To mark this journal’s fiftieth anniversary, Robert T. Coote—then assistant editor—told the story of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH in his article “Finger on the Pulse: Fifty Years of Missionary Research” (IBMR 24 [2000]: 98–105). Evolving from R. Pierce Beaver’s mimeographed Occasional Bulletin from the Missionary Research Library, launched in 1950, the IBMR is among today’s most trusted and widely circulated sources of mission-related information and analysis.

In January 1985 David Barrett’s inaugural “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission” appeared in the IBMR. Coauthored with Todd M. Johnson since 1998—joined this year by Peter F. Crossing—this feature has now appeared in twenty-one consecutive January issues.

With some frequency over the past two years, journalists from major newspapers have requested information on the number of Christian missionaries engaged in mission to Muslims. Thanks to the article by Todd M. Johnson and David R. Scoggins, we are now able to venture a response: an estimated 57,300 Christian missionaries work in countries that are predominantly Muslim or that have significant numbers of Muslims. Conversely, some 141,630 Muslim missionaries work in countries that are predominantly Christian. Both groups of missionaries, surprisingly, seem to focus most of their efforts and resources on fellow believers.

Tallies do not tell the whole tale of world Christianity, of course. Ideas, scholarship, books, and archives are also an integral part of the Christian story, making absolutely essential the kind of institutions and activities described in the articles by Jean-Paul Wiest and Kylie Chan.

Everyday human life must be lived in contexts over which we have little or no control. Swept along like flotsam on geopolitical, economic, and social tidal waves, not even the most powerful human being can control the nature, direction, speed, or impact of these overwhelming and often destructive forces. In such a world, Christian missionaries—insofar as they resist being drawn into the maelstrom of competing, aggressively self-serving nationalisms, choosing rather to live Christianly in contexts of hatred and turmoil—will be radical in Norman E. Thomas’s instructive sense of that word. The IBMR deems it high honor indeed to play its part in tracking the radical movement that continues to turn the world upside down.
Radical Mission in a Post-9/11 World: Creative Dissonances
Norman E. Thomas

Will mission in the twenty-first century be “business as usual”? Will the tried-and-true models for mission of the late twentieth century provide sufficient creativity and vitality for the new century now dawning? Respected missiologists answer No. “The missionary movement is now in its old age,” declares Andrew Walls. “What is changing is not the task [of world evangelization] but the means and the mode.” Wilbert Shenk, in the final chapter of his Changing Frontiers of Mission, probes deeper: “Christendom as a historical reality is finished,” he concludes. “The conditions that made it possible in the past no longer exist.” Instead, we should expect creative dissonances.

Radical Changes
“turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6)

When did the twenty-first century begin? According to the Gregorian calendar it began January 1, 2001. Historians may give a different answer. How about September 11, 2001? Now into the fifth year of the new century, is it possible that more than the Twin Towers fell on 9/11? Are we now in a permanent state of war against terrorism that will define this century?

What about the church and its mission? Do we also face a world with radical changes from the past? Wilbert Shenk, a respected missiologist teaching at Fuller Seminary, says, Yes. He writes, “Renewal will not come by way of incremental revisions of structures and liturgies inherited from the past.” Lyle Schaller, a noted North American church consultant, concurs. In Twenty-one Bridges to the Twenty-first Century, Schaller contrasts the relatively modest degree of change of a century ago with the increasingly sudden and discontinuous changes that the church now faces in the new millennium.

Doug Nichols, international director of Action International Ministries in Bothell, Washington, warns of the folly of a “business as usual” approach to missions. “If missions are not careful,” he writes, “they may become like the old empty cathedrals in Europe.” He feels that putting first the care of missionaries (salaries, retirement benefits, insurance, housing, etc.) could detract from the primary mission of taking the Gospel to the masses. The consequence, he fears, would be that missions will become “a shell, possibly with lots of activity, but no life.”

What a contrast with Paul’s model for mission! When synagogues barred their doors, house churches were formed. Jails were no longer places of confinement but of witness. Women took their place as early leaders. So transforming was the first Christian missionaries’ witness, by word and deed, that in Thessalonica they were known as “people who have been turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

My thesis is that creative twenty-first-century mission will require a radical response to the creative dissonances of our age. The term “radical” is pregnant with meaning. I am interested here, not so much in its common usage (referring to something extreme), but in the sense closer to its derivation from the Latin radix, “root,” referring to what is fundamental or basic. In mission what is radical in this sense points us toward the mission models of the apostolic church.

Effective mission in the twenty-first century will require creative approaches to the dissonances in our world. Here I consider five of the most sobering dissonances currently facing us in this new century.

Reconciliation vs. New Forms of Violence
“God... entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (2 Cor. 5:19)

“The road to hell” is the way Robert Rotberg, director of Harvard University’s Program on Intrastate Conflict, describes the escalating levels of violence in today’s world. Wars since the early 1990s in and among failed nation-states have killed close to eight million people and made refugees of an additional four million. Hundreds of millions have been left impoverished, malnourished, and deprived of fundamental needs for security, health care, and education. Some violence, especially in Rwanda and western Sudan, involved the genocide of whole ethnic groups. Failed states, including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, have been not only “breeding grounds of instability, mass migration, and murder” but also reservoirs and exporters of terror.

How shall churches in mission respond to such escalations of violence? Humanitarian aid to the victims is one ongoing response—from the refugee camps of the Congo to the violated women of Kosovo and the Sudan. Another is the World Council of Churches’ Decade to Overcome Violence (2001–10), an effort, through the use of nonviolent tactics, “to overcome the violence of division in our societies and to respond to the yearning for peace and a life of dignity for future generations.” Another is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Originally a secular response to the scars of apartheid, the commission became a Christian effort against injustice under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

One growing form of violence is religious persecution, with martyrdom as a frequent outcome. Barrett and Johnson estimated that there would be 167,000 Christian martyrs in 2004, with an increase to 210,000 per year by 2025. In their encyclopedic survey of world Christianity, they judged martyrdom to be “the most significant and far-reaching of all the modes and methodologies of evangelization.” International missiologists have judged it to be “the experience of being uncompromising in the choice of mission, including the mission of the people of the Church. Witness in martyrdom is incumbent on both the individual and the community. It is a choice for the God of justice and righteousness and it rejects the God of exploitation and oppression.”

Reconciliation will be a missionary task amid the violence of this century. Robert Schreiter develops five understandings of the Christian message of reconciliation. First, it is God who initiates and brings about reconciliation. We, both victims and oppressors, are invited by God to cooperate in God’s reconciling ways. Second, reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy. It needs to become one’s vocation or way of life, not just a set of discrete tasks to be performed and completed. Third, reconciliation makes of both victim and oppressor a new creation. It is not just righting wrongs or restoring a past state. Fourth, it is the

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Norman E. Thomas is the Vera B. Blinn Professor Emeritus of World Christianity at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He is the editor of International Mission Bibliography: 1960–2000 (Scarecrow Press, 2003) and of Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity (Orbis Books, 1995).
Contextualization vs. Fear of Syncretism

“To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.” (1 Cor. 9:20)

What is distinctive about Ghana Methodism?” I asked Brew Riverson, then a student at Yale Divinity School but more recently president of the Ghana Methodist Church. Without hesitation he replied: “Our churches have organs, and our pastors wear clerical collars with tabs like John Wesley.” Ten years later, in 1987, I stood outside a Lutheran church in Tirupati in the Andhra Pradesh state of India. My guide said with pride: “Our church is an exact replica of a Lutheran church in the Black Forest of Germany.” From Ghana to India came examples of the previously dominant mission approach to Third World cultures—that Christianity should be dressed in Western garb.

Syncretism has been a subject of vigorous debate. In 1978 the Lausanne Committee’s Theology and Education Group invited thirty-three mission leaders and anthropologists from six continents to study “Gospel and culture.” Their Willowbank Report warned of the danger of syncretism, or “harmful carry-overs from the old way of life.” It declared that “elements which are intrinsically false or evil clearly cannot be assimilated into Christianity without a lapse into syncretism.”

Eighteen years later in Salvador, Brazil, 574 participants in the WCC’s eleventh ecumenical conference on world mission and evangelism (1996) grappled with the same issue under the theme “Called to One Hope—the Gospel in Diverse Cultures.” The subsection on syncretism in the conference report begins: “Dynamic interactions between the gospel and cultures inevitably raise the question of syncretism. From one perspective, syncretism is merely a mixture of elements from different sources. In that respect, any cultural expression of the gospel is syncretic.”

Since the term “contextualization” was first coined in 1972, missiologists and Third World theologians have deepened our understanding of the new paradigm. Indigenization of clerical dress or church architecture or music will not suffice. The very heart of a culture needs to be embraced and transformed by the Gospel. Such radical contextualization is similar to that of the apostle Paul, who wrote, “To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews” (1 Cor. 9:20).

Thomas Thangaraj of India has had an odyssey from cultural dissonance to radical contextualization. Two hundred years ago his ancestors converted from Hinduism to the Christian faith. Upon doing so, they destroyed the Hindu shrine in their village and built a Christian church in its place. Thangaraj himself grew up in two worlds—those of Tamil culture and of Western culture. In the multireligious urban settings of Madras and Calcutta as a theological student and later a teacher, he discovered how bicultural he was, and how his theology was informed by both Hindu and Christian traditions. For thirty years he has been writing hymns in the Tamil language. His reformulation of the idea of the uniqueness of Christ employs the Hindu concept of guru as a Christological model. Thangaraj relates that Hindus have come with new receptivity as the Christian Gospel is conveyed in language familiar to them.
Radical contextualization in twenty-first-century mission will be affirmed as “mission in Christ’s way.” Christopher Duraisingh believes that such a mission “does not seek the disappearance of another culture or religion” and does not “do away with differences,” but rather holds them together in a “community of communities.” In the resulting dialogue “Christians may give an unequivocal witness to God’s love in Jesus Christ.”

In a chapter entitled “Culture and Coherence in Christian History,” Andrew Walls concludes, “The faith of Christ is infinitely translatable; it creates a place to feel at home.”27 The challenge for twenty-first-century mission is for each church to embody this truth—and feeling—in its own changing cultural context.

Radical Dialogue vs. Exclusivism

“In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” (John 1:4)

David Bosch, in his magnum opus Transforming Mission, identified witness to people of other faiths as one of the “largest unsolved problems for the Christian church.”28 Since publication of this work in 1991, the debate has intensified. On the one hand, claims of Christian exclusivism have intensified, as has the ascendancy of fundamentalisms in other faiths.29 On the other hand, walls of division between Christians and persons of other faiths have been broken down through mutual searches both for peace and justice and for salvation across traditional confessional lines. The result is creative dissonances.

Philip Jenkins’s prediction of the “next Christianity” includes the clash of fundamentalisms, especially in the Southern Hemisphere. Recent violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria raises the prospect that Nigerian society “might be brought to ruin by the clash of jihad and crusade.” Similar religious conflicts cloud the future of Indonesia, the Philippines, Sudan, and a growing number of other African nations. Hindu extremists persecute Christians in India.20

By contrast, partnership by persons of diverse faiths is increasing in work for justice and the integrity of creation. The Peace Council, for example, an offshoot of the World Parliament of Religions, unites religious leaders of varied faiths to work for nonviolent and just resolution of conflicts. “Acting, struggling, and suffering together for the cause of peace or justice make for special friendships,” Paul Knitter reports.21 Similar interfaith partnerships have addressed the HIV/AIDS pandemic and hunger issues.

Radical dialogue in the twenty-first century will continue to take two paths. Theologians will continue to push the frontiers of Christian theology toward greater Christian appreciation of God’s work among persons of living faiths. Meanwhile a dialogue of life will intensify as persons increasingly embrace Christ while continuing to affirm their cultural heritages. Aloysius Pieris, a Sri Lankan Jesuit, believes that the uniqueness of Christ—in whom God became poor, a victim, and one of the oppressed—can be shared best as Christians stand for justice with those who have been victimized, exploited, and powerless.22

Roman Catholics find in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) important milestones in the church’s theology of the religions. They include the affirmations that major world faiths represent what is “true and holy” and “reflect a ray of the Truth that enlightens all people,” and that “whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel” (Nostra aetate 2; Lumen gentium 16).

Ecumenical Protestants draw upon the World Council of Churches’ affirmation that “God . . . has not left himself without a witness at any time or any place” (1982), and that “we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God” (1989).23 The council continues to recognize the tension between those two statements—a tension which has not yet been resolved.” Christians were encouraged to practice a dialogue of life. Faithfulness in love of one’s neighbor—even one’s enemy—may be the best form of witness through “a humble, kenotic style of mission, following Christ’s vulnerable life in service, not domination.”24

Can such a dialogue take place with the so-called hidden Christians? In 2000 the World Christian Encyclopedia reported that there were 13,676,310 nonbaptized believers in Christ. They are members of non-Christian religions who have been converted to faith in Christ as Lord and Savior but who choose to remain in their religions as witnesses to Christ. The largest numbers are Hindus, primarily in India, followed by Buddhists, primarily in China. Projections are that their numbers will grow to 23,480,000 by the year 2025.25

Ralph Winter has called this estimate in the WCE “potentially the most explosive revelation in the entire work.” As corroborating evidence he cites the careful study of over ten million people in the city of Chennai (Madras) in India, where there are four times as many Hindus who are devout followers of Christ as there are believers affiliated with the official Christian churches. Significant numbers of persons remain culturally Hindu but embrace Christ, reading the Bible and worshipping him daily.26 What is the potential for a dialogue of life among these persons?

Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, after surveying historical theologies of mission, propose “mission as prophetic dialogue” as a synthesis of the theology of mission needed for the twenty-first century. It is multidimensional, including witness and proclamation, liturgy, prayer and contemplation, justice, peace and the integrity of creation, interreligious dialogue, inculturation, and reconciliation. It is a lived-out theology—open to people of other faith perspectives and to the contexts in which people live. As Christ embodied the reign of God in his preaching, serving, and witnessing, so also the church is called to work for justice among humans and in creation with openness, determination, sensitivity, and courage.27

Nonbaptized believers remain in their religions as witnesses to Christ.

Cybermission vs. Conventional Communication

“I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.” (1 Cor. 9:22)

“Electronic media is to the Reformation of the twenty-first century what Gutenberg’s press was to the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” This is the conviction of Michael Slaughter, pastor of one of the fastest growing churches in North America today. He argues: “No wonder the Church isn’t making sense for most people in North American culture. We are speaking a different language. We are still using the language of a literate culture in a post-literate visual age.”28
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Nor is this just a First World discontinuity. Basil A. Rebera writes: "When I think of the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka, with a population larger than China’s, to say that TV and video is all the rage is not a journalistic banality. That medium is creating social and cultural transformations more rapid and more profound than centuries of earlier colonial rule."25

Scholars tell us that a radical discontinuity is taking place, not simply the replacement of one technology by another. “The media are no longer screens we watch, or a radio we listen to,” wrote Cardinal Martini of Milan. “They are an atmosphere, a milieu in which we are immersed. They surround us and penetrate us from every side. We live in this world of sounds, images, colors, impulses, and vibrations as primitive men and women were immersed in the forest, as a fish is in water. It is our environment, and the media are a new way of being alive.”30

No technology has grown faster than the World Wide Web. In 1969 there were but four Web sites in the entire world. By 1990 there were 333,000. By the end of 1997 Web sites had increased to almost 20 million. By 2004 Google, the most widely used search engine worldwide for English speakers, surpassed 6 billion Internet items.31 Compare this transformation with earlier media technologies. It took 40 years for radio to attract 50 million users in the United States; it took television 14 years; but it took the Internet just 4 years.32

The Internet is no longer used predominantly by English speakers. Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are major Internet users, as well as Europeans in various languages. It was projected that between 709 and 945 million people would use the Internet in 2004.

Sarang Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea, is an effective congregation in its use of multimedia. It began its digital ministry in 2000. By 2003 its seeker-sensitive approach increased average Sunday worship attendance to over 20,000. Sarang Church sponsors separate Web sites in English, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian. They feature inquiries about what Christianity is and also provide worship in each language. Their goal is to present Christ to as much of the unchurched new generation as they can.33

Cybermission works best in active synergy with other forms of mission. The ongoing challenge is to bring persons out of individual isolation into online groups, and eventually into face-to-face communities of faith. The new structure may involve hundreds of volunteers in different time zones coordinated by a central team of permanent staff. Ministries may include evangelism (with Web pages “What is Christianity?” or “How to become a Christian?”), chat rooms for inquirers, mentoring for missionaries and pastors, TEE courses, online counseling, and prayer ministries.34

The apostolic church was creative in mission as it used the traditional oral culture (e.g., the parables of Jesus) while embracing the emerging literate culture. Paul symbolized that creativity both as preacher and writer, saying, “I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). Those in twenty-first-century mission who embrace the new multimedia technology have a similar potential to meld modes of communication. Expressive elements (storytelling, preaching, music, dance, painting, sculpture, etc.) can continue to evoke faith alongside video, film, CD, and sound-card technologies.

Radical Leadership vs. Creeping Clericalism

"gifts . . . to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11–12)

“Is our goal to send missionaries or to reach the unreached?” Alex Araujo posed this question to evangelicals planning for mission in the twenty-first century. If it is the latter, what will be the most effective method? In one case it may be to send North Americans. In another it may be more effective to assist local Christians. In yet another it may be better to form a partnership with Christians of a similar culture nearer the unreached people. Then, reflecting on the dominant paradigm of the twentieth century, that of the salaried cross-cultural missionary, Araujo continued: “If our goal is to send missionaries, we may find ourselves sending hundreds of them very efficiently, while failing to reach the lost.” He concluded: “If our methods are wrong in relation to our ultimate goal, efficient implementation cannot prevent failure.”35

In the last 100 years almost 90 percent of the world’s full-time foreign missionaries came from Europe and North America. At the close of the century, by contrast, an increasing number came from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Present estimates suggest that by 2025 as many as half the world’s full-time Christian missionaries will be sent by churches of the Two-Thirds World.36 Joseph Healey, with abundant examples of East African Catholics in mission, details how African missionaries are called forth by their local churches and sent to other parts of the world.37 Jehu Hanciles documents the dynamism of African Christian leaders who have migrated to Birmingham, New York, and Moscow, ministering not only to immigrants but also to unchurched Westerners.38

The second radical shift in leadership will be from clergy to laity and from salaried to volunteer persons in mission. It is a return to an apostolic church paradigm in which God’s gifts were believed to have been given, not exclusively to a set-apart professional leadership, but rather “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph. 4:11–12).

“A core characteristic of the twenty-first-century church is the mobilization of the laity,” declared a church leadership training team. Now there is “a high value placed on mobilization with each person seen as having a gift, role and place to serve. There is a systematic approach to the process of identifying gifts and talents, equipping/coaching and placement for service. Mobilization is implemented by a leadership team with a designated point person for lay mobilization.”39 The fastest growing stream of Christianity—that of Pentecostals and charismatics, who worldwide claim the loyalty of some 534 million adherents—has empowered laity at the grassroots to affirm their ministries through the gifts of the Spirit.40

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, mission planners face the daunting challenge of countries resistant to the Gospel and denying entry to foreign missionaries. In hope, we have confidence that the Spirit will raise up new witnesses as in the past. In 1993 C. Duh Kam of the Chin Baptist Convention in Myanmar (Burma) gave this testimony: All foreign funds and personnel had been cut off for more than thirty years, but still mission was the center of the church’s life. Local churches supported 150 young people who were serving as missionaries. By 1995 there were 225 in service. The goal of their 250,000-
member convention was to win a million Chins for Christ by the year 2000.

What will be the paradigm for mission leadership in the twenty-first century? First, we can predict that it will be pluriform as Christians engage in mission on six continents. Mutuality in mission will be facilitated by international mission agencies. Cross-cultural persons in mission not only will share their special gifts in service but also will be catalysts for change and servants in ministry. We can also anticipate that local, shared, and most often voluntary leaders in mission will be the normative model in this new century.41

Conclusion

Creative dissonance was the defining experience of the prophet Elijah. Amid political violence he fled for his life to the wilderness of Horeb and hid in a cave. There God spoke to him, but not in a tornado that split mountains or in an earthquake or fire, but in “a sound of sheer silence” (NRSV), or “a gentle whisper” (NIV). In the calm after the storm Elijah received both the summons and the taste of the Kingdom, and sensitive to the mystery of God to whom it will build up human communities as a foretaste of the Kingdom, and sensitive to the mystery of God to whose mission in the world we are but humble servants.”42

The five creative dissonances in mission presented here presume that radical change is ahead in mission. Radical reconciliation, contextualization, dialogue, communication, and leadership will be needed. Mission in the twenty-first century must be rooted firmly in the biblical mandate, trusting in the one who promised his followers: “In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world” (John 16:33).

Notes

Christian Missions and Islamic Da‘wah: A Preliminary Quantitative Assessment

Todd M. Johnson and David R. Scoggins

Christians and Muslims have a long history of outreach beyond their own communities. This short article examines the status of Christian mission to Muslims and of Islamic outreach as worldwide phenomena. In both cases we focus only on foreign outreach, counting missionaries who leave their national boundaries to work in another country. Although our estimates are preliminary, we believe they will be helpful in providing a context for understanding the significance of both movements.

Christian Missions in Muslim Contexts

Table 1 summarizes the Christian missionary enterprise as it relates to the Muslim world. Of the 52 countries listed, 45 are 50 percent or more Muslim, and the remaining 7 countries each has a Muslim community of at least 10 million persons. The table reports the number of Muslims in each country, the percentage of the country’s population that is Muslim, the status of religious liberty in each country, the total number of Christian missionaries sent to that country, and the number of Christian missionaries to Muslims per million Muslims. The number of Christian missionaries to these 52 countries is 13 percent of the world total—over 85 percent of all Christian foreign missionaries (now totaling 443,000) work in the other 186 countries (141 of which are 60 percent or more Christian).

This ideal, however, is often not realized. In Pakistan, for example, the vast majority of missionaries in fact work either with tribal groups or with existing Christian communities, not with the 95.9 percent of the population who are Muslim. In this case, then, the actual number working among Muslims is lower than reported here. This same discrepancy is especially true in the 7 countries listed where Muslims are in a minority, which means that only a very small percentage of the 41,000 missionaries shown in the table work in Muslim communities.

