Finding Our Own Voice: The Quest for Authentic Conversion

Charles Forman is to be thanked for his masterful overview of theological developments in the Pacific Islands, a part of the world too seldom mentioned in this journal. His title, “Finding Our Own Voice,” aptly reflects a ubiquitous and quintessentially human quest that manifests itself at all levels of life—individual, community, ethnic group, and nation—and across the spectrum of languages, societies, and religions. This quest is implicit in several of the articles in this issue of the IBMR.

To be spoken for implies a degree of powerlessness on the part of those who are represented by the voice of another. This incapacity may issue from intrinsic reasons having to do with one’s degree of maturity, mental development, or medical condition; or it may be the result of extrinsic conditions that foster and perpetuate marginalization, rendering certain individuals and groups voiceless.

Representation does not always reflect the wishes of those represented and sometimes is brutally imposed, as with colonies and possessions of empires. Those on whose behalf the powerful voice of domination is raised are obliged to sit mutely by while others explain what is “really” on their minds. In other cases, socially amplified voices represent or misrepresent others in matters pertaining to the Ultimate and the innermost. Theologians speak for God, bishops speak for dioceses, clergy speak for congregations, and missionaries speak for converts.

Anatoliy M. Ablazhei’s article, translated by David Collins, illustrates ways in which a people can be rendered voiceless through the well-intentioned actions of missionaries. Through his careful study of the religious worldview of the indigenous population of the northern Ob’, in western Siberia, Ablazhei reminds us that while the Christian Gospel should be good news for all peoples, regardless of their cultures, destructive forces are unleashed when insensitive outsiders too quickly presume to represent God within a complex cultural and linguistic milieu that they neither adequately comprehend nor fully appreciate. Such ignorance has at times issued in the exorcism of indigenous cultures through the agency of Western boarding schools for the young. Years spent on the Procrustean bed of Eurocentric education inevitably spawn sterile hybrid cultures whose indigenous memories and traditions have been obliterated or so denigrated as to no longer serve as trustworthy guides to life.

The indigenous cultures having been exorcised, the inrush

Continued next page
of an incoherent concoction of values and orientations has produced miserably dysfunctional communities whose condition is worse now than before the “Good News” arrived.

Yet, as Jennifer Trafton reminds us in her article on Samuel Fairbank, missionaries often got things right. It was the adaptation of the kirttan (an indigenous style of teaching and singing) to Christian purposes in the mid-nineteenth century that most compellingly and effectively communicated the Gospel to the people of Wadalé, India, resulting in what today is a socially vibrant and predominantly Christian region. The story of Fairbank’s agricultural work is a sober rebuke to doctrinaire insistence on Rufus Anderson’s “self-supporting churches” ideal, whatever the cultural and economic circumstances of a people. Those subsisting as landless laborers, sharecroppers, or beggars, whose destitution is compounded by droughts, blights, and famines, have never well complied with the comfortable Western missionary’s insistence that they be self-supporting. Something more was needed—in Fairbank’s case industrial schools, agricultural work, and English classes—so that Christian touchables might develop the capacity not merely to speak but to be heard in their own voice.

In his essay “Christian Scholarship in Africa in the Twenty-first Century,” appearing in the December 2001 issue of the journal African Christian Thought, Andrew Walls noted that while the health and survival of Christianity depend upon cross-cultural diffusion, Christian conversion involves more than a cognitive shift from incorrect to correct theological propositions. Any transformative process aiming to redirect the breadth and width and height and depth of a people’s culture toward Christ must penetrate to the very DNA of that culture. And “deep translation” as he calls it, takes multiple generations to accomplish.

Walls went on in the same article to make the startling prediction that if such qualitative conversion occurs in African societies, “we may see something like what appeared in the third, fourth and fifth centuries. We may see a great creative development of Christian theology; new discoveries about Christ that eventually touches the very heart of a culture and transforms its every fiber. The second may be a resurfacing of the same fatally flawed proelytizing as practiced by those whom our Lord accused of crossing “sea and land to make a single convert,” and then making “the new convert twice as much a child of hell” as they themselves (Matt. 23:15), while the first contributes richly to “building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to . . . the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:12–13). Not shallow hypocrisy but authentic conversion should be our object, an aspiration that we think you will agree is modestly supported by this issue of the IBMR.
Finding Our Own Voice: The Reinterpreting of Christianity by Oceanian Theologians

Charles W. Forman

The study of Christianity in the Pacific Islands is nothing new. What is new is that the study is being carried out by islanders themselves. Recent years have seen a surge of fresh thinking by theologically trained Pacific Islanders dealing with the Christian religion. This new thinking is the result of a great variety of changes in island life. The most obvious change has been the transition from colonial status to independence in most island countries. Equally important has been independence for the island churches. Starting with Tonga in the nineteenth century and continuing with the other islands from the 1930s to the 1960s, church independence for all but the Roman Catholic churches was established. The Catholics received native-born bishops and regional bishops’ conferences to care for them, even though, as in the Roman Catholic Church worldwide, the bishops continued to be appointed by Rome. Independent churches in independent countries have given an impetus to independent thinking.

Simultaneously, a revolutionary change has taken place in theological colleges in the Pacific Islands, making fresh thinking possible. The old theological colleges provided only limited opportunity for students to study, for the students had to grow their own food or catch their own fish, and they had to construct or maintain their own homes and the college buildings. In this way the colleges were economically independent, reflecting the economic independence of traditional Pacific societies, but less than half of the workday could be spent on studies. Academic standards were usually low. But starting about 1960, standards began to rise. With outside financial help, that highly privileged character—the full-time student—began to appear.

The flagship for the new style was a special college established jointly by the Protestant churches from all over the South Pacific in 1966. It was the Pacific Theological College, located in Suva, Fiji. It was the first degree-granting institution in the South Pacific Islands and received the top students from the churches of most of the island countries. Its purpose was to train theological and church administrators, rather than local pastors. It also had a further goal, as stated in its original statement of purpose: “To make available to the world the distinctive theological insights which God has given to Pacific Christians.”

In other words, its establishment implied the creation of a Pacific theology, and from the beginning it took this intention seriously. Students were required to write theses or projects, most of which were about Pacific theology, conditions, or history. Of the 291 theses written before 1994, fully 275, or 95 percent, focused on a Pacific theme. These theses, an important expression of Pacific thinking, have been microfilmed by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, in Canberra, Australia.

The Pacific Theological College naturally became the main source for teachers and principals of the lower-level theological colleges in all the island countries, and these graduates were the prime force in raising the standards of those institutions. Islanders gradually replaced the European missionaries in the colleges (the term “European” applying to all people of European ancestry, whether they came directly from Europe or from Australia, New Zealand, or North America). A survey of the sixteen Protestant colleges made by the present author in 1968 found all the principals of these colleges to be European, while another survey in 1984 found all the principals to be islanders. From the Pacific Theological College also came the great majority of the theologians who are included in this study. Not included here, it should be noted, are Papua New Guinean theologians, since they are so abundant as to require separate treatment, and they have already attracted considerable attention.

Role of the Worldwide Ecumenical Movement

The new theological thinking in the Pacific has been closely related to the ecumenical movement, which has brought the churches of the world closer together. One islander has written: “It was the ecumenical movement that made possible serious theological reflection.” The chief ecumenical agency in the Pacific has been the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), which emerged at the same time as the Pacific Theological College. Conference meetings have provided occasions when theologically trained people could get together and share their ideas. The PCC meeting in 1976 heard one of the first calls for a Pacific theology, and the delegates there voted to call a consultation on theological education, which was held in Papauta, Samoa, in 1978. This gathering in turn led to three Pacific-wide consultations on theology, held in Fiji in 1985, 1987, and 2001, and to smaller national consultations thereafter. In these consultations theological connections far beyond the Pacific were important. A secretary of the World Council of Churches was the one who suggested the first consultation, and all consultations were funded by the World Council and other world agencies.

World ecumenism gave another boost to Pacific theology by helping to provide a journal in which the island theologians could publish their ideas. The Pacific Journal of Theology was started on a small scale in 1961. Because there was not yet a sufficient number of Pacific theologians to support the venture, however, most of the writing was done by a small group of European missionaries. Besides the great difficulty in securing articles, a rapidly declining circulation forced the abandonment of the effort in 1970. By the time of the theological consultation in 1987, however, there was a new generation of trained Islanders and strong pressure to revive the journal. European, Australian, and American financial support was secured, and the Journal has had a continuous existence ever since.

The extent of the world ecumenical interest in helping Pacific theology is understandable if one looks at it in connection with what was going on in the rest of the globe. The 1983 Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which was devoted to issues of Gospel and culture, proclaimed that every culture should have its own access to the Gospel. Under World Council auspices the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) was launched in 1976 and held periodic meetings in Third World countries. A Pacific chapter was organized.

Charles W. Forman is Professor Emeritus of Missions, Yale University Divinity School. He has published extensively on Pacific Island Christianity, including The Island Churches of the South Pacific (Orbis, 1982) and The Voice of Many Waters (Lotu Pasifika Productions, 1986).
in 1994. In these several ways the ecumenical movement provided the context and stimulus for distinctive theological thinking in the Pacific.

**Four Leading Islander Theologians**

It is appropriate now to consider the men and women who have led in the development of islander theological thinking. First must come the one who may be regarded as the father of Pacific theology, the late Sione ‘Amanaki Havea, of Tonga. He was long the president of the main Methodist Church of Tonga, guiding that church through critical times as the one person who had the confidence of both the king, with his conservative cohorts, and the liberalizing, democratizing young churchmen. He was the first chairman of the PCC and the first islander to serve as principal of the Pacific Theological College. He issued one of the earliest calls for a Pacific theology, doing so at a World Council of Churches meeting in Toronto in 1983, a call that made headline news in Fiji.

Havea coined the term “coconut theology,” suggesting that it might well be the description of Pacific theology. In many ways the coconut could symbolize Christ, since it gives life to human beings, and when it is broken new life springs forth. The Pacific use of time might be called coconut time, since the coconut comes to fruition at its own pace, without hurry or concern for punctuality. Havea claimed that the Gospel, instead of coming with the missionaries to the Pacific, affected the whole world simultaneously at the time of Christ. The missionaries came only to make known the Good News that was already present, being hinted at in the sharing and caring that were already common among Pacific peoples. On the whole, however, Havea was not so much a contributor to Pacific theology as he was an instigator, one who saw the need and got people interested in the subject.

The second important figure has had much to contribute. Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, from Fiji, has also been a principal of the Pacific Theological College. He has as well been the general secretary and president of the Methodist Church of Fiji, where he did a miraculous work in pulling back together the narrow nationalists and the broad ecumenists who had shredded the church by their fierce struggle following the 1987 coup. He succeeded in part because of the theological outlook that he has advocated, one expressed most fully in his book *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place* (2002), based on his doctoral dissertation.

Though Tuwere has broad relationships in the ecumenical church, he has felt strongly the power of *Vanua*, or land, for the Fijian soul. Land, seen in the Fijian way, includes more than the physical turf. It includes the people and the ways of life that exist on the land. A Fijian proverb says, “Land is people, people is land.” The land is linked to the things that have happened on the land. So the land has a history, and the God of history is likewise the God of the land. Western writers have often missed this understanding in their one-sided emphasis on the God of history. Tuwere speaks of “the trinitarian solemnity of Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu”—land, church, and government. He wants to keep these three together. He believes that the church has erred in teaching a kind of dualism, with one side of a person belonging to the land and the other side to the church, thus dividing the physical from the spiritual. There is, in his view, only one reality: the land, in which the physical and the spiritual are related. Christian teaching has mistakenly emphasized a spiritual salvation, the side of the church, as over against creation, the side of the land. But salvation takes place within creation, the land, and presupposes creation. Creation indeed provides a framework for salvation. And the history of salvation includes the history of the land as it is remembered in myths, legends, dances, and idioms.

This thinking may sound like an absorption of Christianity into Fijian culture, but Tuwere balances these ideas with other considerations. The history of salvation includes, he says, not only the history of the land with its myths and legends; it includes also Christ at its center. There is one continuous history of salvation in Fiji in which God has been at work, first in the history of the land with its beliefs and value systems, and then in the coming of Christianity and the growth of the church. Christ stands at the center of this single history. Fijian culture is therefore not the final reality. The message of Christ should be used for “brutal self-criticism” within the culture. In order to allow this self-criticism to operate, the church must be independent of the state, and there is no place for a Christian state such as the nationalist Methodists have been demanding. So Tuwere has kept a precarious balance and has been a voice for moderation in strife-ridden Fiji.

The third of our leading theologian-statesmen is Bishop Leslie Boseto, the first Melanesian to serve as moderator of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, which has now become, for his area, the United Church in the Solomon Islands. Though he is most at home in his Solomon Island villages, he is an effective leader on the national level, having been a cabinet minister in the government, and also on the world stage, having been on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and becoming, as some have said, “the authentic ‘Voice of the Pacific’ in international gatherings.” He has published one book, which is primarily an account of his year as moderator.

In his theological writings Boseto, like Havea, often appeals for indigenized theology. The Gospel is indeed universal, but theology, he says, must be local, interpreting the Gospel in terms of the local culture. Yet Boseto also goes beyond this general call, stressing the strong sense of community among Pacific peoples. God prepared the peoples of Melanesia to hear the Gospel by making them community-minded people. The Pacific way of interdependence, he declares, is a way derived from God, whereas the way of individualism, coming from the West and leading to the pursuit of profit and the accumulation of things, is not in the interests of God’s kingdom. He does not go so far as to claim that Pacific ways can provide the foundation for the church; that is provided by the ways of Jesus. Boseto spent two years visiting every village on his home island of Choiseul to learn the needs of the village communities, which are the heart of the church. From his village experience he became concerned about the environmental damage to the islands. “The more we love Christ,” he says, “the more we love the earth.” He believes God’s spirit...
is angered and pained by what is happening to his forests and his seas. God’s people should protect God’s creation. Thus he includes social ethics in his theology.

Boseto also includes a concern for church unity. Wherever there has been a union between separated churches, as in the case of his own church, he sees it as a gift from God. Church unity “must be seen within the center of God’s being and his will.” Boseto has been able to speak more forcibly for church unity than have other Pacific theologians, since the denomination of which he was moderator has presented the only example in the Pacific Islands of churches coming together from diverse Christian traditions.

The fourth and last of the major theologians may be regarded as one who has dealt principally with social ethics: Bishop Patelesio Finau of the Roman Catholic Church in Tonga. Finau, who died suddenly in 1993 while chairman of the PCC and at the height of his great influence, was a champion of action in society. His great effort was to get the churches out of their ecclesiastical closets and into the public life of society. He wanted the church to be the conscience of the nation. With this message he inspired and excited the young theological students and the younger priests and pastors.

Finau, however, was not just a social activist. He gave strong theological foundations to his ethical demands. The Hebrew prophets were his examples. The incarnation was his pattern, especially in Jesus’ identification with the poor and the oppressed. His theology in general was very traditional, but he gave it a contemporary application. Unlike some of the other theologians, he saw much to criticize in Pacific cultures, including frequent lack of respect for women and youth, abuse of authority, domineering and unforgiving attitudes, and family values that pushed aside gospel values. He was little inclined to hold up Pacific culture as congruent with Christian faith. Following in his wake, other Tongan theologians have spoken out, more than have theologians in other islands, against injustices in the old social structures.

Finau seems to be the only Roman Catholic man who has been a major figure in island theology. The Catholics were late in developing higher theological education. Their Pacific Regional Seminary, located close to the Pacific Theological College in Suva, was seven years later in getting started. Catholics did not indigenize their teaching staff in their seminaries as quickly as the Protestants did. Their writing was more on practical church operations and spiritual development than on theology. Finau was an outstanding exception, which gives his work special significance.

Three Other Important Islander Thinkers

In close connection with the four leading figures just discussed, we must recognize three other outstanding islanders who have published full-length books on theological subjects. The first is Lalomilo Kamu. His book The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel (1996) is a revision of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Birmingham, published posthumously by his American-born wife. The book wrestles throughout with the Gospel-culture question, which has been raised by so many islanders. The first part criticizes the European missionaries for having been too condemnatory of the culture, and the last part criticizes the Samoan church for having been too conciliatory toward the culture. Both criticisms have much truth in them.

Kamu has some of the same interest as Tuwere in the land, seen as mystically related to the people, as something that is life-giving rather than being a commodity that can be bought and sold. But he is clear that the land is not itself divine, only a gift from God. And he has some of the same interest as Boseto in God’s involvement with the community. Samoans experience life always in community, and God deals with the community. Still, they should not idealize the community or let it become tyrannical. He believes that the original creator God of the

Unlike some of the other theologians, Finau saw much to criticize in Pacific cultures.

Samoans, long denounced by the missionaries and their students, was essentially the same as the Christian creator God, now related through Christianity to a much bigger creation. The worship of God, in Kamu’s view, needs to be both more localized and more universalized. Kamu thus maintains a constant sense of balance in his writing.

In contrast to Kamu, Pothin Wete is far from looking for a balance. Coming from New Caledonia, he is an ardent champion of the Kanaks, the indigenous people of that land. He has been a teacher at the Pacific Theological College, and his book is a revised version of the master’s thesis he submitted there.

Wete’s writing follows in the line of an earlier thesis written at the Pacific Theological College by another Kanak, Djoubelly Wea, who wrote on the subject “An Education for the Kanak Liberation.” After his theological education Wea became one of the leaders of the independence movement in his homeland. When Jean-Marie Tjibaou, the chief leader for independence and a believer in nonviolence, went to France for negotiations in 1988 and signed the compromise involved in the Matignon Accord, under which New Caledonia might never get complete independence, Wea was horrified. He later invited Tjibaou and his chief colleague to a memorial service for independence martyrs, and as they were entering, he shot and killed both of them. Wea and his accomplice were immediately killed by the bodyguards.

Wete is like Tjibaou in calling for nonviolent resistance, but like Wea in demanding complete independence. He describes his thought as “Kanak liberation theology.” In most of the world, liberation theology has expressed a protest against forms of class domination and economic oppression. But Wete carries the liberation theme to a more fundamental level. He believes Kanak liberation theology will enrich and deepen the liberation theologies of other lands because it expresses the cry of a people not just for political or economic liberation but for their very existence. The Kanaks, he feels, are in danger of losing their existence through the loss of traditional values and the adoption of foreign ways. His concern is based not simply on national identity; it has biblical roots as well. The demand for independence flows from all that the Hebrew prophets have said about justice and freedom. It is also related to the Christian hope for the new creation. That hope leads the Kanaks forward on the path toward independence, which is hard and full of obstacles, where the conflict will intensify over the years. Wete is a theological thinker rather than an activist, but his thinking points clearly to vigorous action.
Ana'amalele Tofaeono, the third of this group, is the most recent major theologian to emerge in the Pacific. Coming from American Samoa and trained in Germany, he recently published his doctoral dissertation as *Eco-theology: Aiga—the Household of Life* (2000). Tofaeono takes his cue from today’s global ecological crisis and more particularly from the serious environmental degradation of Samoa. His work is thoroughly researched and explores rich veins of myth and history. Christianity, he shows, has concentrated too narrowly on the human scene and has neglected the wider creation. Traditional Samoan religion was aware of the whole of creation and human dependence on nature. In the present crisis there is need to recapture the values of the old tradition and to combine them with Christianity. The sacredness of the land and sea need to be respected again as they were of old. Tofaeono examines the biblical as well as the traditional grounds for this view, seeing in the Bible the purpose of God as the production of “sustainable life in communion and unity of all things in creation.” The Samoan concept of *aiga*, or family, which is all-powerful in Samoan social life, includes the whole family of creation. Tofaeono’s thoughts carry a challenge to Christianity far beyond the bounds of Samoa.

**Important Social Activists**

Many other church leaders among islanders offer a broad challenge, though more as social activists than as theological thinkers. They deserve some attention here, however, since their action reflects important lines of theological thought. They address the major social and economic problems of the Pacific and the world. They are concerned about nuclear testing and nuclear waste, national independence, global warming, tourism, transnational corporations, drift-net fishing, and the like. The primary locus for the expression of these concerns has been the PCC. Various programs of the PCC have been aimed at these problems, especially the Church and Society Program. The periodic assemblies of the PCC have been great occasions for social pronouncements.

The general secretary of the PCC who did the most to arouse social concerns was Lorine Tevi, who served as secretary from 1977 to 1981. She opened up the churches to a sense of social responsibility as no one else in her position has done. She felt that the churches should not look back to their island traditions so much as forward to the needs for justice, peace, and development.

Tevi’s thinking on rural development was related to, and partly based on, the work of one of her staff, Sitiveni Ratuvili, a minister of the Fiji Methodist Church. In a booklet entitled *Spiritual Bases of Rural Development in the Pacific* (1979), Ratuvili stressed the theological reasons for new directions in development policies worldwide. Development, he said, should encourage people to follow God’s way of love and care for each other, and of faith and hope in one another and in God. Development should therefore not lead to fragmentation in the community and enhancement of selfishness, as it often does, but should encourage people to work together, using their own resources to accomplish their own decisions. It should not rely heavily on outside aid, which only creates dependence and destroys the self-reliance of the people. Ratuvili thus stood against what were then the major trends of international development programs.

The most famous advocate of social action by the church has been the Anglican priest Walter Lini, the first prime minister of Vanuatu. He declared that in the Pacific tradition there was no division between religion and politics and that churchmen, including ministers, should hold political office. In fact, the first Vanuatu parliament included six ministers of religion, and four of the seven cabinet members were ministers. This involvement he saw as appropriate, because the church is required to fight injustice. People like Lini and Tevi took for granted the theological grounds for action and did not get into much examination of those grounds.

Another group of activists who have often taken the theological grounds largely for granted have been the advocates of women’s rights. Pacific church women, often supported by the world church, have been holding national and then regional meetings. In the 1990s they formed an organization known as the Weavers. At their meetings the speakers have examined the life of Pacific women and have told their stories. They have reported on the disabilities that women suffer in traditional culture. The most theologically articulate of the women has been Ketti Ann Kanongata’a, a Roman Catholic from Tonga, superior general of the indigenous order Sisters of Our Lady of Nazareth. She believes that the stories the women have been telling need more theological depth. She asks the question, Where is God in women’s domestic life? She compares women’s life to life in the womb and their present liberation to the process of birthing. “God’s female maternal womb is fertile and compassionate,” she writes. “It enables our birthing to come about with forcefulness and firmness, but also with creativity and gentleness.” Obviously the view of God as Mother is present here, but she also makes room for God as Father. She links the oppression experienced by women to the wider oppression experienced by Pacific cultures.

A centerpiece for women’s theology has been the book *Weavings: Women Doing Theology in Oceania* (2003), published by the Weavers. The book is a collection of essays by twenty-three women drawn from all over the South Pacific. It puts its first emphasis on the need for inclusivity in the view of God, who should no longer be seen as only male. Biblical and traditional arguments are presented for the full equality of women with men in church and society. Many personal testimonies are also given by women who have broken with tradition and forged new places for themselves.

