastically altering the religious landscape of Europe.**

Numerous religions will have relatively high (over 2%) growth rates in Europe over the fifty-year period, including Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Chinese folk-religion, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Muslims will grow from 2.7% of the population in 1970 (18 million) to 5.9% in 2020 (44 million), likely because of immigration and lower-than-average European birth rates.

• **In 2010, on average, 23% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Europe personally knew a Christian.**

It is projected that these communities will continue to grow at a much faster pace than Christians between 2010 and 2020 (Christians will average 0.0% annual growth between 2010 and 2020, compared to 0.5% for Muslims, 1.0% for Hindus, and 0.4% for Buddhists), potentially creating more opportunities for members of all these traditions to interact.

**Regional Trends: Latin America**

Christianity is declining as a percentage of Latin America’s population, from 94.2% in 1970 to 92.1% by 2020, but Latin American Christians represent an increasing share of the global Christian population, up from 22.0% in 1970 to 23.5% by 2020.

• **Roman Catholics, as a percentage of Latin American Christians, will decline.**

Roman Catholics represented 87.7% of the total population in 1970, a figure that is expected to decline to 79.7% by 2020. While some of the decline can be attributed to secularization, the majority of those who leave join Protestant or Pentecostal churches. For example, in Brazil in 1970 Protestants and Independents combined represented 7.7% of the country’s population, a figure that is expected to grow to 17.6% by 2020.

• **Dramatic growth characterizes both Evangelicals and Renewalists in Latin America: from 3.2% and 4.5% of the population, respectively, in 1970 to 9.1% and 31.1% in 2020.**

Many Roman Catholics in the region are becoming Catholic Charismatics or are switching to Evangelical or Renewalist denominations. Pentecostals in particular are gaining an increased role in public life, with the region having recently seen two Pentecostal presidents in Guatemala and the founding of a Pentecostal political party in Nicaragua.

• **Marginal Christianity will grow significantly in the region (to 11.2 million in 2020), in particular, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah’s Witnesses.**

Mormons are making great gains in some of the smaller island countries like Aruba, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Jehovah’s Witnesses averaged growth of more than 5% per year in Nicaragua and Honduras between 1970 and 2010. In 2010 they each numbered over 40,000 in both countries.
Regional Trends: North America

Christianity is declining as a share of the population in Northern America, while the number of unaffiliated—both religious and nonreligious—is on the rise.

- Christianity’s share of the population has been shrinking dramatically in Canada.

In 1970 Canada was 94.5% Christian, but by 2010 this figure had dropped to 69.4%, with a further drop to 66.0% forecast by 2020. The presence in Canada of nine religions, each with adherents numbering at least 1% of the total population, makes it one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world.

- The number of Christians who are not affiliated with any particular church tradition is growing.

The religiously unaffiliated include not only agnostics and atheists (the nonreligious) but also a growing number of Christians who have chosen to disaffiliate with institutionalized Christianity; the majority of these Christians are under age thirty.

- Agnosticism is the second-largest tradition in Northern America and growing.

By 2020, agnostics in Northern America will have tripled from their 1970 percentages in the United States and increased their share by a factor of seven in Canada. Between 2010 and 2020 agnosticism will grow almost four times faster than Christianity in the region (2.17% vs. 0.56% per year). Although the United States will remain the country with the most Christians globally in 2020 (263 million), it will also be home to over 53 million agnostics and atheists (the second-largest population, after China).

Regional Trends: Oceania

In terms of percentage, Christianity in Oceania declined from 92.5% of the population in 1970 to 76.6% in 2010, largely because of secularization.

- Ethnoreligions are still quite prominent in the region, with 1.0% of the total population in 2010 (420,000 individuals).

The resilience of ethnoreligions in Oceania (and elsewhere worldwide) has been a surprise to some. Active Christian missionary presence in the region could challenge ethnoreligionist existence in the future.

- High rates of immigration from Asian countries are significantly affecting the region’s religious landscape.

China is a major sending country, contributing to the rise of Chinese folk-religionists (over 100,000 in 2010) in the region. Many migrants arrive from India as well, increasing the Hindu population (over half a million lived in the region in 2010). Buddhism has the highest average annual growth rate among larger religions, nearly 8% per year between 1970 and 2020 (though only 2% for 2010-20).

- The internal makeup of Christianity in Oceania is expected to change by 2020.

Anglicanism and Protestantism are the oldest traditions in Oceania, the result of early Western missionary efforts. In 1970 these traditions together represented 46.4% of the population, but by 2020 this percentage is expected to drop to 32.0% (accompanied by an ongoing decline in the actual number of Anglicans). The Roman Catholic share of the population is declining as well, while Independents, Marginals, and Orthodox are all poised to make gains, through both missionary effort (Mormons are particularly active in smaller island nations) and immigration (such as European Orthodox immigrating to Australia).

Mission and Society: Missionaries

In 2010 Christians from all traditions sent out approximately 400,000 international missionaries; they went from almost every country to all of the world’s countries. This figure does not include cross-cultural missionaries who were at work in their home countries.

- Countries of the Global South are sending increasing numbers of international missionaries.

Of the ten countries sending the most missionaries in 2010, three were in the Global South: Brazil, South Korea, and India. The second “top ten” included six

In Latin America, both Evangelicals and Renewalists are growing dramatically.

Southern countries: South Africa, the Philippines, Mexico, China, Colombia, and Nigeria. Southern missionaries go not only to other Southern countries but also to Northern countries, in a reverse of the pattern seen over much of the twentieth century.

- Countries of the Global North are receiving increasing numbers of international missionaries.

Five of the countries receiving the most international missionaries are in the Global North: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. While many of these international missionaries come from the Global South to work among their own
peoples in diaspora, they are also increasingly seeking to reach the native populations of the countries in which they minister.

- The ten countries that received the most international missionaries in 2010 were home to 29% of the world’s non-Christians—but also to 37% of the world’s Christians.

When India (ranked tenth) is left off the list, the top nine receiving countries were home to only 3.5% of the world’s non-Christians but received more than 34% of all international missionaries. All nine have Christian majorities, and they were home to over 34% of the world’s Christians in 2010. They also sent almost 53% of international missionaries.

- Missionaries are often sent to places where there is already a well-established Christian presence.

The countries that receive the most missionaries per million people are overwhelmingly in Oceania and the Caribbean, both of which have majority Christian populations. In contrast, the countries receiving the fewest missionaries per million people have some of the least-Christian populations, and often either ban or severely restrict missionary activity.

**Personal Contact**

The data on personal contact have their origins in a simple concept: proximity. What percentage of religionists around the world has contact with Christians, and what does this mean for mission and civility in society?

- The countries in which there is least personal contact between non-Christians and Christians are overwhelmingly Muslim-majority countries.

On a regional basis, only 9.9% of non-Christians in Western Asia are thought to have personal contact with a Christian. In South-central Asia and in Northern Africa the figure is 11.9%.

- Atheists and agnostics have more contact with Christians than do most non-Christian religionists.

In one sense this is not surprising, given that many nonreligionists, at least in the Global North and Latin America, are former Christians. More surprising, however, is that agnostics have less contact with Christians than do atheists. Globally, Muslims have less contact with Christians than do Jews; in some individual regions Muslim contact is much higher than average, while for Jews this is not the case.

- High levels of contact by atheists and agnostics mask low levels of contact among other religionists in many parts of the world.

In Northern America, for example, 80.2% of other religionists have personal contact with a Christian. Removing atheists and agnostics from the calculation reduces the figure to only 40.1%. The decline is even greater in Northern Europe, from 82.0% to 20.8%. However, more other religionists know a Christian in Western Africa (23.5%) than is true for any region in Europe.

**Unreached Peoples**

At the Lausanne meeting in 1974, missiologist Ralph Winter defined a “people group” as the largest group within which the Gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance. A people group is considered “unreached” if there is no indigenous Christian community within it capable of carrying the task of evangelization and church planting without outside assistance.

- Increasing attention is being drawn to people groups who have no missionary presence among them.

Despite almost forty years of emphasis on unreached people groups, many groups still have no church-planting work of any kind among them. Many mission strategists are seeking to move churches and mis-
sion agencies beyond “adopting” a people to actively engaging them in actual church planting work.

- Progress in reaching unreached peoples has been steady but slow.

There are many ways to divide the world’s peoples and multiple ways to measure Christian progress among them. Our method is to divide each country into ethnolinguistic groups and to assess twenty different ways of evangelizing. Using this model, there were approximately 3,600 least-evangelized peoples in 1970, dropping to about 2,200 by 2010, and expected to further drop to about 1,900 by 2020.

- The number of unevangelized individuals has remained high but is falling as a percentage of the world’s population.

The number of unevangelized individuals is estimated to have been 1.8 billion in 1970 (44.3% of the world’s population) rising in number to 2.0 billion by 2010 (but dropping to 29.3%), and expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2020 (29.0%). Thus, even though population growth is increasingly outpacing evangelistic efforts, the percentage of unevangelized individuals worldwide is slowly dropping.

Migration

Migrants tend to alter the religious makeup of the countries in which they settle, either by bringing entirely new religions or by bringing different forms of already established ones.

- Of all people in diaspora worldwide, nearly half are Christians, and another quarter are Muslims.

Christians and Muslims together made up 55.3% of the world’s population in 2010, but they represented 72.8% of all people in diaspora. Most of these migrants are individuals moving from the Global South to the Global North. This has potential for improving efforts in Christian-Muslim dialogue and understanding.

- The top three “sending” countries of international migrants are Mexico, Bangladesh, and Argentina.

Mexico has sent the most Christian migrants, most of whom have settled in the United States. Bangladesh is the leading sending country of both Hindus and Muslims, many of whom are found across the border in India as modern geopolitical migrants following partition of the subcontinent.

- The United States hosts the most total migrants of any country worldwide: 118 million.

The United States is the top destination of Christian, Buddhist, and atheist/agnostic migrants; the number 2 destination for Hindus (after India) and Jews (after Israel); and the number 7 destination for Muslim migrants. Together, the United States and India host nearly a quarter of all people in diaspora.

Social and Economic Challenges

The most significant set of indicators on social and economic progress around the world is the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2012 MDGs report categorizes some of the most critical human problems into eight major goals, followed by a plan for global partnership in development.

- Extreme poverty continues to decline in many countries and regions.

The proportion of people worldwide living on less than US$1.25 a day fell from 47% in 1990 to 24% in 2008. By 2015 it is expected that the global poverty rate will fall below 16%. This global trend has continued despite the effects of deep economic recession in recent years. Four of every five people living in extreme poverty in 2015 will live in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

- The poorest children have made the slowest progress in terms of improved nutrition, and hunger remains a global challenge.

In the period 2006–9, a total of 850 million people (15.5% of the world’s population) were living in hunger. Even though extreme poverty has decreased, progress has been slow in reducing child malnutrition. In 2010 nearly one in five children globally was underweight, including one-third of children in Southern Asia.

- Christian involvement in caring for the poor has deep roots.

Over the centuries, each of the major Christian traditions has developed strong theological foundations for social action. Current Christian efforts tend to dovetail with those initiated by the United Nations and individual governments. Many of these take the form of nongovernmental agencies, ranging in size from multi-billion-dollar global enterprises to local family-run operations.
Slum Dwellers

Improving the lives of a growing number of urban poor remains a monumental challenge. In developing regions, the number of urban residents living in slum conditions was estimated by the UN at 863 million in 2012, compared to 260 million in 1970.

- Improvements in the lives of 200 million slum dwellers exceeded the MDG slum target.

The share of urban residents in the developing world living in slums declined from 39% in 2000 to 33% in 2012. More than 200 million gained access to improved water sources, improved sanitation facilities, or durable or less crowded housing. This achievement exceeds the target of significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, well ahead of the 2020 deadline. There is still a great need to improve the lives of slum dwellers, however, especially in terms of sanitation and security.

- The Christian presence in slums is disproportionately small.

Although 1 in 6 people globally lives in slums, it is estimated fewer than 1 out of 500 Christian missionaries work in slums. In addition, only a tiny fraction (perhaps 1 in 10,000) of national workers (such as pastors) work in slums in their own countries.

- Very few Christians who do ministry in slums actually live in slums.

The vast majority of Christians who work in slums live elsewhere. While many have built effective ministries, the most promising work appears to be that of incarnational teams living in the slums.

The full report is available for free download at www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext.
On March 13, 2013, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Bishop of Rome. A citizen of Argentina, Pope Francis is the first Latin American and the first Jesuit to become pope. We asked three friends of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, all members of the Roman Catholic Church, for an initial assessment of the significance Pope Francis’s elevation holds for Christian mission.

—The Editors

In February 2013 the Catholic Church was in crisis over the sudden resignation of Pope Benedict XVI. Who would be his successor? Who could possibly deal with all the church’s huge problems? Who could best shepherd the flock of God’s people? Many cardinals were considered papabili. Few predicted that the answer to these questions would be Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio from Argentina.

