Globalization, Mission, and the Coming Kingdom

Professor Dana L. Robert, a contributing editor, breaks new ground in this issue with “The First Globalization.” She suggests that the Anglo-American Protestant missionary movement between the two world wars contributed to what was then labeled internationalization and which can be seen today as an early form of globalization.

Internationalization and globalization can be sought along political lines, as in the 1920s and 1930s, and along commercial and technological lines, as is the case today. The world Christian movement is committed to another option: the kingdom of God. At their best, both liberal and conservative expressions of the missionary task have sought “globalization” in the form of the kingdom, even if agreement is lacking as to how it is to come. How can Christians hope and pray for anything less when the First Missionary taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”? Are we to discount his vision of this world’s future?

Premature claims of the kingdom’s arrival dot the historical record. On Whitsunday in May 1862, King George Tupou I of the Friendly Islands (now Tonga), announced to his people a new charter of government, based on Christian precepts, whereupon his subjects confidently broke out with “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun.” Robert’s article traces the thinking of Daniel Fleming, one of the most prominent of mainline mission leaders between the wars, as he moved from a vision of world unity through Christian impact on the political order to a more cautious vision for global unity expressed through the church of Jesus Christ. Unity even on that level proves elusive.

But the vision remains. As Robert states in her introduction, “The global vision intrinsic to Christianity—one world, one kingdom of God under Jesus Christ—has been the motive and purpose behind much missionary fervor.” Robert quotes Tissington Tatlow, England’s longtime Student Christian Movement secretary: “There rose for me a vision of men of every kindred and tribe and race in one fellowship worshipping God.”

Without such a vision, those pursuing mission today would have to ask (rephrasing Paul of Tarsus [1 Cor. 15:29-30]), “Now if there is no kingdom coming, why do we endanger ourselves every hour?” Some years ago in this journal, John V. Taylor, a mission spokesman from the generation following the Second World War, and for many years general secretary of the Church Mission Society, reflected on the ambiguous role of human effort in the coming of God’s kingdom (“My Pilgrimage in Mission,” April 1993, p. 60). Speaking of “all our planning and patience, our fighting and faithfulness, our longing and loss,” he concluded, “We shall not build the Kingdom of Heaven in this world; nevertheless God will give it to us.”

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The First Globalization: The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the World Wars

Dana L. Robert

The global vision intrinsic to Christianity—one world, one kingdom of God under Jesus Christ—has been the motive and purpose behind much missionary fervor. Driven by this idealistic vision, the mission of the church nevertheless has been conducted within human history. Modern missions emerged in the context of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and the subsequent expansion of capitalism and modernization. With its internal logic of universalism, or catholicity, Christian mission of necessity finds itself in dialogue with the secular globalizing tendency of the historical moment—whether European expansionism, Western capitalism, or the World Wide Web.

The Anglo-American Protestant missionary movement of the 1920s and 1930s functioned within the globalizing discourse of “internationalism”—a moral vision of one world that emerged after the horrors of World War I and stemmed from the idealism of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points. Internationalism launched a massive pacifist movement, brought into being the League of Nations and the World Court, and established the idea of the right of self-determination for all peoples. Important sectors of the Protestant missionary movement embraced internationalism—they helped shape it, participated in it, and defended and critiqued it at a grassroots level. In their most optimistic phase during the 1920s, mission advocates were accused of confusing internationalism with the kingdom of God. Particularly in North American mainline Protestant churches it became difficult to distinguish internationalism from the mission impulse itself.

Although internationalism was central to mainline Protestant missions in the 1920s and 1930s, scholars have not used it as an interpretive framework for the missionary issues of the era. Many have preferred to interpret the interwar period in light of the Kraemer/Hocking debate or in relation to the tension between evangelistic and social gospel approaches to missions. This essay explores the relationship between internationalism and indigenization in the mission movement between the world wars, with primary reference to a North American conversation. I hope to demonstrate that internationalism and indigenization were two sides of the same coin.

The globalizing vision of one world stood in tension with the cultural particularities that emerged in relationship to the global context itself. Internationalism demonstrated all the complexity that bedevils globalization in the early twenty-first century—a shifting set of both secular and religious definitions, and assumptions of universality both challenged and affirmed by nationalistic or particular ethnic identities. In this study I place the mission thought of the 1920s and 1930s in the larger context of internationalism, and then explore briefly the parallels with globalization today.

Missions and the Development of Christian Internationalism

The internationalist agenda emerged quickly among young adults, many of them university students, whose generational cohorts died by the millions in the trenches of Europe from 1914 to 1918. On January 8, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States put forth the Fourteen Points as a basis for ending the war. Among the points was the idea of the self-determination of minority peoples, the end of the Ottoman Empire, the return of European territory under the imperial control of the Axis powers, and the founding of the League of Nations as a forum for resolving international disputes. In May 1919 the terms of the Treaty of Versailles became public, revealing that instead of reconciliation among nations, there would be economic punishment of the Central powers so severe that a new basis for continued conflict was created. Then the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which coupled with the decision of the United States not to join the League of Nations, set in motion a widespread internationalist movement among young adults determined to achieve lasting peace based upon Wilson’s Fourteen Points.

Prior to World War I international Christian student movements like the YMCA and the World’s Student Christian Federation (WSCF) had already spread throughout the colleges of Europe, Asia, South Africa, and the United States. From 1889 to 1892 Luther Wishard of the World Committee of the YMCA toured Japan, China, India, and parts of Africa to organize student YMCAs, visiting 216 mission stations in twenty countries. Missionaries, who considered the YMCA a partner in youth work, were its strongest supporters in so-called mission lands. The YMCA also sponsored the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), founded in 1888. In 1889 the first YMCA foreign secretaries arrived in Japan and China. By the early 1940s nearly 600 Western men had been involved in planting organized youth work in Christian colleges in mission lands across the globe. With its focus on developing indigenous leadership, the YMCA quickly developed a partnership model whereby foreign secretaries worked alongside and then under indigenous student leaders. The WSCF, founded in 1895, piggybacked on the YMCA and to some extent was an extension of it. Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Sweden, leader in both the Life and Work and the Faith and Order ecumenical movements during the 1920s, reminisced that it was the YMCA, beginning with his attendance at evangelist Dwight Moody’s Northfield, Massachusetts, conference for college students in 1890, that gave him his “world-wide vision of ecumenical Christianity.”

Given the missionary focus and international connections of the student Christian movements before World War I, it was a logical though not uncontested step for the younger generation...
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through the YMCA, YWCA, SVM, and other student mission groups. The failure of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and join the League of Nations was a grave disappointment for mission-minded college students. Then in 1924 came the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act, giving dramatic immediacy to internationalist concerns. Missionaries widely opposed this law, which kept Chinese, Japanese, and other “ Orientals” out of the United States, for why would Asians want to become Christians if a so-called Christian country was refusing them admittance? The postwar American mission focus on “world friendship” represented a combination of pacifism, interracial reconciliation, and a vision of global unity that emerged from mission ideals.

The history of the student missionary movement at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, the first women’s college in the United States, is a concrete example of the evolution into internationalism. Mount Holyoke was the preeminent training school for Congregationalist missionary women in the mid 1800s, and in 1878 a group of its students founded the Mount Holyoke Missionary Association. A decade later, with the founding of the SVM and its cosponsorship by the YWCA, the Mount Holyoke Missionary Association became the Missionary Literature Committee of the campus YWCA. At the beginning of the twentieth century the YWCA spearheaded missionary interest on campus, holding mission study classes and missionary meetings. In 1925 the Missionary Department of the YWCA changed its name to the World Fellowship Department. Similar developments took place at Carleton College in Minnesota, another stronghold of missionary Congregationalism. At these schools “the spirit of evangelical missions and of a more secular internationalism fused and became almost indistinguishable.”

Advancing the Internationalist Agenda, 1925

After World War I not only the younger generation but also the middle-aged missionary movement hitched its wagon to the vision of a peaceful, united world. Major church conferences in the mid-1920s shared a focus on internationalism, with the most optimistic Americans merging it into their vision of the kingdom of God. In their dissatisfaction at the decision of the International Missionary Council (IMC) not to hold an international meeting until 1928, the North American mission societies held their own Foreign Missions Convention in Washington, D.C., in 1925. Eighty-five mission organizations, eleven missionary training schools, and 3,419 delegates attended. President Calvin Coolidge opened the meeting with an address urging missionaries to carry the best of Christianity to other cultures and to counteract the evils of Western civilization by bringing back to America the best of other cultures. Internationalism suffused the proceedings. A series of papers on the theme “the present world situation” reviewed the situation of missions in different parts of the world. A number of distinguished missionary speakers addressed aspects of internationalism. One of the most explicit was Charles Brent, who had served as Episcopal bishop of the Philippines for sixteen years before becoming senior chaplain of the American Expeditionary Forces in the Philippines, and then bishop of Western New York. Appealing for the authentic conversion of those in so-called Christian nations, Brent noted that the shrinking distance between East and West meant that Christians would be made in the East only if Easterners saw Christian behavior in the West. To be truly of service to the world and to reach the East, Western civilization needed to become more meditative and worshipful, “more empowered to use silence.” But the greatest opportunity for Western Christians, according to Brent, lay in the League of Nations, to be established by an international treaty binding on all nations. Both the League of Nations and the proposed World Court were “Christian in their aim and in their possibilities…. The Christian Church has got to say in no uncertain voice whether it accepts war as an evil necessity and will support war when it arises, or whether it believes that it is a barbarous atrocity, that there is a substitute for it, and that we must discover and use that substitute.” In a statement of his own passion, made more moving by his ill health, Brent declared, “I see but two things to live for: one of them is the unity of the church of God; the other is the good will among the nations that will forever banish war.”

