Shortly before his election as Pope Benedict XVI, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger published a pithy little volume in Italian, *Europa: I suoi fondamenti oggi e domani* (Edizioni San Paolo, 2004). Recently translated into English under the title *Europe Today and Tomorrow* (Ignatius Press, 2007), the book wistfully recalls the continent’s Christendom heritage and argues that, without a return to its spiritual foundations, Europe’s moral and political disintegration is inevitable.

In his lead article Philip Jenkins argues that while the collapse of mainstream European religion may well mark the death of Christendom, closer scrutiny suggests that instead we may be witnessing a prolonged and growingly uncomfortable gestation, a necessary prelude, that could birth spiritual regeneration, though perhaps not in a wholly familiar form. Is Christendom being born again, so to speak, to a faith that combines Christian beliefs with Christian behavior? This hopeful idea is echoed by Lamin Sanneh in his essay “Can Europe Be Saved?”—an extended review of Jenkins’s just-published *God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2007).

Christendom from its earliest days found it impractical to follow the ways of Jesus—to actually reflect the mind of Christ—as demonstrated by its violent politics, aggressive and self-centered economics, and fierce militarism. As Alan Kreider points out in his essay on violence and mission in the fourth and fifth cen-

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of Missionary Research
turies, Christendom—the conjunction of self-serving state and ostensibly self-giving church—almost at once succumbed to the use of both social and military compulsions in the cause of its mission efforts. Christendom constructed an ethic that permitted, applauded, and at times compelled killing in Jesus’ name. Today, the armies of powerful but anxious neo-Christendom likewise launch rockets, scatter bombs, and demolish cities in piously rationalized causes.

What, then, does Europe—or, for that matter, its giant neo-Christendom offspring—need to be saved from? As Ratzinger rightly argues, it needs to be saved from cultural and spiritual amnesia, from the self-inflicted partial lobotomy that has removed the memory of its Christendom past. Europe has lost its way. As any traveler knows, to be “lost” makes arrival at the desired destination a matter of implausible chance. Is it reasonable to think that Europe might traverse the present and arrive at a hopeful future if it rejects its memory of where it has recently been?

But further troubling questions arise. If it be granted that a people is defined primarily by shared memory, does it follow that mere recollection of its Christendom past will be sufficient for the salvation of Europe? What if Europe has never been “saved” in any Gospel sense of that word? (Nonconformists can make a case for this conclusion.) What if the real clash of civilizations, from a strictly Gospel point of view, is not and has never been between Islam and the West but between self-serving states and followers of the self-giving Christ within their borders?

Perhaps, even with the accelerating metamorphosis of the continent’s conspicuously proud monuments to human power, architectural ingenuity, and bygone devotion into mosques, museums, markets, and upscale apartments, Europe might embrace some kind of unembarrassed belief in Christ, the Savior of the world. After all, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures teach us that we humans need to be saved, above all, from ourselves. The Bible offers no scheme for rescue from outside enemies, but it has much to say about the enemy within. Such a rescue could not come too soon for both Christendom and its Islamic nemesis.

Old Christendom was violent, and powerful neo-Christendom still prefers violence as an effective means of insisting that its will be done on earth. While old Christendom, since World War II, has enjoyed a relative moratorium on war, time and circumstance will doubtless change that situation, perhaps in the not-too-distant future. As for neo-Christendom, it is disheartening to observe how utterly reliant on violence and its terrible instruments this great society and its institutions have become. Commanding 43 percent of the global trafficking in weapons, operating out of more than 700 military bases scattered across the globe, and with virtually every state somehow benefitting from the weapons trade, there appears to be no way out. Neo-Christendom is no mere victim, but the primary beneficiary, of violence around the world.

Twenty years ago in this journal, one of the wisest Christian leaders of his generation posed this question: “Suppose instead of trying to understand the Gospel from the point of view of our culture, we tried to understand our culture from the point of view of the Gospel?” (Lesslie Newbigin, “Can the West Be Converted?” International Bulletin of Missionary Research 11, no. 1 [January 1987]: 5). The way we choose to answer this question may contain the key to one of the most important concerns of our time: Can Europe be saved?

—Jonathan J. Bonk

Front cover: Bishop Adhemar of le Puy, with mitre and armor, outside Antioch, during the First Crusade. From William of Tyre, History of the Crusades (France, between 1250 and 1259). Courtesy of the British Library.
Godless Europe?

Philip Jenkins

When I tell colleagues that my most recent work is on religion in modern Europe, the inevitable joking reply is, “It must be a very short book!” Comments of this sort become all the more acute when I say that I am studying the state of contemporary Christianity because, as everyone knows, the faith is dead or dying on the European continent. In the most alarming scenario, a spiritually desolate Europe will inevitably drift toward the faith of its rapidly growing Muslim immigrant communities. A provocative slogan warns, “Islam—our religion today, your religion tomorrow.” Bruce Bawer remarks, “When Christian faith had departed, it had taken with it a sense of ultimate meaning and purpose—and left the continent vulnerable to conquest by people with deeper faith and stronger convictions.”

It is almost too easy to find convenient images of the decay of Christianity and of the growth of Islam. Any traveler in modern European cities has noticed the new mosques, the abandoned and secularized churches, some transformed into museums. In the words of former film star Brigitte Bardot, who these days is a controversial anti-immigration activist, “From year to year, we see mosques sprout up pretty much everywhere in France, while church bells are becoming silent because of a lack of priests.”

From the perspective of a North American Christian, Europe might already be a tempting, if difficult, mission field.

Yet although it may be approaching the status of a truth universally acknowledged, the vision of a predominantly Muslim Europe nearby on the historical horizon demands serious qualification. Muslim numbers are far smaller than many might suspect from current jeremiads, while birth rates are plummeting all around the Mediterranean, in Muslim as well as in Christian lands. At the same time, Christianity has not vanished, nor is it approaching extinction, and there are intriguing signs of growth within that secular framework. The recent experience of Christian Europe might suggest not that the continent is a graveyard for religion but rather that it is a laboratory for new believers who can accommodate themselves to a dominant secular environment. Intriguingly, too, some of the most encouraging signs of growth reflect the influences of the global South.

Signs of Collapse

Such a positive portrait might sound surprising when so many indicators point to the decline or collapse of Christian faith. A recent survey for Le Monde des Religions suggested that the number of self-described French Catholics had dropped from 80 percent in the early 1990s to just 51 percent today. As the magazine’s editor claimed, “In its institutions, but also in its mentalities, France is no longer a Catholic country.”

Any number of indices confirm this picture. In terms of religious belief, several different surveys regularly ask people in various nations how important religion is to them. In some Muslim nations, around 90 percent declare that religion “plays a very important role” in their lives, while the U.S. figure in 2002 was about 60 percent. The average figure for Europeans was 21 percent, with national variations. The figure for Italy was 27 percent, Germany 21 percent, and France and the Czech Republic 11 percent. Unlike in the United States, moreover, religious disaffection is not expressed merely in nonparticipation in church activities. A significant number of Europeans declare themselves nonreligious or atheist. A survey of British respondents in 2004 found only 44 percent admitting to belief in God, with 35 percent denying that belief, and 21 percent choosing the answer “don’t know.” Among those aged eighteen through thirty-four, atheist respondents rose to 45 percent.

European levels of church attendance fall far short of American, and the situation is deteriorating fast. Around 40 percent of Americans report visiting a place of worship weekly, compared with less than 20 percent in most of Europe. According to some estimates, the British attendance figure is 15 percent, with 12 percent in Germany, and Scandinavia below 5 percent. If those figures seem low, then the news for Christians is still more depressing, for the rates include attendance at any place of worship, whether church, mosque, or synagogue. Including Muslim believers produces higher numbers than if we considered Christians only. At the other end of the scale of religious practice are those who never or “practically never” attend a place of worship. The American figure for seldom or never attending a place of worship is 16 percent. As of 2000, though, such absenteeism made up 60 percent of French respondents, 55 percent in Britain, and between 40 and 50 percent in Scandinavia and the Low Countries. Young people are much more likely to be never-attenders than regulars. The number of young British people attending Anglican services has halved just since 1979; now only 6 percent of those aged 15 to 29 attend. Between 1900 and 1960, half of those baptized in the Church of England later went on to confirmation; that figure is now 20 percent. In 2005 the English Church Census reported that since 1998 half a million people had stopped going to a Christian church on Sundays. Across the Continent, numbers attending Catholic seminaries are often only a tenth of what they were fifty or sixty years ago.

Such figures have spawned grim forecasts about the Christian future. Former archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has suggested that if the Church of England were a human being, “the last rites would be administered at any moment.” He sees the church “as an elderly lady who mutters away to herself in a corner, ignored most of the time.” Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, archbishop of Westminster, has said that “Christianity, as a sort of backdrop to people’s lives and moral decisions—and to the government, the social life of the country—has now almost been vanquished.”

In Germany, similarly, the Evangelical Church, EKD, which includes most Protestants, has lost over half its membership in the past half-century. Though in theory the church claims the loyalty of around a third of the population, some 28 million notional members, only a million or so demonstrate any regular religious participation. Catholic Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne has said, “We’ve never had as much money as in the last 40 years, and we’ve never lost the substance of the faith as much as in the last 40 years. . . . In the Cologne archdiocese, there are 2.8 million Catholics, but in the last 30 years we’ve lost 300,000. For every one baptism, there are three funerals.”

July 2007

the proportion of babies born in Switzerland who were baptized was 95 percent; it 2000 it was only 65 percent.

Faith Persisting

While it would be easy to pile up such statistics, the story is rather more complex. First, Europe is a large continent, with many regional variations. The New Europe of the former Soviet bloc includes other areas of continuing Christian strength, notably in Poland. Though the Catholic Church there suffered some decline after the fall of Communism, it has since rebounded. The number studying for the priesthood grew from 4,500 in 1998 to 7,000 in 2005, and great seminaries like Krakow’s are as packed as those of western Europe were before Vatican II. Regular attendance at religious services is reported by 78 percent of Poles, and around a third attend Catholic services weekly. Polish migrants have helped revive Catholic churches in Britain and other western European nations, as have exiles from other such strongholds of the faith as Slovakia and Croatia.

But in western Europe, too, we must distinguish between a decline or collapse of institutional churches and the survival of Christian faith. Far from having vanished, religious belief is still an important force for many old-stock Europeans, though expressed with less public fervor than in the United States. We see many signs of the latent power of faith, of a persistent undercurrent of spirituality, that manifests itself in surprisingly medieval forms of devotion, including pilgrimage and the veneration of saints. Many thousands travel to Naples each year to witness the stigmata claimed by the mysterious Brother Elia. Less controversially, French surveys over the past half-century have repeatedly shown that by far the most esteemed figure in France’s abandonment of Catholicism is not nearly as complete as some suppose.8

If in fact Christianity is becoming extinct, it is odd that Europe today is living in the golden age of pilgrimage, with a proliferation of shrines—some newly cherished in the past few decades, others rediscovered after a hiatus of some centuries. Critics might well question the kind of faith that such pilgrimages demonstrate, and both Protestants and many liberal Catholics are nervous about the theological content of a Marian healing shrine. But if we regard the pilgrimages to Mecca or Varanasi as symbols of the passionate faith of Muslims or Hindus, then we should treat Christian expressions with equal respect.

The world’s largest Marian shrine is Guadalupe in Mexico, which attracts 10 million visitors a year, and 6 million annually visit Brazil’s church Our Lady of Aparecida. But Europe is still home to several thriving centers that draw pilgrims on a near-Latino scale, and over the past half century the numbers have grown substantially. Partly this growth reflects greater ease of travel in the modern world, but the demand is also there, sufficiently so in fact to make the early twenty-first century a glorious era for European pilgrimage. Perhaps Catholic believers are seeking here the kind of religious expression that they would previously have found in their parish churches, a sense of mystery and spiritual power that became scarcer after the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Lourdes, for instance, drew about a million each year in the 1950s, before the council. That number is now closer to 6 million annually, and several thousand might pass through even on a quiet day. Just since the late 1980s, pilgrimage has enjoyed a breathtaking revival at Santiago de Compostela, which now attracts some half a million pilgrims in a regular year, rising to a million in special holy years.

Shrine-rich Italy draws many pilgrims, though in a place like Rome or Assisi it is difficult to distinguish between pilgrims and tourists. But for whatever reasons, millions each year visit the Holy House of Loreto or the tomb of St. Anthony of Padua. When the Shroud of Turin was exhibited publicly in 2000, all the accumulated scientific doubts about the relic’s authenticity did not prevent the attendance exceeding a million. Among Orthodox churches, too, the revival of monasticism since the fall of Communism has led to a reestablishment of ancient shrines that once more draw large numbers of pilgrims. Such once great landmarks of Russian Christianity as Sergiev Posad and Valaam are flourishing anew, offering spiritual direction to seekers. So is Optina Pustyn, which in its day welcomed Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

Signs of Revival: Roman Catholic Church

Such manifestations of latent faith suggest that many Europeans practice what sociologist Grace Davie has termed “believing without belonging.” And for some believers, the refusal to “belong” might in its way be a positive or encouraging sign, as it has separated faith from the bureaucratic structures of comprehensive national churches. If in fact a church stands no realistic chance of incorporating all members of a society, then it can become a smaller and more focused body, more rigorously committed to personal holiness and transformation. Pruning can promote growth, and the sharper the pruning, the stronger the growth. In its newly found minority setting, Christianity can restructure itself to serve the needs of a new society, demanding more commitment and involvement in some areas of life while acknowledging greater flexibility in others.

Perhaps surprisingly, it is within Europe’s Roman Catholic churches that such a reorientation has been most intensely discussed. These churches, after all, have for centuries maintained very close alliances with states, and they have acted as if all baptized members of a community were sons and daughters of one church, which in practice meant virtually all members of society. Yet however powerful the idealistic vision of an all-embracing Catholic society, some influential thinkers have recognized that it no longer bears much resemblance to political reality. The present Pope Benedict has asked how one could speak of a Christian society if “in a city like Magdeburg, Christians are only eight percent of the total population, including all Christian denominations. Statistical data shows irrefutable tendencies. . . . There is a reduction in the possibility of identification between people and Church.” Christians needed to accommodate themselves to the idea of minority status, a staggering idea from the viewpoint of nineteenth- or twentieth-century Catholicism: “The Church of the first three centuries was small, without being, by this fact, a sectarian community. On the contrary, it was not closed in on itself, but felt a great responsibility in regard to the poor, the sick—in regard to all.”10

Since the 1980s the Vatican has strongly encouraged the development of new religious orders pledged to the defense and expansion of the faith. Among the most successful have been Opus Dei, the Neocatechumenate, the Focolare, and Communion and Liberation; smaller examples include the Community of Sant’Egidio, L’Arche, the Schönstatt movement, the Emmanuel Community, and Regnum Christi. In the mid-1980s Pope John Paul II publicly acknowledged “the great and promising flowering of ecclesial movements, and I have singled them out as a cause for a hope in the entire church and for all mankind.” In 1998 he
welcomed representatives of the orders at a vast convocation that gathered on Pentecost, the day that marks the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. In Rome in 2006, at another Pentecost, Pope Benedict XVI addressed 300,000 members of the new movements gathered in St. Peter’s Square.11

Some of these groups trace their origin to the charismatic movement, which grew in parallel with the Pentecostal and charismatic movements within Protestantism. Counting Catholics and Protestants together, the numbers are impressive, especially when we compare them with the Muslim population, which has received so much media attention in recent years. Roughly, Europe’s evangelicals, charismatics, and Pentecostals outnumber Muslims by almost two to one and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Charismatics became a potent force within the Catholic Church during the late 1960s, and in 1975 they received the powerful backing of Pope Paul VI. In the 1970s the movement developed a significant following in Italy, where the Rinnovamento nello Spirito became an ecclesial movement in its own right. By 2000 the movement claimed 250,000 followers, organized in 1,300 communities and groupings, with at least some presence in every Italian diocese.12 The movement also boomed in France. A French network of charismatic prayer groups spread rapidly as groups grew and then split to form new cells. Soon the network institutionalized in the form of the Emmanuel Community, which was formally recognized by the church in 1992; today it has some 6,000 members, including 130 priests. Like other Catholic charismatics, they distinguish themselves from their Protestant counterparts by their profound veneration for the Virgin Mary and their use of pilgrimage. Since 1975 the community has based itself at Paray-le-Monial, which in the seventeenth century became famous as the site of the first reported vision of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and which continues today as a pilgrimage site that attracts 300,000 visitors annually. In addition to that total,

The revival of monasticism has led to reestablishment of ancient shrines that once more draw large numbers of pilgrims.

some 20,000 attend the summer sessions and retreats organized by the Emmanuel Community for priests, families, and young people. Suggesting the wealth of spiritual sites that survive in contemporary Europe, Paray-le-Monial is near both Taizé and the ancient monastery of Cluny.13

Though little known outside their immediate region, other Catholic communities have produced revival movements, often operating within the charismatic framework. In the Czech Republic, which normally represents a malarial swamp for mainstream churches and networks but that have since acquired an institutional life of their own. Spring Harvest began as a Christian conference that is larger than a small or cell group but considerably smaller than a Sunday service gathering.” Some of Britain’s most flourishing evangelical congregations either are Anglican or involve Anglican alliances with other traditions; other examples include All Souls in Langham Place, Holy Trinity Cheltenham, and St. Thomas’s Sheffield.17

Anglicans within the church cooperate with evangelicals from other bodies, including the remnants of the old Nonconformist churches that were once so powerful a force in British politics and culture. British Christianity also has its own version of the new ecclesial movements, groups that originated as ad hoc fellowships and networks but that have since acquired an institutional life of their own. Spring Harvest began as a Christian conference in 1979 and has now become a regular event, attracting up to 100,000 enthusiastic believers in several locations around the United Kingdom. Its sponsors claim it as “the largest Christian conference in Europe.”18

Some movements have grown out of evangelical efforts

Signs of Revival: Other Christian Groups

Outside the Roman Catholic Church, other Christian bodies have also offered imaginative responses to the prospect of Christian decline and minority status. Germany, for instance, now has a substantial revivalist movement that fits poorly with the sober state-oriented traditions of that nation’s Protestantism. In the 1990s former YMCA director Ulrich Parzany formed the movement ProChrist, which modeled itself on the North American Billy Graham crusades, adapted to the electronic age. (Parzany himself is a Lutheran pastor.) The movement holds revivals at a central location, which are then broadcast to a thousand local centers scattered across twenty European nations, so that over a million can participate remotely.15

Most studies place Great Britain (together with the Netherlands) at the leading edge of European secularization, yet it is within the Church of England that “pruning” has been most effective. Through most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the church was divided between two parties, high and low—the liturgical Anglo-Catholics and the evangelicals. Since the 1960s, however, the high party has shrunk into virtual insignificance, while evangelicals have flourished. They have in fact come to resemble an enthusiastic U.S. denomination, although often worshiping in venerable Gothic churches.16

The movement is seen at its strongest in a London parish such as Holy Trinity, Brompton (HTB), which attracts over 3,000 to its Sunday services. As in an American megachurch, the life of Holy Trinity is based on intense small-group activities, organized through its fifty pastorates, lay-led groups of twenty-five to thirty each who meet fortnightly in nonchurch locations. Holy Trinity is committed to church planting and has established seven offshoot churches following its evangelical principles and worship style. HTB is also the source of the Alpha Program, which has had a potent influence beyond British shores. The Catholic archbishop of Paris has described the Alpha course as one of the two greatest gifts of Protestants to Catholics in modern times—the other being the charismatic movement itself—and hundreds of French churches now sponsor Alpha. Though HTB has acquired worldwide fame, it is by no means the only church of its kind. In Chorleywood in Hertfordshire we find the charismatic church of St. Andrew’s, which is also part of the Anglican Church and also offers an impressive range of levels of involvement. Besides full-scale services, the church’s Mid-Size Communities “give a fresh and exciting new expression to our life as a church by setting free the creative dynamic of a group of church members that is larger than a small or cell group but considerably smaller than a Sunday service gathering.” Some of Britain’s most flourishing evangelical congregations either are Anglican or involve Anglican alliances with other traditions; other examples include All Souls in Langham Place, Holy Trinity Cheltenham, and St. Thomas’s Sheffield.17

Anglicans within the church cooperate with evangelicals from other bodies, including the remnants of the old Nonconformist churches that were once so powerful a force in British politics and culture. British Christianity also has its own version of the new ecclesial movements, groups that originated as ad hoc fellowships and networks but that have since acquired an institutional life of their own. Spring Harvest began as a Christian conference in 1979 and has now become a regular event, attracting up to 100,000 enthusiastic believers in several locations around the United Kingdom. Its sponsors claim it as “the largest Christian conference in Europe.”18
within the Church of England, though they have subsequently acquired a more independent identity. One creative figure has been David Pytches, former Anglican bishop of Chile and vicar of St. Andrew’s, Chorleywood. Pytches’s roots are firmly within Anglicanism, “with seven generations of family vicars behind me. . . . I have two brothers ordained and a son-in-law, all clergy.” Even so, he drew freely on other Christian traditions. Pytches imported to England the enthusiasm of Latin American charismatic revivalism and was also influenced by John Wimber, founder of the U.S.-based Vineyard Church. From the late 1980s Pytches became involved in two successful parachurch organizations. One is Soul Survivor, which since 1993 has operated a charismatic Christian version of a rock festival, where young people gather “to pray, sing, dance and have fun.” New Wine operates training events and summer conferences and has many resemblances to the Vineyard.

**Flourishing Immigrant Churches**

Accounts of the collapse of Christianity neglect the growth of immigrant churches among Africans, East Asians, and Latin Americans. Though far less numerous than Muslims, immigrant Christians represent a potent cultural and religious force. Even if we accept the most pessimistic view of the fate of Christianity among Europe’s old-stock white populations, these thriving new churches represent an exciting new planting, even potentially a kind of reevangelization.

Perhaps the most successful example today is the Kiev-based church founded by Nigerian Sunday Adelaja, the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations. Sunday Adelaja was one of many bright African and Asian students brought to the Soviet Union to receive an education and ideally to become a future advocate of pro-Soviet views. Within a couple of years the Soviet Union itself dissolved, and in 1994 Adelaja founded a Pentecostal congregation in the new Ukrainian republic. From seven founding members, the church soon claimed 30,000 adherents, overwhelmingly white, and some very powerful indeed. “Over twenty services are held every Sunday in various auditoriums of

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**Accounts of the collapse of Christianity neglect the growth of immigrant churches.**

Kiev, Ukraine. Over fifty daughter churches function in the Kiev region. More than a hundred daughter and satellite churches exist in the cities and villages of Ukraine. Over two hundred churches in the countries of the former Soviet Union, the USA, Germany, UAE, Israel, and Holland have been founded. . . . The church’s Christian television and radio programs reach approximately eight million people.