God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are his plans our plans. Pope Francis as the new shepherd of the church is an awesome surprise gift for us all, especially as we learn about his character and personality—a man of radiant simplicity and genuine humility, a man of intellect and also of compassion. I sense he will bring great reforms in the Christian mission to the world. He is a pope for all the people—young and old, regardless of religion, color, or race. His simple and inclusive style will draw more people back to church and closer to God.

The style of Pope Francis, who goes out to the people, blesses and kisses children, washes the feet of young prisoners, female and male, honors suffering people in their difficult situations, welcomes all delegates and all leaders of the world, blesses and charms the thousands of pilgrims in Rome—all this is a sign of a real church. His exuding of God’s loving care, mercy, and tenderness to those who are suffering is at the heart of mission.

The words of Pope Francis during his public addresses have signaled a shift of emphasis toward social justice. His concern for the poor and oppressed reflects the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), including his concern for all Christians and the respect he has shown to nonbelievers. His example in word and deed will be a powerful force for change in missionary practice.

The striking message of this new pope is openness toward a new era for the church, one with more compassion, more inclusion, more openness to the world. He wants the spotlight to be on people who have been forgotten, who are on the margins and suffering in various ways—to be a humble and listening church at a time when it has been rocked by scandals of sex abuse, corruption, and internal power struggles. Such an emphasis on seeking the total well-being of humanity represents nothing less than aligning ourselves with the Manifesto of Jesus Christ himself, expressed in Luke 4:18–19, which is at the heart of Christian mission.

The new shepherd of the church can make a great impact on the world if he uses the papacy to find pragmatic steps toward dealing with today’s global problems (e.g., the nuclear threat, child trafficking, poverty), as well as toward restoring the sinking image of the Catholic Church, making the priesthood more attractive to the youth, addressing interdenominational and interfaith frictions, and intensifying evangelism and discipleship.

I believe that Pope Francis will bring significant changes in the world and in Christian mission by his living witness and prophetic voice. Already we have heard his significant call to have “a poor church for the poor.” He has made himself an example of a more humble and frugal church by refusing many trappings of the papacy and by urging respect for all of creation and protection of our environment. Furthermore, he has reached out to those of other faiths and those with no religion, seeking to intensify dialogue in order to build peace in the world. May he be influential in bringing many hearts and souls back to God.

In all things, may God be glorified!

—Theodora Bilocura

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of society. He went to celebrate Mass on Holy Thursday in a prison for young people, and there he washed the feet of twelve, including two Muslims and two women.

From the very beginning of his pontificate, we are seeing characteristics that are significant for the mission of the church. Pope Francis’s approach to the “other” is marked by respect and reverence; he is deeply concerned about relationships; he desires a poor church for the poor, embracing those who are at the margins of society; he is deeply concerned about the care of creation; and he preaches the Gospel with the words of Jesus—telling the story and inviting all, including himself, to enter the story, experiencing Jesus. As he began his ministry, he prayed for the grace “to walk, to build, to profess Jesus Christ crucified.”1

On Easter he reminded all that “God always surprises us” and urged us “not to be afraid of the newness that God wants to bring into our lives.” He recalled that “we, too, like the women who were Jesus’ disciples, who went to the tomb and found it empty, may wonder what this event means (cf. Lk. 24:4). . . . It means that the love of God can transform our lives and let those desert places in our hearts bloom.” After the resurrection, Jesus opens us to “a future of hope.”

—Mary Motte

Notes


Mary Motte, F.M.M., a contributing editor, directs the Mission Resource Center of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the United States. Her present research focuses on the growing consensus between science and theology about creation and life, and on questions it raises for missionary discipleship and insights for communicating the Good News of the Gospel.

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As Cardinal Bergoglio, Pope Francis was known for his simple and approachable style and for his support of social justice programs and commitment to the poor in his native Argentina. The pastoral office was for him a call to serve the people and to draw near to them. He was active in the cause of ecumenical unity and action, affirming his solidarity with Jews, Christian evangelicals, and Muslims. He took a very strong position condemning the bombing in 1994 in Buenos Aires of a seven-story building housing the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association and the Delegation of the Argentine Jewish Association. In 2005 Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz of the Center for Christian Jewish Understanding at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, praised Cardinal Bergoglio’s leadership.

Given his distinctive style of leadership, we can expect reforms in the church to be centered on consensus-building and attentiveness to the life and concerns of the faithful and of their neighbors. The work of social justice will receive greater attention, and with it, presumably, the heroic service of the extraordinary sisters who have borne the brunt of care for the needy and have been pillars of the educational mission of the church. As a self-declared patron of the poor, the pope is unlikely to be sequestered as nothing more than defender-in-chief of ecclesiastical power, and given his involvement in political and social issues in Argentina, human rights should receive great prominence in his pontificate. It remains to be seen, however, what reforms, if any, he will institute of the encrusted Vatican bureaucratic machinery, including financial management, and whether he will tackle prevailing thorny matters of celibacy, divorce, marriage, women’s role in the church, gay rights, and the continuing restrictions on contraception and abortion. Once upon a time doctrine and theology were the driving force of the church’s reliable if lumbering superstructure; today social and cultural matters fill that role, threatening a polarity between the church and faithful communicants who dissent from its social prescriptions.

As a hint of his desire to abandon the image of the church as a musty anachronism, Pope Francis has spoken before of the need to avoid “the spiritual sickness of a self-referential church.” He has criticized the overly clerical character of the church, saying, “The priests clericalize the laity, and the laity beg us to be clericalized.” He calls that “sinful abetment,” saying that baptism should suffice for the life of discipleship. If he adheres to that stripped-down, unpretentious view of the church, he will likely advance the promise of lay enablement that Vatican II encouraged but left unfulfilled. That impulse has been lodged like a dormant supplement in the body of the church, waiting for the day when it can be released for the good of all believers.

As for his impact on the wider ecumenical front, Pope Francis heralds a new age for the church as a bridge-builder between Catholics and non-Catholics, between liberals and conservatives, between priest and laity, and between the church and the world. The pope will be mindful of what St. Bonaventure, St. Francis’s biographer, wrote affirming the nature of God as that of a circle which the center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, which suggests a spirit of genuine openness to the world. By virtue of the one God and Creator, we are all of one kin.

On the Muslim front, it is not too early to see the pope’s election and his adoption of the name of Francis of Assisi as of tantalizing symbolic significance. In following the saint’s footsteps, before both non-Christians and believers, Pope Francis intends to bring his Jesuit credentials into the crucible of serving the poor, making peace, and defending the dignity of the downtrodden and the forgotten. Pope Francis seems resolved to launch the church into a new age of evangelism guided by the spirit of St. Francis. In an ironic way, nothing could be more appropriate for the contemporary world.

—Lamin Sanneh

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Vatican II (1962–65) radically changed the Catholic Church’s self-understanding, as well as its relation to the world. In the postcolonial context of emancipated Third World countries, missionaries were facing new challenges. The need to enter into dialogue across cultures and religions became a defining feature of contemporary mission. In the early 1970s the Quebec Foreign Mission Society (QFMS) reviewed its constitutions and reassessed its objectives and understanding of mission. The Society became aware of the inconsistency of its serving almost exclusively in countries that were already mostly Christian, and thus the 1973 General Assembly decided to open a new mission in an environment that was both non-Christian and poverty-stricken. From 1974 to 1983 eight missionary priests were sent to a new missionary project in the Diocese of Medan, in Indonesia. This article explores the extent to which this experience was in line with conciliar teachings on mission and interreligious dialogue, but it also shows the influence of internal and external factors on the project’s fate. I utilize Society archives and official publications, as well as interviews conducted with several members of the Indonesian project. First, I summarize the main teachings of Vatican II on both mission and interreligious dialogue. Next, I consider the project’s most important features and greatest challenges. Finally, I evaluate the project in light of conciliar teachings. I argue that although this project was marginal in the Society, it became a milestone in its renewal process.

Mission and Interreligious Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council resulted from internal and external factors pressing the church to review its relation to modernity. The concepts of aggiornamento (bringing up to date) and ressourcement (return to the sources) helped the conciliar fathers to enter into Pope John XXIII’s project. Both concepts rest on the conviction that Catholic tradition is rich enough to face and promote change, contrary to the impression given by Vatican I (1869–70). According to John W. O’Malley, ressourcement is the most crucial element for understanding Vatican II. By going back to the sources of the church, especially patristic sources, the Council effectively changed the tone of the church from legalistic and judicial to pastoral.

On August 6, 1964, Pope Paul VI promulgated his first encyclical on the church, Ecclesiam suam, which promoted an attitude among Catholics of respect, openness, and readiness to engage in dialogue with the world (§50). Dialogue requires that the church deepen its self-understanding (§9). To avoid the pitfalls of “a watering down or whittling away of truth” or of syncretism, Catholics engaged in dialogue should search for the truth and maintain their “vital bond of union with Christ” (§§88, 35). The call for dialogue is tied to mission, and the conception of dialogue is rooted in the experience of salvation, which comes from God’s desire for all of humanity (§§64, 70). The pope reminds Catholics that dialogue cannot be limited, self-seeking, or coercive, but it must remain open to anyone who does not clearly reject it, and it must be persevering (§77). Paul VI sees in dialogue a method characterized by clarity, meekness, confidence, and prudence that Catholics should use to establish spiritual contacts with their contemporaries (§78). Finally, he specifically addresses dialogue with Jews and Muslims, who should be admired “for all that who look for God and worship Him” (§107). Nonetheless, the pope stands by the teachings of his predecessor in making clear that an attitude of openness is required for Catholics to engage in dialogue (§108).

What are the main teachings of the conciliar fathers on mission and interreligious dialogue? First, the church is missionary by nature, and every Catholic is on mission (Ad gentes [1964], §17). The two main conceptions of mission circulating in university circles over the first half of the twentieth century—plantatio ecclesiae (the planting of the church) and the conversion of souls—have received full recognition in Ad gentes, which also specified, in line with Gaudium et spes, that mission includes simple presence among brothers and sisters. Recalling that “people look to their different religions for an answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence” (Nostra aetate [1965], §1), the fathers restated the church’s high regard for Muslims. Points of convergence can be established between the two religions: the worship of one God, their sharing of the same father in faith, Abraham, and the veneration of Jesus as a prophet. The council fathers pleaded for mutual understanding in order to preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice, and moral values. This declaration was also a strong appeal for the recognition of the equal value and dignity of every human being, without regard for his or her religion, race, or condition of life.

Doing Mission in a Poor, Non-Christian Milieu

As mentioned, one outcome of Vatican II was a deliberate and extended reconsideration on the part of QFMS of the order’s missional engagements in light of its constitutions and understanding of mission.

The foundation, development, and aggiornamento of an apostolic society. The bishops of the province of Quebec founded the QFMS in Montreal in 1921 to represent the Church of Quebec abroad. The Society sent its first members to Manchuria, China, on September 11, 1925. In 1937 the Society accepted a mission in southern Philippines, and five years later, priests of the QFMS arrived in Cuba. Given the rather difficult political situation in China at the end of the 1940s, the Society closed its work there and opened

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a new mission in Japan in 1948. This particular context and recommendations from the Vatican led the Society to diversify its horizons, and it opened a new mission in Honduras in 1955, and then in Peru in 1956. After fifty years of existence and an ecumenical council calling for an aggiornamento of its structures and members, what was the Society’s specific institutional context at the beginning of the 1970s, a period marked by a decrease in vocations in Quebec?

The 1973 General Assembly witnessed stark debate over the discrepancies between the Society’s practice and its stated goals. In the end, however, it affirmed its intention to move forward in facing the missionary challenges. Fundamental questions were raised during the assembly with respect to the countries where the Society was present. Given that only Japan was a non-Christian country, was the Society actually following its original vision to minister to non-Christians? Following agreement by the members of the assembly “to give priority to the first announcement of the Gospel, the training of new Christian communities, and the promotion of local leaders ready to take up full responsibility of these communities as soon as possible,” they prepared to launch a new project in a poor and non-Christian environment within the coming year. Mgr. Jean-Louis Martin was put in charge of this new mission.10

Weekly in the local prison, Desrochers answered questions from the prisoners. This experience challenged his faith.