In this postcolonial context one should note that few of the countries listed offer missionary visas. This situation has caused a profound shift in the nature of Christian missions among Muslims. Whereas in the past missionary work (sometimes encouraged by colonial powers) often included both educational and medical initiatives, today social betterment is almost always an essential aspect of mission. Very few of these missionaries are in the Muslim world simply planting Christian churches.

Another new factor is the way in which foreign missionaries today typically think about the religion and cultures of Islam. Increasingly, Muslim culture is seen as a bridge to Christianity and not an obstacle. A robust literature exists today on radical contextualization of the Christian Gospel among Muslims—such as new believers in Christ continuing to meet in mosques on Fridays, just as first-century converts from Judaism met in synagogues.

Finally, a new development in Christian missions to Muslims is the shift in where these missionaries come from. The country sending the largest number of missionaries to Muslims today is the Philippines (which sends Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Independents). The growing participation of large numbers of Southern Christians in missions to Muslims will likely begin to challenge the perception that Christianity is a Western religion in opposition to Islam.

International Islamic Da‘wah

Islamic da‘wah, or missionary, efforts rarely exhibit a one-to-one correspondence with those of Christian missionaries. Combined

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with the lack of literature on Muslim “missions,” this lack of correspondence often contributes to significant misunderstandings on the part of Western audiences. Muslims almost never travel to other countries en masse in the manner of Christian missionaries. Instead they send money or a few charismatic or missionary groups reject the classical Islam of that Muslim missionaries bring is often a repackaged version of Ulama, whom they assist primarily in bringing a revitalized Islam to local nominal or folk Muslims. The revitalized form of Islam that Muslim missionaries bring is often a repackaged version of Islam; typically, missionary groups reject the classical Islam of the Qur'an and the Traditions of Muhammad as they see fit, regarding less of whether their interpretations reflect what the Ulama have held as unchanging interpretations for some one thousand years. Sufi groups are an important exception to this general rule, though their interests are often distanced from the often minute legal questions of traditional Islamic scholarship.

The word “da’wah” comes from the triliteral Arabic root d’w, whose most basic meaning is “call.” As such, the word can describe (1) preaching, (2) theological-political campaigning or propagandizing, and (3) calling others to the Islamic faith, analogous to the Christian concept of missions. Here we define “da’wah” as any effort by a Muslim to propagate, protect, or preserve a version of the Islamic faith, either to other Muslims or to non-Muslims. An international da’i, or Muslim missionary, is any individual who crosses a political border for the purpose of propagating or defending a version of the Islamic faith for two years or more.

Table 2 summarizes, in less detail than table 1, the entire Muslim missionary enterprise. The table is organized differently than table 1 because detailed information on da’wah is not available at a country level. It presents a taxonomy of different

### Table 1. Christian Missions to the Muslim World, mid-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population (1,000s)</th>
<th>Muslims (1,000s)</th>
<th>% of pop.</th>
<th>Level of religious liberty</th>
<th>Total missionaries</th>
<th>Missionaries per million Muslims</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>26,163</td>
<td>25,605</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>state hostility and prohibition</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>33,076</td>
<td>32,027</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>8,282</td>
<td>7,106</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>state hostility and prohibition</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>minorities discriminated against</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>152,552</td>
<td>131,156</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>4,209</td>
<td>2,510</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>limited political restrictions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>9,194</td>
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<td>limited political restrictions</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>Comoros</td>
<td>702</td>
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<td>98.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>73,807</td>
<td>62,284</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>1,271</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>complete state noninterference</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>8,780</td>
<td>5,875</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>225,338</td>
<td>121,988</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>state subsidies to churches</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>75,366</td>
<td>72,253</td>
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<td>minorities discriminated against</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>26,322</td>
<td>25,258</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>5,652</td>
<td>5,284</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>5,216</td>
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<td>64.1</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>1,806</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>5,905</td>
<td>5,666</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>Maldives</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>complete state noninterference</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
<td>13,127</td>
<td>10,553</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>3,089</td>
<td>3,062</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>complete state noninterference</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Mayotte</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
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<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>22,012</td>
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<td>Niger</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Northern Cyprus</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>89.9</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Oman</td>
<td>2,969</td>
<td>2,616</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>160,347</td>
<td>153,792</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>3,812</td>
<td>2,963</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>limited political restrictions</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Qatar</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>state subsidies to churches</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>23,765</td>
<td>22,275</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>state hostility and prohibition</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>174</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>10,677</td>
<td>9,306</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>7,460</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somaliland</td>
<td>3,172</td>
<td>3,159</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>34,887</td>
<td>24,920</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>18,389</td>
<td>16,772</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>5,278</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>10,013</td>
<td>9,909</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>71,209</td>
<td>69,157</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>minorities discriminated against</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>5,204</td>
<td>4,580</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>2,840</td>
<td>2,149</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2,840</td>
<td>2,149</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>22,484</td>
<td>22,243</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>1,139,640</td>
<td>946,526</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>state hostility and prohibition</td>
<td>16,300</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other counties with at least 10 million Muslims: 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,305,864</td>
<td>1,212,376</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>70,962</td>
<td>62,405</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,088,581</td>
<td>133,130</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>minorities discriminated against</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>24,213</td>
<td>11,469</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>state interference and obstruction</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>129,722</td>
<td>54,605</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>140,920</td>
<td>106,672</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>39,435</td>
<td>11,859</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>2,799,697</td>
<td>2,655,850</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>41,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>3,939,337</td>
<td>1,212,376</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>state subsidies schools only</td>
<td>57,300</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Trends, A.D. 30–A.D. 2200* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 2001), country names, methodology, and explanation of religious liberty; and World Christian Database (Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts), updated figures for population, number and percentage of Muslims, and number of missionaries.
kinds of da'wah groups in order to make an initial set of estimates of the total number of Muslim missionaries. One similarity between Christians and Muslims is who they send most of their missionaries to. We estimate that some 85 percent of Muslim da’wah endeavors direct their efforts toward other Muslims.

Islam generally does not distinguish between religion and politics, so that many of these groups have either specific political ideologies, as in Libyan or Iranian interpretations of Islam, or more general sociopolitical agendas that they promote, as in the Saudis’ various promotions of Wahhabi belief worldwide.

In spite of the excessive media attention given to Islamic militancy—which, as a form of protection and preservation of the Islamic faith against real or perceived anti-Islamic forces, we include in our figures here—these constitute a small minority, even of the most radical interpretations of Islam in the most desperate of contexts.

The simplest way to distinguish among the various Muslim missionary groups is through their sponsorship: those sponsored by multiple governments, those sponsored by single governments, and those with no government sponsorship. Because of the diversity and large number of groups in the third category, we divide it further into voluntary independent groups, Sufi groups, and groups specifically targeting the Islamic diaspora in the West.

The first category primarily consists of Saudi-run intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), several of which have varying degrees of official recognition by the United Nations. Some of these groups have fifty or more member countries; as such, they represent an extremely broad range of Islamic beliefs and can act only in the broadest of categories, such as mosque building, Qur’anic printing and distribution, and anti-Christian polemics. These IGOs also send imams to needy mosques throughout the world, with Africa and Asia receiving the most attention. We should also note that these groups exercise significant political and financial clout for various Muslim causes, particularly in such places as Mindanao, Philippines, and in Chechnya and the Balkans. Their financial and political influence is quite disproportionate to their personnel in terms of the number of international da’is.

Many Muslim countries have some version of our second

Table 2. Islamic Da’wah Groups Engaged in Foreign Missions, mid-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Foreign missionaries</th>
<th>Known activities¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spurred by multiple governments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim World League (1962, Mecca)</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, multimedia, training; Q: distribution; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s); MG: schools, funding, oversight; O: relief work, mosque construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 other groups</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>5,580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spurred by a single government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia (1932, Riyadh)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, Web, multimedia, training; Q: distribution, translation, small groups; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s); MG: schools, funding, oversight; O: relief work, mosque construction, military action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No government sponsorship: voluntary independent groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood (1928, Cairo)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>D: Muslims; Q: small groups; L: periodical(s); O: politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jema’at-i Islami (Islamic Society) (1941, Pakistan)</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>D: Muslims, training; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s); O: politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablighi Jama’at (Missionary Society) (1926, Lahore, Pakistan)</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, Web, training; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmadiyya (1889, London)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, Web, training; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 other groups</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>121,350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No government sponsorship: Sufi organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naqshbandiyah Order (ca. 1350, Turkish Cyprus)</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, Web, multimedia; Q: training; MG: schools; O: relief work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chishtiyya Order (ca. 1150, Rajasthan, India)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 other groups</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No government sponsorship: Groups targeting the Muslim diaspora</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Society of N. America (1974, Plainfield, Ind.)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>D: Muslims, non-Muslims, Web, multimedia; Q: small groups; L: periodical(s); MG: funding, oversight; O: relief work, mosque construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Council of Europe (1973, London)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>D: Muslims, training; L: dissemination, publishing, periodical(s); MG: schools; O: relief work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 other groups</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double counting</strong></td>
<td>-8,550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td>141,630</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1. In the entries below, D signifies various da’wah activities (to Muslims, to non-Muslims, via the World Wide Web, multimedia [television or radio], and training in da’wah), Q activities involving the Qur’an (distribution, translation, small-group study), L, literature (dissemination, publishing, the regular production of a journal, newsletter, or magazine), MG involvement with various Muslim groups (establishing schools, funding other Muslim groups, overseeing other Islamic organizations), and O other activities (relief work, including aid to the poor or uneducated or aid to victims of disasters or war, mosque construction, political campaigning, military action). Other activities not listed here include correspondence courses, da’wah to correctional facilities, and the comprehensive “Islamization of Knowledge” project.

2. These other groups include the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, World Council of Mosques, and Organization of the Islamic Conference.

3. Other such groups are under the direct supervision of the governments of Brunei, Kuwait, Sudan, and Turkey.

4. Other such groups are the Higher Council of Islamic Affairs in Cairo, the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and Kenya, Hamas, Nigeria’s Iṣalā movement, and the Nation of Islam.

5. Other Sufi groups are the Nimutullahi, Shadhili, and Tijani Orders.

6. Other groups for the Muslim diaspora include Islamic Foundation (England), Muslim American Society (North America), and Federation of Student Islamic Societies (England).
category, primarily because of the nature of Islamic da‘wah, which includes the “defense” of Islam in the sense of preserving religious, cultural, and political heritage among diaspora Muslims. These groups range widely from Libyan and Iranian da‘is spreading their respective revolutionary ideologies to imams in Germany sponsored by the Turkish government.

The voluntary independent groups exhibit the widest variety, both in methods of propagating or defending Islam and in the versions of Islam that they propagate. Together with the multiple-government organizations they are the most significant and influential of Muslim missionary organizations in this survey. What they lack in financial and political power they more than compensate for in their numbers, religious zeal, and ability to contextualize the Islamic message. These groups vary from the extremely political and influential Jama‘at-i Islami (Islamic Society) to the extremely apolitical and highly successful Tablighi Jama‘at (Missionary Society), which is by far the largest Muslim missionary movement in the world.

Contemporary Sufi movements generally do not consider their work proselytism because it is so nonconfrontational. Nevertheless, they win their share of converts both in the Islamic world and in the West. The respect they receive in some parts of the Muslim world, as well as the ease with which their experiential and intellectual mysticism fits with postmodern Western culture, gives them success in both areas. Somewhat surprisingly, Sufi orders can be highly politically active, both in the Muslim world and in the West. They are particularly active in sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, India, North America, and Europe.

The groups targeting the Muslim diaspora in the West represent a special category. Nearly every organization we have surveyed has branches in at least two Western countries. The branches often contextualize in interesting ways, with pious Islamic groups truly acquiring a Western face in an effort either to convert Westerners or, more often, to preserve Islam as an active and vital force among the Muslim diaspora. One would not readily realize that the Islamic Foundation of Leicester, England, and the Islamic Circle of North America (with headquarters in Jamaica, N.Y.) are simply the European and American branches of Pakistan’s Jama‘at-i Islami.

At the bottom of the table we correct for the fact that an estimated 8,550 Muslim foreign missionaries have been counted twice—those whom governments funnel through multigovernment organizations, and those in the receiver groups targeting the Muslim diaspora.

Conclusions

The most surprising conclusion of this brief study is that Christians and Muslims both send the bulk of their missionaries to people of their own faiths. In this sense, the foreign missionary enterprise of the world’s two largest religions is largely an attempt to renew their own traditions. This fact is surprising because both Christians and Muslims already have an enormous indigenous presence in the countries to which they send most of their foreign missionaries.

Our other major conclusion is that in a postcolonial world, both Christian and Muslim missionary efforts are being recast in a global, multicultural, and multilingual context. As noted earlier, the dichotomy between the Christian West and Islam is diminishing. Although there are many reasons to fear clashes between conservative Southern Christians and Muslims, there is at the same time an opportunity for fresh dialogue that could transform Christian-Muslim relations in the years to come.

Selected Bibliography


### Shifts in the North American Missionary Field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Personnel (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>9,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>8,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>9,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**KEY**

Each symbol represents 100 full-time missionaries. (Affiliation totals are rounded to the nearest 100.) Measuring from 1968, when the personnel total was about 34,000, the increase in personnel to 45,600 as of January 1, 2002, approximates the rate of population growth in the United States. During the same period of time, the total number of Protestant mission sending agencies has ranged from the low- to mid-400s.

Columns 1996 and 2002 highlight the change in affiliation of three large agencies: New Tribes Mission, Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board, and Wycliffe Bible Translators. Changes in affiliation over the last several decades have not been limited to these three; in the case of EFMA alone, more than twenty agencies have dropped their affiliation or merged with another agency, have failed to report, or have ceased operations altogether. In the same period of time a comparable number of newly founded agencies have affiliated with EFMA.

**Symbols:**
- x DOM/NCC and CCC/CWC
- s Seventh-day Adventist
- o IFMA
- e EFMA
- c AFMA
- u Unaffiliated (mostly independent; some affiliated with small, separatist associations)

**Additional Notes:**
1. Harlan P. Beach, Yale Divinity School librarian, and Charles H. Fahs produced a world missionary atlas in 1925, with data for 1918.

The Mission Handbook reports a grand total of nearly 400,000 North American personnel as of January 1, 2002, including about 350,000 short-termers (serving from two weeks to less than a year). However, the accompanying graph purposely reflects only full-time overseas missionaries. Short-term data is notoriously misleading. Also not included in the graph are so-called “nonresident” missionaries, persons who minister in, but who do not live in, their place of ministry; their total as of January 1, 2002, was 1,984.

Several points may be observed in the present graph:

1. Mainline agencies (Division of Overseas Ministries, National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.; and Canadian Council of Churches, Commission on World Concerns) reflect an increase of 600 missionaries over the number reported in 1996. This change checks a previously unremitting downward slide, dating from 1968.

2. Agencies affiliated with the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association appear to have gained about 1,400 missionary personnel since 1996. However, the increase reflects the recent addition to IFMA membership of New Tribes Mission (1,496). Without this change in affiliation, IFMA as a whole would have shown a net decline of 100.

3. Agencies affiliated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies appear to have gained about 8,000 missionary personnel since 1996. This increase, however, is due to the addition to the EFMA list of the Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board (5,437) and Wycliffe Bible Translators (3,907); both agencies were formerly unaffiliated. Without the addition of these two agencies to the EFMA group, EFMA would have shown a net loss of about 1,300 personnel.

4. A newer association of charismatic agencies, Alliance for Missions Advancement (represented by “c” in the 2002 column of the graph), reports fewer than 700 missionaries. Only 16 out of 68 AFMA agencies reported data for the current edition of the Handbook. It is not known whether this small percentage reflects a paucity of overseas missionaries or simply a failure to report. (Four AFMA agencies maintain membership also in EFMA, creating a double count of about 300 personnel. Three symbols are shaded to indicate this, and the duplication has been eliminated from the grand total of 45,600.)

5. Overall, the graph exhibits a net increase in total personnel of about 2,000 as compared with 1996. Again, this increase is more than accounted for by just two agencies: the SBC International Mission Board and Wycliffe Bible Translators. In 1996 the two agencies reported a combined total of 7,200 missionaries, while in the latest Handbook they report nearly 9,350, recording a gain of 2,150. In other words, as the North American Protestant missionary community enters the twenty-first century, statistical measurement does not indicate much momentum. More often than not, IFMA and EFMA agencies are static or in decline, offsetting the expansion of the few agencies that exhibit significant growth.

Robert T. Coote, a senior contributing editor, has authored assessments of the size and character of the North American missionary community for more than two decades.
Enabling Encounters: The Case of Nilakanth-Nehemiah Goreh, Brahmin Convert

Richard Fox Young

In the preface of The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures, author Anne Fadiman, a self-described “cultural broker,” sets forth her reasons for writing the book. I find them more broadly relevant than she perhaps anticipated. They are intriguingly descriptive of the creative possibilities awaiting people who situate themselves between cultures, societies, and religions: “I have always felt that the action most worth finding them more broadly relevant than she perhaps anticipated.

ous evidence. First, at the high end, the Indian corollary to an “ivory tower” intellectual, I adduce Vitthal Shastri, a Maratha pandit who taught Hindu philosophy at the Benares Sanskrit College, which had been established with British patronage in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The missionaries, he explained, “mistake our silence. When a reply which we think nonsense, or not applicable, is offered to us, we think that to retire silently and civilly from such useless discussion is more meritorious than to continue it. But our silence is not a sign of our admission of defeat, which the Missionaries think to be so.”

I shall return to Vitthal Shastri later, for the most interesting cross-cultural intellectual activity taking place in Benares involved the Sanskrit College. For a sense of what was happening in the more public spheres of Benares, however, I turn to Pratapnarayan Mishra (1856–94), the editor of a local Hindi periodical. In an essay entitled “The Useless Efforts of the Missionaries,” Pratapnarayan tells of having silenced a missionary by challenging him to compare the Bible with the Ramayana. Charged at having his ignorance of the sacred text exposed, the missionary beat a hasty retreat. What makes the anecdote especially noteworthy is that Pratapnarayan claims to be an admirer of Jesus, whose teachings he praises as “nectar for the soul of man.”

Like Vitthal Shastri, there may have been other moderates who experienced more than a mere flicker of “active theoretical interest” in Christianity, even though the evidence is yet to be found that would attest to it; likewise, there may have been other activists like Pratapnarayan Mishra who responded to “the foreign challenge,” even though a single instance of intervention only underscores how courteous most people were, most of the time. Relations with the missionaries were rarely adversarial; the worst the missionaries complained of was the occasional verbal taunt or well-aimed brickbat from Hindu hecklers and rabble-rousers, who were few. In Benares, a countervailing force for the defense of Hinduism never emerged, the likes of which one finds around this time in the metropolitan centers of colonial India. It seems all the more noteworthy, therefore, that when resistance to Christianity began to manifest itself in the mid-1840s, it was a Maratha youth, a Chitpavan Brahmin by the name of Nilakanth Goreh, barely nineteen years old, and from a backwater princely state in Bundelkhand, acting alone, who took the lead. Nilakanth did so by taking to the ghats, chowks, and bazaars where William Smith (1806–75) of the CMS was sure to be found, eager to talk up the Gospel.

When Nilakanth took to the Benares streets to confront missionary Smith, it was not only because Smith’s no-other-way-than-faith-in-Christ-the-avatar-of-God Hindustani preaching style irked him greatly. To Nilakanth, Benares was under spiritual siege, not by ordinary mortals but by the same destabilizing forces lurking in the cosmos that were always undermining dharma. Nilakanth articulated this perspective on Christianity in the idiom of antiquity, drawing on stories about fraudulent avatars who propagate fraudulent religions—Jainism and Buddhism are generally implied—by propounding fraudulent scriptures to deceive the witless and hapless and thereby establish adharma (moral disorder, religious anarchy). Missionary Smith

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well knew the biblical corollary, for he spoke of equipping himself with the “full armor of God” before going out to the streets: “[O]ur struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). In short, a colossal—probably overdramatized—confrontation was in the making.

Saboteur or Seeker?

It may seem counterintuitive, but Nilakanth the saboteur was actually a seeker, and so the denouement of his confrontation with missionary Smith need not be delayed by withholding the fact that Nilakanth eventually apostatized and converted to Christianity, receiving at baptism the name “Nehemiah.” However, once we take into account certain predictors of a future conversion experience, the hunch seems valid enough that events would take this course. The ties of Nilakanth’s household to the prestige of declining princely families in rural Bundelkhand, Nilakanth’s ties to an overprotective father at whose feet he precociously mastered Sanskrit, his ties to a tyrannical uncle so orthodox that Nilakanth could not mingle with students of the Sanskrit College, where the action most worth watching in Benares was then occurring—all these factors indicate an identity tightly bounded by family and community.

Obviously, Nilakanth might never have transcended such an identity had missionary Smith not gotten in the way, offering unsolicited critiques of other peoples’ religion and envisioning for them a new identity grounded in a different reality, which necessarily placed the Christian dharma in tension with the Hindu dharma. In that tension, however, Nilakanth became more keenly aware that he could change his mind about life’s fundamentals, that his identity need not be communally determined, and that he could choose a path for himself by himself. Missionary Smith did what missionaries do: he communicated choice. And in the exercise of choice that missionary Smith enthusiastically encouraged, Nilakanth discovered the possibility of an individuated self, a possibility that Europe enhanced—inadvertently—by overrunning India.

Since in Nilakanth’s case it can be said that conversion was also apostasy, a space on the edges between Hinduism and Christianity would take this course. The ties of Nilakanth’s household to the prestige of declining princely families in rural Bundelkhand, Nilakanth’s ties to an overprotective father at whose feet he precociously mastered Sanskrit, his ties to a tyrannical uncle so orthodox that Nilakanth could not mingle with students of the Sanskrit College, where the action most worth watching in Benares was then occurring—all these factors indicate an identity tightly bounded by family and community.