A section of the Foreign Missions Convention of 1925 was devoted to the relationship of the missionary movement to “peace and good will among nations.” Speaking on international relations, one speaker indicated that a major problem of the day was in harmonizing nationalism with the Christian ideal of worldwide unity. Other speakers spoke of the need for prayer and humility and for Christian cooperation to counter the divisiveness between peoples. Said John R. Mott, chairman of the IMC, “Christian missions are indeed the great and the true internationalism. Our 29,000 missionaries are ambassadors, interpreters, and mediators in the most vital aspects of international and inter-racial relationships.” Speaking for the woman’s missionary movement was Evelyn Nicholson, president of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, member of the IMC, and author of the first book on peace education to be published by the Methodists after the war. Stressing the importance of the church for creating world peace, Nicholson argued that the teachings of Christ commissioned the church to teach interdependence, peace, and mutual respect. The church “is in itself a League of Nations functioning now, through its representatives, in every land. It is a recognized educational agency, training not only the intellect but the will and spirit.” Through its schools, missions were teaching that people had rights. According to Nicholson, the promotion of friendship among people of different races and nationalities was a unique responsibility of mission agencies.

Another important church meeting that took place in 1925 was the Stockholm Conference on Life and Work. While the mission convention in Washington demonstrated agreement among the British and American speakers that internationalism was an essential part of the missionary agenda, the international Stockholm conference revealed a chasm between the former Allies and the German delegates over the issue. Although the Anglo-Americans and French seemed to agree that the League of Nations should be supported as part of creating a new world order, the German delegation accused them of confusing a temporal program with the kingdom of God. Invoking Luther’s “two kingdom” theory, the Germans insisted that their suffering under the terms of the Versailles peace treaty made them wary of identifying a human program with the divine will. Protested Dr. Klingemann, superintendent of the Rhine Province, “Now remember that disarmed we live in an armed world. We wait for
the promised general disarmament to be able to believe in peace."14

The protest of the German delegates that the internationalist agenda looked suspiciously like a hijacking of the kingdom of God by a particular political program was the same objection raised by German students to the optimism of Tissington Tatlow. Of what good was an idealistic movement for world peace when economic disparities loomed between national winners and losers? The German objections not only raised the theological question of confusing internationalism with the kingdom of God, but they implied that the movement for world peace was a political ploy of the victorious Allies. In short, it was charged that the internationalist agenda was being promoted by those nations who held all the power in the postwar world.15

The 1925 Stockholm conference was not strictly speaking a missionary gathering as was the North American conference in Washington. But when we see it in relation with the Washington conference and the Manchester Quadrennial of the British SCM—all three held the same year—it becomes clear just how widely some form of the internationalist agenda had spread throughout the leadership of Western Protestantism.

The adoption of Christian internationalism by a large group of missionaries and mission leaders was an important factor in the growing rift with fundamentalist mission leaders, who, like some Europeans, distrusted the idea that the internationalist agenda was somehow connected with an emerging kingdom of God. For more conservative missionaries, world unity would be a result of the eschatological establishment of God's heavenly kingdom, not the outcome of its step-by-step development on earth.16

On the part of self-identified liberal Protestants in the 1920s, the emergence of internationalism replaced a traditional, more narrowly evangelistic view of missions: it dealt with the Christianizing of relationships between nations rather than conversion of individuals. While the internationalist liberals of the day usually retained a focus on individual commitment, they broadened the missionary agenda to emphasize Christianizing the social realm.

Internationalism in the Fosdick Family

An extremely interesting example of this process occurred within the Fosdick family, Baptists from upstate New York. Members of the family played major roles in the development of internationalism within liberal Christianity. Harry Emerson Fosdick was the most famous preacher in America between the wars. He recalled in his autobiography, The Living of These Days, that his childhood decision to be baptized was because he wanted to become a missionary: "The wide, wide world was called to our attention mainly as a mission field. It grew vivid to us when missionaries pictured it in all its heathen need. When I graduated from high school in 1895 the Turks had just been massacring the Armenians, and my 'oration' was an appeal for that decimated people."17 As the result of his theological training at Colgate Seminary and his fieldwork in the Bowery in New York City, Fosdick adopted modernist theological views. He became professor of practical theology at Union Theological Seminary and continued to sharpen his homiletical skills as preacher in many churches. Through his many books on spirituality and preaching, especially The Manhood of the Master, Fosdick's ideas had a wide readership among missionaries and indigenous Christian leaders.

In 1921, traveling to China to hold conferences among missionaries, he experienced firsthand the split that was opening within the missionary community between fundamentalism and modernism. In 1922, after returning from China, Fosdick delivered his sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Controversy over that sermon was one of the major events in the fundamentalist-modernist contention in the 1920s. In response to the uproar, Baptist and millionaire businessman John D. Rockefeller, Jr., called Fosdick as pastor of his church. On the upper east side of multicultural Manhattan next to Union Theological Seminary, Rockefeller constructed the nonsectarian Riverside Church, which under Fosdick's leadership embodied the internationalist movement. Fosdick's stated goal for Riverside Church was to help the younger generation discover its divine vocation and say, "Here I am, send me." "If where I soldiers of the common good are fighting for a more decent international life and a juster industry, they should feel behind them the support of this church which . . . has kept its conviction clear that a major part of Christianity is the application of the principles of Jesus to the social life, and that no industrial or international question is ever settled until it is settled Christianly, that would be wonderful."18

Many missionaries on furlough and international students attended Union Seminary while Fosdick taught there, and the Riverside Church became their home away from home. Fosdick noted some of the typical mission causes supported by the congregation: a rural project under the Kyodan (Japanese Protestant Church), education of girls in an Arab refugee camp, Korean refugees, an American Indian college in Oklahoma, the International Christian University in Japan, Vellore Medical College in India, a school of social work in Delhi, the YMCA in Mozambique and Senegal, a settlement house in Tokyo, work among migrants under the Home Missions Council, an agricultural missionary in China, Union Seminary in Tokyo, the radio ministry of the Philippine Christian Council, the Agricultural Missions Foundation, ecumenical work in Santo Domingo, and various projects in New York City. While he never became a missionary in the strict sense, Harry Emerson Fosdick's internationalism was an outgrowth of that earlier interest. Describing internationalism as an "idea that has used me," he wrote, "The idea that mankind is inevitably becoming 'one world,' so far as the conquest of distance and the intensifying of economic interdependence can make us one, has had a major influence on my thinking and preaching."19

Harry Fosdick's involvement in internationalism is all the more noteworthy when one realizes that his younger brother, Raymond, was the first undersecretary of the League of Nations. Having studied under Woodrow Wilson at Princeton for both his bachelor and master's degrees, and then working in New York City as an anticorruption reformer, Raymond Fosdick was tapped as the first undersecretary by President Wilson before the League of Nations was voted on by the U.S. Senate. (Brother Harry preached a pacifist sermon in Geneva at the opening ceremony of the League in 1925.) After retiring from the League, Raymond became a lawyer, with Rockefeller as his first client. Spending more and more time on the various organizations funded by the Rockefeller family, and as senior advisor to Rockefeller, Raymond

Fosdick was convinced that humankind was becoming one world.
Missionary Indigenization Within the Internationalist Paradigm

In the remainder of this essay I focus on one aspect of missionary internationalism that was particularly significant in the 1920s and 1930s, namely, the movement toward cultural indigenization. I intend to demonstrate that a primary missionary contribution to Christian internationalism was the active promotion of indigenization in non-Western Christianity—the vision of the church as a worldwide panoply of different cultures and heritages. Paradoxically, the mission leaders who were the most visible internationalists were on the cutting edge of promoting indigenous cultures within Christian expression. To have a truly global church meant appreciating the individual cultures within it. The self-determination of peoples meant encouraging their individual contributions to the world church; it meant the liberating of church life—including its history, art, architecture, literature, and worship—from domination by Western traditions.