Only a few men have spoken for the women’s theological cause. Two Samoans, Otele Perelini and Peteru Tone, both on the staff of the Malua Theological College, are noticeable. Perelini maintains that since Jesus frees all the oppressed, any church structures that prevent the full emancipation of women fall short of the Gospel of Jesus. Tone examines the limitations on women found in the Bible and points out that they all followed upon the Fall of humanity. The church is to bring liberation from the effects of the Fall, and therefore women should not be subordinate in the church.

**Adapting Christianity to Pacific Culture**

The procession of all islander theological thinkers is a long one, and here we sample only a few more of them, and then only on one major topic: the adaptation of Christianity to Pacific culture.
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They, like several of the thinkers already mentioned, feel that there has been an unfortunate separation between Christianity and Pacific culture and that the task today is to heal that separation. They see the Pacific cultures as complementary to the Gospel. “Our cultures and traditions,” says one, “still carry precious concepts and ideas that are complementary to the message of the Gospel.” Or, to quote another, “Those cultures are the best instruments given to women and men by God to understand his ways.” A PCC assembly gave its official approval to such thinking when it said there should be “a marriage of theology and culture.”

Implicit in this endorsement of Pacific culture are a criticism of modern Western culture and accusations that it is incompatible with Christian life. A Tahitian church leader criticizes “the Western missionary invading zeal” and the negative, foreign distortions that came with it to a Pacific where God, Christ, Spirit, and Gospel were already present. A Fijian theologian points out that while Pacific culture values cooperation, generosity, family loyalty, sharing, and community life, Western culture stresses money, violence, sex, sports, and individual power. Capitalism from the West, says a Samoan, is damaging the environment and deforming Pacific societies. The deformation is shown in the way that traditional holders of power are making themselves wealthy rather than serving the common good. Capitalism is not acceptable in Pacific cultures, with their emphasis on sharing. Pacific Islanders are sometimes criticized because they do not do well in business, but this so-called weakness is a virtue because business involves individual aggressiveness and acquisitiveness, which Islanders do not have and should not want. Capitalist globalization has had a negative effect on the islands, with its depletion of resources, its global warming, and its toxic wastes.

Along with Western culture, Western theology comes in for its share of criticism. It is common to argue that Western theology is relevant only to Western conditions. To try to apply it to the Pacific is to engage in theological imperialism. Theology must be reformulated for each time and place, and the would-be universal theologies from the West are ineffective for Oceanians.

Pacific culture values cooperation, generosity, family loyalty, sharing, and community life.

A more trenchant criticism, this one from the recent principal of the theological seminary in American Samoa, is that the whole European way of studying theology is faulty because it fails to humble human reason before God. It tries to capture the transcendence of God in human rationality. Theology should be more a reflection of inward experience and should follow a more intuitive approach. It is interesting and a bit ironic that this author appeals to two Germans, Karl Barth and Paul Tillich, to support his criticism of Western theology.

Some of the most creative thrusts in the adaptation of Christianity to the Pacific have been made by means of singling out particular Pacific traits that might enhance Christianity. Kihone Mafaufau, a young Samoan theologian following on Havaea’s thought, has claimed theological value for the Pacific way of using time. Time, in his view, is not something to be rushed through, but something to be used deliberately and with appre-

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Some of the most creative thrusts in the adaptation of Christianity to the Pacific have been made by means of singling out particular Pacific traits that might enhance Christianity. Kihone Mafaufau, a young Samoan theologian following on Havaea’s thought, has claimed theological value for the Pacific way of using time. Time, in his view, is not something to be rushed through, but something to be used deliberately and with appre-

Summary

Looking back at the whole field, it is clear that what we have seen is a major reinterpretation of Christianity moving along two lines. Along one line we have seen the creation of a much more socially responsible and socially critical Christianity. The established churches in the past were otherworldly in their interests, concerned primarily with eternal souls, while being comfortably conformed to the local social structures. No one could say they
were socially irrelevant, for they were deeply intertwined with the traditional society and contributed to its strength. Occasionally a local pastor or priest would criticize a morally wayward chief or headman, but mostly they cooperated with the local power structures. They had little to say about national affairs or international matters. But now we have seen a widespread interest in effecting social and political change, especially in the international realm. Church leaders have awakened to the world-encompassing powers and policies are damping the Pacific, and they are calling for the protection of their lands and seas.

The other line of reinterpretation has brought Christian belief into a more appreciative relation with traditional culture. The links to Western culture have been weakened, and the links to Pacific culture have been strengthened. This change has, rather strangely, been brought about by people who are more closely in touch with Western culture than were their village-bound predecessors. The men and women whose thoughts have been examined here are part of the new cosmopolitan elite, the intellectuals are not for the rank-and-file Christians but for the intellectually advanced, for whom they have provided a new standing for the traditional culture. As the older type of village Christianity helped shape the identity of many villagers, the new theology helps shape the identity of cosmopolitan Christian islanders.

The question inevitably arises as to how far these theologians are participants in the “invention of tradition,” the idealization of traditional culture that has been much discussed by scholars.76 There can be no clear-cut answer to the question. Of the major thinkers we have covered, Havea and Wete, and perhaps Boseto and Tofaeono, show a wholly positive and therefore somewhat idealized picture of traditional culture. But others—Finau, Tuwere, Kamu, Tevi, and the feminists—recognize that there are negative elements in the inherited ways. Many writers make it their task to identify particular traits in the tradition that they believe can improve island Christianity, without having a totally positive evaluation of the past. On the whole we may say that the idealization of the old culture—what has been called “traditionalism,” as distinct from tradition—has had a considerable influence, but it has not been allowed to go unchallenged.

Alongside of some “invention of tradition” we may speak of some “invention of Christianity.” The particular ways of thinking set forth by the men and women of the Pacific constitute a new formulation of Christianity. It is not a bitter rejection of what has been received from the common Christian heritage, for the new formulation carries forward the basic Christian heritage. But it adds its own perspectives and emphases, which then modify the whole. The result is a new kind of religion, a new stream blending two different tributaries. For those who are involved in the study of missions, the emerging voices from the Pacific offer a significant enrichment of the field of study.

Notes

18. Ibid., p. 171.
42. Ibid., pp. 71, 88–91, 104.
44. Forman, *Voice of Many Waters*, pp. 102–33; see Suliana Siwatibau and David Williams, *A Call to a New Exodus: An Anti-Nuclear Primer for Pacific People* (Suva: Lotu Pasifika, 1982).
52. Peteru Tone, “The Place of Women in the Church and Society of the Pacific,” in *Towards a Relevant Pacific Theology*, pp. 59–67.
61. Meo, “Quest for Pacific Theology,” p. 4.
74. Jurimia, “Theology and Practice in the Islands.”
“It Is Our Bounden Duty”: Theological Contours of New Zealand’s Missionary Movement, 1890–1930

Hugh Morrison

Up to 1930, at least 750 New Zealanders went overseas as Protestant missionaries, 60 percent of them women. Drawn from a broad spectrum of Protestant denominations (with Presbyterians, Brethren, Baptists, Methodists, and Anglicans in the majority), they went to a variety of destinations, particularly India, the Southwest Pacific, China, and South America. They were supported by a growing network of churches, organizations, and individual supporters. Women and children were especially involved and enthusiastic supporters. By the 1920s missions occupied a central position in the priorities, were especially involved and enthusiastic supporters. By the organizations, and individual supporters. Women and children were supported by a growing network of churches, denominations. Mission theology in this period, framed within a broadly evangelical construction, varied in both definition and conception. In this article I outline these theological contours and their changing nature, focusing particularly on the language and imagery employed by men and women across the denominational spectrum between 1890 and 1930.

Theological Construction of Foreign Missions

Analysis of a wide range of documentary material indicates that New Zealanders employed an astonishingly wide range of words, images, and concepts in their approach to and understanding of foreign missions. These concepts, as well as the importance given to them in different time periods, are indicated in table 1. These different ways in which people understood the purpose and essence of mission were by no means discrete or mutually exclusive. Some of the categories mentioned in table 1 increased in perceived importance; others decreased. One (establishing an indigenous church as the goal of missions) was not mentioned before 1919.

A number of antithetical word pairs appeared in discussion of these descriptors and became defining images in the theological construction of missions (table 2). Underlying these antithetical word pairs was a dualistic view of the world that differentiated sharply between Christendom and heathen non-Christendom.

Additionally, the data show that a variety of biblical texts were appealed to in missionary sermons and addresses. From 1890 onward, use of the Psalms and Isaiah was noticeable, although most texts cited were from the New Testament, particularly the Synoptic Gospels. The two most popular passages were Matthew 28:19–20 and Mark 16:15. By the 1920s these two passages were commonly conflated into one command by God to go and preach the Gospel worldwide, and they became the defining texts for both the New Zealand and international missionary movements as they developed in the 1900s.

Missions as Conversion and Evangelization

Foreign missions were theologically understood in predominantly conversionist terms. The concept of conversion was broadly defined and consistently understood across lines of gender and denomination. The focus on conversion encompassed a fundamental concern for both the spiritual state of non-Christians and the moral and societal transformation of non-Christian societies. Conversion was variously understood to be an act of enlightenment, liberation, and spiritual or social transformation, as well as a metaphysical shift of individuals or societies from the sphere of heathenism into the new and progressive sphere of Christendom. Both the philosophy and the methods of conversion were broadly defined and conceived, encompassing the conversion alike of souls, bodies, and minds, as well as of geographic, cultural, and social space.

There was a similar breadth of understanding of the term “evangelization,” which is best understood within its context in the 1890s and early 1900s. Historically, the use of the word in the New Zealand context was most directly affected by the American Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (established in Australasia in 1896) and by this movement’s slogan, “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” While early international formulations of the watchword were originally premillennial in tone (reflecting a popular concern to hasten the return of Christ), from around 1900 the American missionary statesman John R. Mott helped to broaden its focus, arguing that “the evangelization of the world in this generation . . . means the preaching of the Gospel to those who are now living.” The emphasis here lay on proclamation rather than conversion.

In the New Zealand literature the term “evangelization,”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missions viewed as:</th>
<th>Overall rank</th>
<th>1890–1918</th>
<th>1919–30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvation/conversion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to great need</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going with/taking the Gospel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty/obligation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching/teaching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual warfare</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending God’s kingdom</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian leavening of society</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to God’s command</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service/sacrifice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing Christ</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaping a harvest</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premillennial urgency</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical fulfillment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing an indigenous church</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>not mentioned</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The information in this and the following table is based on comments and phrases from 623 individual documentary sources for the period 1890-1930. Of these sources, the largest number are Presbyterian (217), followed by Baptist (127), Angican (122), China Inland Mission (58), Bolivian Indian Mission (45), and other (54). For further details, see Hugh Douglas Morrison, “‘It Is Our Bounden Duty’: The Emergence of the New Zealand Protestant Missionary Movement, 1868–1926” (Ph.D. diss., Massey University [Albany], 2004).

Hugh Morrison is currently (2005) a contract Lecturer in History at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

July 2005
though still ambiguous, was understood as referring more to missionary proclamation than to conversion. The Church Missionary Society Gleaners’ Union, for example, sought to unite “all who are interested in the cause [the CMS] represents, viz. the Evangelisation of the world; all who desire to take, in any way, a personal share in its work of preaching the Gospel to the Heathen and Mohammedan nations.” Yet “evangelization” was also occasionally used as a synonym for the act of conversion. George Allan (founder of the Bolivian Indian Mission) used it in the 1890s in the context of observing that South American people were ready for Christian conversion.6 Evangelization received further definition after 1900. A Baptist leader argued that “the purpose of God” found its “best, and indeed only adequate expression, in [the phrase] the Evangelisation of the World.” Here evangelization incorporated both the means by which the Christian message could be communicated and its intended outcome of conversion. A Presbyterian missionary suggested more explicitly that “a country is evangelised when every man, woman and child has had an adequate opportunity of hearing carefully and fully expounded the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In most cases “evangelization” was thus a form of shorthand for conveying the message of Jesus Christ that the vast majority of the world’s population still had not heard. While some New Zealanders understood the word in premillennial terms, most perceived that the signs of the times indicated that the time was right for Christian conversion. The impact of war on New Zealand society was unprecedented. Of 100,000 men sent to fight, 18,000 died and many more were wounded. The trauma of these losses branded the public consciousness and psyche and, in the 1920s, resulted in the erection of public memorials and the annual ritual of Anzac Day. It was not surprising that the potent language of warfare and of sacrificial service and duty was co-opted for the missionary cause in the postwar period. Missionary publicists exhorted young people to emulate the spirit of sacrifice shown by soldiers and other wartime volunteers.

Table 2. Dualistic Images of Missions by New Zealanders, 1890–1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christendom</th>
<th>Non-Christendom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Ignorance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved</td>
<td>Unsaved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourished</td>
<td>Starving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Wretched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed</td>
<td>Cursed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeful</td>
<td>Hopeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultured</td>
<td>Uncultured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet missionary writers and speakers also articulated a fairly accurate sense of the specific needs of others that reflected their everyday realities. Dr. John Kirk reported in 1910 that “the name of our hospital [Ko T’ong] stands for ‘Universal Love,’ and if this is to have any meaning at all in the hearts of the people—aye, if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to have any meaning at all—we cannot afford to turn poor, pain-burdened, weary souls from our door.” Writings from the Bolivian Indian Mission also indicated that social amelioration of the Quechua Indians and the righting of injustices were very important. Some people clearly saw specialist activities such as medical and educational missions as inherently valid and important, and not merely as precursors to overt evangelism. This perspective also filtered back to the New Zealand public. Missionary applications after 1918 indicate that a growing number of people were applying specifically to be medical or educational missionaries.

Obligation, Duty, Service, and Sacrifice

From the early 1900s the “great need” motif was conflated with a cluster of theological categories popularly perceived to be God’s commandment to spread the Gospel worldwide, the missionary duty attendant upon both individuals and churches, and a strong undercurrent of spirituality that emphasized service and sacrifice. A variety of factors contributed to this aspect of missions: women’s missionary unions, missionary literature and study circles, visiting speakers, Christian conventions, and youth movements like Christian Endeavour, the Student Christian Unions, and the emerging Bible Class movement.

The focus on service and sacrifice was evident throughout the entire period 1890–1930, becoming particularly obvious after World War I. Also present were notions of personal usefulness, service motivated by love, personal surrender to God’s call, and the view that human agency was indispensable to completing the missionary task.

The impact of war on New Zealand society was unprecedented. Of 100,000 men sent to fight, 18,000 died and many more were wounded. The trauma of these losses branded the public consciousness and psyche and, in the 1920s, resulted in the erection of public memorials and the annual ritual of Anzac Day. It was not surprising that the potent language of warfare and of sacrificial service and duty was co-opted for the missionary cause in the postwar period. Missionary publicists exhorted young people to emulate the spirit of sacrifice shown by soldiers and other wartime volunteers.

Also, by the 1920s the general call to responsibility and sacrificial service had been intensely personalized. Many people applied a highly individualized biblical hermeneutic, as illustrated by the notion of missions as a response to God’s command (as embodied in the Matthean and Markan texts). The original Greek of both texts clearly indicates that the task of missions was entrusted to a community of people, not to any one individual. Yet a generation or more of evangelical theology and spirituality that increasingly emphasized individual conversion, devotional practices, and personal accountability before God caused a general commandment to the whole church to be subconsciously internalized as a personal imperative.

Expansion and a Changing World

Another cluster of terms or images emphasized the expansionist nature of Christianity: going with, carrying, or taking the Gospel; conquest; and extending the kingdom of God. This expansionist...
theme was hardly surprising in this period, which witnessed the climax of European global power. Missionary rhetoric was not always easily disentangled from language extolling the particular virtues of the British Empire. John Takle, a missionary with the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society (NZBMS), commented that “every true Britisher thrills with the privilege of belonging to an Empire so extensive that nearly one quarter of the world’s population has come under its sway, an Empire that has done more than any other for the emancipation of peoples, and for the evangelisation of the native races.” In New Zealand such sentiments were born out of historical, cultural, and familial proximity to British roots and were voiced most stridently in times of heightened imperial awareness. New Zealand’s relationship to Britain, however, was not necessarily uncritical. Missionary commentators, for example, were ready to admit Britain’s flawed reputation. John Takle was quick to remind his 1916 audience that ultimately the Christian community should be more concerned “with a greater Imperium, to whose Imperator we have bowed in reverence, obedience and loyal submission. Our supreme interest is the Kingdom of God . . . for Christ shall reign.”

The decade after World War I marked a slight change in missionary attitudes toward imperialism and the British Empire. New Zealand was still intensely proud and supportive of the British Empire, but there were indications that significant changes lay ahead. The war itself had exposed a disturbing human heart of darkness, raising serious questions about human progress. Many people now understood that world peace was a fragile commodity and, rightly or wrongly, that new forces of colonial liberation were a potential threat to that peace. On the one hand, nationalist movements and sentiments were having a ripple effect among indigenous Christian communities. It became increasingly obvious to many missionary societies that a key task in this period would be the establishment of independent indigenous churches and structures. On the other hand, the fear increased that these modernizing societies would be swamped by the more invidious elements of Western civilization and that indigenous churches would not be mature or strong enough to stop or reverse this process.

An Evaluation of the Theological Contours

Three questions are worth pursuing in light of the above discussion. First, to what extent was early New Zealand mission theology gendered? Second, to what extent was a distinctive body of New Zealand mission theology emerging by 1930? And third, to what extent had differences in mission theology become significant by 1930?

First, what was the extent of gender differentiation in New Zealand mission theology? On the surface there was little. Women, though, seem to have placed a greater emphasis than men on mission either as a response to great need or as sacrificial service, while men seem to have emphasized more than women did the socially ameliorative aspects of mission and the imperative of missionary duty.

There are some indications, however, that women had an important role in shaping popular missionary thinking. The Baptist and Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Unions (BWMU, PWMU) drew attention to the fundamentally theological and spiritual nature of mission through their devotion to and emphasis upon prayer. Foreign missions was conceived of as a four-way partnership between God, missionaries, indigenous Christians, and supporters at home, and prayer was the essential glue that held this relationship together. Women and students were also important initiators and organizers of formal mission study, especially following the world missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910. They helped to shape a core of church-going people who were quite well informed in terms of international awareness and understanding. Furthermore, through books and magazines women accentuated the motif of need by highlighting the perceived plight of women and children in places like India and China. In so doing, they reinforced, rather than subverted, prevailing Western stereotypes of the non-Western world and accentuated notions of racial superiority. Women did, however, develop a greater sense of connectedness between New Zealand missionary supporters and their international “sisters.” For example, a formal association existed between the PWMU and a North American Presbyterian women’s missionary alliance. This association in turn had links with the American World’s Missionary Committee of Christian Women. By philosophically and theologically identifying with their international sisters, Presbyterian women understood themselves to be empowered by the incarnational Christ to form part of a great feminine “girdle round the earth.”

The second question asks about a distinctive body of New Zealand mission theology by 1930. Early on, the missionary movement was largely the product of a missionary worldview imported from Great Britain. As it developed, a variety of contextual factors served to further shape and entrench this movement as an integral participant in the wider Anglo-American missionary movement. Although New Zealanders were increasingly informed by local literature and speakers, the content was not substantively different from what was being written, read, and preached in Australia, South Africa, North America, or Great Britain.

Despite this common foundation, there are a number of indications that this question may be worth further reflection. In New Zealand’s Bolivian Indian Mission, for instance, one can detect the influence of an earlier pioneering mentality that spurred on its initial workers before 1914, as well as a self-effacing attitude that directed the honors away from the mission and its personnel. Among New Zealand Baptists generally there was a curious blend of colonial independence, self-congratulation, and sense of imperial obligation. An oft-repeated exhortation in NZBMS reports was that the several million people in East Bengal were New Zealand’s special responsibility, entirely dependent upon a handful of colonial Baptists for their eternal salvation and well-being. Among Anglican and Presbyterian missionary applicants there was also a note of responsibility that issued from a sense of dual privilege. It was a great privilege not only to be a Christian and live in a Christian society but also to live specifically in New Zealand, especially in light of the global socioeconomic inequalities that became increasingly apparent after World War I.

The third question asks what differences in mission theology

Missionary publicists exhorted young people to emulate the spirit of sacrifice shown by soldiers and wartime volunteers.
had become significant by 1930. Late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century theological developments, as well as the impact of World War I, helped precipitate a general crisis for Western Protestantism. New Zealand was not wholly untouched by this situation. Changing views on the rationale and practice of mission and the formation of various theological camps in response were a reflection of wider debates and developments.

In the New Zealand context before 1930, the extent to which these debates had an impact was limited to certain groups and contexts. For example, World War I had a particular impact on the emerging missionary thinking of the various Western student movements. The New Zealand Student Christian Movement debated missionary policy in the mid-1920s and produced at least one reformulated policy statement as a result. This statement placed a new emphasis on intelligent engagement with world issues and on identification with other peoples under the rubrics “fatherhood of God” and “brotherhood of man.” Mission was viewed as a cooperative exercise with indigenous peoples and churches. In response to this statement, one critic identified the “dangers of the present position” as being an overemphasis on these very phrases, which blurred distinctions between “the saved and the unsaved,” and a misunderstanding of the concept “kingdom of God.” The critic concluded that foreign missions would be weakened as a result, warning that “it is at our peril that we turn aside from our divinely appointed task of some fascinating programme of social betterment and internationalism.” Such views were representative of a conservative sector of New Zealand Protestantism that emerged in the 1920s. Differences in opinion over the content and direction of foreign missions separated those willing to embrace new modes of approach to the wider world by New Zealand Christians.

In conclusion, it seems clear that up to 1930 most mission groups and denominations in New Zealand accepted a number of core theological components that did not restrict missionaries and organizations to any one philosophy or methodology. This latitude in turn served to locate missionary work at varying points along a missiological continuum. Thus mission could be variously defined as both conversion and social amelioration, as both proclamation and Christianization, and as both an act of Christian obedience and religious or social activism. It was only as a conservative defensiveness emerged after World War I that this underlying breadth of thinking began to disappear.

Further research and reflection are needed to carry this discussion through to the end of the twentieth century. I anticipate that such discussion would highlight at least two lines of thought. The first is that after 1918, at least two streams of thought emerged with respect to mission theology. These streams, which could be broadly labeled “conservative” and “ecumenical,” were local manifestations of broader international trends. In the 1930s and 1940s this division was most manifest in things like the growth of interdenominational missions, the growing dominance of the Auckland-based New Zealand Bible Training Institute, and the creation of two divergent Christian movements among students in secondary schools and universities. From the 1950s this dividing of the ways between the two streams was also a feature of much denominational thinking, as church assemblies and synods wrestled with the postcolonial era of indigenous political and ecclesiastical independence. Many of the main denominations moved away from a conversionist or expansionist mode of thought to embrace the notion of partnership and a commitment to wider socioeconomic aid and development.