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Naturally, the experience of Nilakanth the apostate/convert will remain inaccessible. Fortunately, however, one can reconstruct from his various writings what Christianity looked like to him as a Hindu, and—conversely—what Hinduism looked like to him as a Christian. That corpus is essentially threefold: first, the preconversion Shastratattvavimarnaya (A verdict on the truth of the Scriptures) in Sanskrit, dating to 1844–45, which I discussed at length in Resistant Hinduism and will therefore use the least; second, the early postconversion Vedant mat ka bichar (An inquiry into Vedanta) in Hindi, dating to the very year of his conversion, 1848, although printed later; and third, the late postconversion Shaddarshandarp (A mirror of the six Hindu philosophical systems), also in Hindi, dating to 1860. Ample scope is afforded by these three texts for a diachronic view over a twenty-year period, most of which transpired in Benares, where Nilakanth served the CMS as a catechist and appropriated the freedom to individuate himself and assert his identity, often in opposition to the one missionary Smith envisioned for him.

Even in these early years Nilakanth came into contact with other European Christians who broadened the horizons of his emerging self-identity. Before turning to those individuals, it must be emphasized that the early postconversion Nilakanth was virtually the mirror image of missionary Smith, who, to reinforce his new Christian’s wavering commitments, had Nilakanth out on the thoroughfares of Benares in no time, proclaiming the no-other-way-than-faith-in-Christ-the-avatar-of-God message that had irked him so much initially. For an individual almost pathologically indecisive, the routine and rigor of CMS discipleship was genuinely reinforcing. The dark side, however, was that Nilakanth was plagued to his very deathbed by an unshakable regret that his conversion had not been like the apostle Paul’s, which is to say, sudden, ecstatic, mystical, and once-for-all, according to the conventionalized account of it that, inspired by the Book of Acts, dominated in Evangelical circles. As a lad in Yorkshire, missionary Smith had experienced a conversion of that very kind.

Why exactly the Evangelical idiom of metanoia resounded so resoundingly with Nilakanth remains unclear, because the Verdict, his preconversion treatise on Hinduism and Christianity, talks of sin only abstractly as a problem of theodicy. But resonate it did, and the reason perhaps had to do with fear, the kind of fear that might have been instilled in him by the same bleak message that was conveyed by the Presbyterian tract mentioned earlier; later on, Nilakanth would write, “It was the doctrine of everlasting punishment which shook my soul from the very bottom” and, very probably, spurred him into taking the step he had long delayed. Once he took that step, the role of true-to-form Christian convert that he assumed was already being scripted for him by missionary Smith, whose biography of him, fresh off the press almost before the waters of baptism had dried, plays upon the etymological meaning of the common synonym for a Brahmin—dvij or twice-born (i.e., a Brahmin who has undergone the sacred-thread initiation ritual)—to signify that Nilakanth had experienced a spiritual rebirth that conformed to the idealized Evangelical norm. Nilakanth, who anyway was learning to be a Christian by imitating the only available model, took to his role with avidity. That is why the section on Christianity in his first piece of postconversion writing, the Inquiry, couches itself in the idiom of sin and grace: “Scholar or fool, celebrity or unknown, householder or ascetic, all alike are in the grip of the disease of sin. . . May the Supreme Lord, Savior of the World, bestow his grace upon you, so that you may escape the jaws of death and attain eternal life and the highest bliss.” The text goes on like this, and, on metabolizing Evangelical metanoia into a Hindu idiom for the Hindus of Benares. One finds the same trope in each

The early postconversion Nilakanth was virtually the mirror image of missionary Smith.
of Nilakanth’s postconversion writings, but other concerns—more authentically his and not missionary Smith’s—start to surface around this same time.

From Foolishness to Wisdom

One very interesting concern reveals itself in Nilakanth’s postconversion writings in the idiom he uses to describe his transition from Hinduism to Christianity, which for him was not from sin or darkness or death to grace or light or life but from ajñāna (ignorance and foolishness) to jñāna (knowledge and wisdom). This more culturally appropriate idiom, however, does not appear all at once. There was an intermediate stage in which the two vocabularies intermingled while Nilakanth disentangled himself from the Evangelical conversion paradigm and discovered his own. The hybridity of his idiom is especially evident in a longish, didactic tirade against Hindu asceticism and world-renunciation in the early postconversion Inquiry: “People who renounce the world [i.e., become sannyasis] become self-centered, and because they are of no use to anyone they stand before God as egregious sinners. . . . True renunciation is to detach oneself from the things of this world while remaining involved in worldly affairs, loving God above all else and being prepared to surrender everything, should God demand it.”

These lines exemplify one of the most spectacular somersaults Nilakanth felt compelled to perform in the early phase of his postconversion career as a Christian apologist. Only a few years earlier, in his preconversion Verdict, he had defended asceticism and world renunciation against the aspersions of John Muir (1810–82), whose work of anti-Hindu polemics, the Examination of Religions, had been presented to him by missionary Smith, thus eliciting from Nilakanth his own work of anti-Christian apologetics. A moderate Evangelical from Kilmarnock who had been educated at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh at the end of the Scottish Enlightenment, Muir had gone to Benares as the acting principal of the Sanskrit College, bringing in his baggage some of the Scottish school of common sense for local application. Michael Dodson has written of Muir that he “subscribed to a developmental hierarchy of civilization, in which Britain stood at the top, distinguished by its commercial prosperity, the operation of justice, and a religion supported by, and based in, science and rationality, rather than superstition.”

This, indeed, is the bias that oozes out of the Examination, when Muir implies that India would never rise higher on the ladder of nations without renouncing world-renunciation, which is not only detrimental to its economic development but also religiously untrue (as in the monistic maxim of Advaita Vedanta, “I am Brahman,” aham brahmaasmi, which identifies the individual self with Brahman, the ground of being). The indictment of Brahmin gymnosophists (mendicant ascetics, portrayed as socially parasitic) is as old as antiquity, except that the ones being indicted in antiquity for being like the Brahmin gymnosophists

Noteworthy

Announcing

“Unexpected Angles: The Potential and Challenges of Missiological Archives” is the theme for a roundtable at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Seattle, Washington, January 7, 2005. This session will bring together historians and archivists to reflect on the characteristics, potential, and limitations of missionary archives for historical research. Jon Miller, professor of sociology and director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, will chair the roundtable. Ryan Dunch and Jane Samson of the University of Alberta, Rhonda Semple of the University of Northern British Columbia, and Martha Lund Smalley of Yale Divinity School are the panelists. Register by visiting www.historians.org.

The Nordic Institute for Missionary and Ecumenical Research will hold a course, “Methodological Plurality and Academic Integrity in Missiology,” March 7–11, 2005. Doctoral students are invited for the research course, which will be held in Magleås, Denmark. Details may be found at www.missionresearch.net.

The Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missiory Movement and Non-Western Christianity will hold its annual meeting July 7–9, 2005, at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, addressing the theme “Identity, Ethnic and Christian, in the History of Christian Missions.” The study group is cosponsored by the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh, the Yale Divinity School, and the Overseas Ministries Study Center. Visit www.library.yale.edu/div/yaledin.htm for details.


The Internet Mission Photography Archive, a new Web resource hosted by the University of Southern California, offers a database of more than two thousand mission photographs dating from the nineteenth century to World War II from repositories in Britain, continental Europe, and North America. Included are photographs from the Leipzig Mission, Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll), Norwegian Missionary Society, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and Yale Divinity School Day Missions Library. Photographs from the archives of the Moravian Church and other missions will be added to the database. Jon Miller, jonmill@usc.edu, is leading the project. To search the photography archives, visit http://library.usc.edu/uhtbin/catstat.pl/impa.
were the Christians. One hears in Muir’s idiom an echo of theological Orientalism—perhaps of Presbyterian Orientalism!—which, as such, belongs to what postcolonial scholars call the “discourse of domination.” That is to say, Muir justified British colonialism by depicting Hinduism’s traditions of jñāna as too mystical, impractical, and effeminate to empower India to rise to the level reached by European—that is, Christian—civilization. In the lines extracted above Nilakanth unwittingly mimics this bias, but not for long, because the trope of world-affirmation versus world-renunciation vanishes from his follow-up postconversion writing, the more elaborate Mirror, even though the agenda otherwise remains the same. Nilakanth, who eventually renounced all financial support from Christian missionary agencies to live the life of a wandering Christian samnyasi, was becoming aware around this time that Western Christianity was not so hostile toward contemplative practices as he had been led to believe.

To see more clearly that Nilakanth was a subaltern neither of Evangelicalism nor of Orientalism, one must add to the list of Europeans with whom he interacted a third figure, James Robert Ballantyne (1813–64), a Scot from Kelso who superintended the Sanskrit College after Muir left. Although Ballantyne and Muir were similarly shaped by the Scottish Enlightenment, they differed in significant respects. Most important, Ballantyne was by no means a Presbyterian Orientalist. He was, in fact, openly anti-Calvinist and in frequent conflict with the likes of missionary Smith, whose ignorance of Hinduism irked him the way it used to irk Nilakanth. It was in interacting with Ballantyne that Nilakanth finally disentangled himself from the Evangelical conversion paradigm and found a more congenial idiom in a jñāna and jñāna. Thus he began to remake himself in the image of a Benares pandit, transformed by Christian wisdom and called by God to make that wisdom Indian wisdom. In responding to this call, Nilakanth’s postconversion exegetical strategies for engaging Hinduism changed in substance but not in method.

The action most worth watching in Benares around this time was occurring at the Sanskrit College, for the project Ballantyne was busy implementing exemplified a new strategy quite different from missionary Smith’s or Orientalist Muir’s for eliciting a response to Europe and a “dialogue” with Christianity. Ballantyne’s methodology was to invoke Indian antiquity to affect Europe’s modernity, thus to poke and prod India toward the modernity that Europe represented in India by means of Anglo-Indian institutions such as the Sanskrit College. Since the project was essentially dialogic, Ballantyne saw it as hopeful for expanding the horizons both of India and of Europe. It was, of course, transparently—and unapologetically—biased toward Christianity.

The Ballantyne project unfolded progressively, commencing in 1848 with publications in Sanskrit on secular knowledge (logic, science, history) and culminating in 1860 with The Bible for Pandits, a work of exegesis that was intended to undo the damage

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**Personalia**

Michael W. Treneer is the first non-American to be appointed international president of the Navigators, Colorado Springs, Colorado, effective January 1, 2005. Treneer, an Englishman trained as a chemical engineer, served as the Navigators’ director for Africa from 1981 to 1998. In 1998 he became an international vice president, overseeing ministries in Australia and New Zealand, Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States. For the past three years he has led the European work. Treneer, with his wife, Chris, pioneered the Navigator ministry in Nigeria. A staff of more than 4,000, representing 63 nationalities, ministers among college students, military personnel, business and professional people, communities, and churches in 110 countries. For details, visit www.navigators.org.

Frontier Internship in Mission elected Manuel Quintero, an electrical engineer and journalist from Cuba, as director, during their International Coordinating Committee meeting in Indonesia in October 2004. Quintero, who assumes his duties in January 2005, was director of communications for the Latin American Council of Churches, Quito, Ecuador. Previously he was general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation. FIM, based at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, offers internships with emphasis on justice issues in South-to-South exchanges. FIM is guided by representatives from the World Council of Churches, the regional ecumenical councils, and the World Student Christian Federation. For details, visit www.tfim.org.

The Lutheran Society for Missiology chose Allan Buckman, 64, as executive director effective November 1, 2004. A North Dakotan, he was an evangelistic missionary in Nigeria among the Yala people and supervised the translation of the Yala New Testament. In 1977 Buckman became area secretary for Africa, Europe, and the Middle East for the Board for Mission Services of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, and in 1989 the board named him director for world services. Society information is found at www.lsfmissiology.org.

Richard J. Wood, president of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, will retire in December 2005. He became president in 2001 after retiring from Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, where he was dean. He also served for eleven years as president of Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. As professor of philosophy at Earlham, Wood became well known for his contributions to the understanding of Japanese philosophy in the English-speaking world. He was instrumental in establishing Earlham College’s Japanese Studies Program. The United Board, based in New York City, makes grants and operates programs supporting colleges and universities throughout Asia with the stated aim of “enhancing Christian presence” in Asian higher education. Under Wood’s leadership, the United Board expanded the Asia-based programs while continuing its grant-making with greater focus on particular needs and demonstrated outcomes. For details, see www.unitedboard.org.

Johannes J. Visser, 60, principal since 1993 of the Hendrik Kraemer Institute, Utrecht, Netherlands, was granted early retirement. Before coming to the institute, he served in Gambia and Kenya. At the celebration of his retirement, October 8, he was honored with a Festschrift, A New Day Dawning: African Christians Living the Gospel, edited by Kwame Bediako, Mechteld Jansen, Jan van Butselaar, and Aart Verburg.
Inflicted on Christianity by the likes of missionary Smith. Chronologically, the Ballantyne project spans the period from Nilakanth’s conversion (1848) to the second of his postconversion writings, the Mirror (1860). Although Nilakanth had a minor role in Ballantyne’s project (Vitthal Shastri was the primary collaborator), his interest in it becomes evident only at the penultimate stage, when Ballantyne first addressed the subject of sacred knowledge in Christianity Contrasted with Hindu Philosophy. The school of Hindu philosophy that Ballantyne most explicitly engages in this text is Advaita Vedanta, the monistic nondualism of Shankara, for which he felt a deep affinity: “Theologically, the Vedantin, asserting that the Deity is nirguna, and the Christian, asserting that God is immaterial, are asserting the very same fact in terms of separate theories. . . . Instead of holding, as [the Vedantins] have been accused of holding, that God has no attributes in our sense of the term, they hold in fact, that He is all attribute,—sheer existence [sat], sheer thought [chit], sheer joy [ananda].” In the entire Ballantyne corpus in Sanskrit, however, I have yet to find that he actually used “Brahman” as the name of God. On the contrary, God is always Parameshvara (Supreme Lord) and is said to be God. On the contrary, God is always Parameshvara (Supreme Lord) and is said to be saguna, endowed with countless attributes besides sat, chit, and ananda, such as justice, goodness, and truth, which signifies that the transformed Vedanta Ballantyne envisioned would not be monistic but theistic. Legend has it (namely, the shastri legend, from the honorific title Christians later gave him) that Nilakanth was an authority on the whole range of Indian philosophy before his conversion. More accurately, he was a Vaishnava whose affiliations for the bhakti (devotional theism) of the Bhagavata Purana exceeded his fondness for philosophical abstraction, although his bhakti was tinctured with Vedanta, for that was the norm. Frankly, I find it puzzling—and not a little disappointing—that Nilakanth defined himself in opposition to Ballantyne, for Ballantyne was engaging Vedanta in a way that was original and perhaps essentially right, but react he did, and in reacting, Nilakanth found the theological voice that was most authentically his, even though this voice is not the one I would most like to hear. For him, there was no convergence between Vedanta and Christianity, and for Ballantyne’s mediation between the two, Nilakanth felt considerable disdain. He therefore refashioned the Inquiry, his early postconversion work of apologetics, into the Mirror to restore to the Vedanta the concrete particularity and otherness that Ballantyne had drained from it. The text of the Mirror is too complex to summarize briefly, but three strands of argument in it deserve attention. Properly understood, they may help to rehabilitate the image of Nilakanth, which has suffered in recent years, considering that so much Christian thinking has been invested in the quest for a fundamental rapport with the Vedanta.

Reparticularizing Vedanta

First, if Brahman is the only actually existing reality, then relationality becomes problematic. Time and again, Nilakanth admonishes the Vedantins to follow their hearts instead of their heads, for he knows, because he was himself a sectarian Hindu who accommodated bhakti to the Vedanta, that intellectual monism rests uneasily on a foundation of intuitive theism. One can go at least part way with him in this respect. But to go with Nilakanth into his second major argument is virtually impossible without a technical knowledge of Indian philosophy. He draws not from Scottish commonsense philoso- very but rather from the anti-Vedantic arguments of Vijnana Bhikshu’s theistic Samkhya (late sixteenth century) to argue that Advaita invalidates each element essential to it by presupposing a cognizing self (jivatman) and a timeless power different from the transempirical Brahman (namely, maya, which conjures the appearance of empirical multiplicity). In short, duality is implied, though not admitted. The third argument seeks to demonstrate the logical absurdity of Advaita monism on a number of particulars. Note here that in Nilakanth’s preconversion persona as the author of the Verdict, his work of Hindu apologetics, he had declared Advaita off-limits to rational inquiry because Brahman can be declared only by the Veda, revelationally, and to appreciate the revelatory truths of the Veda one must have faith, which is divinely given. Instead of faith, from Nilakanth the Christian one hears a great deal about reason and about humankind’s innate powers of intelligence, which Vedanta deadens and Christianity revivifies. Revitalization of the intellect is for Nilakanth very much what the Good News is all about. The idiom of his argument is less alien and more culturally appropriate than it might seem, however, since Nilakanth draws upon the theological anthropology of Hinduism, which holds that reason differentiates human beings from all other forms of life. But the argument stops there, with the Vedanta in pieces and Christianity intact, only because Nilakanth now declares Christianity off-limits to rational inquiry: God can be declared only by the Bible, revelationally, and to appreciate the truths of the Bible one must have faith, a divine gift. The circle thus becomes complete. A latent substratum of Vedanta, evident in the subordination of reason to revelation, remetabolized for Christian purposes, emerges and enables Nilakanth to speak in his own voice instead of Ballantine’s, whose Benares project engaged the sacred knowledge of Hinduism and Christianity with the exhortation, “Let professing scriptures be examined!” At this point the subordination of Christian revelation to reason was precisely what Nilakanth rejected. If the bias in this seems stunningly obvious—one standard for Christianity, another for Vedanta—it was an acceptable bias in the tradition of Indian philosophical disputation called vada-vitanda. On this point, B. K. Matilal observes: “It is quite feasible for a debater (or skeptic) to conduct an honest (nontricky) form of debate consisting only in refutation. Such a debate . . . can be undertaken by a genuine seeker after truth.” The Mirror is classic vada-vitanda, but because of my need to condense it, it seems more relentless and less civil than it really is. More than anything else, the Mirror reflects Nilakanth’s own image.

Who, though, would speak in such a voice nowadays, when so much Christian thinking is being invested in the search for a fundamental rapport with the Vedanta? The question Max Müller raised after meeting Nilakanth in Oxford in 1877—by which time

Ballantyne was engaging Vedanta in a way that was original and perhaps right.

Subordination of Christian revelation to reason was what Nilakanth rejected.

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Nilakanth had transformed himself into an Anglo-Catholic and was about to become a Christian samnyasi—still seems relevant: “Men such as Dr. Henry Brown were Christian Platonists at Cambridge; why then should there be no Christian Vedantists, such as Nehemiah Goreh [could have been] in the beginning of his career?” There is no denying that Nilakanth seems an obsolete figure in Indian Christian theology and that his postconversion works of Christian apologetics seem a retrograde model for engaging Vedanta today. Even now, however, the otherness of Nilakanth Goreh poses serious challenges for Hindus and Christians who endeavor to understand the transformative power that comes from being on the edges between Hinduism and Christianity.

Notes

1. Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1997), p. viii. This article is a condensed version of one of the lectures given by Richard Fox Young at Cambridge University as the Henry Martyn Lecturer for 2002.


5. For this way of formulating the missionary endeavor, see Kenelum Burridge, In the Way (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), pp. 3–34, from which I draw heavily for idiom in this paragraph.


7. Richard Fox Young, Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India (Vienna: Univ. of Vienna, Indological Institute, 1981).


13. Ibid., pp. 32, 53.


17. Ballantyne, Bible for Pandits, p. lxiii.

18. Shastri is one of the lesser titles bestowed on Hindu scholars for their mastery of certain genres of Sanskrit literature. Though well-read in many respects, Nilakanth’s attainments were too modest to merit this or any other distinction, for which, in any event, he disqualified himself by apostatizing from Hinduism. His preferred form of self-reference was pandit, a term broadly applied to anyone who had received a classical education. It was Nilakanth’s missionary “handlers” who invented the shastri legend to claim for him a prestige he never enjoyed among his peers.


The Centenary of Edinburgh 1910 and the Direction of Christian Mission in the Twenty-first Century

Mission thinkers and practitioners around the world have detected in the centenary of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference an opportunity for the communities of Christian mission to re-gather in order to focus on the missionary challenges of the twenty-first century.

A consortium of Scottish-based church and academic institutions has begun work on coordinating an approach to the centenary that is fully international, widely representative, and thoroughly forward-looking. The aim is to discern the shape of Christian mission in the coming century and to stimulate fresh commitment to missionary tasks.

In June 2005 a group of international mission thinkers and leaders will meet to make initial plans. It will aim to identify the key themes on which work should be done in preparation for the event(s) to be held in 2010. Study Commissions, each based in a suitable center of excellence, will be established to examine each theme.

You are invited to:

- Pray for God’s blessing on this attempt to discern the meaning of Christian mission for our time.
- Suggest themes which you think call for attention in this consideration of the direction and practice of Christian mission in the twenty-first century.

Visit the Web site: www.towards2010.org.uk
Send your suggestions by May 1, 2005, to Kenneth Ross at kross@world-mission.org
Religious Studies and Research in Chinese Academia: Prospects, Challenges, and Hindrances

Jean-Paul Wiest

Under the impetus of Deng Xiaoping’s guiding principle that “education should be geared to the needs of modernization, of the world, and of the future,” Chinese academia has undergone important changes since the early 1980s. Travels abroad for conferences and research have become commonplace, ties with Western academic institutions are flourishing, salaries are much higher, and the government has made grants and subsidies available. Not surprisingly, Chinese universities are registering a growing number of foreign visiting professors and a steady increase in the number of returning Chinese graduates to fill vacant or new positions. This situation has contributed to a steady improvement in the depth and scope of Chinese academia. Today, courses and research at top Chinese universities compare well with those at renowned Western institutions. Prospects of finding well-paying jobs with joint ventures and high-flying local enterprises have swollen the ranks of students majoring in business, engineering, and computer science. But other faculties and departments are also well attended, including some that had been banned for a long time, like sociology, psychology, and religious studies.