Contributing to the local church through evangelization and dialogue. The Diocese of Medan in northwestern Sumatra met the criteria set by the General Assembly. In the words of Martin, it was “so strongly Muslim that, in certain places, we could not even mention the name of Jesus.”11 For their first two years in Medan, Society members quietly studied the culture, learned Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, as well as Batak dialects, especially Karo and Toba—all the while looking for the best ways to serve the people and the church. The diocese was entering another phase of its indigenization process, and the Society was free to add its own color, since “there were large sectors where Church servants could not go because of a lack of personnel. Consequently, some areas were abandoned, and there were great needs.”13 In 1976 a first contract was signed with the diocesan authorities. The Québécois missionaries were put in charge of fifty-five Christian communities of unequal size, scattered across an area about 600 kilometers (375 miles) in length, and they agreed to work toward the creation of other communities. More specifically, the local church asked that they (1) do specific work with youth and university students, (2) make sure that each member took charge of several of the fifty-five Christian communities, (3) work with Muslims and other non-Christians, and (4) initiate new projects and contribute to renewing pastoral action through the training of local leaders or the development of socio-ecclesial projects such as cooperatives. With respect to Christian-Muslim dialogue, “In the majority of cases, time had not yet come for dialogue with words.”14 Martin remembers that “what we could do was to train people, Indonesians themselves, who will then, when the time is right, dialogue with Muslims through works, common celebrations, and maybe doctrine.”15

The missionary action toward non-Christians began with the Bataks, whose animist beliefs were not recognized by Indonesia’s ideology of Pancasila. Several members of the project got more directly involved with Muslims in Banda Aceh and Belawan. Martin, Grégoire Vignola, and Marcel Beaulieu remained in the area of Medan, while Magella Coulombe started to work with the Bataks-Karos in Binjai in a concerted attempt to counter the Islamic push in this area. Jean-Yves Isabel headed to Banda Aceh to serve the small and isolated Catholic communities of this region and was later joined by Rhéal Désy. And Bertrand Roy and Raymond Desrochers established themselves in the port city of Belawan, where they shared the responsibility of the city’s dozen Christian communities.

Desrochers and Roy lived in Belawan from December 1976 to the end of 1983. Over the course of his stay in Belawan, Roy focused on the training of laypeople so they could fully assume responsibilities for the Christian communities there. This training included “opening them to the missionary dimension of their Christian faith, in the perspective of dialogue with Muslims.” This aspect of the training sessions was not easy for Catholics who were “living in a Muslim environment, where there were all sorts of conflicts between Catholics and Muslims.”17 Several months later, Roy introduced a special issue of Missions étrangères on Indonesia by recalling his experience of a meeting of Muslims: “Tonight, they unite because they believe in the One who announces a kingdom of peace and justice. This invitee from the other end of the world, seated in a corner and trying to follow the conversation, is there for the same reason.”18

Desrochers spent time daily at the port, where he listened, prayed, helped, and tried to be a brother to any of the men from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds who were working on ships. “Every time I leave for the port, I ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and for good discernment in every situation . . . so that he uses me for the purpose of revealing to these people, through another ordinary human being, God’s love and understanding.”19

In addition, he went weekly to the local prison. There, in collaboration with the head of the prison, a practicing Muslim, Desrochers answered questions from the prisoners. This experience challenged his faith. “So how do I express my views, my thoughts, and my faith in front of someone who thinks differently from me? If I’m not able to say certain things, then why is that? If mission includes conversion, am I ready to tell this to people? If I’m not able to express some things, where is the problem? Maybe it’s not only that I’m shy; maybe it’s because my motivations are not right.”20

In the case of Banda Aceh, where Christians constituted only 1 percent of the entire population, they unexpectedly, because of the excellent reputation of their schools, had an important influence on the larger community. Still, the influence of Islam was felt in every aspect of the people’s daily life. In that context, what could Jean-Yves Isabel accomplish? He toured the isolated Christian communities of Aceh and trained laypeople to take up ministerial responsibilities when he could not be present. With respect to Muslims, he “smoothly established a deeper relationship with the students and professors of Darussalam University.”21

In 1980 Isabel noted encouraging improvements in his dialogue with Muslims, especially through discussion groups he held with Muslim groups. In Isabel’s view, “This is a remarkable success. We compared elements of both religions, but also came to a point where we became witness to our respective faith, which requires a deep friendship.” This experience also influenced his
Muslim friends, who shared it with their university colleagues. This led to a path-breaking opportunity: Isabel was invited to join the faculty of Muslim theology. He concluded his article with these reflective remarks: “To invite a Catholic priest to become a member of the faculty of Muslim theology is, especially in Banda Aceh, an extraordinary gesture of trust.”

On the other end of the spectrum of dialogue, Magella Coulombe became involved with the Bataks-Karos in the area of Binjei, where he was free to work openly with the Christian communities in seeking to expand their numbers, mainly because the Bataks “usually find more similarities between their values, way of life, traditions, and customs and Catholicism than with Islam.” This experience shows how varied the results can be of engaging in interreligious dialogue.

A heart-breaking decision; or, how the Society left Indonesia. Although the experience of the Society in the Diocese of Medan was rich and positive in terms of understanding more deeply the issues involved in interreligious dialogue, it required a series of adaptations and reorientations, as Jean-Louis Martin underscored in 1978. He was almost prophetic that year when he wrote, “Nothing is sure, given the political atmosphere, which could change and force foreigners to leave the country within six or seven years.”

At the turn of the 1980s, the biggest issue confronting the missionaries was the renewal of their visas. According to an old law that the Indonesian government had decided to enforce, foreigners could not stay longer than four and a half years in Indonesia under their current visas. At that point they had two choices: leave the country, or become Indonesian citizens. President Suharto insisted that the church needed to become Indonesian, a point the Québécois missionaries were very sensitive to. As recalled by Desrochers, Isabel, and Roy, this situation led members to have intense discussion concerning their future, balancing the needs of the local church with the meaning of missionary work, especially if it meant they had to become Indonesians. In the meantime, “The Indonesians made it clear that a condition for becoming Indonesian was to abandon one’s former citizenship rights.”

By the end of 1983, everyone had decided to leave Indonesia, choosing not to change their citizenship. But although they left, no one felt their work had been in vain. Building upon the experience of the Society in the Diocese of Medan as a presence and a witness to Christ through the transformation of the local church with the meaning of missionary work, especially if it meant they had to become Indonesians. In the meantime, “The Indonesians made it clear that a condition for becoming Indonesian was to abandon one’s former citizenship rights.”

Another factor that should be taken into account in assessing the contribution of the Indonesian project in the overall renewal process of the QFMS is the project’s relatively limited size. At that time (the late 1970s and early 1980s), it was the Society’s smallest project, involving only eight members. In contrast, fifty members were then in the Philippines, and between ten and thirty each were serving in the missions in Honduras, Peru, Japan, and Cuba. Also, it was the Society’s only mission work both taking place in an environment of poverty and being directed primarily to non-Christians. Throughout, the work in Indonesia was faithful to the main orientation spelled out in the Society’s General Assembly of 1973, namely, co-responsibility with the local church, which meant that they implicitly agreed to accept the role of temporary servants.

Conclusion

What have we learned from this study regarding Christian-Muslim dialogue and mission in the postconciliar context? First, this project proved to be both a way to return to the Society’s original impulse to send missionaries to non-Christians and a way to experience the renewal called for by the church. Second, the most important feature of this work in Indonesia is the experience of mission as a presence, which took a wide range of forms. It proved to be the best way to enter into dialogue with the non-Christians of the Diocese of Medan, both Bataks and Muslims. Third, at the request of the local diocesan authorities, the members of QFMS engaged in work with Muslims. Their experience demonstrates that, despite political conditions that would seem to exclude interreligious dialogue, an attitude of brotherhood can help bridge between the two sides, even at the level of faith and belief.

As with many other studies on Christian-Muslim dialogue in the context of mission, this article has focused on the experience of priests. Women, however, “differ from men in the ways they are human and religious, and it follows therefore that interreligious dialogue characterized by ‘feminine inclusivity will differ fundamentally from male-centered interreligious dialogue.’” In light of this difference, a promising topic for future research would be Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa as experienced by female missionaries such as the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa.

2. According to theologian Gilles Routhier, “Vatican II cannot be understood without reference to the renewal movements that came before, and as such, it represents a new beginning, a moment of synthesis that also led to seeking new challenges” (Vatican II au Canada: Enracinement et réception [Saint-Laurent: Fides, 2001], 11–12). The renewal movements that transformed the Roman Catholic Church from inside over the course of the first half of the twentieth century—catechetical, liturgical, missionary, pastoral, and philosemitic—worked to counter the influence of antimodernist discourse within the church by taking into account the scientific advancement of the humanities and social sciences.

3. According to church historian Étienne Fouilloux, the matrix of contemporary Catholicism can be traced back to the way Rome interpreted most aspects of the modern world, leading to the Holy Office’s condemnation of sixty-five propositions subsumed into the term “modernism,” which the Vatican described as “the synthesis of all heresies” (Une église en quête de liberté: La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II [1914–1962] [Paris: Descleée de Brouwer, 1998], 10).


5. “We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people as other than sisters and brothers, for all are created in God’s image” (Nostra aetate, §5), a viewpoint that also reflects Dignitatis humanae (1965).

6. Upon agreement reached with Mgr. J.-M. Blois, vicar apostolic of Mukden, Louis Lapierre, Eugène Bérichon, and Léo Lomme were the first to go on mission in the name of the QFMS. In 1929 the Society was put in charge of the apostolic prefecture of Szeping-kai, erected on portions of the vicariates of Jehol and Mukden, Manchuria.

7. In his encyclical Evangelii praecoxes (1951), Pope Pius XII encouraged missionary institutes to consider territories of apostolate such as Latin America, even though most of its population was Catholic. He was concerned to counter the negative effects of materialistic atheism, freemasonry, and the push of Protestantism in the continent (§§17–18).

8. Eclesiae sanctae (August 6, 1966) called for the implementation of the Council’s teachings by religious institutes, asking them to organize a special general chapter for that purpose (§§1–6).


10. Martin, only thirty-nine years old at the time of his appointment, was responsible for the training of seminarians (1967–73) in Quebec and had previously served in Peru (1959–67).


12. This attitude is consistent with the conclusion Stanislaw Grodz draws from the analysis of a new mission of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in an African Muslim country: “It certainly makes a difference whether a missionary arrives almost as an agent of a mighty development investor, or whether he comes as a hired worker who may be more inclined to listen to and learn from the local people and who would certainly be dependent on them” (“‘Vie with Each Other in Good Works’: What Can a Roman Catholic Missionary Order Learn from Entering into Closer Contact with Muslims?”, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 18 [2007]: 212).

13. Martin interview.

14. Though initially Monsignors Van den Hurk and Pius were not keen on asking the Québécois missionaries to work with the Muslims, in a diocesan assembly of February 1976 the bishops finally asked the QFMS priests if they would give it a try (Jean-Louis Martin, “Les Prêtres des Missions-Étrangères: Serviteurs de l’Évangile dans l’Église de Medan,” Missions étrangères 17 [1976]: 3–6); quotation from Martin, interview by author, March 24, 2011.

15. Martin interview.

16. Pancasila was the state ideology implemented in 1945, at the time of Indonesian independence. It is based on the five principles of belief in one supreme God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations in representative bodies, and social justice for all people. According to this ideological system, in order to be fully recognized as citizens, every Indonesian must belong to a religion accepted by the state, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism, or Catholicism. This policy created conditions for missionary activity toward the Batak groups in the area of Medan, first by Lutheran Protestants and, since the end of the Second World War, by Catholics.

17. Bertrand Roy, interview by author, February 11, 2010, at the QFMS.


22. Jean-Yves Isabel, “L’Indonésie: Conflicts and dialogue,” Missions étrangères 19 (1980): 26. The late 1970s saw the uprising and development of a nationalist movement in Aceh, especially around the group Aceh Merkeda, which advocated nationalizing the natural resources of the area and demanded recognition as being able to govern themselves as part of a decentralized model of governance. This was at odds with the type of governmental structures established in 1965 by the New Order regime (Edward Aspinall, Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press], 18–83).


26. Some missionaries had become especially active with cooperatives in the rural sectors of Medan, as this initiative was part of a larger diocesan orientation that stressed social justice. See Jean-Yves Isabel, “Un mètre de terre vaut plus qu’un mayam d’or,” Missions étrangères 20 (1983): 7–10.


29. General Archives of the QFMS, Statistics of personnel per country, Laval (Pont-Viau), Canada.

30. “To conclude, I would say that we have to replace Christology in a Trinitarian perspective. The category ‘filiation’ can be fruitful in the pursuit of this endeavor. We could develop the following: every human being is called to become who he/she is, son or daughter of the same Father. . . . It puts emphasis on the quality of human relations. The purpose of mission is that people become aware of the filial dimension of their being” (Geneviève Comeau, “Mission et religions: Le point de vue catholique [1963–1999],” in L’altérité religieuse: Un défi pour la mission chrétienne, XVIIIe–XXe siècles, ed. Françoise Jacquin and Jean-François Zorn [Paris: Karthala, 2001], 375).

31. See Bernard Heyberger and Rémy Madinier, L’Islam des marges:
The Peacemaking Efforts of a Reverse Missionary: Toyohiko Kagawa before Pearl Harbor

Bo Tao

Toyohiko Kagawa (1888–1960), notable Christian leader from Japan, has attracted much attention from scholars and the general public of late, partly because of the commemorative fervor that surrounded the centennial of his momentous entrance into the slums of Kobe in 1909, but also because of the renewed interest in the value of his social and economic teachings in light of recent global financial calamities.

