The twentieth-century expansion of the global Christian community is widely noted and celebrated—from half a billion people in the year 1900 to two billion in 2000. It is not as readily recognized that this remarkable expansion nonetheless fails to translate into an increased percentage of the world’s population. In his latest annual statistical table (see the January 2000 INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN) contributing editor David B. Barrett calculates the Christian community as 33 percent of world population, little changed from what it was a hundred years earlier (actually slightly less).

More remarkable than numerical expansion is the demographic shift in the global Christian community. In 1900 Christians in Europe and North America accounted for more than 80 percent of the world Christian community, but at the end of the century these erstwhile Christian heartlands contributed less than 40 percent. Today it is the non-Western world that boasts the majority—more than 60 percent of the globe’s Christian population.

In “Shifting Southward,” the lead article of this issue, contributing editor Dana Robert lays out the dimensions and the dynamics of the new concentration of Christian communities in regions formerly served by Western missions.

Professor Robert also attends to a peculiarity of this otherwise welcome phenomenon: even as the Christian faith has surged around the world, establishing what one would like to think of as a truly universal religion, close observers detect more fragmentation than ever. If mission leaders once worried about the divisiveness that Western denominations brought to their ministries in non-Western lands, what are we to think today when distinctives between Christian communities are further multiplied as indigenization plays itself out around the globe? As Robert writes, “What at first glance appears to be the largest world religion is in fact the ultimate local religion.”

In terms of the statistics Barrett has compiled over the years, there were fewer than 2,000 Christian denominations in 1900, but 20,000 in 1980 and nearly 34,000 today. It is only right and fitting that we should rejoice at the global extent of Christ’s followers, but as Robert challenges us, it is going to take diligent study and analysis if we are to appreciate just how all the parts fit into the impressive whole. This is a task alike for historians, theologians, and the practitioners of the world Christian mission.
Shifting Southward: Global Christianity Since 1945

Dana L. Robert

From December 12 to 29, 1938, the most representative meeting of world Protestantism to date took place in Tambaram, India. Under the gathering storm clouds of World War II, with parts of China already under Japanese occupation, Hitler triumphant in the Sudetenland, and Stalinism in full swing, 471 persons from 69 different countries met at Madras Christian College for the second decennial meeting of the International Missionary Council.

For the first time, African Christians from different parts of the continent met each other. The African delegation traveled together for weeks on a steamer that proceeded from West Africa to Cape Town, and around the Cape of Good Hope to India. China, besieged by Japan and torn asunder by competing war-lords, nationalists and Communists, sent forty-nine official delegates, of whom nearly two-thirds were nationals and only one-third were missionaries. The women’s missionary movement, then at the height of its influence, pushed for full representation by women at Madras. Their persistence was rewarded with sixty Christian College for the second decennial meeting of the International Missionary Council.

The central theme that drew so many to India at a time of multiple global crises was “the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historic universal Christian community.” With Protestant missions bearing fruit in many parts of the world, the time was ripe for younger non-Western churches to take their places alongside older Western denominations in joint consideration of the universal church’s faith, witness, social realities, and responsibilities. The roster of attendees reads like a who’s who of mid-twentieth-century world Christianity.

Yet the 1938 IMC conference was a gathering of visionaries, for the global Christianity it embraced was a skeleton without flesh or bulk, a mission-educated minority who were leading nascent Christian institutions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Europeans dominated the world church, with approximately 70.6 percent of the world’s Christian population. By 1938, on the eve of World War II, the apparent European domination of Protestantism and Catholicism remained strong. Yet by the end of the twentieth century, the European percentage of world Christianity had shrunk to 28 percent of the total; Latin America and Africa combined provided 43 percent of the world’s Christians. Although North Americans became the backbone of the cross-cultural mission force after World War II, their numerical dominance was being overtaken by missionaries from the very countries that were considered mission fields only fifty years before. The typical late twentieth-century Christian was no longer a European man, but a Latin American or African woman.

This article paints in broad strokes the transformation of world Christianity since the Second World War—a massive cultural and geographic shift away from Europeans and their descendants toward peoples of the Southern Hemisphere. The shift southward began early in the century, and the 1938 missionary conference was vivid proof of powerful indigenous Christian leadership in both church and state, despite a missionary movement trapped within colonialist structures and attitudes. But after World War II, rising movements of political and ecclesiastical self-determination materially changed the context in which non-Western churches operated, thereby allowing Christianity to blossom in multiple cultures. After examining the changing political context in which the growth of global Christianity took place, this essay will give examples of the emerging Christian movement and then comment on the challenge for historians posed by the seismic shift in Christian identity.

Christianity and Nationalism

Besides laying waste to Europe, North Africa, and western Asia, the Second World War revealed the rotten underbelly of European imperialism. In the new postwar political climate, long-simmering nationalist movements finally succeeded in throwing off direct European rule. With the newly formed United Nations supporting the rights of peoples to self-determination, one country after another reverted to local control. In 1947 India obtained its freedom from Britain, beginning a process of decolonization that continued with Burma in 1948, Ghana in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, Kenya in 1963, and on around the globe. British policies of indirect rule promoted orderly transitions in some places, but left open sores in others, for example in Sudan, where the Islamic north was left to govern the traditionalist and Christian south in 1956. Having introduced Western democratic institutions, the United States released the Philippines in 1946. Colonial powers such as Holland, France, and Portugal resisted the nationalist tide, ultimately to no avail. The Belgians were so angry at losing their colonies that they literally tore the phones off the walls in the Congo, leaving the colonial infrastructure in ruins. The French departed Algeria after six years of fighting the independence movement. Only a coup d’état in Portugal finally persuaded the Portuguese to free Angola and Mozambique in 1975, which, like many countries, erupted into civil war once the Europeans had departed. Different ethnic and political groups that had previously cooperated in opposition to European imperialism now found themselves fighting over control of nations whose boundaries, size, and even political systems had been created by foreigners. The success of anti-imperialist independence movements, with subsequent internal struggles for control in dozens of fledgling nation-states, was the most significant political factor affecting the growth of non-Western Christianity in the decades following World War II.

To understand why decolonization profoundly affected the state of Christianity in the non-Western world, one must explore the prior ambiguous relationship between Western missions and European imperialism. On the one hand, although missionary work often predated the coming of Western control, imperialism’s arrival inevitably placed missions within an oppressive political context that they sometimes exploited for their own benefit. In China, for example, the unequal treaties of 1842 and 1858 permitted missions to operate in selected port cities and to buy land. Foreign missions in China benefited from extraterritoriality, whereby they were not subject to Chinese laws and regulations.
Mission schools provided local leadership the tools it needed to challenge colonial oppression.

In colonial Africa, missions received land grants. For example, in 1898 Cecil Rhodes awarded 13,000 acres to American Methodists for their Rhodesian Mission. Sometimes, however, the missionaries themselves stood between the indigenous peoples and their exploitation by Europeans. French Protestant missionary Maurice Leenhardt defended the land rights of the Kanaks in face of overwhelming pressure from French colonialists in New Caledonia. Presbyterian missionaries William Sheppard and William Morrison faced trial in 1909 for exposing the atrocities perpetrated on rubber gatherers in the Belgian Congo. While courageous individual missionaries mitigated the effects of imperialism on indigenous peoples, by and large the missions benefited materially from European control. Most missionaries saw themselves as apolitical and preferred the status quo of colonialism to the uncertainties of nationalist revolution.

Another important factor in understanding the ambiguous relationship between missions and imperialism before decolonization was the importance of missionary schools. Christian missions pioneered Western learning in the non-Western world. In 1935 missions were running nearly 57,000 schools throughout the world, including more than one hundred colleges. Mission schools promoted literacy in both European languages and vernaculars, and they spread Western ideals of democratic governance, individual rights, and the educability of women and girls. Despite their limitations, missions through education provided local leadership with the tools it needed to challenge foreign oppression. The Christian contribution to Asian nationalism was extremely significant, especially through the impact of mission schools. Korea, for example, was colonized by the Japanese in 1910. At that time, mission schools were the only form of modern education in the country. In 1911 the Japanese military police arrested 123 Koreans for conspiracy, 105 of whom were Christian clergy. Even though Christians represented only 1 percent of the total population. Mission education, which combined vernacular literacy with Western learning, clearly played a key role in equipping nationalist leadership.

The role of mission schools in creating nationalist leadership was important not only in Asia, but also in Africa. Missions founded schools before those of colonial governments, including the first higher education for Africans in 1827 at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, and higher education for South Africans at Fort Hare in 1916. By the Second World War, mission churches in Africa had produced a Christian elite poised to found independent governments. When independence came, even though Christianity was a minority religion, its adherents played a much larger role than their numbers warranted. Most black African leaders were churchmen. Kenneth Kaunda, first president of Zambia, was the son of a Presbyterian minister. Hastings Banda, first president of Malawi, received his early education in a
mission school and attended college in the United States. Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, attended Catholic mission schools and began his career teaching in them. Leopold Senghor studied for the priesthood before entering politics and becoming first president of Senegal. Similarly, Julius Nyerere, first prime minister of Tanzania, both studied and taught in Catholic mission schools. Not only did mission schools train many nationalist leaders, but church-related institutions provided opportunities for developing indigenous leadership.

After World War II, with the process from decolonization to independence in full swing, Christianity in the non-Western world faced an entirely new context. In 1954, leading East Asian Christians wrote a volume entitled Christianity and the Asian Revolution. Reflecting on the social convulsions of the twentieth century, the Christian leaders defined the “Asian Revolution” not only as a reaction against European colonialism but also as a search for human rights and economic and social justice, ideas obtained from the West itself. The authors noted, “As the American colonists revolted in the name of English justice against British rule, so Asians, in the name of political and social doctrines which originated in large part in Europe and America, revolted against European colonialism.”

From the 1950s through the 1970s, as nations shook off the legacy of European domination, churches around the world accused Western missionaries of paternalism, racism, and cultural imperialism. The refrain “Missionary, Go Home!” reached its peak in the early 1970s. In 1971 Christian leaders in the Philippines, Kenya, and Argentina called for a moratorium on missionaries to end the dependence of the younger churches on the older ones. In 1974 the All Africa Conference of Churches, meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, called for a moratorium on Western missionaries and money sent to Africa, because of the belief that foreign assistance created dependency and stifled African leadership.

The cries for moratorium from Latin American, Asian, and African Christians shocked the Western missionary movement. But indigenous Christian protests against Western mission were insignificant compared with the wholesale rejection of Christianity that occurred within revolutionary movements led by non-Christians. At the International Missionary Council meeting of 1938, the largest delegations of Asian Christians came from the countries with the largest Western-style Christian infrastructures: India and China. Both Indian and Chinese Christianity boasted national Christian councils under indigenous leadership; both enjoyed thriving ecumenical movements that supported organic church unions; both hosted a range of Christian colleges and hospitals. Ironically, anti-Christian backlashes raged in both countries. Because Christianity was a minority religion in both China and India, its association with European domination widely discredited it as dangerous and foreign in the eyes of the majority non-Christians. Despite a community that traced its founding to the apostle Thomas, most Indian Christians were outcasts, members of ethnic groups despised in Hindu society. Practicing a double discrimination against both Christianity and low caste status, the postcolonial Indian government excluded Christian Dalits (outcasts) from the affirmative-action programs guaranteed to other ethnic minorities. The government of India began denying visas to missionaries in 1964, and Christians faced ongoing discrimination and intermittent persecution in both India and Pakistan.

In China, the place of the largest Western missionary invest-

Non-Western Christians were seen as rice Christians, and missionaries were thought to be as outdated as dinosaurs.

destruction of all things religious or traditional. Except for a catacombs church of unknown strength, it seemed to China watchers in the 1970s that the Communist dictatorship had destroyed Chinese Christianity.

In parts of Africa, anticolonial movements sometimes took an anti-Christian stance. Nationalist leaders accused missions of telling Africans to pray and then stealing their land while their heads were bowed. Despite having been a resident mission pupil in childhood, Jomo Kenyatta, leader of the anti-Christian, pro-independence Mau-Mau rebellion in Kenya during the 1950s and later the country’s first president, accused missionaries of trying to destroy African culture. During the Mau-Mau liberation struggle, which mobilized African traditional religion against Christianity, rebels killed African Christians who refused to drink the goats’ blood and other sacrifices of the pro-independence cult. During the cold war, Marxist ideology as well as funding from the Soviet Union and China began playing a role in African conflicts. Following the Cuban example, Communist-funded movements in Mozambique and Angola dismantled mission schools and attacked churches as supposed organs of capitalism and European religion.

By the 1970s, on a political and ideological level, world Christianity seemed in disarray. Although mission education, literacy training, and ideals of individual human worth had
provided tools that initiated intellectual leadership of independence movements in Asia and Africa, the perceived alliance of foreign missions with European domination branded Christianity a henchman of colonialism. In the West, reacting against the colonial legacy, scholars and historians similarly indicted Christian missions as a tool of Western domination. As far as Western intellectuals were concerned, the non-Western Christian was a mercenary “rice Christian,” and the missionary as outdated as a dinosaur. The teaching of missions and world Christianity began disappearing from colleges and seminaries, a casualty of the Vietnam-era rejection of “culture Christianity” and Western domination in world affairs. With indigenous church leaders calling for moratoriums on missionaries, Western mainline churches became highly self-critical and guilt-ridden. Attempting to shift from paternalistic to partnership models of mission, they began cutting back on Western missionary personnel. During the long process from decolonization to independence, scholars, politicians, and leading ecclesiastics branded both Western missions and world Christianity failures because of their perceived social, theological, and political captivity to the despised colonialist interests.

Revival and Renewal in World Christianity

The irony of world Christianity from the Second World War through the 1970s was that even as scholars were writing books implicating Christianity in European imperialism, the number of believers began growing rapidly throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Perhaps if historians in the sixties and seventies had been studying Christianity as a people’s movement rather than a political one, they might have noticed that growth among the grass roots did not mirror the criticisms of intellectual elites. The process of decolonization and independence began severing the connection between Christianity and European colonialism. The repudiation of missionary paternalism, combined with expanding indigenous initiatives, freed Christianity to become more at home in local situations.

Another fallacy of treating Christianity as a politicized Western movement is that scholarship ignored the way in which ordinary people were receiving the gospel message and retranslating it into cultural modes that fitted their worldviews and met their needs. In retrospect it is evident that even during the colonial period, indigenous Christians—Bible women, evangelists, catechists, and prophets—were all along the most effective interpreters of Christianity to their own people. The explosion of forms of Christianity that provided the most resistance to Communist domination in the churches. Biblically literalist, directly dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, and emerging from the religious sensibilities of popular Chinese religion, indigenized forms of Chinese Christianity grew the most under Communist persecution. What had been 700,000 Protestants in 1949 grew to between 12 and 36 million Protestants by the end of the century.

In addition to government-approved churches, millions of Chinese Christians meet in house churches characterized by spontaneous spoken prayer, singing and fellowship, miraculous healing, exorcisms of evil spirits, and love and charity to neighbors. The translation of Christianity into African cultures was most obvious in the life and work of so-called African Independent or African Initiated Churches (AICs), defined by Harold Turner as churches founded in Africa, by Africans, primarily for Africans. By 1984 Africans had founded seven thousand independent, indigenous denominations in forty-three countries across the continent. By the 1990s over 40 percent of black Christians in South Africa were members of AICs. Chafing under white domination and racism, African-led movements began breaking off from mission churches in the 1880s. The earliest independent churches emphasized African nationalism in ecclesiastical affairs. They received the name “Ethiopian” in 1892 when a Methodist minister, Mangena Mokone, founded the

Indigenous Bible women, evangelists, catechists, and prophets were the most effective interpreters of the faith to their own people.
Ethiopian Church in the Witwatersrand region of South Africa. Believing that Africans should lead their own churches, Mokone cited Psalm 68:31: “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God.” During the early twentieth century, important African prophets and evangelists emerged throughout the continent, often to be arrested and persecuted by colonial authorities who deemed spiritual independence a dangerous precursor to political independence.