The second line of thought is that the theological gap between the two streams was often more rhetorical than real. Great emphasis continued to be placed on the ameliorative aspects of mission, regardless of where organizations or denominations lay along the theological spectrum. This underlying commonality became a more pronounced reality from the 1980s onward, as evangelicals in particular embraced a more holistic approach to mission. Mission was thus still predominantly defined as a response to the physical, socioeconomic, and spiritual needs of others, even while it retained areas of ambiguity and variety. Innovative ventures such as Servants to Asia’s Urban Poor (which originated from New Zealand)18 and wide support for both interchurch aid ventures and organizations like World Vision and Tearfund underscore an essentially pragmatic approach to the wider world by New Zealand Christians.

Notes

1. This article is derived from my recently completed Ph.D. dissertation, Massey University (Albany, 2004), on the growing involvement of New Zealand Protestant churches in overseas missions between 1868 and 1930. I gratefully acknowledge helpful comments on this article that I have received from Janet Crawford, Allan Davidson, Peter Lineham, and John Roxborogh.


5. “Ivens,” ANG 143/3.70, Box 10, New Zealand Church Missionary Society Archives, Auckland.


11. For example, “BWMU Member’s Card,” undated, Folder 1, Box 0036, New Zealand Baptist Historical Society Archives, Carey Baptist College, Auckland.


13. This construction, however, contained inherent racial hierarchies.
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15. For example, “NZBMS Report, 1903,” NZBU Baptist Handbook, 1903–4, p. 68.


17. Typewritten report in “Pacific Basin Tour 1926—NZ,” Series 7, Biographical Documentation, Folder 2590, Box 156, Mott Papers, Record Group 45, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, Conn.


Women, Mission, and Medicine: Clara Swain, Anna Kugler, and Early Medical Endeavors in Colonial India

Maina Chawla Singh

The recovery from disease is the kindliest exhibition of divine power, and the Christian medical missionary occupies a lofty vantage ground in his work.

—Mrs. J. T. Gracey
Women’s Medical Work in Foreign Lands (1881)

From the early days of mission, medical work was recognized as an important means of evangelism. Mythologies circulated about missionary physicians and their work in “heathen lands.” For instance, it was said about a certain Dr. Parker that he “opened the gates of China with a lancet when European cannon could not heave a single bar.” By the middle of the nineteenth century, missionary men began speaking more and more about the importance of gaining access to the women in non-Christian societies by means of medical ministry. Missionaries on furlough spoke to home churches of “the great value of medical knowledge” as an “aid in reaching the heathen women in their homes.” Gradually, mission-inclined men and women, both British and American, were convinced that to gain access to women in non-Christian societies, it was essential to minister to their bodily ailments as an “entering wedge” for the missionary enterprise. As a result, many British and North American women, especially single women, sought mission sponsorship overseas to “save” their “heathen sisters” from “suffering and disease.”

These images, which were pervasive in nineteenth-century missionary writings, overlooked the existence of indigenous systems of medicine such as Ayurveda and Unani that predated Western medicine and were always available to local communities. Missionaries, however, dwelled constantly on the idea that women living in segregated societies, with limited access to public spaces, were “in need” of “Christian Light” which they sought to impart through educational and medical work. It was common in missionary writings to encounter stereotypes of Indian women as “languishing in pain,” waiting for the benefits of Western allopathic medicine. In a society like colonial India in the nineteenth century, missionary women had an advantage over their male brethren and were able to access women of the local communities, to whom male missionaries had no access. Thus, after the second half of the nineteenth century, Western missionary women working in colonial India had an array of opportunities for medical work and for managing projects independently. This, in turn, had the significant effect of disrupting the gendered hierarchies in the missionary world by providing women missionaries opportunities for professional growth.

The first qualified woman missionary physician to be sent overseas work was Clara Swain, a North American. Swain was assigned to India and arrived in 1870, preceding her first British counterpart, Fanny Butler, by ten years. The first missionary women to start dispensing medicines, however, were not professionally trained—some were missionary wives, and others, both British and American, were zenana workers. “Zenana,” an Urdu word, was a widely used generic term to denote spaces in households which were marked off exclusively for women, where they would cook, do domestic work, and spend leisure hours. The practice was prevalent in upper-middle-class families among Hindus and Muslims.

Medical work for women in non-Western societies was initially tentative and experimental in nature. It grew as an offshoot of missionaries’ organizing children’s schools, holding sewing and literacy classes for women, and zenana-visiting, and these missionary women relied for their prescriptions on medical handbooks and common sense. Although some missionaries dispensing medicines were opposed to qualified physicians) made a mark by setting up enduring projects, they faced many obstacles. The daunting cultural issues included gaining access to the zenana women, persuading them to try Western medicines in place of traditional remedies, and wooing them from their secluded homes to visit the dispensary, which was perceived as a public space. Even after professionally qualified female physicians began working in India in the 1870s, medical work in cross-cultural contexts offered many challenges. Inadequate surgical equipment, a support staff of mostly untrained assistants, and the constant drain on resources were problems frequently cited in the reports sent home to mission boards. In addition, the caste

Maina Chawla Singh, Associate Professor at the College of Vocational Studies, University of Delhi, India, is the author of Gender, Religion, and the “Heathen Lands”: American Missionary Women in South Asia, 1860s–1940s (Garland, 2000).
and class realities of the patients constantly challenged Western notions of hospital care and frequently caused the medical work to begin slowly.8 This article describes some of these early scenarios of gendered medical work and the processes by which many such initiatives expanded from little dispensaries to become hospitals with training classes for assistants, midwives, and medical support staff. Although some of the projects were extremely successful and eventually became full-fledged degree-awarding institutions—notably the medical colleges at Ludhiana (North India) and Vellore (South India)—I am not concerned here with the later process of institutionalization, which I have discussed elsewhere.9 Rather, I highlight some of the early challenges that medical women faced in dealing with the paucity of resources, issues of local culture, and indigenous resistance as they sought to combine their goal of evangelism with professional aspirations in a culture that resisted both Christianity and Western therapeutics.

The first part of this essay focuses on the initiatives of missionary women who were not trained as medical missionaries but who began by dispensing basic medicines, often adding to their training by taking medical courses later in their careers. Subsequently, I turn the spotlight on two of the early North American Protestant female missionary physicians: Clara Swain (1834–1910) and Anna Kugler (1856–1930). Swain, sponsored by the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, arrived in 1870 to open work in Bareilly (North India), and Kugler founded the missionary medical work in the Guntur district (South India), where she arrived in 1883. Both started medical missionary work for women in regions where there were no precedents for such work, yet they chose very different paths to do so.

Neither Swain nor Kugler attained the heights of professional recognition achieved later by Ida Scudder of Vellore or Edith Brown of Ludhiana. Yet the project of recovering their work is important not only for issues of gender and the history of mission but also for deepening our understanding of the intersections of gender, mission, and the history of Western medicine in non-Western societies.

The Beginnings: Zenana Medical Work

Medical work for women usually began as auxiliary to zenana outreach, because missionary women found it a useful instrument of access to local women living within gender-segregated structures. The pioneers who began organized medical work in India included some British missionaries, prominent among whom were Rose Greenfield, Elizabeth Bielby, and Sarah Hewlett, who were sponsored by three different British missionary societies. Although none of them was a qualified physician, their initiatives nevertheless flourished, bringing to each of them a degree of prestige. The work of these women reveals some typical patterns and processes that marked such early initiatives.

Rose Greenfield, a Scottish missionary sponsored by the Society for Female Education in the East, arrived in Ludhiana in 1875. She set up the Ludhiana Zenana Mission, supported by other female teachers and evangelists. She began by organizing children’s schools and then moved to offering medical help and “prescribing cleanliness” to the women. Greenfield was not professionally qualified, but her medical work grew out of zenana work and eventually reached a professional level. Greenfield’s dispensary began in a rented room in 1881. By 1888 the growth of her work enabled her to negotiate with the Presbyterian mission for the use of their small church as a hospital. By 1889 this work grew to become the Charlotte Hospital.10 In 1891 Dr. Edith Brown became the first qualified physician to take over this initiative. Under Brown’s leadership, it became the Women’s Medical School, Ludhiana (1914), and finally a full-fledged medical center, the Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, which exists to this day.11

Elizabeth Bielby, who arrived from Britain in 1876, had some previous medical training before she began her dispensary, and later hospital, in Lucknow (North India). Her experiences in local society convinced her of the necessity of proper medical education and training. In 1881 she returned to England to study medicine. By 1885 she had obtained the license of the Kings and Queens College of Physicians, Ireland, and an M.D. (a postgraduate degree in medicine) in Berne, Switzerland.12 While in Britain, Bielby had an audience with Queen Victoria, during which she described the “sufferings of Indian women.”13 After having attracted considerable attention at home in England, Bielby returned to work in India, this time to Lahore (now in Pakistan). In 1888 the hospital in Lahore under Bielby’s charge was inaugurated as Lady Aitchison Hospital.

Sarah Hewlett of the Church of England Zenana Mission Society arrived in India in 1877. She first spent six months in Lucknow with Elizabeth Bielby, learning the local language before she began work in Amritsar (Punjab, North India). Equipped with some previous experience in nursing and midwifery, she took charge of the Amritsar Dais School, a modest institution set up in 1866 by the colonial civil surgeon Dr. Aitchison to train local dais (midwives). Hewlett subsequently began a class to train girls to serve as medical assistants in hospitals. With her active medical and surgical work over the years, she acquired some repute in the surrounding community.

Early Women Physicians

Clara Swain. In 1869 Clara Swain arrived in India. Born the youngest of ten children in Elmira, New York, Swain, like many educated girls from middle-class American families in late nineteenth-century America, began her professional life as a schoolteacher, first in Castile, New York, and later at Canandigua, also in New York. Subsequently changing gears, she began training at the Castle Sanitarium. Following a three-year program there, she entered Woman’s Medical College, Philadelphia, from which she graduated in the spring of 1869.14 In 1868 Swain was one of the first two female candidates to be sponsored for overseas missionary work by the newly founded Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the other was Isabella Thoburn, founder of the Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow. They sailed from New York on November 3, 1869, reaching India on January 20, 1870.
When a Mrs. Thomas, a missionary wife in the Bareilly region, lobbied her home church to support a woman physician to attend to the welfare of the native Christians in Bareilly (then about thirty families), her main argument was that a “lady physician” would be an effective way to open doors to the upper class families and zenanas of Bareilly, which were otherwise closed to them. Issues of class and access were thus central from the outset. Missionary women were always conscious that for their work to gain credibility, it was important to attract women patients from upper caste and upper class families who were wealthy and enjoyed status and social prestige among the local community.

Swain settled in Bareilly, taking over a medical work already present in embryonic form, begun by a missionary wife who had initiated “a small class of native Christian women” for a “limited course of instruction in medicine.” Like most early women physicians, Swain realized that training local women to join medical work, at least as assistants and perhaps later as qualified professionals, was key to the success of the medical projects. Using a student from her class as an assistant, Swain thus began efforts to train local women in rudimentary medicine. Her first class was modest, consisting of sixteen girls from the missionary orphanage and three disabled women. They were taught anatomy, physiology, and some rudimentary medicine, but their level of professional training reached only a basic certificate level of practice. It took another two decades before formalized medical classes were begun by Edith Brown, the British missionary physician, in Ludhiana (Punjab) in the 1890s. Brown’s initiative finally led to the founding of the Ludhiana Medical College for Women in North India.

The little dispensary Swain started in 1870 grew, and within a couple of years a local princely ruler, the Nawab of Rampur, donated a portion of his estate adjoining the mission property in Bareilly for establishing a hospital for women. This generosity was not unusual, for many of the local princely families in this region were early supporters of mission-sponsored initiatives for female education or medical work for women. Swain moved into the new premises on January 1, 1872. A dispensary building was completed in May 1873, and the first in-house patients were admitted in January 1874. In March 1876 Swain went to the United States on furlough, returning to India on November 6, 1879.

In March 1885 Swain treated the rani (i.e., wife) of the raja of Khetri, also a local princely ruler in that region. After two weeks of “successful treatment,” Swain was offered the job of being her personal physician. This offer was not unusual, although female missionary physicians usually continued to treat their elite patients alongside their community outreach work. Swain, however, as mission sources narrate, after “much thought and prayer” consented to give up her work in Bareilly and to remain in Khetri to do for the Lord “what she could . . . in this place where there were no Christian influences.” She obtained permission to take her companion Miss P. E. Pannell with her so as to “carry on the work as Christians should.” In March 1888 Swain took another furlough to America, traveling with Pannell.

Noteworthy

Announcing

The fourth International Conference on Baptist Studies will be held July 12–15, 2006, at Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, with “Missions” as the theme, encompassing home and foreign mission, as well as evangelism and social concern. Thirteen main speakers will address aspects of the subject, but short papers related to Baptists and missions are also welcome. Selected conference papers will be published in the series “Studies in Baptist History and Thought,” published by Paternoster Press. Papers from the first conference have been published as The Gospel in the World: International Baptist Studies, edited by D. W. Bebbington. For details contact Bebbington, Department of History, University of Stirling, Scotland, at d.w.bebbington@stir.ac.uk.

The annual meeting of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association and the Evangelical Missiological Society will be held September 22 – 24, 2005, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For details, visit www.ifmamissions.org.

The International Association for Mission Studies archives are now being housed as part of Special Collections at the Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, Connecticut. For details, contact Martha Smalley, research services librarian and curator of the Day Missions Collection, at martha.smalley@yale.edu.

The World Council of Churches and the Yale Divinity School Library are collaborating on a five-year microfilming project that will result in the preservation and publication of documents important to mission history. For questions about the current phase, “Dialogue with People of Living Faith,” contact Paul Stuehrenberg, the divinity librarian, at paul.stuehrenberg@yale.edu. The next phase of the Yale-WCC archives endeavor will catalogue correspondence of the WCC general secretariat.

The Pacific Journal of Baptist Research will be launched in October 2005. Providing an international vehicle for research and debate, the journal will be published twice a year, in April and October. The editor, Martin Sutherland, is director of the Center for Theological Studies at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand. Topics are not limited to the Pacific region; all subject matter potentially of significance for Baptist communities will be considered, especially theological and historical themes. Submissions for the first issue should be received by July 31, 2005. Manuscripts may be submitted to the editor at martin.sutherland@carey.ac.nz.

Personalia

James J. Stamoolis has been appointed senior vice president of academic affairs and dean for Trinity College and Trinity Graduate School, Deerfield, Illinois, effective July 1, 2005. Stamoolis will also hold the rank of professor of biblical studies. His teaching career has included professorial roles and lectureships on missions and intercultural studies at Wheaton College and the Bible Institute of South Africa. He has served as president of the American Society of Missiology and is author of Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today (Orbis Books, 1986; reprint, Light and Life Publishing, 2001).

Died. Frederick Hollander Bronkema, 71, American Presbyterian missionary and ecumenist, April 3, 2005, following a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease, at Penney Farms, Florida. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, he helped estab-
Swain’s decision to serve the royal family clearly limited her future career opportunities. She continued to hold Bible classes alongside performing her duties to the family. Her letters reveal that she enjoyed being a close associate of the royal family and that she lived in considerable luxury as compared with other missionaries, who lived either in mission compounds or in simply constructed mission bungalows located close to the rural communities they served. When in October 1895 Swain’s assignment with the royal family came to an end, she sailed from India to retire in the United States.

Several years later, in 1906, Swain revisited India to attend the jubilee celebrations of the Methodist Mission in India (founded in 1856). In April 1908 she returned to the United States, retiring to the sanitarium in Castile, New York. Her health deteriorated gradually, and she died on December 28, 1910. Through the initiative of a friend, the many letters that Swain had written over the years were collected, compiled, and published as A Glimpse of India (1909).

Anna Kugler. Born in 1856 in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, Anna Kugler was the daughter of Charles and Harriet Sheaff Kugler. Described in her biographies as “serious-minded” and “sensitive to impressions,” the young Anna was educated at a private school in Bryn Mawr and at Friends’ School in Philadelphia. After graduating from the Woman’s Medical College, Philadelphia, she worked as an assistant physician at the state asylum at Norristown.

In 1882 Dr. Kugler applied to the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (later a part of the United Lutheran Church) for sponsorship to do medical work for women in India. Although Clara Swain had preceded her by over a decade, the board officially replied that the organization was “not yet ready to undertake work of this kind”—but she could do “general work.” Although women’s foreign missionary societies began gaining ground within home churches in many denominations in the 1870s, the board’s resistant attitude toward Kugler illustrates the unevenness that marked the policies and attitudes prevailing among the foreign missionary societies in North America at the time. Kugler, however, agreed to be sponsored as a “general” missionary and sailed from Philadelphia in the company of seven other missionaries. They arrived in India in November 1883.

When Kugler arrived in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh (South India), there was no precedent for Western-style medical work among women in that region. She performed her medical work in addition to her more general missionary duties, but when her stock of medicines was depleted, the work had to be discontinued until her fellow missionaries raised $350 to start a hospital. Finally in 1885 Kugler was officially appointed for medical work and there were sufficient funds to rent a house to function as a dispensary. In 1887 two dispensaries were opened at Mangalgiri and Guntur. It took fifteen years, though, for Kugler’s project to become a full-fledged hospital with a children’s ward, maternity block, chapel, and nurses’ home.

In 1888 Kugler was assigned for medical work alongside performing her duties to the family. Her letters reveal that she enjoyed being a close associate of the royal family and that she lived in considerable luxury as compared with other missionaries, who lived either in mission compounds or in simply constructed mission bungalows located close to the rural communities they served. When in October 1895 Swain’s assignment with the royal family came to an end, she sailed from India to retire in the United States.

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During the early years Kugler, like other Western women physicians, was confronted with cultural issues. For instance, Western-style instructions about administering medicine, which assumed literacy among the patients, were mostly ineffective. In addition, the use of a spoon was not common among the local people. Simple directions and ingenious solutions were thus needed to indicate medicine dosage. Strips of paper were pasted on the side of the medicine bottles, with notches or marks on the paper to indicate the amount of each dose. Issues of caste and race, also, impeded medical work at every step, although Muslim and lower-caste Hindus were easier to access than high-caste Hindus. Despite her medical knowledge and success, the white woman physician was widely viewed as the cultural other, without caste and therefore unclean, even for the most basic physical contact. This was a prejudice based on race and religion rather than gender. Male missionaries confronted similar issues in Hindu and Muslim society. As Kugler discovered, even when local women were persuaded to try her medicine, many “would not accept a dose of medicine from her outcaste hand and had to receive it from the hand of a relative.” Liquid medicine (with an alcoholic content) was less acceptable than medicine in powdered form. Such conservative Hindu interpretations of “purity” and “pollution” were irksome, even humiliating, for the missionary women, as Kugler recounted: “It was not pleasant to be constantly reminded as one entered high-caste Hindu homes, that one was an unclean object, defiling everything one touched. It was not pleasant to have all the bedclothes put to one side while one examined the patient or to have a very ill patient taken out of bed and brought into the courtyard because the doctor was too unclean to go inside. . . . Neither did one enjoy stooping down and picking up the medicine bottle because one was too unclean to eat together. Christians readily agreed, but Hindu patients were more reluctant, not wanting to defile caste purity. They preferred to be accompanied by a family member who would use their own brass cooking utensils to prepare food for them at the hospital.

Despite the difficulties in treating the upper castes, the missionary physicians were conscious of the need to garner local support and were eager to develop connections with women of the zenanas, especially from the princely families, who often became their donors and supporters. Besides Swain, Kugler also was supported by such local patrons.

Early female medical professionals were inevitably drawn into administrative and organizational roles. Rose Greenfield, Swain, and Kugler worked on the expansion, architectural design, and planning of their hospitals. They all were sensitive to the specific cultural and climatic requirements for a hospital in a South Asian context. Innovative in the planning and organization of their hospitals, they ingeniously adapted local materials and resources for their purposes.

Conclusion

Early women physicians in India chose to modify Western medical practices in order to attract clientele. Over time, they realized that attracting women to Western therapeutics was easier than expecting them to submit to a Western-style hospital, with its imported social and cultural ethos of a highly regulated space. Their strategies to attract patients, dispel local resistance, and conform to local preferences reflected missionary anxieties about how issues of religion and culture needed to be surmounted before their hospitals and dispensaries could become successful.

An important theme that emerges from such a study is that

Dealing with Caste, Class, and Culture

Women physicians like Swain and Kugler, who initiated medical work in a particular region, had no precedents and little previous experience. They had to treat all manner of medical needs, from snakebites and broken bones to childbirth and basic surgery. Their resources were meager, and local conditions challenged them on multiple levels. Learning local languages and attempting to understand local mores, they plodded patiently onward, even as indigenous resistance to Western therapeutics and to themselves as white women persisted in upper-caste Hindu communities. Caste sensitivities operated at several levels: first, in the personal contacts with patients, then within the dispensaries, where ailments were treated and medicines dispensed. When medical work expanded to become a hospital or an institutionalized training center, the logistics became even more complex. Missionaries attempted to avoid caste-related controversies by hiring upper-caste hospital cooks and men to draw water from the well. They also encouraged patients to live and eat together. Christians readily agreed, but Hindu patients were more reluctant, not wanting to defile caste purity. They preferred to be accompanied by a family member who would use their own brass cooking utensils to prepare food for them at the hospital.

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An important theme that emerges from such a study is that
the histories of these early medical projects reveal a reverse process of acculturation through which female physicians were influenced by their local experiences across race and culture. Their adaptations, born of either cultural compulsions or social pragmatism, paved the way for mission schools and hospitals that had a South Asian flavor. Although they were run by missionary societies and although Western missionary women were visible on the faculties even until the 1960s, their functioning reflected the adaptations missionaries had to make in a non-Christian culture. Many of these early medical ventures still exist today. Clara Swain Hospital, a moderately sized institution in Bareilly, still trains medical assistants and midwives, and the work at Ludhiana, after the 1930s, grew to acquire prestige as a premier national medical institution.

In general, missionary schools and hospitals in modern South Asia grew unevenly. They faced major challenges after the end of British colonial rule in 1947 and subsequently, when the governments of both India and Pakistan began to restrict the access of foreigners for missionary work around the 1960s. The work of the early female physicians and teachers, however, created precedents for subsequent generations of women, both missionary and lay, which they could then adapt to the changing times. Even in the 1970s and 1980s, missionary hospitals and nursing homes, particularly for gynecological and obstetric care, continued to enjoy favor among middle- and upper-class Indians, most of whom associated them with good nursing, competent medical care, and good hygiene. As large numbers of secular medical institutions, both state-sponsored and privately owned, with advanced technology and equipment began to emerge after the 1970s, missionary institutions have been challenged to match new standards.