Sunday Adelaja is only one of many successful Third World evangelists now operating in Europe, though he stands out in his ability to attract white Europeans. Some transnational Christian networks operate in literally dozens of nations, churches headquartered in one of the great missionary nations of the modern world, such as Brazil, Nigeria, DR Congo, the Philippines, or South Korea. Particularly important are the African-Initiated Churches (AICs), bodies of African foundation and worship style. During the 1960s London became the base for several Aladura churches, including the Celestial Church of Christ, Church of the Lord Aladura, the Cherubim and Seraphim, and Christ Apostolic Church. The Aladura tradition is powerfully represented by the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), founded in Nigeria in 1952, which has a strong missionary outreach. “At the last count, there are at least about four thousand parishes of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria. . . . In Europe the church is spread in England, Germany, and France.” In addition to its African presence, the Congolese Kimbanguist church, l’Église de Jésus Christ sur la Terre par son Envoyé Spécial Simon Kimbangu, is active in Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and England. Brazilian congregations, such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, are widespread. So are Philippine lay charismatic communities like the astonishing El Shaddai, which operates in some thirty countries, or the Brazilian Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, or IUARD, the aptly titled Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

Some churches of global South origin have flourished. One example is London’s Jesus House, established in 1994 as a new planting by the RCCG. Today it claims over 2,000 weekly participants, and numbers are growing steadily. Of Britain’s ten largest megachurches, four—Glory House, Jesus House, Kingsway International Christian Centre, and New Wine Ministries—are pastored by Africans. This is not solely a British phenomenon, nor are large works arising only from Nigeria, for the Congolese have rivaled the Nigerians in their church-building zeal. By 2003 one of Europe’s largest Congolese churches was the Belgium-based New Jerusalem, with 1,300 members, and 900 attend Sunday worship at Paris’s Assemblée des Fidèles aux Prières Chrétiennes.

France today has a series of ethnic church federations representing, for instance, the Maghribian and Haitian communities. The Congolese-initiated Communauté des Églises d’Expressions Africaines de France (CEAF) claims thirty-five congregations across France. Greater Paris has 250 ethnic Protestant churches, chiefly black African. Immigrants are concentrated especially in the “93,” the postal code of the department of Seine St. Denis. Sixty evangelical churches operate in the 93, including a dozen affiliated with the CEAF, with names like Good Seed and Gethsemane. The RCCG has a presence in Seine St. Denis, where we also find a Laotian church and a Portuguese congregation of the Assemblies of God.

Other host nations have their new Christian stories. Germany has at least 1,100 foreign-language Protestant churches, with some 80,000 members. The first AIC appeared in 1974, when the Nigerian Celestial Church of Christ (an Aladura foundation) opened in Munich. By the end of the century, two hundred AICs were recorded: forty in Hamburg, twenty each in Berlin and Frankfurt, perhaps a hundred in the Rhine-Ruhr valley. Germany has its Aladura churches and its Kimbanguists. While African missionaries established some congregations, many grew out of local fellowships and Bible study groups on German soil, such as the All Christian Believers Fellowship, founded in Karlsruhe in 1993. In some cases (globalization in action!) Africans in Germany formed their own churches, which then set up branches in the mother countries in Africa itself. In Hamburg in 1992 Ghanaians Abraham Bediako founded the Christian Church Outreach Mission, which seems on the way to becoming a denomination in its own right. It has a dozen churches in Germany and more than sixty in Ghana itself. The church describes itself as “an international, non-denominational multi-racial church and a full-gospel, charismatic faith congregation with branches in Germany, Holland, Great Britain, Spain, United States and Ghana.”
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In short, European Christianity is neither dead nor dying. We have powerful evidence of latent faith, however remote that may be from actual church membership. We see effervescent new movements within the churches, and then there are the genuinely exciting immigrant communities. Furthermore, recent conflicts with Islamic extremism have forced mainstream secular-minded Europeans to ask just what their values are based on, and in many cases they are forced to reconsider the claims of Christianity. In a series of recent essays that have astonished his admirers, venerated leftist philosopher Jürgen Habermas proclaims that “Christianity, and nothing else, is the ultimate foundation of liberty, conscience, human rights, and democracy; the benchmarks of Western civilization. To this day, we have no other options [to Christianity]. We continue to nourish ourselves from this source. Everything else is postmodern chatter.”25 As German bishop Jobst Schöne has observed, “Perhaps God is using the Muslims to bang our Christian heads together.”26

So I have to answer my jokesters in the negative: my book on Europe’s religion is anything but short. And “European Christianity” is not an oxymoron.

Notes

17. For Holy Trinity Brompton, see www.hib.org.uk; the account of Mid-Size Communities is from www.st-andrews.org.uk/mid-size-communities.php.
24. For the Christian Church Outreach Mission, see “Les Églises Africaines se développent en Europe.” See also www.ccomi.org/pastors.html.
Can Europe Be Saved? A Review Essay

Lamin Sanneh

During a visit to London in 1969 I remember an English friend taking me to Great St. Margaret’s in central London, saying that this was the church of T. S. Eliot. In a stroll through Kensington Park afterward, I remember asking my friend what role he saw for Christianity in Britain in view of the looming challenge of Islam. I had just arrived from studying in the Middle East, which was what prompted my question. Christian minorities there have had to learn to lie low for a thousand years or more. My friend said he thought secularization would tame Islam the way it had Christianity, and the matter then subsided into the sylvan mood of the park. I resolved, however, to find out what, if anything, Eliot might have said on the question.

T. S. Eliot on the Christian Society

In his discussion of the idea of a Christian society understood in the three interrelated aspects of the Christian state, the Christian community, and the community of Christians, Eliot comes closest to dealing with the subject. The Christian state, Eliot explains, is the kind of state with which the church can have the sort of relation that is not a concordat or a reciprocal one. That can happen only if the rulers have had a Christian education, so that they can think and act in Christian categories without compelling belief. “What the rulers believed would be less important than the beliefs to which they would be obliged to conform.”

The Christian community, Eliot observes, is constituted of the parish, though that is in serious decline, thanks to urbanization and suburbanization. In the face of secularization Eliot does not think it is possible to embark on a utopian retreat into the past, nor does he think that an expedient surrender to the exigencies of the moment is in the Christian interest. The idea of posterity, for him, has about a tenth of that number (p. 46). Without children in their lives, adults will see life very differently. The idea of posterity, for example, will have little relevance or meaning. It is as if a strange ideology were imposed on a nation to replace what had once been its religious core.

Eliot’s reflections make much of the idea that too great a strain must not be placed on Christians in terms of a feeling that there is an unbridgeable gulf between a Christian and a non-Christian view of society. A way of life that requires an unremitting conflict between what is easy or normal and what is Christian is not sustainable or desirable. If Christian behavior is restricted to a cloistered way of life, then the rationale for a Christian society is diminished.

Eliot’s observations impinge directly on the importance of a Christian society’s having a wide margin of flexibility to enable virtue to flourish, but without suppressing all error and indifferent virtue. The point for Eliot is that we should not think of the wrongs or evils of society as having causes wholly beyond the human will and, therefore, to think that only other nonhuman causes can change society. As long as society is established on Christian foundations, Eliot argues, solutions to the problems of society would not be hostile to Christian aims. Eliot’s challenge of militant Islam lay much in the future, and it would compound the Christian aims of Eliot’s prescription.

Islam in a Secularized Europe

That challenge is taken up in Philip Jenkins’s book God’s Continent, where he examines rising Islam lapping on the shores of a Europe that is in the throes of advanced secularization. It is an important and timely study, executed with skill, insight, and sensitivity, and with unflinching faithfulness to the facts as Jenkins sees them. Many in today’s Europe worry that it is no longer an idle or implausible question to ask whether the rapid pace of dechristianization will push Europe to the fringes of the Muslim world as “Euraibia” (p. 4)—whether, for example, Spain will revert to Islam. Will Britain become North Pakistan, France the Islamic Republic of New Algeria, Spain the Moorish Emirate of Iberia, Germany the New Turkey? Will Oktoberfest now feature a German “Biergarten” flush with glasses of sweet mint tea? With its 20 percent Muslim population, will Brussels and Belgium become Belgistan? Will Italy and Albania merge to become a new Albanian Islamic federation (p. 6)? As Libya’s President Qaddafi asserts, “There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe without swords, without guns, without conquests. The fifty million Muslims [allegedly] of Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades” (p. 8).

Qaddafi is alluding not only to the statistics of precipitous religious decline in Europe but also to seriously low fertility rates across Europe. A Norwegian Muslim leader, Mullah Krekar, jubilantly predicts, “Look at the development of the population of Europe, where the number of Muslims increases like mosquitoes. Each Western woman in the EU produces, on average, 1.4 children. By 2050 thirty percent of the European population will be Muslim” (p. 8). Michael Novak and George Weigel concur with this grim Muslim assessment and predict a dire cultural meltdown, as does Niiall Ferguson, who declares, “The greatest of all the strengths of radical Islam . . . is that it has demography on its side. The Western culture against which it has declared holy war cannot possibly match the capacity of traditional Muslim societies when it comes to reproduction” (p. 9).

In the Italian province of Ferrara the birth rate has fallen below 0.9 percent every year since 1986. A priest who in 1970 might have directed 1,200 children in a confirmation class now has about a tenth of that number (p. 46). Without children in their lives, adults will see life very differently. The idea of posterity, for example, will have little relevance or meaning. It is as if a strange...
moon has appeared in the European firmament like a circulating antiaphrodisiac and has lulled Europe into self-negation.

In France only about 5 percent of Catholics are practicing their religion. In Germany Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne declared, “We’ve never had as much money as in the last 40 years, and we’ve never lost the substance of the faith as much as in the last 40 years. . . . In the Cologne archdiocese, there are 2.8 million Catholics, but in the last 30 years we’ve lost 300,000. For every one baptism, there are three funerals” (p. 32). Between 1978 and 2003 the number of priests in Europe fell from 250,000 to 200,000. In France there were “about 50,000 priests in 1970, but barely half that number in 2000” (p. 32). Many dioceses have had to import priests from Francophone West Africa.

The number of seminarians has plummeted, too. While Europe in 1978 accounted for 37 percent of novices worldwide, the figure for 2003 was only 22 percent, with a marked decline setting in after 1995. In 1966 “the Catholic Church in France ordained 566 men, compared to just 90 in 2004” (p. 33). The number of men entering seminary fell in the 1990s alone from 1,200 to 900. The seminary of Saint Sulpice, near Paris, has room for 200 but houses only 50 today, and many are from the global South, such as Vietnam and Rwanda. In 2004 just fifteen men were ordained in Ireland. In a typical year the Dublin archdiocese, with a million members, ordains one new priest (p. 33). It is a dispiriting scenario altogether.

A similar picture obtains with figures for monks and nuns. The fate of Sister Luc-Gabriel, known as the singing nun, who in 1963 had a worldwide hit with her recording of the song “Dominique,” may be symptomatic. She grew disenchanted with the failure of the church to follow through with promised reforms from Vatican II and in 1967 recorded a song backing contraception. She resigned her order and “probably lived in a lesbian relationship until she and her partner committed suicide in 1985” (p. 33). Germany in 1971 had 70,000 nuns; today the figure is 30,000. In 1960 France had thirty nuns for every 10,000 Catholics, but in 2000 the figure was only ten (pp. 33–34). The scandals of pedophile priests and the cover-up (pp. 34–36) have had a disastrous impact on morale and have been a major setback for recruitment.

**Secular Liberal Hostility to Christianity**

There are other forces eating away at Europe’s resolve, and none is more intentional than the secular liberal hostility to Christianity. Bruce Bawer’s book *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* (2006) presents gay rights and same-sex marriage as fundamental components of European values. Bawer compares Islam to Christian fundamentalism. “The main reason I’d been glad to leave America was Protestant fundamentalism” (p. 12). Bawer does not grant the existence of any religious or conservative moral critique that he does not stigmatize as fundamentalist.

In a fantasy novel, *The Flying Inn* (1914), Chesterton describes Islam overrunning England. It begins with the secular liberal commendation of Islam as progressive: it is intellectual, rational, devoid of priestcraft and mystifying rituals, and strongly anti-alcoholic (p. 11). Chesterton is making the point that secularism is itself a form of rigid religion with an intolerant outlook and as such paves the way for authoritarianism. Jenkins agrees. “Secular liberalism, it seems, is a self-limiting project; unlimited libertarianism brings its own destruction” (p. 12).

This secular hostility represents the reigning orthodoxy of Europe, though it is not limited to that continent. In a review article in the *New York Times*, Stephen Metcalf writes without any provocation: “If the spirit should finally move me, and I answer the call to care for my fellow man unconditionally, the biggest challenge will be extending my newfound caritas to the religious zealots, for it is the zealots—more than the child molesters, petro-dictators or certain on-air personalities of the Fox News persuasion—whom I despise above all.”

This heap of sauerkraut is the measure Metcalf offers to offset the chocolate he says religious people use to stop the mouth of those who ask about why God allows evil. Such secular disdain is no match for an awakened Islam.

Jenkins picks up this theme in his final reflections on the fate of Europe. For two centuries, he says, many of Europe’s intellectual debates have been shaped by the encounter with secularism and skepticism, a milieu that conditioned Christian attempts to make the faith compatible with modernity. “But what happens when the main interlocutors in the religious debate operate from assumptions quite different from those of secular critics, when the rivals assume as a given the existence and power of a personal God who intervenes directly in human affairs, and seek rather to clarify the nature of His revelation?” (pp. 265–66).

For Jenkins the choice is between acknowledging the Qur’an as the true revelation, and with it the authority of Muhammad, on the one hand, and, on the other, seeing the Qur’an as a historical text subject to the demands and limitations of the circumstances of its creation. In the first case we would have a concession that is tantamount to submission to Islam and would accept the demands of radical Islam; in the second, we would at best let stand a sterile confrontation with Islam. “If there is a third course—to accept some prophetic status for Muhammad while maintaining belief in the Christian scriptures and the church—it is not yet apparent,” Jenkins argues (p. 268). The fact that, unlike the New Testament, the Qur’an remains sealed in the prophetic discourse of Muhammad immunizes it against the rules of historical construction and critical hermeneutics.

In the meantime, Islam continues to complicate the choices facing European leaders, religious and political. From the right the response has been strident. In 1997 Pim Fortuyn wrote *Against the Islamification of Our Culture*, in which he warned of the Islamic threat to core European values, which he defined as liberal, secular, feminist, democratic, and tolerant of homosexuality (p. 12). Not long after its publication, he was murdered. Mogens Camre of the Danish People’s Party warned that “Islam is threatening our future,” while Mathias Düpfnert wrote in *Die Welt* that Islam threatens to plunge Europe into a new Nazi era (p. 13).

Among Muslims themselves there have been growing calls for denouncing Europe’s radical social agenda. Khalil el-Moumni, a Rotterdam-based imam from Morocco, denounced the Netherlands for its promotion of homosexuality, saying because of it “Europeans stand lower than dogs and pigs” (p. 188). Sir Iqbal Sacranie, a British Muslim leader, warned that homosexuality “damages the very foundations of society” (p. 188). The remedy, for these Muslims, is the introduction of Shari’a legislation to contain the excesses.
THE BLESSING OF AFRICA
The Bible and African Christianity

Keith Augustus Burton

Keith Burton examines the achievements of African Christianity arising from a history of conflict. His work places the story of the Bible and African Christianity in a wider global context, challenging our assumptions about Africa’s role in Christian mission.

Beginning with its origins in the Old Testament, Burton chronicles the African presence in the church. He shows the impact of Islam, European colonialism and the slave trade on Africa and underscores the visionary efforts of African Christianity to claim the faith for today’s African context.

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Signs of Christian Renewal

The new Christian stream of immigration flowing into Europe also adds to the complications of a secular society (pp. 51–53). While the mainline churches are experiencing sharp, critical declines, there are signs of hope and renewal (pp. 55–56), Jenkins observes. From within Europe itself new initiatives have led to the beginnings of renewal (chap. 3). The faith remains vibrant in much of eastern Europe, such as in Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia (p. 57). Polish immigration, for example, has strengthened the Catholic presence in Britain; Catholic renewal under John Paul II has continued under Pope Benedict XVI (pp. 70–72). In the distinction between believing and belonging there is a dormant faith tradition capable of being rekindled (pp. 63–66). Many who identify themselves as Christians do not necessarily attend church.

Similarly, attitudes on abortion and gay marriage vary greatly: many Christians who support gay marriage would balk at abortion (pp. 67–68), which shows the limitations of the standard liberal-conservative dichotomy. Also, religious establishment has not inhibited protest and criticism of the state. In that sense, Cardinal Ratzinger spoke of a smaller church playing the role of catalyst and of a creative minority in European society (pp. 69–70). During his pontificate John Paul II embarked on new evangelization in a secular Europe with astounding success. Catholic revival continued with apparitions of the Virgin and canonization of the Italian Padre Pio in 2002; a shrine was built at the cost of $40 million at San Giovanni Rotondo in the Puglia region of Italy with a seating capacity of 6,500 and standing room for 30,000 more (p. 71). The founding of new religious orders flourished, such as the Neocatechumenate (founded in Madrid in 1993), Opus Dei (founded in Spain in 1928), the Focolare, and Communion and Liberation, orders that John Paul II commended as “great and promising flowering of ecclesial movements . . . a cause for hope in the entire church and for all mankind” (p. 72).

In other ways the new tide of Christian awakening in the twentieth century surged in the church. Catholic charismatics, for example, received the blessing of Paul VI in 1975, and in Italy the charismatic movement created the Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo (RnS). By 2000 it had 250,000 followers organized in 1,300 communities and groups (pp. 74–75). The charismatic fervor spread to France, where it was led initially by Pierre Goursat and Martine Catta. Catta said he felt as if French charismatics “were reviving Pentecost” (p. 75). The network was institutionalized as the Emmanuel Community. Based at Paray-le-Monial, the movement has some 6,000 members today, including 130 priests. Some 20,000 attend summer sessions and retreats organized by the Emmanuel Community (p. 75).

In England there are several dozen charismatic communities. In 1985 English layman Myles Dempsey had a vision while visiting the French shrine of Ars that included the words “Walsingham” and “New Dawn.” As a consequence, Walsingham became the center of an annual New Dawn summer conference, which seeks to present “the beauty of the church . . . in all its splendor, the church with all its lights on and all its aspects celebrated—the charismatic, the liturgical, the Marian, the Eucharistic, the Sacramental, the mystical” (pp. 75–76). A charismatic movement sprang up in the Czech Republic under Vladimir Mikulica, drawing on Orthodox and mystical currents. In Slovakia, Silva Krčmery, a Catholic physician, led the charismatic revival, supplementing it with street evangelization (p. 76).

Similar stirrings are evident in European Protestantism. New hope revived with the appointment of Rowan Williams as archbishop of Canterbury and of John Sentamu as archbishop of York. Williams has long been recognized for his ecumenical statesmanship and theological brilliance. Sentamu, however, had a mixed reception at York, where racial abuse and insult combined with admiration and respect for his precedent-setting appointment. Also in England David Pytches, former Anglican bishop of Chile, has led a charismatic movement within the Church of England. He reports many miracles of healing, saying, “Healings are a sign of the Kingdom of God” (p. 82). When stories of child abuse and satanic ritual practices circulated in England and Holland, charismatic leaders stepped into the breach to try to minister, though admittedly not always with salutary results (p. 83).

At Holy Trinity in Brompton, London, a popular and highly successful program for evangelization with charismatic appeal was launched called the Alpha Course, and by the early 1980s it had gained national impact, thanks to the work of Nicky Gumbel. By 2005 some 7 million people had attended an Alpha course, including 1.6 million in Britain (pp. 83–85).

However refracted, light has been beaming in from another direction. Although Muslim immigration has received the lion’s share of attention, it is by no means more significant, and perhaps even less so in scale, than Christian immigration. For example, Sunday Adelaja, a Nigerian, started from a small house fellowship to gather a sprinkling of charismatic worshipers. Eventually they streamed forth as the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations, with 30,000 members in Kiev. Similar in style, if not in scale, is Matthew Ashimolowo and his Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC), which has a 5,000-member congregation, double the seating capacity of Westminster Abbey or St. Paul’s Cathedral (pp. 88–89).

Britain now hosts 1,500 missionaries from 50 countries, many from Africa (p. 89). The Kimbanguist Church, with its roots in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is active in Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and England. The Brazilian Pentecostal movement known as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God has an active mission outreach in Europe, as does the Philippine lay charismatic movement called El Shaddai (p. 90). Abraham Bediako of Ghana founded the Christian Church Outreach Mission in 1992 with a dozen churches in Germany and more than sixty in Ghana (p. 95). There are 380,000 black Africans in London, with an additional 344,000 Afro-Caribbeans (p. 91). A trend is afoot that suggests “the southernization of European Christianity,” as Jenkins aptly calls it (p. 91).

The Uncertain Future

Two major forces are contending today for Europe’s soul—radical Islam and the new Christianity. Radical Islam has ratcheted the state into a high security posture, while the new Christianity seems only to have offended Europe’s cultivated sensibility and transgressed against its reigning secular convictions. Accordingly,
as Jenkins notes, secular Europe would sooner make its peace with Muslims than with the new Christians, with political leaders quick to extend legal protection and political recognition to Muslim immigrants. By contrast, immigrant churches are subject to cultural hostility as illegitimate cults (p. 98). African Pentecostal groups, for example, are typically blamed for witchcraft and human sacrifice, their rituals condemned as voodoo magic. This kind of opposition came to a head in London with media reports from 2005 that moved from describing the exorcisms as rituals to fight diabolism to presenting the rituals themselves as diabolic, “a form of primitive black jungle savagery dressed in Christian guise.” The exorcism the churches practiced represented, according to Richard Hoskins, “a new Frankenstein religion, an unholy marriage of perverted Christianity and an ingrained African belief in the spirit world” (p. 99).

The strategic question for Europe is whether radical Islam can in turn be domesticated and moderated before being launched to stem the tide of extremism in the Muslim heartlands. What or who precisely in secular Europe can achieve that goal of taming and monitoring its global court? With its prickly secular scruples, is the liberal can up to the task? Or does the Christian awakening now beckoning beyond Europe’s assured self-understanding provide a clue for Europe’s transition to a vibrant and cohesive phase of intercultural engagement? It does not require a sixth sense to appreciate that the Muslim challenge implies that Europe can again be a continent only if it becomes God’s continent. Yet whose God that is will determine what kind of continent Europe becomes. It is the merit of Jenkins’s book that it allows us to contemplate the near future with the options on the table.

Notes
2. Ibid., p. 29.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
5. This and subsequent page numbers in the text refer to Jenkins, God’s Continent.

Violence and Mission in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: Lessons for Today

Alan Kreider

“Violence and mission” is a massive topic. Although we could approach the topic by studying Patrick in the West or the Church of the East (the so-called Nestorian Church) in the Far East, I concentrate here on violence and mission in the part of the “ecclesiastical cartography” that is best charted—the Roman Empire. What happened in the Roman world in the fourth and fifth centuries in violence and mission has had immense consequences for the subsequent history of the Christian church throughout the world, which I believe has specific lessons for us today.

Constantine: Making Christianity Advantageous

We begin with an event in the year 312 that to contemporaries must have appeared miraculous. In the early fourth century the Christian movement was three centuries old. During these centuries it had been illegal; its members had been subjected to various disincentives to continuing in their faith, and there had been outbreaks of harrowing violence, the most recent of which occurred between 303 and 311 under Emperor Galerius. How astonishing, then, that in 312 the emperor claimant in the West, Constantine, reported that on the eve of a decisive battle he had seen in the sky a vision of the Greek letters chi and rho or (depending on the account) the cross. And Constantine heard a voice telling him, “In this sign conquer.” For the rest of his reign Constantine not only stopped persecuting Christians but also made Christianity a legal cult and started favoring it. Constantine himself resisted receiving catechesis (he didn’t want bishops educating him!), and he deferred baptism until 337, just before he died. But almost from the beginning Constantine referred to himself as a Christian. Already in 313 he addressed bishops as “dearest brothers.”