By the mid-twentieth century, the largest group of AICs were known as Spirit churches, often called Aladura in western Africa and Zionist in southern Africa. Spirit churches were characterized by a prophetic leader, a high emphasis on the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal phenomena such as speaking in tongues and exorcisms, and often a holy city or “Zion” as headquarters. With Bible translation into many African languages, prophetic African leaders interpreted the Scriptures for themselves in line with African cultural practices. Zionists, for example, permit polygamy, which exists both in the Bible and in traditional African cultures. Their leaders rely on dreams and visions for divine inspiration—also both a biblical and traditional African practice. Many people are attracted to AICs because they focus on healing the body and spirit through prayers, laying on of hands, and administration of holy water and other remedies. Women healers treat barren women and other sufferers, providing respite for them in healing colonies. In Zimbabwe more than 150 indigenous churches have extended the metaphor of healing by joining in a movement to heal the earth through planting trees—750,000 trees in 1997 alone. Spirit churches spread rapidly following political independence because they translated the Christian faith into African cultures, thereby both transforming the cultural forms and expanding the meaning of the Gospel as received from Western missionaries. Spirit churches also spread because they mount vigorous missionary movements, sending out evangelistic teams that dance through the villages, singing, praying, preaching, healing, and drawing people into a vigorous worship life.

Another momentous change in the world church since the 1960s can be traced to the renewal of Catholicism, the largest branch of Christianity with approximately 980 million members in 1996. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) brought to Rome the Catholic bishops, who together voted major changes in Catholicism’s theological self-definition, customs, and attitudes. As these bishops returned to their homelands, they began putting into practice the idea of the church as the people of God, with Mass said in the vernacular and a new openness to current sociocultural realities. In particular, the more than 600 Latin American bishops who attended the Vatican Council gained a new sense of their potential as the numerically largest block of Catholics in the world. Latin American bishops reflected on their common social problems—stark division between rich and poor, takeovers by military dictatorships, and a legacy of a church that took the side of the rich. At the meeting of Latin American bishops in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968, the bishops evaluated the social context of their continent and spoke with a powerful voice against the dependence of Latin America on the industrialized North—a dependence that perpetuated the poverty of the South. Calling the church to take the side of the poor, the bishops supported a new “theology of liberation.”

The “renewed commitment to democracy and human rights in the Catholic Church” supported a wave of democracy throughout Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Philippines during the 1970s and 1980s. The movement toward democracy in traditionally Roman Catholic countries was not universally acclaimed by the church, as the route often entailed violent rebellion and upheaval of the status quo. The theology of liberation immediately came into conflict with powerful military dictatorships, which began persecuting the church. Militaries martyred an estimated 850 bishops, priests, and nuns in Latin America during the 1970s and early 1980s. Military governments targeted church leaders at all levels because they were conscientizing the poor—teaching them to read and defending their human rights. The Roman Catholic Church in Latin America gained a vitality it had long lacked as laypeople began meeting in Base Christian Communities, which functioned as Bible study groups that reflected on the relationship between the church as community and social injustices. But as the theology of liberation confronted the social and political power structures in Latin America, the Catholic Church became divided between those who supported liberation theology among the “people of God” and those more conservative, who felt the nature of the church was more hierarchical and otherworldly.

The renewal of Catholicism in Latin America since the Second Vatican Council underscores a major tension in the growth of non-Western Christianity since the mid-twentieth century: the forms and structures for the growth of late twentieth-century Christianity could not be contained within either the institutional or the theological frameworks of Western Christianity. The Base Christian Communities, for example, introduced Bible study and a more intense spirituality into what had been
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nominal Catholic practice. Faced with the severe shortage of priests, Latin American Catholics, once they became used to reading the Bible for themselves, began forming their own churches and breaking away from Catholicism. Ironically, the liberation theologies of the Base Christian Communities may have created heightened expectations that could not be fulfilled, and disillusioned Catholics began founding their own churches. Protestant growth has become so rapid in Latin America that scholars have predicted that Protestants, notably of Pentecostal persuasion, could constitute a third of the Latin American population by the year 2010, with their greatest strengths in Guatemala, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Brazil, and Honduras. These new Protestants are founding their own churches, such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, a Pentecostal group begun in the late 1970s by Edir Macedo de Bezerra. By 1990 this home-grown denomination had 800 churches with two million worshipers led by 2,000 pastors throughout Latin America. Neither Catholicism nor the classic churches of the Protestant Reformation can contain the vitality of Latin American Christianity today.

Reasons for the revival and renewal of global Christianity today are too complex and diverse to be encapsulated in a brief essay. In addition to increasing indigenization within a postcolonial political framework, many sociological factors affect church growth, including urbanization, dislocation caused by war and violence, ethnic identity, the globalization of cyberspace, and local circumstances. Political contexts differ widely for Christian communities around the world. Nevertheless, Christianity throughout the non-Western world has in common an indigenous, grassroots leadership; embeddedness in local cultures; and reliance on a vernacular Bible. Where Christianity is growing in the South, it supports stable family and community life for peoples suffering political uncertainty and economic hardships. The time when Christianity was the religion of European colonial oppressors fades ever more rapidly into the past.

A Global/Local Christian Fabric

As Christianity shifts southward, the nature of Christianity itself evolves. The movement of the faith from one culture to another typically has caused a major change in the self-understanding and cultural grounding of the Christian movement. Past cultural shifts occurred when Christianity moved from a Hebrew to a Greco-Roman milieu, and then from a Mediterranean to a European framework. With the voyages of discovery, Europeans began exporting their religion in the late 1400s. At that time Christian expansion was partly a function of the state, reflecting the Christendom model of church/state relations. Even the voluntarism of Protestant missions occurred within a largely Christendom model. But the end of European colonialism after the Second World War accompanied a decline of European religiosity relative to the rest of the world. The virtual destruction of Russian Orthodoxy under the Communist regime was also a major factor in the elimination of the Christendom model.

Now much of the dynamism within world Christianity is occurring below the equator. As Christianity shifts southward, the interpretations of Christianity by people in Latin America, Africa, and southern Asia are coming to the fore. This changing face of the world church also brings new interpretive challenges for historians.

One of the knottiest interpretive problems in understanding Christianity today is the tension between a worldwide community of people who call themselves Christians and a multitude of local movements for whom Christianity represents a particular culture’s grappling with the nature of divine reality. Christianity is a world religion with a basic belief that God has revealed himself in the person of Jesus Christ, whose adherents are spread throughout the globe. Yet as Lamin Sanneh has so cogently argued, by virtue of its use of the vernacular in speaking of God and in spreading the Scriptures, Christianity has translated or incarnated itself into local cultures. What at first glance appears to be the largest world religion is in fact the ultimate local religion. Indigenous words for God and ancient forms of spirituality have all become part of Christianity. Flexibility at the local level, combined with being part of an international network, is a major factor in Christianity’s self-understanding and success today. The strength of world Christianity lies in its creative interweaving of the warp of a world religion with the woof of its local contexts.

The increasing cultural diversity within Christianity, with the recognition of the local within the global and the global within the local, complicates the writing of church history in the twenty-first century. The days are gone when the history of Christianity could be taught as the development of Western doctrine and institutions. Being in the middle of a large-scale transformation in the nature of Christianity, we do not yet have an adequate interpretive or even descriptive framework for what is happening. Australian historian Mark Hutchinson advocates a paradigm shift in the history of Christianity to a model of multiculturalism, a globalization of evangelicalism. Others interpret worldwide growth as the spread of Pentecostalism, since the majority of growing churches today express themselves in Pentecostal worship styles. A history-of-religions framework sees that the growing energy of Christianity has always been drawn from primal spirituality. Sociologists have explored the spread of Christianity today as a process of modernization, a variant of the Weberian thesis in the growth of capitalism. Historians influenced by liberation theology stress that the central focus of history should be the poor and marginalized rather than the ecclesiological elites of the Christendom model. Liberation theology has a strong influence on the ongoing history projects of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.

While each of these models has something to offer in helping us speak and teach about world Christianity, there is danger in theories of globalization that skip over the painstaking historical research necessary for each local context. Global analyses need to begin with local history, with the internal criteria of each movement as the starting point of our historical musings. As with the outdated nomenclature of mission history, such as “younger churches,” “developing churches,” the “history of the expansion of Christianity,” and so on, there is a constant temptation to define the changing global patterns in relation to the European and the North American experience.
The tension between the global and the local is not merely an academic exercise but is a struggle over identity. For example, some commentators are describing the growing world church as Pentecostal. Pentecostal and charismatic scholars want to claim the growth of world Christianity as part of their own missionary success. Since Pentecostal phenomena were so derided in Western Christianity into the 1980s, it is understandable that Western Pentecostal scholars wish to include all phenomenologically similar movements as somehow related to Azusa Street. Anthropologists might similarly wish to describe new Christian movements as Pentecostal because of the prominence of common phenomena such as speaking in tongues, healing rituals, and the alleged marginalized social status of many adherents. For political liberals who look down on what they perceive to be narrow pietism, the word “Pentecostal” has been attractive as a negative descriptor, as part of an implied spillover from the Christian right in the United States.

For historians, however, unreflective use of the term “Pentecostalism” to summarize growing world Christianity has the same problem as calling all biblical Christianity “fundamentalism.” It reduces local identity to a standardized set of criteria, in this case to phenomenology. Are Pentecostal phenomena the defining mark of identity for local practitioners, or are there other theological or communal identity markers that are more meaningful for them? Do all Pentecostal phenomena worldwide have an organic connection to Azusa Street and the missionary movement that spread from there, or is Pentecostal practice reflective of indigenous cultural initiative? Is the use of the word “Pentecostal” just the latest instance of categories originating from the North being used to explain and somehow take credit for what is going on in the South?

Non-Western historians are cautioning against blanket use of the word “Pentecostal” to describe indigenous Christianity. For example, Nigerian church historian Ogbu Kalu, head of the African history project for the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, has criticized the Pentecostal terminology as reflecting the dominance of anthropology in ignoring essential historical and theological differences among current movements. Kalu insists that historians be more accurate and recognize the differences that arise within the movements themselves. Inus Daneel, the leading interpreter of African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe, argues vigorously against the label of Pentecostalism being plastered onto indigenous churches. Not only have these churches been founded by African prophets, but they have recruited their members largely from the traditional population, not from so-called mission churches. Although they emphasize the Holy Spirit, the AICs deal with issues arising from African culture, not from Western Pentecostalism. To claim that AICs are otherworldly, for instance, ignores the holism that undergirds African religions.

As scholars analyze and define what is happening in world Christianity today, we must apply such globalizing concepts as “Pentecostal” only after careful research into the local contexts. Historians should take the lead in acknowledging the new Christianities as radically indigenous movements, not simply Pentecostalism or primal religiosity, or perhaps not even multicultural options within a global evangelicalism. Each movement should be studied from within its own internal logic, even as the universal nature of Christianity is recognizable in the construction of local identities. Popular Korean Christianity is a case in point. David Yonggi Cho leads the largest church in the world, the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea. Cho is by membership a Pentecostal, a minister in the Assemblies of God. Yet the emphasis of his congregation on material blessings and on such spiritualities as a prayer mountain is clearly attributable to the influence of Korean shamanism. Does Yoido Full Gospel Church exemplify globalized Pentecostalism or localized spirit religion? As historians work within the tensions between the global and the local that characterize indigenous world Christianities today, we should recognize that each form of twenty-first century Christianity represents a synthesis of global and local elements that has its own integrity.

As Christianity declines in Europe and grows in the South, historians need to recognize what the International Missionary Council saw in 1938: the future of world Christianity rests with the so-called younger churches and their daily struggles. Ultimately, the most interesting lessons from the missionary outreach during the Western colonial era is what happened to Christianity when the missionaries weren't looking, and after the colonizers withdrew. The challenge for historians lies in seeing beyond an extension of Western categories and into the hearts, minds, and contexts of Christ’s living peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Notes


2. In attendance were pioneer leaders like Bishop Azariah, the first Indian Anglican bishop, and Toyohiko Kagawa, advocate of Japanese social Christianity. There were up-and-coming theologians such as Christian Baeta of Gold Coast and D. T. Niles of Ceylon, both thirty years old. Young leaders of future social struggles included Chief Albert Luthuli, future president of the African National Congress and first African recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960, and Y. T. Wu, author of the controversial anti-Western Chinese Christian Manifesto in 1950. Women leaders included Mina Soga, social worker and the first African woman to attend an international conference, and Michi Kawai, noted Japanese educationist. For attendance list, see ibid., pp. 187–201.


4. An earlier draft of this article was presented at the meeting of the American Society of Church History in Washington, D.C., on January 9, 1999. Following both the terminology of the New International Economic Order (Brandt Commission), and the geographic reality of where most churches are growing, I have chosen to speak here of Christianity in the “South.” “North”/“South” nomenclature nevertheless contains imprecisions and inadequacies, as do the terms “West”/“East,” “First World”/“Third World,” or “First World”/“Two-Thirds World.”


8. The rise of Hindu fundamentalism in the late 1990s increased...
drastically the amount of anti-Christian violence. In Gujarat alone, sixty recorded incidents occurred in the second half of 1998 until Christmas, and roughly the same number occurred in the few weeks after (Thomas Quigley, “Anti-Christian Violence in India,” *America*, April 3, 1999, p. 10).


24. Mark Hutchinson, “It’s a Small Church After All,” *Christianity Today*, November 16, 1998, pp. 46–49. Hutchinson is one of the leaders of the Currents in World Christianity Project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, which seeks to understand the global spread of evangelicalism.


29. Shenk, “Toward a Global Church History,” p. 56.

30. Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan told the Eighteenth Pentecostal World Conference in 1998 that more than 25 percent of the world’s Christians are Pentecostal or charismatic and that “the renewal will continue with increasing strength into the next millennium” (“Current News Summary,” *Religion Today* [October 5, 1998]).


33. One possible paradigm is to distinguish between largely urban, modernizing movements and rural, neo-traditionalist movements. In Singapore, for example, there are growing numbers of English-speaking, Internet-linked, young professional Pentecostals. These Christians are part of an international network replete with its own literature, hymnody, and global evangelistic consciousness. In rural Indonesia, however, nonliterate indigenous Christian movements, influenced by the spirit world of Javanese mysticism, are not connected to the nearby urban elites. (I am indebted to Graham Walker for this example.)

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Lesslie Newbigin's Contribution to Mission Theology

Lesslie Newbigin (1909–98) was one of the outstanding Christian leaders of the twentieth century. This brief essay considers Newbigin's contribution to theology from the perspective of the Christian mission. He lived a long and full life and continued to write and speak right up to the end. His writings span six decades. In this appreciation of Newbigin's oeuvre as reflected in his writings, I note the characteristics that distinguish his work and assess the impact of his thought and its continuing relevance.

A fitting starting point is the formative experience he records in his autobiography. He entered Cambridge University in 1928 an agnostic, but during his first year at university the example of an older student challenged him to consider the Christian faith. The following summer, at age nineteen, he joined a Quaker service center in South Wales that provided recreational services to unemployed miners. The coal mining industry was depressed, and the situation bleak and hopeless. One night as he lay in bed overwhelmed with concern for these men, he saw “a vision of the cross” touching, as it were, heaven and earth. Its outstretched arms touched the whole world and the whole of life. This experience left an indelible imprint on him, furnishing the point of departure for his life. Furthermore, his relationship with God was intimate and vivid, nurtured by continual communion. From this time he was one of God’s partisans.

Newbigin was highly disciplined. He mastered the basics of whatever he was studying and prepared thoroughly for each assignment. When he arrived in India in 1936, he immediately set out to attain proficiency in Tamil, a language nonnative speakers find difficult to master. Next he deepened his understanding of the culture and religion of India by spending many hours with the Ramakrishna Mission reading alternately the Svetasvara Upanishad and John’s gospel in the original languages. This attitude of readiness to fearlessly confront the intellectual and theological demands of each situation continuously drew him into dialogue with a range of viewpoints, regardless of whether or not he found them congenial.

By force of personality and giftedness, Newbigin early emerged as a missionary statesman and ecumenical leader of substance. His views were never parochial, and yet he remained rooted in the local—be that the rural villages of Tamil Nadu, urban Madras, or inner city Winson Green in Birmingham. He modeled what it means to contextualize Christian witness by immersing oneself in the language and culture of a particular people. Rather than narrowing or limiting one’s view, true contextualization will extend one’s horizon.