Understanding these earlier histories enhances our understanding of the ways in which the early female physicians negotiated mission patriarchies and the colonial bureaucracy to carve out spaces for professional work. Their stories enable us to map out how gender and medicine intersected with race and religion in early cross-cultural medical initiatives for Indian women. At another level, they also reveal that, however sporadic or uneven the success of these early female physicians, they did manage to found the first hospitals exclusively devoted to women’s health care. Thus they created models and precedents for other such ventures in the decades to follow.

Notes

5. This was starkly so in the case of single women missionaries who were qualified physicians or educators. See Singh, Gender, chap. 6.
8. I have briefly touched upon some of these issues elsewhere (Singh, Gender, pp. 62–67). Here I focus exclusively on detailed analysis of the early missionary work, which targeted Indian women and had a specifically medical focus.
13. The Kings and Queens College of Physicians, Ireland, was the first licensing board in the British Isles to open its doors to women.
15. Ibid., pp. 13, 200.
16. For biographical information on Clara Swain, see Mrs. Robert Hoskins, Clara A. Swain, M.D., First Medical Missionary to the Women of the Orient (Boston: Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1912); Clara Swain, A Glimpse of India: Extracts from Letters of Clara Swain (New York: James Pott, 1909); Dorothy Clarke Wilson, Palace of Healing (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968).
17. In a puzzling admission, her biographer claims that “we have no special record of Dr. Swain’s years of study in Woman’s Medical College” (Hoskins, Clara A. Swain, p. 12).
19. This dispensary grew to become the first hospital exclusively for women in India, subsequently named after Swain.
22. Swain lived with Dr. Mary T. Greene, the niece of Dr. Cordelia Greene, who had established the sanitarium. The two women remained deeply involved with the institution.
23. This society had been conducting mission work in Guntur since 1842. See Paul E. Kretzmann, Glimpses of the Lives of Great Missionary Women (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1930), p. 78.
24. In the first four years 8,000 operations were performed and over 1,500 babies were delivered in the hospital (ibid., p. 82). For a detailed account of Kugler’s work, see Anna S. Kugler, Guntur Mission Hospital, Guntur, India (n.p.: United Lutheran Church in America, Women’s Missionary Society, 1928).
26. When the hospital actually opened, Kugler was away in America because of ill health. The first in-patients were accepted by Dr. Mary Baer and Katharine Fohs, who founded the nurses’ training program at Guntur. Kugler took over the work in October 1899. See Kugler, Guntur Mission Hospital, pp. 49, 135.
28. Dr. Lydia Woerner, in ibid., foreword.
29. The ceremonies were hosted by the governor of Madras Presidency in full colonial pomp. Poor health prevented Kugler from being present at the ceremony in 1917.
30. Ida Scudder, handwritten speech (n.d.), Box 3, Scudder Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass. The following comments by Scudder about Kugler are from the same source.
31. Bhuyanga Rao Bahadur of Ellore (now Eluru), a local raja, became a supporter of Kugler’s work after she successfully treated the rani (i.e., wife of the raja) and “saved the life of his son and heir.” At Kugler’s request he funded the construction of a rest house near the mission hospital where the Hindu families could stay while their patients were in the hospital. It is believed that the youngest child of the raja was named Annamma, after Anna Kugler. See Kretzmann, Glimpses, p. 85. Clara Swain’s association with the rani of Khetri was similarly beneficial.
On the eve of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Orthodox Church had at least nine missions operating among Siberia’s indigenous peoples. The Red victory in the ensuing civil war led to the elimination of all missionary activity, whose resumption was possible only after the fall of the Communist regime seventy years later. The few accounts of Christian missions published in the USSR were tendentious in the extreme. Only in the post-Communist era have scholars in the former Soviet Union been free to explore the rich archival and journalistic resources left by the missionaries.

Anatoliy Ablazhei’s article was chiefly addressed to scholars in Russia. It explores the extent to which the newly available missionary accounts are useful sources for contemporary scholars investigating native religion and cosmology. His work is reproduced here in translation for several reasons. It exemplifies the new wave of Russian scholarship about missions history, giving us a glimpse of the mass of documentary material available for researchers to use. Its critique of Russian Orthodox perceptions of native religion and the imperfect methods employed to spread Christianity in Siberia provides us with material from a mission field little known in the outside world. This information can prove useful for comparative missiological investigations. Above all, however, its value lies in its contribution to the ongoing debates about contextualization and syncretism, the validity of the Gospel for all peoples, and the appropriation of Christianity by the world’s indigenous peoples. It exemplifies the errors of ignorance often committed by outsiders trying to spread the Gospel within a thoroughly alien culture. As Terence Ranger reminded us in the first Adrian Hastings Memorial Lecture at Leeds University in November 2002, authentic Christianity is indeed possible among indigenous peoples. The Holy Spirit can inspire a transformation of their lives and culture, without an excess of Eurocentric accretions.1

The fullest possible reconstruction of traditional worldviews requires the use of a wide range of sources. Among these are the documents of the [Russian] Orthodox religious missions to the pagans that operated in the Northern Ob’ region [of western Siberia] for more than three hundred years. The present article uses materials relating to the concluding period of the missions’ activity, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The information of interest to us is found in various types of documents of the [Russian] Orthodox religious missions to the pagans that operated in the Northern Ob’ region [of western Siberia] for more than three hundred years. The present article uses materials relating to the concluding period of the missions’ activity, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The information of interest to us is found in various types of documents of the missions, mainly the early twentieth century.

**Missionary Methods**

According to the 1822 [Russian government] Statute on the Administration of the Natives, the indigenous peoples were accorded full freedom of religious belief. Adoption of Orthodoxy was encouraged but was not obligatory, which ruled out the methods of forcible baptism characteristic during the eighteenth century. This legislation forced the missionaries to seek new modes of activity based more on seriously plunging themselves into the life of their existing and potential flocks. They began single-mindedly gathering information about the local peoples, studying their religious beliefs and the details of their everyday lives. Study of the local languages was encouraged; missionaries in fact compiled several dictionaries, and portions of Sacred Scripture were translated. The Obdorsk branch of the missionary Brotherhood of St. Gury had a special “museum of the Brotherhood, or repository for a collection on the ethnography of the peoples of the Tobol’sk North, whose aim was to assist the study of the life, customs, and mores of the natives by graphic means.”2 Several missionaries, particularly the hieromonk Irinarkh (Ivan Semyonovich Shemanovsky), published works on the ethnography of the people of the Northern Ob’.

The main conditions for success in Christianizing in the period under review consisted in making missionary trips through the localities where the baptized population had lived from time immemorial, relating to them within the confines of their customary dwellings and establishing close contact with representatives of the various categories of traditional society. The missionaries frequently made no distinction between the peoples of the north, lumping them together under the general term “natives,” which demonstrated a lack of understanding of the differences between their ethnic cultures. Nevertheless, there were
instances of intelligent discerning of the discreteness of the cultures of the region’s peoples. The missionaries began to “hear” and “listen to” the voices of these cultures. Instead of a monologue, the predominant form of contact became dialogue, a clear example of which we see in the following missionary account: “At first the conversation, as ever, was general. We talked of the daily life of the natives, about their troubles and misfortunes, about buying and selling, about the lives of the Russians. . . . We touched on Christ . . . an old pagan man said how much he liked the way the priest sings in church and how the Russians pray. To my question ‘Why don’t you get baptized and become a member of the church?’ the old man replied that the priest had spoken to him many times about this, but he did not want to be baptized now. . . . The old man said . . . that we foreigners should also sacrifice reindeer to God.”

Two elements in this account are significant: the missionary view that conversation is the best form of communication with the native population (which can also be found in other documents) and the mention of sacrifices to “God.” It is not clear which “God” is meant—Christ, the icon of St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker (whose identity was transmuted through the local worldview, a matter to be discussed in more detail below), or a figure from the native pantheon. Regardless of the answer, the missionary’s interlocutor considers sacrifice the best gift (as the Russians do singing or prayer). From this incident we can draw the conclusion that to the traditional worldview both religions (paganism and Christianity) coexisted on an equal basis. They were distinguished only by the objects and means of worship used by one people or the other.

Missionary Evaluation of Native Worldviews

Since the elements of traditional worldviews that missionaries found most interesting were religious perceptions, not a single missionary account omitted a distinctive “theoretical section” in which the authors attempted to interpret local beliefs. One report, for example, described the people’s “religious cult of shamanism” as “one of the oldest religions of mankind. It has no doctrine, and all its power and essence consist in beliefs indisolubly linked to ceremonies making scant appeal to human reason. They subjugate people mentally, filling all the natives’ fearful and timid interior world with images and perceptions, forcing them to live and struggle with visible and invisible enemies under the most severe and burdensome conditions.” In this particular case the peculiarities of the indigenous religion are explained (which was one of the basic tasks) from the point of view of its specific role in the natives’ daily lives. This approach coincides in many respects with contemporary views on the character and role of traditional worldviews, which for “the majority of the northern peoples are not only spiritual expressions of the various layers of ethnic cultures, but are also a special means (mechanism) of psychological adaptation to the extreme social and climatic conditions of the Far North.”

As regards the term “shamanism,” within which the missionaries typically subsumed the whole gamut of traditional beliefs, it obviously cannot reflect all their complexity and multiple layers. For the missionaries shamanism was the most tangible, understandable, and significant element of indigenous religion. It therefore became the object of the most strenuous opposition on their part, even though the level of its development among various peoples differed.

In explaining the peculiarities of the environment within which traditional worldviews were formed and functioned, the missionaries pointed out that “the beliefs of the Ostiaks and Samoyeds were formed partly under the influence of the conditions of life . . . economic, family, and social.” In the missionaries’ opinion, “the peculiar conditions of life of the natives inhabiting the region of the Obdorsk Mission, their distance from the parish church (between 300 and 600 versts [320–640 km. / 200–400 mi.]), their frequent absences from their dwellings for hunting, and in general their nomadic way of life” also created obstacles in the path of Christianization. From the missionaries’ point of view the natural environment also determined various elements of the worldview that arose through contemplating it: “The Ostiaks regard elevated locations and mountains as holy, because, as they say, ‘God could see better’ from such places.” But “God sees” through the eyes of people; in one of these high places a missionary saw “a heap of anitlers that, according to Vasia, were placed on the summit to show the route.”

The missionaries considered that strict observance of ritual was another extremely important facet of the indigenous population’s spiritual life. As one observed, “The kernel or leaven of morals, rituals, and beliefs of tundra paganism is unshakable fidelity to the traditions of the ancestors.” Irrespective of rational bases for the retention of traditional religions, the missionaries saw the root of the evil in the habitual nature of the beliefs, which led to “deep-rooted fanaticism.” A missionary writing in 1910 came to the following conclusion: “If he sticks to his shamanistic belief, it is mainly through habit.”

Striving to overcome such tradition, the missionaries devoted enormous attention to educating children in school. In 1919 the missionary Shikhalev wrote: “I consider that the most important question for the mission, for our missionary life, the basis and main foundation for the mission are native boarding and day schools and orphanages.” It is no accident that the missionaries encountered strong opposition from the indigenous population over the issue of education. The latter correctly saw the schools as a special institution to destroy their traditional way of life. One of the teachers in a mission school wrote in his report: “The reason [for the small number of students and the continual dropping off of their numbers—A.A.] was their unwillingness, which they expressed to me, to educate their children. This unwillingness came from die-hard superstitious convictions, for they saw that if their children became literate, they would no longer imitate the people’s superstitions.”

For the missionaries shamanism was the most significant element of indigenous religion.

The Shaman

Mission documents pay tremendous attention to the figure of the shaman, whom missionaries viewed as their basic ideological opponent. According to the missionaries, the shaman in traditional society had an exceptionally important role, not only in the religious sphere, but in all aspects of life. The shaman is “a person possessing the ability to enter into communication with invisible spirits and to learn their demands under a trance. . . . In all the circumstances of life a native needs the shaman’s help, and the
Missionaries accorded to shamans a decisive significance as protectors and transmitters of traditional culture.

must distinguish several important points about this description. First of all, taking into account the reasons advanced above, we do not have to agree with the missionary in defining the “protector of idols” as a shaman. Z. P. Sokolova notes that the images of the ancestors (and these images were probably what the missionaries meant when they referred to idols) were usually guarded by a special person, but “this was not the shaman, although often identified as one.” The missionary’s direct reference makes it clear that he was convinced that shamanism and “idol worship” were things of the same order.

Finally, and most important, the document refers to “friendly communication” as forcing the interlocutor to relate something important to the other person. This is one of many examples of the complex process of intercultural interaction, which is mutually enriching when information passes in both directions: from the native to the missionary and vice versa. In the excerpt in question the conduct of the “shaman” is comparable to the way in which the missionary behaves: he explains the principles of his religion, its significance, its influence on the life of his people, and its necessity for their continued existence. These functions are significant in the practice of traditional religion, for in order to explain them, the “shaman” himself must think through and formulate his convictions. For a member of a traditional society, this communication is an absolutely new phenomenon, formed under the influence of cultural interaction.

The missionaries gained reasonably clear views about the role of the shaman in the daily lives of the indigenous population, and not only in the sphere of the sacred. In some accounts dealing specifically with shamans, however, the missionaries preferred to use the name they heard: “The natives express complete faith in witch doctors, prophets and exorcists, Tadibe, who travel all over the tundra with the aim of enticing their brothers and sisters into the world of superstitions and prejudices.” From another account it is also evident that the missionary did not know that the Tadibe [also Tachibe—A.A.] is one of the categories of shaman: “I entered the chum. There was a great assembly of natives in it. Evidently something special was afoot. Soon I managed to discern that the owner of the chum had lost a large quantity of fur trade goods and had asked the witch doctor ‘Tachibe’ and was seeking the thief. . . . The assembly included simple spectators and a large number of those upon whom suspicion of theft had fallen. ‘Tachibe’ had practiced his sorcery for five days already and yet had not been able to ferret out the necessary suspect. To my question about whether he really knew anything and whether he could find the thief by this means, ‘Tachibe’ spoke his mind, not without fear, in the presence of the assembly of natives, saying that he knew nothing positive, but if he took on himself the role of ‘Tachibe’ and beat the ‘Pender’ drum, it was only because he had been asked to practice sorcery.”

This description coincides with the characteristic noted in ethnographic investigations of the Nentsy, according to which “shamans of the ia nayy (ia nayy tadibia) category are shamans connected with the spirits of the earth. They ‘healed’ the less seriously ill, sought lost reindeer, and so on. Unlike other shamans they performed their rites at night around the campfire.”

In analyzing the missionaries’ conceptions about shamans and shamanism, it is important to reemphasize that they accorded them a decisive significance as protectors and transmitters of traditional culture, predominantly religion. This recognition is evident from the means proposed to struggle against them, namely, the missionaries would “compile and present to the consistory a list of all shamans, having obtained signatures from them to the effect that they would not do this [i.e., would not offer sacrifices—A.A.] again.”

Nature Spirits and Spirit Protectors

In recording the various aspects of traditional religion, the missionaries noted the existence of a cult of nature spirits: “According to Ostiak and Samoed notions, the world is full of numerous spirits, both good and evil. Everything has its own deity—water, fire, wood, stone, and locality—and these deities have an enormous influence on the fate of humankind. Particularly dangerous is the influence of evil spirits, which try to harm people wherever possible. They send various fears. People must beware of angering them in any way, thus attracting their wrath. If, despite everything, they become angry, then attempts must be made to mollify them, or else something very bad would happen. . . . According to Ostiak and Samoed beliefs, no medicines can help poor humans. The only way to combat disease is to offer penitentiary sacrifices to the spirit that has sent the disease.”

Missionaries cite examples of cult practices with regard to these deities: “At one sacred place I saw reindeer antlers scattered about with dried bread rings [baranki] threaded on them. Reindeer hides, antlers, and heads had been placed on two sticks.” The accuracy of this observation is confirmed by the description of a similar location in one of V. N. Chernetsov’s travel diaries: “It [the sacred place—A.A.] consists of a large heap of antlers . . . . Omdiu [the guide—A.A.] placed a dried bread ring on the itilia (sacred tree).” The missionaries transferred the division of the world into good and evil, which is characteristic of Christianity, to the traditional religion of the indigenous peoples. Judging by contemporary data, however, there was no such division, and the spirits of the underworld (naturally seen as evil by the missionaries) could perform good deeds as well.

The missionaries recorded the presence of family spirit protectors quite accurately. In the description included below, a distinction between specific aspects of the Khanty and Mansi cult is also mentioned. “Besides shamanism the Samoeds, and in
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particular the Ostiaks, practice idol worship. Worship of the shaitans, anthropomorphic depictions of the deities...continues in almost every yurt or chum. There is a deity—a shaitan—which the whole family reveres, bows down to, and makes prostrations to as a sacrifice. They keep their shaitans in boxes in the front corner. When you go in to the chum, they try to hide this box.”

From this description it is obvious that in this case the missionaries were in contact with a population ignorant of Christianity, because their neighbors, the Mansi and southern Khanty, who had experienced Christian influence, already had icons in many of their homes. The missionary would have made direct refer-

ence to their existence, as, for example, in the following report: “Some of our informants state quite categorically that earlier ‘before the Russians’ they had puby in the right corner.” This comment refers to the fact that icons, which had to be placed in the right corner, had displaced the spirit images, now found on the left. Also, the missionary would not have been given access to a box that had been retained, since “relations between humans and the spirit protectors had an intimate character.” Infringe-

ment of this prohibition, all the more so when missionaries were concerned, laid the owner open to the supreme penalty.

Christian Influence on Traditional Worldviews

One of the most complex questions in the context of the theme under discussion is that of the influence of Christianity on the traditional worldview of the peoples of the Northern Ob’. In the present article analysis of this matter will be concentrated on the transformations to which the figure of St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker was subjected through cross-cultural interaction. He was the most popular Christian saint among both the Russian and the aboriginal populations of the area. Two reasons for these changes must be distinguished. First, the church itself contributed significantly to the process by building a church of St. Nicholas in almost every newly founded Russian settlement. Second, and more important, was the phenomenon of so-called folk orthodoxy, that is, a noncanonical variant of official doctrine that included a considerable number of pagan elements characteristic of the Russian peasant population ever since [early medie-

eval] Kievan Rus’. Speaking of the influence exerted on the aboriginals’ worldview by proximity to the Russian population, investigators concluded that “only in the few places where the Ostiaks were significantly influenced by the culture of the Russian population do we have a gradual modification of the general Ostiak worldview.”

The missionaries themselves paid a great deal of attention to the worldview phenomenon connected with the figure of St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker. If we compare accounts from different periods, we can clearly follow the evolution of religious stereotypes and the gradual adaptation of figures of the Chris-

tian pantheon by traditional religion. A mission report from 1857 notes, “Some, however, extended their folly as far as calling their idol [in this case meaning the family spirit protector] St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker’s brother.” Gradually, however, the au-

thority of the Christian saint rose, and in 1916 the missionary Tutomlin pointed out that “among the native shamanists St. Nicholas Mirlikskii the Miracle Worker is revered everywhere. The natives consider him a Russian god stronger than pagan ones.” This Khanty Mikola, however, was not the Christian St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker but a substantially new deity subsuming within itself traits of various religious traditions. According to M. B. Shatilov’s observations, “Ostiak religion contains elements of a whole range of beliefs...there is an identification of Christian saints with Ostiak deities or heroes of the national epic, for example Mikola-Torum or Mikola-Ike.”

A corresponding cult rooted in traditional observances developed in relation to the new deity. The missionaries were correct in considering it a result of Christianization, when they wrote about the practice of “vows” made to Mikola to ward off various misfortunes such as reindeer plague, diseases, failure during the hunt, and so forth. Analysis of reports about such vows (a usual expression of which was the obligation to cross oneself) allows us to conclude that baptism (an important act from the point of view of the church) had very little significance for the newly baptized person. It was understood to be a superficial formality and therefore was undergone perfunctorily. Chris-

tianity could thus be partially adopted, merely by accepting some of its propositions and ceremonies. The result was additions to the structure of the traditional worldview and limited modification of certain elements of religious consciousness—all changes that fit the needs of traditional society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence demonstrates that because of a whole series of objective and subjective reasons, missionaries, as bear-

ers of Christian traditions, formed perceptions of the traditional worldview of the indigenous population of the Northern Ob’ that were in many ways incomplete and frequently incorrect. Their conceptions must be carefully checked against the data of ethnographic investigations. Nonetheless, they did record a series of elements completely correctly. The missionaries distin-

guished three constituent parts of the aboriginal religious consciousness: shamanism, worship of nature spirits, and the family spirit protectors. They considered the main figure in ceremonial cult practices to be the shaman, who also played an important role in daily life, fulfilling medical and other functions. Missionary statements about the adaptive role of the traditional worldview also coincide with ethnographic data. The adoption of Christian-

ity could take the form of simply incorporating individual Chris-

tian elements as additions to the existing structures of traditional consciousness, while rethinking and reinterpreting the new ele-

ments as appropriate.

Notes

1. The remainder of this article, following these introductory remarks by the translator, is a translation of Anatolii M. Ablazhei’s text. Except where marked “A.A.” bracketed comments inserted in the text are by the translator, who also supplied subheadings. Preparation of the original article by Ablazhei was funded by the Russian Humanities Scientific Fund.
From Sax to Seminary

Born in New Castle, Pennsylvania, in 1930, I grew up in the depression era, attended a small Methodist church with my parents, became proficient on the clarinet and saxophone, and was the first member of my extended family ever to go to college.

In high school I led a thirteen-piece dance orchestra, then majored in business administration at Grove City College to better handle the business side of my “big band.” In my senior year of college, however, I felt that God was calling me to the ministry. I sold my orchestra business and my sax and went off to Boston University School of Theology to prepare to be a Methodist pastor.

Following graduation from seminary in 1955, I was ordained in the Methodist Church, served for a summer in Alaska helping the Methodist pastor. Returning to Boston University to complete a Ph.D. in church history, I decided to write my dissertation on the theology of missions in the twentieth century. By the time I finished, I felt compelled to go to Asia as a missionary. Fortunately for me, Joanne Pemberton, whom I had met during my doctoral studies in the church where I was an associate minister in Providence, Rhode Island, shared my love and my missionary vocational calling. A few weeks after my graduation in 1960, we were married and sailed to the Philippines as Methodist missionaries.

The Philippine Decade

I had been appointed to teach church history at Union Theological Seminary, which was in Manila when we arrived, but it soon moved to a new campus twenty-three miles south of Manila in Dasmariñas, Cavite. There Joanne and I enjoyed nearly ten years of richly rewarding service and fellowship with missionary and Filipino colleagues and students. Both of our children were born in Manila and flourished in our rural campus setting. We were also happily involved with the growing Philippine Methodist Church. It was the beginning of a lifelong love affair with the Filipino people.

Memorable, and where students from Asia challenged my theological views as we discussed Hendrik Kraemer’s recently published book Religion and the Christian Faith (1956). This was the beginning of my lifelong engagement with mission studies and the theology of mission.