Today, Kagawa’s legacy in Japan remains a highly contested one: on the one hand, he was the best-selling author of the Taishō era (1912–26) and the forerunner of many prominent social and religious movements during his lifetime; on the other hand, his fame and recognition faded rapidly in the years following his death. One explanation for this decline in public perception might be his simultaneous involvement in an incredibly diverse range of activities. Although Kagawa played a leading role in numerous religious, cooperative, and pacifist organizations, while also engaging in active literary production throughout his life, his contributions to each field have received limited recognition from posterity, stemming from a critical attitude toward his perceived lack of commitment to a single cause.

In contrast, Kagawa’s overseas image is fairly consistent: he has been viewed by Christians of the world as a representative non-Western evangelist who also preached widely on topics of concern to Christians—in short, a “reverse missionary” from Japan. However, the extent of his social and political impact on the peoples and countries he visited has, in many cases, yet to be fully examined. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to begin the process of historical contextualization and reevaluation of Kagawa’s transnational impact by focusing on a specific episode in U.S.-Japanese diplomatic history prior to Pearl Harbor, with an eye toward how Kagawa, acting as a reverse missionary, contributed toward shaping the course of events.

Kagawa’s Letter and Gift

As a guidepost for discussion, the present study will examine the connections between Toyohiko Kagawa and Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945). Their relationship, to be sure, was not particularly direct or extensive; most of their contact came in the form of correspondence, often mediated through a mutual acquaintance. Nevertheless, the issues that brought them together were of central importance in the early twentieth-century world, highlighting fundamental themes that, fittingly encapsulated in Kagawa’s preaching and speaking tours in America, remain relevant even today.

The nature of Kagawa’s relationship with Roosevelt can be surmised from his January 20, 1941, letter to the president, typed on a letterhead marked with his name and office in Kami-Kitazawa, Tokyo, and dated on the occasion of the president’s third inauguration.

Your Excellency:

As a token of my deepest appreciation of your great kindness accorded to me on my landing in your country a few years ago, and also as an expression of my congratulations to you upon your re-election for the third term as President of the United States, it gives me great pleasure to present you this portrait “Kake-mono” of your excellency drawn by a Japanese artist, Mr. Tobun Hayashi. . . .

So please accept this with my best wishes and with my sincere and earnest prayer for ever-lasting international good-will between our countries and for world peace at this difficult time.

Toyohiko Kagawa

Enclosed with the letter was a scroll portrait of the president, sitting at a table with his glasses in hand, along with the implements used to produce the painting (see following pages).

The artist, Tobun Hayashi, drew the portrait based on a picture loaned by Joseph Grew, the American ambassador to Japan. The act of “great kindness” here refers to President Roosevelt’s personal letter in December 1935 granting entry permission to Kagawa—who had come to the United States for a speaking tour but was detained on December 18 by San Francisco immigration authorities. The officials cited Kagawa’s trachoma, a severe eye infection he had picked up during his years of work in the Kobe slums, as a potential health risk. Upon learning of the Japanese Christian leader’s detention through the personal telegrams of Kagawa’s many supporters around the country, Roosevelt promptly called attention to this matter at a regular cabinet meeting on December 20. A press statement released by the White House said that the president had expressed “personal interest” in Kagawa and had “urged prompt action” for the resolution of his case. Kagawa was soon given clearance, and went on to...
The Japanese Christian Peace Delegation

The primary source of tension between Japan and the United States during this period stemmed from Japan’s military expansion in East Asia and its perceived threat to American commercial and diplomatic interests. Such antagonisms were exacerbated when Japan, spurred by Hitler’s successful campaigns in Europe, decided to side with Germany and Italy in the Tripartite Pact and began advancing southward toward French Indochina, under the name of constructing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. America became greatly alarmed by such maneuvers, and a war in the Pacific appeared imminent.

In anticipation of the turbulent international waters ahead, the government of Japan enacted the Religious Bodies Law in April 1940, forcibly consolidating Japan’s forty or so Christian denominations over a year’s time. These wartime religious policies—coupled with the nationalist zeal that accompanied the celebration in late 1940 of the 2,600th anniversary of the enthronement of Japan’s legendary first emperor, Jimmu—set in motion the final steps that led to the formation of a general governing body for native Christians, the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisutokyō dan).

From the Christians’ perspective, this was not an unwelcome step; an ecumenical church union had been a long-term goal of their own. Japan’s participation in the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh marked its first step into world Christianity, resulting in a heightened desire for church unity and eventually leading to the founding of the National Christian Council of Japan (Nihon Kirisutokyō renmei) in 1923—with much encouragement and practical support from John R. Mott, the chairman of Edinburgh 1910.10 In the wake of the 1928 conference of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem, the momentum for church union in Japan culminated in the Kingdom of God movement (Kami no kuni undō), sponsored by the National Christian Council. The movement, originally proposed by Kagawa at a special meeting of the council in honor of Mott’s 1929 visit to Japan, consisted of mass rallies and prayer meetings around the country from 1929 to 1935. It mobilized an audience of over one million and became the largest Christian evangelization campaign in Japanese history.11

Since the Religious Bodies Law also sought to restrict the role of foreign missionaries within the Japanese church establishment, certain adjustments had to be made with the American mission boards. Thus on February 15, 1941, the National Christian Council submitted a resolution to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, proposing a meeting of church leaders from both countries to deliberate on the issues that had come between them in the preceding months. American church representatives responded positively, suggesting the historic Mission Inn at Riverside, California, as the venue, and the week following Easter as the time for the gathering.11 Herein lay the origins of the 1941 Japanese Christian Peace Delegation to the United States (Nichibei Kirisutokyō heiwa shisetsudan).

Meanwhile, in late January 1941, two Tokyo officials had independently set out to influence the course of U.S.-Japan relations. Tokuyasu Fukuda, an officer from the Intelligence Bureau of the Foreign Ministry, confidentially consulted his older colleague Mitsuaki Kakehi, former director of YMCA Japan and at one time a leader in the Student Christian Movement, on the best way to achieve peace in the Pacific. Agreeing that normal diplomatic channels were no longer sufficient to attain their goal, they decided to call upon the services of a private citizen who could positively influence Japan’s public image in America. To that end, Kakehi, who had seen Kagawa preach to an enthralled audience at the Twentieth World’s Conference of the YMCA, held at Cleveland some ten years earlier, promptly recommended him as the only man suited for the job. While it took some amount of persuasion, Kagawa ultimately agreed to the plan.12

There was a problem, however: Kagawa had been arrested by the Japanese gendarmerie in August 1940 because of his apology to the people of China, in an overseas publication, for Japan’s repeated acts of aggression.13 Although he was released through the help of Foreign Minister Matsuoka, Kagawa was subsequently placed under constant surveillance, making it difficult for him to travel abroad. Fortunately for their plans, Fukuda and Kakehi soon found out that the National Christian Council had been independently planning a trip of their own—the Japanese Christian Peace Delegation to the United States—that could provide the perfect cover for Kagawa. Thus, necessary arrangements were made with the Foreign Ministry, and the Imperial Army and Navy were ordered not to interfere with the activities of the delegation, as it was deemed a purely religious mission. Kagawa, for his part, refused to take orders from the government and insisted that he go on his own accord, raising funds from private sources and arriving in the United States separately from the rest of the delegation.14

Kagawa and the John Doe Associates

Japan’s leadership was sharply divided at this moment. Despite its aggressive military conduct, not all Japanese desired war, and Prince Fumimaro Konoe (1891–1945), Japan’s prime minister...
during many of the critical months before the outbreak of the Pacific War, held out hope for a negotiated settlement with the United States. Facing opposition from the military clique in the government, Konoe sought to arrange a secret meeting with the American president, thereby avoiding any confrontation between him and the rest of his cabinet until final arrangements had been set.

The first round of peacemaking efforts was initiated rather fortuitously by two American volunteers—Bishop James E. Walsh of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (also known as Maryknoll) and his enterprising vicar general, James M. Drought. Walsh and Drought went to Japan in November 1940 to oversee the withdrawal of their missionary establishment from Japan, necessitated by the enforcement of the aforementioned Religious Bodies Law. Possessing a vague yet optimistic sense of duty to serve their church and society, the two men quickly made the acquaintance of several influential Japanese. After returning to the United States in January 1941, the Maryknollers met with President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull through the introduction of Drought’s personal friend Postmaster General Walker, one of the most prominent Catholics in the administration, delivering the message that various elements in the Japanese government wished to achieve a settlement with America.

Throughout early 1941, the two Maryknoll priests along with their two Japanese associates—a group collectively dubbed the “John Doe Associates”—attempted to broker an agreement between Tokyo and Washington, acting as unofficial aides to the newly appointed Japanese Ambassador, Kichisaburō Nomura. Their well-meaning interventions, however, did more to confuse than to facilitate, and they were, in any case, soon interrupted by Germany’s commencement of hostilities against the Soviet Union, and Japan’s decision to press southward into French Indochina. As a result of these developments, Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets within the United States and placed an embargo on oil and gasoline exports to Japan.16

Kagawa was there for a YMCA camp, and the two, being old friends, met frequently during his stay. Jones recalls one occasion in which “we rose at an early hour and went to the lakeside to wait on God, to see if we could see any light on the tremendous question as to whether China and Japan could be reconciled.” Having witnessed firsthand the brutality of war in East Asia and eager to find some basis for peace, Jones asked Kagawa on what conditions Japan would agree to a settlement, to which the latter replied, “political and territorial integrity for China.”19 Kagawa went on to mention that what Japan really needed was “a place for her surplus population” in an area “warm enough for her to take off her coat,” and suggested New Guinea as a possibility.20

Newspaper accounts of Kagawa and his fellow peace envoys reveal an interesting difference in their attitude toward the press. Kagawa’s outspokenness—he is said to have “expressed surprise during an interview [in New York] at apprehensions in this country of possible war between Japan,” asserting that “there was not nearly as much talk of war among Japanese people as he found here [in America]”—stood in sharp contrast with the relative reticence of the rest of the “goodwill ambassadors” to speak on topics relating to future relations between the two countries. Tsuchijirō Matsuyama, for example, allegedly “closed up tighter than a jammed door” when he was interviewed, and declined to make any comment on political matters.18 While his colleagues may have been apprehensive about breaching the strict terms of their religious mission, Kagawa was not afraid to overstep that boundary in the name of reconciliation. He knew that religion can, under certain circumstances, serve to alay political differences, and he recognized that words from somebody in his position carried special weight.

During his whirlwind tour of the United States in 1941, Kagawa made two important stops: one in Washington, D.C., and the other in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. On the morning of June 19 he arrived in the nation’s capital, where he met and spoke with Ambassador Nomura. Although we do not know what they discussed, the meeting served as a point of conversation during his subsequent visit with E. Stanley Jones (1884–1973), the illustrious Methodist missionary to India, from July 1 to 5 at Lake Geneva. Kagawa was there for a YMCA camp, and the two, being old friends, met frequently during his stay. Jones recalls one occasion in which “we rose at an early hour and went to the lakeside to wait on God, to see if we could see any light on the tremendous question as to whether China and Japan could be reconciled.”

Last Efforts for a Peaceful Settlement

Back in Japan, Emperor Hirohito was becoming wary of his nation’s evident march toward war. At an Imperial Conference on September 6 with the cabinet and military executives, he reiterated the precedence of diplomacy, and Prince Konoe was given one month’s time to reach a settlement with the United States. Konoe wasted no time on this duty, arranging a dinner on the same night with Ambassador Grew, asking him to make a final and direct appeal to President Roosevelt for a summit meeting.

What is often omitted from these accounts of the final rounds

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Portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Tobun Hayashi, sent to the president by Toyohiko Kagawa in 1941.
of peace negotiations, however, is the role of Toyohiko Kagawa. Kagawa, who had just returned to Japan from his four-month trip in the United States, was called to meet with Konoe on the evening of September 5—the night before the fateful Imperial Conference (if we are to trust his memory of exact dates), during which he received direct instructions from the prime minister to contact his friends in America to bring about the coveted summit meeting. Kagawa immediately sent out telegrams to President Roosevelt, Vice President Henry Wallace, John Mott, E. Stanley Jones, and John Foster Dulles.21

Of this mixed group of statesmen and religious leaders, only Jones succeeded in negotiating with the high officials in Washington. On September 17, in a meeting with assistant secretary of state Dean Acheson and Maxwell Hamilton, chief of the State Department’s Division of Far Eastern Affairs, Jones presented his suggestion to offer New Guinea to Japan in exchange for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China and Southeast Asia, a final attempt to preserve peace.24 Indeed, this was the only option the president to send a cable directly to the emperor of Japan in a final attempt to preserve peace.24

In addition to the New Guinea proposal, Jones was also granted a meeting with the president on December 3. Jones related to Roosevelt the news that several Japanese envoys, desperate in their desire to avoid a war with the United States, had requested the president to send a cable directly to the emperor of Japan in a final attempt to preserve peace.24 Indeed, this was the only option left for stopping the war party that had taken over the Japanese state following Konoe’s resignation on October 16.