Lesslie Newbigin was a frontline thinker because of an uncommon ability to sense the emerging issue that must be addressed at the moment. This trait is not to be confused with the pursuit of fads. He abhorred faddishness. What captured his attention were the issues that impinged on the future of the church and its obedience in mission: the nature of the church in relation to unity and mission, the relevance of the Trinity, the Gospel and the religions, the meaning of contextualization, conversion, pluralism, and Christian witness in a culture that has rejected Christendom. Time and again Newbigin led the way in introducing an issue that would become a dominant theme in the ensuing years.

Newbigin’s mode of discourse was theological, even though he consistently disclaimed any pretension to being a professional theologian. In the preface to one of his most widely read books, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, he wrote: “I can make no claim either to originality or to scholarship. I am a pastor and preacher.” Virtually everything Newbigin wrote was “on assignment,” that is, in response to a speaking or writing assignment. He found no time for leisurely and detached reflection. He spoke and wrote on the run, both figuratively and literally, for, despite a permanent limp that resulted from a serious bus accident in India in 1936, he moved with dispatch. This habit stamped his thought with an immediacy not characteristic of the academy. He seldom bothered with the usual scholarly apparatus of notes and references, so that some academics felt compelled to charge that he was not one of them; yet his thought has consistently commanded attention because of its profundity, vigor, and challenge.

Newbigin remained intensely engaged in both church and world and devoted himself to reflecting on the life of faith as it intersects with the world; he was impatient with “airy-fairy” or detached scholarship that flaunted its objectivity. (He could be devastating in exposing the pretensions of the latter.) His vocation was to be one of the seminal frontline thinkers of the twentieth century. He was read with appreciation by a vast number of laypeople, while his books have regularly appeared on the reading lists of numerous divinity schools’ syllabi. Rather than being a systematic scholar attempting to provide a comprehensive account, he is best characterized as a strategic thinker, one sensitive to the priority issues facing the church.

Christ’s Community as Key

Newbigin was wholly committed to God’s mission of the redemption of the world. He was equally committed to the unity of the church. At the center of mission and unity stood Jesus Christ. His total commitment to Christ-centered mission and Christ-centered ecumenism gave his witness a coherence that leaped over the usual ecclesiastical and theological lines. Conventional theological labels were never adequate to describe him: he was too evangelical for some conciliar Protestants, and too open for some evangelicals.

This passage from the 1952 Kerr Lectures, frequently repeated over the years, functions as something of a programmatic statement of Newbigin’s theological vision:

It is surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind Him was not a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life, but a visible community. . . . He committed the entire work of salvation to that community. It was not that a community gathered round an idea, so that the idea was primary and the community secondary. It was that a community called together by the deliberate choice of the Lord Himself, and re-created in Him, gradually sought—and is seeking—to make explicit who He is and what He has done. The actual community is primary; the understanding of what it is comes second.

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The starting point must ever be God’s initiative in Jesus Christ, the calling of the church to be the visible and witnessing community of the Gospel, the essential structure an unfolding narrative rather than an institutional system.

The categories of theology and missiology are almost wholly irrelevant. Newbigin’s theology is thoroughly missiological, and his missiology theological. The wellspring of his thought and action was his vision of the cross that perforce thrusts the church into missionary witness; for him, action must continually be tested against the norm of the Gospel, the center of which is the cross.

Newbigin’s only effort to present a comprehensive statement of his theology of mission is his book *The Open Secret*, based on a course of lectures he gave at Selby Oak Colleges for several years following his retirement from India. In the preface he notes that the original germ for the work was his *Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today’s Mission*. This is a serviceable summary of his theology of mission but does not anticipate his preoccupation with “The Gospel and Our Culture” final phase of his life.

**Missionary Theologian**

On almost every page of Newbigin’s writings, one encounters the mind and heart of the missionary theologian at work. In the William Belden Noble Lectures for 1958 at Harvard University, Newbigin offered a rejoinder to one of Harvard’s most eminent philosophers in the twentieth century, William Ernest Hocking, who two years earlier had published *The Coming World Civilization*. In the 1930s Hocking had presided over the Laymen’s Foreign Missions Inquiry, which produced the multivolume report *Re-Thinking Missions*. Hocking himself wrote the summation volume, which stirred intense debate about the future of Christian missions. Hocking’s proposed reformulation of missionary principles entailing a fundamental redefinition of mission contributed to polarization within the missionary movement.

Newbigin’s reply to Hocking posed a question: *A Faith for This One World?* Already at this point Newbigin was wrestling with the issue that would preoccupy him continually the last two decades of his life: “No faith can command a man’s final and absolute allegiance, that is to say no faith can be a man’s real religion, if he knows that it is only true for certain places and certain people. In a world which knows that there is only one physics and one mathematics, religion cannot do less than claim for its affirmations a like universal validity.” The modern secular solution in which two mutually unintelligible categories were established—“facts” and “values”—had to be rejected. The secularist claimed universal validity for scientific facts but allowed only for personal preference insofar as values were concerned. In making his critique and counterproposal, Newbigin considered three schemes for a universal religious framework for humankind put forward by Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, British historian Arnold Toynbee, and American philosopher William Ernest Hocking. It is the latter that concerns us here.

In his quest for a basis for a universal civilization, Hocking argued that Christianity alone offered an adequate foundation. To be viable, however, the Christian message had to strip away its offensive parochialisms and doctrinal particularisms. Newbigin queried Hocking’s proposal at three crucial points: Hocking’s view of faith, his understanding of Jesus Christ, and the relationship between faith and history.

First, the biblical view of faith is fundamentally different from that of Hocking’s. For the latter, faith is “an individual experience of timeless reality,” a view that echoes Radhakrishnan’s. In the Bible the living God acts by gathering a people committed to covenant relationship—that is, God takes the initiative in creating a new social reality. According to the biblical account, “the eternal emphatically has a history, however shocking it may be to the philosopher.” Hocking speaks abstractly of One who is Love, but this One never engages history. This is too vague and insubstantial to command our faith response.

Second, Hocking is diffident about Jesus Christ, preferring to interpret the Christ in relation to some universal religious spirit. He suggests that Christian faith is of a piece with the faith by which all people live. Hocking cited the words from John’s gospel: “The real light which enlightens every man was even then coming into the world” (1:9 NEB). Here Newbigin points up the logical fallacy on which Hocking’s argument turns. Hocking bases his reasoning on personal religious experience, the classical liberal premise, whereas the Johannine passage insists that this light is “present wherever man is present, not wherever religion is present.” In this and numerous other passages, Newbigin warns of the danger of putting confidence in religion. Biblical faith arises from God’s initiative in history, encountering us in our world, dying at the hands of sinful humans and in the resurrection gaining victory over the power of death. Biblical faith depends on what Newbigin repeatedly refers to as “the total fact of Christ.”

The third criticism of Hocking concerns the way the philosopher argues for a necessary link between history and religion but fails to base this on the incarnation. Christians believe, insists Newbigin, “that at one point in human history the universal and the concrete historical completely coincided, that the Man Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnate Word of God, that in his works and words the perfect will of God was done without defect or remainder.” The Christian Gospel depends on this “total fact of Christ.” Hocking fails to take this center seriously, opting instead for a universal mystical experience available to humankind but without any specific point of reference. By contrast, the Gospel insists that God acted decisively in Jesus Christ to reveal the meaning of divine love and salvation.

Ultimately, Newbigin’s reply to Hocking’s program is that the only viable basis for the civilization he advocates is to be found in the missionary proclamation of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, by which a new humanity is being called into being. In the ensuing years Newbigin would develop his theology of mission further by placing it in a Trinitarian framework and thinking through issues of conversion and contextualization. But its foundation remained “the total fact of Christ.”

**Contextual Theologian**

A cursory reading of the Newbigin writings might suggest a fair amount of repetition. He early developed a characteristic style of discourse on which he continued to rely. Certain themes recur over the decades, and the theological framework remains securely in place. What then accounts for the vibrancy and relevance of his thought? I suggest that what makes Newbigin consistently worth listening to is his keen sense of context and his capacity to identify with his audience. He had the ability to articulate what for others remained only subliminal until he expressed it for them.

Newbigin began his missionary service in India in 1936. Western civilization was in turmoil, with intimations of another
Diego Irarrázaval

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Announcing
Gerald H. Anderson, editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research since 1977, has announced that he will retire in June 2000. Following missionary service in the Philippines, he came to the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC), then in Ventnor, New Jersey, in 1974 as Associate Director, and became Director in 1976. He will be succeeded by Jonathan J. Bonk as Director and Editor. Robert T. Coote will become Associate Director and Associate Editor.

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held June 16–18, 2000, at Techny (near Chicago), Illinois. The theme is “Creative Partnerships for Mission in the Twenty-first Century.” Anne Reissner from the Center for Mission Research and Study at Maryknoll, New York, is the ASM president. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 15–16 at the same place in conjunction with the ASM. The theme of their meeting is “The Global Church in the Mission Classroom.” Susan Higgins of Milligan College, Tennessee, is president of the APM. For further information and registration for both meetings, contact Darrell R. Guder, Columbia Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 520, Decatur, Georgia 30031-0520 (Fax: 404-687-4656; E-mail: Guder@CTSnet.edu).

The International Association for Mission Studies, meeting in South Africa in January, 2000, elected Paulo Suess as President. A German Catholic missionary, he is Director of Postgraduate Studies of Missiology, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Darrell L. Whitman, Professor of Missionary Anthropology at Asbury Theological Seminary E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, in Wilmore, Kentucky, was elected Vice President. They will serve for the next four years until the next general meeting of the association.

Personalia
Timothy Dakin, 41, is the new General Secretary of the Church Mission Society (CMS), London. He takes the place of Canon Diana Witts, General Secretary since 1995, who retires at Easter 2000 and who will be a Senior Mission Scholar in residence at the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, for the Fall term 2000. Dakin was a mission partner with the Church Army and was Principal of Carlile College, Nairobi, Kenya, for six years. He is a graduate of Oxford University and is ordained in the Anglican Church.

Michael Kinnannon has been appointed to the new Allen and Dottie Miller Chair for Mission and Peace at Eden Theological Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, effective July 1, 2000. Kinnannon began his ministry on the staff of the World Council of Churches as executive secretary for the Commission on Faith and Order. An ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), he comes to Eden from Lexington Theological Seminary, where he served as Professor of Theology and Ecumenical Studies.

Died. Ruth Sovik, 71, American ecumenical mission administrator, January 12, 2000, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Following missionary service in Taiwan, she moved to Geneva and, in 1965, joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) as editorial assistant for the International Review of Mission, a publication of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), whose deputy director she became in 1978. She left the WCC in 1980 to become associate general secretary of the World Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and later, in 1983, its general secretary. In 1985 she was appointed as one of three deputy general secretaries of the WCC. She held this position until her retirement in 1991, when she and her husband, Arne, returned to the United States.

world war. Movements for political independence in the Asian and African colonies constantly reminded the European colonial powers that the present order would not last indefinitely. Missionary leaders were aware that the so-called younger churches were restive under continued mission control, even if the missions typically seemed paralyzed as to what constructive steps might be taken.

Newbigin begins the 1952 Kerr Lectures with a discussion of the breakdown of Christendom and its significance for ecclesiology.17 Christendom stands for “the synthesis between the Gospel and the culture of the western part of the European peninsula of Asia” that had developed over a long period. Christianity was so accommodated to European culture that it had become the folk religion of the West. The ecclesiology developed in this insular Western context was devoid of a sense of mission to its own culture. This ecclesiology was largely devoted to conflicts between various Christian groups rather than being animated by a vision of the church in relation to the pagan world. The breakup of this historical Christendom reality, starting in the seventeenth century, coincided with the beginning of the movement to send Christian missions from the West to other continents. Naturally, these missions took with them the only understanding of the church they knew, the Christendom model. Thus, both in the historical Christian heartland called Christendom as well as in other parts of the world where Western missions had established churches based on this Christendom ecclesiology, the theological understanding of the church is a matter of urgent concern.

If we compare The Household of God with The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, written thirty-six years apart, an underlying coherence in theme and structure is evident. Each book models sensitivity to the sociohistorical context in which it is set, which characterizes a vital theology. In 1952 Newbigin was a Western missionary living in the non-Western world trying to address both worlds; by 1988 his outlook has undergone a radical change. Retiring from service in India in 1974, he attempted to “go home” but discovered that the Great Britain he once knew was no more. Instead it had become a disconcerting, even disturbing, environment. Now he saw his homeland with critical concern, indeed alarm. What some artists and philosophers were describing as the decline of the West and the end of Christendom in the pre-World War II era, had now become reality. A palpable existential hopelessness had settled over Western society. The bankruptcy of the Christendom ecclesiology weighed heavily on him. It is no surprise that the chapter in The Gospel in a Pluralist Society that attracts the greatest reader response is chapter 18, “The Congregation as Hermeneutic of the Gospel.” The malaise widely felt among Western Christians is generally attributed to forms of
Died. Josef Amstutz, S.M.B., 72, Swiss missiologist, October 9, 1999, at Immensee, Switzerland. Ordained to the priesthood in 1953, he had doctorates from the Gregorian University, Rome (1957) and Oxford (1959). After pastoral work in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and teaching theology in Switzerland, he was General Superior of the Bethlehem Fathers from 1967 to 1981. He was one of the founders of the Institute of Missiology at the Universidade Intercontinental, Mexico, from 1982 to 1985, and since 1986 he was a member of the research group at Romero-Haus, Lucerne, Switzerland. His most recent book is Missionarische Praesenz: Charles de Foucauld in der Sahara (Immensee, 1997).

Died. David M. Stowe, 80, executive vice president emeritus of the United Church Board for World Ministries, the overseas mission agency of the United Church of Christ in the U.S., January 10, 2000, in Englewood, New Jersey. A graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles in 1940, he earned his B.D. degree in 1943 and his Th.D. in 1953 from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1966. Ordained in 1943 in the Congregational Church, he and his wife, Virginia, went to North China in 1945 as missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, where he taught at Yenching University in Peking. In 1956 he joined the national staff of the American Board in Boston, which became the United Church Board for World Ministries in 1957. In 1963 he became executive secretary of the Division of Foreign Missions in the National Council of Churches in the U.S., and in 1970 he was elected to the top executive position of the United Church’s World Board. He retired in 1980.

Died. John R. Fleming, 88, Scottish missiologist, June 27, 1999, in St. Andrews, Scotland. Educated at Glasgow University, Heidelberg University, and Union Theological Seminary, New York (Th.D.), he was ordained in the Church of Scotland and sent to China in 1938 with his wife, Pearl, where he taught at Moukden Theological College. In 1951, in Singapore, he became the first general secretary of the Malayan Christian Council, and lectured at Trinity Theological College. In 1958 he became the representative in South East Asia of the Nanking Theological Seminary Board of Founders (now the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia), and in 1961 he was appointed executive director. He was the first editor of the South East Asia Journal of Theology, the first dean of the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, and the first executive director of the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia. In 1968 he became Senior Lecturer in systematic theology at the University of St. Andrews. In 1971 he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Glasgow University.

Died. Stephen Fuchs, S.V.D., 92, India missionary scholar, January 17, 2000, at St. Gabriel near Vienna, Austria. Born in Austria, he joined the Society of the Divine Word in 1927, where he came under the influence of Wilhelm Schmidt, the noted S.V.D. scholar of linguistics and anthropology. Following ordination in 1934, Fuchs went as a missionary to India where he worked among the so-called untouchables in Madhya Pradesh. He received his doctorate from Vienna University in 1950, with a dissertation that was a pioneering ethnographic study of a Harijan caste in India. During his sixty years in India he taught at various universities and institutes, including the University of Bombay, and was a visiting professor at the University of San Carlos, Cebu, Philippines. He also established the Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay. Among his numerous books were Anthropology for the Missions (Allahabad, 1979) and The Aboriginal Tribes of India (New Delhi, 1992).

church life that do not support Christian discipleship and witness in modern culture. The diagnosis Newbigin offered in 1952 has, if anything, become even more compelling as the decades have moved on.

Strategic Theologian

In 1981 the British Council of Churches asked Newbigin to draft an aide-memoire to guide the council in responding to the crisis of the church in modern British society. The result was a small book entitled The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches, which sparked The Gospel and Our Culture program, a six-year initiative under BCC auspices that culminated in a national consultation held at Swanwick in 1992 entitled “The Gospel as Public Truth.” This was a sustained effort to get Christian leaders in the professions, public life, and church to come together to rethink what it means to witness to the Gospel in all sectors of life.