Separating Christ from Western Culture

At the theological center of missionary internationalism was the separation of Christ from Western culture. The horrors of World War I not only provoked a widespread search for ways to prevent war, but they caused a revulsion against the easy association of Christianity with Western culture. For it was so-called Christian nations that had fought the most devastating war in human history. The shift in tone in American missionary literature was immediate. For example, before the war the annual women’s study books by the Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions often took a condescending view toward the cultures of the world. But beginning with Caroline Atwater Mason’s World Missions and World Peace in 1916, the study books of the women’s series, as well as the books produced by the Missionary Education Movement, took a positive view toward non-Western cultures and criticized the non-Christian aspects of Western culture. The key shift from late nineteenth-century theology to that of the 1920s was the ability to separate Christ from Western culture and to see him embodied in other cultures.

To illustrate the theological and missiological dynamics of the separation of Christ from culture, let us examine a handful of groundbreaking works that appeared in the mid-1920s. By 1925 the postwar shift in missionary thinking was clearly expressed not only in the conferences already discussed but also in missionary publications that had a wide impact on both missionary and popular thinking. Among North Americans E. Stanley Jones was undoubtedly the most popular and visible figure among those missionaries self-consciously associated with internationalism and its twin, indigenization. He was widely influential in pacifist circles, he was an early and prominent supporter of Indian independence, and he shaped the thinking of the 1920s generation of seminarians and young church leaders in the United States. Author of twenty-eight books, including the best-selling The Christ of the Indian Road, Jones’s missiological and spiritual writings influenced both evangelical and liberal missionaries all over the world into the 1960s. Designated by Time Magazine in 1938 as the “world’s greatest missionary,” Jones first went to India as a Methodist missionary in 1907. Coming from a pietistic grounding in Holiness theology, Jones believed that religious experience through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ was the foundation of Christian living.

As Jones immersed himself in Indian culture in attempts to reach Hindus and Muslims, he realized that their association of Christianity with Western culture left them unable to relate to Jesus Christ, who seemed to them a metaphor for British imperialism. Jones began giving public lectures on Jesus Christ, followed by fatigue question-and-answer sessions with the indigenous intelligentsia. By firmly stripping away the trappings of Western Christianity, Jones proved able to get thousands of Hindus and Muslims to stand and acknowledge their allegiance to Jesus Christ—not to a system of doctrines but to a person. Jones did not think of his work as an Indian interpretation of Christ, preferring to leave that task to Indians themselves. Rather, as in
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Jon Hoover, Ph.D. candidate, and
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The Christ of the Indian Road, Jones described the process of how Christ was “becoming naturalized” in India. By giving a straightforward presentation of Jesus Christ, Jones refused to become embroiled in defenses of Christianity as a religious or cultural system. He argued that the absoluteness of Christ permitted a generous view of non-Christian systems. A friend of Gandhi, Jones believed that the Hindu reformer pointed to Jesus, who was Life and Truth itself. In his optimism Jones felt that the spiritual atmosphere in India was permeated with Christ and that belief in him would soon burst from the heavy clouds as if a rainstorm.

By separating Christ from Western culture, Jones experienced a breakthrough with Hindus and Muslims.

Jones’s basic mission theology was a form of fulfillment theology. “Just as he [Jesus] gathered up in his own life and person everything that was fine and beautiful in Jewish teaching and past and gave it a new radiant expression, so he may do the same same with India.” Although Jesus’ words “I came not to destroy but to fulfill” were “locally applied to the Law and the Prophets,” they were “capable of a wider application to truth found anywhere.” In the paper he gave in 1925 at the Foreign Missions Convention in Washington, “The Aim and Motive of Foreign Missions,” Jones described the development of his radical methodology as a means of separating Christ from the view that missionaries were creed-mongers, forerunners of imperialism and capitalism, and supporters of domineering ecclesiasticism. By separating Christ from Western culture, Jones experienced a breakthrough with the Hindus and Muslims who opposed him. At the heart of Jones’s fulfillment theory was a theology of the cosmic Christ: “If we go deep enough into religion, we must stand face to face with Jesus, who is religion itself in its final expression.” In relation to the East, Jesus Christ was the way (“karm marg,” “way of life”), the truth (“gyan marg,” “way of knowledge”), and the life (“bhakti marg,” “way of devotion”).

To E. Stanley Jones, one of the wonders of the age was the new revelation that Christianity was breaking out beyond the borders of the church and into non-Western societies. The Christ of the Indian Road was the Christ of service, moving among the people in his flowing garments, touching and healing them, and announcing the kingdom of God. In accordance with his desire to “naturalize” Christ in the Indian context, in 1930 Jones opened his first Christian ashram, the beginning of a series of live-in meetings in the political realm held between the British and Indian nationalists, and consultations designed to help solve the world’s problems through negotiation and peaceful means. His Christ of the Round Table (1928) played a role in the acceptance of interreligious dialogue as a feature of mainline Protestant missions.

Daniel Fleming’s Whither Bound in Missions was a second groundbreaking book. Although it did not reach the popular state-side audiences in the way that The Christ of the Indian Road did, it put Jones’s anecdotal insights into a more systematic form and laid out a program for missions that was widely influential among practicing missionaries. A former Presbyterian missionary to India, Fleming was professor of missions at Union Theological Seminary from 1918 to 1944. As professor with Harry Emerson Fosdick at Union, he lived in the same building as Fosdick for decades, and their families were friends. Fleming attracted a wide range of international students, missionaries on furlough, and “missionary kids,” including Timothy T. Lew, Y. T. Wu, Frank Laubach, and Charles Forman. Since many of Fleming’s twenty-three books were published by the international student movement, they reached a wide audience of YMCA workers, missionaries, and indigenous Christian leaders around the world.

In Whither Bound in Missions, Fleming distinguished between Christ and Western Christianity and predicted that the “storm center of Christian controversy” would soon pass to the “oriental seminaries” as they adjusted Christian thought to their ancient heritages. The context for the new mutuality in mission, and interpretation from West to East and back again, was an “organic conception of a world society, where independence gives way to interdependence, and where competition is superseded by cooperation. Fully to realize this co-relationship as members one of another constitutes a great part of growth in spirituality.” Like Jones, Fleming emphasized that Jesus was handicapped by his association with the West. Given that the goal of missions was to communicate Christ, it was necessary for missions to separate Christ from a culture of racism and Western self-righteousness. Fleming dwelled on the need for friendship with those of other religions, on international issues that affected the church, on indigenization in worship, and on devolving control of missions to the indigenous churches. He spent an entire chapter, “Christian World-Mindedness,” on the universal brotherhood of all people, the rights of smaller groups to pursue their own ways of doing things, and the need for worldwide cooperation in common tasks, including the League of Nations and the World Court. Mission education must emphasize “the universal brotherhood of children of God and purposeful, constructive endeavor for world ends,” which Fleming saw as part of what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God. Developing the “international mind,” including “world consciousness, world outlook, world background, world fellowship, and world objectives,” should be the subject of mission education for students. Advised Fleming, the “Christian internationalist” will read foreign papers, study foreign languages and cultures, and be concerned with international relations.

One of the missionaries Fleming influenced was Frank Laubach, a Congregational missionary in the Philippines who took his furlough at Union Theological Seminary between 1919 and 1922. Deeply influenced by Fleming’s vision that missions should be concerned with the total welfare of peoples, Laubach realized through reading Fleming’s Mark of the World Christian that two-thirds of the world were illiterate. After returning to the Philippines and working among the Muslim Moros, Laubach pioneered the “each one, teach one” method of literacy education, and the use of a basic set of words by which adults could learn to read in as short a time as a few hours. In addition to being “Mr. Literacy,” Laubach became widely recognized as a Christian internationalist, pacifist, and mystic. Author of forty-three books, he was a completely ecumenical figure who could not believe that one part of the church had a monopoly on truth. As he delved deeper into mysticism, influenced by the faith of the Muslim Moros, he came to think of himself as a member of all denominations, and even of all faiths. Eager to soak up the riches
of diverse devotional traditions, he applied the same idea to the nations: "I have become an internationalist so much that patriotism means the Lord’s Prayer for the whole world, and especially for those who are being forgotten or oppressed."26

In 1925 Laubach produced his most scholarly book, The People of the Philippines: Their Religious Progress and Preparation for Spiritual Leadership in the Far East. Daniel Fleming wrote the foreword. In his comprehensive history of religion in the Philippines, Laubach started with its pre-Christian and Muslim heritage and then worked through the history of Christian missions. The aim of his book was "to discover the footprints of God across the history of the Philippines."27 Published under the influence of the Fourteen Points, at a time when the United States was debating whether to handle the "problem of the Philippines" by granting it the right of self-determination, People of the Philippines advocated independence for the islands. Laubach argued that Americans had been given a distorted picture of Philippine culture by the U.S. expeditionary forces and disgruntled Spanish priests. Rather than barbaric cannibals, the Filipinos were meek, gentle, hospitable people. Their deep religious insights, drawn from their rich heritage, meant that they were progressing toward the kingdom of God and were set to exert spiritual leadership throughout Asia. In his history he focused less on Western missionaries than on Filipino leadership in the mission of the church, including the founding of nineteen indigenous denominations from 1909 to 1921.