In 1978 Deng revived the United Front. But unlike the United Front formed by the Communists and non-Communists to defeat the Japanese invaders during the Sino-Japanese War, this new United Front was an alliance to muster all the forces in the society toward the common task of modernizing the country. This policy called for a more benevolent and open attitude toward religion. Among the many signs of such a change was the reappearance of representatives from the five officially recognized religions—Taoism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam—at the meeting of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Then, in 1982, China’s new constitution entrusted with the study of Christianity.2

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Pioneer Studies on Religion

This inclusion of religion in the common task of modernization also required a reinterpretation of the history of Christianity in China. In 1978, with the restoration of colleges, universities, and other academic institutions, the Institute of World Religions reopened, including its Department of Christian Studies.2 Until the late 1980s this department remained the only institution entrusted with the study of Christianity.

Meanwhile, the lifting of the prohibition on religious activities and of the persecution of religious people led to a rapid revival of religions, which was reinforced by the spiritual void caused by a widespread disillusion with Communism and a rampant moral chaos. Such a revival could not escape the attention of scholars and some government officials. Four major studies published in the 1980s testify to an increasingly positive view of Christianity among Chinese academics: Missionaries and Modern China (1981), by Gu Changsheng; The History of Religious Conflicts in China (1987), by Zhang Li and Liu Jiantang; Religion Under Socialism in China (1988), by Luo Zhufeng; and The Chinese Catholic Church, Past and Present (1989), by Gu Yulu.3

These four books were still ideologically and politically Marxist in their critique of religions, Christianity in particular, but one notices a clear progression in their appreciation of some aspects of the missionary enterprise. They not only saluted the scientific and artistic achievements made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the missionaries employed at the imperial court but also acknowledged some later contributions in fields such as education, medicine, and agriculture.

Three articles published in the early 1990s in the Institute of World Religions’ journal, Studies in World Religions, are typical of academic studies during that period. The first essay, by Fang Litian, entitled “Ten Years of Religion in China,” analyzes changes that took place in the religious world as “changes for the better.” Although the author acknowledges that problems still exist, he credits the “harmonization between Christianity and socialism” for the rapid increase in numbers of believers. The second article, by Wang Weifan, is entitled “Forty Years of Christianity in China.” In it Wang states that “if it had not been for the creation of a new China under the leadership of the Communist Party, there would have been no possibility of an entirely independent Chinese church and no possibility of radical changes in Chinese Christianity.”4

He Guichun wrote the third article in 1991 under the title “A Summary of Research in the Last Ten Years into the History of Christianity in China.” Regarding the contemporary religious situation, the author concludes: “There is a shortfall between research and actual needs. Very little systematic, rigorous research has yet been carried out into the reasons for and effects of the rapid growth in numbers of Christian believers in China. We must increase research into the situation of the church and believers in all parts of China and aim at developing education on atheism and the eradication of superstitions so as to implement fully the religious policy. This approach has great significance for positive attitudes toward the development of socialism among believers and nonbelievers.”5

The most significant change during this period was indeed the gradual abandonment of the government’s dogmatic Marxist interpretation of religion and the adoption of a more open attitude toward religions. The idea of religion as the opium of the people gave way to the idea of “religion as culture,” an expression coined by Chinese scholars to describe “religious phenomena closely connected with human cultural phenomena.”6 One of these scholars wrote very appropriately: “Looking back at the road religious studies has traveled since 1949, we can say that no other theory or idea restrained the thinking of scholars of religion so severely as the idea of religion as ‘reactionary politics,’ and no other theory or idea played a liberating role so great as the idea of ‘religious culture.’”7

Study and Research Programs on Christianity

The effort to adjust the relation between religion and socialism and to look at religion from the standpoint of culture led a

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January 2005
growing number of intellectuals to undertake more in-depth studies of Christianity, its influence on the development of Western civilization, its past dealings with China, and its possible contribution to contemporary Chinese society. Some of these scholars were themselves undergoing a personal reorientation of values, and they thought that religion might provide something to fill the spiritual void of the Chinese people.

Under their leadership over the past fifteen years, a number of universities and local academies have established centers and institutes devoted to the study and research of religions. These organizations function mainly under the umbrella of departments of philosophy and history. Among those that focus primarily on Christianity, several train undergraduate and graduate students, organize local and international conferences, head research projects and surveys, and publish scholarly studies and journals. Yet full-fledged academic departments of religious studies are still a rarity because the State Council, also known as China Central Government, and the Ministry of Education seem reluctant to let them be formed. This in turn tends to keep down the number of China-trained scholars with M.A.’s and Ph.D.’s in religious studies.

Between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, three research institutions on religion were created. The Religious Studies Institute of the Department of Philosophy at Peking University was the first one to be launched, and to this day it has maintained a solid curriculum of Christian studies. In 1995 it also became the first such program to be elevated to the rank of department, although it shares its faculty with the philosophy department. Zhao Dunhua serves as chair of both departments.

In 1989 Zhang Kaiyuan, president of Central China Normal University in Wuhan, launched the Center for Historical Studies of Chinese Christian Colleges as part of the History Department. The center has strong links with the Department of Religion at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Ricci Institute of the University of San Francisco. It has convened several international colloquiums, and the scope of its research has broadened to include all Christian educational institutions formerly established in China.

Chen Cunfu of the Department of Philosophy at Hangzhou University (now Zhejiang University) spent three years planning for the Center for the Study of Christianity before he could finally launch it in March 1991. When it opened, it became the first such center operating within a university setting. In September 1999, during my first meeting with him, Chen told me why he decided

### Centers for the Study of Christianity in China

Listed here, by locality, are more than forty centers, institutes, and departments across China that support an academic program of Christian studies or sponsor research on Christianity and other religions. The information appears “largest to smallest” by name of the university or institution, then department, then specific institute or center. When known, dates of the beginning of journals and of the founding of institutions appear in parentheses.

#### Beijing Municipality

- **Beijing Normal University**, Research Center for Culture and Values.
- **Beijing Union University**, College of Arts and Sciences, Institute for the Study of Nationality and Religion.
- **Central University for National Minorities**, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Institute of Religious Studies.
  - Graduate School, Department of Religious Studies.

#### Tsinghua University, Philosophy Department, Center for the Study of Morality and Religion (2001).

#### Yenching Graduate Institute, Institute of Western Civilization and Religion.

#### Fuzhou, Fujian Province

- **Fujian Normal University**, Philosophy Department, Institute for the Study of Religious Culture.

#### Guangzhou, Guangdong Province

- **Zhongshan University**, Philosophy Department, Institute of Comparative Studies of Religions, and History Department, Institute of Religious Culture.

#### Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province

- **Zhejiang University**, Department of Philosophy, Institute for the Study of Religious Culture.

#### Huhhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

- **Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences**, Institute for the Study of Religion.

#### Jinan, Shandong Province

- **Shandong University**, Philosophy Department, Institute for the Study of Religious Culture.

#### Kunming, Yunnan Province

- **Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences**, Institute for the Study of Religion and Institute for National Minorities.

#### Lanzhou, Gansu Province

- **Gansu Provincial Academy of Social Sciences**, Institute for the Study of Religion.
to establish what is now known as the Institute for the Study of Religious Culture. “Since the fourth century Christianity has been the main factor of Western culture and has influenced all aspects of Western society. Western philosophy, including some of its newer trends, is intertwined with Christian thought. Therefore without understanding Christianity, one cannot fathom Western society and culture—and by the same token Western philosophy.”

Chinese scholars consider Chen to be the pioneer in grassroots research on contemporary Christian communities. The articles he has published on the subject and his firsthand experience are much admired and valued.

Listed below are more than forty institutions in China that currently have an academic program of Christian studies or do research on Christianity. In addition, nine journals in the field of religious studies are listed.

**Prospects for Grassroots Research**

Nowadays Chinese scholars on the mainland encounter very little official constraint in teaching, researching, and publishing about religion before the advent of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. I am impressed by the quality of articles, books, and dissertations that have appeared since the late 1990s. Although many academics remain wary of possible adverse repercussions and therefore prefer the “safe zone” of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, more and more are venturing beyond and even into contemporary Christianity.

One-sided and sweeping criticisms of Christianity in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries are rare. Studies of this period rightly expose the appallingly imperialistic and culturally insensitive character of some Catholic and Protestant missionaries, but scholarly attention seems to have shifted to the contributions made by a much greater number to the Chinese state and the Chinese people. Rather than playing obediently to the tune of Marxist propaganda, recent studies by Chinese scholars are more complex, for they consider closely all the factors—economic, social, cultural, and political—that contributed to the ups and downs in the relationship between Christianity and China. The role of some Christian individuals and agencies in the development of modern Chinese education, medical care, the press, and social and relief services is being documented and acknowledged from sources sometimes not available to, or overlooked by, Western scholars.

On the 1937 Japanese invasion and its aftermath, Chinese...
Grassroots studies cannot occur freely because these activities are often classified as intelligence gathering and are restricted.

of various investigative methods, and (2) the sharing of strategies and ideas on how to gain the trust of the people, the cooperation of local religious leaders, and the support of local officials.

Of the seven major papers presented at this conference, four looked specifically at Christianity, and one focused on Chinese Buddhism. The other two studied new expressions and practices of faith. Many issues were considered, but all the papers in one form or another dealt with the challenges brought to religion by a fast-changing society and the advent of a market economy. Some focused on how this new situation is positively and negatively affecting the life and religious practices of ethnic minority Christians, as well as those of rural and urban Han Christians. Others discussed how this rapid economic change and social dislocation have also led new urban dwellers who are not Christians to find religious expressions that give meaning to their personal lives. For instance, one scholar focused on the special economic zone of Shenzhen, just across the border from Hong Kong, documenting the rise of a new spiritual consciousness thriving on elements of the popular religion that were once considered forgotten or moribund. These city dwellers have incorporated such elements into their contemporary life as a source of personal meaning and spiritual nourishment.

These researchers concurred that in recent years more and more Chinese scholars have begun to attach importance to empirical research on the present situation of religion in China. But coverage of the field is still in its initial stages, too sporadic, and very limited in scale. They agreed that there was a great need for more comprehensive methodologies, for better-constructed questionnaires, and for analyses based on reliable data rather than merely on common assumptions. I would add that many studies would also benefit from a historical perspective that looks back further than the time of the liberation in 1949.

The Chinese scholars were quick to point out that the shortcomings of empirical studies did not all stem from the inexperience and the poor training of researchers but were too often due to the lack of cooperation from the relevant government offices and religious organizations. At present, grassroots studies still cannot occur freely because these activities are often classified as intelligence gathering and therefore are restricted. Any research based on interviews of believers requires prior approval of the localities to be investigated, of the format and content of questionnaires, and of the list of persons to be interviewed. From the discussion, it became very clear that in places where local officials are friendly and accommodating, these measures are a mere formality. Researchers in many other areas, however, have encountered words and measures of intimidation, as well as official distortion of facts. Furthermore, the authorities’ strict control of publications on religion continues to muzzle academic freedom of data analysis by preventing the dissemination of studies deemed inadequate.

Unanticipated events can also easily turn a rather favorable atmosphere into one that is difficult, if not impossible. The 2000 flare-up of the dispute between the Vatican and the Chinese government regarding the ordination of bishops and the canonization of 120 martyrs had negative repercussions on several empirical projects. A grassroots research project on Catholic communities in Zhejiang province was severely disrupted when local government and religious affairs officials heretofore very cooperative became afraid of being blamed by Beijing. They withdrew their cooperation, thus preventing the completion of the survey administered by graduate students of Chen Cunfu. In some rural communities the Catholics (who were already naturally suspicious of outsiders) became afraid and gave researchers the cold shoulder. And in the city of Hangzhou, the bishop, incensed by Rome’s denunciation of his recent consecration, forbade the research team to administer the survey in his cathedral.

It was good to see how the scholars who assembled at this October 2003 gathering shared ways to minimize the harm coming from the difficulties and obstacles they faced. The discussion was especially interesting to observe because of the participation of a representative of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) United Front Work Department. At no time did that person attempt to control the discussion or to hand down directives from higher up. At the same time, I was struck by the unrestrained freedom of expression of the scholars. The conversation, with its frank sharing of experiences, solutions, and suggestions, seemed to represent a genuine effort on both sides to foster a friendlier climate for research in contemporary Chinese society. I was not able to assess, however, whether the absence of papers on Taoism, Islam, and Tibetan Buddhism had been due to the lack of significant current studies on these religions or whether scholars expert in these fields had had other engagements that prevented them from attending. In the cases of Islam in western China and of Tibetan Buddhism, I would not be surprised if government restrictions and the reticence of religious authorities has made such research nearly impossible.

In March 2004 at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, a panel entitled “Field Research on Christian Communities in China Today: Insights and Implications” gave international exposure to indigenous grassroots research. Yet, while two of the three presenters were ethnic Chinese, they were not Chinese citizens. Moreover, they and the chair were all attached to American universities. From what has been said above, it should come as no great surprise that neither panelist came from an academic institution in the People’s Republic of
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China. Given its tight internal control over contemporary religious issues, most of which are considered extremely sensitive, the Chinese government is even less willing to let mainland researchers discuss such topics in international gatherings abroad.

If native Chinese researchers doing research on their own face many obstacles, foreign scholars or teams of local and foreign scholars fare even worse because of government regulations regarding empirical research in China by non-Chinese citizens. In 1998 the Office of the Central Committee of the CCP and the Office of the State Council jointly issued a confidential document authorizing the Ministry of State Security to supervise all grassroots research sponsored or conducted by foreign scholars. Since then, all academic institutions in China have been required to submit surveys initiated by foreign individuals or institutions to their local bureau of state security. The bureau has the prerogative not only to amend questionnaires and monitor the way they are administered but also to review the data collected and decide what can be released to foreign researchers. The document, obviously aimed at restricting collaboration between Chinese and foreign scholars on contemporary issues, at first had a chilling effect. Since the bureau of state security is in charge of its application, anyone trying to go around it is open to the charge of peddling or stealing state secrets. As is so often the case in China, the enforcement of this document varies from one locality to another, depending mostly on the disposition of the local representative of the state security bureau. Yet in the past few years, as we know too well from press reports of the jailing of foreign and Chinese researchers, the threat remains very real.

Conclusion

It would be wrong to end on such a pessimistic note. From my understanding of Chinese academic journals and books on religion, I see scholars dealing with sensitive topics and giving broad hints about what is really going on, even though the government’s censure prevents them from being too explicit. Within the limitations explained above, these studies are often honest and as thorough as they can be. I wish I were as adept as my Chinese colleagues at reading between the lines!

Moreover, while studying Christianity, several Chinese researchers have come to discover in it a moral code and altruistic principles very much needed in present-day Chinese society. This valuation stands in sharp contrast to the collapse of the traditional Confucian system of moral values and the erosion of the Communist ethic under the assaults of modernization. The material, scientific, and economic progress brought about by the process of modernization goes hand in hand with terrible evils such as moral decay, rampant corruption, selfish pursuit of money, and the deterioration of the environment. These academics view the present time as a golden opportunity for religion, and Christianity in particular, to play an important part in the building of a modern spiritual and civilized China. Chinese society is undergoing a spiritual crisis centered on a moral vacuum. A code of morality and ethics such as the one provided by Christianity is one of the viable avenues that could simultaneously strengthen the process of modernization and defeat modernization’s negative effects.9

Without getting involved in the controversy surrounding the use of the ambiguous expression “cultural Christians,” one must recognize the existence of a significant group of Chinese intellectuals who have gained a profound knowledge of the Bible and Christian values, and their message on the meaning of life and of our world. A small number have actually converted and joined a church. The majority, however, refuse to belong to a church or to be identified as converts. They prefer to identify themselves as friends who admire and espouse the moral values of Christianity, without rejecting the values of other religious or ideological systems. To use a sentence coined by Zhou Enlai, I would say that their attitude toward Christianity is to “seek the common ground while reserving differences [qui tong cun yi].”10 Just a few years ago, who in the West could have foreseen that non-Christian Chinese scholars supporting the adoption of Christian values would spearhead the field of religious studies?

Notes

2. The Institute of World Religions was created in 1963, and the Department of Christian Studies one year later. They were shut down during the Cultural Revolution. In 1978 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was founded, and the Institute of World Religions was placed under it.
5. He Guichun, “Jindai shixinlai Zhongguo jidujiaoashi yanju zongsu” (A summary of research in the last ten years into the history of Christianity in China), Shijie zongjiao yanjiu (Studies in world religions), no. 4 (1991): 115–25. In this article He Guichun also reviewed the two previous articles by Fang Litian and Wang Weifan.
7. Lu Daji, quoted in ibid., p. 10.
8. Interview with Chen Cunfu in Hangzhou, September 1999.
10. Sentence spoken by Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference of nonaligned nations in 1955.
11. In most academic institutions, institutes are attached to departments. In the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, however, the Institute of World Religions is the larger umbrella under which function eight departments: Buddhist Studies, Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, Taoist Studies, Confucian Studies, Contemporary Religious Studies, Studies on the General Theory of Religion, and Studies on Religious Culture and Art.
Counting in the Christian tradition has a long and respectable history, stretching from its biblical roots “Take a census” (Numbers 1:2), to “Count the worshippers” (Revelation 11:1), to the massive annual surveying that today we call “the megacensus.” This report continues in the missiometrical tradition, bringing the reader up-to-date on the art and science of counting, on global documentation, on numbers of religionists and growth rates, on key trends related to Christian mission, and on the megacensus as a central ongoing phenomenon. In light of this collecting of statistics that occupies millions of Christian workers and costs over $1 billion annually, we hope to provide a reliable quantitative framework for understanding global Christianity.

Missiometrics is accounting, not bookkeeping

The annual collecting of statistics on church membership and religion can be compared to the bookkeeping aspect of accounting—simply recording financial transactions. Missiometrics, in contrast, is parallel to accounting in the financial world, defined as “the system of classifying, recording, and summarizing business and financial transactions in books of account and analyzing, verifying, and reporting the results” (Webster’s Unabridged). The emphasis here is on analyzing large amounts of data that may or may not be comparable. In light of financial scandals around the world in both business and ecclesiastical arenas, it would be absurd to suggest that “accounting” is not needed. Missiometrics serves this function in the assessment of the quantitative status of global Christianity.

Challenges to the discipline

In recent times many forces have worked to diminish the significance of missiometrics. One of these is innumeracy or mathematical illiteracy, which continues to plague Christian agencies from all national backgrounds. Although numbers and mathematics are ubiquitous in the 21st century, most Christians do not see the need to become numerate. This results in an unhealthy dependence on the intuition of Christian leadership. Preferring not to wrestle with the numbers, many instead rely on off-the-cuff remarks from Christian leaders. Yet another force is found among academics and journalists who continue to assert that religious statistics are “notoriously unreliable” or “exaggerated.”

Four trends reinforcing missiometrics

One can identify at least four significant trends in missiometrics that highlight its resilient nature in such a potentially hostile environment. First, new Christian research centers are sprouting up around the world. This fact reverses a recent trend when such centers were being closed down in rapid succession. In 1970 over 900 Christian research centers operated around the world, dropping precipitously to only 300 by mid-2000. The main reason for this decline appears to have been organizational fatigue over negative findings such as declining church membership. Today this trend is turning around. New research centers are emerging, not surprisingly, among Christians in the Southern Hemisphere, where Christianity is vibrant and growing most rapidly. The Center for the Study of Christianity in Asia, based at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, opened its doors in 2001. Recent initiatives in Beijing, Hong Kong, and Chiang Mai, Thailand, are focused on analyzing the growth of Christianity in China. The Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association is sponsoring a state-by-state inventory of Christians in Nigeria. The India Missions Association has similar goals for India. These examples show that the rise of Christianity in the South is accompanied by a growing investment in research.

Second, a potential setback for missiometrics has been averted. With the rise of the postdenominational churches (Independents), we expected an aversion toward counting and, consequently, a dearth of reports of membership figures. Surprisingly, these movements have shown that they are intensely interested in keeping track of their members. Leaders of African Independent Churches and Chinese house churches have continuously published their own stories, insisting that accountability is a central feature of their movements. Accountability implies some sort of counting, and even for what would seem to be the most disorganized and diffuse movements, figures are available on the number of cells, their growth rates, and the location of new cells. Today many of these churches have elaborate web sites and produce detailed reports.

Third, the secularization myth has been soundly discredited. A short time ago it was considered preferable in the academic world to hate the subject that one was studying in order to attain some kind of objectivity. Tragically, this led to a bias against religion and, indirectly, against counting religionists. Pundits like sociologist Peter Berger, in a famous comment in the New York Times in 1968, predicted the extinction of religion by the year 2000, while missionaries projecting the growth of Christianity and other religions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were ignored as biased. Belief that religious statistics are exaggerated may have had its roots in the idea that “superstitious people” (i.e., committed religionists) did not know how to count. Now that this myth has been overturned, there will likely be much more serious reflection on statistics of religious communities.

Fourth, over half of the world’s governments continue to ask a question about religion in their censuses. These questions provide a rich source of data in trying to assess the status of both Christianity and other religions around the world.

The future of missiometrics

Missiometrics, then, has a potentially bright future under the leadership of Christians from across the world. In the South, where Christianity is growing the fastest, research centers, detailed membership reports, and a concern for accuracy are proliferating. In the postmodern North, one finds a struggle for balance in the qualitative/quantitative research continuum. In both cases, understanding and interpreting numbers related to global Christianity and world evangelization are essential.
Documenting Global Statistics of World Mission

The table opposite is the twenty-first in an annual series describing statistics, trends, and documentation supporting the Christian world mission. A document is here defined as anything written or printed, relied upon to record or prove something past, present, or future for reference or as evidence; it can be a tablet, scroll, codex, sheet, card, pamphlet, tape, article, report, journal, book, or encyclopedia. A record is a more concise fact, figure, statistic, or event formally written down as past, present, or future evidence. If the worldwide situation is being described, the adjective “global” may be added.

Thus the table opposite contains 72 Lines with 432 numbers each of which could be termed a global record. (Six other Lines, 38–43, each refer to only one continent.) Together, these 72 global records constitute a global document. And global documentation is the vital process of organizing and making sense of global records and documents covering both religious and nonreligious materials in 5 Epochs over the last 6,000 years.

The First Epoch of Global Documentation, BC 4000–AD 1450

A more picturesque title would be: The Age of Limited Library Access Only to the Privileged. In BC 4000 the Mesopotamian city-state Ur invented clay tablets to record double-entry accounting, banking, mathematics, astronomy, religion, and cosmogonies. Libraries arose in most great temples (BC 2500 Nippur, also in China, Egypt, Greece, Rome). The Assyrian conqueror Ashurbanipal (BC 650) maintained a personal archive of 25,000 clay tablets. And the Old Testament emerged as a vast storehouse of censuses and statistical data.