Whatever kind of Christian Constantine may have been, he put a stop to violence against Christianity. And he was impatient with anyone who seemed to him to destroy the unity and peace of the empire; hence he was exasperated with “heretics” and “schismatics,” who put their convictions ahead of catholic unity. But even in dealing with these irritating zealots, Constantine advocated tolerance. Let us, he said, “cultivate patience . . . let nothing be done to reciprocate an injury; for it is a fool who would usurp the vengeance which we ought to reserve to God.” There must be no violence in mission. Similarly, with reference to those who were committed to polytheism, Constantine wrote in an edict of 324: “What each man has adopted as his persuasion, let him do no harm with this to another. That which the one knows and understands, let him use to assist his neighbor, if that is possible; if it is not, let it be put aside. For it is one thing to undertake the contest for immortality voluntarily, another to compel it with punishment.” Constantine saw himself as an...
advocate of religious toleration. Of course, he wavered; he made statements against Jews, for example, that are chilling, calling them people who have committed “the murder of the Lord” and who are “sick with fearful error.” And at times he looked on passively as his courtiers looted pagan temples, whose wealth came to the imperial fisc and was used to build Christian churches. But Constantine viewed himself as a repudiator, not as a wielder, of violence in mission.

Constantine did more than end violence against Christianity; he made it advantageous to be a Catholic Christian. He associated publicly with the church, giving it the cachet of the emperor’s approval. People interested in imperial jobs noted this change. Now upper-class men, who hitherto had been resistant to Christianity, began to join the church. Furthermore, Constantine gave Christianity specific benefits. He provided imperial funding for the construction of church buildings, massive and modest. Under Constantine, Christianity became a public cultus; in an edict of 323 Constantine ordered the seizing of the houses, private dwellings, of “all who muster heresies by private assemblies.” In Constantine’s empire there would be no “house churches.” Furthermore, Constantine gave privileges to the orthodox, public church: he made the Christian holy day of Sunday a day of rest for the entire urban empire; he gave bishops free use of the imperial post; he exempted churches from taxes and churchmen from public duties. Why these benefits to the church? In an edict of 320 Constantine gave his reason: “That the churches’ assemblies may be crowded with a vast concourse of peoples.” Mission, under Constantine, will take place not by force but by favor, not by violence but by advantage.

Under Constantine, the Christian church grew numerically. It grew, in part, because it was now a legitimate religion, to which it was advantageous to belong.

First Three Centuries: Attractive Christianity

It had been different for the churches of the first three centuries. (These churches were immensely varied, and it is precarious to generalize about them. The sources, though, allow us to draw a few conclusions.) First, the churches prior to Constantine were growing. From the handful of messianic believers on Pentecost, the churches by Constantine’s day had grown to number approximately 6 million adherents, or about 10 percent of the imperial population.

Second, the churches were growing despite disadvantages. Becoming a Christian was not a way to get ahead in professions; indeed, a person who was baptized became a marginal figure, a “candidate for death.” Nevertheless, people became Christians because Christianity, despite the disincentives, was attractive. One attraction was the Christian churches’ reputation as places of spiritual power where people were set free from demonic powers that distorted lives, deprived people of freedom, and made people sick. A second attraction was the Christians’ capacity to inculturate their message, to speak to the concerns of their contemporaries while maintaining their distinctiveness. The Christians called themselves paroikoi, “resident aliens.” They were resident, like other people, and comprehensible to them; but they were also aliens—distinctive from other people and hence, in their difference, intriguing. The Christians, the apologist Justin Martyr reports, attracted outsiders by their “consistent lives”; the non-Christians noted “the strange patience [nonviolence] of their injured acquaintances, or experienced the way they did business with them.” In a world in which people were afraid of death, the Christians were known as people who were unafraid to die; as Bishop Cyprian of Carthage put it, since “hope is of future things . . . no one should be made sad by death.” At a time when burial societies charged large amounts to provide a decent burial to their members, the churches provided free burial to their members, no matter how poor (this was the primary function of the catacombs). In a society in which women were harassed by husbandly willfulness, abortion, and the exposure of unwanted girl babies, the churches provided places of fidelity, the cherishing of life, and unexpected possibilities for women’s ministries. Around A.D. 200 a Christian apologist could make the astonishing claim: “We do not preach great things, but we live them.” Why did the church grow? Because, according to an early fourth-century Egyptian church order, Christianity transformed lives: “The progress of those who have been illuminated is high and better than the common behavior of people.”

Attractiveness, so the early Christians were convinced, was the only way a faith could grow. At the beginning of the third century, the apologist Tertullian argued that true worship cannot be compelled: “It is no part of religion to compel religion.” And as the Epistle to Diognetus asserted, compulsion is contrary to God’s nature. In sending Christ, God “willed to save man by persuasion, not by compulsion, for compulsion is not God’s way of working.” Around 250 a catechist in Carthage asked Cyprian, his bishop, to provide a list of topics that every candidate for baptism should be taught and should memorize. Cyprian provided 120 of these, one of which states simply that “the liberty of believing or of not believing is placed in free choice.” There can be no violence in mission. On the eve of the Constantinian era, the philosopher Lactantius summarized the Christian approach: “There is no occasion for violence and injury, for religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows, that the will may be affected . . . . We do not entice, as they say; but we teach, we prove, we show.”

As we have seen, this view of religious toleration is one that Constantine seems to have shared and sought to perpetuate. In the half-century that followed his death there were major changes in the Christian churches. Except for eighteen months under Julian in the early 360s, all the emperors were Christians. The churches grew rapidly; in major cities in the Easter season thousands of baptismal candidates, dressed in white, would stream to their first communions. Aristocratic males began to join the churches. By the 380s, depending on the area, between a third and a half of the populace of the Roman Empire belonged to the Christian church. Inculturation continued, with an “amplification” of worship and an accommodation of ethics. There were occasional acts of violence by Christians who destroyed buildings and images and by both pagans and Christians who committed acts of murder and intimidation.

While these events were taking place, a debate was going on at the highest levels of society about violence and mission. Among emperors, Julian, who was born into a Christian family but converted to paganism, tried to tip the balance back toward the traditional religions. While giving both Christians and pagans
freedom to worship, he gave the advantage back to the pagans. Julian wrote: “By the Gods I desire the Galileans neither to be killed nor to be beaten unjustly nor to suffer any other harm; however, I declare absolutely that the god-fearing [i.e., the pagans] must be preferred over them.” In contrast, Valentinian I, a Christian who succeeded Julian as emperor, attempted to be religiously neutral, to “take his stand in the middle of a diversity of faiths,”²⁹ he was the first to apply to pagans the word paganus, which connoted marginality, a second-class status.³⁰ The debate also raged among the intellectuals. Firmicus Maternus, a philosopher who in the 340s had recently converted to Christianity, urged the emperors to persecute the pagans. He based his argument not on the New Testament, which had been central to the thinking of Christians, but on the Old Testament. Firmicus, citing Deuteronomy 13:6–10, noted that God had ordered the Israelites to stone people, even members of their own family, who had served the gods of the Gentiles. So now “the law of the Supreme Deity enjoins on you that your severity should be visited in every way on the crime of idolatry. . . . He [God] bids spare neither son nor brother, and thrusts the avenging sword through the body of a beloved wife. A friend too He persecutes with lofty severity, and the whole populace takes up arms to rend the bodies of sacrilegious men.”³¹ Mission should be carried out by violence, sanctioned by God.

Several leading Christian theologians recoiled at such ideas. In Cappadocia in the 360s the missionary bishop Basil of Caesarea restated the Christian tradition. Mission cannot be carried out by violent means: “One must not use human advantages in preaching the gospel, lest the grace of God be obscured thereby.”³² Two decades later his friend Gregory of Nazianzus protested at signs of Christian violence in mission: “I do not consider it good practice to coerce people instead of persuading them. Whatever is done against one’s will, under the threat of force, is like an arrow artificially tied back, or a river dammed in on every side of its channel. Given the opportunity it rejects the restraining force. What is done willingly, on the other hand, is steadfast for all time. It is made fast by the unbreakable bonds of love.”³³ In asserting that violence in mission will not work, Gregory sounds like the early Christians.

Christendom: Mission Becomes Violent

In the final two decades of the fourth century, however, we come to a turning point. The church and the empire, now closely allied, were leaving the Christians of the first three centuries behind. Throughout the fourth century the Christian church had grown tremendously; imperial advantage, as well as Christianity’s attractions, had produced results. But Christianity was still not in a dominant position. One scholar has estimated that by 400 approximately half of the imperial populace was formally Christian.³⁴ Other scholars have studied the major city of Antioch, where Christianity had numerous adherents but still had to compete with strong Jewish and pagan communities.³⁵ In the Easter season in Antioch Christian converts submitted themselves for baptism, but other Christians were drawn to Jewish synagogues because there was reputed to be greater spiritual power there.³⁶ And there were always Christians who were attracted by the practices of polytheism. The religious market was relatively free and was marked by intense competition. Was this situation tolerable? Should Christianity continue its original approach, which assumed a coexistence, even a peaceful missionary competition, with its rivals? Was it indeed true, as Lactantius had written eighty years earlier, that “if you wish to defend religion by bloodshed . . . it will no longer be defended, but will be polluted and profaned”?³⁷ Was the strength of Christianity in its inherent attractiveness and in its missionary methods “we teach, we prove, we show” (Lactantius)?³⁸ Or in this new situation, was a new approach necessary? Should the Christian church and its imperial sponsors move from attraction, coupled since Constantine with advantage, to something new—to compulsion, force, violence?

Emperor Theodosius I (379–95) chose violence. In 380, urged on by Bishop Ambrose of Milan, Theodosius addressed an edict to the people of Constantinople, stating that “all peoples . . . shall be engaged in . . . that religion which the divine Peter, the apostle, . . . transmitted to the Romans,” the Trinitarian orthodoxy that Pope Damasus now represented. These people were to be called “Catholic Christians.”³⁹ All other people, even though they might call themselves Christians, Theodosius adjudged to be “demented and insane.” Their beliefs were to be called heresies; their meeting places were not to be called churches. And they were to be punished severely both by divine vengeance and by “the punishment of our authority.”³⁶ In the course of the next decade, a flood of legislation attempted to close down heretical groups. For example, an edict of 382 provided for “inquisitors,” whose job it was to make sure that there were no “secret and hidden assemblies” that harbored heretics.³⁹

In the 390s Theodosius shifted the focus of his legislation to pagans. In a mandate of 392 he prohibited pagan worship, private or public. No longer would it be legal to offer incense to a household god or to examine the “quivering entrails” of a sacrificial victim; the building in which such worship occurred must be confiscated and added to the imperial treasury, and the worshipper must pay a crushing fine. Later edicts barred persons “polluted” by heresy or the “crime of pagan rites” from the imperial household, the army, and the civil service.⁴⁰ Public life, including public religious activity, would henceforth be purged of heresy and pagan religion. Public life would be Christian, orthodoxly Christian.

A noble goal, one might think. But how does one get there? By laws, influence, and violence. An imperial letter of 428 spoke of “a thousand terrors of the promulgated laws.”⁴¹ There were indeed many laws, terrifying laws, and they certainly had some effect. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, commented, with satisfaction, “For long Christians did not dare answer a pagan; now, thank God, it is a crime to remain a pagan.”⁴² But laws had to be enforced, and the empire had an administrative staff that by our standards was tiny, with very few police. So the enforcement of

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But laws and influence were not enough. Throughout the
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ments: “If such a proprietor became a Christian, no one would
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According to a work of hagiography
written in the 420s—Mark the Deacon’s Life of Porphyry, Bishop
of Gaza—in the last decade of the fourth century there was a
clustering of Christians in Gaza huddled in two small churches.
The pagans predominated in Gaza; they had eight temples,
the largest of which—the Marnion, or temple of Marnas, the
“Cretan Zeus”— was one of the cult centers of the ancient world.
In 395 the Christians of Gaza elected Porphyry as their bishop.
Porphyry performed miracles of rainmaking and healing, which
attracted only a minority of pagans. So Porphyry, who “wanted
to convert the multitudes of Gaza,” appealed to the emperor
in Constantinople for military support. His first appeal got
nowhere. Emperor Arcadius (395–408) made promises of help,
but resourceful pagans deflected any action by paying large
bribes to an imperial administrator. So Bishop Porphyry and
the bishop of the neighboring diocese, John of Caesarea, went
together to Constantinople to appeal to the reluctant Emperor
Arcadius through the formidable Empress Eudoxia. The empress
prevailed, and the emperor sent to Gaza a “zealous Christian,”
Cynegius, and a “great band of soldiers and civil officers” to
destroy Gaza’s temples by force and fire. When the pagans, who
included some of Gaza’s leading citizens, protested, the soldiers
“beat them with clubs and staves.” The climax came with the
orchestration of the great Marnion, on whose cleansed site a new church
was built. Some Christians chanted psalms and shouted, “Christ
has conquered!” A number of people presented themselves for
baptism, and the troops clubbed others into submission. Many
Christians, according to Mark the Deacon, were troubled by this
method of conversion. They suggested to Bishop Porphyry that
pursuing mission by violence was not the Christian tradition: it
was not right for the bishop to receive “those who came out of
fear, but those whose purpose was good.”

Bishop Porphyry, articulating the change in Christian thinking
that was under way, had an answer for his critics. God, the
bishop responded, is patient; God “endures our frowardness with
longsuffering,” and God’s preference is to persuade. “But
when we are not persuaded, desiring in all things like a good
and merciful master to keep us and not to thrust us away, he [God]
lays upon his fear and his teaching, calling us to acknowledge
what is right for us.” God, the early Christian tradition to the
contrary, uses violence. Porphyry proceeded to prove this by
quoting from several Psalms, including the following rendering
of Psalm 78:34: “When he [God] slew them, then they sought
him, and they returned and inquired early after God.” Even if
people “come doubting, in time God will soften their hearts.”
Many pagans did not experience a softening of their hearts, and
Gaza remained an embattled city. There were ongoing tensions
between pagans who resisted and the imperial troops who,
according to Mark the Deacon, used “no little terror.”

Paul G. Hiebert
1932–2007

Paul Hiebert, a faithful follower of Jesus Christ as his Lord
until his death on March 11, 2007, was more than a saintly man
of God who, richly endowed with the fruit of the Holy Spirit
(Gal. 5:22), became a spiritual giant. He was also a courageous
missionary statesman of consummate diplomatic skill and a
learned academic who combined indefatigable research,
imaginative scholarship, and highly original thinking with
sensitive teaching and gentle guidance for those less gifted
than himself.

Born on November 13, 1932, in Shamshabad (a suburb of
Hyderabad), Paul represented the third generation of a Men-
onite Brethren missionary family. His grandparents, Nicholai
and Susie Hiebert, arrived in India in 1899 and were followed
by his parents, John Nicholas Christian and Anna Jungas Hiebert.
Paul attended Kodaikanal (now International) School, gradu-
ated from Tabor College (Hillsboro, Kans., 1954) and Mennonite
Brethren Biblical Seminary (Fresno, Calif., 1957), and obtained
an M.A. in cultural anthropology from the University of
Minnesota (1959). He was then sent to Shamsabad to take
over as missionary principal of Bethany Bible School and Col-

Robert Eric Frykenberg, also from a missionary family and a historian
of India’s Christianity, grew up in Telengana and knew Paul Hiebert
from childhood, as a schoolmate at Kodaikanal, and as a colleague
through most of his professional life as a scholar and missionary.

published as Konduru: Structure and Integration in a South In-
dian Village (1971), established his reputation and placed him
in the front ranks of scholars in his field.

No longer allowed into India as a regular missionary, Paul
became a professor of anthropology and South Asian studies.
His career, first at Kansas State University (Manhattan, 1961–72)
and then at the University of Washington (Seattle, 1972–77),
was extremely successful. During these years he often went
to India for field research under prestigious grants ([Ford] Fore-
ign Area Fellow, 1964, 1965, 1966; Kansas State University,
1968, 1969, 1971; American Council of Learned Societies, 1972;
and Social Science Research Council, 1977). While in India, he
often also served the Mennonite Brethren Mission’s school in
Shamsabad, Telengana. During these same years, he spent one
year as visiting professor at his Mennonite Brethren Seminary
in Fresno (1969–70) and another year as a Fulbright visiting
professor at Osmania University in Hyderabad (1974–75).

During his last thirty years, from 1977 onward, Paul was
a missionary anthropologist. This phase began when he ac-
cepted a research professorship at Fuller Theological Seminary
(Pasadena, Calif.; 1977–90). After thirteen years of training
doctoral students at Fuller, he moved to Trinity Evangelical
Divinity School (Deerfield, Ill.; 1990–2007). He spent his last
seventeen years there, serving first as professor of mission
anthropology and South Asian studies. Named distinguished
professor of mission and anthropology in 2001, to the end of
his life Paul remained heavily involved in his work, especially
in India. During these years Paul served several boards. Most
prominent among these were the Mennonite Brethren Board
In North Africa a few years later, the great Augustine of Hippo dealt with similar issues in his conflict with the Donatists, schismatics whom he was attempting to attract into the Catholic fold. Should a Christian use violence in mission? In correspondence with Vincentius, a Donatist leader, Augustine admitted that earlier he had not thought so, but he had changed his mind. “My first feeling . . . was that no one was to be forced into the unity of Christ, but that we should act by speaking, fight by debating, and prevail by our reasoning.” Augustine was a product of the early Christian tradition. But Augustine had changed because he, like Porphyry, had concluded that God himself uses force. Augustine cited not the Old Testament but the New. On the Damascus road God had forced Paul to repent; in one of Jesus’ parables God forced people to attend the messianic banquet (Luke 14:15–24). God uses violence, and violence works. “I have,” Augustine said, “yielded to the facts . . . My own city . . . which had been wholly Donatist . . . was converted to Catholic unity by the fear of imperial laws.” For Augustine, such tactics were beneficial, for he heard people say: “This [orthodox Christianity] is what God uses violence, and violence works. Was he right? This claim would be tested in the century of Augustine’s pronouncement—the fifth century. In it there was a great deal of violence. Imperial rescripts show that the emperors, like the bishops, were overwhelmingly preoccupied with a succession of ecumenical church councils that attempted to determine orthodox theology, especially Christology. These councils, as Ramsay MacMullen has demonstrated in a new book, were characterized by violent language—but also by violent behavior by the clergy and mayhem in the streets. MacMullen estimates that—across a couple of centuries—25,000 people were killed as a result of the struggles over the ecumenical councils. But outside the theological debates and the strong-arm behavior associated with them, there was much unclarity. Some local officials energetically enforced the imperial policies against pagans and heretics; others ignored them. All kinds of anomalies were present. A sample of these is the case of Volusian, a Roman aristocrat whom Augustine attempted to convert to Christianity in 412 when Volusian was in North Africa. Volusian resisted, finding that the teachings of Jesus “were not adaptable to the customs of the state.” Nine years later, Volusian, still a pagan, was urban prefect (i.e., the top administrator) in Rome. Emperor Constan-
In the fifth century it seemed obvious that violence was working: the proportion of the society that was baptized and active in the state-sanctioned church activities steadily increased. As the number of Christians mounted, inculturation, or the insertion of Christianity into the wide variety of ethnic groups that characterized the Roman Empire, was taking place. As Andrew Walls has noted, inculturation requires a sensitive balancing of two principles: the pilgrim principle and the indigenizing principle. It is fascinating to watch this process, to see Christianity come to be at home in Roman circles, both aristocratic and peasant, and to watch Christians appropriate elements of pagan behavior. We have an interesting sample from Upper Egypt as the great fifth-century abbot Shenoute tells of his encounter with a local Christian. To Shenoute’s dismay, the Christian had tied fox claws, which were reputed to have healing properties, to his painful legs. He insisted, “It was a great monk who gave them to me, saying ‘Tie them on you [and] you will find relief.’” Another example of inculturation was the very use and justification of violence as a tool of religious policy.

So the church was growing, and theologians decided that violence works. But questions remained. Were people changed? In the early centuries, Christians were known as people who, though misguided, were admirable and exemplary. Now Christians were often just like everybody else. A typical word for them was hypocrite. Augustine described them as “depraved persons who in mobs fill the churches in a bodily sense only.” In church services, where people were required to be present, Chrysostom reported that they engaged in various forms of misbehavior—roaming about during the services, causing an uproar, acting as if they were in the forum or barbershop, bolting for the door as soon as possible. Augustine was aware that paganism continued to flourish in rural areas and in people’s inner commitments: “It is easier to close temples than it is to close people’s hearts to the idols.” Nevertheless, as the fifth century progressed, imperial legislation progressively heightened the pressure of compulsion; it narrowed the rights of Jews and cramped the liberties of pagans and heretics.

In the mid-sixth century—beyond the period of our focus—the Christian policy of force came to a climax under Emperor Justinian I (527–65). In a famous edict of 529, Justinian indicated that he was aware that many people in his empire who had been baptized had returned to what he called the “error of unholy and abominable pagans”; these people who were “guilty of concealing sacrifices” were to be subjected to “extreme punishments.” Similarly, Justinian recognized that people, in order to get jobs or rank or property, had submitted themselves to be baptized but had left their families or households “in the pagan error.” These people were to be punished; their property was to be confiscated, and they were prohibited to share in the life of the state, for “they clearly have not obtained holy baptism by pure faith of their own accord.” Finally, Justinian’s edict made a sweeping requirement: any man who had not been thought worthy of “venerable baptism” should with their wives and children and households now present themselves for catechesis and baptism; and all children “of young age immediately and without any delay should obtain salutary baptism.” With this final coercive act of having everyone undergo baptism, the mission of the church was complete. But of course it was not; for centuries people continued to engage in pagan worship stealthily, on the sly.

In this essay I have been describing a paradigm shift in Christian mission as it came to be coupled with violence. We have moved from Christianity (defined by faith in Jesus Christ) to Christendom (defined by the effort to promote the lordship of Christ over all of society by coercive means). We move from a Christianity that spreads because it is attractive to a Christianity that spreads because it is advantageous and, finally, because it is compulsory. And this movement changes mission fundamentally. It represents a paradigm shift—a “Christendom shift”—that, I have argued, represents a tragic distortion of the missio Dei.

Lessons for Today

From mission and violence in the fourth and fifth centuries, we can draw several lessons for today. First, we must deny that mission and violence always go together. Many people view Christianity as intrinsically intolerant; for them, the “coercive Christian is the normative Christian.” They make this connection for good reasons. They can point to much violence in mission, not only in the fourth and fifth centuries, but across many centuries. We need to listen to this critique and take it seriously. But a lesson from this essay is that Christian mission is not intrinsically violent. We can recall that Christianity’s early mission was nonviolent; indeed, it was the early Christian Tertullian who coined the phrase libertas religionis (religious liberty). Up to the time of Constantine, the only voices “which can be found raised in favor of freedom of belief as a universal principle (rather than a political expedient)

The church was growing, and theologians decided that violence works. But questions remained. Were people changed?

are those of Christian authors.” Violence by Christians in mission has been real, but this was not Christianity’s original vision; it represents a turning, a distorting, that shaped subsequent Christian mission. Violence in mission is not Christian and not Christianity; it is Christendom.