This effort became his consuming passion and set the course for the rest of his life: so to renew the church in the West that it would again bring the witness of Christian revelation to bear on the whole of life, but do so without reverting to “Constantinian” forms and assumptions. Newbigin deployed insights from philosophy, history, sociology, and science to create a compelling analysis of the present situation, but his framework was theological and missiological. From this point on Newbigin was not only engaging a particular context but was continually asking the question of strategy: how can the church respond faithfully in this situation?

Yet this was no exception. Throughout his life he demonstrated an uncommon ability to discern the critical issues and offer a strategic, constructive response. Some initiatives failed, while others succeeded. Always one began by defining the key concern and then working out an appropriate theological response.

The Challenges Ahead

It is entirely characteristic that Lesslie Newbigin titled his autobiography Unfinished Agenda. He lived in the present for the future. He had a strong sense of an eschatology that gave one nerve to face the present knowing that the victory was assuredly in God’s hands. What guidance with regard to the future did Newbigin offer?

1. We are challenged to affirm that the cross provides the clue to the human predicament. The Gospel tells us the story of what God has done to redeem the whole creation from bondage to sin, decay, and death. At the center of that story stands the cross, representing that moment when God in Jesus Christ inter-
vened decisively “for us and our salvation.” No part of human existence is beyond the scope of God’s saving purpose, for the divine compassion encompasses the whole of creation.

Yet Christian history is filled with examples of how the Gospel of the cross has been denied or reduced to fit the prevailing plausibility structure. Whenever this occurs, the power of the Gospel is diminished. An emergent modern culture in the seventeenth century introduced the distinction between “fact” (i.e., that which is empirically verifiable according to scientific laws) and “value” (i.e., what is personal, private). Only objective “facts” could be regarded as universally valid and authoritative. Religion was relegated to “value” status. The Gospel of the cross—viewed merely as a value—was regarded not only as scandalous but as entirely out of place in the public sphere. But if the church is to have a witness, it must reclaim “the total fact of Christ,” not a truncated version tailored to accommodate modern sensibilities. This requires that the church learn once more to indwell the biblical narrative so that its own life, witness, and worship are shaped by that narrative rather than by secular myth.

2. We are called to reclaim the church for its missionary purpose. In *The Household of God*Newbigin pointed to the fatal dichotomy that marks Christendom ecclesiology, that is, the separation between church and mission. Mission is often treated as a stepchild or, even worse, in some cases an orphan, for traditional ecclesiology often had no place for mission. Yet the church was instituted by Jesus Christ to be a sign of God’s reign and the means by which witness to that reign would be carried to the ends of the earth. The church that refuses to accept its missionary purpose is, at most, a deformed church.

3. We are called to reclaim the church for its missionary purpose in relation to modern Western culture. While it is essential that we press to reclaim the church for its missionary purpose, we cannot stop here. The next step is to work out that fundamental missional ecclesiology in relation to modern Western culture. This is admittedly a daunting undertaking. With its roots in Christendom, modern Western culture manifests deep antagonism toward religious faith. It views itself as being post-Christendom, even postreligious. Such attitudes and habits of thought are deeply held. It is urgent that the church in the West retrieve the integrity of its identity as a missionary presence in society. This recovery entails learning to understand this culture, its controlling myths and plausibility structure, from a missionary perspective and discern the relevance of the fullness of the Gospel in this culture.

With full awareness of the profound changes that the Christian mission had to make in light of the ending of the colonial era, Newbigin concluded his lectures at the Kuala Lumpur assembly of the East Asia Christian Conference in 1959 by emphasizing the urgent need for a new pattern and appropriate missionary method. But in order to translate such talk into action, one condition had to be met: “That condition is that there shall be distributed throughout the whole membership of the Church a deep, and strong, and experientially verified conviction about the sufficiency and finality of Christ for the whole world.”

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3. We are called to reclaim the church for its missionary purpose in relation to modern Western culture. While it is essential that we press to reclaim the church for its missionary purpose, we cannot stop here. The next step is to work out that fundamental missional ecclesiology in relation to modern Western culture. This is admittedly a daunting undertaking. With its roots in Christendom, modern Western culture manifests deep antagonism toward religious faith. It views itself as being post-Christendom, even postreligious. Such attitudes and habits of thought are deeply held. It is urgent that the church in the West retrieve the integrity of its identity as a missionary presence in society. This recovery entails learning to understand this culture, its controlling myths and plausibility structure, from a missionary perspective and discern the relevance of the fullness of the Gospel in this culture.

Notes

1. This article is a revision of one commissioned for the British Bible Society’s periodical *The Bible in TransMission* (Summer 1998). A full-scale appraisal of Newbigin’s thought appears in George R. Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998). Anyone wishing to consider more fully Newbigin’s contribution will want to avail themselves of Hunsberger’s book, including the bibliography of Newbigin’s writings for the years 1933–95 (pp. 283–304).


3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. At age seventy-eight Newbigin was invited to be the 1988 Alexander Robertson Lecturer at the University of Glasgow. He understood that this entailed the delivery of half a dozen public lectures during the autumn term. He arrived in Glasgow with the lectures in completed manuscript form, only to be told by the dean of faculty that this term the lectures would be delivered as twenty classroom lectures to first-year divinity students. Immediately he set about reorganizing and rewriting the lectures in the form found in his book *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (New York: Friendship Press, 1954), p. 20.


9. See note 5 above.


13. Ibid., p. 51.


15. Ibid., p. 30.

16. Ibid.

17. Note 7 above.


19. Newbigin regarded as a failure the study entitled “The Missionary Structure of the Congregation,” which was launched in 1961 following the New Delhi Assembly, while he was director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches.

20. *A Decisive Hour*, p. 44.

21. Ibid., p. 45.
Christianity’s World Mission would be less intimidating and more manageable if everyone spoke the same language, followed the same customs and viewed life the same way. That idyllic world, however, is not the world Christ calls us to engage.

The real world features at least a dozen major cultural families and more than 2,000 religions, 6,000 languages and 30,000 distinct societies and cultures. There are also an unknown (and shifting) number of sub-cultures, counter-cultures and peoples with their own distinct name, history and identity. Furthermore, secularization has transformed Western nations into “mission fields” once again.

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My Pilgrimage in Mission

Paul E. Pierson

I had the privilege of being born into a strong Christian home. My father was the son of immigrants who helped establish a Swedish Baptist church in Forest City, Iowa, around 1870. After marriage he and my mother moved to southern California, where he worked in an industrial plant. I was the third of three sons, born into this Christian family and into the Baptist Church. The church had a strong fundamentalist bent, but I never felt the need to rebel, which I think was because of the integrity of my parents in the practice of their faith. Beyond the need for salvation in Christ, which my parents emphasized, I especially remember two other things they taught me: first, that the Gospel was for all peoples and thus that missions are essential, and second, that any kind of racism was wrong. When a Japanese family bought the house next to ours in 1937, my parents welcomed them as neighbors, soon took the children to Sunday School, and ultimately saw a Japanese Baptist church established partly as a result. And when our neighbors were taken to “relocation” camps after Pearl Harbor, my father took care of their property, received the rent, and sent it to them without accepting any payment. Years later a Japanese-American pastor told me that my father was the reason he was in ministry.

Facing the Mission Question

After brief navy service in World War II, I went to the University of California, Berkeley, to study chemical engineering. In my junior year I began to attend the First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, where a remarkable pastor, Robert Boyd Munger, had a powerful ministry, especially among returning veterans. In his preaching I heard two primary emphases: first, that Jesus Christ was Lord, and if we were to be serious Christians, personal recognition of his lordship was essential. Second, Christ’s concern was for the whole world, which clearly led to an emphasis on mission. Here I became part of a dynamic group of several hundred students studying the Bible and exploring these issues. Scores of my colleagues later entered ministry and mission.

My own spiritual struggle was over the issue of the lordship of Christ. I had been a believer all my life, but now the question was whether I was willing to embrace Christ fully as Lord of my life, wherever that might lead. I went through an intense struggle for nine months before I made that decision, quietly, with no show of emotion, in a worship service. (He and his wife have spent over forty years in Pakistan.) During my senior year I met Rosemary, a marvelous young woman in a Bible study group, and very soon decided I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. She and I were married a year after our graduation from the university. By this time I was working in Berkeley in my chosen profession, and she was teaching school. Then ten weeks after our wedding we received what I can only describe as a very clear call, a conviction that God was calling us into missionary service. We have always been grateful that the call came to both of us together. Our parents were surprised but very supportive of our change in direction.

When my father heard of our decision, he told me he had always prayed that one of his sons would become a missionary. But he had never told anyone about that prayer!

In 1951 we went to Princeton Seminary, in New Jersey.
Rosemary taught in a nearby school while I studied in the seminary. The two professors with the greatest influence on me were John A. MacKay and Otto Piper. MacKay was one of the great missionary statesmen of the time. I can still hear him thundering in class, "The church that is not missionary is not truly the church." And Piper, who had courageously stood up against Hitler in the early 1930s and been exiled from Germany, gave me a new vision of redemptive history as the integrative principle for the Bible. Although I was admitted to Ph.D. study in New Testament under Piper, we decided it was time to go to the mission field and deferred further study.

**Overnight from Student to Pastor**

In 1956 we sailed to Brazil to serve under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, USA. In language school, a Mennonite friend and I organized a study group among the students. The first book we studied was Donald A. McGavran's *Bridges of God.* Later, as secretary of the Commission on Theological Education of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, I was able to bring McGavran to lecture in the Brazilian seminaries.

The agreement between our mission and the Brazilian Presbyterian Church was that missionaries would work mainly in the far interior, and after language study we were sent to Corumba, a small city on the Brazil-Bolivian border. (It is the scene of much of the action in John Grisham's latest book, *The Testament.*) There I became pastor of a group of twelve Presbyterians who had moved there, established a congregation, and built a small chapel. One week I was an inexperienced seminary and language school graduate, the next week I was a pastor! I spent many hours with the three key leaders in the congregation, drinking Brazilian cafezinho, sharing ideas, listening, praying, and planning. I also studied intensively the Book of Acts. I wanted to be sure that the message I was attempting to communicate was that of the apostles. I really learned to preach, not at Princeton, but in the mission field.

### Teaching and the Brazilian Crisis

We had planned to return to Corumba after furlough, but the national church and the U.S. mission asked me to teach in the Presbyterian Seminary in Recife. The position was in church history, so I returned to Princeton in 1960 to begin a Ph.D. in that field. In 1961 Rosemary and I, now with four children, arrived in Recife, the major city in Brazil's Northeast, one of the most poverty-stricken regions of South America. We had seen poverty in Corumba, but it was worse in the cities and interior of the Northeast. The state immediately south of ours registered 46 percent infant mortality one year. Such statistics were common. The area was a major focus of President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, and we became friends with a number of the USAID families, many of them strong Christians. I even had the unenviable task of preaching in the American church there the Sunday after Kennedy's assassination.

In Recife there were a number of issues to be faced. Most of our students came from the interior, with a faith focused primarily on personal salvation. As they came to the seminary in the city, they began to ask new questions. How was their faith to relate to the crushing poverty and political oppression? On one side were older church leaders who saw any such questions as dangerous, possibly leading to Communism; on the other side were university students and others who saw Marxism as the only alternative. Castro's Cuba seemed to be the model for many Brazilians, especially among the students. Communist-led peasant leagues were organized among sugar cane workers in the interior, threatening to march on the city. The seminary was in a time of turmoil, and to complicate matters, because of dissatisfaction with the Brazilian rector at the seminary, I was suddenly elected to that position by the Brazilian trustees.

The Brazilian government seemed to be sliding toward anarchy, and in 1964 we saw tanks half a block from our home, preparing to fire on the local police headquarters if it resisted the military coup in progress. If they had done so and missed, the shells would have landed in the middle of our seminary campus. To make matters worse, our most popular Brazilian faculty member, who taught ethics and theology, was accused of being a Communist by the far right, and we discovered there was an order for his arrest. Through a series of providential contacts we were able to keep him out of prison.

### Our mission board and the Brazilian church moved further apart, and we missionaries were caught in the middle.

I remember saying, as we took him and his wife to a remote hiding place for a few days, that I had not learned how to do that in Princeton!

And what about the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, now that Vatican II was beginning? This was a difficult dilemma. Earlier in the century a Catholic priest had hired an assassin to kill a Presbyterian missionary physician/minister in our state. His Brazilian helper had been killed defending him, and that man's nephew was now an elder in a new church that I helped organize. But I accepted an invitation from Archbishop Dom Helder Camara to be the first Protestant on his newly organized Commission on Peace and Justice. After the archbishop's home was machine-gunned and one of his young priests murdered (by the military, it was believed), he felt it best to dissolve the group. Later, when I was in the south of Brazil, doing research for my dissertation, I discovered that I had been put under house arrest with an order for my immediate expulsion from the country as a subversive person. Providentially, through a series of contacts, the order was lifted.

A third issue we faced was that the theological curriculum was far too North American; it showed little awareness of the issues faced by the Brazilian church. Attempts at revision or contextualization brought fears of "modernism," but some changes were made, and an evening course was inaugurated for laypersons. We were able to oversee the construction of several buildings, which made it possible to more than double the student body. I also taught as a visiting professor in the Southern Baptist seminary in the city.
As we begin the new millennium, church leaders around the world are confronted with a serious problem. While many Western churches face a leadership crisis, the formal paradigm of institutionally educated professional ministers cannot alone meet the burgeoning need for trained leaders in the Two-Thirds World.

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Alas, the Brazilian church and my Presbyterian board moved further apart on theological, ecumenical, and social issues, and we missionaries were caught in the middle. Soon it became clear that the church no longer wanted missionaries in its seminaries. At the end of 1969 my Southern Presbyterian colleague and I resigned, and I returned to Princeton. There I completed my dissertation on the history of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

Now what to do? I had become convinced in my doctoral studies that our method of selecting and training leaders was far too institutionalized and elitist and hindered the growth and ministry of the church. I also became more aware of the complexity of relationships between the national church, the various missions, and their sponsoring boards. I accepted an invitation to teach in a small seminary in Portugal and to help establish a program in theological education by extension there. But it soon became clear that the Portuguese churches—Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian—did not want such a program, and in 1973, after two years of frustration, we returned to the United States believing that our missionary career was over.

**Facing the Inner-City Challenge**

I was called to the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Fresno, California. It had been blessed with strong leadership, and my predecessor, who had left to teach at Fuller Theological Seminary, left the church with a strong college ministry and a group of committed and able lay leaders, both men and women. The downtown, however, was deteriorating rapidly. In my first few months the two remaining historic downtown churches closed, and their buildings were torn down. A nearby Baptist church moved to the suburbs. A colleague predicted our church would be gone within ten years. There were obviously challenges to be faced. One was to increase the focus on world mission. My predecessor had left a strong foundation, and by bringing in missionary friends to interact with the people, encouraging travel to mission fields, and by preaching and teaching, the mission vision was enlarged. A number of men and women entered ministry and mission. Today with strong pastoral leadership, the church is committed to creative mission projects in places as diverse as India, Albany, and France.

A second challenge was the inner city right around us. After some frustrating attempts trying to work out of our own resources, we were able to sponsor World Impact, an inner city ministry, whose workers live where they minister. After I left, through various initiatives, ministries were started with Southeast Asian refugees, and now two congregations have been established among them. With the leadership of InterVarsity staff some youth and families from the church have moved into the downtown area.

The Fresno experience was marvelous for our entire family. The church nurtured our children, I had an excellent pastoral staff, and we formed deep friendships. We had no desire to leave. But then, in the greatest surprise of my career, Fuller Seminary called me to become the dean of its School of World Mission. I had long admired Fuller, one of our key laymen had become a trustee there, and we had invited mission faculty members to speak on several occasions. But I had never contemplated teaching in a seminary in the United States.