About 80 percent of Filipinos are at least nominally Roman Catholic, with a conservative Spanish heritage. It was fascinating to be in that context during and after the Second Vatican Council, to see changes slowly taking place in the Catholic Church and in relations with Protestants. As a result of my involvement in numerous ecumenical dialogues, I developed lasting friendships...
with several Jesuit and Society of the Divine Word priests, as well as a greater appreciation for certain aspects of the Catholic tradition.

Publishing Ventures


Other, more personal benefits followed. Stephen Neill, who had seen and appreciated the book before we first met in Singapore in 1963, invited me to join him in coediting the *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (1970). This began a friendship that lasted until his death in 1984. One of the last series of public lectures he gave was at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, on the assigned theme “How My Mind Has Changed About Mission.” Privately he said to me, “You know, Gerald, my mind really hasn’t changed!”

Lesslie Newbigin had written the foreword to *The Theology of the Christian Mission*. Later I visited him in Madras, India, on route to the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, in 1968 in Uppsala, Sweden. (I was a delegate of the Philippine Independent Church.) Newbigin also became a mentor, friend, and collaborator in numerous projects over the next thirty years.

Scarritt College and Cornell University

In 1970 an invitation came to serve as president of Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tennessee. While it was difficult to leave our colleagues and such a fulfilling ministry in the Philippines, we felt it was time to move on and open the way for a Filipino to teach church history at Union Theological Seminary.

Being at Scarritt was a good experience for our family’s reentry to life in America at a tumultuous time (with Vietnam, racial tensions, and Watergate), but I soon realized that I did not want to spend my career absorbed in fund-raising for a small college. So after three years I resigned and went to Cornell University as a senior research scholar in the Southeast Asia Program. A few years earlier Cornell University Press had published a book on Philippine church history that I edited, so it was a good fit, and we had a happy year there. During that year I published articles on President Marcos’s corrupt regime in the Philippines; an interview with Raul Manglapus, former foreign secretary of the Philippines (who had an office next to mine at Cornell); and an article warning about the possibility that President Nixon might declare martial law to avoid impeachment. I also edited *Asian Voices in Christian Theology* (1976), the first book from a Protestant to be published by Orbis Books.

Missiology Networks: IAMS and ASM

Soon after returning to the United States from the Philippines, I was invited to join the committee of European missiologists...
headed by Olav Myklebust from Oslo and Hans-Werner Gensichen from Heidelberg that was planning to establish the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS). The inaugural meeting was held at Driebegen, Netherlands, in the summer of 1972, at which time I was elected to the executive committee. I eventually served a three-year term as president. This ecumenical association has flourished, with 207 participants from 43 countries at its general assembly in Malaysia in 2004, and its journal Mission Studies is outstanding.

During my first summer at Scarritt College in 1970, I attended a meeting of the Association of Professors of Mission (APM) in North America. It was depressing to find only fourteen persons in attendance, mostly from seminaries of the mainline Protestant churches. I felt that if this poor turnout represented the future of mission studies in North America, we were in serious trouble.

Ralph Winter from Fuller Seminary shared my concerns, and over the next year or so we strategized about the need for a new organization that would encompass broader membership than the APM and be able to revitalize the discipline of mission studies. I invited APM to have its 1972 meeting at Scarritt College. A few months before the meeting, Ralph and I sent out a letter to the APM membership and to some evangelical and Roman Catholic professors, inviting them to a special consultation at Scarritt just prior to the APM meeting to consider the formation of a new organization focused on the advancement of mission studies in North America that would supplement the efforts of the APM. Ralph encouraged evangelicals to attend, and I cultivated those in the mainline churches related to the National Council of Churches.

Forty-five people, including quite a few members of APM, responded to our invitation and met on June 9–10 to consider the founding of the American Society of Missiology (ASM). Some feared the new organization would compete with and kill the APM. In the end, however, the participants unanimously agreed to proceed, and everyone signed up as charter members. When the APM met a few days later, its members not only supported the proposal but also contributed $250 from the APM treasury to help start the new organization. It was decided to hold the inaugural meeting of ASM a year later at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. I was elected chairman, Donald M. Wodarz, S.S.C., was vice-chairman, and Ralph Winter was secretary/treasurer of the continuation committee.

The inaugural meeting, in June 1973 on the theme “Salvation Today,” was attended by more than ninety persons. I was elected president, Wodarz vice-president, and Winter secretary/treasurer. Alan Tippett, of the Fuller School of World Mission, became the editor of ASM’s new journal, Missiology: An International Review, which began publication in January 1973. Tippett was a well-known missionary anthropologist, and his involvement facilitated the merging of the small but influential journal Practical Anthropology into Missiology, which gave Missiology a good start-up circulation. Today the annual meetings of the ASM regularly record an attendance of 140 to 150. ASM has also helped to revitalize the APM, which holds its meetings in conjunction with the ASM and normally draws about 80 participants.

**Benedict XVI**

On April 19, 2005, after only four ballots in conclave, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger at the age of seventy-eight was elected bishop of Rome, taking the name “Benedict XVI.” In his first official public audience, on April 27, the new pope indicated that the name “Benedict” recalls the papacy of Benedict XV (1914–22), and so his choice of name bears a good deal of significance. Benedict XV succeeded the saintly but rigid Pius X, who had attempted to restrict any theological inquiry that would make use of “modern” methods of history and philosophy. Benedict XV also reversed a previous papal policy that banned Catholic participation in Italian politics and, in what may have been his most important contribution, issued the apostolic letter *Maximum illud* (1919), the first of a series of “mission encyclicals” appearing throughout the twentieth century, and one in which the pope insisted pointedly on the cultivation of indigenous clergeries throughout the world.

The new pope’s name also calls to mind Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 550), the founder of Western monasticism, who set in motion a movement that preserved European faith and culture in the wake of the migration of new and vigorous peoples from the east and the north. Benedict is the patron of Europe, and so his name resonates with the concerns of the new pope about the decline of Christianity in Europe and the West.

Benedict XVI has pledged to work for the unity of all Christians and also has reached out especially to Muslims. Christians should be aware, however, that as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the new pope was responsible for the publication of the document *Dominus Iesus*, in which (quoting Vatican II) Protestant churches are spoken of as “defective” (par. 19). One may well wonder what Christian unity may mean in such an interpretation. Also in *Dominus Iesus* other religions are seen as “gravely deficient” (par. 22). Especially because of this latter position, the new pope will certainly be committed to the act of proclamation as—in the words of John Paul II—“the permanent priority of mission” (*Redemptoris missio*, 44). There is no doubt that, like his predecessor, Benedict XVI will be unshakable in his commitment to the church’s faith in “the fullness and definitiveness of the revelation of Jesus Christ” (the title of section 1 of *Dominus Iesus*). There is no doubt as well, however, that such a position will be worked out within an equally firm commitment to dialogue both with the world’s religions and with people persuaded by postmodern secularism, relativism, and individualism.

Benedict XVI is no liberal. He is suspicious of human culture and sees the church more as a universal reality, of which he is the chief pastor, than as a communion of local churches, each with a certain autonomy. He was deeply affected both by the Nazi co-option of the church during the 1930s and by what he considers misunderstandings of Vatican II in the years immediately following its conclusion. But he is a brilliant theologian and, in these first days of his pontificate, has proved to be extraordinarily sensitive pastorally. The world’s peoples have good reason to hope that he will provide the leadership necessary for our turbulent but exciting times.

—Stephen Bevans, S.V.D.

**Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., a contributing editor, is the Louis J. Luzbetak S.V.D. Professor of Mission and Culture, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.**
Over the next couple of years several Catholic and Protestant mission agencies provided grants for a revolving fund that enabled ASM, in cooperation with Orbis Books, to publish the ASM Series, devoted to scholarly missiological monographs. The formation of the ASM, together with the journal and the book series, helped missiology gain recognition as an academic discipline in North America, and in 1976 ASM was granted membership in the Council on the Study of Religion.

In St. Louis in 1973, at the inaugural meeting of the ASM, I first met Thomas Stransky, president of the Paulist Fathers and formerly on the staff of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. We soon agreed to work together as coeditors of a series titled “Mission Trends”; five paperback volumes were published jointly by Paulist Press and Eerdmans and gained wide circulation. (Friends jokingly referred to it as the Tom and Jerry series.)

OMSC in Ventnor, New Jersey

Near the end of our year at Cornell, I was invited to speak at a conference at the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC) in Ventnor, New Jersey, where my friend R. Pierce Beaver had recently come as director after retiring from the University of Chicago Divinity School. While I was there, he took me aside and asked if I would be willing to come and join him as associate director of the center. His invitation came as quite a surprise, and I was not sure what this was what I wanted to do, as I thought I would prefer a teaching position on a seminary faculty. But it was an attractive setting for our family, the program focused on continuing education for missionaries, and Pierce was widely regarded as the doyen of American missiologists. He told me that he planned to stay only a couple more years and that it was likely that I could succeed him as director. So after Joanne and I talked it over, we decided that this was a calling we should accept. That was 1974, which marked the beginning of twenty-six years at OMSC, first as associate director, then, following the retirement of Pierce in 1976, as director. I realized early on that OMSC, while small in size, had the potential to exercise some influence in the development and direction of the missionary movement and mission studies in North America.

As soon as I became the director of OMSC in 1976, I negotiated to assume the publication of the Occasional Bulletin from the Missionary Research Library in New York City. While it had a distinguished reputation, the Bulletin had languished in recent years, with a circulation of about 300, of which about half were complimentary subscriptions. We redesigned it into a quarterly journal, beginning in 1977, and began an aggressive campaign to increase the circulation. Within four years the circulation was over 5,000 worldwide, and we had changed the name to International Bulletin of Missionary Research. It continues as a signature ministry of OMSC, for the advancement of scholarship in the study of world mission.

When I came to OMSC, one of our goals was to make it more ecumenical and representative of the global church. Few Roman Catholics had ever been there, and 90 percent of the residents were North American missionaries on furlough, while only 10 percent were church workers from the non-Western world. Twenty-five years later this ratio was reversed: 10 percent of residents and program participants were North American personnel, and 90 percent were Asian and African missionaries and church workers, from many church traditions—mainline Protestants, evangelicals, Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, and an occasional Orthodox.

One of the personal benefits of this kind of involvement and association with a broad spectrum of mission personnel and agencies was that at one point in the 1980s, I was serving simultaneously on committees or commissions of the World Council of Churches, the Lausanne movement, and the United States Catholic Mission Association. I was eager to build bridges for the sake of unity and cooperation in the advancement of the Christian mission, and OMSC facilitated these efforts.

A Controversy Among Methodists

At the same time, I had a growing concern about the increasing relativism in mission theology that I observed in various Protestant mission agencies, especially in the General Board of Global Ministries of my own United Methodist Church. I had been educated in some of the premier liberal theological schools both in the United States and Europe. But I had also devoted much of my research and writing to developments in mission theology, and I recognized institutional malaise when I saw it. It was increasingly clear that evangelism was no longer on the agenda; mission was mainly social action and dialogue. Not surprisingly, the United Methodist Church had lost a million members in twenty years.

Private discussions over several years with staff in the Board of Global Ministries failed to effect any change, and I finally decided to “go public” with my concerns. In an address to some Methodist clergy in Dallas in October 1983, I proposed the creation of a new, alternative mission agency for United Methodists. My proposal was widely reported in the Methodist press, and suddenly I found myself at the center of a maelstrom in the church. It was an agonizing time for me personally, because until this point I had always been a part of the official system, whereas now I was challenging the structure.

Soon thereafter I was invited to speak to another gathering of pastors who shared my concern and wanted to do something about it. We met in November 1983 in St. Louis, Missouri, out of which came a decision to form a new unofficial agency known as the Mission Society for United Methodists. Those of us who participated were viewed as disloyal clergy, and some careers suffered. Fortunately I had the support of the OMSC board, and I served as a trustee of the Mission Society for the next twenty years. Today the Mission Society has over 170 missionaries serving in holistic ministries in 31 countries on five continents. Its combined annual budget of $9 million comes from churches and individuals nationwide. There is also a growing recognition that the Mission Society is not a threat to the denomination, but rather an agent for renewal in the church and for the advancement of the worldwide Christian mission. While my involvement in the creation of the Mission Society was difficult in many respects, it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, because I strongly believed that we were engaged in a struggle for the soul of the church. At the time of my retirement, I was deeply moved.
when, despite all that had happened, I received a certificate of appreciation from my bishop for my service as a minister of the United Methodist Church.

OMSC to New Haven, Connecticut

The continuing education program of OMSC flourished, but in Ventnor, New Jersey, we were too isolated from the academic and cultural resources of a great educational center. I felt we had to relocate the center to be close to a major university with a theological faculty that had a strong interest in mission and the global church.

After considering several options, the trustees of OMSC decided that New Haven, Connecticut, the home of Yale University, had the most to offer. Yale Divinity School had a distinguished tradition of professors of mission with Kenneth Scott Latourette and Charles Forman (who was vice president of our OMSC board). The Day Missions Collection in the Yale Divinity School Library offers the best collection of resources for mission studies in North America, perhaps in the world. We were fortunate to find and purchase attractive property just one and a half blocks from the Divinity School. Lesslie Newbigin gave the address at our dedication of the new facility on October 5, 1987, and David Bosch from South Africa taught the first seminar in the new location. With the expansion of our programs we added a spacious new building in 1999, aptly named Great Commission Hall.

I was greatly blessed at OMSC to work with three outstanding associate directors: Norman Horner, James Phillips, and Jonathan Bonk. Each of them brought remarkable gifts, vision, and vitality to the program, and we worked well together. Jonathan became my successor when I retired in 2000. We also benefited from the financial administration of Eugenia N. Dilg, tireless business manager of OMSC for twenty years.

The Biographical Dictionary

Sometime in 1990 I went to the Yale Divinity Library to look up some biographical information about an early missionary. I assumed I would find one or more biographical reference works about missionaries, but I found none. After consulting several colleagues and librarians, I came to realize that such a major comprehensive reference work of missionary biographies had never been published.

It was a project and opportunity that appealed to my interests: church history, biography, missions, editing, and publishing. Simon and Schuster Macmillan, one of the largest publishing firms in the United States, said it would be interested in publishing such a volume, and the Pew Charitable Trusts provided generous funding to support the project. Robert Coote, my longtime OMSC colleague, who had strong editing skills and journalistic experience, readily agreed to serve as assistant editor. Five years after we opened an editorial office for the project at OMSC, the Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions (1998) was published. It was a massive project with nearly a million words, with articles on 2,400 outstanding missionaries in the history of the church, written by 349 authors from 45 countries. Soon after it appeared, Bob Coote and I went to Rome and personally presented copies to Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Josef Tomko, who was head of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, known earlier as Propaganda Fide. A year later, Eerdmans Publishing Company brought out a paperback edition.

Thirty years earlier, in the editorial preface to the Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission, we said, “Only rarely is it possible for authors and editors to claim that they have done something that has never been done before. The editors of this Dictionary, however, believe that this is a claim they are entitled to make.” To be involved with two such pioneering projects was beyond my expectations, and was accomplished only with the generous cooperation and support of a great many colleagues.

In Retirement

Since retirement in June 2000, I have had opportunities to continue what I enjoy most: teaching and writing about the challenges facing the Christian mission today, especially in Asia, from Kazakhstan to Kota Kinabalu. I also enjoy serving on the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia, which provides assistance to theological schools in South East Asia and China. This enables me to keep in touch with some of the important developments that are taking place in the churches and seminaries in Asia.

I also take great pleasure and satisfaction in the fact that the IAMS, ASM, OMSC, the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, and the Mission Society for United Methodists—projects that have meant much to me—are all flourishing.

My pilgrimage continues. Joanne and I enjoy our children and their spouses, our grandchildren, and various opportunities to grow and serve the church in mission. Looking back over these years at a pilgrimage that has often taken me by surprise, I have learned to work and wait, with confidence that God will lead, and grateful that “the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage” (Ps. 16:6).

IBMR Receives Associated Church Press Award of Excellence

When Christian magazine editors and publishers gathered in Nashville in April 2005 for the Associated Church Press convention, the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH received the top Award of Excellence in the Theological Reflection: Long Format category, for the January 2004 feature “Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church,” by Prof. Andrew F. Walls. The award was presented April 26. Congratulations, Andrew!
The Legacy of Samuel Bacon Fairbank

Jennifer M. Trafton

The 1913 centennial report of the American Marathi Mission in India included a large photo with the caption “Samuel B. Fairbank, D.D., Missionary, 1846–1898. Evangelist, Writer, Translator, Editor, Scientist, Agriculturist.” The photo and attribution show the high regard in which Fairbank was held and the amazing breadth of his talents and activities during his long service in India. Though an unknown name now in missions history, Samuel Bacon Fairbank (1822–98) was in his own time a missionary of rare personal giftedness and revered status both on the home front and in the area of India where he spent his life and where he is still remembered. Moreover, he became the patriarch of a missionary dynasty in western India that lasted over a century.

Fairbank never served as an administrator of a mission board, never developed a unique theory of mission or published any books for an American audience, spent most of his life in a tiny village, and, perhaps also to be noted, never did anything blameworthy enough to attract the attention of modern critics of the missionary enterprise. Nevertheless, Fairbank’s career as a missionary spanned a period of many developments and changes in American mission policy and reveals the relationship—and often the tension—between mission theory from afar and actual experience on the field. His many letters that survive in manuscript, together with his contributions to the mission’s annual reports, magazines, and memorial volumes, provide a helpful window into larger issues of the nineteenth-century American missionary movement. Studying the life of a missionary like Samuel B. Fairbank can do much to dispel the prevailing image of nineteenth-century missionaries as narrow, paternalistic, ethnocentric agents of imperialism. It can, in fact, shed light on the complexities of life on the mission field for those pioneers who lacked our privilege of hindsight as they tried to navigate the wilderness of cross-cultural encounters.

The American Marathi Mission was one of the firstfruits of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which sent out its pioneering group of missionaries to India in 1810. Two of this group, Gordon Hall and Samuel Nott, began work in Bombay in 1813, spending much of their time translating the New Testament into the Marathi language. Eventually the mission spread east and south throughout the Marathi-speaking areas of western central India and established three other urban centers in Ahmednagar, Satura, and Sholapur. In 1854 the ABCFM sent a deputation to India led by Rufus Anderson, who urged the missionaries, then including Fairbank, to focus on evangelizing rather than “civilizing” the people and to aim toward building self-supporting, self-governing churches. The members of the Marathi Mission took Anderson’s advice to heart and over the following years attempted to put it into practice. They closed the mission press and many of its schools, began training and ordaining native pastors, and expanded beyond the urban centers into the surrounding villages, planting local churches. The changes inspired by the deputation in the following years resulted in unprecedented growth for the mission.

Fruitful Ministry in Wadalé

Samuel Bacon Fairbank was born on December 14, 1822, in Stamford, Connecticut. He was the eldest son of John Barnard Fairbank, who was principal of an academy in Stamford and later moved to Massachusetts, where he manufactured straw hats. Fairbank studied at Illinois College (A.B. 1842, A.M. 1845) and Andover Theological Seminary, where he became convinced that he was called to be a missionary. After his graduation from Andover and ordination in 1845, he married Abbie Allen. The couple immediately left for India to join the American Marathi Mission, arriving in Bombay in 1846.

Fairbank took charge of the mission press, based in Bombay. During that time he helped supervise the translation, revision, and printing of the Marathi Scriptures, as well as coediting a quarterly journal on temperance. In 1852 Abbie died following childbirth, having been in poor health for some time. After her death and the dismantling of the press because of the Anderson deputation, Fairbank went to the United States for a furlough. While he was there, he married Mary Ballantine, the daughter of fellow missionary Henry Ballantine.

Upon returning to India in 1857, Fairbank heeded Rufus Anderson’s admonition to begin a rural Christian movement by establishing one of the first mission outstations in Wadalé (later spelled Vadala). A village of fewer than three hundred people, Wadalé was located twenty-six miles northeast of Ahmednagar in the Godaveri valley and within ten miles of at least eighty-two other villages. From this central location, Fairbank single-handedly exercised oversight of what became known as the Wadalé district. Wadalé was the most fruitful outstation of the entire mission, growing rapidly over the following decades and eventually having more churches, native pastors, teachers, and schools than any other district—a distinction it could claim well into the twentieth century. Many Wadalé converts became involved in Christian ministry and government work throughout the Marathi-speaking region. By 1900 the churches of the Wadalé district had over 4,000 members, with Christians composing 35 percent of the total population of the region.

Fairbank’s historical essay on the evangelistic work of the mission for the 1882 Memorial Papers gives a detailed picture of how evangelistic work was conducted and how missionaries adapted their methods to specific situations and needs. The methods varied widely and included regular religious services, street preaching in the city, and itinerancy among the villages (periodic visitation, preaching tours lasting several months, or—his own favored mode—lengthy visits to individual villages). Believing evangelism to be his most important task, Fairbank often took long preaching tours—sometimes alone with his native assistant, sometimes with his wife or a pastor missionary. He traveled from village to village in an ox cart he had specially designed to serve as transportation, shelter from weather, bedroom, kitchen, study, bath, and storeroom. It even included bookshelves and a small writing desk. He fondly called it his “tent on wheels.” He made a special point of indicating in his report that the wives of the missionaries (including his own wife, Mary) “were also sent” and, when they were not otherwise occupied with schools and work among women, went on itiner-
The missionaries soon found that they had to provide some sort of spectacle or arouse people’s curiosity in order to gather (and keep) a large audience. One method, employed often by Fairbank, was to use a Magic Lantern or its improved form, the Sciopticon, to provide visual illustrations to a Scripture story. Fairbank’s mission reports also praised the use of native music in evangelism: “among a people so fond of singing as the Hindus are, it would seem that such use might be made of this agency that it would become a powerful means of conversions as well as of evangelization.” Fairbank himself contributed to this trend by preparing a tune book and music manual in Marathi, giving singing lessons, and writing and translating hymns. The most successful musical venture of the mission was its adaptation of the kirttan to Christian purposes. A kirttan, as performed by a company of trained Indian singers and instrumentalists, involved alternating periods of recitative teaching and musical response. From the time of its first use, wrote Fairbank, “the kirttan has been a favorite, as well as a most important and impressive mode of Evangelism. A good kirttan is sure to draw a crowded audience and to secure its pleased attention. The instruction given in it is remembered, and some of the hymns and tunes are learned by the hearers and are sung with joy and profit for many a day.” With a kirttan, portable organ, Sciopticon, or other attraction, a missionary could preach to attentive crowds of several hundred up to a thousand people at a time, including large numbers of higher-caste women, who were otherwise almost impossible to reach.