Outstanding in size was the Great Library of Alexandria, commissioned by Ptolemy I. In BC 284 its first superintendent Zenodotus organized its 500,000 papyrus scrolls, classifying them alphabetically. His successor, mathematician Eratosthenes, became the first to prove Earth is a sphere, calculating its global circumference at 30,000 miles (a “global record,” to us).

Throughout the medieval Christian era libraries existed only for the privileged—rulers, generals, officials, scholars, popes, bishops, clerics, abbots, monks, scribes. Ordinary Christians owned no scriptures or documents and had no access to Scripture except through hearing portions read aloud in church services.

This Epoch can be said to have ended in AD 1450 as pope Nicholas V founded the elite Vatican Apostolic Library in Rome.

The Second Epoch of Global Documentation, AD 1450–AD 1900

Picturesque title: The Age of Public and Private Libraries Accessible to All Literates. Suddenly the emphasis on privilege collapsed as Gutenberg invented movable type and printed the whole Bible. Europe’s 30,000 books in AD 1450 mushroomed by AD 1500 to 15 million copies of books, mostly on Christianity. And this surge continued throughout the Epoch’s 450 years to AD 1900 as Christian literates rose from 2 million to 200 million.

A major reason for this increase must be the proliferation of all kinds of libraries: national, public, private, religious, church, school, college, university, special, city, archive, research. Almost all were open to all literate seekers after knowledge.

Near the close of this Epoch, new documentary organizations arose of significance to the churches: 1895, the Institut Internationale de Bibliographie (IIB) later renamed the International Federation for Documentation (FID) emphasizing research with 300 affiliated bodies in 60 countries; and 1896, the International Bibliography of Periodical Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ).

The Third Epoch of Global Documentation, AD 1900–AD 1970

Picturesque title: The Age of Bibliometrics (Library Science) Organized by Librarians. In 1902 the Book Review Digest appeared, eventually with reviews from 600 periodicals; then in 1927, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), relating in 1946 to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which promulgated the 10-digit International Standard Book Number (ISBN); in 1949, Religious and Theological Abstracts/Religion Index One/Periodicals, indexing articles annually from 645 journals, linked to the Association of Theological Libraries of America (begun 1946) whose database holds 1,315,000 records with 12,000 new records annually; in 1957, the Christian Periodical Index/Association of Christian Librarians; in 1963, the Association of International Librarians; and in 1963, the International Bibliography of Book Reviews Index with 4 million reviews of 2 million book and periodical titles.

This expansion parallels our table: in these 70 years, literates increased by 5 times (Line 5), Christians by 2 times (Line 12), Bibles by 4 times (Line 66), denominations by 10 times (Line 44).


Picturesque title: The Age of Large-Scale Computerized Information Databases Operated by Professionals. Several computer developments began this Epoch. In 1971 OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) began its work. By 2004 it had grown to 9,000 member institutions with the world’s 50,000 largest libraries in 84 countries totalling 55 million titles (bibliometric records).

Two other documentation developments now swept the world. First, from its origins in 1968, the Internet had by 1983 become commercially available. Second, in 1989 staff at the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva invented the World Wide Web. By 1991 a million users were online.

Churches and mission agencies soon found themselves spending vast sums, estimated at US$12 billion a year, for armies of professionals to operate increasingly complex computer systems numbering 328 million by 2000 (Line 61).

The Fifth Epoch of Global Documentation, AD 2000–AD 2050

Picturesque title: The Age of Total Information Instantly Accessible to All. Suddenly, as in the year 1450, a professional-dominated Epoch ended as some 640 millions now discovered they were online and so able to instantly consult 70 million book titles, 8 billion web pages, and a host of other documentation.

The number of Christians active online has now passed 350 million, using over 4,000 languages, producing on the Internet 2,470 million web pages. Library books primarily on Christianity number 5.7 million titles. Denominations working online number 8,000. Christian global documentation covers 190 subject areas producing over one million new statistics each year reported in the annual Christian megacensus, described here on the fourth page of this report.

Users wanting reliable numbers on any subject within this vast web of related global records can now get instant response.

January 2005

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The circle describes, under 10 headings, organized Christianity's annual decentralized censuses held by most of its 37,000 denominations, 25,000 service agencies, and 5.4 million workers. In aggregate, these are termed here: the annual megacensus. Subjects are listed in box 3 below. Resulting data may be located from World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE) and World Christian Trends (WCT).

3. Major religious subjects measured annually
The following 190 subjects are quantified by churches, agencies, and missions worldwide each year: religions, adherents, members, practice, attenders, polls, beliefs, sects, cults, megablocs, communions, confessions, ecclesiastical traditions, councils, conferences, denominations, jurisdictions, dioceses, cathedrals, basilicas, abbeys, priories, parishes, churches, worship centers, affiliated members, adult members, their children, full-time workers, clergy, priests, deacons, pastors, ministers, chaplains, lay workers, friars, brothers, monks, contemplatives, bishops, archbishops, metropolitans, cardinals, patriarchs, popes, women workers, sisters, nuns, lay readers, musicians, choirs, missions, preachers, missioners, home missionaries, foreign missionaries, medical missionaries, missiologists, colporteurs, catechists, evangelists, evangelism, evangelistics, evangelization, urban-industrial mission, campaigns, crusades, audiences, church growth, catechisms, catechumens, home visits, converts, baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, consecrations, marriages, divorces, funerals, excommunications, renewals, revivals, persecutions, martyrs, service agencies, religious orders, societies, institutes, institutions, youth ministries, schools, colleges, universities, study centers, students, hospitals, clinics, beds, outpatients, medicines, orphanages, research, scholarship, scholars, theologians, libraries, holdings, bibliographies, administrators, nuncios, seminaries, seminarians, monasteries, convents, Sunday schools, Sunday schools, ss teachers, ss pupils, retreats, pilgrimages, logistics, strategies, tactics, global plans, finances, offerings, collections, budgets, incomes, expenditures, properties, endowments, assets, embassies, audits, literature, tracts, books, magazines, periodicals, journals, newspapers, yearbooks, directories, annual reports, publications, publishing houses, bookshops, scriptures, scripture distribution, scripture density, scripture use, scripture translations, translators, names for God, transportation, travel, iteration, aviation, ships, vehicles, communications, broadcasting, radio TV stations, listeners, films, viewers, viewings, audiovisuals, correspondence courses, tapes, discs, videos, DVDs, computers, computer personnel, e-mail volume, webmasters, websites, hits, networks, futuristics, projections, trends, prospects, scenarios.

The annual megacensus

1. Background
Interpretation and analysis of the annual megacensus is grounded in the following 6 secular documents. UN Demographic Database, also WHO, UNDP, etc. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) New Encyclopaedia Britannica on race, ethnography Linguasphere register of the world’s languages Long-range world population projections to AD 2200 World Futures and the UN: 250 books To the above 6 seminal documents must be added today’s easy electronic access to the 55 million distinct book titles on the shelves of the world’s 50,000 largest libraries.

2. Secular data
See WCT Table 12-1, cols. 1-53 (pages 407-413).

3. Subjects

4. Enumerators
Like other church leaders, all Roman Catholic bishops (pictured in Sistine Chapel) are each required to answer every year 141 statistical questions concerning their work.

5. Questionnaires
Each year churches and agencies send their workers 10 million questionnaires in 3,000 languages asking 2,000 different statistical questions. Total cost of this megacensus: $1.1 billion per annum.

6. Instruments
These 2,000 measuring devices are enumerated in WCT page 48, showing where to find these data.

7. Analyzers
The Christian world owns 440 million general-purpose computers with access to many supercomputers that work at speeds up to 37 trillion operations a second.

8. Databases
As in World Christian Database (WCD).

9. Findings
As reported in WCT Part 1, WCE Part 1, et al.
Evangelicals have tended to allow pragmatic concerns to override their theological vision. Padilla argued that the strategic should serve the theological imperative.

Christians regard as the main obstacles to effective evangelization at the beginning of the new century, as well as the key opportunities. At the outset Brierley noted that two developments will shape Christian reality in the coming century: (1) Majority World Christians account for 60 percent of the total Christian population, and (2) evangelicals are the dominant force in world Christianity.

Brierley’s survey identified thirty-one priority issues, including globalization, holistic mission, transformation of cities, marketplace evangelism, and religious nationalism. Issue groups were organized to grapple with each of the thirty-one themes, and twenty hours were dedicated to working in these groups. The assignment of each was to investigate its particular theme, demonstrate the significance of the issue for evangelization, propose action steps, and produce a 25,000-word report. It is anticipated that many of these group reports will be published as occasional papers.

Many evangelicals regard the Lausanne Covenant adopted by the Lausanne Congress in 1974 as a landmark. The covenant has served as a theological benchmark for evangelicals, and it has fostered unity and cooperation. But it is also recognized that over the past thirty years much has changed. The HIV/AIDS pandemic had not been heard of in 1974, and globalization has steadily gained momentum. Religious nationalism, terrorism, oppression of children, the neglect of the disabled, pervasive poverty, powerful global media, and the persecution of socioreligious minorities are among the leading concerns facing the world. This setting also provides the context for the ongoing task of evangelization.

One plenary session was devoted to a review of some of the findings of the World Inquiry, a research project coordinated by Luis Bush over the past three years. Of the 6,970 participants in this inquiry, 90 percent were from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. They met in 117 groups in major cities to reflect on the question: What are the barriers and opportunities for evangelization in your situation? From this exercise there emerged a vision of transformation as the new paradigm.

C. René Padilla, from Buenos Aires, Argentina, developed the theological basis for transformation. Returning to the theme he first addressed in a plenary address at Lausanne 1974, Padilla asked rhetorically, “What are the marks of a church which, through the power of the Spirit, is prepared to fulfill its role in its own surroundings as ‘salt of the earth’ and ‘light of the world,’ a task to which all followers of Jesus Christ have been called?” A primary requirement for “practicing integral mission is to be an integral church.” Evangelicals have tended to allow pragmatic concerns to override their theological vision. Padilla argued that the strategic should serve the theological imperative. Otherwise the result will be a reduced or emaciated Gospel.

Richard Howell, executive director of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, spoke movingly of initiatives being taken by various groups of Christians in India to work for justice on behalf of Dalits and other marginalized peoples by drawing on all dimensions of the Christian Gospel.

In a summary of affirmations issued at the end of the forum, six themes were stressed.

1. The church must give priority to those peoples who have had no access to the Gospel.
2. We must renew our commitment to ministries of love and compassion.
3. The church in the Majority World is leading the way in evangelization.
4. A large group of people in today’s world consists of “oral learners,” who must be communicated with other than by written materials.
5. The church must use the media effectively in order to draw nonbelievers Christward.
6. We reaffirm the priesthood of all believers and encourage the church to equip women, men, and youth for participation in the ministry of the church.

The forum concluded with the installation of new leaders of LCWE. Doug Birdsall, president of Asian Access, was elected LCWE executive chair, and Ted Yamamori, president emeritus of Food for the Hungry International, will be the LCWE international director. Six regional deputy directors were also appointed: Paul Choi (East Asia), Adrian de Visser (South Asia), Fiodor MoKan (Eastern Europe), Norberto Saracco (Latin America), Kadebe Daniel Bourdanne (Francophone Africa), and John Azumah (Anglophone Africa).
The Archives on the History of Christianity in China at Hong Kong Baptist University Library: Its Development, Significance, and Future

Kylie Chan

The Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) is a regional pioneer in establishing a valuable archives collection on the history of Christianity in China, with the aim of preserving various facets of the Christian heritage in China.1

Archives on the History of Christianity in China

The Archives on the History of Christianity in China (AHC) collection, consisting mainly of materials in either English or Chinese, covers topics of Chinese Christians, missionaries, church history, and the history of Christianity in China. The archives emphasizes the period before 1950. At the end of 2003, there were 3,084 volumes of monographs (2,078 in English and 1,006 in Chinese), and 31,000 microform items, with thirty linear feet of archival records on the history of Christianity in China.

The archives contain over 200 biographies and memoirs detailing prominent missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor, James Outram Fraser, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, David Abeel, and John Leighton Stuart. The archives contain various valuable and scarce materials, including letters and postcards written by Frederick Webb and 219 lantern slides taken by missionaries of the China Inland Mission. These lantern slides, useful in documenting the social and economic activities of the Chinese from the 1900s to the 1930s, were donated to the HKBU Library by the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

The library also includes later works. For example, of the 183 titles discussed by Jessie G. Lutz in “Chinese Christianity and China Missions: Works Published Since 1970,”2 120 titles are held by the various archives in HKBU.

Importance of the Archives

One of the growing areas of study in Asia is the history of Christian missions in China. Faculty members of the Department of History and the Department of Religion and Philosophy of HKBU have come to recognize that this is a new source of documentation for the study of East-West relations. Besides bringing religious teaching to China, missionaries played an important role in the transfer of knowledge and values between East and West, helping to cross-fertilize the distinctive cultures of Confucianism and Christianity. Missionaries had a long-term impact on Christian education, the adoption of Western medicine, and social services in China as they established Christian schools, hospitals, orphanages, and publishing houses. Christian missions contributed to leaders’ training “in the fields of education and medicine; in the introduction of professions such as journalism, nursing and dentistry, library science, physical education, and agriculture; in the fostering of formal education for women; [and] in the inculcation of ideals of civic responsibility and mass education.”3 In addition, women missionaries made important contributions as educators, role models, and social service workers.

Archival materials on Christianity in China help to shed light on the anti-Christian movements in the 1920s that were supported by political parties hoping to raise their political profile. Some recently surfaced publications on the Chinese churches under the People’s Republic of China will allow more understanding of official churches, that is, the Catholic Patriotic Association and the Three-Self Movement, as well as of their counterparts among the underground churches.

Development and Mission of the Archives

Although Christianity first spread into China over 1,300 years ago, formal research on the history of Chinese Christianity did not begin before the 1930s and the 1940s.4 From 1949 to 1976 missionary activities in China were considered to be associated with Western imperialism. With the open-door policy adopted in China in the late 1970s, studies have been undertaken of the history of cultural exchange between China and other nations and have consequently aroused scholars’ interest in researching the history of Christianity in China.

The initial search for archival materials on Christianity in China began sporadically in the early 1960s in North America. In the first decade or two, scholars who wished to study the influence of Christianity in China needed to spend most of their time doing research in Europe or the United States, which was where most primary sources were. Things began to change in 1987, when “a new law was passed in China [that] promised a gradual release of historical archives including [those of] Christian colleges in China. Around the same time, many universities and institutions that were formerly related to Christian colleges in China began to write their own histories.”5

The study of the history of Christian colleges in China was further encouraged by a conference in 1987 at Sichuan University under a project on Sino-Western universities in Chinese society sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation.6 In 1993 an international symposium entitled “Historical Archives of Pre-1949 Christian Higher Education in China” was held in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It demonstrated to scholars the value of Christian archives in exploring the significance of Christian education in the development of modern education in China, East-West relationships, and East-West cultural exchanges in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This topic of interest was further reinforced locally by three symposia held at HKBU: the International Symposium on the History of Christianity in China (1996), the Second Symposium on the History of Christianity in Modern China (2001), and the Third Symposium on the History of Christianity in Modern China—History of Christianity in Hong Kong (2003).

In 1989 Barton Starr, a Southern Baptist missionary educator with the HKBU Department of History, started his research work on Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and, in the same year, estab-

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lished the Morrison Research Center in the department. Besides collecting manuscripts of Robert Morrison, Starr also collected a number of journal issues from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as archival records of different mission boards relevant to the history of Christianity in China.

In 1995, while Starr’s collection was increasing, he and Lauren Pfister of the Department of Religion and Philosophy recommended establishing an “Archive for the Study of Christian Missions in China.” They sought to (1) make research materials readily available locally in Hong Kong for the increasing number of scholars, researchers, pastors, and seminary students from Asia interested in the study of Christian missions in China, where the history occurred; (2) preserve the records of the multidimensional Christian heritage in Asia for the sake of scholarly research; and (3) enhance the distinctive image of the university. With the approval of HKBU and the support given by the university library, the Archives on the History of Christianity in China (AHC) was officially established in the library building in October 1996. Hong Kong is the ideal location for this archive because of its connection with Protestant missionaries in China. And HKBU is an appropriate place, given its Christian heritage and ethos, as well as the research already being undertaken by its academic personnel.

According to its 1997 mission statement, “The Archives pursues the collection of materials relevant to the study of Christianity in China, regardless of denomination or nationality. These concern Chinese Christians, or missionaries, and will include materials such as biographies, letters, diaries, church histories, and periodicals in English, or Chinese. The Archives has aimed at collecting both primary and secondary source materials, majoring on (but not exclusively) pre-1950.”

The University Library and Teaching Development Grant of the University funded the acquisition of materials during the early phase of establishment. The archives concurrently applied for funds and endowments from various foundations and was subsequently awarded a three-year grant of US$120,000 by the prestigious Henry Luce Foundation in 1997. This grant has affirmed the importance of and need for further research into the history of Christianity in Hong Kong, including social activists Rev. Carl T. Smith and Elsie Tu, have further enriched the collections in recent years.

### Some Current Activities and Goals

The collections of the archives are constantly growing. We are gratefully accepting items from Christian charitable organizations. Despite the current level of openness in China, it is often not an easy task to acquire Chinese materials, especially rare or out-of-print books. It has been very time-consuming to identify relevant titles held in the universities and libraries in China. Nevertheless, the AHC has so far managed to obtain microfilm copies of out-of-print Chinese books on the history of Christianity from a few universities in China. In addition, the AHC has recently acquired a significant collection of over two hundred rare out-of-print books in English on missions or Christianity in China. They had been in the library of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London.

Because of the growing demand to access archival materials in full text online, HKBU has developed an AHC Web page (http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/lib/collections/sca-christian.html) linked to the library home page and the UNESCO Archives Portal. Useful related links on the study of Christianity, missionaries, and churches, as well as a link to the Journal of the History of Christianity in Modern China, published by the Department of History of HKBU, have been established. This journal, published since 1998, is indexed in Historical Abstracts; currently its table of contents and abstracts of papers can be viewed online.

### Hong Kong is the ideal location for this archive because of its connection with Protestant missionaries in China.

Future acquisitions. We will continue to develop the AHC collection, adding both English- and Chinese-language materials. The major online bookstores are important places to search for rare books relating to the history of Christianity in China. In addition,
it is possible to find missionary manuscripts, letters, or rare books through stamp auctions or auction sites on the Web.

Many Christian archival materials available in the Western world about Christianity in China are mission oriented, but very few of them are about local churches in China. Archival materials from organizations in China other than university libraries, such as Christian schools, hospitals, and social service institutions, which are commonly neglected, are as important as the conventional university archival materials and will be targets of collection.

The archives is making plans to develop a collection of relevant dissertations and theses, in both English and Chinese, on the history of Christianity in China. Also, the history of all local churches in Hong Kong will be an important area of research.

**Digitization projects.** The archives has been at work on two digitization projects. (In the summer of 2002 the library acquired a system that incorporates special thesauri of Chinese phrases, synonyms, and subject headings, which facilitate searching and indexing, with an added capability of URL linkage to the records.)

The first project was to digitize the lantern slides held by the AHC, which was accomplished in the summer of 2003. Information regarding the collection of lantern slides, entitled “China Through the Eyes of China Inland Mission Missionaries,” can be accessed at http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/lib/electronic/lantern.html.

The second project is to digitize a small subset of the library’s large holdings of Chinese newspaper clippings covering the period from 1950 to 1976. This project contains more than 1600 clippings pertaining to the development of churches and Christianity in China during this period. These newspaper clippings are major components of the Contemporary China Research Collection, which were purchased from the former Union Research Institute (Hong Kong) in the 1980s and are kept at the Special Collections and Archives in the library. A subset was selected to be digitized because the cost of digitizing all the newspaper clippings in the collection is prohibitive. The project was completed in June 2004. This “Christianity in Contemporary China Clippings Database” is available at http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/lib/electronic/christian_c.html.

**Regional cooperation.** The archives sees the importance of cooperation and of developing projects with other Christian organizations. The university library is an active member of the Hong Kong Archives Society, a local organization of archives and archivists.

As Peter Ng has noted, “There are huge collections of archival materials from Christian colleges in China. The estimate is more than 13,000 volumes.” They are widely spread over China, as well as in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and several Western countries, in university libraries and institutions associated with former Christian colleges. Many valuable personal archives that belonged to missionary educators in China can be located in national, provincial, and municipal archives throughout the country. Shanghai Municipal Archives and the Second Historical Archives in Nanjing are the two most dominant. A series of catalogs of Christian university archives in China was published by Ng and others in 1996–98. It is hoped that a network of regional and international scholars, researchers, and archivists can be formed. Every opportunity will be explored to facilitate the exchange of documentation and archival materials between cooperative institutions for the common goal of returning the history to the people of China, for the preservation of memories of our past, so that they can help shape our present and our future.

**Conclusion**

By establishing its Archives on the History of Christianity in China, HKBU has become a regional pioneer. Many primary source materials and records of local churches are at risk if appropriate preservation measures are not adopted. The HKBU Archives on the History of Christianity in China recognizes the value of such a collection and has developed a vision of rescuing and preserving the memory.

If we lose our way to the past, we lose our way to the future. Although the challenges and tasks we are facing in the HKBU archives can be daunting, I believe they will only motivate our library staff to remain dedicated and active in maintaining functional archives that will indeed preserve a part of China’s living memory.

**Notes**

1. I am grateful to J. Barton Starr, Lauren F. Pfister, Shirley Leung, and Irene Wong for their help in the preparation of this article.
3. Ibid., p. 105.
6. Ibid., p. xv.
9. Peter Tze Ming Ng et al., *Zhongguo jiaohui daxue weixian mulu* (Catalogs of documents on Christian colleges in China), 5 vols. (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, Chung Chi College, 1996–98).
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Thomas Hale, Jr.

I was born in 1937 in New Haven, Connecticut, and grew up in a culturally Christian home. My family went to church; I went to Sunday school. We said prayers and sang hymns. If you had asked me in my early teens if I was a Christian, I would have unhesitatingly said yes.