**Fuller School of World Mission**

So in July 1980, with a good deal of fear and trepidation but also anticipation, I became dean and professor of history of mission and Latin American studies in the School of World Mission at Fuller. I found a warm and supportive group of faculty colleagues. Donald McGavran and Arthur Glasser, my predecessors as dean, were still involved and very supportive. A second great blessing was the sense of cohesiveness among the faculty. Of course the major focus was church growth, but we agreed that if the church was to grow in a healthy manner, there were other issues to be addressed. I had become convinced that while seminaries and similar institutions had an essential function in mission, a variety of nonformal and informal methods of selecting and training leaders was essential if the church was to make its greatest impact in most areas of the world, especially where it was growing most rapidly. Thus we established a concentration in leadership selection and training with two faculty positions. Other new concentrations focused on Bible translation, Islamics, urban mission, community development, and Chinese studies. Unfortunately, the latter was discontinued for lack of adequate financing. Greater emphasis was placed on biblical theology of mission, and primarily through the initiative of Arthur Glasser, a master’s program in Jewish studies and evangelism was initiated. With our enlarged faculty we began a Ph.D. program in intercultural studies.

Our greatest controversy emerged in 1982 around the issue of “signs and wonders.” Most missiological thinking had ignored the question of the miraculous activity of God in the present, while affirming it in the past. Although some of us had been involved in exorcisms and prayer for the sick while overseas, we had not integrated such experiences into our missiology, perhaps because of post-Enlightenment cessationist theology or simply because of reluctance to deal with the issue. But many of our students came from cultures where the issue of power was central in religion—power over the spirits, power over sickness, and power for help in life’s crises. That kind of power, clearly important in the Bible and the focus of traditional religions, strangely enough had been left out of Western theology and missiology. We found that many of our students had been converted, called to ministry, or healed from sickness through a dream, vision, or other clear intervention of God, especially those who came from non-Christian backgrounds. How were we to deal with such issues?

In 1982 we initiated a new course called Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth, taught by Peter Wagner, with the active participation of John Wimber. It received a great deal of attention and became the focus of controversy both inside and outside the seminary. Although the class was discontinued in its original form in 1985, the emphasis continues today in courses taught by Wagner and Charles Kraft, with consistently high enrollment. While not all our faculty would agree with every aspect of the original course, I believe all would agree that it resulted in permanent gain for the church and its mission.

**Lessons Learned, Beliefs Deepened**

How to summarize what I have learned, especially in the last twenty years? First, I am more ecumenical, with a deep appreciation of the variety of people and movements through whom God has worked throughout history. I have had the privilege of teaching and learning from students from over one hundred countries, representing a spectrum ranging from Pentecostals to an Egyptian Coptic bishop and charismatic Roman Catholics, while including all of the mainline denominations. I am more convinced than ever, from the study of both history and theology, that the focus of mission must always be the communication
of the Good News of Jesus Christ, calling men and women to believe in him and to be gathered into worshiping, nurturing, serving bodies, which we call churches, and that these churches must be appropriate to their cultural contexts. Out of such churches ministries of compassion and social transformation can and should flow.

Second, it is clear that mission normally comes out of renewal, which begins with a new vision of the transcendent and holy God, and then a new experience of his grace that both motivates and empowers mission.

Third, I am impressed with the fact that such movements have nearly always begun on the periphery of the institutional church, whether at Antioch, Herrnhut, Moulton, a haystack, or Azusa Street. This fact teaches us to be open to the Holy Spirit, who frequently does his new work through unexpected people in unexpected places.

When we went to Brazil in 1956, the perception was widespread that we were nearing the end of the missionary era. How things change! Today the missionary movement is flourishing and is more multinational than ever before. We have moved into a postdenominational, post-Christendom, post-Western era. The mission boards on which I serve are multiethnic and multidenominational and work with a variety of churches overseas. Today the church is being reshaped to an extent not seen since the sixteenth century. And the challenges are great: how to engage in mission in the burgeoning urban centers; how to help provide better training for the two million functional pastors in Asia, Africa, and Latin America who have no formal preparation for ministry; how to meet the desperate physical and social needs of the world’s poor while maintaining the focus on evangelism; how to affirm the validity of every culture but also recognize that each culture, including our own, needs to be transformed by the Gospel; and how can the church in the West discover how to read the Scriptures with new eyes as we learn from the church in the rest of the world.

Last June, at the Communion service preceding Fuller’s commencement, I walked up the aisle with a Korean trustee to take the bread and wine. In front of me was a woman of African descent, a member of the theology faculty. Around us were students and faculty, men and women, from a variety of nations and races, united as we celebrated the cross and resurrection of our Lord, united in our desire that the world might believe that the Father had sent him. The thought flashed through my mind, “This is the way it is supposed to be”—so that a fragmented world might see that in Jesus Christ lies reconciliation, unity, and life. That experience expresses my pilgrimage. I trust it is the pilgrimage of the church as well.

The Legacy of Timothy Richard

**P. Richard Bohr**

Timothy Richard, whose name became synonymous with the rise of modern China, was born on October 10, 1845, into a devout Baptist farming family in Carmarthenshire, Wales. Inspired by the Second Evangelical Awakening to become a missionary, Richard left teaching to enter Haverfordwest Theological College in 1865. There he dedicated himself to China, which he considered the “most civilized of the non-Christian nations.”1 In 1869 the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) accepted Richard’s application and assigned him to Yantai (Chefoo), Shandong Province. He arrived there in February 1870.

**An Emerging Strategy, 1870–76**

The people’s indifference to Richard’s street preaching soon induced him to adopt a top-down approach. Applying advice from Edward Irving’s sermon “Missionaries After the Apostolic School” about “seeking the worthy,” Richard concluded that if foreign missionaries could Christianize the Chinese elite, the entire population would follow and establish self-supporting congregations. The key to enlightening the “worthy,” Richard thought, was to “free the Chinese philosophers from the chains of superstition ... of Yin Yang and the five elements.”2 To this end, he assisted the American Presbyterian Calvin Wilson Mateer (1836–1908) in physics and chemistry experiments before Chinese audiences in Yantai.

Believing that China’s leaders lived beyond the treaty-port periphery, Richard moved, in 1875, to Qingzhou, an important administrative and religious center 250 miles west of Yantai. As the sole BMS representative in Shandong’s interior, Richard sought to appear less foreign by dressing in a Chinese scholar’s gown, shaving his head, and attaching an artificial queue to his cap. After saving many lives by distributing quinine water during a typhus outbreak within months of his arrival, Richard gathered a flock of fifteen converts—baptizing some in a Buddhist temple so as to make Christianity seem more indigenous—and even gained entry to religious leaders, including Muslim imams and sectarian chiefs. He appealed to the latter by composing verses that mixed biblical quotations with excerpts from their own sacred scrolls. Within a year, however, his proselytizing efforts were cut short by a devastating drought that parched the North China plain.

**Combating the Great Famine, 1876–79**

North China’s five provinces had never enjoyed abundant rainfall. The Great Famine of 1876–79, China’s most catastrophic on record, claimed up to 13 million lives.3 After three successive years of drought-induced crop failures, desperate people devoured sorghum stalks, weeds, and tree bark. When these resources were exhausted, many resorted to cannibalism.

Late in 1876, regents of the four-year-old Guangxu emperor (r. 1875–1908) ordered traditional relief measures, including imperial prayers for rain, diversion of tribute grain to stricken

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1. P. Richard Bohr is Associate Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University in Minnesota.
areas, exemption of land taxes, reduction of grain prices, and creation of refugee centers to distribute rice-gruel, medicine, and clothing. The throne tapped private wealth by selling official ranks and offices to gentry and lineage leaders. Aside from raising considerable sums among coastal and overseas Chinese, the local elite did what it could to redeem women and children sold for food.

Richard considered the famine a "direct leading from God to open up the interior of China" to Christianity. He seized evangelistic advantage by urging famine victims to "turn from dead idols to the living God and pray unto Him and obey His laws and conditions of life." Overnight, some 2,000 Chinese in Qingzhou sought catechism from Richard. Yet Richard was equally concerned about the people's material well-being, noting that Christianity took "cognition of all in this world as well as the next, in a word, of man—body and soul." He quickly devised a relief plan. The same Treaties of Tianjin (1858) and Beijing (1860) that had opened China's interior to foreign trade also granted autonomy of missionary action. However, lest Western charity ignite antiforeignism, Richard coordinated relief plans with Qing officials. He informed Governor-General Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) that the Shandong missionaries would supplement government grain assistance by giving cash contributions.

Richard solicited international donations by publishing graphic accounts of famine suffering in the world press. Contributions were remitted through the China Famine Relief Fund Committee in Shanghai. Richard, along with his Protestant and Catholic colleagues in Shandong, resolved to do more systematic than the government's seemingly haphazard relief effort. After obtaining lists of victims from local officials, the missionaries investigated individual circumstances and distributed cash directly to sufferers. Richard also set up five orphanages to provide job training for young victims.

In November 1877 Richard moved to Shanxi, the neighboring province to the west, where famine had intensified. After meeting with Governor Zeng Guoquan (1824-90), Richard began coordinating the efforts of some thirty Protestant and Catholic foreigners in giving cash door to door.

In October 1878 Richard married Edinburgh-born Mary Martin (1843–1903) of the Scottish United Presbyterian Mission in Yantai. Mary later became a noted authority on Chinese music and an ardent antifootbinding activist. The couple eventually had four daughters.

After the famine began to abate in the summer of 1879, Richard—estimating that the missionaries had dispensed 60,000 English pounds in cash—concluded relief efforts.

**Blueprint for National Reform, 1879–90**

Richard emerged from the Great Famine resolved to employ the same elements he used in relieving famine—his Christian convictions, contacts among leaders, and public relations skills. As he himself expressed it, his postfamine objective was to help create the "Kingdom of God in China?" by enhancing China's "physical, mental, social, national, and international aspects . . . [plus saving] individual souls."

For Richard, the famine exposed China's deepening domestic crisis. He noted that in the wake of a crippling population explosion (from 300 million Chinese in 1750 to 430 million in 1850), destructive midcentury rebellions, and precipitous dynastic decline, China's once-extensive public granary network had collapsed, long-neglected roads had prevented grain from reaching many devastated areas, and government corruption at all levels had siphoned off numerous relief supplies. Moreover, because Confucian economic theory itself assumed that famine was inherent in a rural economy considered cyclical and static, the throne did no more than order such time-honored rehabilitation measures as relocating refugees, improving water control, planting more durable crops, rebuilding public granaries, and outlawing opium cultivation.

In 1879 Richard wrote: "If famine [relief] was Christian work, education to avoid future famine was equally, or greater Christian work." The education he had in mind was based on "the study of science [which] ought to be held in as much reverence as religion, for it deals with the laws of God." During the famine years, Richard sketched these "laws" in a series of articles he published in Wangguo gonghao (Review of the times), a monthly magazine begun in 1874 by the American Methodist Young J. Allen (1836–1907) to bring Western knowledge to China's leaders.

In 1881 Richard reissued the series in a pamphlet entitled *Present Needs*. In it he recommended that the Qing government (1) employ meteorology to forecast famine conditions; (2) expand agriculture by improving water conservancy, teaching agronomy, applying chemical fertilizer, cultivating harder crops, and developing food processing methods; (3) expand industrial wealth through mechanization, mining, and hydroelectric power; (4) expand commerce by stabilizing China's currency, standardizing weights and measures, and promoting entrepreneurial careers in science and industry; (5) open China to international trade and investment by modernizing transportation and communications; (6) nurture practical knowledge and innovation by expanding universal education in Western subjects, inserting science and technology into the civil service examinations, setting up learned societies to promote research, and disseminating new knowledge through newspapers; and (7) promote universal religious education so that Christian love could enrich Confucian morality and thereby make the people loyal to the Qing emperor and respectful of the Christian God.

From 1879 to 1884 Mary and Timothy Richard were busy in Taiyuan, Shanxi's capital, distributing Christian literature, training Chinese evangelists, and supervising mission schools. Yet Richard also found time to give lectures and demonstrations on Western science to Taiyuan's scholar-officials in order to show that Christian civilization had an "advantage over Chinese civilization . . . [because] it sought to discover the workings of God in Nature, and to apply the laws of Nature for the service of mankind." In addition, Richard was invited to advise Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guoquan, as well as Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909)—who succeeded Zeng as Shanxi governor in 1882—and Governor-General Zo Zongtang (1812–85) on economic recovery steps.

In 1884–86, during his first furlough, Richard met with a number of mission board executives in London to suggest that
missionary societies avoid denominational rivalry (which he felt only confused the Chinese) by establishing, in every province, an ecumenical program to pursue philanthropic work (as he had done in famine relief), distribute Christian literature, teach Western subjects in Chinese schools, establish a “high class” college in each provincial capital, train Chinese evangelists, and promote self-supporting churches. After returning to Taiyuan in 1887, Richard—recalling Zongtang’s remark that there was no antagonism between Confucian morality and Christianity—sought to demonstrate that “Christianity has the power of assimilating all that is good in other religions.” He had long admired Confucian morality and its insistence on the goodness of human nature. In the late 1880s he wrote in praise of Daoism as anticipatory to Christianity and claimed that Christ himself was revealed in the love and compassion of Mahayana Buddhism, which, he believed, was the result of the interchange between the apostle Thomas and Asvaghosa in India.

In order to promote East-West religious dialogue, Richard argued, missionaries must be better educated. In particular, they should be required to learn the Chinese language, study Chinese religions, utilize more Chinese catechists, and lead the Chinese to Christianity through their own religious traditions, as Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) had attempted. For their part, he thought, Chinese seminarians should be trained in Western secular subjects as well as Christian theology.

In 1887 five of Richard’s BMS colleagues in Shanxi sided with another missionary’s charge that Richard “taught a mixture of science, popery, and heathenism for the Gospel of Christ.” Deeply wounded by this criticism, Richard left Taiyuan for Beijing in November 1887 to contemplate his future with the BMS. In China’s capital he formulated educational reform proposals based on his discussions with educators in Europe the previous year. During the spring of 1888 he studied modern education in Japan, and the summer of 1889 found him back in Shandong helping to fight yet another famine.

Reform and World Peace, 1890–1919

Richard was frustrated by his inability to advance the kingdom of God through his own BMS at the very moment China seemed most receptive to foreign advice on national reform. Officials with whom he had developed trusting relationships were, in fact, the leading advocates of China’s “self-strengthening” efforts to halt internal decline and foreign aggression by grafting Western technology onto Confucian institutions. Aside from importing Western arms and establishing arsenals, shipyards, and a military academy between the 1860s and 1880s, Li Hongzhang and Zo Zongtang opened mines and textile mills; built short-haul railroads, steamships, and telegraph lines; mobilized private capital for government projects; created schools to teach Western languages, science, and mathematics; and sent students abroad. In Shanxi, Richard declined Zhang Zhidong’s invitation to become a provincial adviser and implement Zhang’s development schemes. After being promoted to governor-general at Canton and then Wuchang after 1884, Zhang implemented Richard’s plans for steelworks and Western-style schools.

While Richard used the term “self-strengthening” in his own writings, his concerns went beyond China’s national security to the physical and spiritual welfare of the country’s rural poor. This theme deeply influenced treaty port thinkers like Wang Tao (1828–97) and Zeng Guanyin (1842–1923), who read Richard’s writings during the 1880s. Asserting the superiority of Confucian morality and the need to free China from imperialist control, these intellectuals also sought to enhance the people’s livelihood by proposing the creation of public schools for boys and girls. Having raised funds in Shanghai for the Great Famine, Zheng, in particular, praised the Christian inspiration of national development and advocated government measures to build up the rural economy along the lines suggested by Richard, whose writings he published with his own reform essays.

Now convinced that advocacy of reform among China’s “worthy” through the printed page must be his top priority, Richard accepted, in June 1890, Li Hongzhang’s invitation to edit and write articles for Shiba (The Times), a Chinese-language daily in Tianjin that, dedicated to “espousing progress,” was widely circulated among the Qing bureaucracy. In September 1891 Richard was handed the opportunity to reach an even larger audience among young intellectuals and students when the BMS seconded him to succeed the Scottish Presbyterian Alexander Williamson (1829–90) as secretary of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese (SDK), headquartered in Shanghai. Through the SDK, Richard felt that he could apply “the healing powers of the Gospel to the . . . misery and poverty of a whole nation, with the inner springs of life of one-fourth of our human race.”

Richard quickly determined that in addition to publishing works on China’s economic development, educational reform, international affairs, and relations with Christian missions, the SDK would distribute its publications at examination centers, sponsor lectures and essay contests, and maintain study associations, museums, and reading rooms throughout China. Richard himself wrote or translated 100 of the SDK’s 250 publications.