Furthermore, Jones informed the president that he had organized a seven-day around-the-clock vigil of prayer at the Epiphany Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., which had begun on December 1 and for which he had coordinated with friends in China, Australia, and Japan. Kagawa, in response, organized a similar session at the Tokyo YMCA. In a telegram on December 3, Kagawa reported to Jones the situation in Japan as follows: “Tokyo Church leaders having seven day Vigil of Prayer, throughout the twenty-four hours, for peace in the Pacific.”25 It is perhaps one of the great ironies of history that the first piece of news that came in after the end of the peace vigil in the early hours of December 8 (Japan time) was of the Japanese air strikes on the U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters in Hawaii. By the time Roosevelt’s cable reached the emperor, the attack was already under way.

Kagawa and Roosevelt’s Shared Concerns

Though Kagawa and his associates’ efforts at reconciliation ultimately failed to avert the outbreak of war, he at least had mobilized the opinions of many for the cause of peace. This was made possible by his prewar social and religious preaching in the United States—the moral emphasis of which appealed to many Americans, including President Roosevelt. In fact, the two of them had much more in common in their spiritual outlook than one would initially suspect.

Roosevelt was certainly no stranger to religion. His early religious influences included his father, who served as a senior vestryman at the St. James Episcopal Church in Hyde Park, and Endicott Peabody, the founder and headmaster at Groton School, whose daily chapel talks on morality, character, and the virtue of public service found a keen audience in young Franklin.26 As president, Roosevelt frequently included prayers in his addresses and organized special services on his inaugural anniversaries attended by family members as well as the cabinet. Starting in early 1940, in a move that drew criticism from some Protestants, Roosevelt sent the Episcopal industrialist Myron Taylor as his personal envoy to the Vatican. Throughout the course of the war, Roosevelt corresponded with Pope Pius XII on issues of peace and world order.27

Despite such spiritual appreciation, Roosevelt had little use for theology. He viewed religion more as a spiritual compass—a moral foundation upon which he could rest his sense of duty and optimism. He was, however, a champion of religious freedom and diversity, and pleaded with Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to transcend their sectarian creeds and “unite in good works” whenever they could find common ground.28 According to Frances Perkins, Roosevelt himself was responsible for including freedom of religion in the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter.29

A convert to Christianity, Kagawa first traveled to America in 1914, realizing, after five years of service among the residents of the infamous Shinkawa slums of Kobe, that charity work could go only so far in the emancipation of the poor. Thus, he resolved to explore other options in the halls of Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1916. In a later recollection he claims to have encountered on the Princeton campus a young Franklin Roosevelt, whom Kagawa described as “gentle-looking.”30 Kagawa subsequently visited the United States in 1924–25 and 1931, the former a three-month speaking tour hosted by the Association of American Colleges, and the latter coming through an invitation to attend the YMCA World Conference in Toronto and Cleveland, followed by a four-month lecture tour across the country.

Kagawa’s best-known trip as a reverse missionary came in 1935–36 in a tour officially sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and the Co-operative League of the United States of America. This was the occasion in which Roosevelt intervened personally to clear Kagawa from his medical detention for his eye infection.

In understanding the reasons behind Roosevelt’s interest in Kagawa at this time, it is perhaps helpful to know that in implementing his New Deal policies, Roosevelt argued that moral and spiritual problems underlay the nation’s material suffering. The federal government’s social planning, he contended, was “wholly in accord with the social teachings of Christianity” and would provide all Americans with a reasonable level of physical comfort so that they could focus on achieving “the more abundant life” that Christ had come to bring.31 The social emphasis of the religion of Kagawa—who knew all too well the spiritual depravity that is born of material deprivation—must have seemed to be the perfect message for Roosevelt’s depression-era America.

Kagawa considered cooperative organizations as the natural expression of his Christian principles. He believed they provided a solid framework for stable sustenance, the humanization of
economic life, and even a viable alternative to what he saw as the defunct ideologies of capitalism, state socialism, and fascism. Cooperatives became the centerpiece of his 1935–36 lecture tour, which saw him speak across the United States on more than 500 occasions over the course of six months. The highlight of his itinerary came in his appearance at the Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, New York, where he gave the prestigious Rauschenbusch Lectures, named in honor of the noted leader of the Social Gospel movement, Walter Rauschenbusch. The lectures were published under the title *Brotherhood Economics*, which has subsequently been translated into seventeen languages and sold in twenty-five countries.

Like Roosevelt, Kagawa did not see much value in denominational separation. His vision of the church’s mission was internationalist; for him, the construction of the kingdom of God on earth was a moral goal that transcended all religious factions as well as nationalities. Once, standing before an audience in Detroit, he quipped to great effect: “You [Americans] have too many denominations. Last time I checked there were 266. That’s too many. Do you intend to live in individual rooms even in Heaven?” The most telling anecdote indicating his influence, however, may be found in the spontaneous creation and distribution of an anti-Immigration Act “decision cards” by his local supporters, which were signed and delivered to Kagawa in support of repealing the discriminatory Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, a law that had placed a major strain on U.S.-Japanese relations in the lead-up to the war.

**Conclusion**

Kagawa’s impact as an unofficial mediator between Japan and the United States before Pearl Harbor was, in the grand scheme of things, a limited one. Nevertheless, his case is evidence that religious actors can play a unique role in international negotiations: by creating access to statesmen, mobilizing public opinion, and acting as an agent of last resort—a final ray of hope when all other options have been exhausted.

As a non-Western evangelist, Kagawa attained a status well beyond that of a purely religious missionary. His lecture tours in the United States were as much a reflection of his own desire to spread his vision of a peaceful and prosperous society as they were a result of American demand to hear him speak on those issues. One of his associates offered the following insight into the significance of Kagawa’s 1935–36 trip:

> Although there are many Asians—Chinese, Japanese, etc.—who are invited to America, most of them are invited out of an American curiosity toward the Orient. However, in Kagawa’s case, this was quite different. It was because Americans had reached a social, economic, and spiritual impasse that they had to look around and find somebody who could give them guidance. . . . It is quite unheard of that the Americans had invited someone from the Orient in order to find a solution to their own problems.

Although his diplomatic maneuvering proved unsuccessful, Kagawa’s peacemaking efforts were ultimately made possible because he, as a clergyman, understood the potential of religion in social reform and political reconciliation, while Roosevelt, the statesman, shared in this view and reciprocated with sympathy within the confines of his power. As a youth, Kagawa was baptized by American Presbyterian missionaries to Japan. In a sense, his return to the homeland of his spiritual mentors marks a full circle in the work of American missions. As a Christian leader respected by even the president of the country of his religious origin, we can say that Kagawa was a reverse missionary in the fullest sense of the words.

**Notes**


3. It is said that, after Emperor Hirohito, Kagawa was the most widely known Japanese figure in prowar America, and, alongside Gandhi in India and Schweitzer in Africa, he was commonly cited as one of three “modern saints.” See, for example, Allan A. Hunter, *Three Trumpets Sound: Kagawa, Gandhi, Schweitzer* (New York: Association Press, 1939).


5. Toyohiko Kagawa to President Roosevelt, January 20, 1941 (Official File 1881: Kagawa, Dr. Toyohiko, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York [hereafter FDRL]).

6. C. E. Peesee to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 20, 1935; Charles R. Crane to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 24, 1935; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Charles R. Crane, February 25, 1936 (Official File 1881: Kagawa, Dr. Toyohiko, FDRL).


8. U.S. Department of State to the Private Secretary to the President, April 25, 1941 (Official File 1881: Kagawa, Dr. Toyohiko, FDRL).

9. Incidentally, this path was nearly identical to the one followed by Chinese Christians. Their attendance at the Edinburgh conference culminated in the establishment, similarly through the guidance of John Mott, of the National Christian Council of China in 1922—just a year before the birth of its Japanese counterpart. The leaders of the Christian churches of the two nations maintained a close relationship throughout the 1920s, frequently exchanging delegations to their respective annual general assemblies. See Tsutemaru Miyakoda, *Nihon Kirisutokyō Gendai Shikō* [A survey of the history of Japanese Christian ecumenism] (Tokyo: Kyōbunkan, 1967), 93–95.


11. Ibid., 252–68.


My Pilgrimage in Mission

Norman E. Thomas

I was born in 1932 in Manchester, New Hampshire, into a strong Methodist family. Both my father and my paternal grandfather were Methodist pastors. Daily Bible reading and prayer were as regular in our home as eating and sleeping. We lived frugally and shared what we had with those in need. I remember that my mother invited those who asked for food to come in and sit at table with us. Later, as a teenager, I helped my father deliver Thanksgiving baskets of food to poor families. But I confess that I never asked the question “What will they eat the other weeks and months of the year?” Ours was charity for the poor without questioning the systemic causes of poverty.

The Call

Grounded in Methodism, I later came to understand how rooted I was in the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, using Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as the sources and guidelines for my theological and moral reflection. The church of my teenage years was warmly evangelical. We had altar calls at Sunday morning services that varied according to what the presentation of Scripture called us as a congregation to do. At a summer youth institute when I was sixteen I “accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord,” affirming that the faith in which I had been nurtured I now made my own. My commitment that day was also to full-time Christian service, confirming publicly the call that I had first experienced at the age of twelve.

I was grounded from an early age in the idea of mission. When I was a child, my mother told us stories that had been recounted to her by her grandmother about Bishop William Carpenter Bompas, her “Cousin Willie.” Bompas and his wife, Charlotte, were pioneer Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries from England to northwest Canada and the Yukon from 1865 to 1906. I treasure a book written for youth in 1930 that tells...
the story of my missionary forebears along with biographies of Wilfred Grenfell, David Livingstone, Alexander MacKay, Mary Slessor, and James Stuart.

As an undergraduate at Yale, 1949–53, I developed close friendships at the Wesley Foundation with several who were studying at Yale Divinity School (YDS) after three years of missionary service in Japan, Korea, and India. In 1951 I attended the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) conference in Lawrence, Kansas, and there signed the historic SVM pledge that “it is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary.”

In March 1953 I applied for the first time to the Methodist Mission Board for short-term overseas service and was accepted. Both my roommate, Ed Poitras, and I expressed a primary interest in South Korea. Ed was selected and began a long creative ministry there. Although offered a second choice to serve in Bolivia, I felt no sense of call to mission there. Instead, I chose to go on to YDS, where my interest in cross-cultural missions intensified. I had studied the history of Christianity with Kenneth Scott Latourette in my senior year in college and grew close to him in weekly Bible study and prayer meetings in his seminary residence. Charles Forman had just returned from India to teach at YDS and became my second mission mentor. Mathai Zachariah of India was my neighbor and friend.

With my marriage to Winnie Williams in 1955 and my coming graduation, I made a second application to the Methodist board — this time to serve in Alaska, where Winnie’s training as a registered nurse could enhance our ministry. That door did not open because of my lack of pastoral experience. Instead, I responded to an invitation to pastor a church outside Portland, Oregon. Seven years earlier I had spent a summer in New York City in an urban life study project sponsored by the American Baptist Convention, but the Portland area pastorate became its own mission challenge.

The Errol Heights church was located in a neighborhood that mirrored Oregon’s demographics, in which church members were only 20 percent of the population. Most of the congregation of two men and ninety-one women had fled the dust bowl of the Southern Plains. They were only 20 percent of the population. Most of the congregation of a specialty in African studies, at Boston University. At Yale I had been profoundly influenced by H. Richard Niebuhr’s ethics of response— that “moral action is human action in response to the governing action of God upon us.” Under the tutelage of Walter Muelder at Boston (1959–61), I grew to embrace the ecumenical understanding of the responsible society. It included citizen freedom to control, criticize, and change their governments, thereby making power responsible to law and tradition and distributing power as widely as possible through the whole community. In economic life it required that economic justice and provision for equality of opportunity be established for all members of society. My specific application of these values to African contexts began as I studied African politics, economics, and anthropology.

Knowing that in our joint appointment we would be serving in a nation experiencing racial conflicts, Winnie and I decided that I should prepare further for my assignment and enter the Ph.D. program in social ethics and the sociology of religion, with a specialty in African studies, at Boston University. At Yale I had been profoundly influenced by H. Richard Niebuhr’s ethics of response—that “moral action is human action in response to the governing action of God upon us.” Under the tutelage of Walter Muelder at Boston (1959–61), I grew to embrace the ecumenical understanding of the responsible society. It included citizen freedom to control, criticize, and change their governments, thereby making power responsible to law and tradition and distributing power as widely as possible through the whole community. In economic life it required that economic justice and provision for equality of opportunity be established for all members of society. My specific application of these values to African contexts began as I studied African politics, economics, and anthropology.

Mission Is Liberation

Our life experiences with persons of other races have been positive. Winnie, who had grown up in Nashville, Tennessee, chose to worship with an interracial Quaker fellowship at Fisk University during her undergraduate years. At high school I grew in friendship with black students both in the school orchestra and in the track and cross-country teams. We were aware during ministry in Portland of the racial tensions in the South. In applying for overseas mission service I wrote:

The mission should proclaim through his life and teaching that:

a. We are one family under God, irrespective of race, color, or creed.

b. Salvation works a change not just in the soul, but of the whole life.

c. Christians should work through groups to effect changes in social policy to further social justice and world order, including church groups, interdenominational associations, welfare organizations, schools, governments, labor organizations, and international organizations such as the United Nations.