Second, we must concede that violence and mission often have gone together. We must face into, not look away from, the violence of Christians in mission in the fourth and fifth centuries and thereafter. I propose that we concede that powerful, influential Christians lost their way. Christians lost sight of Jesus, who, instead of forcing his disciples to follow him, simply asked them, “Do you also wish to go away?” (John 6:67). Christians also lost sight of the approach of the Christians of the earliest centuries.
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Those Christians’ vision of Jesus, distorted by pride and ambition, led to an overcompliant inculturation into the dominant values of their time. We must face this failure. We must have a clear-sighted realism in our view of the Christian past. Such clarity of vision is hard to achieve. An example from my period, the mission of the early church, has to do with the way Christians use the word “persecution.” Christian scholars typically use it to describe the ill treatment that Christians suffer at the hands of non-Christians. If we want to see clearly, however, we must also use the word “persecution” for violence that Christians have directed at others—pagans, heretics, Jews, and other groups—from Constantine and Theodosius onward. Look at the entries for the word “persecution” in standard reference works. My search has not been exhaustive, but I have found only one encyclopedia, the Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, that has an entry “persecution of the pagans.”” We Christians are a persecuted tradition and originated the concept of religious liberty. But this essay has demonstrated that we also, in our unfaithfulness, are a persecuting tradition. Others fear us with good reason.

Third, Christians who are involved in God’s mission must engage in missionary repentance. We need to find ways to express our deep sorrow for the times that Christian mission has been backed up by violence. How can we do this? In personal encounters with people of other faiths and traditions, we can express our sincere regret verbally, and our witness must be rooted in repentant humility. And we can say the same thing by practical gestures as well. Here are a few suggestions. Let us repent for the ways that Christians have coupled mission with violence by henceforth refusing to accept the advantages of association with the military in our mission today, even when to take advantage of such power may accomplish goals more quickly; let us instead function from a vantage point of marginality, precariousness, and weakness. Another suggestion: let us say we are sorry by welcoming adherents of non-Christian religions into our countries, including their missionaries, and by going to bat for their freedom of practice when others, including other Christians, want to discriminate against them. In other words, let us humbly and repentantly invite representatives of other faiths into friendship, into collaboration where possible, and into a peaceful competition of missionary faiths. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). The fourth-century apologist Lactantius said, “We teach, we prove, we show.” What does the life of our congregations and parishes teach, prove, and show? In comparison with other faiths, does our faith bring abundant life? I believe it does, and that we Christians have nothing to fear from the presence of other missionary faiths in our midst. But let us remember what we have seen in this essay: where Christians resort to advantage and compulsion, their attractiveness withers.

Fourth, it is right to be suspicious of the role of the state in the mission of the church. Christendom attempted to be an alliance of the church and the state in the service of Christ the King. As such, this alliance impacted mission, both domestically and globally. Emperor Constantine may have opened the door to this alliance, but subsequent Christian monarchs—Theodosius, Clovis, Charlemagne, Elizabeth I of England, and very many others—embodied it. We must ask: if mission is to succeed, is it essential for the state to espouse Christianity? Is it indispensable for paradigmatic rulers to become Christians and identify with the faith? What should we pray for? In the early 1990s, when I was in Japan, Christians were praying for the conversion of Crown Prince Naruhito, who had married Princess Michiko, who had been educated in a Catholic school. What difference would it make for the churches in Japan, whose growth has been stymied, if the emperor became a believer? More recently, I have read that people are praying for the conversion of Hu Jintao and other leaders of the People’s Republic of China. What difference would it make to the church in China if the leader of the ruling party—the one who sets the fashion, who opens the way to advancement—becomes a Christian? Do we really know what we are praying for? What happens to Christianity when it is associated with an army? How about Japan after World War II, when General MacArthur urged American church leaders to send “thousands of missionaries” to the country? Or today, in Iraq and the Middle East—what impact does American military activity in the region have upon God’s mission? Does it aid the missio Dei when the Gospel is associated with America’s national policy?

Finally, we Christians can relax, for the welfare of the church is in God’s hands. We humans cannot, by violence, secure the welfare of the church. When we attempt to do so, we mess things up. The ascensions and recessions of the Christian movement across the centuries are beyond human control; and God seems to work most powerfully when humans are weakest. Lamin Sanneh, whose view of the world church is broad, has observed that “the contemporary religious resurgence [in many countries] is taking place in spite of state weakness, and often in spite of state suppression, rather than because of state support.” To Christians who know their Bible, this should not be surprising. Mission theologian Paul of Tarsus knew that violence could not be an instrument of God’s mission, but neither could violence stifle God’s mission. “Whenever I am weak,” he confessed, “then am strong.” The principle? “Power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9–10). Supremely, it is Jesus of Nazareth who demonstrates this truth. He said, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and [not to] pursue his mission by means of violence but to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). This is the heart of the Christian message; it also is the heart of God’s mission.

Notes
2. Lactantius, De mortibus persecutorum 44.3–5; and Eusebius, Vita Constantini (henceforth VC) 1.32.
3. For a discussion of Constantine’s progress toward baptism, see Alan Kreider, The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2007), chap 3.
6. Eusebius, VC 2.60.
11. Codex Theodosianus 16.2.10.
15. For a discussion of this point, see Graydon F. Snyder, Inculcation of the Jesus Tradition: The Impact of Jesus on Jewish and Roman Cultures (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999), chaps. 6–13.
16. Tertullian, Ad Uxor 2.4, and comment in Stark, Rise of Christianity, chap. 5.
17. Justin Martyr, Apology 16.
20. Tertullian, Ad Uxor 2.4, and comment in Stark, Rise of Christianity, chap. 5.
23. Nec religiens est cogere religionem, Tertullian, Ad Scapulam 2.2.
24. Epistle to Diognetus 7.4.
25. Cyprian, Ad Quirinum 3.52.
26. Lactantius, Divinae Institutiones 5.20.
30. Codex Theodosianus 16.2.18; for comment, see Coleman-Norton, Roman State, 1:324n.
32. Basil, Moralia, 70.12, 13, 26.
33. Gregory of Nazianzus, De vita sua 1293–94.
34. MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire, p. 86.
36. John Chrysostom, Against the Jews 1.3.
37. Lactantius, Divinae Institutiones 5.20.
38. Codex Theodosianus 16.1.2.
39. Ibid. 16.5.9.
40. Ibid. 16.5.42; 16.10.21.
42. Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos 34/2.13.
43. Augustine, On Catechizing the Uninstructed 5.9.
44. Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos 54.13.
46. Mark, Life of Porphyry, 19, 30, 33.
47. Ibid., 27, 50, 63.
48. Ibid., 72, 78.
49. Ibid., 73, 99.
50. Augustine, Epistle 93.
54. Coleman-Norton, Roman State, 2:374. For further comment on Volusian’s career, including his eventual conversion to Christianity, see Kreider, Change of Conversion, pp. 65–70.
57. Eusebius, VC 4.54.
58. Augustine, On Catechizing the Uninstructed 7.11.
60. Augustine, Epistle 232.
61. A rescript of 393 stated that Judaism was “not a sect prohibited by the laws” (CT 16.8.9), but subsequent laws tightened the screws on the Jewish communities (e.g., CT 16.8.21–22). Laws cramping the life of the pagans and heretics include CT 16.10.25; Sirmondian Constitutions 1.12.6; CT 16.5.57.
62. Codex Iustinianus 1.11.10.
64. Drake, Constantine and the Bishops, p. 405.
65. Tertullian, Apology 24.5.

Errata

In Willi Henkel, O.M.I., “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” IBMR (April 2007), page 85, the year in which the Synod of Bishops considered the topic “Justice in the World” should have read 1971, not 1974. Also, page 86 should have shown 1990, not 1991, as the year in which John Paul II’s Redemptoris missio was promulgated. The editors regret the errors.

July 2007
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Herb Friesen

I was born on January 8, 1930, in Inola, Oklahoma, in the same farmhouse where most of my eleven siblings were born. Discipline and hard work shaped my early life; a better training ground than the farm for future mission service could scarcely be found. Modern amenities such as electricity, running water, and an indoor toilet were added only much later.

Early Influences

Factors in my eventual calling can be appreciated only in retrospect. The deep, unwavering Christian commitment of my father, as pastor, farmer, and carpenter, along with his zeal for the lost and his heart for mission and the poor around us, could not but affect my own worldview. This, along with a diminutive praying mother, at whose knees we would line up to say our little German prayer before trundling up to bed, made for us as secure a childhood as anyone could ask for. Mother, at barely over five feet tall, was the epitome of Proverbs 31. It seems that Mother, along with Dad, literally prayed us all into the kingdom, followed by prayers that sustained us as our paths diverged around the world. Most of my siblings have spent some time in mission or mission-related work—a total of some seventy-five years.

I made my decision to follow Jesus at the age of ten in one of the yearly two-week revival meetings in our humble little country church. Although I wavered and struggled with doubts for some time, the assurance of John 3:36 finally settled the matter: “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” My childhood was further blessed by the missionaries and evangelists who customarily stayed in our home while ministering in our church. The annual summer vacation Bible school offered further exposure to a world in need. In the process I also became a keen student of geography, which remains one of my hobbies.

My early schooling in a rough-and-tumble setting in northeast Oklahoma was not the most conducive to my newfound faith. We lived and went to school some distance from the main church community, and there were only one or two Christians in each grade. In the midst of World War II this ultrapatriotic community frowned upon the stance my parents took as conscientious objectors, for they refused to buy war bonds and stamps. When my older brother became one of the first conscientious objectors to be drafted, we felt the “heat” in school, and more than once, being older than my classmates attended my Mennonite Brethren church! It was probably one of the most “Christian” public schools around at the time. Here I became involved in Hi-Y (a high school YMCA) and a young men’s group in church called Kingdom Builders, with good, solid leadership and support as well as a missions emphasis.

College and Medical School

In 1947 I entered Tabor College, a Mennonite Brethren institution in Hillsboro. The college atmosphere was good for me, with a strong emphasis on Bible courses, Bible conferences, and a faculty dedicated to Christian values, including even the science department. My brother Jake had finished a seminary degree and was in medical school, with the goal of going to India as a medical missionary. Even in his college days I was impressed by the India atmosphere he maintained in his room at home through posters and various mementos. It was one more link in the chain that eventually led me to the same profession.

But my own commitment to medicine and medical missions was still not fixed, and with only a B+ average in college, I began wavering. So I took off a year after college and worked as a carpenter with my two oldest brothers. What missionary has not been involved in some building along the way? Of course, the farm had also provided a wide variety of experience, much of which again entered the store of my preparation. As I was casting about, I found myself in an administrative position for a few months with the Mennonite Central Committee in California—another valuable link in the chain. And just to “cover the bases,” I put in a late application for medical school. To my shock I was accepted at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, even without a proper interview and without having taken the fearsome Medical College Admissions Test. (I found out later that only 1 percent of premeds in the nation are accepted without the MCAT—which I did have to take later, though mainly as a formality.) Surely the Lord had something special in store for my timid faith.

The rigors of medical school were real, but again I was blessed with a class that had a number of Christians. It was special to get involved in the University of Kansas chapter of the Christian Medical Society, one of the most active in the nation at that time. I also found time for belonging to the “Four Quacks”—a barbershop quartet consisting of four Christians from my class. We were not the greatest, but we had a lot of fun, even being asked to sing in churches and other meetings from time to time.

This memory brings up my interest in music—strictly amateur, but very much a part of my life. With a bit of training in voice and conducting, I have had many occasions over the years to sing in all sorts of groups, as well as to conduct choirs. As Ruth, my wife, and I have done for years, we rarely miss a day taking turns playing and singing at the piano just before bedtime.

Although Ruth, a daughter of missionaries, and I had known each other since college, we were little more than acquaintances. But as I returned home from med school to see my mother, it became increasingly clear that there was another special reason for my three-hour trips from Kansas City to Hillsboro! I was concerned that my choice of a companion must have the same missionary aspirations as I had. Well, no problem here—if anything, Ruth was more ready than I. To my proposal of marriage, she gave me a memorable answer from her namesake in the

Herb Friesen, who died in September 2005, was an ophthalmologist. He served with the Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services International in Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. He was author of A Quiver Full of Arrows: The Story of a Country Preacher’s Family (Hillsboro, Kans., 1970); and A Reluctant Surgeon: Reflections of a Farm Boy Turned Ophthalmologist (Islamabad, 1995), as well as articles in medical journals.
Bible: “Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge” (Ruth 1:16). She now often adds, ‘I’ve been ‘whither-ing’ ever since!’ So it was that we were married just before my final year. I benefited also from her income as an elementary schoolteacher near Kansas City. Along with some help from a family member, we came out of medical school with a debt of only $1,600. This was clearly the Lord’s provision, especially in light of the astronomical debts incurred nowadays.

Clinic in Indonesia

Following graduation we went first to India, where we observed my brother Jake at work and visited Ruth’s parents, and then to Nepal, where I could get my feet wet medically. My first real assignment was with the Mennonite Central Committee at a little hospital and clinic in Java, Indonesia.

Without any training in tropical medicine, I had a rude awakening indeed. And there was the matter of human relationships, as every missionary experiences. We were in an isolated situation, with only three other foreigners: a French woman doctor and two nurses. The doctor was well-trained in tropical medicine. To my shame, however, I came to resent her encroachment on my turf as she often changed my orders—in the process, no doubt saving me from some costly mistakes. Only belatedly did we reconcile, as I realized my pride had prevented me from learning from her. We still keep in touch.

My own spiritual maturity seemed late in coming, although I faithfully “did church” and such. With masses of patients and the other doctor on a year’s furlough, I was really put to the test. As the tropics sapped my energy, I fell victim to self-pity as I zigzagged my way through the throng of patients waiting each day on the clinic lawn. I began to groan inwardly, “You people, you are killing me! Why don’t some of you go home?” Hardly was I the benevolent, compassionate missionary doctor I so often read about.

The day finally came, in March 1973, for the opening of one of the finest eye hospitals in that part of the world. In spite of increasing suspicion about what we foreigners were up to, we launched into an ambitious program of medicine, surgery, and teaching, with graduate Afghan doctors appointed by the Ministry of Public Health. Doctors were initially not too interested in specializing in ophthalmology, but as the program developed, they began to take note, and soon we were attracting some of the finest young men and women in the country. In the meantime we were also conducting mobile eye camps in different parts of Afghanistan in order to reach the large segment of the population that could never travel to Kabul.

There followed what was surely the most exhausting and stretching period of my life, with many days of working ten to sixteen hours, along with many middle-of-the-night sessions at the hospital preparing lectures and correspondence. In many ways it was fun being a pioneer, but I have often wondered in retrospect how I might have done it differently. It was a very visible position, with the eye project having attracted a lot of attention around the country. There were thirty-nine embassies in Kabul and countless government and military VIPs, and we were often invited to embassy and other high-level national functions. At times it became a delicate challenge to see how we could decline some of the invitations without offending anyone. And how were we to handle the VIPs at the hospital with our good American wait-your-turn policy? For example, one day I was in surgery when the hospital president sent a message that the vice president of the country was there to see me. I replied that some of the senior residents were in the clinic and could take care of him. The reply came: “See him now or I’ll have you out of the country in twenty-four hours!” I saw him!
To alleviate such conflicts we organized a private clinic, just like home, with some of my old office equipment, a telephone for appointments, and a receptionist—and charged a considerably higher fee than the hospital could charge. It was a great success and generated extra income for the hospital. I would spend one afternoon a week in this clinic, and later we arranged for two of our senior doctors to take a couple of other afternoons per week, allowing them to keep 80 percent of the profits.

Even though underground forces were at work and the Russians were moving in stealthily, we were able to continue, even past the coup in July 1973, when King Zahir Shah was overthrown by his own brother-in-law, Mohammad Daud. In fact, I was partly responsible for sending the king out of the country, which happened because of an eye injury he received when playing volleyball. Feeling that the injury was more complicated than we could handle, we advised him to go to England for treatment. He left, which may have saved his life. He never returned, as Daud usurped the throne and turned it into a presidency.

In late 1978 President Daud himself came in for an eye exam. At the end of the exam, as it was near Christmastime, I presented him with a New Testament, fully aware of the possible consequences. A few months later, when I applied for a visa renewal, my action came to light. The visa was denied, and we were forced to leave the country.

Other Places of Service

During the next couple of years we spent time in the United States and in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Then we returned to Peshawar, Pakistan, to set up a small eye hospital for Afghan refugees, now pouring over the border after the Russian invasion in December 1979. This was another major undertaking, though not on the scale of the Noor Eye Institute, but again with a training program. During the height of the fighting in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we were seeing as many as 30,000 patients per year. An informal survey at this time revealed that, along with handling the eye injuries at the International Red Cross trauma hospital, we were seeing more war-blinded victims than any other hospital in the world, with most of the injuries coming from land mines.

After twelve years we closed the hospital, partly because many refugees were returning to Afghanistan, but mainly because of an opportunity to set up an ophthalmic center in Mazar, northern Afghanistan. (Back in the 1970s our long-range plans had included setting up regional eye centers around the country.) In time this has turned out to be one of our finest centers, complete with a training program. From time to time we took a short break to help with setting up the Gilgit Eye Hospital in northern Pakistan, a huge, underserved area. The hospital was inaugurated in 1995.

Ruth and I retired in 1996 from Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services International. Since then we have returned yearly (except 2001) to revisit the different eye hospitals, to lecture, and to work alongside the residents, as well as meeting with believers. Ruth has also tried to follow up on some of the hundreds of Afghan widows and families who came to our door in Pakistan. With Samuel we can truly say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12).

The Legacy of Pierre Claverie

Jean-Jacques Pérennès, O.P.

Pierre Claverie (1938–96), bishop of Oran (1981–96), Algeria, was one of nineteen Catholic religious figures killed in Algeria during the period of violence in that country in the 1990s. At his funeral many Algerian Muslim friends lamented the loss of “their bishop,” not because he had tried to convert them to Christianity, but because he had been able to create strong ties between two communities, Christian and Muslim, that history had profoundly divided. Born in colonial Algeria, Claverie tried throughout his life to be a bridge between these two communities, to be a man of both shores of the Mediterranean, not merely because this happened to be the circumstance of his own life, but because he was convinced that the place of the church is precisely on what he called “lines of fracture”: “The Church fulfills its calling and its mission when it is present at the breaking points that crucify humanity in its flesh and in its unity. In Algeria we are on one of the seismic faults which cut through the world: Islam-West, North-South, rich-poor, etc., and we are where we should be because it is only here that the light of the Resurrection can be perceived and, with it, hope for a renewal of our world.” A decade after his death, his message is one of striking relevance.

A Life Dedicated to Meeting the Other

Claverie was born in Algiers in 1938 when Algeria was French. His family were pieds-noirs (lit. “black feet”), Europeans in Algeria, living in what had been a French colony since 1830. At the time of his birth, his family had been there for four generations, which explains why he always thought of Algeria as “his” country. Like most people in his social sphere, however, he lived until the age of twenty without meaningful contact with the Arabic and Muslim world next to his own. Later in life he described this situation as follows: “I lived my childhood in Algiers in a working-class neighborhood of that cosmopolitan Mediterranean city. In contrast to other Europeans born in the countryside or in small towns, I never had Arabic friends—not at the local elementary school, where there were no Arabs, nor at my high school, where there were only a few, and where the Algerian war of independence was beginning to create an explosive environment. We were not racists, merely indifferent, ignoring the majority of the people in this country. They were a part of the landscape of our outings, the background of our meetings and our lives. They never were equal partners.”

Jean-Jacques Pérennès, O.P., is a French Dominican friar. After studies in philosophy, theology, and economics, he spent a significant part of his life in Arabic countries. He lived for ten years in Algeria with Bishop Claverie and is now Secretary General of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) in Cairo. He is currently coordinator of the Dominicans in the Arab countries, especially Iraq, which he visits regularly.
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Of the ten million inhabitants of Algeria at that time, Muslims represented 90 percent of the population. Pierre’s parents were honorable people, not colons (exploitative landowners), but they lived in what Pierre would later call “the colonial bubble.” Born in a Christian family, he acknowledged: “I must have heard many sermons about loving our neighbors because I was . . . a Christian and even a boy scout, but I never realized that the Arabs were also my neighbors. Although some people were able to do so, I did not leave that bubble to go to learn about that different world that was always beside me but that I didn’t understand. There had to be a war for the bubble to burst.”

His discovery of the other occurred as Pierre progressed on a rather painful spiritual journey that took him to the Dominican order. After beginning his religious life as a novice in Lille in 1958, he spent most of the next eight years at the monastery of Le Saulchoir near Paris, where his horizons expanded considerably. This center of learning was brimming over with remarkable figures and was visited by a succession of men who opened new perspectives to him. Very early, he wanted to go to Algeria, and so he started learning Arabic and acquired some basic knowledge of Islam. Pierre’s mother and sister left Algeria just before the country gained its independence in July 1962, but his father stayed until February 1963, when he reached retirement. Pierre himself returned to Algiers in 1962 and 1963 to complete his military service by working with army chaplains and running a Catholic club for enlisted men. This experience in an independent Algeria encouraged Pierre even more to return, which he did after his ordination as a priest in July 1967. His priority was to learn about the culture of this country, and three years of intensive studies gave him a good mastery of Arabic. A precious network of friends taught him the rest, those things that are beyond words and that are learned only by sharing with others one’s life, with its joys, its struggles, and its pains. Pierre later paid vibrant homage to his Algerian friends in the cathedral of Algiers on the day of his ordination as bishop in October 1981: “My Algerian brothers and friends, I owe to you also what I am today. You also have welcomed and supported me with your friendship. Thanks to you, I have discovered Algeria, where, even though it was my country, I lived as a stranger throughout my youth. With you, in learning Arabic, I learned above all to speak and understand the language of the heart, the language of brotherly friendship, where races and religions commune with each other. And again, I have the softness of heart to believe that this friendship will hold up against time, distance, and separation. For I believe that this friendship comes from God and leads to God.”

At this point, Claverie had permanently settled in “his” country, but the bedazzlement of his rediscovery was replaced by the difficult demands of dealing with real differences. Engaged in a process of decolonization, Algeria eagerly reclaimed its identity and its culture, with Islam as one of the essential constituents; Christians in Algeria are sometimes reminded of their status as “guests in the House of Islam.” When he became a bishop, Claverie applied for Algerian citizenship to emphasize the enduring ties that bound him henceforth to this country, but he never received it. “In the Muslim world it is not nationality that confers belonging, but religion,” he wrote at the time, adding with a little sadness: “It is true that the longer I live in Algeria, the more I realize, in spite of the strength and quality of my Algerian ties, that I remain a stranger here.” To serve as a bridge is never comfortable.