With Japan’s stunning victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), self-strengthening was discredited, and Richard’s writing—which now began to focus increasingly on China’s external crisis—inspired Chinese approaches to more fundamental change. Kang Youwei (1858–1927) was the leader of the young intellectuals who, reading SDK materials at examination centers, were convinced that Richard’s call for institutional reform was China’s only hope of avoiding colonial dismemberment. Kang thought that Richard’s contention that “God was breaking down the barriers between all nations by railways, steamers and telegraphs in order that we should all live in peace and happiness as brethren of one family” was consonant with his own belief that China would soon be integrated into world civilization.

Kang’s Society for the Study of Self-Strengthening was a mirror image of the SDK in propagating reform. In his own newspaper (also called Wanguo gongbao), Kang published Richard’s and other SDK writings. And Kang’s memorials to the reform-minded Guangxu emperor in April–June 1895 incorporated virtually all of Richard’s recommendations in Present Needs as well as suggestions advanced by Zheng Guanying and Young J. Allen.

Invited by both Kang and court officials to recommend reform measures, Richard suggested the appointment of two foreign advisers, including Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909), the architect and leader of Japan’s Meiji Restoration, as well as creation of an eight-member cabinet (one-half to be Chinese and Manchus and the other half foreigners) to oversee national defense, industrialization, currency reform, an official press composed partly of foreign journalists, an updated examination system devoted to new knowledge, and a Board of Education to promote Western curricula.
During the so-called Hundred Days of Reform (June 12–September 20, 1898), the Guangxu emperor, who himself had studied Richard’s writings, issued edicts mandating the implementation of new industrial and agricultural techniques, railways and mines, a national university to teach Western subjects, conversion of temples into Western-style schools, and public education through newspapers. The emperor contemplated making Christianity China’s official religion and, ignoring Richard’s counsel of gradual change, called for an immediate constitutional monarchy. Although he rejected Richard’s idea of a Western protectorate of China, the emperor invited Richard to be his adviser. But on September 21, 1898, the very day Richard was to have his first imperial audience, China’s Empress Dowager (1835-1908)—fearing the imminent loss of her own power—kidnapped the emperor, revoked his reform edicts, and beheaded several reform leaders.

With hopes for modernization from the top now dashed, Richard became increasingly concerned that Manchu conservatism was making China vulnerable to intensifying international pressures as well as to revolt from below. In Present Needs, Richard had pointed out that China’s economic development depended on its integration into a peaceful world that respected national sovereignty and asserted the equality of all nations under one God as well as China’s access to international trade and the West’s technological innovations. For its part, Richard advised, the Chinese government should safeguard the missionaries (whom he saw as China’s protectors in an increasingly dangerous world), promote friendly relations with the Western powers, and cooperate in the establishment of an “International Peace Organization” that would guarantee China’s security. In 1896 he circulated among European capitals a pamphlet advocating the creation of a “League of Nations” and urged Britain’s Foreign Office to pressure nations into abandoning the scramble for concessions in China, return tariff autonomy to the Qing government, and finance his scheme for China’s universal education.

During the Great Famine, Richard had predicted that the West’s humanitarian involvement in China might inflame nationalist passions. His worst fears materialized when, during the summer of 1900 desperately poor Chinese—whom the Empress Dowager had whipped into an anti-Christian frenzy to obliterate all traces of the recent reforms—rose up as Boxers to massacre 159 missionaries and thousands of Chinese Christians in areas of Shandong and Shanxi where Richard had fought famine and planted congregations. Invited by the Chinese government to mediate the Boxer settlement with the British government, Richard convinced the British authorities to use Boxer indemnity funds to establish Shanxi University. For the next ten years, Richard served as the university’s chancellor, developing a Western curriculum that he hoped would dispel Chinese ignorance of the West.

In 1903, the year cancer claimed Richard’s beloved wife, the Manchu court honored his efforts to create a more favorable international climate for China by conferring on him the rank of Chinese mandarin and ennobling his ancestors for three generations. Later the throne presented him with the Order of the Double Dragon. In 1905 the throne enacted several moderate reforms, including the abolition of the examination system and creation of the Western-style schools Richard had long advocated. Zhang Zhidong, now minister of education, hired the SDK to produce the textbooks for these new schools.

Richard feared, however, that conservative reform was insufficient to protect China from growing international dangers. In 1905 he established the China chapter of the International Red Cross Society, an institution he hoped would keep China from being drawn into the Russo-Japanese War. In 1906 he attended the Lucerne Peace Conference to advocate creation of a world federation and subsequently discussed the idea with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House.

In 1910 the missionary community honored Richard on his fortieth anniversary in China. The following year Dr. Sun Yatsen (1866–1925), the Christian physician, toppled the Manchus and created the Republic of China—an eventuality that Richard had long feared would plunge China into political chaos. In 1913 Richard retired from the SDK (renamed Christian Literature

Richard convinced the British authorities to use Boxer indemnity funds to establish Shanxi University.

Richard as Missionary Pioneer

Timothy Richard’s life intersected with a critical phase of China’s modern transformation. Undergirded by an evolving theological vision, Richard devised creative solutions to China’s domestic and international problems. As Kenneth Scott Latourette notes, Richard’s multifaceted concern for China inspired his “widening vision of the task of the Christian missionary.”

Richard was a pioneer on several fronts throughout his forty-five years in China. A founder of the BMS presence in North China, he believed that Chinese civilization had prepared the way for its fulfillment by Christianity. To this end, Richard’s evangelistic approach to the educated elite was one of many missiological experiments that made Shandong a vibrant center of mainstream and sectarian Protestantism. Richard also initiated missionary involvement in disaster relief, and his methods were in place well into the era of the China International Famine Relief Commission, founded in 1920. China’s catastrophic Great Famine widened Richard’s vocational commitments, convincing him that “Christianity is the salvation of nations as well as of individuals.” Imbuing the Victorian faith in the material progress of the “spirit of God in Nature,” he concluded that the missionary calling must be broadened from “saving the heathen from the sufferings of hell. . . . to sav[ing] the heathen from the hell of suffering in this world.”

Richard shared with social gospel leaders back home the conviction that Christianity must not only be planted, as he wrote, “in the hearts of men, but also in all institutions.” Christian reformers in the West could advance the kingdom through existing institutions. But in China, Richard and such
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missionary-reformers as Alexander Williamson, Young J. Allen, W. A. P. Martin (1827–1916), and Gilbert Reid (1857–1927) had to start from scratch. In fact, they anticipated the expanded institution-building efforts in China after 1900, when half of Protestant involvements were devoted to medical, social, and educational missions.27

Richard's direct experience with the Chinese countryside eventually drew him into political activism. This was new ground for a China missionary, and the political forces became increasingly complex following China's May Fourth rising (which began only two weeks after Richard's death). In the end, Richard's advocacy efforts presaged Protestantism's rural reconstruction movement, where the Welsh Baptist's hopes for the kingdom of God in China lived on.

Notes
2. Ibid., p. 55.
5. Ibid., p. 98.
7. Ibid., 1:151.
8. Timothy Richard, “Discussion,” in Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China Held at Shanghai, May 7–20, 1890 (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Press, 1890), p. 163. For an analysis of Richard's postfamine activities on behalf of China's national development, see Bohr, Famine, chaps. 5–6.
11. Regarding this last proposal, Richard wrote a year later: "In order to achieve wealth and strength there are two most important matters: first is to achieve wide knowledge and skillful techniques and to make the best of human efforts. All this is actually secondary, however. The other is to complete one's morality by worshiping God and by following God's will—this is the fundamental matter" (Wanqu gongbao, January 28, 1882, p. 217).
14. BMS Archives, Richard to the Committee of the BMS, March 12, 1888.
19. Several of these same proposals had been made forty years earlier by Hong Rengan (1822–64), a leader of the Taiping Rebellion.
23. Timothy Richard, "Work in Tientsin," Missionary Herald, May 1, 1891, p. 197. See also BMS Archives, Richard to Baynes, February 17, 1892.
24. BMS Archives, Richard to the Committee of the BMS, May 12, 1887.
27. Latourette, History, p. 619

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Richard's papers are contained in the BMS Archives in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, England.

Books about Timothy Richard
The Legacy of Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen

Lothar Schreiner

Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen’s life and work spanned much of the nineteenth century and most of the first two decades of the twentieth. He was a true expatriate, living his entire adult life in Sumatra, then a part of the Dutch East Indies. He made his home among the Batak people, who after a time accepted him as one of their own and called him Apostle to the Batak.

Nommensen was born on February 6, 1834, on the island of Nordstrand in Schleswig, then Danish territory. His father was a dike-lock keeper. The experience of being able to walk again after a serious injury in a traffic accident motivated Nommensen to become a missionary. He entered the seminary of the Rhenish Mission Society in Wuppertal-Barmen, now the United Evangelical Mission. A few months after his ordination in 1861 he sailed for Sumatra, Indonesia, where he joined four fellow missionaries. In 1864 he was able to settle among the Toba Bataks in the valley of Silindung, Northern Sumatra. It was the beginning of a singular Christian career of outstanding self-denial and unfailing dedication. He preached the Gospel in word and deed among the village people of a territory still independent of Dutch colonial administration. Though in the beginning their behavior seemed strange to him in many ways, he respected their human dignity and recognized their inalienable right to their own convictions. He mastered their language and built bridges of trust.

A local chief, Pontas Lumbantobing (1830–1900), protected him and mediated between him and a militant group of hostile chiefs and priests. Lumbantobing became a Christian and Nommensen’s loyal friend, and he urged his people and fellow chiefs to receive the Gospel of peace and forgiveness. Out of a sense of political reality, he also advocated acceptance of Dutch rule. Nommensen and Lumbantobing, together with missionaries P. H. Johannsen and August Mohri, laid the foundation for the Christianization of the Batak people. By the end of the 1870s the leadership of the Batak traditional religion had embraced Christianity.

Rooted in the Schleswig-Holstein Revival

Nommensen owed his outlook and convictions not only to his seminary training but also to the Lutheran revival movement in Schleswig-Holstein. Throughout his life he interpreted Christianity as “New Life,” as taught by F. A. G. Tholuck (1799–1872) and A. Neander (1789–1850). Tholuck and Neander’s theological and philosophical positions pervaded the teaching Nommensen received during his seminary years. In Sumatra he and his fellow missionaries explicated the New Life in every aspect of indigenous experience: daily life and order, custom, law, time, age, and rule. These key words represented the kerygmatic paradigm for their evangelistic outreach. Nommensen committed himself to see that New Life penetrated Batak life and culture.

The anthropocentric orientation of his theology led him to evangelize dialogically. He introduced instructions for baptism by posing questions about bliss, eternal life, and obedience to the triune God, rather than by starting with the creation story in Genesis and the people of Israel. His idea of an organically growing Christian life and ethos rested on unshakable trust in Christ. He led his dialogue partners to grasp the meaning of salvation, emphasizing the second coming of Christ. He communicated his theology and method to his fellow missionaries, instructing them for their communication with the Batak people: “Bear them on a priestly heart and preach the Word to them in season and out of season. Everyone who comes to you, you should look upon as being sent by the Lord, and devote as much time to him as is needed to show him the way of life.” Nommensen emphasized that one must master the Batak language in order to “live and demonstrate one’s life to the heathen and study their way of thinking.”

Nommensen integrated the revival tradition of his early years in Germany into his daily theology. Central to his belief was the sovereignty of God, who has revealed himself in his living Word, Jesus Christ, “Lord and Savior of the world.”

Nommensen practiced a contextual ecclesiology by using the customary Batak law for the formation of a people’s church.

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(1837–87), who arrived from Hamburg in the same year. Their family life was conditioned by the tropical climate and the hard simplicity that prevailed in Silindung. Jonathan (1873–1950), the youngest of their six children, became a missionary and assisted his father as his deputy for eighteen years (1900–1918). Nommensen went on furlough in 1880. Returning to Sumatra, he left behind in Europe his children and his wife, who was sick and who died in 1887. When he returned to Germany again in 1892, he married Anna Magdalene Christine Harder (1864–1909). They had a son, who died as a soldier in 1916, and two daughters. Anna herself died in 1909. It was a severe testing of faith and endurance to see his two sisters departing this life (1860 and 1864), followed by both wives and four of his nine children.5

The Batak Church, a Living Legacy

Nommensen made a decisive effort to gather the church along “three-self” principles. This approach was meant to help the church survive in case of persecution or the expulsion of European personnel. At the same time, Nommensen, in his paternalism and conservative social ethics, welcomed the colonial administration as the best way for development and progress.6 In 1904 he even proposed to the Dutch administration how to take possession of hitherto independent Batak territory, and how to divide the districts in the best interest of tribal boundaries.7

Because of the growing success of the Batak Mission, Nommensen gained recognition and distinction in Europe. In 1893 he was made knight of the Royal Dutch Order of Orange Nassau; in 1904 the theological faculty of the University of Bonn conferred on him the honorary degree of doctor of theology. October 1911 saw two meaningful fiftieth anniversaries: the beginning of the Batak Mission (October 7, 1861) and Nommensen’s ordination to the ministry (October 13, 1861). Moreover, in 1911 he was honored by the queen of Holland who conferred on him the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Orange Nassau.

But Nommensen’s legacy lies preeminently in Sumatra and in the Christian church among the Batak. By 1918, the year of his death, the Batak church was firmly established, with 34 pastors, 788 teacher-preachers, and 180,000 members.8 In addition, sixty European men and women of the Rhenish Mission served as coworkers with the Batak leadership. By virtue of their established Christian community, the Batak were ready to enter a new age. Nommensen’s impact therefore is not so much evident in a collection of writings, or with missionaries who followed his missionary methods; rather it is reflected in an indigenous Christian community that knows what it owes to his love and vision. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Batak church was the largest Protestant church in Southeast Asia.

In 1954, long after the German mission society had left the island, Nommensen was remembered in the name of a new university, Nommensen University. And on the 150th anniversary of his birth, Nommensen was celebrated in a symposium about the meaning and ongoing relevance of his work for the churches in western Indonesia. This important event was sponsored in 1984 by the theological seminary of the Batak Church (HKBP).9

Focus of Scholarly Attention

Nommensen’s legacy is also manifested in the wide attention he has received through scholarly studies and popular writings. His evaluation and Christian application of the traditional law (adat) has been particularly discussed by contemporary scholars. Bengt Sundklér recognizes Nommensen’s attempt to Christianize the adat: “Tribe and Church became one. Church life, too, was organized around a vast number of casuistic rules. Christians of the third generation could see in the new adat no distinction between original Batak influence and those rules which were specifically Christian in origin. But this was not without its dangers. Christianity came to be regarded as a new law, nova lex, which no longer presupposed a radical change of heart. To dispel this impression was to be the greatest task of coming generations.”10 Keith R. Bridston emphasizes that “Nommensen was well aware of the pervasiveness of the adat in shaping all dimensions of social and individual life and was shrewd in his use of it in dealings with the Bataks, but he was perhaps less perceptive of the dangers of the Christian faith being assimilated within the adat framework as a ‘new law.’”11 Missionary bishop Stephen C. Neill matched his high appreciation of Nommensen as one of the greatest missionaries of all time with a realistic evaluation of Nommensen’s last two decades. Nommensen, wrote Neill, “had lived so long in the world of the Batak that he was hardly capable of understanding and responding to the new ideas that were streaming in; and, at his death in 1918, everything remained much as it had been in 1881. Yet in every way the old ideas and methods were out of date. Indonesian political nationalism, with its strongly hostile reaction to everything Western, was already a reality.”12 Indigenous movements of protest have been carefully investigated by Masashi Hirose of Japan. Hirose gives an illuminating account of Nommensen’s connections with millenarian groups. They regarded Nommensen as a true Batak, the incarnation of a legendary ancestor in the disguise of a European. They believed that this incarnated ancestor had been sent to his people in order to teach and to build churches and schools.13 The veneration of Nommensen, along with two other missionaries believed to have been sent as helpers by the ancestral God, reveals that in Batakland millenarian movements were significant factors in the Christian movement.