Beyond Evangelism

Fairbank’s duties soon extended far beyond itinerant evangelism. He did a great deal of literary work for the mission, publishing Sabbath school notes in Marathi and several vernacular schoolbooks, including a multivolume arithmetic, a Marathi grammar, and illustrations for a geography textbook. He also prepared references for an edition of the New Testament. In later years he was asked to take over the editing of the mission’s annual Marathi almanac. In Wadalé he supervised the native pastors and teachers, who regularly came to him for instruction and advice, established schools and taught English to a group of boys in his home, dispensed medicines and provided medical care, and settled both ecclesiastical and legal disputes among the villagers, who came to revere his counsel.

Although he sometimes regretted that such tasks—especially medical care—took him away from preaching, he reflected, “When the Master sent forth his disciples, the first direction he gave them was to preach, and the second was to heal the sick. He also set them an example and not only in the same order but also by first healing and then preaching. So, acknowledging that healing is a necessary part of the Missionary work, I have always done what I could for the sick.” Often he gave entire afternoons to this task of healing, which he regarded as intimately connected with evangelism. Missionary work, for Fairbank, involved not only preaching a plan of salvation to the “heathen” but also being a living presence among the people, who, in seeing the love of the missionary for them expressed in his daily words and actions, would be drawn thereby to the substance of his message.

Fairbank also made great contributions to agriculture in the valley. A farmer at heart, he was disturbed by the extreme poverty and primitive farming methods of the villagers and helped develop better farming tools and methods adapted to the Indian climate and soil, setting up an experimental farm of his own as a model for others. This initiative brought him into much personal contact with the local people, as he would walk from village to village and chat with them at work in their fields. His letters and mission reports show an intimate knowledge of climate and economic conditions and a deep sympathy for the daily practical challenges the farmers faced. Illustrations and metaphors drawn from nature and agriculture filled his sermons and writings.

During the many years of drought and famine that ravaged the region, Fairbank and his fellow missionaries were involved in relief work, assisting governmental efforts and offering food and shelter to famine victims, taking in orphans, and buying and dispensing seed to farmers. Fairbank himself lost money over the years by lending out of his own personal allowance to poor farmers and native workers who could not repay him, at least for a long time. He found, however, that in the long run it was better for the morale of the people that they learn to earn their own living rather than be dependent on aid from others. He was a strong advocate of industrial schools, in which the students spent half of each day doing manual labor and learning farming or other trade skills. He insisted that this practical work was excellent for their health, reduced the cost of their board, taught them the dignity of work, and helped them gain a livelihood. By the turn of the century, perhaps partly owing to Fairbank’s advocacy, industrial education became a major emphasis in the mission.

The missionaries eventually decided that, though admirable in theory, in practice Rufus Anderson’s ideals of “evangelism only” and “self-supporting churches” were not always mutually compatible. The American Marathi Mission was committed to the goal of helping the local congregations to become independent of foreign aid. According to Fairbank, the work of the missionary is not complete until the native church is self-supporting and stable. He added this qualification, however: “A Christian must have sources of independent income before he can become a pillar in a self-supporting church.” People in these village churches were poor landless laborers or tenant farmers who lived by subsistence sharecropping or by begging. Their financial struggles were compounded by droughts, locust plagues, and famines, and they were often dependent by necessity upon mission funds. The majority were Mahars—“untouchables” excluded from caste society and from regular employment. Living in servile dependence upon the farmers, they were unable to contribute very much to the support of their churches and were also reluctant to “contend for their faith” and challenge the beliefs and practices of those in society on whom their livelihood depended. Fairbank therefore took Mahar Christians under his wing, both personally and financially, to help them become farmers.

Though flying directly in the face of Anderson’s mission ideology, Fairbank’s agricultural work, industrial schools, and English classes (English being the ticket into government service
and colonialism, especially in the context of nineteenth-century India, is an issue far too complex to be settled by individual case studies, and this article makes no pretense of resolving this difficult issue. When studied on their own terms, however, apart from the often unforeseen consequences of their work, the evidence suggests that many of these early missionaries were not consciously intending to impose standards of Western culture but were simply ministering to the needs of people around them, using the only methods they knew, motivated by convictions that transcended cultural considerations and willing to give their lives to the cause.

Window on Mission Life

The career of Samuel Bacon Fairbank provides a fascinating window into other historical issues of the American missionary movement. For example, his letters and mission reports show the development of female education in India and the role of women in the mission, the serious difficulties missionaries faced because of the caste system, the development of indigenous leadership, and the snowball effects of American board financial decisions, funding cuts, and doctrinal disputes on the life of the missionaries on the field. His letters also reveal the complex relationships between denominations and local competition between various mission agencies.

Fairbank’s work as an amateur naturalist illustrates how missionaries often contributed to scientific knowledge. Fairbank had a lifelong love for natural science and pursued this interest in India by planting gardens wherever he went, collecting and sending shells and bird skins back to American museums (which helped finance his scientific and agricultural pursuits), and publishing articles for the Bombay government on local birds, plants, reptiles, and fish. As a result of his accomplishments, in 1868 he was nominated to be a fellow of the University of Bombay.

Samuel Fairbank died, possibly of heat apoplexy, during a train journey to Kodaikanal (in South India) on May 31, 1898. He was buried in Ahmednagar. According to the obituary in the Missionary Herald, “At the time of his death Rev. Samuel Bacon Fairbank, D.D., was, in length of service, the senior male Protestant missionary in India.”

Fairbank’s personal impact on the Wadalé district was incalculable. When he first arrived in Wadalé and requested permission from the village leaders to build a house there, they gave him a plot of land that had been an outcaste burial site, hoping the foreigner would be driven away by ghosts. Decades later, the villagers not only regretted their earlier distrust but organized a homecoming celebration for the aged missionary after he returned from his final furlough in America. They also built a well for him out of their own funds to commemorate the fifty-year anniversary of his arrival in India. The water appeared quickly in the well, and a worker on the project was fortuitously spared from injury, both of which occurrences the villagers attributed to Fairbank’s meritorious life.

Fairbank’s son Henry, who took his father’s place in Wadalé, reported that the village had been so transformed by his father’s ministry that “Christian” had become a name of honor to them, and “this Wadalé is known in distinction from other Wadalés as the ‘Christian Wadalé.’” Fairbank’s second son, Edward, arriving several years later, remarked on the self-reliance of the native Christians in that area. Indeed, Samuel B. Fairbank became something of a local saint in the Wadalé district, and his name is still known and revered. The Wadalé church, built after a famine by Edward and dedicated in 1903, is called the Samuel Bacon Fairbank Memorial Church, and another nearby village has also recently renamed its church after him.

The Family Legacy

Samuel Fairbank’s significance lies not only in the particular accomplishments of his lifetime but also in his legacy carried on by succeeding generations of Fairbanks in India and beyond—what became known in the ABCFM as “the Fairbank Saga.” His first wife, Abbie, bore four children, only one of whom (Emily) survived to adulthood. Abbie died soon after the birth of their fourth child. His second wife, Mary, bore ten children, eight of whom survived to adulthood. All of the Fairbank children went to the United States when they were old enough for formal schooling and lived with various family members and friends, with Fairbank sending them as much money as he could. After the death of their mother Mary, Anna Fairbank Woods, Fairbank’s second eldest daughter, who had married a minister and was living in the United States, became a surrogate mother to her younger siblings. Fairbank’s fatherly hopes were fulfilled when six of his nine surviving children became missionaries: Emily in Ceylon, and the others returning to western India, where they grew up. (Another daughter wanted to come, but the ABCFM lacked the funds to send her.) Many grandchildren also returned. In 1950 there were twenty-five members of his family in India, including in-laws and great-grandchildren.

Samuel Fairbank’s work in Wadalé was carried on first by his son Henry, then by his son Edward, and finally by Edward’s son Robert, all of whom found that the reputation of Samuel Fairbank among both Christian and non-Christian villagers paved the way for their own acceptance and ministry there. According to one descendant’s account, the mission twice attempted to send...
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Edward to another area, since he was no longer needed in Wadalé, but each time the Wadalé church protested, saying, “But there has always been a Fairbank Sahib in Vadala; always ever since our grandfather’s time a Fairbank Sahib has been our Vadala Sahib.” The second time this occurred, the Wadalé delegation submitted to the mission a petition with the names of over 3,000 villagers asking that the Fairbanks be allowed to stay in Wadalé. Joseph Moulton, writing for the Marathi Mission sesquicentennial in 1963, said, “The Fairbank name is still a household word in many a home in the area; their memory is cherished by Hindus and Moslems as well as by Christians.”

Although Fairbank never wavered in his belief that the preaching of the Gospel was the primary work of the missionary, his holistic understanding of Christian life and witness as encompassing the soul, mind, and body surely left its mark on his descendants, most of whom were involved in educational, agricultural, and medical work. For example, his daughter Rose received her M.D. from Johns Hopkins in 1900 and immediately returned to India to serve as head of a mission hospital. She then married another doctor, Lester Beals, and with him established a hospital in Wai, near Bombay, that is still in operation. Fairbank’s daughter Katie married Robert A. Hume, a well-known and gifted missionary teacher and statesman who became the first moderator of the United Church of North India, corresponded with Gandhi, and was awarded for his public service in India. Fairbank’s progeny attended leading academic institutions such as Mount Holyoke, Amherst College, Andover Seminary, and Yale. They inherited Fairbank’s deep respect for the cultures of Asia.

In conclusion, the surviving letters and papers of Samuel Bacon Fairbank and his family provide the historian with a valuable resource for probing more deeply into the lives of “ordinary” missionaries. The combined careers of the Fairbanks in India, spanning over a century, offer a firsthand glimpse at long-range developments in missionary methods, mission theory, and cross-cultural relations between Americans and Indians in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Fairbank himself, as a man of broad and deep—though perhaps not highly visible—accomplishments, is worthy of notice on his own merits. Residing among the villagers for so many years, Fairbank daily faced their physical and social needs, as well as their spiritual ones. He prefaced his essay on evangelism by placing evangelistic work within the context of the whole range of missionary tasks, using a natural analogy characteristic of him.

Missionary activity is like a great tree with various branches, which are like Joseph’s vine, and “run over the wall.” These branches are in some sense separate and bear diverse fruit; but they are all branches of one Mission tree whose fruit is for food to hungry souls, and “whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.” The Preacher, the Teacher, the Bookmaker, and the Doctor, have each most important work in hand and each in his way impresses and blesses others, and earns the “Well done” from the Master. Each uses his special opportunities for communicating Christian truth, and is a light into the darkness. Each has the privilege of doing what is for him the most important work.

Fairbank’s reminder that Jesus combined healing with preaching, as well as his belief that being a living presence among the people was as important as words in the goal of spreading the Gospel, anticipated the shift in missions toward social and philanthropic work by the twentieth century. In his case, however, these beliefs did not reflect a changing theology but flowed from a life of experience on the mission field.

Notes
2. See Rufus Anderson, History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in India (Bombay: Congregational Publishing Society, 1874).
7. Report 1889, pp. 54–55; Samuel Bacon Fairbank to James Fairbank, June 28–July 1, 1874, Fairbank Family Papers (the location of all personal letters cited below).
10. Samuel B. Fairbank, 6th paper, in Memorial Papers, p. 44.
14. See, for example, Report 1889, pp. 70–71.
15. Samuel wrote to his brother James that most of his work was “the superintendence of workers, who live several miles (from 5 to 25 miles) away” (Samuel Bacon Fairbank to James Fairbank, October 21, 1881).
17. See, for example, Report 1882, p. 40; Samuel Bacon Fairbank to James Fairbank, March 10, 1883, and August 8, 1880; Clark, “The Fairbanks of India”; and Hume, “Semi-Centennial,” p. 528. According to Robert A. Hume, “In his district he was the chief authority for many Hindus, as well as for Christians” (“Samuel Bacon Fairbank, D.D.,” p. 301).
20. See Marian Fairbank, “The Fairbank Family in India” (1930), Fairbank Family Papers; Goodsell, They Lived Their Faith, p. 31; Hume, “Semi-Centennial,” p. 527; Samuel Bacon Fairbank to James Fairbank, April 9, 1882; and Samuel Bacon Fairbank to his mother, brothers, and sisters, March 30, 1880.
21. See Hazen, A Century in India, pp. 70–71; and Samuel Bacon Fairbank to James Fairbank, August 10, 1878.
22. See Report 1882, pp. 31–37; and Report 1884, p. 34; and Report 1892, p. 11.
24. R. A. Hume, 1st paper, Memorial Papers, p. 3.
26. See Modak, 4th paper, Memorial Papers, p. 26; and Report 1885, pp. 18–19.
28. For example, the family papers include a receipt from Amherst College that reads: “The Trustees of Amherst College have received from Rev. S. B. Fairbank numerous specimens of shells, collected by the donor in Bombay, as a gift to the Zoological Museum, for which they return a grateful acknowledgment” (Amherst College, letter acknowledging donation, March 30, 1852).
29. Henry J. Bruce, 8th paper, Memorial Papers, p. 106.
30. C. Gonne, Secretary to Government, Bombay, to Samuel Bacon Fairbank, December 29, 1868.
34. See Report 1896, pp. 11–12.
35. Report 1887, p. 22.
37. There is some discrepancy as to the number of children Abbie bore. A letter from Samuel to a friend shortly after her death seems to indicate only three pregnancies (Samuel Bacon Fairbank to Mrs. Kimball, August 25, 1852). In any event, only one of the babies survived.
38. Marian Fairbank, “The Fairbank Family in India.”
39. Ibid.
40. Moulton, Faith for the Future, p. 175.
41. His son Henry, reporting on the work of the Wadalé mission in 1896, echoed his father’s belief that healing was a necessary corollary to evangelism: “It is easy to forget the spiritual side of the medical work in caring for the bodies of the patients. However, I feel that the Gospel is commended in many villages, because bodily suffering has been relieved, and indirectly the Evangelistic work in the district is advanced” (Report 1896, p. 69).
42. Goodsell, They Lived Their Faith, pp. 402–3.
43. Fairbank, 6th paper, Memorial Papers, p. 43.

Selected Bibliography

The main source of material related to Samuel Bacon Fairbank and his descendents is the massive collection of Fairbank Family Papers in the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. The annual reports of the American Marathi Mission also provide a wealth of information. Other general sources include the following:


Historical Sketch of the Mission to the Marathas of Western India. New York: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1862.


Catholic Sources of Global Documentation

Catholic literature on theology and mission is very extensive. There are several excellent bibliographical sources to retrieve this wide variety of materials and documents. Following are three pivotal indexes for the English-speaking world.

The Guide to Catholic Literature began publication in 1888, and The Catholic Periodical Index dates from 1930. In July 1968 these two publications were combined to form The Catholic Periodical and Literature Index. This authoritative index is now available in both electronic and print forms.

Bibliografia Missionaria has been published under the supervision of the Roman Congregation Propaganda Fide since 1935. This is the most authoritative resource for Catholic mission literature of the past sixty years; citations in various languages.

Theologie im Kontext, initiated in 1980 by the Institute of Missiology-Missio (Aachen, Germany), has an English version, Theology in Context, which began appearing in 1984. The special focus of this index is to provide access to journals from the young churches of the so-called Third-World countries.

These three indexes are truly indispensable resources if one wishes to understand the theology and practice of the world mission endeavors undertaken by the Catholic Church. It is imperative that they appear in any comprehensive listing of global documentation on mission.

—James H. Kroeger, M.M.
Loyola School of Theology
Manila, Philippines
The Legacy of John Duncan

John S. Ross

John Duncan was born in 1796 in Old Aberdeen, Scotland, to parents who were members of the Associate Presbytery, or Secession Church. When John was nine years old, he entered Aberdeen Grammar School, where from the outset he showed great interest in languages and metaphysics, the two subjects that were to be lifelong intellectual passions. He was once discovered, during class, furtively reading a copy of Aristotle hidden under his desk.1 In 1810 he matriculated and, obtaining a scholarship, entered Marischal College, Aberdeen, from which he graduated with an M.A. in 1814. Despite the evangelical influences surrounding him, Duncan as a student had espoused the atheistic pantheism of Baruch Spinoza. He nevertheless became a student for the Christian ministry, studying at the theological halls of the Associate Presbytery (1814–16) and the Church of Scotland (1817–21). It was through the influence of one of his tutors, Dr. Mearns, that his skepticism fell away, and he was able to believe in the existence of God. This change happened suddenly, when he was crossing one of the bridges in Aberdeen. He later recalled the impact: “When I was convinced that there was a God, I danced on the Brig o’ Dee with delight.”

Dalliance with atheism left a legacy of remorse, which Duncan summarized in the words of John Paul Friedrich Richter, “I wandered to the furthest edge of Creation . . . and I heard the shriek of a Fatherless world.”2 His recovery of orthodox Christian faith was long and tortuous. Rejecting atheism, he first moved to Unitarianism and for nine years opposed all the central doctrines of Reformed theology, living, as he himself acknowledged, in habitual sin and without prayer. In 1825 he was licensed to preach, a step taken “in ungodliness and doctrinal unbelief and heresy.”3

To supplement his meager income, Duncan became a private tutor to a number of wealthy families in Aberdeenshire, including a family called Towers. He became romantically attracted to their daughter, Janet, and notwithstanding the considerable disparity in their economic and social status, he proposed marriage but was refused. Two years later, on hearing that Janet Towers did in fact harbor an affection for him, he proposed again and was accepted. The letters that passed between them before their marriage reflect both Duncan’s eccentricity and his scholarship. In one, having already written diagonally across his original tightly spaced sentences, he continued to fill “every available quarter inch of space in the margins and corners of the quarto pages.” He then set “himself to teach her Greek . . . illustrates this by a comparison with the structure of Latin . . . and breaks off into French.”4 They married in 1837 and had one daughter, Annie. The following year Janet died, following the premature stillbirth of their second daughter.

Duncan’s conversion, under César Malan in May 1826, brought to him an immediate sense of peace that nevertheless, in time, subsided into pessimism. He found help from his reading of John Owen, Hermann Witsius, and John Love, and from personal association with Gavin Parker and James Kidd.5 These relationships led to a deeper experience he called his second conversion. As a consequence he retained a lifelong dread of superficial Christianity, often entertaining doubts as to the authenticity of his own faith. He never enjoyed a permanent sense of assurance, and although this experience proved painful for himself and his family, it gave him great empathy for others and unusual depth in his evangelistic ministry.

Duncan was a man of remarkable intellect. In October 1839 he applied for the chair of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow and could claim familiarity with Hebrew and all the cognate languages, as well as with Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindustani, and Marathi; furthermore, he had a high degree of fluency in European languages and an amazing facility to express himself in the most elegant Latin. One of Duncan’s very few surviving fragments consists of scribbled annotations on 2 Corinthians 9:6. Of its approximately one hundred words, six are Greek, eight are Hebrew, and four are Sanskrit!6 His linguistic ability, knowledge of Jewish and rabbinic literature, style of teaching, and deep interest in the Jewish people led others to call him Rabbi Duncan.

Joined to his intellectual powers was an endearing eccentricity and absentmindedness. One example must suffice. In 1841, on the day of his second marriage (to Janet Torrance, the widow of an army officer), he went to his room to dress. Some time later when his cab arrived, he was not to be found, so his niece went to his room and discovered him asleep in his bed, with a Hebrew book in his hand. Taking off his clothes had automatically triggered his nighttime routine, which included getting into bed and reading Hebrew!7 Such strangeness of character, however, would have its missionary value. One of his fellow missionaries in Budapest, Robert Smith, spoke of him as “a child and a giant in one, both characters curiously intermingled. . . . No man ever inspired less awe, nor called forth deeper reverence.”8 But neither his brilliant scholarship nor his endearing eccentricities are the true measure of the man; he was above all a devoted Christian, serving his Savior with all his powers, which were dedicated to the salvation of Israel for the short but crucial period between August 1841 and September 1843.

Scottish Interest in the Jewish People

John Duncan himself entered into the heritage of Scottish interest in and sympathy for the Jewish people. Personal acquaintance with Jewish people probably dates from about 1290, when Jewish refugees arrived in Scotland following their violent expulsion from England. Jack C. Whytock reports that Scottish theological halls of the seventeenth century employed Jewish instructors in Hebrew.9 Undergraduates in Scottish universities enjoyed social contact with Jewish students from the late eighteenth century.10 By 1780 there was an established Jewish community in Scotland, although it was not religiously organized until some years later.11 Popular Romantic literature, such as the novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), often portrayed Jews with sympathy. Significantly, there are no records of Scottish anti-Semitism; the Encyclopaedia Judaica comments: “Relations between Jews and non-Jews in Scotland have always been harmonious.”12 Jewish author Abel Philips described the Scots as “a people who held in reverence the teaching and moral principles of the Old Testament.”13 Through its reading of the Bible, its use of the Psalms in worship, its reverence for the sanctity of the Sabbath,
and its tradition of religious covenanting, the Scottish church entered into what Andrew Walls has described as the church’s “adoptive past,” its indissoluble link with the historical and religious heritage of ancient Israel.

In its religious literature the Scottish church reiterated a profound indebtedness to the Jewish people as the source of its greatest good. This attitude is typically expressed by Thomas Boston (1676–1732): “All the means of grace, and acceptance through Jesus Christ, that we have now, we had originally from them. . . . It was the light that came out from among them, that enlightened our dark part of the world.” Gratitude for such blessings, rather than the recrudescence of millennial prophecy, motivated nineteenth-century evangelistic activity aimed at the spiritual restoration of Israel. The foundation, in 1809, of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, with its Scottish auxiliaries, gave many Scottish Christians their first engagement in mission to the Jewish people. Duncan and David Brown, his friend and biographer, were both involved in the formation of an Aberdeen auxiliary, Duncan being one of the secretaries.

Through the pages of his hugely influential Edinburgh Christian Instructor, Andrew Mitchell Thomson actively promoted mission to the Jews. In 1839 the Church of Scotland established its own Committee for the Conversion of the Jews. There was never a more popular missionary project. Evangelical leader Thomas Chalmers considered that “the evangelization of the Jews should rank as a first and foremost object of Christian policy.”

The committee sought to determine where it should establish the first mission stations. In 1839 a four-man deputation—Alexander Black, Alexander Keith, Robert Murray M’Cheyne, and Andrew Bonar—was sent to investigate Jewish communities in Europe and Palestine. A fall from a camel in Egypt and the general rigors of travel led Black, accompanied by Keith, to return to Europe ahead of the younger men. In Budapest, through a remarkable sequence of events, the archduchess, Maria Dorothea, came to support a Church of Scotland mission to the Jews of Pest.

On their return, though, when M’Cheyne and Bonar published their Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land and Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, it advocated establishing the mission in Palestine. In fact, the decision was neither Pest nor Palestine, for in 1840 the first missionary, Daniel Edward, commenced work in Iași, Moldavia (from 1861, part of Romania). But the following year a small team of missionaries, under the leadership of John Duncan, departed for Budapest.

John Duncan and the Budapest Mission

The first missionary party consisted of Duncan and his wife, assisted by Robert Smith, William Wingate, and William Allan. With the exception of Wingate, they arrived in Hungary on August 21, 1841, very conscious of the place they held in the hearts and prayers not only of the Scottish church but also of the archduchess.