To Laubach, the Philippines bore deep insights into both Eastern and Western cultures and so were in a position to reconcile Eastern and Western civilizations. In the words of a Filipino educator, the Filipinos were internationalists, located in a strategic position to precipitate "new world relations." Laubach prophesied that the Filipinos would "reorientalize" Christianity and free it from the "slough of theological despond" into which rationalistic Western minds had led it. Filipinos were going to "work out for the Far East a simplified, beautified conception of the spirit of Jesus Christ—they will help the kingdom of God to throw off its European garb, and take upon itself once more the Oriental dress in which it began its career." As beacons of Christianity and of democracy and the only Asian Christian nation, the Philippines were poised to teach these things to the rest of Asia. If the Filipinos failed in their task, Laubach feared that Asia might turn away from both democracy and Christianity. "She would then learn from the Occident only science, militarism, hatred, and vengeance."28

Another important missionary book was A Straight Way Toward Tomorrow, by Mary Schaufler Platt. A member of a famous German-American, American Board missionary dynasty, Mary Schaufler wrote several books that were widely distributed to hundreds of thousands of American women gathered in denominational mission study groups in American Protestant churches. Published in 1926, A Straight Way Toward Tomorrow represented the application of Christian internationalism to the distinctive concerns of missionary women—child welfare, the Christian home, and religious education. It culminated in a call for "worldwide friendship," which became the keynote of the interdenominational woman’s missionary movement in the interwar period. In "World Friendship" American women endorsed a Christian internationalism that stressed world peace, interracial harmony, and building personal bridges between women of different cultures.29 In its foreword to Mary Schaufler Platt’s book, the Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions expressed its plan for breaking national barriers through united mission study among Christian women around the world: “We are coming together into a spiritual federation of the Christian Women of the world for which we have longed and prayed.”30 The committee expressed optimism that Christian women would be able to unite on a spiritual basis before governments would “agree on political plans” for world unity.

Platt drew attention to the child-centered aspects of internationalism, including the beginning of the Save the Children Fund in 1919 and the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child endorsed by the League of Nations in 1924, the aims of which she declared were biblical. Like Jones, Fleming, and Laubach, she believed that the future of mission lay in the hands of indigenous Christians. “The evangelization of Africa lies with the African of the future.” Speaking of Christian women around the world, Platt stated, “What they have done and can do for their own people, is far beyond the possibilities of foreigners who come to their shores, learn their language more or less imperfectly, and try to think their thoughts and understand their racial feelings. Our Christian sisters of China, Japan, India and Africa are those on whom Christ chiefly depends for leading the women and little children of their own people into the Straight Way Toward Tomorrow…. They will always need our prayers, sympathy and love; but they must increase and we must decrease in influence, in leadership, in interpretation of the message of Christ to the women of their own lands.”31

In the final chapter of her book, Platt underscored women’s basis for World Friendship: true love as the means to end war. She drew attention to the giant women’s peace rally held in London in 1926, to the founding of the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1925 as “an adventure in friendship,” to the missionary movement’s attempt to end the unjust treaties imposed upon China and to revoke the Japanese Exclusion Act, and to the World Conference of Education in 1926, which was inspired by the idea that in order to end war, children must be educated for peace. Platt praised the international movement of Boy Scouts and Girl Reserves, youth movements that were teaching youth to resolve conflicts by means other than war. In its final pages The Straight Way Toward Tomorrow evoked the idea of a Cosmic Christ, who illumined the pathway to life in all cultures: “He is the same Christ yesterday, today, and on through the days to come; the ‘Christ of the Andes’ who stands as the emblem of peace between two great countries; ‘The Christ of the Indian Road’ whom eastern mystics can worship and crave as their Companion; the Christ of the trackless desert to guide the wandering Arab; the Christ of Order and the law of Love for nations that are struggling to find themselves in the seething world of today; the Christ of Unselfish Service for those who know him and would follow in his steps.” The Christian women of every race and country would thus walk in “happy fellowship” with Christ and each other on the straight way “unto the perfect day.”32

In the works of Jones, Fleming, Laubach, and Platt, all experienced missionaries, we see the full development of a

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Pledging themselves to “World Friendship,” American women built personal bridges to women of other cultures.
missionary internationalism by 1926. Although they wrote in different genres of personal narrative, missiological treatise, history, and mission study book, each expressed deep confidence in the ability of Jesus Christ to be fully represented in non-Western cultures. Each looked forward to the development of indigenous theologies and to what we would today call the full contextualization of Christianity. Their vision of a new world order, of Christian internationalism—including peace, democracy, and the political and religious self-determination of peoples—provided the framework for the indigenization of Christianity throughout the world. From a theological perspective, while they supported personal evangelism, they perceived Christ embodied in all cultures. In the case of Jones and Laubach, both ardent and activist pacifists, although they maintained the absoluteness of Jesus Christ, they saw the spirit of Christ operating within other religions as well.43

Missionary Indigenization

Having briefly explored the synergism between internationalism and indigenization in the mission thought of a few leading missionaries in the mid-1920s, I now turn to specific attempts at indigenization on the part of missionaries in the interwar period. All of the leaders whose books I examined stated clearly that interpreting Jesus Christ according to each culture was a vital task for indigenous Christians. It was not something that Western missionaries could do on their behalf. While stopping short of claiming to develop truly indigenous theologies, missionary internationalists in the 1920s and 1930s encouraged the inculturation process in many different ways.

As the years passed, deliberate attempts at promoting indigenization increased, especially after the proceedings of the Jerusalem Conference of 1928 contained an extensive report on the indigenization process. Recorded in the third volume of conference reports, on “Younger and Older Churches,” the discussion of indigenization involved testimonies from China, Japan, India, Burma, and the West. It was stated that the indigenous church could be identified “when its interpretation of Christ and its expression in worship and service, in customs and in art and architecture, incorporate the worthy characteristics of the people, while conserving at the same time the heritage of the Church in all lands and in all ages.”44

As with the mission books examined above, the discussion of indigenous churches by the IMC was set in an internationalist framework of cooperation for world peace and the need to “Christianize” nationalism. Words from the Indian Methodist Conference of 1926 exemplified the relationship between indigenization and Christian internationalism: “There will always be a need of some missionaries to come to India with the best Christian culture from the West, just as there will always be a need of Indian Christian missionaries to take the best of Christian culture from the East to the West. In this fusion of the Christian culture of Occident and Orient will arise a new and international consciousness of Christ which will help to solve so many of the problems of nation and race and color, the great unsolved problems of this age.”45

Ironically, the promotion of indigenous culture in the younger churches could be seen as a top-down imposition by outsiders—a part of the liberal, North Atlantic agenda. By the 1930s missionaries from mainline churches were working among people who in many cases had been Christians for several generations, whose traditions had been handed down by those who had seen Western Christianity as part of a necessary critique of their own non-Western cultures. The resistance to indigenization could be just as strong by “native Christians” as it was by theologically conservative missionaries, both of whom worried that indigenization would invite paganism into the church through the back door. Indigenizing internationalists frequently commented on the resistance to their work by conservative native Christians.46

Literature, Art, and Architecture

The longest sustained attempt at missionary support for inculturation was sponsored by the Committee on Christian Literature for Women and Children in Mission Fields (CCLWCMF), founded in 1912 as one of the three joint programs of the women’s mission boards in North America and lasting until 1989. During the 1920s the program received the collections taken by women on the World Day of Prayer, supported by missionary women around the world. Its goal was to sponsor Christian literature for women and children who, after becoming Christian, needed to have reading material and artwork appropriate to their own cultures.

In its first fifty years, the CCLWCMF sponsored twenty-seven magazines in different languages. Some of the magazines were not labeled as Christian and so gained widespread acceptance as children’s literature in other religious contexts. The magazine The Treasure Chest, for example, in 1922 featured stories, plays, poems, and articles. It carried a regular department on social service called “The Friendly League.” Children enjoyed departments on the flora and fauna of India, biographies of famous people in Indian history, and travelogues, and they wrote letters to the editor. In the late 1930s the National Christian Council of India endorsed The Treasure Chest, which by 1938 was being published in English, Urdu, Malayalam, Telegu, Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Burmese, Gujarati, and Bengali editions.47 Most of the magazines supported by the project worked in vernacular languages under indigenous editors and encouraged children to contribute stories. Clementina Butler, the American chair of CCLWCMF, hoped the project would not only help sustain “Christian homes” but would teach the ideals of peace. In 1939 Butler quoted support of the program from missionary leaders who considered it helpful “in education for world understanding, cooperation and peace.”48 Whenever possible, the CCLWCMF cooperated with the newer Christian literature committees, such as the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, a subcommittee of the International Missionary Council founded in 1929. By the early 1940s the CCLWCMF was planning to translate some of its magazines into romanized characters for use by Frank Laubach in his literacy work.