The Challenge of Otherness

Meeting the other is a challenge, especially if we are not satisfied with understanding the other simply in our own terms. When he arrived in Algeria in 1967, Claverie found a country very different from the one of his childhood: most of the foreigners were gone, and the country had thrown itself with enthusiasm into a campaign of economic and social development of a socialist nature under the direction of President Bounemediene. In 1973 Cardinal Duval, archbishop of Algiers, entrusted Claverie with the direction of Les Glycines, the academic and research center of the Diocese of Algiers, with an emphasis upon Islamic and Arabic studies. Here members of the religious community studied alongside young Christians who came in a spirit of cooperation to aid in the development of Algeria. They were preparing themselves for a mission that reached well outside the Christian community.

This was the period after Vatican II, which considerably reshaped the church’s approach to missionary work. The council’s Declaration on Religious Liberty, Dignitatis humanae, solemnly proclaims the obligation to respect the freedom of conscience of each individual. Nostra aetate, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, goes further by declaring that “the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men” (sec. 2). Although it adds that the church must proclaim Christ, “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), “in whom God reconciled all things to himself” and in whom “men find the fullness of their religious life,” the council nonetheless opened new perspectives for interreligious dialogue.

In 1964 the creation of the Secretariat for Non-Christians (whose name was changed in 1988 to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) led to the organization of large Islamic-Christian conferences in Córdoba in 1974, in Tripoli in 1976, and again in Córdoba in 1977. These conferences were interesting, but they soon revealed that even with the best of good will, these religions did not share a common language or the same understanding of terms as essential as “revelation” or “prophet.” As a result, at this time Claverie became convinced that this approach was not the best way to enhance the truthful nature of the dialogue. He never attended these large gatherings, preferring daily work side by side with Muslims. Six years after his ordination as bishop, he became in 1987 a member of the Secretariat for Non-Christians. This position gave him the chance to temper the enthusiasm of some of those specializing in “dialogue”: “In order to have a dialogue and not the superimposing of one monologue over another, in other words a ‘dialogue of the deaf,’ everything must begin on each side with a question. If we only have affirmations to share, then we can only move beyond an exchange of information to enter into an argument. . . . Rather than ramming
our truths down each other’s throats, isn’t it better to listen to each other and to listen together to the questions raised by the developments of our world?”

One of the original contributions of Claverie in this field is that he took the difference of others seriously. It is always tempting to reduce the other to a simpler dimension in order to meet him or her more easily, or to stick to a small common denominator that avoids the shock of differences. For Claverie, the dialogue must always “start with a face-to-face meeting,” which is sometimes a difficult experience: “It is not possible to cross out with a single pen stroke, or to drown in pious moral exhortations, historical conflicts or differences that separate us and sometimes oppose us to each other in what we hold as most essential, that is to say, our faith in God and our conception of Man.” We must respect others with all their differences, acknowledge them as free and responsible beings, and care about them, as Emmanuel Lévinas used to say. This desire for genuine encounters was the passion of Claverie’s life. He wrote in 1994, when the price to pay was beginning to become a heavy one: “At this moment, the key word of my faith is ‘dialogue,’ not because this is a strategic choice linked to my situation, but because I feel that dialogue constitutes the relation of God with people and of people with each other. . . . May the other, may all others, be the passion and the wound through which God will be able to break into our fortresses of self-satisfaction to give birth to a new and fraternal humanity.” This idea is developed more fully in a posthumous work by Claverie called Petit traité de la rencontre et du dialogue.

The Healing of Memory

If the meeting between Christians and Muslims is so difficult, it is because our memories have been wounded. They are overloaded by images, recollections, even phantasms from the past that come in the way of a calm and peaceful encounter. Speaking to a Muslim audience at the Grand Mosque of Paris in June 1988, Claverie declared at the very beginning: “In the totality of the relations and exchanges which have marked the meeting between Christians and Muslims, dialogue has not always been the rule, far from it. In fact, since the beginning, controversies and conflicts have dominated the relationship, even if friendly ties, commercial exchanges or theological debates showed a desire to communicate.” He continued, reminding his audience: “The collective unconscious has kept the scars that we have inflicted on each other, and it would be totally self-deceiving to believe that we could easily get rid of them by appealing to good feelings. At any moment, and especially during times of crisis, the warriors of Allah and the Saracens or the Moors invading Europe reappear in the collective mind and the discourse of the West, while the Muslim always recalls the Crusades and colonialism.”

Instead of giving in to a soft and easy form of ecumenism, Claverie preferred a speech rooted in truth. To speak truly, one must first make a painstaking and courageous analysis of the past, a loaded past when it deals with the relations between Islam and the West. In the Middle East the Crusades remain a major source of trauma kept alive by the colonial adventures of the nineteenth century; these two historical realities often bring the Muslim world to identify Christianity with domination. Contemporary forms of Western imperialism have reactivated this identification, as was obvious during the Gulf War, when the evocation of the Crusades and the Saracens reappeared in the collective realms of fancy. It is especially easy to make this kind of connection because it is so often constructed from clichés and prejudices that are difficult to remove from the collective unconscious, which is irrational by definition.

Thus in the eyes of Claverie there is no possible meeting with the other without a clear-eyed look into the past and without the healing of memory. At times he would speak of “the abyss that separates us,” even though his basic disposition pushed him to stress the common bonds that pull us closer to each other. In his eyes, one of the ways to heal memory was to live and work together by creating occasions and the space necessary to meet and collaborate. This is what the church in Algeria has done since Algeria gained its independence. The church defines itself as a “church that brings people together.” Because there are only several thousand Christians, mostly foreigners, in Algeria, the church primarily understands the significance of its presence there in terms of its relationship with Muslims. After the shock of independence it was Cardinal Duval who helped the church to redefine the meaning of its mission in a Muslim Algeria. He liked to say that in this meeting the Christian tries not so much to convert Muslims as to bear voluntary witness to a brotherly love. Living and working together with Muslims led the church of Algeria to commit itself to a variety of activities such as education of women, receiving and helping the handicapped, and giving academic help to disadvantaged children. Claverie was thrilled every time he could open one of these “platforms for social interaction and service,” as he used to call them, in his diocese. Even during the upheaval of the 1990s, he renovated old buildings of the church to establish such platforms in Tlemcen, Sidi bel Abbès, Mascara, and other towns in the region of Oran, his diocese, where today the small Christian community is immersed in the Muslim world, offering a free and voluntary demonstration of love and service.

But he also knew that healing the wounded memory required a price, and he would stress it with more and more intensity as violence spread in Algerian society. “Living in the Muslim world, I know the weight of this temptation to withdraw into oneself, the difficulty of mutual understanding and of respecting each other. And I can measure perfectly the abyss that separates us. . . . We would not be able to bridge this gap by ourselves. But God, in Jesus, gives us the means to measure the length, the breadth, the depth, and the extent of His Love. Supported by this revelation, we can regain confidence. . . . To give one’s life for this reconciliation as Jesus gave his life to knock down the wall of hatred that separated Jews, Greeks, pagans, slaves, and free men, isn’t that a good way to honor his sacrifice?”

At the height of the Islamist violence in 1995, Claverie reread Bonhoeffer, whose texts took on a new meaning for him. He explains this insight in a text from October 1995:

They were preparing themselves for a mission that reached well outside the Christian community.

In the struggle that the Gospel is waging today to bring the kingdom of God, he [Bonhoeffer] assumes an exceptional position, and his message reaches me today like a call of solidarity in our turbulent times. We are not the first to face violence and death with our bare hands and only the force of our convictions. We are not the only
ones either. At the moments when we could be tempted to give up, to run away, or to retreat within our fears, how can we not hear the voices of those who held up against death their own lives and offered to bear witness to their faith in the omnipotence of love, of life? . . . Here and today, in Algeria now, we have no other place to accomplish what God expects of us, who are believers, and what we believe to be our highest truth: to live, by the Spirit of Jesus, in a filial relation with God the Father, and a relation open to universal brotherhood. . . . Then begins the one-on-one battle with reality, in all its resistance, its opacity, its rough edges, and, finally, death. Our faith does not pull us away from all this. On the contrary, it immerses us into it, with Jesus. Our life takes its meaning and its fruitfulness following Jesus on the roads of the world: “The proper place for the life of Christians is not the solitude of the cloister, but the very camp of the enemy,” wrote Bonhoeffer. If the cloister exists, it is not for its solitude but for a deeper relationship with Jesus and—through him, with him, and in him—with God the Father and with the world. 11

Claverie ends with words of Bonhoeffer that heralded his own destiny: “In fact, our battle involves a grace for which we must pay. Grace acquired cheaply is grace without the cross. Grace for which we must pay is the Gospel, which one must always look for anew. This grace is costly because it can be acquired only at the price of one’s own life.” 12 From then on, he stressed more and more often the importance for a Christian to be on the “lines of fracture” that cut through the world. In his eyes it is the place where the paschal experience of the victory of life over death can be lived.

A Renewed Look at the Mission

Pierre Claverie left us some innovative thoughts on the mission. As a bishop, he was called upon to give his reactions to the text that the Vatican published in 1984 under the title Dialogue and Proclamation. The drafting was difficult because it brought together two rather different sensibilities: on the one hand, that of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, whose mission is to be open to the contributions of other religions, and, on the other hand, that of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (formerly the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith), with a more traditional vision of the mission, which aims at formal conversion to Christ. As soon as he started in his position as bishop of Oran, Claverie made the originality of his approach felt:

Yes, our church is sent on a mission. I am not afraid of saying it and of expressing my joy upon entering this mission with you. Many misunderstandings inherited from the past hang over the mission and missionaries. Let us say clearly today: we are not and we do not want to be aggressors. . . . We are not and do not want to be the soldiers of a new crusade against Islam, against the absence of faith, or against anyone. . . . We do not want to be the agents of an economic or cultural neocolonialism that divides the Algerian people to better control them. . . . We are not and do not want to be evangelical proselytizers who think they honor God’s love by a tactless zeal and a total lack of respect for the other, for his culture, for his faith. . . . But we are and we want to be missionaries of the

Noteworthy

Announcing

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (www.lausanne.org) will hold its Third International Congress on World Evangelization October 16–25, 2010, in Cape Town, South Africa. Lausanne III will gather mission and church leaders from around the world to address challenges and opportunities of world evangelization, according to Douglas Birdsall, executive chairman. Lindsay Brown, the newly appointed LCWE international director, points to the dramatic shifts that have taken place in Christianity over the course of the last century, shifts that are reflected in Lausanne III leadership: Anglican archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda will chair the Africa Host Committee, IBMR contributing editor Samuel Escobar of Peru will chair the Advisory Council, Methodist bishop Hwa Yung of Malaysia will chair the Participant Selection Committee, and Bible Society of Egypt director Ramez Atallah will chair the Program Committee.

Daryl Balia, scholar in residence at Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies, Birmingham, U.K., has been appointed international director of Edinburgh 2010, the global initiative established to advance study and reflection leading up to the centenary celebration of the historic World Missionary Conference of 1910. The twenty-member Edinburgh 2010 General Council will convene in September 2007, after which a series of study consultations will be held around the world. The study themes will include mission and power, postmodernities, theological education, unity, ecclesiology, spirituality, discipleship, and Christian faith and other faiths. For details, visit www.edinburgh2010.org.

The Indian Institute of Missiology–Research Centre, Bangalore, now offers the Ph.D. in missiology so as to develop faculty members for mission training institutes, theological colleges, and biblical seminars across India. Siga Arles, director since May 1, 2007, was dean of the Consortium for Indian Missiological Education, Bangalore, and formerly vice principal and professor of missiology at Serampore College. The doctoral program was developed in partnership with the India Missions Association (www.imaindia.org).


The Christian Research Association, Nunawading, Victoria, Australia (www.cra.org.au), will host the Fifth International Lausanne Researchers Conference, April 8–12, 2008, at the Geelong Conference Centre outside Melbourne. Mission researchers, scholars, and denominational research staff are invited to network with others with similar interests and to become founding members of the Lausanne Researchers Network. To submit a paper, e-mail a brief synopsis before December 31, 2007, to Peter Brierley (admin@christian-research.org.uk) or Phillip Hughes (admin@cra.org.au).

“Nordic Mission Studies” is the special focus of Swedish Missiological Themes / Svensk Missionstidskrift 94, no. 4 (2006). The issue offers essays introducing the history and current state of mission studies in Danish, Norwegian,
love of God as we have discovered it in Jesus Christ. This love, infinitely respectful of humans, does not impose itself, does not impose anything, does not coerce consciences and hearts. With a light touch, and by its presence alone, it frees what was chained, reconciles what was torn asunder, lifts up what was downtrodden. . . . This love, we came to know it and believed in it. . . . It grabbed us and transported us. We believe that it can renew the life of humanity if we can recognize and accept it.

This conception leads to a certain style of Christian presence, namely, poor and brotherly:

How can we listen if we are full of ourselves, of our material or intellectual riches? . . . Our good fortune in Algeria is to be stripped for the most part—but are we ever stripped enough?—of our riches, our pretensions, and our self-satisfaction to be able to hear, to welcome, to share the little that we have. We should not always be worried about defending ourselves. What do we have to defend? Our fortunes? Our buildings? Our influence? Our reputation? Our social space? All of this would certainly be ridiculous in the light of the Gospel of the Beatitudes. . . . Let us thank God when he returns his church to a simple humanity. . . . Let us rejoice in everything that makes us friendly and available, more concerned about giving than defending ourselves. . . . Rather than protecting ourselves, we should defend what we deem essential to life, to growth, to dignity, and to the future of humanity. The love of God pushes us to do it.19

This great concern to show respect for the other’s religious journey did not prevent him, in the end, from being attentive to the rare individuals who turned toward Christianity when Algeria was caught up in its spiral of violence.

One of Claverie’s last texts, an essay entitled “Humanité plurielle,” may be the most powerful in terms of the theology of the mission. It invites us to open ourselves to the truth of others, but without falling into syncretism or relativism. Commenting on the crisis facing the Algerian society at that time, he wrote:

In this experience shaped by closure [of the colonial period], then by the current crisis and the emergence of the individual [who must decide how to deal with it], I have acquired the personal conviction that humanity exists only if it is composed of diverse elements and that, as soon as we claim—and in the Catholic Church we have had this sad experience during our history—to possess the truth or to speak in the name of humanity, we fall into totalitarianism and exclusion. No single person possesses the truth. Everyone is looking for it. There are certainly objective truths, but they are beyond all of us, and one can reach them only through a long journey and by slowly recomposing that truth by collecting from other cultures, from other types of humanity, what others have also gained, have searched for in their own journey toward truth. I am a believer. I believe in one God, but I don’t claim to possess that God, either through Jesus who reveals him to me, or through the tenets of my faith. One does not possess God. One does not possess the truth, and I need the truth of others. This is the experience that I am having now with thousands of Algerians in the sharing of an existence and the questions that we all ask ourselves. . . . If only, in the Algerian crisis, after this passage

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Campus Crusade for Christ International, DAWN Ministries, Habitats Project, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, the JESUS Film Project, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Youth With A Mission are partnering to develop the World Missions Atlas Project (www.worldmap.org), a Web resource that promises to “create maps of languages and people groups for each country of the world while linking appropriate missions related data.” The status of each language and people group will be evaluated with regards to the “Jesus” film and Bible translation, as well as their current level of exposure to the Gospel. Free downloads include “Global Status of Evangelical Christianity” maps. Web-site reviews, comments, suggestions, or updates may be sent to Art Savage, associate director of the World Missions Center, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, at asavage@swbts.edu.

Personalia

Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, has been named as a contributing editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. He is the author most recently of The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South (Oxford, 2006) and God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis (Oxford, 2007).

Greater Europe Mission, Monument, Colorado, appointed Henry L. Deneen as its second president, effective September 1, 2007. A resident of Columbia, South Carolina, Deneen was chief legal counsel and personal and spiritual adviser to then-governor of South Carolina David Beasley (1994–97). After seminary Deneen, his wife, Celia, and their four children moved to France, where he collaborated with organizations to develop mission initiatives and partnerships in and around North Africa. In 2004 they returned to South Carolina, and a year later he and Beasley started the Center for Global Strategies. Deneen will succeed Ted Noble, GEM president since 1992. See www.gemission.org.

Died. Johannes Aagaard, 78, professor at the Institute of Missiology and Ecumenical Theology, Faculty of Theology, Aarhus University, Denmark, March 23, 2007. A missiologist who specialized in new religious movements and a former president of the International Association for Mission Studies (1978), Aagaard was founder of the Dialog Center International (www.dci.dk/en/), a Christian research organization that collects and disseminates information on new religious movements. Aagaard developed the discipline of theology of mission in a Danish context. He laid the foundation for this undertaking by his thorough historical studies of Gustav Warneck and Warneck’s influence on German missiology. The result was his two-volume habilitation Mission—Konfession—Kirche. Die Problematik ihrer Integration im 19. Jahrhundert in Deutschland (Gleerups, 1967).
through violence and the deep fractures of society, and also of religion and of personal identity, one could eventually imagine that the other has the right to exist, that he carries a truth, and that he is worthy of respect, then the dangers to which we are exposed will not have been run in vain.\textsuperscript{14} 

Conclusion

Pierre Claverie was assassinated on August 1, 1996, killed at the same time as a young Algerian, Mohamed, who was helping him during the summer. This death, with their blood mixed at the door of his chapel, is like the seal on a life totally given to building bridges between the two shores of the Mediterranean, and also between the West and the Muslim world. The luminous testimony of his life and the force of his words make him an inspiring witness for our time. In 2002 his portrait was solemnly carried in a procession during the annual homage rendered in Rome to the memory of Oscar Romero, the Salvadoran archbishop gunned down in 1980.

Notes

2. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 32.
4. Ibid., p. 108.
12. Ibid., p. 212.

Selected Bibliography

Works by Pierre Claverie


Works About Pierre Claverie


The Legacy of Olav Guttorm Myklebust

Aasulv Lande

The missionary career of Olav Guttorm Myklebust (1905–2001) began in South Africa. There he spent eight years together with his wife, most of the time as principal of the Umpumulo teacher training seminary. He then was called home to Norway for academic studies, where he devoted the rest of his life to developing and promoting mission in both the academy and the church. During his professional life Myklebust introduced two generations of Norwegian theological students to missiology and ecumenics. He founded and facilitated interchurch establishment for mission studies, both in Norway and internationally. Myklebust familiarized his audiences with the term “global,” which he interpreted in the light of Christ’s Great Commission.

His final academic contribution was in musicology, revealing a new dimension of his global, Christ-centered vision.

Biographical Outline

Olav Guttorm Myklebust was born in Bergen, Norway, on July 24, 1905. His parents—business manager Ole Peter Myklebust and Elisa Karoline née Hole—were mission supporters. In their local congregation of Nykirken, overseas mission enjoyed a high priority. Already during his high school days Olav Guttorm joined a youth group for mission linked to the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS). Inspired by Peter Hognestad, well-known bishop of Bergen, Olav Guttorm’s church brought together a focused spirituality with cultural and ecumenical openness.

In 1924 Myklebust enrolled in the Lutheran School of Theology (Det teologiske menighetsfakultetet) in Oslo.\textsuperscript{1} With his missionary interest, the seminary of NMS in Stavanger had also been an option. The choice of the school of theology indicates his attraction to its higher academic ambitions and to its overt

\textit{Aasulv Lande, born in Norway and one of Olav Guttorm Myklebust’s students, was a missionary in Japan from 1965 to 1980. He taught at Lund University in the Center for Theology and Religious Studies from 1994 to 2005 and now is Professor Emeritus of Missiology and Ecumenics. Among his publications is The Concept of God in Global Dialogue (coedited with Werner Jeanrond; Orbis Books, 2005).}
ecclesiastical focus. His interest in mission, however, did not subside. In 1926, together with his friend Emil Birkeli (who later became a renowned missionary leader, scholar, and bishop), he initiated the first NMS summer school for youth. After he completed his theological degree and his practical seminary work, he was ordained in 1930 as a minister of the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

On January 20, 1931, he married Gudrun Josefine Nilsen (1905–90) from his hometown of Bergen. Employed by the NMS, they left for South Africa, where Olav Guttorm studied education in Pieternaritzburg. Thereafter the couple began the prescribed study of a South African language, in their case the Zulu language. In 1933 they moved to the Umpumulo Lutheran Teacher Training Seminary, where Olav Guttorm served as principal from 1934 to 1939. A dormitory for girls, a hospital, and a chapel were built during this period. In 1935 Myklebust initiated the English-language magazine Inkanyezi (The Star) in Umpumulo. In its first issue he addressed themes he consistently returned to during his career as a missiologist: Christ-centeredness, concern for the whole human being, and human equality. “Uphumulo stands for Christ-centered education. We believe that without Christ, education falls short of its full end. Furthermore, without Christ, education will have the effect of giving the rising generation stones for bread. . . . Again, Umpumulo aims to prepare Bantu youth for complete living. We want to make accessible the heritage of culture to the indigenous races of South Africa by providing an education that is at once thorough and comprehensive. We stand for equal education facilities for all races, whether white or black. We are not to ignore the tradition and environment of the Bantu. . . . Umpumulo stands for creative cooperation between black and white. The color problem is the problem of South Africa.”

The Myklebusts’ African life came to an end in 1939, when Olav Guttorm accepted a scholarship from the Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo. His teaching focus was “church history, with particular reference to mission.” In Norway, as a member of the school faculty, he devoted himself to the time-consuming process of laying the groundwork for mission studies. He also sought to inspire students, scholars, and church people for the missionary cause. One of his early students, Niils Egede Bloch-Hoell (later a professor), attended Myklebust’s inaugural lecture on October 11, 1939. He remembered in particular the concluding words of the young missionary scholar: “It is my desire and my prayer that the office into which I now am about to enter will lead not only to scholarly interest in mission [misjonsvidenskap] but to enthusiasm for mission [misjonslidenskap].”

The invasion and occupation of Norway during World War II led to an academic standstill between 1940 and 1945. After liberation in 1945, academic work was resumed. In 1947 Myklebust founded Egede Institutet for misjonskunnskap og misjonsgraningsk (Egede Institute of Missionary Study and Research), which began publication of the missiological quarterly Norsk misjonsstidsskrift (changed later to Norsk tidsskrift for misjon (Norwegian missionary journal). Gaining academic acceptance, however, was a long, uphill struggle. Despite its roots in and relations to missionary movements, the Lutheran School of Theology was slow to appreciate the scholarly relevance of mission studies. Not until 1962, ten years after having completed an exceptionally solid doctoral dissertation, was Myklebust promoted to professor. He retired in 1973 but then continued active scholarly work for more than two decades. In 1990 his beloved wife and partner, Gudrun, passed away. Professor Myklebust could look back on a long, happy, and eventful married life. One of the last times I saw him, he said to me, “We both agreed that our best years were in South Africa!” He died peacefully in Oslo on November 29, 2001.