Duncan held that mission to the Jews could prosper only as the Hungarian church generally prospered. In one of his earliest letters home he wrote, “I am . . . very decidedly of the opinion that whoever shall be stationed here must . . . labour for the revival of true religion in the Protestant Churches of the land; which, if it please the Lord to visit them graciously . . . would then become . . . the best instruments for carrying on the work.” Emphasizing this need for partnership, he added, “To this work . . . we, though strangers, are imperatively called. Warm fraternal love bound our fathers together.” There were, however, practical as well as ideological reasons for working closely with the Hungarian church. The Hapsburg administration was opposed to its citizens changing their religious affiliation, except when Protestant spouses became Catholics. In the twelve-month period ending June 1839, altogether 103 persons had sought permission to become Protestants, but only 20 applications were successful. In the same year Hungarian printers had been ordered not to produce Protestant catechisms or confessional books without special license. The activities of foreign ministers and missionaries were subject to grave suspicion; officially, Duncan could operate in Pest only as the pastor of the families of the British engineers who were engaged in building the Széchenyi Chain Bridge (the first bridge over the Danube, constructed 1839–49).

Being a Württemberg pietist, Archduchess Maria Dorothea herself was liable to Hapsburg intolerance; the Catholic clergy constantly intrigued against her, for it was darkly rumored that Scottish Protestants planned to establish a mission for the conversion of Catholics. She dismissed such dangers as inconsequential, commenting to Alexander Keith that “they can only lodge a complaint with Metternich, and all he can do is to present it to the Empress . . . so make yourself easy about me.” The missionaries, however, recognized that her situation was not without risk and so referred to her in code as “the sister on the hill.”

As a Presbyterian, it was natural for Duncan to ally himself to the Reformed Church, but he also established close friendships with the Lutherans. When Maria Dorothea sought, and obtained, permission of the archduke to build a Lutheran place of worship in the Buda Castle district, Duncan appealed to the Scottish church for help: “I beg the Gospel for Hungary; I beg it for God, I beg it of you. Remember the fathers of the Reformation. Rekindle the lamp that kindled ours. Even amidst domestic afflictions liberally devise liberal things.” After the 1843 Disruption, the Free Church of Scotland contributed 20,000 Hungarian florins, and the archduchess an additional 10,000.

Within three months of his arrival Duncan had mastered the grammar of the Magyar language, but he did not attempt to speak it in public. His friend and helper Pal Torok, superintend-ent of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Pest, bore testimony to his “wisdom, modesty, and judicious procedure. He thus won us all, and carefully and happily avoided every cause of offence—all conflict with the political and ecclesiastical authorities.” Duncan’s identification with the Magyar people and their cause was so strong that on a visit to Hungary after the 1848 revolution, Duncan, willing to incur the wrath of the Hapsburgs, loudly cheered the sight of the red, white, and green flag of Hungary and, discarding his tall silk hat, the badge of the Austrians, went bareheaded until he could purchase one of the distinctive flat Magyar felt hats.

A major part of Duncan’s chosen missionary strategy was to hold public services each Lord’s Day. Although conducted in

A major part of Duncan’s missionary strategy was to hold public services each Lord’s Day.
English, ostensibly for the British engineers working on the bridge, they attracted many Jewish Hungarians who wanted to improve their English. It was through one of these meetings, at which Wingate preached, that a breakthrough came when Israel Saphir, a highly respected member of the Jewish community, came to believe in Jesus as his Messiah.

In private, Duncan cultivated close friendships with members of the Jewish community, including the chief rabbi, Low Schwab (1794–1857), who was responsible for the building of the magnificent Dohany Street Synagogue. Duncan and Schwab shared a particularly warm friendship, each having a conserva-
tive understanding of the Bible and an interest in mathematics and philosophy. Schwab invited Duncan to attend the marriage of his daughter to a young rabbi, who was delighted to make the acquaintance of a man he had heard so much about.

Duncan was in the habit of spending whole days in receiving visitors and bringing into play his remarkable conversational and persuasive powers. His home was “thrown open to the Jews; they saw all their habits and ways, and had Christianity presented before them without being forced upon them. His very peculiarities seemed to suit them, and to attract rather than offend.” Perhaps Duncan’s major legacy is best understood in terms of the people who, through his witness, though not his alone, embraced Christianity as the fulfillment of Old Testament promise. These included Israel Saphir and his whole family, as well as Sandor Tomory and Alfred Edersheim.

After the Disruption in 1843 Adolph Saphir (1831–91) went with Duncan to Edinburgh to be educated at New College. (Anachronistically, he appears in D. O. Hill’s important painting of the Disruption Assembly, standing beside John Duncan and the other Jewish missionaries, pointing to a map of Palestine.) In 1854 he was ordained to the Jewish mission of the Irish Presbyterian Church, later becoming one of the best-known expositors of the Jewish origins of Christianity and a strong, though not uncrritical, advocate of Jewish missions. Adolph’s sister Elizabeth and their brother Philip were cofounders of the school that became the center of the Scottish Mission in Budapest.

Sandor Tomory (1818–95) became a missionary to his people in Constantinople. When he first began to show an interest in Christianity, a Roman Catholic bishop suggested he should go to Pest and see John Duncan. “Three days later I was introduced to the dear man. In a most syllogistic way, and in fluent Latin, he brought out the truth of the gospel, and urged me to accept Christ as my Saviour. . . . But quite in keeping with the character of the doctor, . . . in the same breath he began to teach me in English. While the tears were yet in my eyes and his, he began to conjugate an English verb, and made me repeat it. After that I saw him almost daily till he left for Italy. This was in the year 1842. He left, but the blessing remained behind.”

Alfred Edersheim (1823–89) went with Duncan and Saphir to Edinburgh. After attending New College, he was ordained as a Free Church missionary to Iaşi, Moldavia, and in 1849 he accepted a call to Old Aberdeen. When illness took its toll, he moved to England, becoming in 1884 select preacher to the University of Oxford. Edersheim’s literary output was immense; his Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah remains in print to the present day and is still considered useful, though challenged in parts by modern scholarship.

When, after about a year, Duncan’s ministry was interrupted by ill health, he was persuaded to recuperate in Italy. He did return to Pest, though only briefly. On May 24, 1843, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place, with most of the committee and all the missionaries joining the Free Church of Scotland. Duncan was recalled to the chair of Hebrew at New College, a post he occupied until his death in 1870.

**Role as Teacher and Advocate of Jewish Missions**

Although a brilliant Hebraist, Duncan was considered a poor teacher of elementary Hebrew, lacking the discipline and application necessary to keep order in his class. His own minister, Alexander Moody Stuart, commented, “From his student days till the end of his life he taught his pupils with ardour in his own way, however irregularly and however unsuccessfully.” Duncan acknowledged his failures, remarking that he never should have left the Jewish Mission merely to teach Hebrew. Brown’s opinion was that very little of the best of Duncan came out in either the professor’s chair or the pulpit.

Duncan’s finest contributions came through the less formal discussions he held with his students. One of his colleagues considered that the church would have been better served if he had been permitted to abandon the classroom, to conduct walks twice a week with his students in Princes Street Gardens. Referring to Duncan’s peripatetic conversations, one of his students said, “It seemed as if Pascal had shuffled into the sandals of Socrates, and walked up and down Edinburgh streets.” William Knight noted down for posterity some of his musings and soliloquies, aptly calling them Colloquia Peripatetica.

Duncan’s most powerful contributions to the cause of Jewish mission were made in the General Assembly of the Free Church. All six of his assembly addresses, given between 1847 and 1867, concentrate on mission to the Jews and the future of the Jewish people. Although more optimistic than appears justified in the light of subsequent events, they form an inspiring and motivating series of reflections. Duncan’s use of language is breathtaking; his originality, clarity of expression, and precision of vocabulary amply justify Moody Stuart’s comment that he had a “fastidious sense of the music of words.”

Duncan died on February 26, 1870, and is buried, along with his second wife, Janet Torrance, and their daughter Maria Dorothea Spaeth, in Edinburgh’s Grange Cemetery. An inscription on the obelisk pays tribute to “an eminent scholar and metaphysician, a profound theologian, a man of tender piety, and of a lowly and loving spirit.”

**Duncan’s Legacy**

Apart from shaping the lives already referred to, Duncan’s influence continued to be felt for many years after his departure from Budapest. Through reading, correspondence, and occasional visits, he maintained a lively interest in all that was taking place. He corresponded in French with Archduchess Maria Dorothea, who became the patron of many evangelical causes in
Hungary. Through the medium of Latin he also kept in touch with his friend and former colleague Pal Torok, the Reformed bishop in Budapest.

Modern opinion holds that the Scottish missionaries were the catalyst for the revival of Protestant spiritual life in Hungary. A. M. Kool considers that through their network of influence, including Maria Dorothea and Count István Széchenyi, the missionaries communicated "a vision for missions." She cites J. F. A. De la Roi, in whose opinion the Scottish Mission was "a very blessed influence on the church. By the spread of Bibles and literature, its evangelistic outreach, its Deaconesses’ home and its school, the mission gained the biggest influence on the Protestants and Jews of Hungary. The mission to the Jews is nowhere else considered to be such a blessing as in Hungary." Such comment stands testimony to the successful legacy of Duncan’s church and mission strategy.

Notes
2. Ibid., p. 76.
3. Ibid., p. 58.
4. Ibid., p. 110.
7. Ibid., p. 72.

Selected Bibliography
Works by John Duncan
Book Reviews

Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures. Vol. 1: Methodologies, Paradigms, and Sources.

The Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures is a mammoth work that surveys major issues and themes in the study of women and gender in the Islamic world. When complete, it will include six volumes and will draw on contributions from an international team of over a thousand researchers, whose specializations vary by discipline, region, and period of study.

The first volume of this series, Methodologies, Paradigms, and Sources, is an impressive scholarly compendium. It is organized in three sections. The first contains thematic articles assessing the state of scholarship on women in particular periods, regions, and genres and providing short specialized bibliographies. (For example, there are entries on the literatures of the Crusades and Andalusia, and on Mughal India, the late Ottoman empire, and twentieth-century Eastern Europe.) The second section surveys the scholarship on women through disciplinary lenses, assessing fields as diverse as anthropology, law, and linguistics. The articles in this section also provide short specialized bibliographies. The third section consists of a much larger and more general bibliography (supplemented by author and subject indexes) listing books and articles about women in the Islamic world that have appeared in European languages since 1993.

The volumesolidly covers the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia and also includes North America and Western Europe. Several countries—for example, Egypt, Morocco, and Afghanistan—have separate chapters of their own or are treated in small regional clusters (e.g., Malaysia and Singapore). By contrast, there are only two chapters surveying all of sub-Saharan Africa (in the pre- and post-eighteenth-century periods). Given the importance of Islamic culture to the African continent and the diversity of Muslim experiences therein, the coverage of the sub-Saharan region is meager relative to the rest of the essays.

Readers will find few direct references to Christian missions except in the articles by Julia Clancy-Smith (surveying Western colonialism in the Islamic world) and Linda Benson (examining the history of eastern Turkestan in the past two centuries) and in the bibliography of section 3. Those interested in missionary studies in the Islamic world or in the history of Christian-Muslim relations stand to benefit from the book nonetheless. Its synthesis and presentation of scholarship is at once wide-ranging and detailed, while its clear language makes it accessible to specialists and to the proverbial “lay readers.”

In her introduction to the volume and to the larger encyclopedia project, the general editor, Suad Joseph (a professor of anthropology at the University of California at Davis), suggests that the series will fill a large gap in the reference literature of Islamic studies, especially considering that scholarship on women and gender has burgeoned in the past generation. She suggests, too, that the series has a role to play in the current political climate, when the specter of Islamic terrorism and of U.S. intervention in the Middle East looms so large in global imaginations. The first volume, she writes, “comes at a time when there . . . is incessant stereotyping of Muslims, and ongoing conflation of Muslims with Arabs and of Islam with the Middle East, a time when the political stakes in relation to Islamic cultures have risen globally, heightened by misrepresentation and misunderstanding.” Since women are so often made to be the “litmus test of what constitutes ‘modernity,’” she observes, women often serve as symbolic vehicles of cultural struggles and debates (pp. xlviii–xl). She hopes that this encyclopedia will present a treatment of women in the Islamic world that is at once rigorous in its scholarship and sympathetic in its approach—a work, in other words, that will be somehow conducive to cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect.

Like most books published by Brill, a Dutch academic press with Islamic studies as one of its special emphases, this volume is too expensive for most individual bookbuyers. It nevertheless belongs in serious research libraries, where it will function as a valuable reference tool and guide to further study.

—Heather J. Sharkey

Heather J. Sharkey is Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.


This collection of twelve essays, a volume in the series “Studies in the History of Christian Missions,” is a product of two consultations held in 1997 and 1998 as part of the North Atlantic Missiology Project. Wilbert Shenk’s introduction provides an excellent historical context for the essays and sets out the main themes of the book.

While each chapter treats a specific aspect of nineteenth-century North American Protestant missions, certain topics receive frequent attention. Half of the essays deal with the founding phase of 1810–1865, and the others with the maturing phase of 1865–1914. The earlier set concentrates on how mission agencies, especially the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, shaped the ideology of foreign missions for the future, even in light of its limited experience. The strategic role of Rufus Anderson is highlighted.

The chapters on the period from 1865 to 1914 stress the impact of the high
Yao uses a series of case studies of major fundamentalist missionary institutions and campaigns to trace the historical process from a theological perspective. In some cases, though, events appear more as anecdotes than as part of a meaningful context. We read, for example, of schisms in the Nanjing Theological Seminary and Shandong Christian University that gave birth to the North China Theological Seminary (“the Westminster Seminary of China”) (p. 164) and of the China Inland Mission joining the National Christian Council but then separating. These stories could have been related more clearly to the larger picture. Overall, Yao has connected the dots well, placing the events in a coherent, connected historical context. “The fundamentalist movement in China was not an isolated phenomenon but part of a larger international fundamentalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s,” Yao concludes. It “was deep-rooted, its scope was wide, its dynamics powerful, and its impact was deep and long-lasting. The movement’s concerns, its debates with the modernists, and its organizational dynamics were far more complicated than what we have grasped so far” (pp. 279–81).

—Alvyn Austin

Alvyn Austin is a Canadian with roots in the China Inland Mission. He teaches Asian history at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. He has written China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832–1905 (Eerdmans, forthcoming).
readers wonder who inhabited the more infernal region. It would be groundless, however, to suspect that America overawed Ramabai. “[Americans] have developed a veritable habit, when it comes to describing everything belonging to their country, of comparing it with everything belonging to other countries—and then of saying that they and theirs are always best” (p. 126). In times like ours, Ramabai sounds uncomfortably contemporaneous.

In 2003, the year this volume was published, a second translation appeared: Meera Kosambi’s Pandita Ramabai’s American Encounter (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press). The volume under review has no index; Kosambi’s does. While Robert Frykenberg’s introduction rides his favorite historiographical hobbyhorses a bit hard, Kosambi has hers too. Her translation is tepid; theirs is lively: compare Gomes-Engblom on Ramabai’s first American winter (“Ha ha ha! Hoo hoo hoo! Oo! Hoo!” p. 157) with Kosambi (“Br! Br!” p. 125). The difference makes theirs the better choice.

—Richard Fox Young

Richard Fox Young is Timby Associate Professor of the History of Religions at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective.


Migration is a fact of history, but never more so than in our time. Stimulated by decolonization, modernization, demographic imbalances, and global economic inequalities, international migrant movement (overwhelmingly from the South to the North) has reached unprecedented levels and continues to accelerate. In Controlling Migration: A Global Impact (2d ed.), an interdisciplinary group of twenty-nine scholars based in the United States, Canada, and western Europe provides in-depth analyses of immigration-control policies and their outcomes in eleven advanced industrial countries: the United States, Canada, Australia (deemed “classic” countries of immigration); Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands (“reluctant” countries of immigration); and Italy, Spain, Japan, and South Korea (“latecomers” to immigration).

The study focuses on two hypotheses: the gap hypothesis, which stipulates that a significant and persistent gap exists between official immigration policies and actual policy outcomes; and the convergence hypothesis, which claims that there is growing similarity among labor-importing countries in terms of policies of immigration control and immigrant integration and of public attitudes toward immigrants. The profiles of the individual countries are presented in rich detail and with thoroughgoing assessment, further enhanced by dialogic responses. The issues addressed are complex and wide ranging, but a few major themes consistently appear throughout the volume.

In advanced industrial countries aging populations and low birth rates have intensified the need for substantial immigration (to meet huge labor demands); at the same time, populist

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backlash against immigration, attended by evocative appeals to national myths, is influencing the political landscape. Essentially, the new immigrants are wanted but not welcome, which accounts for the ambivalence and inconsistency of governmental approaches to immigration. Restrictive policies mostly target nonwhite immigrants, while favoring highly skilled professionals. So, although most receiving countries claim to be liberal democracies, immigrants face cultural rejection, social stigma, racial discrimination, and human rights abuses.

Contributors in this volume pay little attention to religion, outside of the occasional reference to strong antipathy (in places like France and Italy) to Muslim immigrants or to church involvement (typically Roman Catholic) among advocacy groups. Nonetheless, immigration issues and the strong social reactions they evoke have significant implications for Christian ministry and global witness. Migrant flows correlate with recent shifts in global Christianity, and included among the waves of immigrants are Christians, who bring with them new spiritual fervor and missionary intent that is certain to impact the post-Christian Western societies. On a wider canvas, immigration is a primary source of religious plurality, ethnic tension, and many other social dilemmas that Christian communities in receiving countries can ill afford to ignore. The presence of immigrants, often as vulnerable and exploited populations, also reminds the church of the challenges of globalization and raises urgent questions about its role in social transformation.

For wealthy developed countries, immigration will remain one of the most perplexing sociopolitical issues for a long time to come. From a missiological point of view, Christian leaders will do well to attend to the public debate and inform themselves about shifting governmental policies—which is precisely the kind of assessment provided in this highly readable study.

—Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu J. Hanciles, a Sierra Leonan, is Associate Professor of Mission History and Globalization at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He is author of Euthanasia of a Mission: African Church Autonomy in a Colonial Context (2002).

The Riddle of Sadhu Sundar Singh.


Called from Obscurity: The Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet, Gergan Dorje Tharchin. Vol. 1.


These books are reviewed together because they present two different perspectives on the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh. The late Eric Sharpe invested decades in scholarly research on religion in South Asia and brings that perspective to his study of Sundar Singh. He is deeply respectful of the sadhu but does not shrink from addressing the complex historical and missiological issues that arise in careful study of his life.

Sharpe tells the story of Sundar Singh’s life from beginning to end, examining the standard account of the sadhu’s story as it appears in numerous popular publications. A historical scholar must question why the first published account of Sundar Singh’s conversion

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testimony did not mention the famous vision he had of Jesus; this event appeared without explanation in the second edition of Alfred Zahir’s little biography of the sadhu. Careful historiography, which insists on questioning miracle stories from Tibet, uncovers a fascinating origin for the legend of the martyr Kartar Singh. Questions about the reputed forty-day fast of the sadhu, and about what black-robed person sent telegrams announcing Sundar Singh’s death, receive no conclusive answer; this book, after all, studies the riddle of Sundar Singh.

But Sharpe is clearly not writing to throw dust in the air related to these and other old controversies. His treatment of the controversies that spun around Sundar Singh in the 1920s is exemplary, pointing out the different motives and agendas of the critics and defenders of the sadhu. Yet by far the most important contribution of this book is the defining of a hermeneutical key for understanding Sundar Singh in his last years. The key is that Emanuel Swedenborg in effect became the guru of Sundar Singh.

H. Louis Fader has been involved in Asian Christian history and publication for many years. In his book he tells in detail how he met Gergan Dorje Tharchin, the subject of his study, giving the history of the Moravian Mission to Tibet and the early life of Tharchin (until 1914, when he turned twenty-four). Fader vigorously defends the traditional Sundar Singh story, even though Tharchin himself doubted parts of it. Fader’s fascinating account introduces readers to Tibet and to issues in mission to Tibet that are invaluable.

Called from Obscurity is the first of three projected volumes. All who are interested in the study of Christianity in Tibet will want access to these volumes. Fader follows numerous tangents, however, making the book rather ponderous reading; this first volume is as much about Sundar Singh as about Sundar’s one-time coworker Tharchin.

Students of South Asian church history will be grateful for these important works.

—H. L. Richard

H. L. Richard, author of Following Jesus in the Hindu Context (1998), is a research scholar presently focused on issues in South Asian culture and religion.

Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, and Sources. Vol. 1: Overview from the Seventh to the Twentieth Centuries; South Asia, Austral Asia (pp. xliv, 679); vol. 2: Southeast Asia (pp. xliii, 684); vol. 3: Northeast Asia (pp. xvii, 768).


Here is a gold mine of documentation about theological developments in a region with more than half of the world’s population. It is a comprehensive guide to authors, movements, and sources for research and study of Asian Christian theologies. In the foreword to volume 1, Michael Amaladoss, S.J., says, “Asian theology has come of age,” and these volumes are “a precious tool that helps us to take stock of what has been so far achieved and to become aware of the road that we have so far traversed, so that we can boldly take the plunge to push forward” (p. xiii). He points out that “English is the common link language of Asia . . . but this does not mean that the theology is less Asian, for English here is less an embodiment of culture than a medium of communication”; the work draws on “the writings in many languages of the region” (p. xvi).

New Zealanders John England and his wife, Rita, who have served widely in Asia for many years, coordinated the research, writing, and editing of this project, which involved a broad network of coeditors, contributors, and consultants in virtually every country of Asia, as well as some in the West. A principal concern was “to make available as wide a range as possible of Asian Christian theologies in all their varied forms, and to provide adequate guidance for their discovery, study and research” (3:x). Special attention is given to contextualization, the work of Asian women theologians, liturgy, art, and music.

The editors suggest that the Guide could be used for country or thematic studies, study of regional movements or of selected texts, or further study of primary sources from a particular country, movement, or period. Helpful study outlines for each region and country are provided. The volumes could very well be the basic texts in a semester-long seminar on Asian Christian theologies in context.

Volume 1 begins with a 166-page overview of the groundwork and heritage of Asian regional and ecumenical theologies from the seventh to the twentieth centuries. Especially valuable here is the thorough attention given to the role and development of the East Asia Christian Conference (now the Christian Conference of Asia) and other regional ecumenical associations, along with the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. This overview is followed by a 500-page guide to theological developments, mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) and Austral Asia (Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia). The survey of each country begins with a brief history of the country, a history of Christianity in the country, then the development of theological reflection in that country, highlighting theological themes, institutions, associations, and movements, with brief biographies of individual theologians that list their insights and publications. These biographical profiles are especially valuable; the chapter on India alone has more than a hundred of them.