Then I met God. I was sixteen, a junior at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, when God entered my life. In a way I had never experienced before, I became aware of his presence, his power, his holiness, and his care for me. He showed me that I had been living for myself and that he wanted me to live for him instead. I felt him asking me to give him my life, and so I said yes—little knowing all that was involved.

Two days later I came across a brochure describing the opening of the first mission hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal. The year was 1954. I had hardly heard of Nepal, except that I knew Mount Everest was there. The brochure described Nepal as having the earth’s lowest standard of health, the lowest number of doctors per 1,000 population, and the lowest average life expectancy—twenty-seven years. In addition, it had the lowest number of known Christians—zero. The brochure went on to say that doctors were urgently needed to staff the new mission hospital.

Having just given my life to God, I concluded that through this brochure God was giving me instructions for my life: to be a medical missionary to Nepal. Again I said yes, with small awareness of what I was getting into. I had been a Christian only two days.

Fortunately, God confirmed his call in various ways; I never advise anyone to simply pick up a brochure and do what it says. My own call was confirmed many times throughout my university days. Mount Everest had recently been climbed for the first time, and Nepal was in the news. I read National Geographic articles on Nepal. My love for Nepal and its people grew and grew.

The most wonderful way in which God confirmed my call to medical missions came on my first day of medical school in Albany, New York, when I met my wife-to-be, Cynthia—literally over a dead body. We had been assigned as lab partners in anatomy, the first course in medical school. After a few weeks of dissecting that cadaver together, I finally got up the courage to ask Cynthia why she was studying medicine, for there were few women in medicine back then. Cynthia replied, “God has called me to be a medical missionary.”

“Wow,” I said, “same with me.”

Cynthia did not know to which country God had called her, but I was able to clarify that detail. We concluded that God wanted us to do it together. We were married in the second year of medical school during pathology class. We finished our training—mine was in general surgery, and Cynthia’s was in pediatrics—and after my obligatory stint as a surgeon during the Vietnam War, we went off to Nepal in 1970, taking with us our two small sons, one and four years old.

It was sixteen years between my call to Nepal and our arrival. People sometimes comment about how faithful I was during those years, but I always tell them that God’s faithfulness, not mine, kept me on track. And that faithfulness has remained true every day of my life since.

More than Need

My early spiritual pilgrimage was not all steady and upward. Several months after my initial encounter with God, the marvelous joy and elation that I had experienced went away. I was tempted to think it had just been a passing phase of adolescence. My parents certainly thought so. They refrained from commenting on my plans to go to Nepal, preferring simply to wait until I grew out of it. But God never let the vision die. And then on that first day of medical school, he put into effect his plan for resuscitating my spiritual life, namely, a cute fellow student named Cynthia, standing across that cadaver.

When we arrived in Nepal, we were assigned to a partially constructed rural mission hospital seventy miles northwest of Kathmandu, situated near the base of 26,000-foot mountains. One had to walk fifteen miles from the nearest road to reach the hospital. There were only three doctors—myself, Cynthia, and Helen Huston of Canada—to serve a population of half a million needy people. (In most parts of North America there are over a thousand doctors for each half million population.) My call from the beginning had centered on need—in particular, physical and earthly need. I believed that the need constituted the call. Nepal needed doctors, so I became a doctor to meet that need. I felt that my missionary call was simply to go out to Nepal and love people by meeting their physical needs.

However, after interaction and discussion with missionary colleagues in Nepal and especially with Cynthia, I began to feel that my understanding of the missionary call was inadequate. First, I realized that the call to missions was, properly speaking, not constituted by the need but rather by God’s Word, together with the Holy Spirit. The need, then, was a form of guidance as to how one fulfilled the call. We cannot say that the need is not important, for, all things being equal, God wants to use us where our skills and experience are needed most.

But second, I realized that I had been focusing too much on physical need. Here we were, saving lives almost every day, yet in a few years these same people would eventually die of something else. And then what? Healing people’s bodies without healing their souls was at best a temporary benefit.

Furthermore, I began to realize that meeting people’s physical needs alone tended to turn their attention away from spiritual matters. Patients would go away from our hospital healed in body but less aware of their spiritual need than when they came. It was as if our physical ministry was undermining our spiritual ministry.

It was Cynthia who led us to reevaluate our medical work and to begin placing more emphasis on meeting the spiritual needs of patients. This goal was not easy to reach in a country where it was illegal to proselytize and also illegal for Nepalis to become Christians. But we prayed for opportunities to witness, to discreetly share our faith. We prayed increasingly that God would open people’s hearts to the Gospel. We came to realize...
that our calling as medical missionaries was not simply to love people but to love them in such a way that they would encounter Christ and be drawn to him. Medicine and other social ministries are often called pre-evangelism, but if evangelism proper does not follow, in one form or another, then the ministry will bear no lasting fruit.

When Cynthia and I arrived in Nepal in 1970, there were, out of a population of fifteen million, fewer than one thousand Nepali believers—up from zero in 1950. Our mission hospital was located near the top of a 5,000-foot “foothill,” and from our house we could look out over scores of other foothills dotted with thatch-roofed villages, encompassing a population of several hundred thousand non-Christians. How was our little church of a dozen or so Nepali believers going to make a difference in that vast spiritual desert?

Tiny trickling streams ran down our mountain into the surrounding valleys. But when the monsoon rains came in the summer, those little trickling streams would turn into rushing torrents, flooding the land below. After watching the monsoon seasons come and go for several years, I remember one year when the rains came late. The land was parched; the streams were dry. I was sitting out on our lawn reading a book by Michael Harper, when I came across a line that struck me. Harper was commenting on John 7:38 about the “rivers of living water” that would flow from believers, and he concluded by asking (para-phrased): “Why pray for trickles, when the world needs rivers?”

Tiny spiritual trickles were going to do little for that vast spiritual desert surrounding us. So together with fellow missionaries and Nepali Christians, we began praying for rivers of living water to flow down our mountain and flood the valleys below. In other parts of Nepal, the same kind of prayer was being lifted up. In God’s sovereign grace, his Spirit moved across the land, and now as a result, thirty years later, there are at least half a million Nepali believers—this in a land where it is still illegal for a Nepali to become a Christian. Yes, the world needs rivers; why pray for something less?

New Lessons

I was thirty-two when we began our adventure in Nepal. The learning curve was steep! I was a “fully trained” surgeon, yet I needed almost total retraining in order to work in that bare-bones mission hospital stuck out in the Himalayan foothills at the end of a fifteen-mile trail. One major problem was that I had no one qualified to give anesthetics. Therefore, periodically patients died from an anesthetic accident. To this day, I remember every death. It did not help to reflect that almost all these patients would have died anyway without surgical treatment. Modern medicine—surgery, in particular—was new in our area of Nepal, so these deaths served to frighten away patients who would otherwise have benefited from safe and simple surgical procedures. But above all, each death negated the purpose for which I had trained as a surgeon and come to Nepal. I had many conversations with the Lord about this matter.

One day, after the particularly heart-wrenching (nonanesthetic) death of a patient following elective surgery, I felt like throwing in the towel. I poured my heart out to the Lord. He said to me, “Why are you cast down? After all, these are not your patients; they are my patients. You are merely my assistant. Let me carry this burden for you. Furthermore, how can you talk about quitting? Did I not provide you with all your surgical instruments?”

Yes, he had—and in an extraordinary way. I had obtained, essentially free of charge, every possible instrument that I could ever need from two U.S. Army hospitals. With no advance knowledge or coordination, the hundreds and hundreds of instruments from the hospitals exactly complemented each other, so that I ended up with neither too few nor too many of any single instrument. On dark days I learned to remember the marvelous things the Lord had done for me and to draw strength to carry on.

I was learning many other things too. I learned, for example, what happens if you almost kill a cow in a Hindu kingdom. Talk about a cross-cultural experience! In Nepal the penalty for killing a cow is life imprisonment—the same as for killing a human—which technically means eighteen years (I suppose because no one survives Nepali prisons longer than that). I had not intended to kill the cow, only to drive it out of Cynthia’s vegetable garden. I used a small sickle to poke the cow, but unfortunately I poked a hole in the main artery of the cow’s hind leg, and the animal nearly bled to death. It hovered between life and death for many days, and so did I. The cow was one of my early surgical patients. No patient of mine, before or since, has received more diligent care and attention.

Happily, most of my learning experiences were not so dramatic. Most important were the things I learned from my missionary colleagues, such as how to get along with them. It has often been said that the number one problem for missionaries on the field is interpersonal conflict with other missionaries. I would never have believed it, but I found it to be true.

I recall the day Cynthia and I went for our interview with Interserve’s director, a Britisher, before joining the mission. Of all the questions he asked during the hour-long interview, I can remember only one: “Have you ever worked with British people?” I thought, “What’s the point of that question? What difference is that going to make?” Now I know.

In Nepal I worked overtime learning all the practical lessons the Bible teaches about interpersonal relations. I learned that Satan’s chief tactic is to bring division between Christians, and that he does so primarily through interpersonal conflict. I saw that if he could produce disunity within a Christian team, he would rob us of our fruit. Perhaps that is why there are over sixty verses in the New Testament telling us to remain united—not so that we might not have conflict, but so that we might remain united.

In Nepal I worked overtime learning all the practical lessons the Bible teaches about interpersonal relations. I learned that Satan’s chief tactic is to bring division between Christians, and that he does so primarily through interpersonal conflict. I saw that if he could produce disunity within a Christian team, he would rob us of our fruit. Perhaps that is why there are over sixty verses in the New Testament telling us to remain united—not so much organizationally, but spiritually and personally. Working in international teams in a foreign setting is a stretching and refining experience. Sadly, not everyone survives it.

As I look back on my years in Nepal, an overall lesson emerges. As I experienced the culture shock, the primitive conditions, the surgical deaths, the misunderstandings and conflicts, and, above all, my own personal failings, I realized that I was not up to any of it, that there was no way I could bear any lasting fruit by my own strength and resolve. I relaunched in a deeper way the meaning of Jesus’ words, which I had known since becoming a Christian: “Apart from me you can do noth-
ing.” I came to know experientially that those words were true. For me, that is the greatest lesson of the missionary life. When people ask me what has blessed me most about being a missionary, I answer, “The chance to learn real dependence upon God.”

Struggling to Speak

An additional struggle I had was learning the Nepali language. I knew that if I wanted to communicate the Gospel to Nepalis (virtually none in our area spoke English), I had to learn their language. However, in terms of language ability, I was definitely at the bottom of the class (exactly the opposite of Cynthia!). I have spent close to five thousand hours studying Nepali and still mangle the language; Cynthia spent a tenth of that time and speaks like a Nepali.

For many years I fretted with the Lord over my linguistic ineptitude. If he wanted me to be leading Bible studies, sharing in church services, and so forth (which I was sure he did), then why was he not helping me more? Why was he causing me to waste hours upon hours learning grammar and vocabulary, reading Nepali books and newspaper editorials, and still leaving me at a fourth-grade level when it came to actually speaking with people?

This frustration was all the more perplexing because gradually over the years I had been experiencing a greater and greater burden for teaching the new Nepali believers. In about 1980 John Stott came to speak at our annual workers conference in Nepal. He told us that in places where the church was growing fastest, teaching and discipling of new believers often lagged behind. He said that, in his view, the greatest need of the church in many fields was for teaching, which corresponded with what we were seeing in Nepal. (In mission history, it seems fair to say that establishing the church is one part evangelism and nine parts teaching and disciple making.)

At that conference Stott set aside an afternoon during which he offered to pray with individual missionaries. Cynthia and I met with him and asked him to pray that we might have an anointing as teachers. Perhaps I unconsciously hoped that his prayer might improve my ability to speak Nepali! But no discernable improvement resulted. I struggled on, preparing messages and Bible studies, and practicing their delivery ad nauseam.

At about that time I was struck by a statement in J. Herbert Kane’s book Life and Work on the Mission Field, to the effect that the greatest need on the mission field was for teaching material to use in discipling the newly emerging churches. I began to think about writing such material. I even thought about writing a New Testament commentary in Nepali, though most of the believers were illiterate. (By this time the church had grown to ten thousand or so.) But where was I going to find the time for such a venture? I was the only surgeon for half a million people, and in spite of those early anesthetic deaths, the number of surgical patients was increasing year by year.

Then an interesting thing happened. The mission decided to transfer us to another project. It came as a great shock. I deeply believed the decision itself was wrong—and still do. After appealing, I eventually realized I would need either to accept the new assignment or to resign from the mission. After much prayer and inner struggle, I decided to submit to the decision of the mission leaders. I still had no peace about the new assignment, but I did have peace about submitting. To have resigned at that point would have amounted to insubordination.

Three months later the decision was reversed. New circumstances had arisen. However, a new missionary surgeon had already been assigned to our old hospital, and for the first time during our years in Nepal, the mission had all its surgical positions filled. At that very time of wondering what I should do next, one of the leading Nepali Christians approached me and suggested that I write a one-volume New Testament commentary in Nepali. This suggestion was subsequently confirmed by all the major leaders of the Nepali church. So I embarked upon what, by any rational assessment, was a most unlikely project: a surgeon with no formal Bible training and poor verbal language skills writing a commentary on the New Testament.

In an extraordinary manner God provided a Nepali co-worker named Tirtha Dhakal. I had pretty well mastered the grammar and vocabulary (thanks to those thousands of “wasted” hours studying Nepali), but I had no ear for the language and needed help from someone who did. Tirtha was a math teacher whom Cynthia had led to the Lord years earlier. He had the ear but could not construct a Nepali sentence on his own. We were like the proverbial deaf man and blind man, pooling our skills. When the commentary was published five years later, the Nepali church had grown to 150,000. The mission’s decision may have been wrong, but God’s decision had been right.

Other language groups expressed an interest in having the commentary published in their languages, and so I rewrote it in English (with general articles contributed by Stephen Thorson, a fellow medical missionary in Nepal) in order to facilitate its translation. To my surprise, the English version was subsequently published by Kingsway in England and by Victor Books in the United States for English-speaking readers, under the title Applied New Testament Commentary. It has now been translated or is being translated into twenty-five languages around the world, and from our current home in upstate New York, I am engaged in writing a companion commentary on the Old Testament.

I can only think that when God wants a particular work done, he chooses an unlikely person—a “nothing,” to use Paul’s thought in 1 Corinthians 1:28—to accomplish his purpose. What a surprising list of things I have witnessed in the past nearly half century that clearly illustrate this passage!
The Legacy of Ernest Oliver

Richard Tiplady

E rnest Oliver—the first executive secretary of the United Mission to Nepal (1954–61), executive secretary of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (1961–76), the first general secretary of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (1966–83), and a director of Tearfund (1976–86)—was one of the most influential figures in the British evangelical missionary movement in the twentieth century. His clear sense of the priorities for Christian mission in the middle of the twentieth century left a legacy that still shapes much of the British evangelical missionary movement.

Oliver was born in London on August 20, 1911. One of three children, he grew up attending the local Baptist church in Chelsea. He left school when he was sixteen, having been baptized the previous year. He spent three years at the Hammersmith School of Art in London, concurrent with a six-year apprenticeship to an architectural calligrapher.

Interested in missionary work from an early age, Oliver described the annual Missionary Sunday in his local church as “the most exciting Sunday of the year to me.” Following his baptism, he moved from Sunday school teaching to open-air preaching and preaching in local churches and mission halls, all by the age of eighteen. He described his call to missionary service overseas as “a process, largely the outcome of a growing understanding of the Word of God in relation to his love for the world and his passion for the salvation of all.” However, he also wrote of a sense of assurance of a call, which happened while attending a circus and amusement park with a group of young people from his church, through which “the Lord spoke to me about wasting my time on trivial amusements and showed me that I had to walk firmly and resolutely in pursuance of his call.” Neither was he taken aback by his mother’s question, “Who do you think you are, David Livingstone?” when he informed her of his decision. In their devout household, to be a missionary was regarded as the ultimate in Christian service. Yet his sense of call was never based on his own sense of ability or worth: “I was naturally somewhat shy and timid, content to do the tasks assigned to me as well as I was able, but with no pretensions of being a leader. It took quite a time to wean me from the prayer ‘give me tasks equal to my ability’ to ‘give me ability equal to my tasks.’”

Training and Early Ministry

In 1933 Oliver left his apprenticeship and enrolled at All Nations Bible College in South London. He later wrote of this time, “The course was not very demanding intellectually, but its value for me lay in its emphasis upon the authority and content of the Bible, its cultivation of a devotional life, its wide window on the world, and the disciplining experience of living in community. . . . There was no attempt to produce ‘the compleat missionary’ at the end of two years, but it was a worthy and purposeful launching pad for the takeoff into God’s great adventure overseas for many of us. There was an urgency abroad in those days: we should not spend too much time in preparation, we must get out to the place of God’s calling as quickly as possible, for the Lord’s return was imminent.”

This experience was to influence his work in later life. As executive secretary of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU), and later as general secretary of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA), he supported the development of an appropriate missions course for inclusion in the curriculum of all EMA member colleges. He taught various of the courses from 1961 to 1983, and his notes from that time represent a comprehensive and somewhat prescient introduction to the emerging discipline of missiology.

Oliver entered All Nations Bible College fully convinced that he was preparing to go to work in Belgian Congo with RBMU. In January 1934, however, a devastating earthquake hit Nepal and the Ganges Valley in Bihar, North India, and in a prayer meeting after hearing the news, Oliver sensed a strong call instead to Nepal. RBMU had worked in North Bihar since 1899, with a view to the ultimate opening of Nepal, but had since decided to suspend sending of new missionaries to the region because of the lack of results and the seeming impassability of the Nepal border. But then a supporter of the mission sent funds specifically for sending two new workers to India, and so Oliver was accepted for work in North Bihar.

During his time at college, Oliver spent some time working with the Caravan Mission in Suffolk in the east of England. Many of the young people on those missions visited a particular house for times of fellowship, and it was on such a visit that Ernest met Margaret, one of the daughters of the household, who worked as a schoolteacher. Margaret’s home had often been frequented by visiting missionaries, and she had long had an interest in missionary work in India. Both of them later said that they knew instantly that they would marry one another. Margaret’s family was Christian Brethren, and Oliver made this tradition his spiritual home, whose outlook shaped both his devotional life and his ecclesiology.

Mission rules forbade the recruitment of married missionaries, and so Ernest sailed alone to India in 1935, as Margaret went to Mount Hermon Missionary Training College. It was also required that missionaries had to be in country for a year, and to pass language exams, before they were allowed to marry (a reasonably sure incentive to study!), and so while Margaret joined him in India in 1937, they were not married until 1938.

Bihar, North India

Ernest and Margaret were based in Motihari, the main town of the district of Champaran in North Bihar. It was this district that Mahatma Gandhi made the center of his campaign of satyagraha (nonviolent noncooperation) for the workers exploited by the indigo planters and for the end of British imperial rule in India. In 1939 Oliver was privileged to have an audience with Gandhi himself and wrote later of being “greatly impressed by him.”

Language learning merged into evangelism and basic medical work using the common drugs available. Oliver decided to try to learn more about medicine, and while attending a mission hospital in Raxaul on the Nepal border, he befriended a minor member of the Nepali royal family, Nararaj Shamsher Jang

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Bahadur Rana, who became known as Colonel Sahib. Somewhat out of favor, he had been exiled from Kathmandu to become governor of a state on the southern border of Nepal and was at the hospital with his grandson. Colonel Sahib played chess with Oliver, read the Bible with him, and soon was converted. He would not be baptized, however, for he said that it would cost him everything, but they kept in touch during Oliver’s time away from Motihari during the Second World War.

Oliver was one of several British RBMU missionaries called up in 1940 and appointed as lieutenants in the Indian Army, at that time still led by the British. Work as a cipher officer with the Sixth Indian Division in Iraq until 1942 was followed by appointment as adjutant of a unit in India, and Oliver ended the war at the rank of major. He considered that it was during this time that he had his first real experiences of leadership, learning, as he put it, how to look after people and help them. His ministry was not curtailed by his military appointment, even if his audience had changed. He preached in local churches on Sundays and worked alongside a chaplain in an army prison. In 1946 Oliver was demobilized in London. Although the army wanted him to stay in the service, he had not lost his sense of call to Nepal, and so, following a year studying medicine in London, he returned with his family to Motihari in 1947 to lead the RBMU work in North Bihar.

Leprosy was endemic in the region, and Ernest and Margareta took in a young boy named Mangul who had been rejected by his family. They found him a place in a children’s home and decided that something should be done about the social ostracism of those suffering from leprosy. Under Oliver’s leadership RBMU set up a hospital in the Muzzafarpur Leprosarium, which had hitherto only provided a home to those excluded from their society because of leprosy.

Nepal

Cracks finally began to appear in Nepal’s fortress borders. A palace revolt against the ruling family of hereditary prime ministers took place in 1950. One of the leaders of the revolt had been treated at the RBMU mission hospital in Raxaul, and he was well disposed toward the possibility of Christians being allowed to work in Nepal. Oliver and a colleague, Dr. Trevor Strong, were allowed to visit Kathmandu in 1951.

In 1952 Colonel Sahib wrote to Oliver, stating that he intended to visit at Easter and that he wished to be baptized, which he was, in full view of his servants and the local townspeople. His wish that no one should be told of his baptism was somewhat undermined by this large audience, and upon his return to Nepal he lost all his property and was cut off from his family. He moved back to Kathmandu and provided the means of entry for three young Indian Christians who made a survey visit to Nepal.

Subsequent visits to Kathmandu established that the British ambassador and the head of the American trade mission were Christians, and they advocated to the government the need for Christian mission work in Nepal. There was a clear conviction among many that this work should be through a united front and not fragmented through numerous agencies, as had happened so often elsewhere. And so in 1954 the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) was formed, and Ernest Oliver was appointed as its executive secretary.

Some mission agencies refused to join the UMN because of restrictions on open evangelism. Others held back because the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was involved, a denomination that some regarded as unacceptably contaminated by theological modernism. Oliver’s response was that UMN was not going to set up churches, since it was not permitted to do so, and in any case he wanted to see what the Spirit of God was saying as churches grew from Nepalese roots: “We determined that we would not engage in any sort of church order—not Anglicans, or anything like that—because this church had to have liberty in the Spirit to find something suitable to the place.”