Christ-Centered and Relational Theology

Myklebust’s 1976 textbook for theological students, Misjonskunnskap. En inntog (Missiology. An introduction), criticizes pluralist-oriented historians and theologians of religion, including Helmut von Glaserapp, Arnold Toynbee, C. G. Jung, Karl Jaspers, and W. Cantwell Smith. Myklebust warns against relativistic views of truth and argues for a courageous tolerance that implies understanding and respect for the views of others. He criticizes the idea of continuity between religions, as argued by W. E. Hocking in the 1930s and by later Roman Catholic theologians such as Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, and Raymond Panikkar. He was unable to follow Paul Tillich and Kaj Baage, a Danish missiologist in India, in their anthropological interpretations of Christian faith. Agreeing with statements from the Indian National Council of Churches in 1966 and the All Africa Conference of Churches in 1969, Myklebust argued for “a call to conversion” and against a theology of continuity between religions. He frequently expressed concern for the whole human being, identifying himself with the ecumenical Christian struggle against racism, for he valued the contributions of leaders like J. H. Oldham and initiatives by the World Council of Churches (WCC) such as their Program to Combat Racism. Several of Myklebust’s articles commented on the apartheid system in South Africa, which he consistently and strongly opposed.

Myklebust’s evangelical commitment to racial justice was nurtured already during his formative years in South Africa. He recalled a conversation during the early years at Umpumulo with a black coworker, who said, “We black people are perfectly right in demanding political, social, and economic justice. Basically, however, we demand only one single right: respect for our equality as human beings.” He concluded his article “The Church and Racial Segregation in South Africa” with the following five statements:

- South African whites cannot in the long run ignore the unanimous critique of apartheid by the whole world.
- Attempts at retaining a Western hegemony in South Africa today will by no means succeed.
- Church identification with unjust regimes in Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique have led to collapse; similar dynamics are at work in South Africa.
- Continued insistence on South African apartheid will more than any other factor lead to Communism in the country.
Myklebust proposed an ecumenical vision of the one church for the one world. Conservative Lutherans, however, were not convinced.

He had a global vision for his theology, which we could define as relational. He was fascinated with key terms such as “unity” and emphasized one God, one Gospel, one church, and one world. He communicated closely with ecumenical figures such as Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, Lesslie Newbigin, and Stephen Neill. To Myklebust, the Great Commission was no intolerant expression of Christian exclusivity; on the contrary, it opened the church to the world. He willingly accepted established theological statements but raised critical questions about their application and direction.

Myklebust’s theology of religions might appear conventional, and in a way it was. He considered himself a theologian loyal to the church, a faithful Lutheran. But that is not the whole picture, for he was not attracted by doctrinal theology that was concerned only with local issues and traditional formulations. Africa and the world remained central in his thinking after he returned to Norway. Myklebust constantly looked outside the church to the world. He willingly accepted established theological statements but raised critical questions about their application and direction.

Struggle for Mission in Church and Academy

With his broad understanding of theology, Myklebust had a difficult struggle at home. He left South Africa after a missionary experience of eight years, turning for the rest of his life to missionary research and teaching. The Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo became the home base for his academic vision, namely, Jesus’ Great Commission. His doctoral dissertation was an impressive attempt to relate his vision to the academy. He received his doctorate in 1952, and his dissertation was published in two volumes under the title The Study of Missions in Theological Education: An Historical Inquiry into the Place of World Evangelisation in Western Protestant Ministerial Training, with Particular Reference to Alexander Duff’s Chair of Evangelistic Theology (1955–57).

For Myklebust, mission primarily meant world evangelization, as it appears in the title of his dissertation. His doctoral study explored missionary research and education in Western academic institutions, as well as within mission movements themselves. He focused on three basic periods. The first was 1867–1910, with an emphasis on Alexander Duff in Edinburgh, who held the first chair in mission studies. In this period he also considered the role of Gustav Warneck, founder of the study of mission in Halle. The second period was 1910–45, which Myklebust called the years of expansion. The third period was 1945–50, or the period of his own basic research. The educational treatment of mission at academic institutions in the United States and Europe is presented against the background of social factors and in the context of ecclesiastical and theological developments. The work is still unsurpassed in providing insight into the difficult struggle to establish the science of mission in Western universities. It also documents the development of teaching and research in missionary institutions. Although the 1950s in many ways saw a breakthrough of mission studies as an academic subject, Myklebust describes the academic acceptance of this “odd” subject as indeed a slow and difficult process.

Did the churches and missionary organizations embrace his educational program? We might expect so, for he was a gifted, conservative theologian with a burning commitment to the missionary command. The Egede Institute of Missionary Study and Research, founded 1947, became a dynamic center for ecclesiastically oriented academic mission studies in his country. Myklebust was furthermore instrumental in founding the Nordic Institute for Missiology and Ecumenism (NIME) in 1972, together with Swedish professor Bengt Sundkler from Uppsala, the latter’s successor Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, Johannes Aagaard from Århus, Henrik Smedjebacka from Åbo, and others. He also became a cofounder of the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS).

Myklebust devoted most of his energy to the Egede Institute, named after Hans Egede (1686–1758), pioneer Norwegian missionary to Greenland. He championed ecumenism. In articles, speeches, lectures, and seminars he defended membership of the Church of Norway in the World Council of Churches. He argued passionately on biblical, confessional, and missiological grounds for the legitimacy of the WCC. He saw its rationale in mission outreach, Trinitarian faith, and social justice. Disputes continued, however, with traditionalist Norwegian missionary leaders and doctrinally conservative colleagues at the Lutheran School of Theology. His book on the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran worldwide community offered a solid and well-documented defense of ecumenism from a classic, evangelical Lutheran point of view. Based on confessional documents and Lutheran theology, he argued against a narrow, exclusivist Lutheranism, proposing a humble Lutheran contribution toward an ecumenical vision of the one church for the one world. Conservative Lutherans, however, were not convinced.

Missionary organizations opposed his ideas of mission as church based. Conservative evangelical groups in Norway turned away from him, despite his clear support of the Great Commission. They feared the “theological confusion” of the
WCC, as well as church dominance over missionary activities. Myklebust was not considered heretical, but he was unpopular and marginalized in the Norwegian missionary establishment. His dispute with Norwegian mission societies led him to take on a particular apologetic task: reinterpreting Hans Paludan Smith Schreuder (1817–82), Norwegian pioneer missionary to the Zulus in South Africa.

Myklebust’s first serious analysis of Schreuder as a missionary to Africa was given in a lengthy presentation on South Africa in volume 3 of the history of the NMS.11 The subject recurs, however, in lectures, seminars, and articles. Seven years after retirement, in 1980, he completed a monograph on Schreuder based on his detailed research over many years. Although the study of Schreuder is the work of a professional historian advocating objectivity, it is conducted with deep personal theological commitment. Schreuder was a figure who brought the conflict between church and mission society into focus. The exceptionally gifted Schreuder did not enjoy a happy relationship with his employer, NMS. After an extended conflict with the board about administrative responsibilities, he broke with the society. Later biographers have seen him as a High Church aristocrat, having no understanding of the democratic breakthrough in nineteenth-century Norwegian missionary movements. Myklebust draws on broad empirical material to support an alternative view. Analyzing biographies and biographers historiographically and utilizing historical material from Africa as well as drawing on Schreuder’s correspondence, he concludes that previous biographers tended to interpret Schreuder from attitudes, events, and evaluations of a later date. Based on new and wider documentation and interpreted in the light of Schreuder’s own time, Myklebust portrays him differently, finding that Schreuder had a genuine commitment to the church, that he viewed mission as the church’s apostolic foundation and character.

Presentations by Myklebust in the journal Norsk tidsskrift for misjon and elsewhere opened a fresh awareness of contemporary Christianity coming into being. In Myklebust’s “new missiology,” mission and church merged in a unified vision. It was Myklebust’s deep concern to underline and demonstrate from ecclesiastical documents and contemporary ecumenical developments that mission was an organic part of church identity, and vice versa. Referring to statements by the Lutheran World Congress in Minneapolis 1957, he stated: “The life of the church is mission. The church cannot exist without mission, and mission cannot exist without the church. . . . The wonderful commission given by the Lord to preach the gospel is not a concern of an isolated group of people . . . but of the whole church and is valid until he returns.” Myklebust, however, saw this commission as a responsibility not solely of Western Christendom but of the church universal.12 Here lay the real heart of Myklebust’s professional interest. He worked to introduce this new theology and to enhance the understanding of a new era of mission in which the Third World churches would take an active part. Norsk tidsskrift for misjon published information from the young churches, their thinkers, and their leaders—topics that dominated all twenty-eight volumes from 1947 until 1974. The glowing concern for new thought along these lines and for contributions from the young churches colored his lectures. Year “zero” of his personal vision dawned in 1961, when the International Missionary Council merged with the WCC. He envisaged this merger being translated into ecclesiastical reality worldwide—in particular, into his own Norwegian home church. Norwegian mission societies, however, also feared the initiatives of Third World churches. The winds of mission societies blew markedly against him.

Myklebust’s Final Publication

A surprising addition to the scholarly output of Olav Guttorm Myklebust appeared toward the end of his life. In 1995, at the age of ninety, he published a monograph on the Austrian composer Anton Bruckner (1824–96). Myklebust subtitiled his work Geni og skjebne (Genius and fate), signaling his interpretative perspective on the artist. In his sophisticated interpretation of Bruckner’s works, Myklebust emphasizes emotional dimensions: “When the art of Bruckner overpowers so many of us, this is first of all due to its inner qualities. Bruckner is genuine, clear, uplifted, and clean. But he also expresses will, intensity, and conviction.” He refers to a feature particularly identified by Carlo Maria Giulini: tenderness—“calling on our smile and tears.”13 And he quotes from Bruckner’s pupil and close friend Franz Schalk: “The soul of Bruckner’s music is song.”14

There is no reason to believe that this last piece of research is a break with his earlier commitments. On the contrary, there is a similarity between Bruckner, Schreuder, and Myklebust, who shared a common struggle for acceptance and recognition. Bruckner himself had a hard struggle for acceptance. One might thus see the work of Myklebust on Bruckner as a kind of self-defense. Such an explanation might contain valuable insights, but it should be seen in a wider perspective. From his personal experience, as well as from his theology, Myklebust was well aware of Christian missionary existence as existence under the cross. His presentations of pioneers from mission history (especially Schreuder) described people struggling to overcome resistance and prejudices. His study of missions made him well aware of the difficult academic struggle of missiology. Bruckner could thus be seen as embodying the fighting spirit of the whole missionary struggle. The connection between the fates of Bruckner, Schreuder, and Myklebust in this respect and the links to the uphill fight for a full understanding of mission are obvious.

Another complementary reason should not be overlooked: Myklebust’s deep interest in culture and the arts, which had not been allowed to fully color his understanding of mission. His interpretation of the Great Commission was so far basically activist: “Go and do!” Could we not see in the book on Bruckner a cosmic component of mission, hitherto withheld? To Myklebust, mission was linked to emotions and encompassed a cosmic vision, even a cosmic Christ. Ideas of universality pervaded his thought.

To Myklebust, mission was linked to emotions and encompassed a cosmic vision, even a cosmic Christ. Ideas of universality pervaded his thought.
simply enhance the globality and universality of the divine message for the whole human being and for the whole world. Might the joyful dimension of the Great Commission possibly reach fulfillment by music?

The missionary legacy of Myklebust emerged from early experiences in South Africa. Returning to Europe with a somewhat redefined commission, he directed his missionary concern toward the academic and the ecclesiastical fields, which became a lifelong commitment. With his intellectual powers, cultural sensitivity, and Christian loyalty born in his Bergen environment and refined in South Africa, he envisaged new relationships between the sociohistorical realities of mission, church, and academy. Olav Guttorm Myklebust’s open-minded vision and concern for a new theology directed toward the world brought no immediate or complete success in his home context. He ushered in, however, a new paradigm of relational missionary thought. My qualified guess is that his burning commitment to the missionary task finally found its supreme expression in the language of music.

Notes
1. Det teologiske menighetsfakultetet was founded in 1908 as the result of theological conflict within the Church of Norway. It represented cooperation between pietistic and confessionally conservative movements that confronted the current, more liberal theology of the theological faculty at Oslo University.
2. The name of the place was alternatively spelled “Umphumolo.” Later the seminary added training programs for Lutheran ministers and became a Lutheran theological seminary.
4. Ibid., p. 9.
8. Ibid., p. 120.
14. Ibid.

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Works About Olav Guttorm Myklebust
David D. Grafton

Within the field of missiology, particularly regarding \textit{mission to the Muslim world, the names of Raymund Lull (1235–1315), Henry Martyn (1781–1812), Karl Pfaender (1803–65), Temple Gairdner (1873–1928), and Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952)} are well known. But another early missionary-scholar and pioneer is often overlooked, though his life and ministry greatly impacted the development of early twentieth-century Christian mission to Islam: \textit{Ion Keith-Falconer (1856–87).}

Keith-Falconer is certainly not Scotland’s most famous missionary (that distinction is held by David Livingstone) or Scotland’s most important developer of missionary policy (that would be Alexander Duff in India). In fact, Keith-Falconer’s name is hardly a household word even in contemporary Scottish missionary circles! His life and legacy, however, were greatly appreciated by the missionary community during the life and tenure of his Aden Mission (1886–1963) in Yemen, which affectionately called itself the “Keith-Falconer Mission.” The missionaries who took over the torch of Keith-Falconer’s vision in Yemen idealized their founding father, seeing in him all that was good and noble in Christian service. Keith-Falconer’s life stands out as one of the great stories in mission history, as a life that was tragically ended before he could fulfill his prodigious potential. His was a “career of exceptional promise” closed early.

I will review here the life and legacy of Keith-Falconer, including his mission to Islam. I hope to raise some important issues regarding methods of Christian witness among Muslim communities. Was Keith-Falconer’s mission fruitful, or was it merely a noble but foolish nineteenth-century adventure in which the missiological terms “occupy” and “crusade” were still considered benevolent? Can his vision provide a valid method for ministry today in Muslim societies, in a world that has dramatically changed, not only since the days of the waning Ottoman Empire, but also after the events of September 11, 2001?

I would argue that Keith-Falconer’s work, although it never accomplished its main goal of establishing an Arabian church for Muslim converts, can be a very important model for thinking through contemporary ministry among Muslim communities. Keith-Falconer’s work prompted the further development of a method of mission work that has proven to be one of the most effective and faithful methods of witness to the Gospel and that, in the words of his first biographer, “will in due course produce wide-reaching results . . . much which does not shew [sic] on the surface.” Keith-Falconer’s experience demonstrates that even if Christian service among Muslims does not result in an active Christian community, it still may provide a crucially important witness to Christ in a contemporary Muslim world where the Gospel is associated with Western cultural or imperial domination.

Early Years of Preparation

Keith-Falconer came from a noble family whose ancestors had helped to defend Scotland against invading Vikings. “He had in his veins the blood of heroic men.” In addition to such heroism, his family was landed, and thus wealthy. Financial support was

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\textit{David D. Grafton is an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastor. He currently serves as the Coordinator of Graduate Studies at the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt.}

\begin{quote}
In order to become more accomplished in Arabic, Keith-Falconer traveled to Egypt to immerse himself in a completely Arabic context.
\end{quote}

never an obstacle for Keith-Falconer in the pursuit of his dream to embark on a mission to Arabia. The Church of Scotland in this period was facing financial difficulties; Keith-Falconer thus committed to underwrite the whole mission project and eventually to turn all of the assets over to the church.

Keith-Falconer was a striking man with great physical prowess. He stood six feet three inches (1.9 meters) tall and was an accomplished athlete. During his college years he was a champion cyclist, winning many competitions and holding several cycling records. By some estimations he was the best cyclist in Britain!

In addition to his athletic ability, Keith-Falconer was gifted with a great intellect. He had a passion for learning, primarily

\begin{itemize}
\item During his studies at Cambridge he won prizes for his examinations in Greek and Hebrew. In order to undertake research he taught himself Danish, German, Italian, and Syriac.
\item Keith-Falconer’s academic abilities were recognized by the academic community at Cambridge. He was appointed Hebrew lecturer at Clare College and examiner for the Semitic language exam. In the summer of 1886, in between his first and second visits to Aden, he was appointed professor of Arabic at Cambridge. One of Keith-Falconer’s most important academic achievements was his translation in 1882 of the Syriac Kalilah and Daminah: \textit{The Fables of Bidpai} (subsequently published in 1885). The orientalist scholar Theodor Noldeke commented at the event of its publication: “We will look forward with hope to meet the young Orientalist who has so early stepped forward as a Master.” Unfortunately, the academic world would be disappointed.
\item In order to become more accomplished in Arabic, Keith-Falconer decided to travel to Egypt to immerse himself in a completely Arabic context. He traveled there in November 1881, lodging in a hotel in the Muski (the center of nineteenth-century Cairo). He then proceeded to visit the offices of the American Mission of the Presbyterian Church, where he met Dr. Andrew Watson, who agreed to help make arrangements for him to travel up to Assuit to study Arabic under the supervision of the long-term Scottish-American Presbyterian missionary, John Hogg. On November 20 he arrived in Assuit after a long and difficult train ride, which he described as follows in his journal: “The dust—I shall never forget it. I tried to read . . . but in a short time the book and I got so filthy with the dust that I became irritable and uncomfortable and could not read. After lunching on a dusty chicken, a dusty bit of cheese, dusty apples, dusty ham, dusty bread and some wine, I laid myself on the dusty seats and had a sleep for a couple of hours, and shortly arrived.” At the train station Keith-Falconer was met by one of the theology students, who took him to the home of John Hogg, Hogg.
the hospitable missionary that he was, certainly saw something of promise in his fellow Scotsman who had such an intense love for and mastery of the Arabic language. With Hogg’s help Keith-Falconer set up house in the newly opened Assuit hotel and lodged there while employing a tutor to help him develop his colloquial Arabic.

Unfortunately, Keith-Falconer did not have a good experience in Assuit, nor did he find it to be a hospitable place. He wrote with little-disguised impatience:

Flies are a plague. One sees people lying asleep on the road-side, covered with flies, mouth, nostrils, ears, eyes, swarming with them—a disgusting sight.\textsuperscript{13}

It is a vile place for catching cold. Buildings seem to be constructed with a view to as many draughts as possible.\textsuperscript{14}

The town is truly and unspeakably disgusting. The streets are all filthy alleys, very crooked and winding, and not lighted at night. . . . I shall be very glad to get back to civilisation. I cannot call this a civilised place.\textsuperscript{15}

In February 1882, after only three months in Egypt, Keith-Falconer fell ill and returned to England.

A Nineteenth-Century Evangelical

Like Henry Martyn, Keith-Falconer was a product of the Evangelical movement in England. Although he had close friendships with several missionaries and mission-minded organizations, most of his young religious life was spent promoting evangelistic meetings in the poor sections of Cambridge and the East End of London. Deeply pietistic and thoroughly evangelical, Keith-Falconer showed no signs, however, of being caught up in the debates between liberal thought, the development of modern biblical criticism, and biblical fundamentalism. For him, the issue of inerrancy versus inspiration of Scripture did not affect the call of Christ and his public witness. Writing from Germany, the heartland of nineteenth-century biblical studies, he stated: “Scholarship is a laborious and, to a great extent, mechanical way of getting at the original text. Scholarship assumes no doctrine, and denies none. . . . The more of a ‘scholar’ one becomes, the more one fathoms the depths of one’s ignorance, and estimates the measure of one’s dependence on God’s Spirit.” As a scholar of biblical languages, Keith-Falconer was fully versed in the contemporary arguments for and against inspiration and inerrancy. He wrote:

People forget that while the sacred writers were inspired penmen, yet they were penmen, and that each retained his individuality, yet without sin or error, and that consequently the style, diction, and habits of one writer differ from those of another. It is impertinent and impious to postulate that God must have laid aside the individuality and humanity—in itself first created and not sinful—of each writer, and used him as a passive, dead, inanimate, senseless, pen or instrument. . . . Inspiration lies apart from these considerations. All I know about inspiration is that it makes the writing free from all error and untruthfulness, and that every word is to be considered the word of God. Speaking very roughly, I refuse to believe that our English Bible, as we have it, preface to King James and all, fell down from Heaven.\textsuperscript{16}

During his time as a student at Cambridge, Keith-Falconer showed himself to be a first-rate textual scholar. He would often compare the variant readings of the English translations of the Bible (both King James and the Douay), as well as the Septuagint, the Masoretic Text, and the Peshitta. He did not find variant readings and translations very troubling, only a grand puzzle to be reassembled, allowing the Holy Spirit freedom to move hearts.

The Origin of a Missionary Vocation

In 1885 General F. T. Haig, an Evangelical Christian British officer and supporter of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), requested to the CMS that it begin work in the Arabian Peninsula. He felt strongly that the CMS work in Egypt should expand itself into jazirat al-’Arab, the Arabian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{17} Haig argued that Aden, on the southwest coast of the peninsula, was an important site for future mission work. It was a historic site situated along the trade routes that came from the east and went up the coast toward Mecca. A mission post there would thus give mission workers access to a wide variety of people from all over the region who themselves were traveling in the “heartland of Islam.” In addition, Haig argued that setting up a post in Aden would be relatively easy, as it had been under British occupation since 1839. Aden served as a coal-fueling port for the British navy. This fact would aid the setup, as ships could bring in supplies. It also meant that the missionaries could claim the protection of the British Crown, if necessary.

Keith-Falconer, who was fascinated by Semitic languages and by 1885 was well versed in Arabic, was thoroughly convinced by Haig’s arguments. In response to Haig’s plea for the church to stand up and respond to the challenge of Islam, Keith-Falconer’s “whole soul answered, ‘Here am I, send me.’”\textsuperscript{18} Having long had an evangelical mind-set toward the Gospel, he met with General Haig, and by the summer of 1885 he was making preparations to travel to Aden in order to test the waters as to the feasibility of locating a mission post there.

Aden (1885–86)

Iyon Keith-Falconer and his wife, Gwendolyn, arrived in Aden on October 28, 1885. They spent six weeks in a hotel before moving across the bay to a house that they rented. Their days were spent studying and interacting with people in the town. Every morning Keith-Falconer would give an Arabic lesson to his wife, who found the language extremely difficult. He once wrote: “Arabic grammars should be strongly bound, because learners are so often found to dash them frantically on the ground.”\textsuperscript{19} After the Arabic lesson he would spend the day reading Arabic texts until 4:00 P.M. He would then take tea and walk into the village to talk with the local people. On occasion he would sit in a garden in the village and read aloud portions of the Gospel of Luke. From this time onward he became known as the “sahib who spoke Arabic like a book.”\textsuperscript{20}

Unfortunately, Keith-Falconer did not have a good experience in Assuit, nor did he find it to be a hospitable place. He wrote of it with impatience.
In early March 1886 Keith-Falconer returned to England. During his four-month residence in Aden he had solidified his vision for a mission post and pledged to return in the fall. In preparation he purchased some land in the village of Sheikh Othman, about six miles (ten km.) north of Aden. When he returned, they would be able to begin building the mission station.

Keith-Falconer’s first trip to Aden had led him to several conclusions: first, that Aden was a good place to begin a mission post; second, that the focus of the mission should rest upon medical and educational work. James Robson relates how Keith-Falconer “realised that medicine is one of the most efficient means of approach, besides being a valuable boon in itself; therefore he intended to have a fully qualified medical man to work along with him.” He also believed that focusing on the education of children was another way to prove the genuineness of Christian concern for the local people. Elizabeth G. K. Hewat states that Keith-Falconer found children “far more hopeful than adults.”