Owing to the absence of writings of his own, Nommensen’s religious and social thinking has not been thoroughly investigated, in comparison with the attention directed to his way of building the church. Known for humbleness and self-denial, he was a convincing Christian in his behavior, transcending national, ethnic, and cultural barriers. He demonstrated his holistic Christian way in many episodes throughout his daily life with the local people. One day, for example, several local chiefs entered his hut to provoke him, thinking to make his patience run out. The whole day they pestered him with requests to be entertained. He complied by telling Bible stories and other stories, playing the violin, demonstrating the magnifying glass, and offering them food. At midnight he said, “I am exhausted, I have to sleep.” His unwelcome guests laid down to sleep where they sat. Early the next morning one of the chiefs awoke and marveled to see that each of them had been covered by a woolen blanket. Nommensen himself had arisen at night in order to
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shelter them against the cold. Silently they left, ashamed of their behavior.

Nommensen was not uncritical of himself. He told younger missionaries that he had to learn what it meant to act with patience. Once having become angry with a very rude intruder, he threw the fellow out. Later he felt haunted by it. The fellow, whom he felt he should have saved, never turned up again. “God goes his own way,” he once said, “and shows to us, that he does not need us at all, that it is pure grace, when he uses us.”

His unswerving loyalty to and solidarity with the Bataks, the people of his lifelong vocation, led to his reception into the people’s destiny. He was an irresistible manifestation of a new type of human existence. The kenotic, dialogic approach in his theology is an outstanding feature of his legacy for contemporary reflection and Christian practice.

Notes

3. Schreiner, Selbstzeugnisse, p. 63. The Bataks’ religion did not know of a Satan, yet the people feared the evil spirits of the deceased as the adversaries of the living.
7. See Schreiner, Selbstzeugnissen, pp. 118ff., for Nommensen’s “Bemerkungen zum Kolonialbericht von 1904 betreffend die Zukunft des Batakvolkes auf Sumatra.”
8. The church, however, represented only a minority of the Batak people. By 1940, the final year of the Rhenish Mission in Sumatra, the Christian population equalled one third of the Batak people.

Selected Bibliography

Writings by Nommensen


Writings about Nommensen


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The Lure of the Millennium: The Year 2000 and Beyond.


This book takes the reader on a stimulating tour of the millennial hopes and apocalyptic fears that have decisively shaped the West in the past. Raymond F. Bulman, a professor of theology at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, also outlines some of the daunting challenges that are likely to trouble our future.

Bulman, however, devotes most of his time to assessing the competing religious visions of hope and terror that vie to shape the landscape of tomorrow's world. He invites his readers inside the apocalyptic nightmares that gave rise to Jonestown, Ruby Ridge, and Waco. He vividly describes how white supremacist organizations and militia groups have been influenced by end-times conspiracy theories to arm themselves for Armageddon.

Then he compares a range of Christian visions of millennial expectations and apocalyptic horror that compete for our attention. While Pope John Paul II looks forward to a new millennium in which the entire Christian community could be reunited, other Catholics are caught up in apparitions of Mary. These appearances typically promise either global peace if people renew their faith or sweeping judgment if they fail to do so.

Many Christians, including many evangelicals, he points out, look forward to the millennial inbreaking of God's kingdom in history. Other evangelicals, however, embrace an end-times view that assures them they will be raptured out of this condemned planet before the white heat of God's judgment falls on those left behind.

In the final chapter Bulman rejects millennial literalism of historic faith and offers his alternative vision. Influenced by the work of Paul Tillich, he invites readers to see the new millennium as a kairos moment in which we can jointly develop a new global ethic to help us steer our planet through the white water of a very uncertain future.

The book is very stimulating and informative, and Bulman's call for the development of a global ethic is welcome, if not new. However, he provides no convincing reasons why we should abandon the millennial vision of biblical faith, anchored in Jesus Christ's own expectation of an earthly kingdom made new by the decisive action of the creator God. Many of us are persuaded that it is naive to place ultimate hope in the ability of the human community to fabricate solutions to the challenges of the future.

—Tom Sine


In this reissue of a work originally published in 1995, the author, currently pastor of a church in Indiana, argues the thesis that the Matthean "Great Commission" derives from Jesus and charges the Twelve, both as representative Israel and as apostolic nucleus of the church, to fulfill the messianic mission to the nations. After a sketch of the history of interpretation and clarification of terminology, LaGrand investigates references to Israel and the nations in the church, to fulfill the messianic mission to the nations. After a sketch of the history of interpretation and clarification of terminology, LaGrand investigates references to Israel and the nations in the Old Testament, LXX, and Apocrypha, as well as in writings roughly contemporary with the New Testament. The bulk of the volume is devoted to an in-depth study of the Great Commission in the context of Matthew's gospel.

Overall, LaGrand's thesis is sound and represents a welcome corrective to recent Matthean scholarship, which has been focused on the "Matthean community" and has largely denied the Great Commission's authenticity. Matthew's primary source is indeed the Old Testament, particularly the Abrahamic promise, the Davidic covenant, and Isaiah's Servant songs. And in Matthew theology, Jesus does in fact recapitulate Israel's history with a view toward reconstituting a new messianic community for the purpose of fulfilling Israel's mission to the nations.

Whether LaGrand's way of arguing his case is the most effective is another question. The flow of his discussion tends to get bogged down in side issues (e.g. the Synoptic problem, pp. 163-67); the implications of lengthy sections for his larger case remain regularly unstated (e.g. chap. 2 on terminology); and there are no chapter summaries. Failure to interact with important recent contributions (such as McKnight or Goodman on the issue of a "Jewish mission" prior to Jesus) frequently renders LaGrand's treatment strangely dated. These and other flaws detract from an otherwise interesting study that no doubt will spark further discussion on this important subject.

—Andreas J. Kostenberger

Tom Sine is an Instructor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and a futurist whose latest book is Mustard Seed vs. McWorld: Reinventing Life and Faith for the Future (Baker Books, 1999).

Andreas J. Kostenberger is associate professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. A native Austrian, he is author of The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel (Eerdmans, 1998). He also serves as editor of the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society.


Robert Blinks’ superb book chronicles missionary work from 1668 to 1990 in Kurdistan—that area near the borders of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq where Kurds are a majority. The book concerns a region with several historically prominent ethnic groups, primarily relating Protestant mission work among these ethnic groups. Impact or lack of impact on Muslim Kurds is the focus. The author’s perspective is deep and rich, based on his tenure in the region for most of the 1990s.

A history of missions directed to ethnic Kurds would be one-twentieth the size of this book, which points to the thesis: “Western mission policies had tied their hopes of Muslim evangelism to a revived Christian witness” (p. xi). Why the plan failed so thoroughly, and how Christian missions might succeed in the future, is the concern of this work.

The goal of the missionaries from the beginning was to “enable the . . . [church] to exert a commanding influence in the spiritual regeneration of Asia” (p. 118). Why did this goal elude them? Blinks generalizes three factors: (1) missions continued to invest almost exclusively in historical churches, (2) the very few missionaries among Kurds died and were not replaced, and (3) missionaries believed the time for an ingathering of Kurds had not yet arrived (p. 193).

Particularly interesting are nearly 200 pages of mini-biographical material that chronicle the faithful witness of foreign and national servants who suffered and died. The book concludes with several dozen brief perspectives on culture and mission practice that may hold keys to conveying the light of the Gospel, resulting in Kurdish-background Christian communities.

This timely work connects past efforts with the vibrant activity of the present. The volume of work in Kurdistan this decade justifies a sequel to Blinks’ treatment in the next few years, one that will no doubt reflect the historical lessons learned and perspectives suggested in this work.

—Bill Koops

Changing Frontiers of Mission.


This well-written collection of essays, produced over a period of fifteen years by the professor of mission history and contemporary culture at the School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary, calls the modern mission movement to a renewed sense of the frontier. Convinced that the concept of geography can no longer be used to frame the missionary task, Shenk believes that the highly institutionalized modern missionary movement is in its twilight stages and that a new epoch—still undefined—is in the process of emerging.

New Perspectives on Mission
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The Feast of the World’s Redemption
Eucharistic Origins and Christian Mission
by John Koenig
Arguing against recent theories about the historical Jesus, Koenig states that there was indeed an intentional Last Supper at which Jesus, with a messianic consciousness, fully enlisted his followers in his redemptive mission, and that this continues to provide the contemporary church with an appropriate model for mission.

paper $25.00

The Clash of Civilizations
by Robert Lee
Christianity’s growth in Japan has slowed dramatically because the culture of western individualism clashes harshly with Japan’s collective culture. Lee contends that in order for Christianity to grow, Christians must radically rethink the way theology and the Gospel is presented in Japan.

paper $12.00

The Incarnation and the Church’s Witness
by Darrell L. Guder
Using literary, historical, and social approaches to scripture, Guder challenges today’s church to return to an incarnational mission—one based on the life and death of Jesus—rather than thinking of mission as just another church program.

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The fifteen essays that compose this volume constitute a valuable resource for understanding the modern missionary movement. They are grouped into four sections: the theological frontier; the frontier in theory and practice; the frontier of contemporary culture; and discerning changing frontiers. Most of the essays have appeared elsewhere, but many have been revised for this publication. Some, originally published in German, appear for the first time in English.

Shenk lays a solid foundation for the entire book in the initial chapter, in which he outlines in balanced fashion the elements of a mission dynamic. He stresses the importance of placing the reign of God at the center of the church’s life and teaching. Shenk shuns the temptation to paint futuristic scenarios; rather, he has chosen to focus on those enduring foundations that have always prepared the church to exercise its mission in the face of new challenges.

The author argues convincingly for the priority of mission. Mission is not only prior to the church but also essential to its identity. Shenk emphasizes that the scope of the Gospel embraces both word and deed. His treatment of new religious movements, the depth of his historical understanding, and his sensitivity to cultural issues are among the considerable strengths of the book.

Shenk’s Mennonite heritage is evident throughout, particularly when he reminds the reader of the pervasiveness of the myth of redemptive violence. He rightly affirms that “the greatest integrity and vitality of faith today appears to be found in those churches that have suffered and known martyrdom firsthand” (p. 190).

These essays are characterized by careful scholarship, thorough research, and tight logic. The bibliography, while extensive and foundational, contains relatively few entries after 1991. The index is selective.

—Kenneth B. Mulholland

Kenneth B. Mulholland is Professor of Missions and Dean at Columbia Biblical Seminary and School of Missions, Columbia, South Carolina. He and his wife, Ann, served fifteen years as missionaries in Central America.

2000–2001 Senior Mission Scholars

OMSC welcomes into residence for the fall 2000 semester Senior Mission Scholars Anne Marie Kool and Diana Witts. Dr. Kool, a graduate of the University of Utrecht, Netherlands, is Director, Protestant Institute for Mission Studies, Budapest, Hungary. She is a member of the board and executive committee of the Eastern European Schools of Theology, a member of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, and a contributing editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Canon Diana Witts, a former missionary in East Africa with the Church Mission Society (CMS) and later regional secretary for West Africa, is the recently retired general secretary of the CMS. In 1994 the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded her the Cross of St. Augustine in recognition of her work with the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

In the spring semester of 2001 OMSC’s Senior Mission Scholars will be Sebastian Karotempel and Terrence L. Tiessen. The Rev. Dr. Karotempel, a member of the Salesians of Don Bosco, is Professor of Missiology, Pontifical Urban University, Rome. He is also president of Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, India, where he serves as Visiting Professor. From 1987 to 1998 he was executive secretary of the Federation of the Asian Bishops’ Conference Commission for Evangelization. He is the editor of Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology (1998). Dr. Tiessen is Professor of Theology, Providence Seminary, Winnipeg, Manitoba. A former missionary in the Philippines, he received his Ph.D. from Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University. From 1976 to 1979 and from 1981 to 1984 he was a member of the Area Council of SEND International. He is the author of Irenaeus on the Salvation of the Unevangelized (1993), published in the monograph series of the American Theological Library Association. In addition to providing leadership in OMSC’s Study Program, the Senior Mission Scholars are available to OMSC residents for counsel regarding their own mission research interests.

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Africa’s transformation from a “mission field” into a vigorous heartland of global Christianity is due in large measure to the explosive impact of indigenous prophetic-healing and charismatic movements. Vibrant, immensely popular, and rooted in the rich texture of the traditional culture, such movements and the myriad churches they have spawned have dominated the African Christian landscape for most of the twentieth century. By the closing decades many had begun to lose momentum and membership, having fallen out of step with rapidly evolving sociopolitical contexts. They are increasingly overshadowed by modernistic and more global-conscious Pentecostal/charismatic movements.

The Celestial Church of Christ, an Aladura-type church founded in 1947, straddles past and present by incorporating modernizing and globalizing elements without sacrificing its central prophet-healing dimension. The Nigerian-born Afeosemime Adogame provides a comprehensive and perceptive
treatment of the movement’s emergence, structure, and impact. The book, originally a 1998 doctoral dissertation, reflects substantial research. The author focuses for the most part on two key areas: (1) the routinization of charisma and other complex developments following the demise of the movement’s founder in 1985, and (2) the complex synthesis between the ritual patterns and belief system of the Celestial Church of Christ and the Yoruba worldview. The treatment of the first suffers somewhat from the author’s attempt to weave social theory into the historical drama, but it unMASKS vital human aspects—the pathos, conflicts, personal ambition, and so forth—interwoven with overly successful spiritual enterprise. In dealing with the second key area, the intricate details of Yoruba cosmology are presented with authoritative clarity, and the significant extent to which the belief system, ritual observances, and liturgical structures of the Celestial Church of Christ in Nigeria are grounded in the Yoruba socio-religious milieu is superbly conveyed. The treatment of some issues, like the role of women and the typological confusion that continues to bedevil such studies, could have been more critically developed. Such points, however, detract little from this valuable study of one of the most successful religious initiatives in West Africa.

—Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu J. Hanciles, a citizen of Sierra Leone, has lived and taught in Zimbabwe as well as Sierra Leone. He is currently a research scholar with the Global Research Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.


This report of a new survey of Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel conducted by the authors is the first such definitive compilation of facts since 1970, and as such it is a significant contribution to the work of Jewish missions. In the face of disputed estimates and lack of hard data on congregational structures, Danish scholars Kjaer-Hansen and Skjøtt set out to “give a realistic picture of as many of the congregations and groups in the country as possible” (p. 11).

The survey found 4,957 believers (Jewish and non-Jewish, including children) in Messianic congregations and house groups in Israel. Of this number, 2,178 are adult Jewish believers in Jesus. The total of almost 5,000 is divided among 81 congregations and independent house groups (57 of which were founded in the 1990s, due largely to the influx of Russian and Ethiopian [Falasha] Jews). In the 1970 survey, only one indigenous messianic congregation was mentioned among 43 profiles of congregations led by foreigners. Besides demographics, profiles of each congregation include data on the group’s statement of faith, its history and leaders, legal status, preferred languages, worship style, views on women in ministry, and financial accountability.

Several missiological issues are raised by this study: Can the Hebrew-speaking congregations be flexible enough in language and worship style to welcome the large numbers of Russian- and
Amharic-speaking believers into their congregations? (This study documented twenty Russian and six Amharic-speaking congregations.) How will Israeli believers self-identify in the face of the olim (immigrants)? Will an indigenous "messianic Judaism" emerge in Israel?

The study confirms that in Israel "the gospel is proclaimed, that congregations do exist, and Jewish people are coming to faith" (p. 48).

It takes courage in a country not friendly to evangelism (anti-missionary laws are pending in Israel) both to ask and to answer questions for publication about the congregational life of Jewish believers. The book will undoubtedly meet with opposition from some quarters. Such opposition is outweighed by the importance that it will have for future studies of indigenous congregations of Jewish believers in Israel and elsewhere.

—Theresa T. Newell

Theresa T. Newell, former director of Shoresh Ministries (Church's Ministry Among the Jewish People, USA), is North American Coordinator of the Luanan Premission on Jewish Evangelism, and Travel-Study Director at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

### Education and Transformation: Marianist Ministries in America Since 1849.


The Society of Mary was founded in 1817 by William Joseph Chaminade (1761–1850). Against the background of postrevolution France and the French school of spirituality, Chaminade developed a network of faith communities intended to reintegrate culture and religion and to re-Christianize the country, especially from among the laity (chap. 1).