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Southern Rhodesia in 1962 resembled South Africa in many ways. Only whites served in Parliament, although Africans outnumbered them sixteen to one. Land was segregated, with 6,000 white farmers owning almost all the fertile and well-watered
land, while 750,000 African farmers subsisted on the poorer land, restricted to four acres to plow and four head of cattle per family.

Upon arrival in Africa, Winnie and I lived for our first year at the Shona Language School in Nyakatsapa, a village in the eastern part of Southern Rhodesia. Unlike most missionaries, we were given sufficient time to become fluent in the heart language of the people. Upon my appointment as the Methodist national director of Christian education and youth, with freedom to choose our place of residence, we decided to live in an African village. Arnoldine was a village on church land surrounded by white farmers. We renovated a home abandoned by an African farmer. Word spread that there was a nurse in the village. From simple beginnings Winnie’s clinic grew and grew, for the nearest medical help was forty kilometers away. Our two oldest children attended the village African mission school, although national policy was to have separate schools for blacks and whites. Soon we spoke the Shona language in our home and it became the first language of our two younger children born there. Unlike most missionaries, whose closest friends were other missionaries where they lived, our support group was our neighbors. In racist Rhodesia we believed that living as brothers and sisters with those about us was more important than anything we said or did as missionaries. It was our lifestyle that initially got us into trouble with the white authorities, resulting in 1966 in our being refused long-term work permits required for reentry for those leaving the country for more than twelve months. We decided that I would remain in the country to carry out sensitive research on African religious and political attitudes, while Winnie and the children took a short furlough permitted under our visas. Although we had lived at Arnoldine just four years, our farewell from the village felt as if we were attending our own funeral.

Living in a rural area, I perceived that major cultural influences flowed from urban centers to the rural areas, where most church centers were located. How could churches in towns appeal to the next generation if they remained primarily church homes for rural migrants? In 1967, with the support of the African ministers’ fraternals, I was named the first urban evangelism secretary of the Christian Council of Rhodesia. Joint action for mission was our program priority, with important links to the Urban Rural Mission programs of both the World Council of Churches and the All-Africa Conference of Churches. Simultaneously, I worked in 1970 with a broad coalition of Protestant churches as national secretary of evangelism in a New Life for All outreach in personal evangelism. During a brief visit to the United States in 1969, my first return in eight years, I visited the Saul Alinsky Institute in Chicago. I felt that the Alinsky model of nonviolent direct action for social change had direct relevance for the liberation struggle. During my years in Rhodesia, with African political parties and newspapers banned, the churches became the voice of the people. It was not easy, as our phones were tapped, our mail censored, and our public activities monitored by the police.

In 1970 I resigned as the council’s urban secretary so that an African leader could take my place and then joined the faculty of Epworth Theological College as a senior lecturer and dean of students. The council named me, however, to its executive committee and its national affairs committee. In rapid succession and in close partnership with the Roman Catholic Church, the council took prophetic stands on public political issues involving constitutional revision, land tenure, African education, and the settlement of the constitutional conflict with the United Kingdom.

My own Methodist Church matured through the struggle. In 1966 the white minority government ordered all white men to register for military service, including missionaries. Our African leaders unanimously advised us to defy the government and refuse to register for military service, even if the consequence would be our expulsion from the country. I marked that day as the capstone of years of change from mission to church. Between 1962 and 1976, however, twenty missionaries of our church, including Bishop Ralph Dodge, were deported. My wife and I were among that number in 1973.

Creative new assignments followed. In Zambia from 1973 to 1976 I served as deputy director and dean of studies of Mindolo Ecumenical Center in Kitwe. Its pan-African leadership programs for women and youth and national programs in industry and commerce, rural development, women’s studies, and church leadership equipped hundreds each year for leadership in both church and society. Mission in this context meant close partnership in national development with government and NGOs. For example, I was invited to be coauthor of the Zambian NGOs’ report for the U.N. Habitat Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver in 1976.

Returning to the United States in 1976, I staffed an African task force for our mission board commissioned to rethink priorities for mission on the African continent. The old paradigm was for U.S. church leaders to approve projects, often without participation by African church leaders. The new plan was for increased decision making by an African church growth and development committee with majority African membership.

From Maintenance to Mission

In 1978 Boston University’s School of Theology invited me to direct a new program in mission and evangelism. Thus began twenty-five years of seminary teaching—at Boston (1978–83) and then United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio (1983–2002)—which I approached as part of my life vocation to be a person in mission. Winnie found her new vocation as a certified midwife in private practice equally fulfilling. I brought to my work a deep love of the church, but also a deep restlessness. Returning from Africa, I felt like a “resident alien” in two ways. First, I had become a world citizen who treasured friendships with persons of many races and nationalities, who for me were my brothers and sisters; I felt like an alien among those emphasizing national pride and glory. Second, I had lived in fellowship with Christians of many persuasions and felt constricted by narrow parochial loyalties.

It was in Dayton, among students serving as student pastors while they were in school, that I experienced the greatest disconnect. As pastors of small churches, they faced pressure from parishioners to devote their ministries to the faithful flock given to their care. I taught that, in the words of Emil Brunner, “the church exists by mission, as a fire exists by burning.” Eagerly I threw my energies in both seminary and church leadership into church renewal that would be congruent with this theme.
During my teaching years I treasured opportunities to experience oneness in Christ and creativity in mission with Christians from six continents both as I attended world mission conferences and with international students in our seminary communities. At United Theological Seminary we launched a transcultural program for every seminarian that involved immersion in a cultural context different from their own, with careful preparation and reflection on their experiences.

**Missiology: A Discipline? A Field?**

In 1984 Ralph Covell, editor of *Missiology: An International Review*, invited me to become the journal’s book review editor. For each of the next fifteen years the journal published 100 reviews of titles related to mission, plus annotations of 400 books judged to be relevant to Christian mission.

Noting that the field of missiology lacked a comprehensive bibliography, I proposed in 1986 that the American Society of Missiology sponsor a bibliography project that would provide concise annotations of missiological books published since 1960 in English. The project grew when the International Association for Mission Studies asked for inclusion of titles in all European languages. The *International Mission Bibliography: 1960–2000*, published in 2003 with more than 12,000 titles contributed by an international team of thirty-seven subeditors, fulfilled our ambitious dream.

Early on I realized that the bibliographer’s selection of titles defines the scope of a field of study. Two mission bibliographers provided models for this new project: Andrew Walls, in the *International Review of Mission*, and Willi Henkel, in *Bibliographia Missionaria*. Building on their schema, I organized the bibliography into fifteen subject and five regional categories. Recognizing that much creative research and writing was interdisciplinary in nature, I included sections relating missions to interreligious studies, anthropology and sociology, communications, economics, and political science.

What is the proper place of mission studies in the theological curriculum? At Boston University it was grouped with history and theology. At United Theological Seminary it was part of applied theology. That question gained new saliency when the Association of Theological Schools adopted globalization as a major program emphasis in 1988. If teachers in all theological disciplines were to teach from a global perspective, what would be the unique place of missiology? My response was that missiology should break loose from the straitjacket of being just one theological discipline among many. Instead, I felt that it should be a field of study providing the interdisciplinary focus that the new global theological education requires.

**Missions and Unity**

In 1985, as I developed the schema for a mission bibliography, I discovered that one of the twenty divisions, “Missions: Ecumenical Aspects,” lacked a comprehensive study. With my strong interest in ecumenism, I agreed to write a major work as part of a bicentennial project on the modern missionary era, 1792–1992, with Wilbert R. Shenk as general editor. I began my archival research at Yale. Sitting in the John R. Mott Room, with Mott’s picture and papers in boxes before me, I felt my connection with that history. I had heard Mott speak in 1948; much earlier, in 1886, Mott had helped to develop the historic SVM pledge to become a foreign missionary that I signed in 1951. Later I was able to visit mission archives in Geneva, London, and Basel.

In 1961 Henry Pitney Van Dusen wrote a normative approach to missions and unity, *One Great Ground of Hope*, in which he recommended conciliar cooperation among churches and organic church union. By contrast, in my work I took a descriptive and analytic approach, asking, “How have churches worked together in missions?” I developed ten models for unity in mission and included every branch of Christianity, with case studies to illustrate each model. Again and again I unearthed examples of unity similar to what I had experienced in Africa, recognizing that Christians engaged in mission often overcome historic walls of separation and division.

What of the root meaning of *oikoumene*, namely, “the whole inhabited world”? I found rich data both on wider ecumenism involving persons of other faiths and on secular efforts at unity. Striking was the evidence that the missionary movement had influenced both the founding of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Completing this project took me into my retirement years, with the publication of *Missions and Unity: Lessons from History, 1792–2010* timed to coincide with the 2010 centennial celebrations of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh.

**Conclusion**

Now in my ninth decade, I continue to explore new faith understandings and forms of radical discipleship. The biblical scholarship of Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan has deepened my understanding and commitment to follow Jesus, “who is calling all his followers—and not just the twelve disciples—to accept that communal destiny of death and resurrection.” I have been challenged by the critiques by David Korten, Thomas Berry, and others of the global economy, which ravages the poor and the earth. I understand our mission to include standing against violence, injustice, and all that violates the integrity of God’s creation. I am actively involved in a ministry group of my church that educates and advocates for economic justice. Promoting work in an alternative economy, I am active in a Ten Thousand Villages fair trade store in Pasadena, California, where I live.

**Notes**

Book Reviews


This volume presents a definitive study of concepts, theories, and interpretations of religious conversion and identity. Thirty-six authors, representing major Asian, African, European, and American cultures and religious settings, present forty-six essays written for three international conferences in Basel, Switzerland (in 2009, 2010, and 2011), dealing with understandings of conversion. Individuals and communities experience conversion in their religious, psychological, social, communal, and political spheres; in this process they develop their personal and collaborative identities. Their former understanding of God, self, and the world becomes restructured. Conversion alters their interpersonal relationships and their views on social customs and life priorities. Biographies of Christians and Muslims and others, including several women, are interpreted through theories developed by A. D. Nock, P. G. Stemberg, and several others.

Part 1 of this book examines biographies of several converts, including Uchimura Kanzo, Wilhelm Gundert, Panditha Ramabai, and Pearl Buck. Their conversions and reconversions lead readers to consider the fluid nature of conversion. Part 2 explores historical aspects of conversion. It begins with antiquity, proceeds through the New Testament, interacts with Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed views on conversion, and ends with postcolonial interactions of Euro-American scholars. This part forms the backdrop for the following four parts.

Part 3 highlights “switching” between mainstream Christian denominations and the resulting ecumenical challenges. For example, leaders of Orthodox churches disapprove of the proselytizing efforts of Euro-American Protestant missionaries, and, in particular, their cultural, historical, and theological insensitivity. Part 4 points out the political, economic, and relational consequences of Christian minorities living or merely surviving among people of other dominant religions (e.g., Islam and Hinduism) and ideologies (e.g., Confucianism).

Part 5 addresses the constitutional and humanitarian rights of religious freedom promised by various governments. Experiences of religious freedom in Pakistan, Malaysia, or Indonesia, for example, are not the same as those in Uganda or Nigeria. Likewise, Euro-American Enlightenment views on religious freedom have their limitations. Most countries guarantee religious freedom, at least on paper, but their practices often contradict their intentions and assurances. Converts often struggle to get justice. Generally, Christian converts carry with them several aspects of their ancestral religions, cultures, and traditions and review them only gradually. Part 6 evaluates the main concepts of conversion from theological and practical vantage points. The essayists investigate various possibilities, opportunities, and challenges for religious conversion within particular legal systems or theological traditions, noting that conversion experiences in liberal democracies differ from those in strict autocratic regimes. Since religious conversions affect the close working relationship between state and politics and one’s loyalty to them, Christians are urged to practice tolerance and cautious mission.

This book is a treasure trove of information, not merely in the main essays, but also in the footnotes. All the essays are scholarly, reflecting academic discussions in Euro-American universities and academies. (Some essays are in German; it would be a boon to have them translated into English.) I heartily congratulate the editors for this work and recommend it warmly for graduate students and scholars.

—Daniel Jeyaraj

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

Paul’s Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours.

Published in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Roland Allen’s Missionary Methods: Saint Paul’s or Ours? (1912), and arranged in two parts, Paul’s Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours advances a simple argument: we ought to derive our modern missionary methodology from Paul’s missionary methodology.