Here we see one of Oliver’s lifelong concerns, which was for fully indigenized national churches. This impulse may have come from the Christian Brethren influence, but he also said he was strongly influenced by Roland Allen’s ideas about church development. Awareness of the possibly limited timescale of work in Nepal also focused his mind on the need for a church that could survive and thrive by itself. Oliver wrote later of his joy at the development of a vital Indian church leadership following the reduction in the numbers of expatriate missionaries in that country in the years after independence.3

The first church in Kathmandu began meeting in the home of Colonel Sahib, who also helped with the revision of the Nepali Bible by the Bible Society. In 1960 Oliver helped to form the Nepal Christian Fellowship (now the National Christian Fellowship of Nepal). At the time, there were no more than a hundred converts, but it laid the foundation for church structures appropriate to the culture and context of Nepal, which now encompass some thousands of churches and as many as 700,000 Christians.

Evangelical Missionary Alliance

In 1961, at the invitation of the RBMU Board of Directors, Oliver returned to London to take up the newly created post of executive secretary. The post included responsibility to assist in and coordinate the planning of the several RBMU fields, recruitment of personnel to those fields, and responsibility to ensure good communication between the various RBMU fields and the sending councils, as well as representation of RBMU further afield.

Concurrent with his appointment as executive secretary of RBMU, Oliver joined the Committee of Management of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, which had been created in 1958. He quickly became heavily involved in the work of this new network, joining various subcommittees and speaking at EMA conferences in 1962 and 1964 on the subject of missionary cooperation. This dual focus—on missionary cooperation and on relationships between mission agencies and national churches—characterized his work with the EMA for the next twenty years.

Gilbert Kirby, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, had led the work of the EMA since its inception, but he resigned in November 1965. He had already approached Oliver about the possibility of being seconded part-time from RBMU to replace him within the EMA. So from January 1966 Oliver became EMA general secretary for two days each week. One of his first major undertakings was to hold a conference on the missionary society’s relationship to the church overseas. Convened in 1969 and entitled “The Role of Missionary Societies in the 1970s,” it consid-
ered the growth of the churches worldwide, coupled with a rising awareness of national identity. In proposing the conference, Oliver commented: “Churches have been planted in almost all countries of the world and Missionary work can no longer be carried on as though they did not exist.”

For the British missionary movement of the time, the end of the colonial era, coupled with the undeniable reality of the growth of the church worldwide, made the issue of relationships with national churches, and the debate about any ongoing role for expatriate missionaries, vital and challenging. The Evangelical Alliance appointed a Commission on World Mission in 1970, whose task was to “clarify the relationship between the Church in Britain and the Church in the Third World.” Along with his theological commitment to the vitality of indigenous local churches, Oliver viewed political nationalism as a pragmatic necessity for many of these new countries, quoting Harold Isaacs of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: “In virtually all of these, the first task of the new man in power is to create a new national identity that their fragmented people will recognise and accept.”

Although he was not blind to the problems that such nationalism could cause, Oliver advised mission agencies not to be too worried about the effect of nationalization on their institutions: “The Mission should not be afraid if the country’s Government decides to nationalise. We must assume that in spite of the heyday of nationalism, Governments are becoming progressively saner in the conduct of their public service programmes and are likely to leave undisturbed a Mission hospital provided it is functioning satisfactorily.”

During 1974, in his capacity as executive secretary of RBMU, Oliver returned to Nepal to participate in the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of UMN’s work. In his report the twin themes of cooperation and the importance of national leadership in every area come through clearly:

There can be no doubt now that the decision of the RBMU to enter Nepal with the UMN was the right decision. No one Society could have accomplished what this group of societies has been enabled to do by a pooling of resources in personnel and finance. The hospitals, schools and technical institute are all highly effective institutions contributing very considerably to the health and education of a nation emerging from years of despotism. . . . One of the great features of the United Mission to Nepal has been the priority given to the training of nationals and the willingness to give them responsibility. The new training scheme for auxiliary nurses and midwives and health assistants at Tansen continues this pattern and points to the wisdom of the United Mission’s priorities.

In the same year the International Congress on World Evangelization, meeting in Lausanne, set the agenda for discussions within EMA. Oliver attended this congress and considered “the emergence of Third World missionary societies to be of the highest significance.”

Time and again throughout his leadership of EMA, Oliver helped British missionary societies to navigate the challenging waters of indigenization and relationships with national churches. In 1978 an EMA conference entitled “The Missionary in Contemporary Tensions” considered how to respond to economic and political tensions when missionaries were closely integrated into the lives of national churches, as well as how to deal with disagreements between missionaries and national church leaders over leadership and priorities.

Oliver was committed to cooperation in mission at every level, and the EMA gave him a platform to develop this vision in operations at the “home end” as much as “overseas.” This theme of cooperation, and its centrality to the role of the EMA, was a recurring note in Oliver’s reports to EMA Annual General Meetings. He wrote of his desire that “considerable prayer and thought will be given to ways in which the EMA can become more adequately the platform for united thinking, planning and action,” and later that “in the EMA we are climbing towards that level of cooperation between our member societies where it is normal to consult one another, to coordinate our endeavours, to cooperate where a joint effort is likely to be more productive, and to consider forwarding the activities of another society where those activities are, for reasons of strategy or time, more important than their own.” Toward the end of his time with EMA, he noted that “it is easier to go it alone than to try and work together, but I believe that the benefits of working together are immeasurably greater than what we achieve singly.”

Tearfund

In 1976 Oliver retired from his role in RBMU. At an age when most people’s thoughts turn to retirement activities, Oliver not only remained as general secretary of the EMA but also became an associate director of Tearfund, an autonomous relief agency that was founded in 1968 as the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, on whose board Oliver served since its inception. Tearfund’s first director, George Hoffman, had considered EMA’s close involvement with the new organization to be crucial: “We saw the potential of working closely with the EMA, with its worldwide contacts through its 80 or so member societies.”

Oliver’s initial role was to advise Tearfund on all aspects of its work, for it was recognized that no one else on its board or staff had his experience of managing change overseas. Through Tearfund, churches were being encouraged to make strategic changes in their commitment to and involvement in their local communities. But Oliver soon became involved in the development of a new aspect of Tearfund’s work, and in 1979 he became the first director of its Overseas Evangelism and Christian Education (OECE) department.

The origins of the OECE department lay in discussions that had been taking place within the Evangelical Alliance. The success that Tearfund experienced in fostering evangelical involvement in relief and development had led to numerous requests from Third World churches to the Evangelical Alliance for similar financial support for their evangelism and leadership training programs. The Evangelical Alliance formulated plans to launch a new organization that would fulfill this role—Evangelical Partnership with the Overseas Church (EPOCH). Tearfund and the EMA, however, had already been having similar discussions about the need for such funding. When he heard of the Evangelical Alliance’s plans, Oliver suggested that rather than set up a new organization, which would compete with Tearfund for funds as though their objectives were different, it would be
better for the aims of EPOCH to be included within Tearfund’s charge. To do otherwise, he considered, would be to deny what he called the fullness of mission. In this example we see again Oliver’s commitment both to a holistic understanding of mission and also to the importance of the growth and development of indigenous churches.

Following his (second) retirement in 1983, when he gave up the role of EMA general secretary, Oliver took on the additional responsibility of overseas director of Tearfund. He undertook this task along with his leadership of the OECE department of Tearfund until his (third and final) retirement from these posts in 1986 at the age of seventy-five (although he continued in the role of international consultant for a further three years). The role of the overseas director was to provide leadership and give cohesion to the various aspects of Tearfund’s work, including development grants, international personnel, leadership training, child sponsorship, and fair trade. Those who worked with him during this time say that Oliver’s primary contribution in this role was not perhaps what was intended, since he was a leader and inspirer rather than a strategic thinker or manager. But he gave Tearfund the confidence to work with other organizations and to share resources. He facilitated its involvement with the United Mission to Nepal, the International Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and the Association for Cooperation in Tunisia. In doing so, he helped to raise Tearfund’s profile and enabled it to contribute to and learn from a wider network, again demonstrating the value of cooperation.

Legacy

On Oliver’s retirement from Tearfund, Gilbert Kirby described him as “a man ahead of his time.” While this was undoubtedly true, he was also very much a man for his moment in history: a person committed to evangelical cooperation in mission and the importance of strong indigenous national churches and leadership. This dual focus stayed with Oliver throughout his missionary career and characterized every stage of that journey, allowing him to provide clear leadership to the U.K. missionary movement dealing with the challenges of indigenization and nationalism. His excellent organizational skills meant that he started and left behind organizations that work, and his clear sense of vision, coupled with excellent interpersonal and diplomatic skills, means that he is still remembered with affection by those who knew him.

Ernest Oliver died on September 20, 2001, in Luton, England. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, their three children, eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, the Oliver quotations in this article are taken from his personal papers. I am very grateful to Ernest’s widow, Margaret, and their daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, for their kindness in granting me full access to these papers.
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. Numbers obtained from Betty Young, United Mission to Nepal, in a personal e-mail dated October 10, 2002.
5. EMA Planning Committee minutes, April 16–17, 1969.
7. Ernest Oliver, “Missionary Methods and Pastoralia” lecture notes, lecture 10, emphasis in original.
9. Ernest Oliver, Report of the RBMU Executive Secretary’s tour, February 27–May 10, 1974, p. 3.
10. EMA Committee of Management minutes, June 19, 1974.

Bibliographical Note

Ernest Oliver’s contribution was in mission administration, not writing, and he left no published works. His personal papers are in his family’s keeping. These are not extensive, but they do include a partly-completed biography begun by a family member (which covers his life up until his entry into Nepal) and detailed correspondence relating to his time with Tearfund. His other executive correspondence remains with the organizations for which he worked. The EMA archives are comprehensive and take the form of reports incorporated into minutes of meetings. To date, no works have been published about him.
The Mission Handbook has come a long way since 1953, when the late R. Pierce Beaver produced a mimeographed essay entitled “The Protestant Foreign Missionary Enterprise of the United States.” Beaver had developed a list of about 200 sending agencies, with a combined missionary force of some 18,000. The nineteenth edition, based on data as of January 1, 2002, reports 451 sending agencies (p. 12, fn. 8), with a total of 45,617 full-time resident missionaries (incorporating Canadian as well as U.S. statistics). Adding 1,984 “non-resident” personnel—persons fully supported by mission agencies who travel regularly into “restricted” countries for ministry and witness—brings the grand total of North Americans engaged in full-time overseas Christian ministry to 47,601. One caveat: Today’s “full-time” missionary may be committed to a lifetime career or to as little as a year is doubtless the exception, it is nevertheless clear that today’s category of “full-time” missionary is not equivalent to the former “career” missionary.

Somewhat more than half of the missionaries represented in Beaver’s report belonged to mainline denominations, and the rest were identified as serving with conservative evangelical or fundamentalist agencies—3,000 with IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association), 2,200 with EFMA (formerly Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, now Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies), and 3,500 others (mostly unaffiliated). Lacking affiliation analysis in the nineteenth edition of the Mission Handbook, this reviewer did some additional data processing to complete today’s picture (includes both U.S. and Canadian agencies):

- 4,033 Mainline/ecumenical denominations (includes 573 Seventh-day Adventists)
- 19,376 EFMA
- 7,764 IFMA
- 14,444 Mostly unaffiliated (evangelicals, fundamentalists, charismatics, independents)
- 45,617 Total (excludes “non-resident” personnel)

The decline of mainline forces over the years—in 1968 mainline personnel topped 10,000—and the swelling of conservative forces is reflected in the shifting cycle of publishers of the Handbook: from mainline offices in the 1950s and 1960s to World Vision MARC in the 1970s, and from MARC to the Evangelism and Missions Information Service (EMIS), headquartered at Wheaton College, Illinois, in the late 1990s. John Siewert of MARC worked with the EMIS staff on the previous edition; this time the production fell entirely to EMIS. This reviewer regrets the change in the subtitle of the Handbook from “Christian Ministries Overseas” to the older title “Protestant Missionaries Overseas,” inasmuch as this wording reflects a move away from recognition of Roman Catholic and Orthodox missions, which earlier editions provided in editorial notices or brief reports. Another peculiarity is that an appendix lists agencies holding membership in EFMA, IFMA, and AFMA (Alliance for Missions Advancement, a charismatic group), but it omits listing the members of the mainline associations DOM (Division of Overseas Ministries, National Council of Churches in the United States) and CCC/CWC (Canadian Council of Churches, Commission on World Concerns).

Scott Moreau of Wheaton Graduate School provides a 54-page overview, “Putting the Survey into Perspective.” Peppered throughout the analytic essay are twenty-seven tables and an equal number of graphs. While noting 346,270 short-termers in the U.S. report, Moreau acknowledges that the huge change from the prior Handbook (which reported less than 100,000) is likely “due to changes in reporting rather than actual growth” (p. 14).

—Robert T. Coote

Robert T. Coote, a senior contributing editor, has authored assessments of the size and character of the North American missionary community for more than two decades.
role of ethnic differences. An example of the last point is the uncompromising Pushtunwali code of the Taliban versus the value of harmony among the Javanese majority in Indonesia, leading to a system of government based on the unity of God rather than on Islam.

For the Christian in mission this book offers additional dimensions of understanding of the current “clash of civilizations” and the challenges to expressing the transnational character of the kingdom of God and the vulnerable power of the cross.

—J. Dudley Woodberry

J. Dudley Woodberry is Dean Emeritus and Professor of Islamic Studies, School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

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Ken Guest, assistant professor of anthropology at Baruch College, City University of New York, traces the immigration trail of the young adult Fujianese who have departed the region of Fuzhou City, China, in droves over the past twenty-five years. The vast majority have come to the United States illegally as indentured servants of human smugglers, or “snakeheads,” and arrived in Lower Manhattan, replacing the Cantonese who populated Chinatown in the early twentieth century. The factors of language, religion, education, and occupation have created an ethnic enclave within a transnational network reaching across the United States and back to Fuzhou. Guest presents this work in the context of a well-researched study of the historical Chinese in America, focusing on the replication of religious affiliations brought from Fujian.

Exploitation and isolation entrap these new Americans in a prison of language barriers and financial obligations to the snakeheads who facilitate this network. Six religious organizations are the havens of support for these immigrants, providing outreach in the form of housing, legal aid in immigration affairs, employment opportunities, and all-important hometown community centers, which create an “alternative citizenship” for Chinatown’s newest residents.

The book highlights the power of religious revival in China, the dominant role of women in many churches, and the

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Fifteen Outstanding Books of 2004 for Mission Studies

In consultation with thirty distinguished scholars from around the world, the editors of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research have selected fifteen books published in 2004 for special recognition. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to the advancement of scholarship in studies of the Christian mission and world Christianity.

Anderson, Allan.

An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity.

Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. £42.50 / $65; paperback £15.99 / $22.99.

Bevans, Stephen B., and Roger P. Schroeder.


Coakley, John W., and Andrea Sterk, eds.


England, John C., et al., eds.

Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources.

Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books; Delhi: ISPCK; Quezon City: Claretian Publishers. 3 vols. $100.

Hillerbrand, Hans J., ed.

The Encyclopedia of Protestantism.


Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti.

An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives.

Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. Paperback $29.

Kent, Eliza F.

Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India.

New York: Oxford Univ. Press. £47.50.

Koschorke, Klaus, Frieder Ludwig, and Mariano Delgado, eds.


Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag. €24.90.

Lewis, Donald M., ed.


Ludwig, Frieder, and Afe Adogame, eds., in cooperation with Ulrich Berner and Christoph Bochinger.

European Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa.

Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. €78.

Mallampalli, Chandra.

Christians and Public Life in Colonial South India, 1863–1937.

New York: RoutledgeCurzon. $100.

Parratt, John, ed.

An Introduction to Third World Theologies.


Pfister, Lauren F.


Porter, Andrea.


Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press. £60 / $74.95; paperback £18.99 / $29.95.

Shenk, Wilbert R., ed.


absence of true religious freedom in China. Because of this last factor, political splits in Lower Manhattan can affect religious communities halfway around the world.

Guest correctly notes the church/temple as the source of “social capital” vital to the survival of Fujian immigrants. Still his depiction of their misery may be overstated. After a year and a half of working with them, I find that most are happy and comfortable in their newfound home.

—Gregory McLaughlin

Gregory McLaughlin, a retired investment banker, is a volunteer ESL teacher at Transfiguration Catholic Church, Chinatown, New York.

We Have Toiled All Night: Christianity in The Gambia, 1456–2000.


At roughly 4,360 square miles, The Gambia is continental Africa’s smallest country. Somewhat unusual for a former British colony, its Christian population forms a tiny minority (estimates range from 2.0 to 3.7 percent). Muslims account for between 85 and 95 percent. In this richly detailed study, Martha Frederiks provides a historical assessment of Christianity in The Gambia that covers a range of familiar themes: the colonial nature of the initial Christian encounters, the critical accommodation to indigenous religions by both Islam and Christianity, efforts at vernacular translation, denominational rivalry and cooperation, overdependence on education as a tool of evangelism, the emergence of an indigenous ministry in the face of European racism and paternalism, and the energizing if divisive impact of Pentecostal-charismatic movements. Peculiarities include the decidedly foreign nature of Gambian Christianity (adherents have historically been refugees and migrants), the competing aspirations of Islamic jihadism and European colonialism, and the dismal failure of education as a tool of Christian expansion.

The volume, as the author is quick to point out, is not merely intended to be a history of Christianity. The supreme challenge facing Gambian Christians in a predominantly Muslim society, of maintaining a meaningful and credible (nonconfrontational) witness, forms an overarching theme. Apart from the occasional confrontation, relations between the two groups have historically been characterized by peaceful coexistence, cooperation, and even intermarriage. Yet genuine conversions from one to the other are uncommon.

Frederiks identifies four models of Christian missionary engagement in the Gambian experience: expansion, diákonía (service), presence, and dialogue. Her analysis of these models, which historically have supplemented rather than supplanted each other, is particularly insightful. In the final analysis, however, she posits a fifth model, that of kénosis (signifying self-emptying, incarnation, identifying with the other) as the most effective option, one that requires the church to develop an identity and witness that is “Islam-sensitive.”

Originally a Ph.D. dissertation, We Have Toiled All Night furnishes the reader with a wealth of documentation on the history of The Gambia. Also, at a time when African Christianity is the focus of considerable scholarly attention, it provides a fitting reminder that the African experience provides rich lessons in part because much of Africa remains non-Christian.

—Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu J. Hanciles, a Sierra Leonian, is Associate Professor of Mission History and Globalization at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

Rewarding Encounters: Islam and the Comparative Theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Wilfred Cantwell Smith.


Am I Not Your Lord? Human Meaning in Divine Question.


Acronyms, circumlocution, and abstractions—tools that helped soldier-scholar Bård Mæland carry out a U.N. peacekeeping assignment in southern Lebanon—seem to have helped him also in exploring Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s and Kenneth Cragg’s contrasting theological estimates of Islam. The level of abstraction reaches heights such that readers of this doctoral thesis for the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology, Oslo, may, like U.N. ambassadors, be pardoned for wondering, “What exactly did that resolution say?”

A reader with no access to current Scandinavian and German work on cross-cultural philosophy of religion or interreligious theology, however, must be very grateful to Mæland for bringing some of their models and concepts to bear on evaluating Smith’s and Cragg’s English-language language to Islam. Specifically, Mæland uses relevant ideas of Regin Prenter on the Holy Spirit and of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Annette Raths, and Carl Heinz Ratschow on hermeneutics and truth. As a bonus, this volume contains the most complete bibliography I have seen of works by and about these two lifelong Christian students of Islam.

While honoring the theological effort of both men to reckon with truth in Islam, Mæland in the end aligns himself more closely with Cragg because of Smith’s abandonment of orthodox Christology. Mæland asks, however, whether Cragg has allowed his own Christian standpoint to be questioned as seriously as he himself questions and pushes at the boundaries of doctrines held by today’s prevailing Muslim theologians.

Differences do matter to Cragg, yet he is not satisfied with merely identifying differences. Probing beyond “unhappy polemic and mutual denigration” (p. 20) in Am I Not Your Lord? Cragg searches also for areas of elasticity and for possibilities within each living tradition to reconceive even fundamental ideas.

One such idea and one such reality nominally shared by Christianity and Islam, although differently and too little considered, is Satan. Christians and Muslims can agree that God acts to bring his own claim of divine unity to bear by asking humanity: “Am I not your Lord?” (sura 7:172). Against this rightful and universal claim by God, however, a conspiracy is at work. The Qur’an, despite its overall high regard for human perfectibility, alerts its hearers to dynamic evil, referring to “the whispering insinuator who whispers in the bosoms of men” (sura 114:4–5). Satan—whether named Iblis, the angel who at creation resisted God’s folly in entrusting earthly dominion to humanity, or called Shaitan, who vows to waylay human beings on God’s straight path and must be resisted with ritual stone-throwing on every pilgrimage to Mecca—is known to Muslims for his “evil scheming and lurking in the human scene” (p. 54). The Prophet Muhammad encountered intrigue, mischief, calumny, and contradiction. So

"INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, Vol. 29, No. 1"
today human beings are both tempted and assaulted by usurpers of God’s rightful lordship.

Ever since perpetrators with Muslim affiliations attacked sites of American power on September 11, 2001, both scholarly and commonsense minds have been pondering the links between religion and violence. Unresolved religiously fueled conflicts in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East underscore the question. Some thinkers locate violence near the core of religions. Others find violence an aberration from religions. Cragg is bold to assert that just as the Pentagon is not rightous Lord, neither is Shari’a law, coercive conversion, or the Islamic ummah conceived as a human cause. He seeks to expose all of these as wiles and works of Satan.

“Skimmed in haste by combatants seeking ammunition, this dense and learned book will yield points to indict self-appointed holy warriors on both sides. Pondered with a humble and hopeful heart, it points backward to pre-Constantinian powerless Christianity and pre-Hegira persecuted Islam as models for the truest living under God.”

—Richard J. Jones

Richard J. Jones is Professor of Mission and World Religions at the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia.