Volume 2 deals with Southeast Asia. In a foreword to this volume, Jose M. de Mesa, from the Philippines, says, “The views on Christianity represented here speak of a genuine re-appropriation, within concrete Asian settings, of faith in Jesus the Christ in its many dimensions” (p. xxi). After a summary historical survey of the groundwork and context for theological construction in the region, the authors cover the past two centuries in detail for each country: Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Each country’s chapter covers the historical and religious context, Christian response in terms of contextual theological construction, and profiles of theologians, scholars, and activists, with bibliographies and lists of periodicals for research.

Volume 3, covering Northeast Asia, is the largest. It has more than 800 total pages and follows the general format of the other volumes. It includes China, Hong Kong, Inner or Central Asia (limited here to Afghanistan, Mongolia, and Tibet), Japan, Korea, North Korea, Macau, and Taiwan. In her foreword, Theresa Chu Mei-fen, from Beijing, says this volume

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, Vol. 29, No. 3
shows how Christian leaders and theologians in each country of the region have “reflected upon the path of God’s Spirit in their histories, have often participated in forward-looking social or political movements, and have allowed their theology to be shaped by their people’s suffering and aspiration” (p. xix).

Representative Asian Christian art in color is included in each volume. Oddly, in volume 1 the description about the art and the artists is in the front matter of the book (pp. xxxiv–xxxvi), but there is no clue as to where the pictures themselves may be found. The enterprising reader will find them sandwiched between pages 538 and 539 on unnumbered pages. Surprisingly, nothing is included from Nalini Jayasuriya from Sri Lanka, one of the best-known Asian Christian artists.

In contrast to the very thorough attention given to Roman Catholics and ecumenical Protestants, evangelicals in Asia may feel that there is inadequate attention to their work. Some of their prominent theologians are not even mentioned in the text, such as Saphir Athyal, Sunand Sumithra, and Ken R. Ghanakan in India, Ajith Fernando and Vinoth Ramachandra in Sri Lanka, Chris Marantika in Indonesia, Khang San Tan in Singapore and Malaysia, Bong Rin Ro from Korea, and Ted Yamamori from Japan. The Asia Theological Association, an important network of evangelical schools, is mentioned only in a brief paragraph in volume 1 (pp. 102–3).

Fortunately, these valuable volumes are sold at greatly reduced prices within Asia so that they may be available to a new generation of students and scholars as they seek to reach the rice-roots of their social and cultural contexts with the Gospel.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson, a senior contributing editor and Director Emeritus of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, is Chair of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia. He taught at Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines from 1961 to 1970.

An Introduction to Christianity.


General histories of Christianity can provide a useful framework in which individual stories and experiences can be interpreted and evaluated. Linda Woodhead’s Introduction to Christianity seeks to be such a book. It is a concise, one-volume introduction to the rise and fall of Christianity in the West.

Woodhead says in her introduction that the focus of the book is on Christianity’s relation to social power. She seeks to analyze this relation using two competing models: “power from on high and power from below” (p. 1). In fact the book is overwhelmingly about Christianity’s relationship to power from on high. Woodhead begins the book with a quotation from Eusebius that makes the coming to power of Christianity in Constantine’s Roman Empire normative for the entire story. Power from on high is consistently associated with a male image of a supreme king, a jealous and exclusive God who is continuously being re-formed in the image of male social power. How this model affected women and how women resisted come into view more clearly from the sixteenth century on in the book. The author’s analysis of gender relations in modern Western Christianity and her interpretation of the dynamics of gender
as they relate to power are excellent. But the longer history of Christian dissent against power is seriously under-represented and too often entirely lost, despite the author’s stated intentions.

The book follows the story of Christianity almost exclusively through the Western world. One is hard-pressed to find a name in the book that does not belong to the Western canon of saints and sinners. Woodhead’s discussion of the modern period becomes preoccupied with the story of Christianity in England and Anglo-America. The modern history of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America is dealt with almost as an afterthought. Modern Catholic history is explored in some detail, but again is dominated by concerns of the North Atlantic world. I found the work severely limited in its usefulness in this regard.

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Dale T. Irvin is Academic Dean and Professor of World Christianity, New York Theological Seminary, New York.

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Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire.


Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya.


Mau Mau was a rebellion of the Kikuyu against British rule in Kenya. Caused by genuine socioeconomic grievances, it employed violent means: the murder of white farmers and their families, and the massacre of Kikuyu loyalists—men, women, and children. Sadly, the reaction of the colonial authorities and security forces was in many ways more violent, especially the settlers in the Police Reserve and the Kenya Regiment. Interrogation of suspects was brutal, and court proceedings were biased. In 1954 “Operation Anvil” swept thousands of Kikuyu into vast camps for screening. In this gulag there were horrific abuses that were eventually exposed, despite a long-running government cover-up. Anvil, however, broke the back of Mau Mau, which degenerated into a Kikuyu civil war fomented by the authorities. By the time the last forest gangs were rounded up, London had a draft independence constitution ready that ignored the vengeful settlers. Jomo Kenyatta, who had not sided with the men of violence, took power as president of an independent Kenya in 1963.

David Anderson of Oxford has given us the first complete history of Mau Mau. It is a balanced account, carefully researched. Caroline Elkins of Harvard concentrates on the experience of the gulag, based mainly on oral interviews with survivors. It is a damning indictment. The inclusion of rural resettlement villages in her definition of the gulag makes it possible for her to accuse the British of imprisoning the entire Kikuyu tribe. Elkins’s critique of British rule—and of most things British—is shrill. Even the London Public Record Office, where she obtained archival material, is described as “coldly efficient.” The book makes sweeping generalizations on the basis of specific incidents. Interview transcripts remain in the author’s possession.

Elkins places more emphasis than Anderson on the churches’ alleged ambivalence towards the gulag, especially the Catholics. Neither mentions the remarkable movement of former Mau Mau members and sympathizers to the Catholic Church when the rebellion was over. The Kikuyu Catholic historian Lawrence M. Njoroge has pointed out that Italian and Irish missionaries did not identify with the British, that they appreciated the socioeconomic causes of the conflict and stayed out of cultural controversies in which other denominations were embroiled.

These two books shed further light on a dark chapter of Kenya’s history. They should not be allowed to give the impression that the Kikuyu were merely passive victims of colonial injustice. Once the conflict was over, they settled down to the work of peaceful reconstruction, in spite of the many injustices that were the legacy of Mau Mau.

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Paul Gifford has had a long-standing interest in the charismatic movements in Ghana. In this book he focuses on four megachurches and one prophet-type leader in the Greater Accra area, examples that can serve as bridgeheads to understanding the larger Pentecostal movement in Accra and in Ghana. Gifford has two concerns: profile the charismatic scene over time, and delineate its various public roles, especially given the background of Ghana’s pathology under strongman Jerry Rawlings. Gifford concludes that Ghana is a textbook illustration of an unaccountable neopatrimonial regime, and that Africa’s ills are overwhelmingly due, not to external forces, but to internal problems, especially poor governance,cronyism, clientelism, and the desire to hold power (pp. 11–13).

The charismatic groups Gifford surveys display several positive features, including a lively sense of fellowship and a healthy gender ideology. But they perpetuate the country’s pathology by insisting upon success, wealth, and status (p. 44). In many cases, “faith, giving, deliverance and the pastor’s gifts are more important than hard work” (p. 156). Ghana is enmeshed in the global economy discourse. For him, the new Christianity obscures rationality by appealing to the demonic and seeking miraculous success. The exploding deliverance and prophetic ministries privilege “a word of knowledge” but lack moral seriousness; they use anointing, mantras, and testimonies to encourage members to sit back and let God work.

Gifford hardly acknowledges that some Pentecostal denominations have engaged in true development. Rather, they manifest diverse political attitudes: some critique the political landscape; others spiritualize politics with a theology of territorial spirits or emphasis on the sins of rulers that require national repentance. Birgit Meyer argues that “Africans use this demonic cosmology to make sense of the evils that befall them, and many African Christians claim to be transforming the societies around them” (p. 172).

Gifford’s portraits of some leaders are skewed, as is his verdict that they lack a valid theology and that they have failed to inculcate values that could liberate Ghana (p. 156). Gifford ignores the spiritual power that the people feel. This book is like a thick description of dancers without hearing their music. The dancers in fact praise God for the immense
economic recovery and the successful
democratic political transition in 2001. The
national symbol, Gye Nyame (except for
God), is most appropriate.
—Ogbu U. Kalu

Ogbu U. Kalu is the Henry Winters Luce Professor
of World Christianity and Missions, McCormick
Theological Seminary, Chicago.

Challenged Identities: North
American Missionaries in Korea,
1884–1934.

By Elizabeth Underwood. Seoul: Royal Asiatic

This book, written by a descendant of one
of the great missionary dynasties of Korea,
is a fresh attempt to look at the first two
generations of mission history in Korea.
The book enters into the postcolonial
debate, and more broadly the negatively
critical view of missions, by examining
the issue of the personal and cultural
identities of the missionaries who served
in Korea between 1884 and 1934.

Eschewing both an overly critical and an
overly hagiographic view of the first
missionaries, Underwood shows in a
balanced manner how the missionaries’
self-understanding not only influenced
how they dealt with the Korean people
whom they encountered but also how
they themselves changed in the course of
an extensive encounter with the Korean
people and culture. The book is full of
good insights, especially the initial
comment that what distinguishes missions
in Korea is the fact that imperialism in
Korea was not Western but Japanese.

Although providing an excellent
discussion of its defined topic, the book
has one major flaw—the almost exclusive
focus on Presbyterian missions and
missionaries to the exclusion of the
Methodists and other church bodies. The
history of the Methodist Church in Korea,
despite its considerable size within Korean
Christianity as well as within global
Methodism, is little discussed. The book
would have benefited from an examination
of the differences and similarities between
the two major mission groups and their
missionaries. A table of the plates that
appear in the book and a better index also
would have improved this contribution to
mission studies.
—James Huntley Grayson

James Huntley Grayson, an anthropologist and
ordained Methodist minister, is Professor of Modern
Korean Studies in the School of East Asian Studies
of the University of Sheffield, England. He was a
Methodist missionary in Korea from 1971 to 1987.

History of the Church in Namibia.

By Gerhard L. Buys and S. V. V. Nambala.
xxxix, 449. Paperback N$250.

The two authors of this volume, senior
Namibian theologians, wrote this book in
order “to provide a standard Church
History for Namibia,” as they indicate
there is at present “no general introduction
available in English, except for some
topical publications and selective church
literature” (p. xiv). Their stated point of
departure is a search to perceive and
understand the lordship of Christ in
Namibian history by discovering and
describing the acts of Jesus Christ in
Namibia in the life and witness of Christian
churches. They also clearly state their
Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves (1795–1853).


This is a book that should have been written long ago but thankfully was not. Partisan loyalties would have been too strong. Barely twenty years ago Stephen Neill claimed that Groves intentionally created divisions wherever he went (History of Christianity in India, 1985), and many Brethren have felt that Groves was rather too ecumenical to be truly one of them. Meanwhile, the more open Brethren, for whom Groves has been an exemplar, have been satisfied with the somewhat hagiographic Memoir (1856) by his widow.

Rob Dann has used a considerable range of printed sources to bring to life a wonderfully human Groves—a man who both inspired and irritated but whose gentle humility usually elicited affection. His early years, the development of his distinctive approach to wealth, his association with the earliest Brethren, his break with the Church Missionary Society, and his decision to go to Persia as a freelance missionary are all treated as episodes in their own right rather than as mere prelude to Groves’s later career. Dann’s own firsthand familiarity with Islam usefully informs his account of Groves’s tragic experience in Baghdad, and the account of Groves’s later years in India is similarly enlightening.

Dann clearly sympathizes with Groves’s approach to mission, but his assessments of other, less attractive characters are also generous. Particularly valuable are his substantial accounts of such men as John Kitto, Frank Newman, and Edward Groves, who usually get only brief mention to the extent that they illumine the Norris Groves story. Dann’s book is enriched by informative appendixes, maps, and a genealogical tree, but above all it breathes the charitable faith of its subject—a faith clearly shared by the author.

—Timothy C. F. Stunt

“"The Heaviest Blow"—The Catholic Church and the East Timor Issue.


Does church engagement in political advocacy jeopardize opportunities for evangelization in sensitive contexts? How
and why does the church reflect rather than challenge national political and commercial interests? Does church silence in the face of oppression protect, stifle, or compromise Christian witness in different circumstances?

Patrick Smythe, who has served as a diocesan priest for more than thirty years, grapples with these questions as he reflectively examines eight nonunified church responses to the human rights abuses during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor from 1975 to 1999. He historically contextualizes the reactions of church leadership and laity in East Timor, Indonesia, former colonizer Portugal, neighboring Australia, the United States, Japan, England, and the Vatican. Despite individuals’ commitments to justice, institutional responses were largely characterized by pragmatic apathy, abandonment, inconsistency, or inaction. While the church inside East Timor showed courageous solidarity with the local suffering (and grew from 30 percent to include 90 percent of the East Timorese population under the occupation), outside actors were prudent or reticent to criticize government policy and endanger their own precarious situations, or unwilling to upset the fragile politics surrounding Indonesia.

Throughout the text, Smythe relates each response to an ambiguous practice of Catholic social doctrine that highlights some of the inherent shortcomings of the existing doctrine, calling for the church to revisit the practical utility of decontextualized principles of social justice. Linking this detailed case study to overarching difficulties in applying the abstractions of Christian social transformation, this book is relevant far beyond its regional and ecclesiastical bounds.

—Laura S. Meitzner Yoder

Laura S. Meitzner Yoder recently completed a doctorate in forestry and environmental studies at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. She has worked with education and community development in Latin America, Indonesia, and East Timor.

Influence, Translation, and Parallels: Selected Studies on the Bible in China.


Marián Gálik explains in the epilogue that the Bible was the first book he read, though he was unable to read it freely in his native Communist Czechoslovakia. Later he specialized in the modern literature of China, where he unexpectedly discovered that the Bible was very much alive.

This volume, separated into two parts, gathers sixteen essays, most of them previously published. Unavoidably, the reader will find some repetitions. The first part deals with translations of the Bible into Chinese, especially the Union Version (1919), and it discusses literary critics such as Zhu Weizhi (himself a Christian, discussing the status of the Bible as part of world literature and looking at the Bible, especially the Psalms and the Book of Lamentations, as a history of national suffering), Zhu Yunbin and Niú Yongmao (interested in the love poems of the Song of Songs), and Du Benhai (focusing on the creation story of Genesis).

Part 2 analyzes several creative works inspired by the Bible. In a 1942 novel Mao Dun tells the story of the revenge of Samson against the Female Fatale Delilah, where the Philistines symbolize the Japanese; Xiang Peiliang in Annu (1926), a one-act play, turns the love of Amnon for Tamar...

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The First and the Last: The Claim of Jesus Christ and the Claims of Other Religious Traditions.


In The First and the Last, George Sumner, principal of Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada, considers the reality of religious pluralism. His postliberal theology of religions has one key term, “final primacy,” which relates non-Christian religions to Christ and the truth claims of these religions to the grace of Christ as an overarching theme of Christianity.

After an investigation of Gotthold Lessing’s viewpoint (chap. 2), Sumner analyzes “final primacy” in five areas (chaps. 3–7): modern theology (Barth, Rahner, and Pannenberg), salvation economy (Trinitarian theologies of religions), mission theology (Farquhar, Kraemer, Hogg, Barth, Brunner, and Gutmann), Indian Christian theology (the encounter with Hinduism), and inculcation theologies (African Christian theology as test case). In the conclusion of his study, the author opts for disputation over against dialogue: “Christians working from the assumption of final primacy must engage in dialogue as disputation” (p. 213).

Sumner attempts to overcome the unsatisfying contemporary framework in the theology of religions; he regards exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism not as three models or types of approach but as three necessary dimensions of Christian life (compare Pannenberg, Newbigin, D’Costa). I wonder whether we may not need to be much more radical than Sumner, utilizing an entirely new paradigm and vocabulary.

The title of Sumner’s book is derived from Revelation 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13 (“Alpha and Omega”). But the book does not offer a thorough exegesis of these texts because time does not play a crucial role in the author’s systematic reflections. Chapters 6 and 7, dealing with India and Africa, confront Christ’s claim with those of religions adhering to the idea of cyclic rather than linear time. The book deals less with Christ’s claim in relation to the world of Judaism and Islam, which, like Christianity, adhere to a linear view of time and history.

This book is an excellent tool to be used in graduate courses and outside academia.

—Jan A. B. Jongeneel

Jan A. B. Jongeneel, a contributing editor, recently retired as professor of missions at Utrecht University, Netherlands. He wrote the two-volume Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the Ninteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia (Peter Lang, 1995–97).

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


Eliza F. Kent, assistant professor of philosophy and religion at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, has put together a large number of often conflicting monographs on many different aspects of conversion and gender in Indian society under British rule.

This work makes a valuable contribution to an often-neglected area of research: religion and gender. Kent examines the method and motivation that enlisted women “in a grand, trans-historical venture to transform human society at home and in the colonies” (p. 123). The vignettes of Indian Christian life showing the reformation of gender roles are fascinating, and are a tribute to both the dedicated perseverance of the
missionaries and Kent’s meticulous research.

While this book would make an excellent classroom textbook, its very breadth makes it difficult for the author to tie all the research together in a focused manner. The themes covered include Christian communities, “colonial knowledge,” the construction of “respectable” castes, women’s missionary societies, and domesticity, marriage, and sartorial style among Christian women. These themes are so broad and so extensively dealt with that it would be impossible to fairly report her arguments here.

Although Kent attempts to be fair and even-handed, her book would benefit from a more sympathetic understanding of the missionaries’ particular contexts. Kent’s dilemma regarding the missionaries—that “one can neither absolve . . . nor assign them sole responsibility” (p. 85)—can be resolved by contextualization. Specifically, Christianity empowered female missionaries to inspired work among low-caste groups, offering them a chance to empower and reinvent themselves.

Kent’s strongly modern feminist reading by our current standards but by the good they achieved, even by the good they were aiming for. This magnanimous standard of judgment was a principle taught by Christianity, and it is only just that a study of Christianity follow that principle. —Shashi Joshi

Shashi Joshi has taught history at Miranda House, Delhi University, and is the author of the three-volume Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920–47 (Sage Publications, 1992–94). She is a Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.

All Religions Are Good in Tzintzuntzan: Evangelicals in Catholic Mexico.


The author of this carefully crafted anthropological study started researching artisanship in the Mexican town of Tzintzuntzan and changed to the study of religion when he realized how important it was in the life of people (p. 72). In that sense it reminds us of Sheldon Annis, another Jewish anthropologist scholar (p. 11), who wrote about evangelicals in his now-classic study God and Production in a Guatemalan Town (1987), a work that we find summarized here (pp. 152–54). Cahn’s thesis is that the coming of evangelicals to Tzintzuntzan did not result in interfaith clashes because of an egalitarian attitude characteristic of their inhabitants. He also questions the idea, held by many students of Latin American Protestantism, that conversion to evangelicalism has brought economic improvement to believers.

Cahn offers valuable ethnographic descriptions of Catholic fiestas and Protestant missionary methods as the result of careful observation and recording. His vivid insights into the way some people live their faith and explain it are first-class. His summaries of current scholarship, using sources from old and new studies, for issues such as alcoholism (pp. 39–52) or conspiracy theories (pp. 65–72) are helpful. The book is structured in a logical way, moving from descriptions of Catholic religiosity centered in fiestas, to the effects of conversions to evangelical churches, analysis of evangelical missionary patterns, and attempts at reform within some segments of the Catholic majority church.

This reviewer finds that the arguments do not prove the thesis offered by the author, though they provide good clues for future studies that may help to nuance our understanding of religious persecution, as well as the relationship between evangelical faith and social change in Mexico. One evident weakness of the book is that Cahn views Jehovah’s Witnesses as an evangelical church and comes to some conclusions about evangelicals on the basis of observations about the Witnesses. —Samuel Escobar

One Gospel—Many Cultures: Case Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology.


This book is a collection of essays on contextual theology sponsored by the Theological Subcommitte of the European Area Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Although under European sponsorship, the volume’s contributors come from and have worked around the world. The articles reflect discussion of theoretical and theological issues around the practice of contextualization itself, and also offer helpful reflections on concrete instances of inculturation.

An opening essay by the editors (who are from Ghana and the Netherlands, respectively) lays out some of the issues that the practice of contextualization poses for Christianity as a whole and for the Reformed tradition in particular. Themes

A Time for My Singing: Witness of a Life

by Nalini Marcia Jayasuriya

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explored include how to understand the place and role of the Gospel, the impact of contextualization upon the church, and communication between cultures. Some of the essays deal with the challenge of various contexts to Christian faith (such as the challenge of secularization in Europe and North America); others explore cross-cultural or intercultural hermeneutics (from South and Southeast Asian perspectives); others look at specific instances of contextualization (in Central and South Africa, Korea, and Latin America). Hendrik Vroom reports in a final chapter on the conversation among the contributors, especially as it relates to questions of hermeneutics.

While I must admit that I did not find any new insights into questions of contextualization (especially in the hermeneutical area), the contributions nonetheless represent very competent work in this area of theology. Having them together in this fashion raises again the question of the Reformed contribution to contextual theology, a point raised helpfully in the introduction but not really returned to in the conclusion.

—Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S., teaches at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Dissertation Notices


October 31–November 4
Mission in the Early Church.
Dr. Alan Kreider, associate professor of church history and mission, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, and OMSC senior mission scholar in residence, leads participants to ponder dissimilarities and affinities between the missional experiences of early Christians and Christians today. Cosponsored by the Episcopal Church/Mission Personnel, Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod World Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, and Moravian Church Board of World Mission. Eight sessions. $145

November 8–11, 2005
Understanding the Western Missionary Movement:
Developments in a Formative Phase
Dr. Andrew F. Walls, honorary professor, University of Edinburgh, and former director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, will inaugurate OMSC’s distinguished mission lectureship series—four midday lectures with discussions. Consultation is offered on topics of interest to participants. Cosponsored by American Baptist International Ministries, the Episcopal Church/Anglican and Global Relations, and Park Street Church (Boston). $90

November 28–December 2
Islam and Christianity in Dynamic Encounter.
Dr. J. Dudley Woodberry, dean emeritus and professor of Islamic studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, outlines principles for Christian presence and witness within the Muslim community. Cosponsored by Christar and the U.S. Center for World Mission. Eight sessions. $145

December 5–7
Leadership, Fund-raising, and Donor Development for Missions.
Mr. Rob Martin, director, First Fruit, Inc., Newport Beach, California, outlines steps for building the support base, including foundation funding, for mission. Five sessions in three days. $90

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**Book Notes**

**Barker, Gregory A., ed.**
*Jesus in the World’s Faiths: Leading Thinkers from Five Religions Reflect on His Meaning.*

**Brown, G. Thompson.**
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