The first Marianists in the United States arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1849 to take charge of a parish boys' school. Chapters 2–8 describe the growth of the Marianist ministries, noting especially the influence of major superiors or those in charge of education. Throughout the book Kauffman, who holds the Catholic Daughters' Chair at Catholic University of America and is editor of U.S. Catholic Historian, places a major theme—the growing fissure between "monasticizing" religious life and their apostolate and the ultimate transformation of the group—in the context of American and U.S. Catholic history. Chapter 9 depicts the last twenty years of the society and unfolds the reasons for some of the disorientation felt by many U.S. Catholics after the Second Vatican Council. An afterward by David Fleming suggests the present and future implications gleaned from Marianist history. Appendices list past and present Marianist leadership and communities.

In the United States, the Society of Mary was instrumental in the establishment of several high schools and colleges, the National Catholic Education Association, and the development of the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. Marianists sent personnel to Puerto Rico (1938), Latin America (1939), and Africa (1957).

Of particular interest to mission studies is chapter 6, which describes the interaction of the pedagogical and spiritual principles of The Manual of Christian Pedagogy for Use of the Brothers of Mary (1899), later used by other teachers in the United States, and several chapters that examine Marianist responses to religious pluralism and their interaction with ethnic and racial issues.

—Angelyn Dries, O.S.F.

Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., is Associate Professor and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

### The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics.


This book challenges the assumption that the world is becoming secular. In the lead article, Peter L. Berger refutes the secularization theory that modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion. After the editor's global overview, particular studies follow.

George Weigel writes that the Roman Catholic Church, through its methods of persuasion, "has reacquired a certain critical distance from the worlds of power, precisely in order to help hold those worlds [of power] accountable to universal moral standards."
secularization, says that "Jews have been focuses more on Jewish identity in the context of postmodernity and secularization, says that "Jews have been living... in a condition of ambivalence about themselves and trauma about their relationship with the world" (p. 63).

While the rest of the world tends toward desecularization, Europe seems to be the exception to the rule, says Grace Davie, because Europeans are less capable of remembering religion as a collective memory. In Communist China Tu Weiming writes that "as China is well on its way to becoming an active member of the international society, the political significance of religion will continue to be obvious" (p. 100). In today's modern world Abdullahi A. an-Naim says that the principle of pluralism and the protection of basic human rights, which is an Islamic imperative, should be followed.

From the above summary, we can see that not all the contributors have fully targeted the general aim of the book. But it is clear that religions today are influential. Since religions, like culture in general, are dynamic, they can assume new forms with modernization. Furthermore, while the many external religious trappings may have disappeared in the modern cities, religions as immanent remain resurgent.

—Leonardo N. Mercado, S.V.D.

Leonardo N. Mercado, S.V.D., formerly a missionary to Papua New Guinea, is Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. During a 1999 sabbatical leave he was a research fellow at the Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.


This is a good read! It is the first volume in a projected two-volume work by Timothy Dudley-Smith, describing his friend and colleague, John Stott, now rector emeritus of All Souls (Anglican) Church, Langham Place, London. The present volume covers the first forty years of Stott’s life (1921-60). It is detailed and comprehensive, written to "supply material for judgement, rather than to pronounce judgement" (p. 12). It has 36 pages of notes and an index.

The book supplies insights into Stott’s family background and struggles during World War II. The influences on his life as a student at Rugby Public School and later in Cambridge in the war years were critical in his spiritual formation. In his teens, the three emphases of his life emerge as his personal walk with Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the drive to bring others to share his faith.

First as curate (1945) and then rector (1950) of All Souls Church, in the heart of London, we see him doing the work of pastor, teacher, and evangelist. He modeled new patterns of ministry that others followed. His vision was wider than the local church. As a university missioner all over Britain and then in many parts of the world, he filled a role that no one had filled in the student world since John R. Mott.

It is salutary for those who now take for granted the influence of evangelical faith in the Church of England to read of the battles that had to be fought to secure this position. Nor was his vision...
constricted to the boundaries of his own denomination. Before his fortieth birthday, he was beginning to be involved tirelessly in wider initiatives at home and abroad.

The final chapter of the book is a delightful description of the cottage in Wales that became the haven to which he resorted to give concentrated attention to writing. His writing was to become one of his major contributions to the lives of his contemporaries and generations to come.

What keeps one reading the book is the "Who's Who" of personalities in the evangelical Christian world that crossed Stott's path. Also there are things we never knew and are surprised to find out.

Timothy Dudley-Smith had many difficult choices to make, as he says in his foreword. He has made them well, and those who read this book will look forward to volume 2.

—Tom Houston

Tom Houston, a Scot now retired in Oxford, England, served as a pastor (1951–71) in Scotland and Nairobi, Kenya. Between 1972 and 1994 he was the chief executive officer of the British and Foreign Bible Society, then of World Vision International, and finally of the Lausanne Committee, which he also served as minister at large (1994–98).

Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures.


Darrow L. Miller, vice president of staff development at Food for the Hungry International, argues that poverty and hunger are "the logical result of the way people look at themselves and the world. . . Physical poverty is rooted in a culture of poverty, a set of ideas held corporately that produce certain behaviors, which in turn yield poverty" (p.63). Poverty, Miller argues, is most likely to be present in settings where the biblical worldview is absent.

In the Christian worldview God is good and rational. Creation is orderly. Work is sacred. Progress is possible. People are agents. Wealth is created. Stewardship, "a metaphor for development" (p.227), is a core value. This worldview is foundational to physical well-being and prosperity.

While written in an attractive and inspirational style, and while I appreciate the Weberian point that ideas matter, I have substantive concerns. The author blames poverty on the "poverty of mind" (p.63) of those who are poor. Animistic peoples prize ignorance (pp. 92, 113), which explains African poverty (p. 113). In fact, however, many animistic tribal peoples have profound knowledge of their physical world and may do well in terms of nutrition and diet—until a larger world impinges on them, expropriates their land, and turns them into landless peasants at the bottom of a new socioeconomic order. Their knowledge related to prudential matters concerning food and housing was not problematic until others changed their world. Many of the poorest people on earth represent such subordinated minority groups. In such cases, blaming their "poverty of mind" is a way of blaming the victim.

The author argues that the area with the least Christian presence (the so-called 10/40 Window) is also the area with the most poverty (p. 61). He fails to note, however, that this region also includes some of the richest nations on earth. Whatever the variable separating these rich and poor nations, it is not that of a Christian worldview.

An adequate biblical response to poverty requires a more balanced understanding of complex and variable factors contributing to poverty than anything presented in this book, which I cannot recommend.

—Robert J. Priest

Robert J. Priest is Associate Professor of Mission and Anthropology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. The son of Wycliffe missionaries, he grew up with the Sirohono of Bolivia and subsequently conducted anthropological research with another Amazonian minority group, the Aguaruna of northern Peru.

The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil (1630–1654).


The author, who served for years as a missionary in Brazil, has done meticulous research and given us a fine work on a
little-known colonial/missionary venture of the Dutch in northeast Brazil. During the Eighty Years’ War for independence from Spain, the Dutch invaded Brazil, a colony of Portugal then under Spanish domination. While it was clearly a commercial venture, there was also strong missionary motivation.

The Reformed Church, transplanted to Brazil, served primarily the Dutch colonists but also held services in English, French, and Spanish and soon began work among the indigenous population. Several pastors worked among them, learning the Tupi language, organizing three churches. Some indigenous “comforters” (lay pastors) were appointed.

Education was a priority, and schools were established for both sexes wherever there were children. Instruction was given in Dutch and Tupi in the indigenous villages, and several indigenous teachers were hired. A modification of the Heidelberg Catechism was prepared and published in Dutch, Portuguese, and Tupi, but controversy arose, and it was never used. Apparently this early attempt at contextualization was unacceptable to the Dutch church.

The extent of religious liberty was unique for the period. Roman Catholic priests were allowed to function if they took an oath of loyalty to the government. Nearly 1,500 Jews who had fled from Portugal to the Netherlands now came to Recife and built the first synagogues in South America. After the Portuguese reconquest, most Jews fled, many to New Amsterdam (New York). Tragically, of those who remained, 400 were condemned to prison, and at least 18 were executed.

This is a valuable work, especially for those interested in Brazilian church history.

—Paul E. Pierson

Paul E. Pierson is Dean Emeritus and Senior Professor of History of Mission and Latin American Studies in the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He served as a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil (1956–70) and Portugal (1971–73).

This is a superb volume that more than fulfills its promise as indicated in the subtitle. Jean-Jacques Bauswein, most recently the director of the John Knox International Reformed Center in Geneva, and Lukas Vischer, with extensive experience in the World Council of Churches and professor emeritus of ecumenical theology at the Evangelical Reformed Theological Faculty of Bern, Switzerland, have skillfully coordinated and edited the contributions of 122 Reformed church leaders from around the world.

The publisher’s information sheet states succinctly the nature of this work: “The book includes a complete list of the churches and institutions that today claim for themselves the heritage of the Reformation and provides basic information on each of them. All streams of the Reformed tradition—Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Evangelical, and United—have been brought together; the book includes 746 churches and 529 theological schools. This reference work presents a superb overview of the Reformed family.” What isn’t stated here is that Lukas Vischer also contributes a
splendid thirty-three-page introductory essay entitled "The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Faces."

In addition to statistics on each of the Reformed churches and schools, larger areas have brief historical sketches of the formation and development of Reformed/Presbyterian churches in the countries involved. Hence this is more than simply a book of statistics, valuable as they are.

Representatives of particular denominations may feel the writer has not done justice to their church, but the brief historical sketches for each denomination appear to be accurate and objective. One could question some of the judgments, however, in the category "Theological Schools with Reformed Teaching." For example, how much distinctly "Reformed teaching" takes place at Chicago Theological Seminary or Trinity Evangelical Divinity School? But this is a minor quibble. This volume is a magnificent resource that will be of interest not only to libraries, church executives, and historians but to anyone interested in the Reformed tradition.

—I. John Hesselink

I. John Hesselink was a missionary of the Reformed Church in America (1953–73), where he served as professor of historical theology, Tokyo Union Seminary (1961–73). He was president (1973–85) and professor of systematic theology (1986–98), Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, and is now Professor of Theology Emeritus.


Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf, was a pivotal figure in the development of Christianity in Europe and North America in the eighteenth century. Offering sanctuary on his estate at Berthelsdorf to a remnant of Moravians from Czechoslovakia, Zinzendorf soon found himself drawn into a leadership role for a community of Christians whose passion for world mission has inspired countless others, most notably William Carey. Their community, Herrnhut, became a center for renewal, prayer, intercession, hymnody, and evangelism, as well as a model for Christian community.

Arthur Freeman, retired New Testament professor at Moravian Theological Seminary and a bishop of the Moravian Church, has been a student of Zinzendorf for many years. This book is the fruit of his research and reflection.

Little of Zinzendorf’s creative approach to theology has been available to the English-speaking world. George Forell’s engaging translation of Nine Lectures on Important Subjects in Religion (1973) stands out as a unique contribution. Drawing from many sources, Freeman has now added a great deal of original Zinzendorf material. That it has taken so long for a Moravian to do so perhaps indicates the ambiguity of Moravian sentiments about the man Forell called the “noble Jesus freak.”

Writing with an eye to contemporary issues in theology, ecumenical as well as distinctly Moravian, Freeman seeks to bring the treasures of Zinzendorf’s unique Christology into current discussions. There is a fair amount of Freeman’s own theology here, and it is not always clear whether Freeman is speaking for himself or for Zinzendorf. Freeman is at his best in placing Zinzendorf within the context of his time. His presentation of Zinzendorf engaging the issues of the Enlightenment, especially the emerging field of biblical criticism, is helpful.

Zinzendorf’s important contribution to ecumenism is addressed, but his seminal missiology gets scant attention, a curious omission considering the fingerprints that Zinzendorf left on Herrnhut’s mission efforts over a period of nearly thirty years.

The footnotes are copious and detailed. Future Zinzendorf researchers will appreciate Freeman’s extensive bibliography and the listing of Zinzendorf writings.

—Hampton Morgan, Jr.

Hampton Morgan, Jr., is Executive Director of the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church. He served as pastor of New Herrnhut Moravian Church in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and of Macedonia Moravian Church in Advance, North Carolina, before appointment to his present position in 1995.
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Servant Leadership for Today's Mission. Directors of the Mennonite Leadership Foundation and Pioneers team up at OMSC to apply foundational principles in light of the internationalization of the Christian mission. Cosponsored by Christ for the City International. Eight sessions. $95

Gerald H. Anderson  Oct. 3-6
Christian Mission in the New Millennium. The newly retired director of OMSC explores major issues facing the missionary community, including holistic witness, uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and the place of interreligious dialogue. Cosponsored by Latin America Mission, LCMS World Mission, Mennonite Board of Missions, and Mennonite Central Committee. Four morning sessions. $75

Anne Marie Kool  Oct. 9-13
Mission in Central and Eastern Europe: A Biblical Model for the Twenty-first Century. OMSC's Senior Mission Scholar and Director of the Protestant Institute for Mission Studies, Budapest, focuses on mission history and prospects in Hungary and its neighbors. Cosponsored by Maryknoll Mission Institute and RCA Mission Services. Eight sessions. $95

Andrew F. Walls  Oct. 23-27
Christian Missions: Agents of Social Transformation. Prof. Walls, Edinburgh University, demonstrates the impact of missions on the social and moral fabric of modern societies. Cosponsored by American Baptist International Ministries. Eight sessions. $95

Jean-Paul Wiest  Oct. 30-Nov. 3
Doing Oral History: Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story. The director of the Maryknoll history project teaches skills and techniques for documenting church and mission history. Eight sessions. $95

“EMEU” Conference  Nov. 2-4
Spiritual Riches of Middle Eastern Christianity. Annual conference of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding, First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Ill. Cosponsored by OMSC. $60. Further information: www.EMEU.org; email: sklavin@northpark.edu, or call 773-244-5786.

Peter Kuzmic  Nov. 6-10
Mission in the Ethnic and Religious Mosaic of Eastern Europe. Dr. Kuzmic, Evangelical Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, helps Protestant missionaries bring authenticity and sensitivity to their evangelical witness. Cosponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions, and InterVarsity Missions/Urban 2000. Eight sessions. $95

Diana K. Witts  Nov. 14-17
“As the Father Has Sent Me.” A biblical study by OMSC's Senior Mission Scholar and newly retired general secretary of the Church Mission Society targets practical issues in mission. Four sessions. $75

Scott Moreau  Nov. 27-Dec. 1
Advancing Mission on the Information Superhighway. Wheaton College’s professor of missions shows how to get the most out of the worldwide web for mission research. Cosponsored by the Billy Graham Center and Mission Aviation Fellowship. Eight sessions. $95

J. Dudley Woodberry  Dec. 4-8
Islam and Christianity in Dynamic Encounter. Fuller School of World Mission’s professor of Islamic Studies lays the groundwork for constructive Christian witness in Muslim communities. Cosponsored by Christian Reformed World Missions, OC International, and Southern Baptist Woman’s Missionary Union. Eight sessions. $95

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Book Notes

Anderson, Allan H., and Walter J. Hollenweger, eds. 
Pentecostals After a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition. 

Berthrong, John H. 

Brown, Michael L. 
Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus. 

Cobb, John B., Jr. 
Transforming Christianity and the World: A Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism. 

Durchholz, Patricia. 
Defining Mission: Comboni Missionaries in North America. 

Good Citizens: British Missionaries and Imperial States, 1870–1918. 

Greenway, Roger S. 
Go and Make Disciples: An Introduction to Christian Missions. 

Henry, Helga Bender. 
Cameroon on a Clear Day: A Pioneer Missionary in Colonial Africa. 

Kirk, J. Andrew, and Kevin J. Vanoozer, eds. 
To Stake a Claim: Mission and the Western Crisis of Knowledge. 

Li, Li. 

Montgomery, Robert L. 
Introduction to the Sociology of Missions. 

Thorne, Susan. 
Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England. 

Witte, John, Jr., and Richard C. Martin, eds. 
Sharing the Book: Religious Perspectives on the Rights and Wrongs of Proselytism. 

In Coming Issues

The Ecumenical Missionary Conference, New York City, 1900 
Thomas A. Askew

Developments in Mission Studies 
Jan A. B. Jongeneel

Evangelicalism, Islam, and Millennial Expectations in the Nineteenth Century 
Andrew Porter

Kenneth Cragg in Perspective: A Comparison with Temple Gairdner and Wilfred Cantwell Smith 
James A. Tebbe

Veli-Matti Känttäinen

What’s Behind the 10/40 Window? A Historical Perspective 
Robert T. Coote

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