One of the most interesting aspects of the work of the CCLWCMF was its sponsorship of native Christian art, the first mission organization to systematically sponsor indigenous art. Concerned that converts in India only had cheap pictures of Hindu gods with which to decorate their homes, Clementina Butler, who had grown up in India in a missionary family, began...
commissioning Christian pictures in Indian styles in the 1930s. Sold at cost for 2½ cents each, response to the first ten pictures was immediate. "The Good Shepherd" sold 27,000 copies in the first year, and later E. Stanley Jones's ashram in Lucknow sent 2,600 copies as Christmas presents to workers among the poor. The CCLWCMF held annual contests for the best indigenous Christian art in India. In China, in addition to its magazines, the CCLWCMF sponsored a Pictorial Life of Our Saviour in five volumes. The first volume sold 23,000 copies in the first eighteen months. A missionary made filmstrips of the series; it was watched by thousands, accompanied by rhymes sung by spectators. At a time when most mission literature was still using pictures of blonde and blue-eyed Madonnas, the CCLWCMF was commissioning native art for the covers of its magazines and books.

Some of the art commissioned by the CCLWCMF was introduced to a Western audience by its inclusion in a series of three books edited by Daniel Fleming on non-Western Christian art and architecture: Heritage of Beauty (1937), Each with His Own Brush (1938), and Christian Symbols in a World Community (1940). They were published by Friendship Press, itself a product of missionary internationalism, representing the merger of the publishing arms of interdenominational North American mission education programs.

In the introduction to the first of the three books, Fleming explored the relationship between the Christian vision of a "world community" and the indigenization process in the younger churches. Referring to the world community, he stated, "Doubtless the greatest influence making for its fullest realization, is the Christian world fellowship—a fellowship which is not a political federation of the world, no mere brotherhood of man, transcending all differences of race and nationality, but a community which progressively embodies the Christian faith, renewed distinctively by worship of God through Jesus Christ." The Christian world fellowship should become a "conscious reality" in the Christian's life. Achievement of the world fellowship required becoming aware of "cultural embodiments of Christianity other than our own." He continued, "We are not satisfied to think of ourselves as belonging merely to an American, a British, a Japanese or an Indian group of Christians; but are striving to attain a loyalty and an attitude of mind that consciously and unconsciously will reveal that we are citizens of a universal kingdom. We realize that, for Christians, the world community should have a universal, a catholic, an ecumenical connotation. Any objective approach, therefore, which helps us to gain a sense of the wide diffusion of the church and to acquire more understanding of its truly multi-national, multi-racial character should be of help."

One of the significant aspects of Fleming's thought in the late 1930s, as compared to his ideas in the early 1920s, was the shifting of his international vision from the world to the church itself. Fleming raised the knotty problems of indigenization—the relationship of culture to religion, the question of how far forms should be adjusted to the cultural backgrounds of the people, and how to separate the essential features of Christianity from its host cultures. Having lost some of his easy optimism of the early 1920s, Fleming admitted that these issues were difficult and that it would take centuries to develop a common world culture. But in the 1930s, to recognize cultural differences was "to affirm the catholic character of the Christian church." The main hope for missions was "that an indigenous church may develop—a church that smacks of the soil, that grows naturally, that feels itself to be native and not exotic." One of the difficulties in encouraging indigenous art was the resistance of Asians themselves, who assumed that indigenous art was pagan. The amount of locally produced Christian art was very small. "Certain interested Western representatives, therefore, take the initiative in producing model experiments in adaptation in order to overcome the initial attachment to alien forms to which second and third generation Christians have become accustomed." Most of the buildings that Fleming pictured in Heritage of Beauty were produced in the 1920s and 1930s, demonstrating the recent nature of movements toward indigenization in architecture.

In the second book of the series, Each with His Own Brush, Fleming noted that Christian art was in its infancy, partly because the poverty of most Christians prevented them from sponsoring high-quality work. He had received statements from all over the world indicating that indigenous Christian art did not yet exist. Yet he managed to put together a book of paintings, much of it commissioned by missionaries and the CCLWCMF. He judged that Christian art was in its most advanced phase in China, where the Episcopal priest and later bishop T. K. Shen had begun sponsoring Christian art in 1926 under the name St. Luke's Studio. Catholics connected with the Catholic University of Peking had also begun to sponsor Christian art in the 1920s and had held several exhibitions. In his third book on Christian symbols, Fleming quoted from missionaries who had tried to introduce indigenous symbols in India, only to be opposed by the Indian people for fear of paganism entering the church. The prophetic voice of indigenizers like Bishop Azariah aside, the inculturation process was not an easy road.

In early 1938 the committee that was preparing for the IMC meeting in Madras, India, began receiving suggestions that it sponsor an international exhibit of Christian literature to join a planned exhibition of Christian art. A. L. Warnshuis, secretary of the IMC, sent a letter to the secretaries of national Christian councils requesting that they send materials for exhibits on Christian literature, art, and architecture. Materials requested included pictures, sculptures, tapestries or needlework, photographs of church buildings, sketches, and models. The exhibits were intended to "demonstrate the long history and universality of Christianity and the contributions which different ages and different lands are making to the enrichment of Christian art and architecture." The artwork itself would be a unifying factor in a conference set to accommodate the widest geographic range of delegates who had ever attended an ecumenical conference.

One of the advocates of including architecture in the exhibit was J. Prip-Möller, who had worked for five years in Manchuria in cooperation with the Danish Mission Society, the Scottish and Irish Presbyterians, and the YMCA. An architect and author of Chinese Buddhist Monasteries, Prip-Møller had designed the YMCA building in Moukden to follow the structure of the typical Chinese family house. He also designed and built schools, hospitals, and churches. But probably his most important work grew

In Asia, missionaries found that second and third generation Christians tended to view indigenous art as pagan.
out of his eighteen-year friendship with Karl Reichelt, a Norwegian missionary operating a unique mission to Buddhist monks in Hong Kong. Like E. Stanley Jones, Reichelt was a long-term missionary who, in line with fulfillment theory, believed that Mahayana Buddhism found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Under the Norwegian Lutherans he opened a mission to Buddhists, Brotherhoof of Religious Friends, that was destroyed in the 297 civil war in Nanking. Adopting the style of a Buddhist monk to attract monks, Reichelt developed a liturgy based on Buddhism. In 1931 he dedicated a complex of buildings in New Territories (Hong Kong) called Tao Fong Shan, a Christian community modeled on Buddhist monasteries. Prip-Møller was Reichelt's architect at Tao Fong Shan.68

In *Heritage of Beauty* Daniel Fleming discussed how Reichelt adapted Buddhist symbols to Christianity in his Brotherhood of Religious Friends near Nanking. Reichelt used the emblem of a cross rising out of a lotus. The chapel contained an altar finished in red lacquer, candles in the form of white cranes, and ample use of varied symbols like the fish, fire, sun, and so forth. Liturgical adaptations included the use of red candles and incense.69 In the third book of the series on indigenous art, *Christian Symbols in a World Community*, Fleming included photographs of the church and altar at the Tao Fong Shan Christian Institute. In an interest-

Delegates to the 1938 meeting in Madras, India, concluded that each nation should be encouraged to offer its own cultural forms to Christ.

meeting of the IMC in Madras, India, in 1938. The exhibits on indigenous Christian literature, art, and architecture were well received. Many different discussions occurred on various aspects of indigenization in the "younger churches," including liturgy and worship, the Christian home, indigenous hymnody, poetry, Christian festivals, and religious art. Delegates concluded that each nation should be encouraged to offer its own cultural forms to Christ. In the section on worship, it was recommended that national Christian councils collect cultural adaptations of liturgy and keep them in a library for future reference. The recent writings of Daniel Fleming on indigenous art, as well as the reflections of Prip-Møller on indigenizing architecture, were mentioned.62 The official findings of the conference expressed the consensus on inculcation:

When churches grow up in the environment of non-Christian religions and cultures, it is necessary that they should become firmly rooted in the Christian heritage and fellowship of the Church Universal. They have their place in the great Christian brotherhood of all ages and races. But they should also be rooted in the soil of their own country. Therefore we strongly affirm that the Gospel should be expressed and interpreted in indigenous forms, and that in methods of worship, institutions, literature, architecture, etc., the spiritual heritage of the nation and country should be taken into use. The Gospel is not necessarily bound up with forms and methods brought in from the older churches. The endeavor to give Christ His rightful place in the heart of people who have not previously known Him—so that He will neither be a foreigner, nor be distorted by pre-Christian patterns of thought—is a great and exacting spiritual task in the fulfilling of which a young church can bring a rich contribution of her own to the Church Universal.63