As a third conclusion, Keith-Falconer recognized that in order for a medical-educational mission to work, he needed to move out of the port area and into a completely Arab context. For this purpose he felt that the village of Sheikh Othman would be the best choice. Here, in this village that stood at the apex of several caravan routes into the interior, he would be removed from associations with the British establishment, and—in his own words—it would afford “an opportunity of getting into touch with people from many parts of Arabia to which the missionary cannot go himself.” His idea of withdrawing from the British presence in Aden related to the most important obstacle to mission to Islam at the time. In the contemporary Muslim mind, Christian missionaries were in collusion with the imperialists, and as we will see, Keith-Falconer’s intention was to steer clear of association with the British establishment. Yet by virtue of his citizenship and that of succeeding missionaries (both Scottish and Danish), his mission was never ultimately able to do so.

Sheikh Othman (1886–87)

Ion, Gwendolyn, and another colleague, a Dr. Cowen, arrived back in Aden in November 1886. A simple two-bedroom house was constructed, called “the shanty,” with an additional room to serve as a small dispensary. The local community was tentative and that of succeeding missionaries (both Scottish and Danish), his mission was never ultimately able to do so.

Keith-Falconer recognized that for a medical-educational mission to work, he needed to move out of the port area and into a completely Arab setting.

The fame of the foreigners began to spread. People soon served as a small dispensary. The local community was tentative, did not neglect his study of Arabic. He continued to spend four hours a day reading the language, in addition to his Bible study and prayer. By February 1887, however, only three months after his second arrival, he and his wife began suffering from fevers—most probably related to malaria. He suffered from long bouts of illness throughout April and May and by late May had become completely bedridden. On June 7, 1887, he succumbed to the fevers and passed away in his sleep.

Robson relates the conclusion of this missionary’s sojourn: “Dr. Cowen had left him sleeping peacefully at ten [P.M. on June 6], when he had gone to take a much-needed night’s rest; Mrs. Falconer, herself ill, was sleeping in the room next to her husband; and the nurse sat up during the night with him. He was sleeping more calmly than he had done for some time, so at 4 A.M. [on June 7] the nurse lay down beside his bed and fell asleep. About a quarter to six his wife came in to see him, and found him ‘lying on his back, with eyes half-open, and hands resting on the bed by his sides.’ . . . He died at just Henry Martyn’s age, like him devoting his life for the sake of winning the Muslim.”

An Appraisal

Ion Keith-Falconer is an important figure in nineteenth-century mission history, but aside from reviewing some interesting historical facts about his life and mission, what can we say or glean from his work? Keith-Falconer was certainly gifted for the work to which he was called, a true missionary-scholar to Islam in every sense. Did his vision for mission work, however, affect the church and its mission toward Islam? Does it have any impact on our own view of mission to Islam today, especially in a post-9/11 world? Three main issues emerge in considering the effects of his work.

First, we must recognize what a profound impact Keith-Falconer’s ideas had upon the Church Missionary Society, the Danish Mission, and the Reformed Church in America mission work for the next generation of missionaries. On their way to Arabia to begin their own mission, both James Cantine and Samuel Zwemer utilized the experience of the Scottish missionaries to inform their own methods of work. Cantine spent some time in Edinburgh consulting with the foreign missions committee of the Church of Scotland regarding its work in Aden. Zwemer stopped off in Scotland to confer both with the committee and with Gwendolyn Keith-Falconer. After their initial language training in Beirut, the two Reformed Church missionaries headed to Aden, again hoping to glean information from the Scottish missionaries. Cantine spent time traveling with the Scottish medical doctors. Keith-Falconer’s decision regarding the placement of a missionary post, as well as the medical work undertaken by the Scots, impacted the future thinking of Cantine and Zwemer and the direction of the Arabian Mission. Further success of the CMS doctor Marcus Eustace in Busrah (modern-day Basra in Iraq) would later reinforce the importance of medical work as “something like an article of faith” of Christian missions in the Middle East. One of Keith-Falconer’s successors in Aden reflected on the success of this method of medical missions:

Every village of any size at one time or another sends its representative to Bagdad, Busrah, Bahrain, Muscat or Aden, while far from the interior sick ones are brought to the mission hospitals and dispensaries for treatment and so give the missionaries an opportunity of reaching places that they could never hope to visit in person.

[Thus], the missionaries are sure of a warm welcome wherever they go, and places that but a few years ago were closed are now open for the gospel.

From the very beginning, the Scottish Mission (and later the Danish Mission) had a fully qualified medical missionary on its
staff. Experience taught other societies the necessity of healing the sick as well as preaching the Gospel. This conclusion is borne out by several incidents in the experience of the Aden mission. The first was in 1937, when the king of Yemen petitioned the mission to send “a doctor, a religious–holy one” to the people of Beihan, in the far interior.” The king had recognized both the piety of the doctors and their desire to serve his people. The second incident occurred in 1946, when the mission was asked by the government to help train its medical workers, at the government’s expense. The health care workers were trained at the Sheikh Othman Hospital, which was originally set up by the Keith-Falconer Mission and then later turned over to the government. It was the mission doctors who handled the training and oversight. (This phenomenon of governments inviting missionaries to administer national institutions has been subsequently repeated in the Gulf with other Arabian mission posts.)

A second important legacy of Keith-Falconer was his practice of dissociation from the “powers that be.” Aden was a port for the British navy and an important protectorate for the British Empire. Any mission work there would suffer from the stigma of being associated with the behavior of the British servicemen. Keith-Falconer thus decided to remove his mission from the British presence. In 1886, when he chose to go inland to Sheikh Othman, he wrote in his journal: “Many [Arabs] imagine that Europeans are clever people who get drunk and have no religion to speak of.” In the words of Lyle L. Vander Werff, “A straight forward presentation of the Gospel was necessary to remove from the Arab mind misconceptions derived from ‘the evil example set by so many Europeans who live in or pass through Aden.” Thus, during the “Age of Imperialism” the location of missions mattered.

This problem of association with foreign imperialism is the bane of the missionary. There is no escaping the fact that a missionary walks in two worlds and seeks to interpret both the sending and the receiving culture. Keith-Falconer purposely relocated his mission in order to be free from association with the British occupation and the trappings of Western lifestyles, which might negatively affect the possibilities of “winning” Muslims over. Yet by virtue of his citizenship and his inherent and implicit association with British culture, he and the Falconer Mission would never be completely free from suspicion. The mission and its hospital were thus subject to the problems of nationalization following World War II. Considered foreign holdings, they were seized by the government. The mission itself was directly affected by the changing world order. The Falconer Mission’s proximity to Aden and Britain’s waning power in the region doomed the mission post to being associated with an occupation whose time had ended. Ten years after his death, the Ion Keith-Falconer Memorial Church was commemorated in Aden as a chapel established to minister to British troops, and it was served by a chaplain from the Scottish mission. At the turn of the century the chapel “was filled every Sabbath with those who love to hear the old Gospel.” Thus, Keith-Falconer’s name had come to be associated with the British post, not with an indigenous Arab church!

Finally, we must assess the original missiological intention of the Keith-Falconer Mission. At first glance, one might judge that his was a failed mission by nineteenth-century standards, and perhaps even by early twentieth-century missiological expectations. Keith-Falconer did not live long enough to reap the benefits of his linguistic knowledge of Arabic and cultural awareness of Arab society by creating and supporting a thriving indigenous church, as did John Hogg in Egypt, nor did the Keith-Falconer Mission produce a significant indigenous Arab church. Certainly, throughout its existence the mission did see some Yemenis become Christians. Yet the Church of South Arabia in Yemen (officially formed January 8, 1961) could not be considered a thriving evangelical success story by nineteenth-century missiological standards. Unlike the American Presbyterian missionaries who engaged in “indirect evangelism” (that is, reforming the indigenous church to engage Muslims), Ion Keith-Falconer was the first Protestant missionary to intentionally focus upon Arabian Muslims. In the words of another missionary, “The real hope of winning Arabia lies in the creation of an indigenous native church.” Such a hope has, to this point, been clearly dashed. As noted by Elizabeth Hewat, “When all the encouragements and signs of progress are added together, the sum total is not as impressive or definite as the ardent Christian would wish.” Although the Arab church has thrived outside the peninsula, the extreme social pressure among Arabian Muslims against conversion out of the faith certainly is a major factor. “Here in a nutshell was the problem of Arabia. The social-political environment did not permit Muslims of such sensitive perception to respond positively to the Gospel of Christ.”

If this was the case during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, how much more problematic must these “sensitivities” be in the post–9/11 era? Given the current climate in the Middle East, with the occupation of Iraq and Palestine; the touchy political environment with Islamist sympathies in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Egypt and Algeria; government crackdowns on Islamic terrorist cells; and the American and British military presence in the Gulf (including Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and even Yemen’s Aden), will Western Christian workers receive a free hearing from Arab Muslim communities? Certainly the “Zionist-Crusader” conspiracy label will be attached to Christian missions, especially if—it the Keith-Falconer Mission—they are based in areas where there is a heavy Western presence.

At this point, even an attempt to “go inland” in order to get away from Western presence and gain access to indigenous peoples will be in vain. Given present advances in information technology, physical locality is no longer the main issue. The mere fact of one’s citizenship affects the reception of one’s message. A Western Christian worker in the twenty-first century cannot assume that he or she is bringing the message of the Gospel as Paul did, for Paul was a Roman citizen, traversing the provinces of an empire in which his language, his ethnicity, and even his views were given a fair and legal hearing (e.g., as in Acts 22). He was free to travel and speak as he saw fit. The situation is different today for Western missionaries. There are already preconceptions about Christian missionaries and mission work among Arab Muslims, and most of these preconceptions are based on mere association with Western hegemony by citizenship. We are no longer in an apostolic age of mission; rather, we

Keith-Falconer’s missiological perspective and legacy offer foreign mission workers a positive model for encountering Islam.
are in an era much like that of Tertullian in the second century, in which the church—in order to clearly and carefully respond to its detractors—must sift through many charges stemming from the predominant culture. For their part, the motivations of Western Christians will be viewed with a sense of suspicion at best, or, at worst, with animosity. For any response to be credible, it is imperative that the native Arab church (in all its varied forms) take the lead in a careful and concise apology articulated from within the confines of Arab culture.

Despite its apparent lack of success, Keith-Falconer’s mis-

**Notes**

9. Ibid., p. ix.
11. Ibid., p. 63.
12. Ibid., p. 57.
16. Ibid., pp. 98, 99.
24. Ibid., pp. 158–59. After Keith-Falconer’s death his wife Gwendolyn returned to Scotland. She met with the Church of Scotland and arranged to continue to underwrite the cost of the mission.
28. Ibid., p. 158.
30. Scudder relates the importance of the doctor in Arab society. Quoting Stanley Myleura, he writes: “The profession of medicine carries with it in Arabia, as in most countries, a certain distinction. There is an Arab proverb which places medicine above religion. The very word, doctor, becomes in the Arab’s mouth, Hakeem, the Wise Man. . . . Given the right personality, the Christian doctor’s potentiality for good in a country like Arabia is almost limitless” (*The Arabian Mission’s Story*, p. 256, n. 1).
34. The same issue occurred in 1965 when the Danish Mission was forced to leave Aden. V. Tranholm-Mikkelsen, part of the Danish Mission in Aden in the 1960s, recalled how even though the missionaries were “respected and received with great hospitality except the last year or two because of the political tensions . . . [they] were identified with the British colonialists” (correspondence with V. Tranholm-Mikkelsen in possession of the author). The same happened with the Reformed Church’s Arabian Mission (see Scudder, *The Arabian Mission’s Story*, p. 310).
37. See *The Church Is There: In Two Moslem Lands, South Arabia and West Pakistan* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland Overseas Council, 1964).
38. Scudder, *The Arabian Mission’s Story*, p. 145. The only other Protestants who were interested in working directly with Muslims were the Moravians in the eighteenth century. At this point we are making a distinction between Arabian Muslims (from the peninsula) and Egyptian or Arab Muslims in general. See Julius Richter, *A History of the Protestant Missions in the Near East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 92.
It has been almost a decade since Risto Lehtonen published *Story of a Storm: The Ecumenical Movement in the Turmoil of Revolution* (Eerdmans, 1998). Now Robin Boyd, whose career with the Student Christian Movement (SCM) goes back to 1951 (part of the “golden years” of SCM), when he was appointed secretary of its theological college department, has provided us with his own analysis of the rise, fall, and (possibly) rebirth of that ecumenical student ministry. His own roots in the progress of global Christianity go back to 1899, when his father, then a student at Queen’s Belfast, signed onto the Student Volunteer Movement as a missionary recruit, serving in India and then as home convener of the foreign missions of the Irish Presbyterian Church.

The story Boyd tells is thus a personal one at the end of a long life of service in India, Australia, and Ireland. There are heroes in this book, among them M. M. Thomas, Lesslie Newbigin, and, particularly for their biblical emphases, Suzanne de Diëtrich and Hans Ruedi Weber. But there are also individuals who bear responsibility for the collapse of SCM during “the storm,” especially Ambrose Reeves, general secretary from 1962 to 1965. That was the point when, Boyd asserts, SCM sowed the seeds of its own destruction by becoming a single-issue society (political and social justice) and establishing a policy of open membership. In chapter 9 he analyzes the question, “Why did the SCM collapse in ‘the Storm’?” He sees the failure of the movement as being due to detachment from the wider Christian community, an interesting development for “the church ahead of the church.”

Throughout the book Boyd is aware that evangelical student ministry has experienced explosive growth with the expansion of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), founded in 1947. There is an unfortunate personal reference to one of its leaders (p. 41), and a caricature of evangelicals (p. 172) as being slow to accept women as equal partners in ministry. Actually, IFES was a pioneer among evangelicals in placing women in significant leadership roles. Boyd deplores evangelical separatism but, in providing a hitherto unchronicled story of the deflection of the Edinburgh Christian Union in 1952–54 (pp. 86–89), shows how necessary it was for the IFES’s own integrity. Hopefully, as the celebration of the centennial of Edinburgh 1910 approaches, there will be many other similarly helpful retrospectives.

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A. Donald MacLeod, Research Professor of Church History at Tyndale Theological Seminary, Toronto, is the author of *C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University* (InterVarsity Press, 2007).

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Alastair Hamilton’s book *The Copts and the West, 1439–1822*: The European Discovery of the Egyptian Church.


Alastair Hamilton’s book *The Copts and the West, 1439–1822* is a masterful and highly engaging history of the relationship between missions and scholarship in the early modern period. Based on extensive research into manuscript collections and early printed volumes, and grounded in linguistic expertise that includes Coptic, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and a wide range of European languages, Hamilton’s work should become a standard reference in the field.

Divided into four parts, the book begins with a survey of Egyptian church history from late antiquity to the Islamic period, ending with a discussion of Coptic education, belief, and customs under Ottoman rule. Parts 2, 3, and 4 are more substantive and represent the author’s main body of original research.

Part 2 focuses primarily on the history of Roman Catholic missions in Egypt, beginning with the Council of Florence in 1439 and ending with the establishment of the Coptic Catholic Church in the eighteenth century. Part 3 covers this same period, but with a different goal in mind—to trace the role of Western European missionaries and scholars (both Catholic and Protestant) in the acquisition of knowledge about the Copts. For those interested in a fascinating account of how various mission objectives, theological disagreements, linguistic factors, institutional politics, cultural prejudices, and personal idiosyncrasies contributed to missteps and advances in intercultural encounter, parts 2 and 3 are highly recommended reading. Part 4, an often quite technical treatment of Western progress in the study of the Coptic language, will be of greater interest to linguists, manuscript experts, and biblical scholars. For students of mission, however, Hamilton’s epilogue helpfully brings his historical account into the modern period, highlighting major developments in the interaction between the Copts and the West during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the appearance of Coptic Protestant communities.

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Stephen J. Davis, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, specializes in the history of Christianity in late antiquity.

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DR. KIRKLEY SANDS

An Anglican pastor and educator for more than thirty-five years, Kirkley Sands is a priest and canon in the Diocese of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Since ordination in 1968 he has ministered both in the Bahamas and in London and Edinburgh. He is chair of the School of Social Sciences and assistant professor in the Department of Religion and Theology at the College of the Bahamas.

DR. FRANK NOLAN, M.AFR.


Spring 2008

Dr. Caleb O. Oladipo
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Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity.


This edited volume is a Festschrift for evangelical missiologist Paul G. Hiebert and follows up the important addition he made to the three “selves” of mission theory. Hiebert argued that new churches should be not only self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating but also self-theologizing. But what are the implications for Christian belief and practice if each church does theology locally? And how does the localization of theology play alongside the forces of globalization and in an era of world Christianity? These are the issues addressed in this forward-looking book.

In the introduction, Harold Netland calls evangelicals to rethink the definition and method of theology in the light of global or world Christianity. There follow thirteen contributions to the debate from colleagues of Hiebert and one from Hiebert himself. The chapters are of varying style, but most are of high quality. Highlights for this reviewer include Tite Tiénou’s plea that Christian theology should recognize the fact that the Christian faith is not only the faith of white Western people, Andrew Walls’s discussion of the need to write Christian history from global and cross-cultural perspectives, Kevin Vanhoozer’s argument that doing Christian theology is a “world endeavour,” and the articles by Vinoth Ramachandra and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, who expose some uncritical contextualization in North American theology. Craig Ott’s conclusion urges a global dialogue of local theologies as the way forward for evangelical theology—although the limitation of this dialogue to evangelical Christians seems rather unnecessary after such stimulating articles that interact widely, and after Charles Van Engen’s reminder that catholicity is an essential part of the church’s nature.

—Kirsteen Kim

Kirsteen Kim, Honorary Lecturer (Theology), University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England, has served in mission and theological education in South Korea (1987–92) and India (1993–97).

The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative.


When editor Jonathan Bonk invited me to review this book, he added, correctly, that “nothing comparable . . . has ever been written.” While there certainly are books of comparable scope and size, what is distinctive is Wright’s perspective. In part 1 he argues that, rather than mission being one perspective from which the Bible can
be read, it is the key to its entire “grand narrative.” Mission, in other words, is not to be justified by amassing numbers of biblical texts. The Bible is about the mission of God. It reveals a God whose deepest desire is to share Godself with all peoples and, indeed, with all of creation. And God is—wondrously—revealed, as well, as sharing this mission first with Israel and then with the church.

Wright develops this “missional hermeneutic” in three steps. First (part 2), the God of the Bible is described as the only God, sovereign over the cosmos, yearning to have the divine name known by all peoples. This God is first revealed in Israel, then in Jesus Christ. Israel’s and the church’s task is to keep faith in this God and to expose any other god as a mere idol. Second (part 3), Wright shows how election in Abraham, redemption at the Exodus, and covenant existence are not exclusive privileges for Israel or the church but ultimately blessings for all nations. Third (part 4), Wright speaks of the “arena” of God’s—and God’s people’s—mission: the care of the entire created world, all of humanity, and all of human cultures. Mission is holistic, including both redemption from sin and liberation from any and all oppression.

A short review can only acknowledge the brilliant, balanced scholarship that Wright evidences throughout. This is a biblical theology of the first order, and Wright argues powerfully that such a biblical theology can only be a missional theology. Three areas of critique might be mentioned, however. First, in the section on Jesus, in whom the missionary God is fully made known, Wright focuses more on the rather abstract affirmation of Jesus’ divinity than on describing the kind of God he reveals: unfathomably merciful, involved in human suffering through his healings and exorcisms, totally inclusive, loving us even to death on a cross (see Phil. 2:8). Second, although Wright acknowledges an Old Testament emphasis (p. 18), he might focus too much on the Old Testament and not enough on the New. Third, while it is true that the book is a biblical theology, there might have been more explicit links to the profoundly Trinitarian nature of the mission of God.

Nevertheless, this is a must-read, not only for missionaries and missiologists, but also for biblical scholars and indeed all Christians. Perhaps more than a read, though, this book is one to be meditated on and prayed through.

—Stephen B. Bevans, S.V.D.
niscences, yarn-spinning capabilities, and research in UMCA mission archives yield an engaging, popular-style tale. Unfortunately, the book lacks careful editing and relies on dated and often inaccurate secondary materials for its historical assertions, yielding multiple errors of spelling, grammar, and fact. The narrative also has an Anglo-centric colonialist perspective reflecting its sources. Larger quotations from Allen’s letters would have made this work more valuable for historians.

Such correspondence has often been a gold mine for mission historians. In this case, however, Allen’s father, a prominent clergyman, removed what was deemed unpleasant in the lost originals before publication. Hence Brown admits that the letters are “infuriatingly lacking in detailed information regarding people and happenings at the mission” (p. 225). Still, Brown offers fascinating details and portrays colorful characters in Allen’s world: missionaries like Edward Steere, Zanzibar’s second bishop, who worked closely with Allen since both were skilled linguists; other Europeans like John Kirk, famous abolitionist British consul in Zanzibar; Arabs like the Sultan Barghash and Princess Emily Reute, who escaped Zanzibar to marry a German. Less present are the Africans whom Allen served generously in the clinic at the Anglican mission.

May Allen appears as a likeable, even heroic figure whose Victorian modesty wrestled with missionary zeal. That modesty and the circumstances of her letters’ publication conspired to rob them of some their potential historical value, but her story is worth remembering.

—Paul V. Kollman


Alive in Christ is an exciting story of how the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea is struggling to connect Christianity more deeply to Papua New Guinean and other Melanesian cultures and to confront pressing political, social, and economic issues. Beginning with a brief but informative historical overview, we learn that today the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea, with 1.5 million members, is slowly establishing Melanesians in positions of leadership, but the shortage of national priests is a chronic problem. Nevertheless, the church is now sending 125 missionaries to serve overseas.

Despite “glowing statistics” and the fact that the Catholic Church is the largest church in Papua New Guinea, a dominant theme throughout the book is that the Christian faith has not penetrated deeply, as noted by Isaiah Timba: “Catholic Christianity has been in PNG for many years, yet the Christian message and values are inculturating at a slow pace in the minds and hearts of our people. Will it take another hundred years to recognize the Papua New Guinean face of Christ?” (p. 49).

From November 22 to December 12, 1998, the Synod of Bishops for Oceania took place in Rome. During the first week the bishops and other
invited representatives were given eight minutes each to speak. Twenty of these “interventions” are published here, giving us a good understanding of the major issues facing the synod. An outstanding missiological example is Archbishop Karl Hesse’s intervention on inculturation. The second week of the synod, fifty propositions were presented, debated, and voted on. Each of these is published here. The “interventions” and “propositions” were used by Pope John Paul II to write Ecclesia in Oceania, his postynodal letter of November 22, 2001, which is reprinted in an appendix.

The missiological meat of this book is found in the narrative theology of twenty-one Melanesians relating their Catholic faith to everything from living with HIV to the negative influence of certain traditional beliefs.

—Darrell Whiteman

Darrell Whiteman is Vice President for Mission Education and Resident Missiologist at The Mission Society, Atlanta, Georgia.

As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions, 1640–1810.


Published initially as a doctoral dissertation in the Netherlands in 1970, this work by former Calvin Seminary president James A. DeJong is now available in an American paperback edition. DeJong thus makes available to a wider audience his insightful reflections on the seminal role of millennial speculation in the dawn of Anglo-American missions. DeJong’s specific interest is what grew out of the symbiotic relationship that existed between British (primarily Scottish) and colonial American (New England) evangelicals in the development of a mission theology and praxis that would lay the groundwork for the American contribution to the nineteenth-century Protestant missionary movement. The terminal date (1810) represents the launching of that expansionary movement through the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, at which point British and American efforts (at least organizationally) went their separate ways.