In part 1, “New Testament,” the contributors examine Paul’s message in its first-century context. Michael Bird shows how Paul’s ability to understand and read his own Jewish, Greek, and Roman contexts contributed to the success of his mission. Eckhard Schnabel tells how Paul’s encounter with the risen Christ and his desire to win all shaped his missionary task. Robert Plummer draws our attention to the missional significance of Paul’s understanding of the Gospel as the only means of salvation and as a new dynamic realm in which believers stand. Benjamin Merkle shows that Paul’s understanding of the church “as the gathered people of God” (60), led by a plurality of leaders, who trust in Christ and meet together both to worship the triune God and to participate in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, made him successful. Christoph Stenschke considers Paul’s understanding of mission as the mission of the church, while Don Howell and Craig Keener discuss the importance of suffering and spiritual warfare in Paul’s mission strategy.

In part 2, “Paul’s Influence on Missions,” several contributors address the implications of Paul’s and Allen’s mission strategies for today. For example, John Terry considers Paul’s establishment of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating indigenous churches, while Ed Stetzer and Lizette Beard outline his...
inclusive church planting strategy, contextualized approach to church planting, and intentional nurturing of the new converts, as well as the importance he placed on visitation and follow-up. Chuck Lawless points to his model of preparing leaders who will in turn train others. J. D. Payne draws our attention to some elements in Allen’s missiology, namely the way of Jesus, the apostolic paradigm, pneumatology, evangelism, and faith.

By bringing Paul’s missionary method to bear on the church’s mission today, the volume makes a major contribution to contemporary missiology. However, the attempt to understand Paul’s missionary strategy from the perspective of the deutero-Pauline epistles instead of strictly from his undisputed letters weakens the book’s argument, at least for those who accept critical Pauline scholarship. This weakness in the eyes of many scholars notwithstanding, missionaries, mission executives, and students of mission will find this book enriching.

—Frank Kofi Blibo

Frank Kofi Blibo is a graduate student of New Testament and Early Christianity at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregations.


Honoring the Generations is the fruit of collaboration among a number of Asian American ministry leaders who wanted to see more clearly what God was doing in Asian North American (ANA) churches. Members of the group include both theologians and practitioners of ministry, partnering to develop a contextualized theological framework for ANA churches. The various authors of Honoring the Generations seek to help people understand and improve ANA church ministry through the integration of theology and practice.

The book starts with a theology of the household of God based on the Book of Ephesians. It then addresses the often difficult relationship between the first generation and the second and third generations in ANA churches, giving some possible ways of improving the relationship. As it continues, the volume addresses a number of important areas of church life, such as pastoral formation, lay ministry, and global mission in ANA churches. These areas can present real challenges for any church, but obviously special challenges may appear in ANA churches that are both cross-cultural and intergenerational. It is especially on these challenges that the contributors focus.

The strength of the book is that it garners theological and practical insights from a diverse group of scholars and pastors who are familiar with the ANA church context. This diversity provides different perspectives on how to do ministry better in such a context and can be helpful to any minister serving in an ANA church. At the same time, this strength is also the book’s weakness, as it has no unifying theology or strategy. The main unity of the book comes from the goal of improving ministry in such churches, and it is clearly worthwhile for people interested in that topic.

—Sun Man Kim

Sun Man Kim serves as Senior Pastor of the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Greater Hartford, in Manchester, Connecticut. His congregation supports more than forty missionaries and mission agencies around the world.


This edited volume of papers presented at a conference in 2009 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars reveals the latest twist in international business. Wealthy nations or corporations have refined their business strategy to include leasing or purchasing farmland from governments in some of the poorer nations. This is clearly nothing new (21); however, inequalities in power and the often unfavorable positioning of the least powerful land users between their own governments and international players raise a series of economic and ethical concerns.

What is new is that “food security” drives a country such as China or a corporation such as Daewoo to lease or buy land in a country such as Tanzania or Madagascar, then to work the land with their own imported labor and to ship all the produce back to the home country. This system not only cuts out the middleman but also alienates local communities from both land and labor.

It is estimated that in the period 2000–2012, over 200 million hectares—that is, an area “the size of Western Europe” (1)—have been leased or sold or are under negotiation. Investors want a return on their money; nations want food to feed or fuel their populations; and governments want to secure their tenure in power. Ethical issues involve the rights of indigenous populations (who may be at odds with their governments), the meaning of “unused” land, the control of water, and the fact that some poor countries leasing or selling farm land also receive food aid from the World Food Program (14).

Some of the authors argue that “we should accept the reality and seek to learn more about these deals with a spirit of inquiry that steers clear of undue alarmism and Pollyannaism alike” (6). Fair enough, but when I read about “uninhabited land,” I have to ask how it became uninhabited. Is there really unused or surplus land anywhere? Should we be reassured to read that “land under foreign control remains a relatively small proportion of total land in host countries” (8)? Or should we ask what proportion of the arable land is under foreign control? I am reminded of correspondent Thomas Fowler’s phrase in Graham Greene’s novel The Quiet American, “Sometimes, to be human, you have to take sides.”

In this age, one should always ask about differential power among actors. This book provides a variety of articles from the point of view of investors, of host countries, and of concerned parties. The church and mission agencies, however, are lamentably absent from the conversation. Is this an editorial oversight, or does the church not have a respectable theology of land and labor?

—Michael A. Rynkiewich

Michael A. Rynkiewich, now retired, was Professor of Anthropology at the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.

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“The undertow of almost any Christian’s sense of the missio Dei is that God has acted decisively in Jesus Christ to re-create this world that went wrong. In light of the Christ event, God’s people participate with the Holy Spirit in his mission in a myriad of micro-level situations throughout the world. . . . we all as Jesus’ followers—mission analysts included—must engage people in micro contexts of mission. Just as Jesus focused on the people right in front of him, we all must interact with the real, live people whose concrete situations we share in life. It does no good to contemplate the vastness of the ocean of life if we neglect the immediate conditions of our own rowboats, the surrounding waves and weather; and, most important, our fellow passengers in the boat, with whom we struggle to row forward in our particular locales.” —J. Nelson Jennings, Editor

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“*The IBMR is a splendid periodical of tremendous value to the academy as well as the church.*”

—Mark A. Noll, University of Notre Dame
The chorus of voices criticizing political evangelicalism in the United States has reached a high point. That this decline in the fortunes of evangelicalism is greeted with a smug harrumph by news organizations such as the New York Times is understandable, but that so much of the criticism comes from within the ranks of evangelicals past and present is particularly notable. David Fitch is Lindner Professor of Evangelical Theology at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois.

Fitch’s End of Evangelicalism takes the criticisms seriously, but he is also intent on seeking models for Christian engagement with the broader American body politic on grounds that lead to authentic Christian mission practices and that are in touch with solid insights from political philosophy and science. His book is essential reading, particularly as evidence piles up that—to all outward appearances—a range of Christian political choices are made on the basis of predetermined cultural attitudes rather than by Christian sociopolitical and ethical discernment. That situation raises the question, “How does one avoid the trap of making up one’s mind on issues first and looking for biblical and theological warrants later?” Fitch is fully aware of this problem and the danger of we-group, Christian narcissism as he proposes that evangelicalism is a political ideology in need of a carefully constructed political theology. As for what evangelicalism is, he follows David Bebbington’s and Mark Noll’s well-known markers.

The most important intellectual move in Fitch’s book is his argument that the Slovenian philosopher and social theorist Slavoj Žižek can help sort out the causes of evangelicalism’s becoming a “hardened” complex of positions that paper over hidden “antagonisms” and that cripple evangelicalism’s Christian identity and effectiveness in achieving its real mission. Fitch’s explication of Žižek’s positions is subtle and convincing. Summarizing that material would take us beyond the prescribed length of this brief review, however, and I can only say that reading his explication is well worth the effort, despite the charge by radical orthodox theologian John Milbank that Žižek is a mystical nihilist.

Chapters 1 and 2 identify the problems of the present manner of evangelical engagement; chapters 3 through 6 make the case for a deeper participation in the life of the triune God, as opposed to the arrogance of the rigid use of Scripture as a cudgel to smite enemies and close off conversation (chap. 3). For me, as a Roman Catholic, Fitch succeeds in maintaining the supremacy of Scripture while working from a deeper hermeneutic of what I like to call “what Scripture as a whole” emphasizes, as opposed to cherry-picking the Bible for verbal ukases to hurl at infidels. While Fitch’s use of Žižek is convincing, I wonder whether a better place to start might be the classic Catholic-Protestant divide between Scripture and Tradition and Scripture versus Tradition, on the one hand, and the new divide between Scripture and Ethics, on the other.

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hand, and, on the other, recent attempts to phrase the relationship as Scripture within Tradition. The latter, I believe, fits much better with the missiological insights of the late Paul Hiebert and his explication of a “bounded-set” versus a “centered-set” mentality.

Chapter 5 does a masterly job of laying out the ways that a Christian-nation ideology nurtures forms of antagonism toward its enemies and falls short of what a well-thought-through vision of Christian mission requires. Chapter 6 and the epilogue are the best single explanation I have seen of how a more adequate political theology can help us determine the mission of Christians in a polarized but rudderless nation like the United States. If the mission-as-expansion-of-franchise era is or ought to be over, the challenge of the early twenty-first century is for churches that are now planted in the midst of the nations to discern what they are called to by God. Although Fitch’s book has an explicit reference to mission in the public square of the United States, I think it may be very useful for Christians in other lands as well.

—William R. Burrows

The Gospel of Freedom and Power: Protestant Missionaries in American Culture after World War II.


American Protestant missionaries and their supporters from World War II onward managed to combine a strong commitment to the greater freedom of once-colonized populations with a sense that they, as Americans and Christians, knew just how that freedom should be exercised. This is the chief analytic theme of this book, and it is a sound one. Yet what is valuable about this book is a series of highly particular research contributions by Sarah Ruble that are only modestly connected with this basic, rather banal claim.

The first contribution is an overview of the conversation about missions carried on among the old “mainstream” Protestants, especially the Methodists, as visible above all in the pages of Christian Century. Second, Ruble provides a comparable overview of the conversation about the same topics as carried on by more evangelical Protestants, especially as seen in the pages of Christianity Today and in the doings of the Free Methodist Church, a denomination more aligned with the evangelicals than with the ecumenical “mainline,” of which the United Methodist Church was a key element. These two contributions indicate the Methodist-intensive character of the book, which has very little to tell us about Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, and other groups also central to the study of Protestant missionaries in American culture after World War II. But Ruble has a good feel for what matters in the conversations of the two types of Methodists, as visible above all in the relevant pages of the two leading Protestant magazines of the period.

Ruble’s third and fourth contributions are even more selective. She offers an account of the occasional conversations between anthropologists and missionaries about the ways in which their endeavors overlap or conflict. And finally, she traces various formulations of the gender distinction as those formulations affected missionary organizations and the image of missionaries as displayed in several popular works of fiction. Her treatment...
of the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists does not even mention the debate over Robert Priest’s intervention concerning the concept of “the missionary position,” and it leaves out several other prominent episodes in missionary-anthropologist discussions. Her treatment of gender is largely devoted to a reading of two popular novels and otherwise does not go beyond the already substantial work of Dana Robert and other missiologists on women and Protestant missions. As a result, this book is valuable more for the many engaging bits and pieces of information it presents than for its comprehensive analysis.

—David A. Hollinger

David A. Hollinger is the Preston Hatchett Professor of American History, University of California, Berkeley.


We know that businesses can fail and hurt people (e.g., Enron) and harm nature (e.g., BP). But it is equally true that we all depend on businesses and that they can do good. The woman in Proverbs 31 is an astute businesswoman whose ventures serve people and her community. The Quakers practiced a kind of corporate social responsibility (CSR) long before academicians developed the term. Their motto was “spiritual and solvent.” They served God and people in and through business.

Even Adam Smith, author of The Wealth of Nations and sometimes called the father of capitalism, said that business should operate within a framework of fair play, justice, and rule of law.

Five highly qualified American academics have produced a landmark publication, Corporate Responsibility: The American Experience. It is a thorough and helpful study of the development of business behavior in the United States from the mid-eighteenth century until today.

There has been a gradual shift from focus on shareholders and profit to the inclusion of growing sets of stakeholders such as customers, staff, suppliers, community, and environment. Corporate responsibility is about businesses having a positive impact economically, socially, and environmentally: the triple bottom line.

This wider outlook goes beyond corporate philanthropy of merely giving part of profit to charitable causes. The book refers to a 2008 study that, although it found thirty-seven definitions of CSR, showed a strong congruence in the understanding and praxis of corporate responsibility. The concept of CSR is still evolving through the interaction of theory and application, and its global impact is growing.

As Christians, we welcome these CSR conversations and developments, and we should join in various ways, including drawing from the enormous well of intellectual capital regarding CSR found in this book. But we must also include God as a stakeholder and thus we need to ask: How can we shape business both for God and for the common good? This is CSR+. We want to start and grow businesses to serve people, align with God’s purposes, be good stewards of the planet, and make a profit.

—Mats Tunehag

Mats Tunehag is the Lausanne Senior Associate on Business as Mission, as well as Chair of the Global Think Tank on Business as Mission, www.BAMthinktank.org.