At the same time, the conference kept before the churches the vision of Christian internationalism. While acknowledging that the missionary must "identify himself with the best aspirations and interests of the people he serves," the findings of the section on church and state cautioned that the missionary must at the same time "be ever mindful of the worldwide fellowship he represents, and of the common citizenship of all Christians in the Kingdom of God." Despite the concerns of the delegates over militant nationalism, the Sino-Japanese War, and the rise of Nazism, they still affirmed that "in the missionary enterprise the Christian movement makes an indispensable contribution to the international order. . . . Here international and interracial contact may reach its highest level. The true missionary comes as a friend. . . . The wall and partition between nations and races is broken down in the ever-widening fellowship of the ecumenical Church."64

The 1938 IMC meeting showed clearly how internationalism and indigenization had grown together since World War I.65 Madras had the highest proportional representation from the non-Western world of any mission gathering to date. With so many indigenous Christians from diverse parts of the world, the main topic of the conference was the "younger churches." The vision of Christianity as a worldwide community and a force for unity, peace, and justice in the world was evident in the global fellowship gathered there. At the same time, the conference called for the deepening of the Christian life in each national context through the adaptation of Christianity into different cultures. While faith in moving toward the kingdom of God on earth had receded since the more optimistic 1920s, the international vision had not died. Rather, in mission circles it had become more focused as the principle of indigenization within a global church. It was less likely to be linked to the former
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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.

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The dual themes of separating Christ from Western culture and supporting cultural indigenization were both part of the missionary contribution to Christian internationalism in the interwar period. Neither would have been effective, however, without the substantial participation of non-Western Christians in communicating a universal vision to the Western church. In the eyes of Westerners the most effective witness to world fellowship in God's kingdom was an actual living, breathing, English-speaking Christian from a so-called mission land. With "World Friendship" the mission slogan of the era, the 1920s and 1930s marked the beginning of the widespread use of indigenous Christians as ambassadors, or reverse missionaries, to the West. Perusing missionary magazines of the period, one is struck by how the actual voices of non-Western Christians were being heard in the 1930s. In earlier years a story written about a Chinese or African Bible woman in a missionary magazine would be in the Western missionary's voice. But by 1930 such stories were told in the voice and from the perspective of the indigenous Christian herself. Not only had years of missionary higher education produced literate non-Western leaders, but the missionaries realized that the voice of a so-called native Christian was far more effective in promoting an internationalist agenda than that of a missionary.

Starting in the 1920s, Christian student movements and mission organizations began sponsoring the publication of English writings by non-Western Christians, especially of those who had been educated in the West and who shared the internationalist perspectives of their sponsors. Once again the international Christian student movement provided leadership in this area, and the indigenous officers of various YMCA, YWCA, and WSCF branches became popular speakers among Western university students and international friendship groups, as the experiences of Tissington Tatlow testified.66

A cursory examination of this literature produced in the West indicates a strong focus on Chinese and Japanese Christian perspectives in the 1920s. As missionaries sought to counteract the negative publicity of the anti-Christian movement in China in 1922, to create support for renegotiating the unjust treaties from the mid-nineteenth century, and to build opposition to the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924, they tried to humanize and individualize the Chinese and Japanese in the minds of Westerners. China To-Day through Chinese Eyes was a groundbreaking series of essays, published in 1922 and 1926 by the SCM of Great Britain. The list of authors reads like a Who's Who of Chinese Christian intellectuals and YMCA leaders, including T. C. Chao, David Z. T. Yui, Timothy Tingfang Lew, and T. Z. Koo. While exploring various aspects of the Christian movement in China, the authors endorsed the internationalist agenda, as did the Christian Church in China in 1922, when it called for "international world brotherhood" and "international friendship" as Christian obligations. The newly founded Christian Church in China called for the Christianization of "the rapidly developing national consciousness" that was growing in China.67 Writing on intellectual movements in China, P. C. Hsu, professor of philosophy at Yenching University, indicated that the Christian contribution to the rising tide of nationalism was to supplement it "by the spirit of Christian Internationalism," the doctrine of human brotherhood that would make possible a warless world.68

Another article by Timothy Tingfang Lew, former student of Fosdick and Fleming at Union Seminary and dean of theology at Yenching University, discussed the mixture of science, democracy, nationalism, and spiritual quest pursued by Chinese intellectuals in the New Culture Movement. A noted hymn writer, Lew received praise at the 1938 IMC meeting for having produced an experimental series of indigenous liturgies and devotional materials. In 1927 Lew became the first non-Western professor of missions in the United States when he taught for a year at Boston University School of Theology.

Among non-Western supporters of women's missions in the United States, none had the stature of the Japanese educator Michi Kawai, a former student at Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia, founder of a girls' Christian school in Japan, and cofounder and head of the Japanese YWCA. Kawai was a devout internationalist; she maintained a network of friends in the United States, Great Britain, and China. Her first speaking trip to the United States was for six months in 1910 on behalf of the YWCA. She returned in 1926 to get help in supporting her Christian school and to create momentum against the exclusion of Japanese from the United States. On one occasion, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller and the Sidney Gulicks, who were former missionaries in Japan, took her to a church meeting where they spoke in favor of repealing the Japanese exclusion acts. Kawai recorded in her autobiography that her trip in 1926 affirmed her desire to make "international study" a feature of her school and to encourage her pupils to "usher in a new world order, with peace and goodwill prevailing."69

In 1934 Kawai coauthored the mission study book Japanese Women Speak, sponsored by the Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions. This book explored the themes of education, internationalism, pacifism, and world friendship being promoted by Japanese Christian women against the rising tide of militarism.70 Having brought two speakers from China the year before, in 1934 the women's mission boards of North America sponsored a speaking tour by Kawai. One of the Japanese delegates to the IMC meeting in 1938, Kawai summarized the significance of the conference for Christian education: "It exhorts us to treasure each national or racial heritage and demands that we put into it the rich Christian blood which revives and invigorates the old indigenous culture." She believed that evangelism was the foundation for "ushering in the Kingdom of God on earth," and that teachers were coworkers with God.71 Not surprisingly, Kawai and other Japanese Christian women suffered for their pacifism and international outlook during the Second World War. American readers were able to sympathize with her struggles by reading her two autobiographies printed in English, My Lantern (1939) and Sliding Doors (1950).72
women into a worldwide organization as an alternative to the League of Nations, which she considered a male organization. The proposed organization would promote world peace and fellowship, encourage the professionalization of women’s work, protect women and children, train women to be world citizens, and establish justice and righteousness everywhere. Kim’s proposal was then presented by a Japanese and a Chinese Christian woman to the entire Federation of Woman’s Boards of Foreign Missions. In 1929 the Methodist woman’s missionary society considered changing its name to the “Women’s International Missionary Society” to reflect that the world church was a sisterhood of equals. Then in 1939 women from twenty-seven countries formed the World Federation of Methodist Women. With its symbol the tree of life—suggested by Lucy Wang, president of Hwa Nan College in China—the federation supported the following “fruits” in each country: evangelism, education, medical work, literature, youth, childhood, world peace, temperance, rural education, home life, interracial relationships, and economic justice. The leaves of the tree symbolized the healing of the nations as Methodist women of different nationalities together sought to build a “Christian world order.”

The IMC meeting in Madras in 1938 was noteworthy for having seventy women in attendance, which happened partly through sustained pressure by Western women’s mission organizations that pushed the various national Christian councils to appoint women to their delegations. The Chinese delegation was even headed by a Chinese woman, Wu Yi-fang, the first woman to head any delegation at an international conference. A graduate of mission schools, Wu held a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Michigan. In 1927 she became the first Chinese president of Ginling College, the only interdenominational woman’s college in China.

One of the international women at the IMC was a delegate from South Africa, Mina Soga, a teacher and social worker, the first African woman delegate to an international missionary conference. She attended the conference because longtime missionary Clara Bridgman, the only woman on the nominating committee of the newly founded National Christian Council of South Africa, insisted that a woman be chosen as part of the twelve-person African delegation. Soga made a big impression on the gathering with her singing and with her plea that Christianity be put into African form, in the culture of Africans. Recalled Ruth Seabury, who later wrote Soga’s biography, “As we listened to her words some of us began for the first time to see the possibilities of the Christian message expressed in African terms.” The conference made a big impression on Soga too, who experienced true interracial fellowship for the first time. She felt a solidarity with other delegates from the developing nations, as she recalled, “My journey out of Africa turned me from a South African into an African. Madras made me a world Christian.”

After the conference, with the American delegation making her arrangements, Soga and a few other international delegates sailed to the United States to share their experiences of world fellowship at Madras with mission circles, youth meetings, and church groups. Soga spoke in twenty-four American cities over a six-month period. The racial segregation in the United States meant that Soga’s presence and her message about the situation in South Africa, as well as the vision of international Christian fellowship, were very timely and inspiring to both black and white Christians struggling to affirm racial reconciliation.