DeJong’s primary thesis is well known and well covered in other historical missionary surveys. But rarely has it been covered so thoroughly and convincingly. With a Joe McCarthy–like radar for millennial themes, DeJong finds traces of millennial speculation in most every mission-related publication and sermon of the era, both in what he calls its “mild” or “simple” formulation and in its more extreme manifestations. This delineation may be DeJong’s most helpful contribution. What interests him is not whether a particular millennialism is “pre” or “post” or “a” but whether it represents “Scripturally-based hopes regarding the latter days” (p. 2). The evidence that he produces in well-documented case studies is that such hopes were not only one of many driving forces behind the rise of Anglo-American missions, but the main one. One is left to wonder whether there would have been a Protestant American mission effort apart from the millennial hopes that undergirded it. This book suggests that the answer would be no.

—John Hubers

John Hubers is the former supervisor of the global mission program in the Middle East and South Asia of the Reformed Church in America.


This affordable book was written to coincide with the centenary of the most important event in American and (so suggests its author) global Pentecostal history, the Azusa Street revival (1906–8). This is the definitive version of the events that rocked global Christianity a century ago. It confirms Mel Robeck, professor of church history and ecumenics at Fuller Theological Seminary, as the premier historian of the Los Angeles revival. It is a highly focused book that settles the question of the significance of this African American–led revival and missionary movement for world Pentecostalism. Its subtitle suggests that this revival was the birth of Pentecostalism. Although global Pentecostalism might require a more multidimensional approach to the question of origins, Robeck has identified himself with those in recent years who have supported the shift of emphasis on origins from the racist Charles Fox Parham in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901 to his one-time disciple William Joseph Seymour in Los Angeles in 1906.

Robeck has superbly set the story of the Azusa Street revival and William Seymour within the context of early twentieth-century Los Angeles and African American society. This was undoubtedly the most important Christian revival of the early twentieth century. Its speed growth in a short time, its effect on other churches, its function as “the primary icon” of global Pentecostalism (p. 10), and its outreach to the marginalized make this an event that still has missiological significance. Much of the book gives information from primary sources never previously published.

My main complaint about this volume is its inadequate referencing. This format was the publisher’s decision and should not detract from the sheer authoritative nature of this study, one that will endure as a monument to Robeck’s meticulous scholarship for the foreseeable future. There is more to come, and we can expect to see an even more comprehensive volume on Azusa Street from Robeck’s research in the near future.

—Allan Anderson

Allan Anderson is Director of the Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion and Professor of Global Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England.


In 1999 Lamin Sanneh published Abolitionists Abroad, arguing that African-Americans engaged the motherland successfully because they were inspired by certain republican principles and anti-structural ideology that sidelined the traditional chiefs, who were compromised in the slave trade. But Sanneh did not pursue the consequences of the settler presence. A different genre of historiography soon emerged: county/parish histories characterized by intrepid archival grubbing and detailed biographical narratives. Richard Hall represents the latter mold. During his undergraduate years in the early 1980s, he encountered sixty boxes of the records about African Americans who left Maryland for the motherland during the repatriation process. He studied them through the next two decades and then in 2003 published On Afric’s Shore (a phrase taken from one of the romantic lyrics of the protagonists).
Hall tells the story of blacks sponsored by the Maryland Colonization Society going to Cape Palmas (later annexed into Liberia), a county that later produced a president and notable professionals. It is a detailed story with 431 pages of narrative, 78 pages of annotated lists of early settlers, and copious reference notes. The first hundred pages deal with five key issues: the multilayered, contested motivations, the institutional organization of the enterprise, the acquisition of land, the difficulties and broken dreams during the early settlement, and the encounters with the indigenous Grebo culture. The next hundred pages reconstruct the saga of missionary enterprise built around the major figure of John Russwurm, who provided sacrificial leadership, albeit leadership that ended on a sour note. The rest of the story is about the development of the colony, which was fraught with political and social squabbles, economic difficulties (in the colony and in the home base), contentious relationship with the indigenous population, and the settlers’ policy of leaving the native population on the periphery. This policy constitutes the foil to the contention of historians that the settlers failed to evangelize the indigenous population and serves as the foundation of the relationship between the church, the Masonic Lodge, and the political parties. When Master Sergeant Samuel Doe staged a successful coup against Tolbert’s government in 1980, he was hailed as one who finally liberated the indigenous people of Liberia.

Hall tells an enthralling narrative. He clearly has done his homework.

—Ogbu U. Kalu

Ogbu U. Kalu is the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, and Director of the Chicago Center for Global Ministries, located in the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

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**New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.**


*New Faith in Ancient Lands* makes a powerful contribution to mission history. The product of a conference sponsored by the University of Leiden, it contains fourteen essays on Protestant and Catholic missions to Muslims, Jews, and Orthodox Christians in the Middle East.

In an incisive introductory chapter, Heleen Murre–van den Berg describes the nineteenth century as a period of special Christian interest in the Middle East, comparable to the Crusader era of the late eleventh through the late thirteenth centuries. Missionaries were infused with “geopiety” (p. 10) distinguished by renewed interest in the Holy Land as a focus for pilgrimage and biblical study. (Indeed, the essay by Heyberger and Verdeil describes nineteenth-century Jesuit missions to the Holy Land as both a “comeback” [p. 40] from the Crusades and a source of insight for exegetical study.) Likewise, missions to the Middle East played important roles in constructing “Christian Orientalism” (p. 17), as essays by Stockdale on the German Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Palestine, and Kaminsky on the German Kaiserwerth institutions in the Levant, attest. Murre–van den Berg also draws a distinction between “conversionist” and “civilizational” programs (p. 16), associating the latter with a tendency toward secularization that occurred in missionary schools (as Fleischmann...
argues in an essay about American girls’ education in Syria).

Several contributors stress the importance of relations between missions and governments, among them Bourmand, who considers how the establishment of the CMS hospital in Nablus depended on British mediation with Ottoman authorities, and Buffon, who shows how Franciscans in the Holy Land resorted to “internationalism” by calling various European governments to support their work. O’Mahony’s essay on Coptic Catholics, Badr’s on the Armenian and Arab Protestant communities of Syria-Lebanon, Tamcke’s on the Kurds and local Christians of northwestern Iran, and Merguerian’s on the Armenians of eastern Anatolia trace the influence of missions on ethnic, sectarian, and national identities. Ryad points to the unexpected consequences of Christian mission work for Muslim social activism in Egypt.

In an essay on a German orphanage in Jerusalem, Löffler reflects, “I would like to see mission history integrated into the newly developed discipline of Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (Modern Church History), which tries to combine methods and theories of theology as well as of social and cultural history in order to interpret the making of religion in modernity” (p. 153). This excellent volume certainly helps to achieve that goal.

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.

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**To Give or Not to Give? Rethinking Dependency, Restoring Generosity, and Redefining Sustainability.**


“I am calling for a complete reformation of perspective. . . . I am convinced the time has come to openly challenge our settled conclusions about missions giving and to slaughter the sacred cow represented by the self-supporting paradigm” (p. 239). John Rowell, church planter and director of Ministry Resource Network, frames a new paradigm for twenty-first-century mission giving. Calling for the abandonment of the “three-self paradigm” with its double standard for missionary workers that has plagued at-temps for partnerships, Rowell challenges the Western church to face its privileged status as rich and obey God’s repeated instructions in Scripture to be “rich in good works.”

Rowell reviews the history of the “three-self paradigm,” explaining how Henry Venn and John Nevius developed this perspective to challenge the paternalism of colonial mission. He then shows how the modern application of this paradigm, distorted by radical changes of private and public philosophies of charity, reflects our unreasoned fears that giving to nationals creates dependency and even destroys effective ministry. Citing David Garrison’s assertion that money is the “devil’s candy,” Rowell argues that such perspectives are part of the “devil’s cunning” to make Western Christians “rich fools and robbers, presuming ‘to buy and to keep’ for themselves the riches meant to be shared with others” (p. 237).

Arguing that world evangelization is spiritual warfare, requiring vast economic, human, and spiritual resources, Rowell calls the church to build a war chest for
world mission, parallel to Roosevelt’s World War II Lend-Lease program for American allies. The most significant contribution of this book is the “Missionary Marshall Plan for the 21st Century.” Noting that the Western church has a vast untapped capacity to give, Rowell defines four principles for sending churches to maximize their investment in world mission warfare, and five principles of stewardship for those who go, through which they may enable local congregations to advance evangelism and kingdom work in their own cultures and beyond.

—Sherwood G. Lingenfelter

Sherwood G. Lingenfelter is Professor of Anthropology, Provost, and Senior Vice President, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

A Brief History of Vatican II.


Vatican II Forty Years Later.


What the Second Vatican Council taught is almost as contested today as it was forty years ago. The reason is that its sixteen conciliar texts were the product of a prolonged quest for a consensus and clarity that were ultimately unobtainable. The council members represented widely divergent perspectives and interests, including Thomists versus Augustinians, the divergent interests of the superiors of mission orders, leaders of the young “Third World” churches and the Propaganda Fide, Pope Paul VI’s concerns, and those of the curial conservatives, and the majority of the bishops. To harmonize the prevailing diversity of views necessarily meant enshrining ambiguity, as well as indicating new directions in the final documents.

Thanks to Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak, though, we have an outstanding historical record of the council’s proceedings and a sophisticated analysis of how clashing viewpoints and different schools of thought came together to result in a redefinition of the nature of the church, its historic missionary task, and its relationship to the modern world, other churches, and other religions.

Their weighty and authoritative five-volume history was published between 1995 and 2006. The fifth and last volume has a detailed account of the clash of ideas and development of texts—in this instance, how they were finalized. Some of the narrative is valuable only as a reference text. But there is much fascinating editorializing and reflection on how the council was received by the wider Christian community. Lukas Vischer’s substantial chapter, “The Council as an Event in the Ecumenical Movement,” is particularly useful. In a footnote we are told that Vischer was the World Council of Churches’ delegate, but an irritating aspect of the entire series is that none of the other chapter authors are introduced. Some are little known. It would have been important to know where they were coming from, in more senses than one.

The council was billed as an ecumen-
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The Will to Arise: Theological and Political Themes in African Christianity and the Renewal of Faith and Identity.

By Caleb Oluremi Oladipo. New York: Peter Lang, 2006. Pp. xxiv, 240. $32.95 / £27.20 / £19 / SFr 42.

In the course of the twentieth century the Republic of South Africa has been the scene of spectacular developments. The institution of apartheid, supported by principles developed in the Dutch Reformed Church, met with resistance in its suppression of blacks. The victory over apartheid was followed by a successful process of reconciliation. Both resistance and reconciliation were inspired by a self-esteem of the black people who found a new identity in the Christian Gospel.

For Nigerian Caleb Oluremi Oladipo, professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, this process of the emergence of a new Christian self-understanding and spirituality has been the starting point of research and reflection on its value for Christianity worldwide. He states, “There is no doubt that South African Christian Life has become part of God’s vision for the redemption of all humanity” (p. xvi). Oladipo’s reflections resulted in a number of articles that are collected in this book.

The author starts with a description of the development of Christianity in the struggle against apartheid, which is followed by some more intuitive comments. These thoughts lead to a new understanding of the resurrection of Christ, and even the development of new insights in interreligious dialogue. In this way Oladipo discerns a new way of living the Christian faith, having detached itself from its old, Western expression.

This multiple approach is undoubtedly the strength of the book, but also its weakness. Focusing on key phrases like “creative integration,” “cross-fertilization,” and “integrative tolerance,” the author makes a plea for a new Christianity that is based more on experience than on understanding, more on doing than on


In 1706 the first Evangelische/Protestant missionaries, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau, arrived in Tranquebar. En route to India, they were successively commissioned in Halle, Copenhagen, and London. They represented a unique ecumenical and international venture. Whether or not the Royal Danish-English-Halle Mission was indeed one, two, or three separate entities is a matter scholars can debate. Editors of this set of volumes see two distinct missions: the Danish-Halle and the English-Halle. This reviewer sees one. What cannot be denied are the common bonds of Pietistic faith and inspiration shared by the sovereigns of all three political systems that supported this enterprise.

Such bonds enabled ideas inculcated by August Herman Francke to set a pattern for future expansion and inculturation of the Gospel during the centuries that followed. The pattern included mastery of vernacular tongues; translation of scriptural and scientific essentials; provision of basic literacy for all converts, including women and children; printing presses for the publication of translated texts; training and utilization of indigenous leaders for evangelization, teaching, pastoral ministry, and mission expansion; and ceaseless research so as to increase worldwide human and intercultural understandings, both cultural and scientific. What had started in 1695 as an orphanage amid social degradation outside the city gates of Halle turned into a campus “school-city” for children of all classes and all levels of learning. Francke’s vision of “changing the world by transforming human beings” was chartered by Elector Frederick III, later King Frederick I, of Brandenburg-Prussia. The prince who founded Halle University and appointed Francke professor of theology thus supported the Franschesche Stiftungen (foundation). Halle’s influence, half a century before the rise of Zinzendorf’s Herrnhut, was to be enormous. Francke’s Halle, in short, became the springboard for modern missions.

The twenty-two chapters of volume 1 contain a wide variety of insights and understandings. As is so often true of such collections, the quality of these items is uneven, ranging from brilliant to barely informative. Important missionaries, pastors, and leaders, both male and female, are treated in full chapters. Encounters between Christians from different confessions—Syrian or Thomas (Orthodox), Catholic, Lutheran, Moravian, Pietist, Armenian, and Anglican—are examined in separate chapters. Encounters between Christians and Hindu ideas and “Hindu” institutions and ideas are also studied in depth. For the most part, readers will be richly rewarded for their efforts.

Volume 2 focuses upon mission work in South India, especially upon details relating to Tranquebar and Thanjavur, Cuddalore and Madras (or Chennai, Fort St. George, etc.). In volume 3 this focus is widened so as to include interplays between evangelical or Pietistic concerns and various scholarly disciplines that emerged from the Enlightenment. Advances in scientific understanding enjoy special attention and prominence. Close consideration given to systems of knowledge by the editors is especially commendable. Readers will also be grateful to find the last two hundred pages devoted to three substantial appendices.

All in all, this work is a gold mine—rich in insightful commentary and analysis, basic data, and documents and reference materials that reveal the origins of Pietist/Protestant missions in modern times. As such, this boxed set fully deserves its rank among top works published in 2006 and should occupy an important place on the shelf of every scholar seriously interested in the history of missions and world Christianity.

—Robert Eric Frykenberg

Robert Eric Frykenberg taught for forty-four years at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, specializing in the history and cultures of India.

Other Voices

A Study of Christian Feminist Approaches to Religious Plurality East and West

Helene Eg nell

What difference would feminist perspectives make to interfaith dialogue and theology of religions? This book explores the contributions of feminist dialogue praxis and feminist theology in this area. Women’s interfaith projects make use of a methodology from the women’s movement, sharing life stories and building relations, that creates a “safe space” where conflicts can be constructively dealt with. Women meet in the shared experience of being marginalized in their religious traditions, of being “the other”. They share the critique against patriarchal traditions and the commitment to changing them. Feminist reflection on the significance of being the female “other”, and of being on the margins of religious traditions, provides new and fruitful ways of approaching the religious “other”. Dissertation at Uppsala University 2006.

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Gospel and Culture in the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne Movement with particular focus on the period 1973-1996

Klas Lundström

This is a study of the central issues in the discussion on gospel and culture within the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne movement. The book provides a background to the discussion in the 1950s and 1960s and continues with a deeper analysis of the statements from the two bodies in the period 1973-1996. Dissertation at Uppsala University 2006.

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The Literature of Islam. A Guide to the Primary Sources in English Translation.


With the increasing interest in Islam in academic circles in recent years comes the need to study the primary literary sources in the vast and rich Islamic tradition through the Middle Ages to the modern time. The most important scholarly works were written in Arabic (or Persian or Turkish), and in the West they are therefore accessible only to specialists in Islamic studies. Now, however, scholars not proficient in Arabic have a guide to translations of many of these works into English.

Paula Youngman Skreslet, a professional librarian, and Rebecca Skreslet, a scholar of Arab culture and Islamic religion, have published a very useful introduction to the most significant Islamic works that are available in English translation. The outline of the book follows a traditional classification of Islamic literature: The Qur’an, The Traditions (Hadith), Exegesis of the Qur’an (Tafsir), Law and Legal Theory (Shari’a and Fikh), History and Historiography (Ta’rikh), Philosophy (Falsafa), Theology (Kalam), and Spirituality and Mysticism (Tasawwuf).

In each area works have been selected according to the impact they have had in the Islamic scholarly tradition. The place of the original works in the Islamic literature is explained, and the translations are critically reviewed. The main emphasis is on medieval works (up to the thirteenth century), but there are also some introductions to books written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for example, by Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Mawlana Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb. Each chapter concludes with a short section on developments in the modern era.

A guide for pronunciation of the most essential names and terms, a glossary of Arabic terms, a comprehensive bibliography, and name, title, and subject
indexes contribute to making this book an indispensable tool for scholars who study and teach Islam but who are not proficient in Arabic.

—Mogens S. Mogensen

Mogens S. Mogensen is a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and a consultant on intercultural and interreligious issues. He was a missionary with the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, 1981–91.

Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel.


Barbara Cooper’s volume is important in at least two ways: it is the first to treat the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) work in Niger, and it is the first to study the impact of the mission on the indigenous church. The book looks at areas of cooperation and conflict between the mission and the Evangelical Church of Niger (EERN), which the mission helped to found. It discusses in particular how SIM and other evangelical missions understand Islam and Muslim evangelism. For example, SIM missionaries typically viewed Muslims as lost without Jesus in their hearts but would be sensitive to Muslim religious sensibility, which in turn endeared them to Muslims in Maradi (in southern Niger) and also in northern Nigeria. This relationship with Muslims was unfortunately tarnished with the emergence of Pentecostal Christians, who were more aggressive in confronting Muslims with the claims of Christianity.

Not only in evangelism but also in politics, SIM missionaries allowed the context to dictate their behavior. SIM as an evangelical group was generally apolitical, but they could not avoid being politically active in dealing with either the British colonial authorities in Nigeria or the French government in Niger. It was rather ironic, then, that SIM missionaries tried to convince their converts in Niger and also in Nigeria to stay out of politics because politics was a dirty game.

Cooper is critical of SIM missionaries’ negative attitude toward Hausa culture and the suppression of women, and their use of social services as an enticement to spread the Gospel. Even though such comparison is not clearly made in the book, SIM missionaries were less inclined to adapt their theology to the African milieu than were Roman Catholic missions. Such noncontextualized areas include SIM missionaries’ understanding of conversion, which they taught as individualistic and exclusive; otherworldliness, which led them to teach an austere Western lifestyle; and dualism, where they taught that life was good or evil rather than both good and evil, which is African. In addition, the mission instituted a system of church discipline (horo) to make converts conform to perceived African Christian culture. Still, Cooper’s use of the word “fundamentalists” for the SIM is misleading.

This book will be an invaluable asset to all those interested in African history, mission, politics, linguistics, and economics.

—Musa A. B. Gaiya

Musa A. B. Gaiya is Professor of Church History at the University of Jos, Nigeria. His recent research interest is in Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria, especially how the reintroduction of Shari’a law in some northern Nigerian states has affected the relationship between Muslims and Christians.

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October 16–19
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October 22–26

November 5–9
Understanding the Western Missionary Movement III: Western Missions Move into the Twentieth Century. 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 present OMSC’s third Distinguished Mission Lectureship series—five lectures with discussions. Consultation with participants on topics of interest. Cosponsored by American Baptist International Ministries, Areopagos, Christian Reformed World Missions, Evangelical Covenant Church World Mission, and Mennonite Central Committee. $115

November 12–16
Diaspora African Missionaries in the Bahamas and the Caribbean in the Era of Slavery. Dr. Kirkley C. Sands, chair of the School of Social Sciences of the College of the Bahamas and a senior mission scholar in residence at OMSC, unfolds the missionary legacy of the African diaspora. Cosponsored by Moravian Church Board of World Mission. Eight sessions. $145

November 26–30
Learning About Mission from the White Fathers in Africa, 1919–39. Dr. Francis P. Nolan, M.Afr., formerly a missionary teacher with the White Fathers and a senior mission scholar in residence at OMSC, draws from the experience of the Missionaries of Africa to address vital issues in mission today. Eight sessions. $145

December 3–7
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 St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (Riverside, Connecticut). Eight sessions. $145

January 7 to February 1, 2008
Student Seminars on World Mission
Thy Will Be Done on Earth: Good News in Deed and Word
A monthlong survey of the Christian world mission, cosponsored by 30 seminars. Reduced rates for students from cosponsoring schools and mission agencies. Schools offer students credit for one, two, three, or four weeks.
For details, visit www.OMSC.org/january.html.
Book Notes

Cartledge, Mark J.
Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition.

Castro, Daniel.
Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé de Las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism.

Chan, Kei Thong, with Charlene Fu.
Faith of Our Fathers: God in Ancient China.

Engh, Mary Jane.
In the Name of Heaven: Three Thousand Years of Religious Persecution.

Haig-Brown, Celia, and David A. Nock, eds.
With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada.

Hunter, Harold D., and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., eds.
The Suffering Body: Responding to the Persecution of Christians.

Laugrand, Frédéric, Jarich Oosten, and François Trudel, eds.

Penner, Peter, ed.
Ethnic Churches in Europe: A Baptist Response.

Reed, Colin.

Smith, R. Drew, ed.
Freedom’s Distant Shores: American Protestants and Post-colonial Alliances with Africa.

Stanislaus, L., and John F. Gorski, eds.
Sharing Diversity in Missiological Research and Education.

Stewart, Kenneth J.

Tsering, M. G.
Jesus in a New Age, Dalai Lama World: Defending and Sharing Christ with Buddhists.

Watkins, Adrian, and Leslie Nathaniel, eds.

In Coming Issues

The Economies of Temple Chanting and Conversion in China
Eric Reinders

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

World Christianity and Christian Mission: Are They Compatible?
Insight from the Asian Churches
Peter C. Phan

Adivasi and Avarna Communities in the History of Christian Mission
Robert Eric Frykenberg

New Priority for Churches and Missions: Combating Corruption
Edward L. Cleary, O.P.

Theological Education in a World Christian Context
Dale T. Irwin

Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs
Stuart J. Foster

J. Dudley Woodberry

Possessions, Wealth, and the Cultural Identities of Persons:
Anthropological Reflections
Sherwood G. Lingenfelter

In our Series on the Legacy of Outstanding Missionary Figures of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, articles about
Thomas Barclay
George Bowen
Hélène de Chappotin
Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz
Hannah Kilham
George Leslie Mackay
Lesslie Newbigin
Constance Padwick
Peter Parker
James Howell Pyke
Pandita Ramabai
Elizabeth Russell
Bakht Singh
James Stephen
Philip B. Sullivan
James M. Thoburn
M. M. Thomas
Harold W. Turner
Johannes Verkuyl
William Vories