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Dr. Volker Küster—Fall 2013

Dr. Volker Küster, professor of comparative religion and missiology at Johannes-Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany, studies the “interconfessional, intercultural, and interreligious dimensions of Christian faith [from the] perspectives of culture, religion, race, class, and gender.” An expert on Christian art and theology in the majority world, he is author of The Many Faces of Jesus Christ: Intercultural Christology (2001), editor of Reshaping Protestantism in a Global Context (2009), and co-editor of Visual Arts and Religion (2009). Before assuming his present academic chair in October 2012, he was professor of cross-cultural theology at Protestant Theological University, Kampen, The Netherlands. Dr. Küster studied theology in Heidelberg and Seoul. His research focuses on dialogue, conflict and reconciliation, and visual art and religion.

Dr. Mary Mikhael—Spring 2014

Dr. Mary Mikhael was president from 1994 to 2011 of the Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon, and is the first woman seminary president in the Middle East. She was NEST academic dean, and director of the women’s program for the Middle East Council of Churches (1988–95). A Presbyterian who was born in Syria to Greek Orthodox parents, Dr. Mikhael has been involved in ecumenical and interfaith activities and is a noted authority on the church in the Middle East and the role of women in the church. She is author of the 2009 Horizons Bible Study “Joshua: A Journey of Faith” and was coauthor of She Shall Be Called Woman (2009), a meditation on biblical women.

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July 2013

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The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel.


The Fervent Embrace bridges church history and foreign relations history. Building on her 2008 Emory University dissertation, Caitlin Carenen argues that Protestant interpretations of Jews and Zionism from the Holocaust to the present have been a key part of the United States’s relationship with Israel. She also traces the theological and organizational changes that brought, first, mainline and then evangelical Protestants to support Israel, moving from pragmatic and humanitarian reasons for mainline advocacy in the wake of the Holocaust to evangelical eschatology in the 1970s and beyond.

The book uses a chronological narrative and three short case studies to illustrate key figures and moments in the Protestant relationship with Israel. Mainline Protestants changed Christian-Jewish relationships by reaching out to Jews after the Holocaust. Reinhold Niebuhr and organizations like the American Christian Palestine Committee argued that humanitarian protection for Jews and Cold War pragmatism necessitated a Jewish state. Soon, however, concern for Palestinian refugees sparked mainline doubts about political support for Israel, particularly after the 1967 Six-Day War. Fundamentalist leaders interpreted Zionism through premillennial dispensationalist theology, but only in the late 1950s did they begin taking active steps to embrace Jews and ensure the fulfillment of prophecy by supporting the State of Israel. By the 1970s and 1980s, evangelical political and cultural power had strengthened American ties to Israel. Zionist groups and the Israeli government kept close tabs on American Protestants throughout, wooing key leaders and aiding pro-Israel organizations. Case studies on the Martin Niemöller controversy, post–World War II debates on whether to emphasize conversion for Jews, and the pro-Israel advocacy of Ursula Niebuhr illustrate moments of theological change and organizational mobilization.

Carenen provides a valuable contribution by incorporating State Department and Zionist groups’ perspectives as well as those of Protestants and by emphasizing the importance of mainline support for Israel alongside better-known evangelical relationships. Room remains for exploration of relations between policy makers and Protestant leaders; and a clearer distinction between evangelical leaders, organizations, and denominations would improve the book’s second half. Ultimately, Carenen convincingly argues that the theology and activism of Protestant organizations and leaders had a powerful influence on the American public and on national policy.

—Michael Limberg

Michael Limberg is studying toward the Ph.D. in history at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut.

Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a Catalyst for Open Debate.


Sebastian Kim, professor of theology and public life at York St. John University, York, England, offers a readable introduction to the theme of public theology, complete with engaging illustrations of the type of conversation he has in mind. Readers familiar with his earlier work might not discover anything new, but it is good to have his key concentrations presented in a single volume. The text itself consists of three parts: a survey of the history and method of public theology, a discussion of the churches’ responses in four global contexts, and issues in contemporary Europe. The examples from the last two parts are intended to illustrate and fill out the theoretical assertions made in the first. Though the language Kim uses is that of “public theology,” the strength of his work rests in the seamless way he draws theory and examples from mission studies into that discussion. His contextual examples are well researched and presented from an insider’s perspective. Especially for those unacquainted with Kim’s work, this text is recommended.

One small concern is how Kim relates his theoretical work to his practical examples. The initial survey situates public theology within a wider discussion, and many of his fundamental categories and distinctions seem more suited to the contexts of Europe and America than to the global context (his references to South Africa and the Global Network for Public Theology notwithstanding). Kim stresses the centrality of conversation and seeks a common language usable by Christians and understandable to a wider audience. Chapter 2 deals with the Bible as a “public book” and contains an excellent discussion of the hermeneutical openness brought by reading the Bible in non-Western contexts. It is less than clear, however, how the second chapter informs the problems of the first, for the two discourses appear to be so divergent as to offer no common language of the variety seemingly central to public theology. This same observation might be made of the chapters that deal with world Christianity. I do not deny that such a connection is possible, but at times Kim seems to leave such work to the reader.

—John Flett

John Flett, a New Zealand native, is a Habilitant at the Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel, Germany, writing on the theme of apostolicity.

Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience.


Among recent scholars who are turning their attention to the exploding phenomenon of short-term missions (STM), Brian Howell is the first to provide a full-length ethnography exploring “what these trips mean for those who participate, how they reflect or refashion the practices and beliefs of participants and how they contribute to particular understandings of the world beyond those of the STM travelers” (29). A professor of anthropology at Wheaton College, in Wheaton, Illinois, Howell gathered and analyzed data from two trips he took with local church members to the
Dominican Republic. Rather than orient his writing to anthropologists, Howell chose InterVarsity Press, using his theological training and evangelical membership to speak to short-term travelers, leaders, and informed Christian readers.

Drawing on the Billy Graham Center archives, his own field notes, and follow-up interviews, he examines the narratives evangelicals tell themselves about what they are doing. With accessible scholarly sophistication and insider humor, he analyzes the unhelpful nature of narratives that obscure global material realities while encouraging suburbanites to be thankful for their social location, even while taking “lessons” from the poor “happy” nationals they encounter (especially cute brown children).

Simply put, what church people repeatedly hear and see about the STM experience is how they imagine their trip before ever stepping foot abroad. Such expectations shape perceptions during preparation, interactions on location, and reports upon return. This pervasive experiential feedback loop reinforces myopia by stymieing informed engagement with global realities and hindering authentic encounters with people STMers meet.

Howell uses the voices of respected evangelical international leaders in a concluding chapter that offers generalized prescriptive suggestions for greater self-awareness, cross-cultural respectfulness, and justice-informed engagement. My only critique is that Howell’s own insider/outside ambivalences may have constrained him from delving deeper into the coercive power of discourse. If we are to stop unilateral STM narratives from circumventing the agency of national believers and leaders, we need to be shown more of the destructive detail than Howell actually exposes so that it can be repaired. Nevertheless, I highly recommend this groundbreaking book.

—Kersten Bayt Priest

Kersten Bayt Priest is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana.


This biography of the first Indian woman to be principal of a Christian college in India was cowritten by the professor and head of the Western History Department of Lucknow University and by the founder-

in English literature from Allahabad University.

In 1914 she married Prem Nath Dass, from an equally prominent Christian family in the United Provinces. Between 1915 and 1924 they had six children. After her husband died in 1931, she rejoined the faculty of Isabella Thoburn College and became its vice principal. During a sabbatical in 1938–39 she completed a master’s degree in education at Columbia Teachers College (New York City) and received honorary doctorates from Goucher Col-
Utrecht University: 375 Years Mission Studies, Mission Activities, and Overseas Ministries.


The Netherlands has a remarkable history and rich legacy of mission studies and missionary activity. Utrecht University has been a vital center of this activity, with a nearly unbroken record of 375 years of missiological involvement.

In this volume Jan A. B. Jongeneel, who is honorary professor emeritus of missiology at Utrecht (where he supervised forty-one doctoral dissertations), gives a brilliantly documented description and analysis of this history that is comparable in its thoroughness to his earlier two-volume Missiological Encyclopedia (1995–97).

In addition to the mission studies and all their professors and lecturers at the university through the decades (beginning with Gisbertus Voetius, “the founding father of Protestant missionary theology,” p. xv), Jongeneel discusses the overseas ministries of their Dutch and non-Dutch alumni, their involvement with mission agencies, and those who received honorary degrees, and lists every doctoral dissertation and M.Th. thesis connected with missions and overseas ministries done at Utrecht University since 1897. This work is a goldmine of research.

Jongeneel also includes a report on the Religious Education Training Programme, jointly sponsored by Utrecht University and the University of Zimbabwe (1986–92). The objective of this “peculiar project,” paid for by the Dutch government (271), was a study of “curriculum and staff development in the fields of religious education (RE) and African Traditional Religions (ATRs) and the production of teaching materials for RE in Zimbabwean schools” (307).

A very important initiative was the

John C. B. Webster is a retired missionary to India who taught at Isabella Thoburn College (1960–62), Lucknow, India. He has written extensively on the history of Christianity in India.
The Overseas Ministries Study Center has served church leaders and missionaries from around the world for ninety years. Each year some fifty long-term residents from as many as twenty countries contribute to OMSC’s vibrant community life. Similarly broad is the ecclesiastical spectrum represented in the OMSC community—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Anabaptist, Reformed, Lutheran, Independent—all of whom find at OMSC a welcoming and nurturing community.

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Although Scott Moreau states that Contextualization in World Missions came about almost by accident when he accepted the challenge to add a supplement to Stephen Bevan’s map of the models of contextualization, this work is obviously the result of years of research, observation, and personal involvement in the praxis of contextualization. While serving as a missionary in Africa, Moreau gained much experience in working with contextualization issues, and as a professor of intercultural studies at Wheaton College (Wheaton, Ill.), he is dedicated to communicating the principles of contextualization to his students, as well as giving them a broad perspective on the various models of contextualization that have been used in the cross-cultural communication of the Gospel.

In the opening pages the author presents an outline of the book, his purpose in writing it, and definitions of the terms he uses. In addition, in the first chapter he reviews the pertinent literature. As an evangelical, Moreau focuses on “mapping” evangelical models of contextualization, while not neglecting to position them within the broader map of the world of Christian contextualization.

In the first section of the book, Moreau describes assumptions missiologists make and criteria used for evaluating models of contextualization. He goes on to portray the basic principles that guide evangelical methods and the tools used for analysis and ultimately for application in the field. The second part of the book comprises descriptive “tours” through the various territories of the map. These chapters present well-documented examples from church life and from the Bible of the various roles played by the initiators of contextualization—facilitator, guide, herald, pathfinder, prophet, and restorer. The concluding chapter poses some future possibilities for contextualization.

Moreau has added a valuable volume to the literature on contextualization. The writing is clear, insightful, and easy to follow throughout. This book is a must for anyone seriously interested in the communication of the Gospel cross-culturally, whether beginner, student, or career missionary. For the professor who wishes to employ this book as a teaching text, a series of PowerPoint slides is available for use in the classroom.

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Penelope R. Hall, a Canadian, currently serves as a consultant for theological studies and theological libraries in the Majority World. She served as a missionary/Bible translator in South Vietnam (1966–75) and in Ecuador (1978–88).


This volume evolved from the 2010 symposium “Europe in China—China in Europe,” held at Zurich University for the 400th anniversary of Matteo Ricci’s death. The papers successfully “deepen the understanding of the scientific and missionary engagement of Matteo Ricci and his followers” (10). In particular, the Artur K. Wardega and Michela Fontana papers, which foreground Ricci, place much flesh upon this missiological skeleton while successfully avoiding a hagiographic approach. They contextualize Ricci the purveyor of “cultural accommodation” (23) and emphasize Ricci the academic. Of particular interest is Fontana’s illuminative account of Ricci’s youthful scientific studies, which underscores his use of science as disciple “bait” (28), from which we can draw twentieth-century parallels with the medical missionary “point of a lancet” approach.

Yu Sanle’s paper on the Swiss Jesuit Stadlin as a proponent of Ricci’s cultural accommodation is fascinating, and the account of the Zhalan foreign missionary cemetery provides a splendid example of the missionary-legacy revisionism of the People’s Republic of China. Eric Zettl’s paper, in German, on the eighteenth-century painter Sichelbarth details the Jesuit artistic association with court life; it is supported by Peter F. Tschudin’s informative, well-illustrated contribution on the history of paper making. Claudia Von Collani’s paper on lady Candida Xu offers a remarkable account of the first ranking female Christian in China. I do, however, take some issue with Xu Wenmin’s pejorative definitions of the Ming dynasty rulers, while providing no definition of “ruler” (40), together with a quotation from “later historical research” with no supporting reference or date (42). I was also, on several occasions throughout this volume, distracted by Latin and French phrases that required translation both within texts (54) and within footnotes (8). Setting aside these minor protests, however, this volume not only is a worthy addition to any Chinese historian’s library but also provides valuable pedagogical material.

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