The most notable “reverse missionary” in the United States between the world wars was the Japanese evangelist, social worker, socialist, and pacifist Toyohiko Kagawa. Although some had been aware of his work earlier, the biography of Kagawa published in 1932 by William Axlíng, a long-term missionary to Japan, bought Kagawa to the attention of Western churches. With another missionary, Helen Topping of the Kobe YWCA acting as his editorial assistant, Kagawa produced a number of books in English, including poetry, spiritual reflections, and an autobiography. Kagawa was one of the chief representatives of Christian internationalism, and he was sought after by mission groups, Japanese-American groups, and pacifist organizations. He shared the spirit of Japanese Christianity with Americans in a time of hostility and distrust between the two nations.

We close this cursory glance at ambassadors of Christian internationalism with a brief mention of the effect of Hindu reformer Mohandas Gandhi on Christian internationalists. Although the effect of Gandhi is much too complicated to consider fully in this essay, it should be noted that he had a number of missionary partners who introduced his nonviolent campaigns to Western audiences, including E. Stanley Jones and C. F. Andrews. One early and extremely thoughtful biography that introduced Gandhi to the West was published in 1932 (the same year as Axlíng’s Kagawa biography) with the odd title That Strange Little Brown Man Gandhi. It was written by Frederick Fisher, supporter of Indian independence and former Methodist missionary bishop of India, who had retired from the bishopric to make way for the first Indian Methodist bishop. Fisher’s study of Gandhi was a scathing indictment of white racism, Western imperialism, and capitalism. Fisher called for the self-determination of all peoples and for Christian methods as the only adequate means to fulfill the Christian ideals of human brotherhood.

The development of an international Christian consciousness between the world wars was a deliberate partnership between Western missionaries and English-speaking, well-educated non-Western Christian leaders. Returned missionaries like Fred Fisher and “native” Christians like Toyohiko Kagawa shared an international vision, even if their backgrounds and motives differed.

### Conclusion

In this essay I have introduced the internationalist discourse within the missionary movement in the 1920s and 1930s. That discourse reveals that the global vision of a cooperative, worldwide, peaceful community of different races and cultures required deliberate attention to deepen the meaning of Christianity in each culture. While internationalism was a broader movement than the missionary movement in the period under review, missionaries made a distinctive contribution to it by envisioning a Christian internationalism in which indigenization of Christianity in each culture was a central feature.

As the 1920s gave way to the 1930s, optimism about the achievement of secular internationalism faded in the wake of Italian, German, and Japanese fascism, Soviet communism, and nationalist movements among colonized peoples. But a church-centered internationalism thrived as the growing world church deepened its emphasis on indigenization. It was not a coinci-
dence that the most prominent missionary spokespersons for internationalism of the period were the same people who were the most committed to indigenization and devotion in mission practice. As mission practitioners, they were open to the spirit of Christ taking form in diverse cultures, and sometimes even in diverse religions and secular movements like the nationalist struggle in India.

Three steps were taken by the missionary movement to encourage Christian internationalism and its twin, indigenization. First, mission leaders were determined to separate Christ from Western culture and to see him incarnated in varied ethnic and national contexts. While they did not develop full-fledged indigenous theologies, these missionaries saw such development to be an unfolding major task for the so-called younger churches.

Second, mission groups entered into specific experiments in indigenization, including the sponsoring of indigenous Christian literature, art, architecture, liturgy, and the like. Still couched in the liberal internationalist discourse, it is no surprise that such experiments were accused of syncretism by both Western fundamentalists and indigenous conservative Christians. Karl Reichelt, for example, whose Ritual Book of the Christian Church Among the Friends of the Tao was praised at the 1938 IMC meeting for its adaptation to Chinese culture, was criticized for his Cosmic Christ theology by Hendrik Kraemer.79 If indigenizers went outside the Christian context for their points of reference, they were seen as going too far by both missionaries and nationals. With Christian internationalism the underlying reference point for indigenization projects, the day was not yet ripe for pluralistic, contextual theologies.

Finally, the missionaries worked in partnership with a group of highly educated, articulate Christian nationals who, for their own reasons, became ambassadors of internationalism and indigenization to the West.

How does the Christian internationalism of the interwar period compare with the emphasis on global Christianity in our own day? On the surface, cynics could consider them both religious manifestations of larger movements for world unity spearheaded by materially successful, capitalist nations. The global agenda of our own era is driven by educated elites around the world in partnership with each other, which was very much the case with the internationalist agenda of the interwar period. While internationalism was a program for political unity, globalization has pursued a capitalistic, technological vision of world unity.

A second similarity between internationalization and globalization is the tension between top-down visions of world unity and opposing forces of nationalism or ethnic resurgence that draw strength from the global context. Militant nationalism marks both periods of history, and in both situations the Christian missionary has taken on a role as symbolic villain for anti-Western forces. As much as Christian mission organizations in the West like to think of themselves as apolitical, they are caught inevitably in the web of human history that paints them as representatives of Western political and economic power.

In terms of Christian mission, the major similarity between internationalism and globalization is the strong emphasis on the indigenization of Christianity. The excitement today about local forms of Christianity within a world church parallels that of the 1930s.80 While missionary leaders of the interwar period lamented the lack of non-Western art and theology, by the late 20th century non-Western theology was a thriving enterprise (though in many cases published by Western presses). Just as missionaries promoted non-Western art and literature between the wars, today Western Christian publishers sponsor non-Western theology. Although the internationalists tended to be theological moderates or liberals, today’s advocates of globalization can be found in both liberal and conservative theological camps. Liberals tend to be interested in contextual theologies, while conservative evangelicals point to the global spread of evangelical Christianity into cultures all over the world. The World Council of Churches is today seen by many conservatives as a relic of a bankrupt, outdated liberal idealism. Yet as globalization entities historically embedded in Western culture and capitalism, it may be that liberals and today’s conservative evangelical “world Christians” have more in common than they would like to admit.

### Notes


2. While mission scholars would not equate Christian missions with globalization itself, there is a theoretical and practical problem of how to relate to secular globalization, how to influence it, and how to avoid being so closely identified with it that when globalization’s time has passed, the mission of the church does not get washed away with the ebbing tide of popular support.


4. This article is a foray into a larger research project investigating the relationship between so-called older and younger churches after World War I. Suggestions are therefore most welcome.


7. Ibid., p. 685.


10. As late as 1944, missionary statesman and pacifist socialist Sherwood Eddy indicated the ecumenical movement’s hope for a “Christian world order” and the “coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.”


Such arguments are similar to those of antiglobalization, antifree trade protestors today, to whom economic globalization looks like the agenda of the rich countries.


Ibid., p. 194.

Ibid., pp. 198, 304.


The attempt to separate Christianity from Western culture had been a goal of nineteenth-century “three self” mission theory, but Western cultural assumptions were not widely criticized until after the First World War. For an overview of Western mission thought, see Timothy Yates, Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.)

The copy of the book that I own, printed in November 1926, indicates that after its first issuance in September 1925, it had been reprinted monthly since. I don’t know how many times it was reprinted, but The Christ of the Indian Road must have sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

For a brief biography of Jones, see Richard W. Taylor, “E. Stanley Jones, 1884-1973.” Following the Christ of the Indian Road, in Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement, eds. G. Anderson, R. Coote, N. Horner, J. Phillips (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1994), pp. 339–47. Jones’s name appears widely in meetings, publications, and causes associated with Christian internationalism. His influence was greater than that of any other missionary. For example, his ideas deeply impressed Methodist Walter Muelder, a seminarian in the 1920s who went on to become the leading social ethicist, ecumenist, and seminary dean of mid-century Methodism. (Telephone interview with Muelder, December 2000, Newton, Massachusetts.) I have found references to Jones jotted in the papers of South African, American, and British missionaries. On Jones’s importance in Protestant pacifist circles, see Patricia Appelbaum, “The Legions of Good Will: The Religious Culture of Protestant Pacifism, 1918–1963” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 2001).


Ibid., p. 170.


Ibid., p. 56.


Although I greatly admire William Hutchison’s pioneering history of American mission theory, I think that he misinterprets the interwar period by treating Fleming as an isolated, prophetic figure whose ideas were not widely distributed until reaching their fulfillment in Hocking’s Laymen’s Missionary Inquiry in 1932. (William R. Hutchison, Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987], pp. 150–56.) Despite Fleming’s heavy reliance on Jones in Whither Bound in Missions, Hutchison makes no reference to Jones in his book. Fleming did not stand alone but was part of a network of progressive mission thinkers and internationalists.

The used copy that I own of Whither Bound in Missions, for example, was owned in 1926 by M. Searle Bates, a sinologist and missionary who taught for thirty years at the University of Nanking, China, before filling Fleming’s old post at Union Seminary in 1950.