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Daniel Jeyaraj, a contributing editor, is the Judson-DeFrietas Associate Professor of World Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, Massachusetts.
The concept of endangered species is entrenched in Westerners’ minds, but the parallel of endangered languages is only now live in towns and are losing cultural cohesiveness. In North America and Europe we recognize some of the languages and their speakers: the struggling Mohawks, the entertaining Yiddish, and the recently reinvigorated Welsh. Others are not well known, such as elderly Yuchi Indians in Oklahoma (some of whom remember beatings in school for speaking their language), the very opinionated Provençal speakers of France, and the remote but actually increasing Hixkaryana in Brazil. Abley describes parents not teaching their children their language, painfully realizing only decades later that something irrecoverable has been lost. There is no magic recipe for saving a language, but having youngsters immersed in it for hours a day seems the best strategy.

Abley is not a linguist, but he has read many of the best sources for understanding linguistics and his travels and interviews start in Australia, arguably the country with the most extremely endangered languages in the world, where he encounters the social decline of speakers of Tiwi, who now live in towns and are losing cultural cohesiveness. In North America and

Abley sprinkles fascinating language examples throughout: in Turkish the word for “stone” also refers to a chess piece or an innuendo; some Aboriginal languages have six words for “you.” There is just no such thing as a primitive language—they are all complex.

Missionaries, priests, and Bible translators often appear in passing. The author details the case of the Hixkaryana in Brazil and commends the help given by SIL Bible translators, though questioning SIL’s motives because of “their faith in such hard-line Protestant doctrines as the divine inspiration of all biblical texts” (p. 238).

Abley is not a linguist, but he has read quite extensively and talked to the experts, resulting in a factually solid and entertaining book.

Michael Cahill, International Linguistics Coordinator of Summer Institute of Linguistics International, Dallas, Texas, served for eleven years in Ghana with SIL, working on a literacy and Bible translation project with the Koma people.

An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity.


Allan Anderson offers an up-to-date survey of the kaleidoscopic nature of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. About two-thirds of the book is historical; the remaining third is mostly theological but includes the impact of Pentecostalism on missions, ecumenism, and culture, as well as a useful treatment of the shifts in Pentecostal theological education.

Anderson writes as “a sympathetic yet critical insider” (p. xii), having served
as a card-carrying Pentecostal minister and theological educator in South Africa. Over the past decade he has emerged as the successor to Walter Hollenweger at the University of Birmingham, where for decades serious academic research on Pentecostalism has been conducted.

Two distinct contributions of Anderson’s book are his recognition of the global origins of Pentecostalism, in contrast to the usual North American Parham-Seymour account, and his critical assessment of the widely reported numbers of Pentecostals and charismatics, which Anderson shows depend heavily on the definitions of included groups.

Readers will pick up interesting facts. For example: the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was originally formed as a Jesus Name group (p. 49); G. T. Haywood, an early black Pentecostal leader, was among those invited to Hot Springs (p. 53); the Korean Assemblies of God organization has associated with the Korean National Council of Churches (p. 139); and the vice president of Zambia is a Pentecostal pastor (p. 262).

Some, however, may be puzzled to find Crystal Cathedral pastor Robert Schuller listed with the “Faith teachers” (p. 222) and secondary documentation for early Christian sources included but author Philip Jenkins excluded from both index and bibliography.

Still, this volume is the place to begin if one is searching for a single-volume introduction to Pentecostalism. This book is exactly that, and profitably so.

—Russell P. Spittler

Russell P. Spittler is Provost Emeritus and Senior Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He currently serves as Interim Provost at Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, California.


As the subtitle reveals, this book presents provocative perspectives keyed to events sensationalized in daily headlines: the rise of Islam, the agonizing Middle Eastern conflicts, and the exponential growth of China’s economy as it integrates into the global trade and political world order. In the mid-1980s, David Aikman was Time magazine’s Beijing bureau chief, later returning as a freelance journalist with a keen interest in Christianity. The experiences he recounts in this kaleidoscopic compendium are based on evocative interviews, human interest stories, and personal accounts, many from anonymous sources.

Unfortunately, the work is almost exclusively skewed to the perspectives of unregistered Chinese Protestant Christians. Aikman makes their case by negative criticisms of the Chinese Christian Church and by severely judgmental attacks on outstanding leaders such as Bishop K. H. Ting. Regrettably, the single chapter on Roman Catholic Christianity is poorly sketched. While there is good synoptic background of the initial twelve centuries of solely Catholic Christianity in China until the early nineteenth century, little attention is given to many significant developments in Chinese Catholicism in the past quarter century.

Predictions made to substantiate the stated contention that “Christianity will change the nature of China in many different ways over the next several

“Asian Theology Has Come of Age.” —Michael Amaladoss

Editors:
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Co-sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia, the Asian Pacific Missiology and Research Program, Missio (Aachen) and The Council for World Mission, London
decades, and, in so doing, will change the world in which we live” (p. 292) reflect the recently much-heralded emergence of a numerically explosive, almost exclusively Protestant, urban, and educated Chinese Christian entrepreneurial class, which will significantly impact China’s development as a world power.

Jesus in Beijing serves to memorialize, albeit in rather narrow perspective, the millions of Chinese Christians of whatever persuasion who have always been living temples of irrepressible religious faith, undergirding the best of what it means to be Chinese and Christian. This reviewer wishes it would have more objectively celebrated this encounter in all its richness and variety.

—Janet Carroll, M.M.

Janet Carroll, M.M., is a Maryknoll missioner who served many years in pastoral and social ministries in Taiwan. From 1989 to 2003 she was executive director of the United States Catholic China Bureau, which exists to foster missionary partnership with the Roman Catholic Church in China.

David lifted the garage door open and a smile developed on his face. He turned around and looked at the group as if to say, “Here it is.”

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A native of Kenya, David Gichuru knows what it’s like to come to the United States with only a few suitcases filled with clothing. Because of this, he loves his job. He oversees a unique ministry at Asbury Seminary aimed at incoming international students.

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Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience.


Beads and Strands: Reflections of an African Woman on Christianity in Africa.


In these three books the medium is as important as the message because the production and dissemination of knowledge is a crucial aspect of the problem of African theological education. The three first appeared in a collaborative effort by Editions Clé, Cameroon, and Akrofi-Christaller Center, Ghana (through Regnum Africa), to publish the theological reflections of Africans at affordable prices. This is only one of the pioneering ways in which Kwame Bediako, the director of the center, has sought to define the theological enterprise in contemporary Africa. Orbis Books is recommended for encouraging this effort by sharing these works with a global audience through their Theology in Africa series. Among the three authors, the anglophone voices of Oduyoye, who served as a deputy secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Bediako are more familiar. Mana, who teaches at the Institut Protestant de Théologie de Porto-Novo, Benin, introduces the scholarship of a number of francophone Africans.

Oduyoye strengthens the voice of Christian women in patriarchal African churches; Bediako delineates the critical African contribution toward the numerical growth and changing faces of African Christianity; and Mana reflects on a theology of hope or renaissance in the midst of African pathology, or recovery from “the devaluation of our presence in the world of today” (p. 27).

All offer the same solution, which urges Africans to dig deep into their worldviews, religious traditions, and cultures for the resources needed for a new theology. The indigenous knowledge embedded in myths, proverbs, and cultures of Africa could make Christ meaningful and empowering amid the enlargement of the religious market, powerlessness in the global context, and vast social and moral challenges. Bediako refers back to the African world of early Christianity, where the Gospel functioned...
in a terrain similarly suffused with primal religions. Mana argues that our theology must recover the creative vitality of ancient Egypt and African traditions. Christology becomes the dialogue or fruitful cross-fertilization between Jesus Christ, as he comes into the “groves of our initiation,” and the sacred traditions that have sustained African communities. He reinterprets some myths that illustrate this process. Oduyoye reinterprets them for the liberation of women and hearing the speech of God afresh. Bediako builds on Vansina’s Paths in the Rainforests (1990) to emphasize the crucial role of language and the recovery of the story behind words. His students are required to read the Bible and to write their dissertations in the vernacular so as to grasp the full measure of the challenges of the Gospel to Africans. This approach is lived Christianity, with the potential for mature growth.

According to Bediako, the vernacular mediates Christ unobtrusively into African spirituality, reconfigures the gender ideology, provides a new way of doing hermeneutics, and recovers the resonance between African and biblical worldviews. I concur.

——Ogbu U. Kalu

Ogbu U. Kalu is the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Missions, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. He is President of the Midwest Association of Professors of Mission.


Anyone who has lived and worked in China is familiar with the foreign affairs officer, or Wai Ban, who is responsible for managing foreigners’ contacts and relations with the local community. Most are courteous and helpful, but they are part of a larger government system designed to monitor and control foreigners in China and to promote the official image of China to the world. Anne-Marie Brady’s book is a documented history of this system, how and why it came to be, and how it has changed over the eighty years of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule.

Two audiences are served by this book: historians of modern China, particularly those focused on pre-Reform China; and foreigners working in China today or planning to visit for specific purposes. Although Brady acknowledges the influence of traditional culture, her thesis is that party ideology controls policy and content. She traces the origin of the foreign affairs (Wai Shi) system to the CCP’s direct adaptation in the 1920s of the Soviet model, which limited foreign influence while taking advantage of foreign sympathizers. She describes the twists and turns of the policy from the special treatment in the 1950s and 1960s afforded Western sympathizers like Edgar Snow, Anna Louise Strong, and the New Zealander Rewi Alley to the current effort to curry favor with Western business leaders. While there is only one reference to religious organizations and nonprofit organizations (p. 229), the last two chapters on how the current system is in flux are very relevant for foreigners working on behalf of the church in their various institutions.

As China changes, the paradigm for interaction with foreigners is gradually changing. To quote Brady, “Breaking through such a paradigm to establish genuine interaction . . . is one of the challenges for the future” (p. 251).
The book offers an extensive bibliography, comprehensive footnotes, and the added bonus of an excellent eight-page Chinese-Pinyin glossary of important terms.

—Doug Lovejoy

Doug Lovejoy, Executive Director of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau, holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. He has taught courses in Chinese politics and international relations at Princeton University.

The History of the Relations Between the Low Countries and China in the Qing Era (1644–1911).


This collection of papers, presented in 1995 at an international conference sponsored by the Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, reminds us that small countries like Belgium and Holland played an important role in the West’s remarkable encounter with modern China. The book’s contributors, top scholars in their respective fields, weave a tapestry that covers the impact of the Low Countries’ evangelism, commerce, and cultural contact on China’s search for “wealth and strength” amid dynastic decline and the so-called unequal treaty system (1842–1943) imposed by Europe’s “Great Powers.”

Before becoming sovereign nations, Belgium and Holland contributed such notable Jesuits as Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–88) and Antoine Thomas (1644–1709) to the campaign in Catholic Europe to Christianize and exchange scientific knowledge with China. Their letters home, portraying an ethically governed Middle Kingdom devoid of the religious strife devastating Europe, made China the most-admired land in Asia. Two centuries later, the Dutch supported the German Catholic missionaries in Shandong.

Although the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) revoked the emperor’s 1724 ban against Christianity, Belgian Catholics sought to become independent of Great Power imperialism. They founded the Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae to promote missions in Mongolia. And in the Manchus’ twilight years they sponsored hundreds of Chinese students at Belgian universities, where many trained to manage the railroads that King Leopold II was building to open China to global commerce and new ideas.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands Missionary Society had sent the German-born Pietist Karl Gützlaff (1803–51) to pioneer Protestant evangelism in China. Dutch merchants expanded Sino-European trade and contributed to a widely read literature of praise for the nobility of the Chinese masses.

Amid the turbulence of warlord fragmentation after China’s 1911 revolution, the sympathetic Belgians did what they thought was best for the Chinese students in their midst: Christianize and Westernize them so they would transform China into a democratic republic. Back home the tide was already turning, as anticolonialism, with its attendant rejection of Christianity, began pushing China into Communism’s embrace.

—P. Richard Bohr

P. Richard Bohr is Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, St. Joseph and Collegeville, Minnesota.
The Unexpected Way: On Converting from Buddhism to Catholicism.


At a time when Buddhism continues to appeal to European and American seekers, when significant dialogue continues to occur between the Buddhist and Christian traditions, Paul Williams’s account of his conversion to Catholicism after more than twenty years as a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner is an exceptional contribution. University of Bristol professor of Indian and Tibetan philosophy, head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, and codirector of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Williams has authored four books on Buddhist thought. All the more, then, does his highly informed understanding of Buddhist belief and practice and his rejection of it to embrace Catholicism make compelling reading.

Williams expresses his position through some thirty-eight “analytic meditations” (p. 15), which are grouped under three major topics: (1) God, Buddhism, and morality; (2) the resurrection; and (3) Catholicism. Contending that from very fundamental perspectives, Buddhism and Christianity are “exactly opposite” (p. 79), Williams probes each distinction with a scholastic inquiry into which position is more rational, preferable, and obvious.

The central opposition, in which Williams finds Buddhism ultimately inadequate, is its practical denial of the relevance of God. Williams bluntly states that “from a Christian point of view Buddhism is clearly a form of atheism” (p. 26). He argues the persuasiveness of a necessary being over against the Buddhist assertion that things simply exist in causal dependence without explaining why they are so ordered. Williams is likewise critical of Buddhism for effectively denying the survival of one’s person, even while holding to a notion of reincarnation. The pessimism this view induces and the weakening of moral and ethical foundations implicated in this devaluation of the person poses a sharp contrast with Williams’s newfound Christian hope.

In my view, the author’s dismissal of Buddhism as merely an array of strategies for mind transformation and private, personal experiences is unwarranted and far too simplistic. At the same time, it raises certain questions about the Catholicism that Williams embraces. His emphasis on communal sacramentalism and on moral behavior as taught by a “theocratic” church authority (pp. 142, 146, 152) diminishes the significance of the rich meditative prayer traditions that grace the essence of the Mystical Body, which he otherwise so movingly celebrates.

—Brian Edward Brown

Brian E. Brown is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Iona College, New Rochelle, New York.

An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives.


As the title suggests, the author of this book first gives a brief overview of the biblical testimony regarding the meaning and value of other religions, then helpfully highlights some examples of various
In his discussion of some recent developments in Catholic thinking, the author unfortunately misunderstands and therefore misinterprets the so-called Venice Statement of 1977, which he says rejects evangelization of Jews (p. 119). What the statement actually rejects is proselytism of Jews, which it defines as “any sort of witness and preaching which in any way constitutes a physical, moral, psychological or cultural constraint on the Jews . . . by offering more or less overt protection, legal, material, cultural, political and other advantages, using educational, social or other pretexts.” Nowhere does it reject authentic mission and witness to the Jews!

There has never been published in any language a comprehensive study of Christian theology of religions throughout church history. This book could be a stage toward such a larger and more thorough work that would be a major reference tool. Until we have such a larger study, Kärkkäinen’s work will serve very well as an introduction to the subject.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson, a senior contributing editor, is Director Emeritus of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective.


Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader.


With an added epilogue on Orthodox-evangelical exchange, the revised edition of Clendenin’s presentation of Eastern Orthodox Christianity continues to serve its original purpose: to introduce aspects of Orthodox history and theology to evangelical Christians. This perspective shows in the concentration on Orthodox approaches to theology and truth claims about God and in the book’s emphasis on Orthodox understanding of Scripture, the believer’s growth in holiness, and the piety connected with seeing the divine in the icons. Ecclesiology, the sacraments, liturgy, and the role of Mary and the saints receive scant attention. Clendenin provides much useful information on the history of the early and Byzantine church, and he helps readers understand the
alienation between the Eastern Orthodox and the Latin church. To its great credit, the book relies heavily on the giants of modern Orthodox scholarship (Lossky, Schmemann, Meyendorff, and Kallistos Ware). The writing is colored by the author’s own experiences of a “hermeneutics of love” and is aimed at fostering mutual respect and overcoming mistrust and facile stereotyping. The accompanying volume—Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader—is a wonderful supplement, presenting basic texts that have become classics.

The Orthodox emphasis on the ecclesial mediation of faith and salvation is acknowledged, but Orthodox Christians may have a hard time with the author’s very Protestant discussion of sola Scriptura versus “Scripture within the church.” The many descriptions of the Protestant West cannot convince this Scandinavian, Lutheran reviewer that Clendenin is not grinding the axes of evangelical opposition to Reformation churches that root doctrine and interpretation of the Bible in liturgical worship. But by Clendenin’s own admission, the implied readers are not High Church Scandinavian Lutherans but American evangelicals who expect the Christian faith to be more than a head trip and who look to the evangelizing of post-Soviet Russia as a part of their Great Commission. Christians with that agenda can do nothing better than, with Clendenin, adopt a hermeneutics of love and policies of respect.

—Anna Marie Aagaard

Anna Marie Aagaard is Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Theology, University of Aarhus, Denmark.

Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement.


The issuing of the second edition of this already indispensable dictionary is evidence of the dramatic and rapid changes that characterize the ecumenical movement. Today’s survey of the ecumenical movement must, after a scant hundred years’ development, engage ecumenism in its Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal/Charismatic, indigenous, and non-Western forms. All these perspectives are admirably respected in this resource.

The six editors (Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom F. Stranksy, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Pauline Webb), who are themselves a guarantor of the quality and balance of the work, provide an accessible, well-organized, lucidly written, and remarkably comprehensive tool with this Dictionary; they added over forty articles to the first-edition collection and carried their coverage forward to 2002 (in at least some articles). The contributors represent a Who’s Who of ecumenical experience and erudition. The brief bibliographies after each article guide the reader into the necessary literature. The alphabetical list of articles at the beginning helps in designing one’s search; there is an index of names at the end and a very useful glossary of abbreviations to help one through the “alphabet soup” of modern acronyms.

Major articles are often masterful (e.g., “Jesus Christ,” by Rowan Williams; “Mission,” by Philip Potter and Jacques Matthey), and the overviews of major meetings, consultations, and documents are useful. Both beginning student and
Established scholar will use this resource with profit. Wishes for the third edition: the inclusion of missiologists as part of the ecumenical story (e.g., Bosch, Verkuyl, Walls, Warneck), attention to the issues of the church and the parachurch, and recognition of the missional significance of Karl Barth, especially in the emergence of the missio Dei theology. The Dictionary is essential for libraries and well worth its price for the serious student. —Darrell Guder


Dissertation Notices


February 28–March 4, 2005
**Church Growth for a New Generation.** Dr. George G. Hunter III, former dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission, Asbury Theological Seminary, offers strategic thinking for churches, especially in outreach, evangelism, cross-cultural mission, and social reform. Eight sessions. $145

March 7–11
**Exploring God’s Creation: New Insights, New Response.** Miriam Therese MacGillis, O.P., cofounder of Genesis Farm, focuses on the interface between our Christian tradition and the new insights offered by contemporary science and ecological awareness to aid participants in their search for more authentic ways to live in harmony with the natural world and each other. Cosponsored by Maryknoll Mission Institute and held at Maryknoll, New York. Eight sessions. $140

March 14–18
**Culture, Interpersonal Conflict, and Christian Mission.** Dr. Duane H. Elmer and Dr. Muriel I. Elmer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, help Christian workers strengthen interpersonal skills and resolve conflicts among colleagues, including host-country peoples. Cosponsored by Inland Mission International and Moravian Church Board of World Mission. Eight sessions. $145

April 4–8
**Ministry in Islamic Contexts.** Rev. Joseph Cumming, Ph.D. candidate, Yale University, and Mrs. Michele Cumming, M.A., in Intercultural Studies and vice-president of the American Society of Missiology East, draw on two decades of living, ministering, raising a family, and running an NGO in a North African country to offer both theoretical and practical insight. Eight sessions. $145

April 11–15
**Missionary Identity: A Dialogical Process.** Professor Frans J. Verstraelen, OMSC Senior Mission Scholar in Residence and formerly at the University of Zimbabwe, explores Christian and ecclesial mission in different contexts as dynamic development based on mutual assistance and reciprocal correction and enrichment. Eight sessions. $145

May 2–6
**Personal Renewal in the Missionary Community.** Rev. Stanley W. Green, Mennonite Mission Network, and Mrs. Christine Aroney Sine, Mustard Seed Associates, blend classroom instruction and one-on-one sessions to offer a time of personal renewal, counsel, and direction for Christian workers. Cosponsored by Mennonite Mission Network. Eight sessions. $145
Book Notes

Gelber, Harry G.
Opium, Soldiers, and Evangelicals: England’s 1840–42 War with China and Its Aftermath.

Haumann, Mathew.
Travelling with Soldiers and Bishops: Stories of Struggling People in Sudan.

Hayes, Michael, ed.
Mission and Evangelisation.

Heslam, Peter, ed.
Globalization and the Good.

Hirsch, Bertrand, and Manfred Kropp, eds.
Saints, Biographies, and History in Africa / Saints, biographies et histoire en Afrique / Heilige, Biographien und Geschichte in Afrika.

Jeyaraj, Daniel.
Genealogy of the South Indian Deities: An English Translation of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg’s Original German Manuscript, with a Textual Analysis and Glossary.

Langmead, Ross.
The Word Made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Missiology.

Magesa, Laurenti.
Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa.

Mortensen, Viggo, ed.
Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue.

Nissen, Johannes.

Phan, Peter C.
Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making.

Phan, Peter C.
In Our Own Tongue: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation.

Pickens, George F.
African Christian God-Talk: Matthew Ajugua’s Johera Narrative.

Sandos, James A.
Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions.

Zdero, Rad.
The Global House Church Movement.

In Coming Issues

The Congregational Leadership Crisis Facing the Japanese Church
Thomas J. Hastings and Mark R. Mullins

The Church in North Korea: Retrospect and Prospect
Hyun-Sik Kim

Catholic Missionaries and Civil Power in Africa, 1878–1914
Aylward Shorter, M.Afr.

Beyond Bosch: The Early Church and the Christendom Shift
Alan Kreider

The Religious Worldview of the Indigenous Population of the Northern Ob’ as Understood by Christian Missionaries
Anatolii M. Ablazhei

John Howard Yoder as Mission Theologian
Joon-Sik Park

Pre-Revolution Russian Mission to Central Asia: A Contextualized Legacy
David M. Johnstone

In our Series on the Legacy of Outstanding Missionary Figures of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, articles about
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