Fleming, Whither Bound, pp. 45, 199.


While Laubach’s later work as the apostle of literacy training was very important, its major accomplishments lie beyond the scope of this paper. For a short summary of Laubach’s life and work, see Peter G. Gowing, “Frank Charles Laubach, 1884–1970: Apostle to the Silent Billion,” in Mission Legacies, pp. 500–507.

Mason, Laubach, p. 130.


Ibid., pp. 456, 461, 462, 464.

On the missionology of World Friendship, see Robert, American Women in Mission, chap. 6.


Ibid., p. 124, 129.

Ibid., p. 222.

The idea of the Cosmic Christ was a common theme adopted by twentieth-century missionaries who experienced good in other cultures, and even in other religions. More research is needed on the missionary use of this idea. The idea of the Cosmic Christ was a correlative of “fulfillment theory.” On the prominence of fulfillment theory early in the twentieth century, see Kenneth Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy, and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846–1914 (London: Epworth Press, 1995).


Ibid., p. 53. See Timothy Yates’s excellent summary of the internationalist themes at Jerusalem 1928 (Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century, pp. 65–70).

I was discussing the thesis of this article with my former mission professor, Charles Forman, who was born in India; he was trained at Union Seminary, returned to India as a missionary, and then became professor of missions at Yale University Divinity School for thirty-four years. He was also chairman of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia from 1970 to 1989. As part of the liberal, internationalist movement in missions, he and his friends became missionaries in order to help the world. When in India, he tried to promote indigenous music, liturgy, and so on in the churches. One

47. See pamphlets in the Archives of the Committee on Christian Literature for Women and Children, Record Group 90, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut. Ruth Robinson, “The Treasure Chest” (n.d.): Clementina Butler, “A Quarter Century of Service to the Christian Home” (CCLWCMF, 1939), RG 90, Box 7, File 124. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the CCLWCMF conducted writing workshops for indigenous women around the world, but these activities are outside the chronological framework of this paper.


50. Butler, “Report,” p. 4. The filmstrip of the life of Christ used to evangelize the Chinese was a forerunner of the phenomenally successful “Jesus Film,” seen in 712 languages by more than 4.6 billion people as of January 1, 2002. The progression from indigenization to the globalization of Christianity during the twentieth century is evident in the history of multimedia as well.


52. Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

53. Ibid., p. 15.


55. On the efforts of Bishop Azariah, the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church, to indigenize the worship and architecture of his church, see Susan Billington Harper, In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Bishop V. S. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 261–62.


57. A. L. Warnshuis to Secretaries of National Christian Councils and Conferences, June 1, 1938, IMC Archives, Fiche 262005, #2, Madras 1938, “ Exhibits.”


60. Prip-Möller to Paton, p. 3.


65. It should be noted that “internationalists” were not the only mission advocates interested in indigeneity during the 1930s. Internationalist discourse emanated from the “liberal” wing of the missionary movement. Conservative missiologists, like Hendrik Kraemer and Bruno Guttman, were also interested in indigenity, but they did not share the theological framework or rhetoric of internationalism. Continental missiologists tended toward a “bottom up” method of promoting indigeneity rather than the “top down” approach of the internationalists. On Continental criticisms of the “crusading” idealism of North American mission advocates, see Jan A. B. Jongeneel, “European-Continental Perceptions and Critiques of British and American Protestant Missions,” Exchange 30 (April 2001): 117–18.

66. Church-centric mission was what the German and other Continental missionary advocates had been supporting all along. On the German insistence on church-centric mission between the wars, see Yates, Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century, and Jongeneel, “European-Continental Perceptions.”

67. While the indigenous Christians I discuss here had their own perspectives that need to be explored, for the purposes of this study I am considering them in the context of facilitating the Western missionary agenda. Clearly, however, their participation in the internationalization of Western missions served purposes of their own, some of which overlapped with those of their sponsors.


71. Michi Kawai and Ochimi Kubushiro, Japanese Women Speak (Boston: Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions, 1934). Other books published by the Central Committee also promoted “World Friendship” by making heard the voices of non-Western Christian women leaders. Of particular interest was a volume edited by Madame Chiang Kai-shek et al., containing articles by leading Chinese women from around the world entitled Women and the Way: Christ and the World’s Womanhood (New York: Friendship Press, 1938).


79. See Reichelt’s speech on the Logos spermatikos, the Cosmic Christ idea that underlay points of contact between Christianity and Buddhism. (“The Johannine Approach,” in The Authority of the Faith, IMC, pp. 90–101.) As a result of his missionary experience, Reichelt saw continuity between religions.

80. Ironically, a focus on indigenization, or multiculturalism in the church, is a critique of Western hegemony sponsored by segments of the Western church itself. In both the 1930s and the 1990s, American foundations established by rich tycoons funded research into Christianity as a global religion. It would be interesting to compare the research funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1920s and 1930s with that of the Pew Charitable Trusts in the 1990s.
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The “Jesus” Film: A Contribution to World Evangelism

Paul A. Eshleman

On Saturday night, August 19, 2000, following an address by Pope John Paul II at the World Youth Day in Rome, the “Jesus” film was viewed by over one million young people. In the preceding four days, 694,000 videocassettes of the film were distributed to young people at eighty-five locations throughout the city.

During the period between Christmas 1999 and Easter 2000, over 700 million people saw telecasts of a special millennial edition of the “Jesus” film. Shown on national television in 122 countries, the film contained tributes from thirty-two world leaders.

And on February 10, 2000, seven-year-old Amber watched the new children’s edition of the “Jesus” video in her living room and prayed the prayer at the end to receive Christ as her Savior. The video film was a gift from her new parents, who had just adopted her.

For a million young people in Rome, for the nations of the world, or for a seven-year-old orphan, Jesus and his incomparable Gospel is still the greatest news ever announced to our world. And the way that many have been seeing, hearing, and understanding the message has been through the “Jesus” film, a two-hour documentary outlining Jesus’ life and teachings.

Roots of the Project

I began working on this project in 1978. The vision for using a film on the life of Jesus for evangelism first came to Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ, in 1945. Over the years he never found a film that he could use, nor—until 1978—was it clear how funds could be secured for the production.

In the early 1970s a similar idea about making films based on the Scriptures came to the well-known Hollywood film producer John Heyman, who produced or funded numerous award-winning and best-selling films (Saturday Night Fever, The Longest Yard, Black Sunday, Heaven Can Wait, Gandhi, and others). Heyman had lost dozens of his Jewish relatives in the Holocaust. As he read the Scriptures, he saw in them the basis for our system of law and justice, and indeed for the foundations of our society. He felt that the best thing he could do for the world was to bring these truths to the motion picture screen. With funding secured from investors in his secular projects, Heyman began what he called the Genesis Project. The goal of the project was to portray every scene of the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, as accurately as possible.

Heyman began with the Book of Genesis. As the characters spoke Hebrew, a voice-over narration in English provided the biblical text verse by verse, without alteration. All the filming was done in the Holy Land, as close as possible to where the original events took place. Costumes were designed according to the drawings found on the pyramids showing the dress of Hebrew slaves. All the cloth used in the film was hand woven.

Yemenite Jews were selected as actors because their facial features are thought to have changed little over the millennia.

After Heyman had completed eight fifteen-minute films covering the first twenty chapters of Genesis and two additional films covering chapters 1 and 2 of Luke, one of his consultants encouraged him to seek the assistance of Campus Crusade for Christ in marketing these films to churches. This led, in 1976, to a meeting with Bill Bright. I met Heyman at this time and we struck up a friendship. Then, at Bright’s personal request, I was seconded to the Genesis Project offices in New York, where I helped in the distribution of the first episodes of these Bible-teaching films. They were promoted as the New Media Bible.

The Dreams Realized

During 1977 Heyman began thinking about producing feature films on the Bible that could go into commercial theaters. It was hoped that the profits generated would be sufficient to produce the remaining films on Genesis and Luke and then to go on to the Books of Exodus and Acts, and so on through the whole Bible. The decision was made to begin with a feature film on the life of Jesus, with the Gospel of Luke selected as the script basis because it is the most complete in relating the events of Jesus’ life.

In August 1978 Columbia Pictures, MCA, Universal, and other film distributors were approached to provide the financing and theater distribution for the feature film. By the end of August, Warner Brothers had agreed to put up funding for distribution of the film in theaters throughout North America if production funding could be secured elsewhere. At that time Campus Crusade for Christ was holding a weekend conference for a small number of its donors to talk about laying plans for a worldwide evangelization initiative. It was felt that some kind of film on the life of Jesus should be a part of it. Heyman spoke to the group, briefing them about the possibilities of a film on the life of Jesus. At that point Bunker and Caroline Hunt, longtime friends of Bill and Vonette Bright, agreed to guarantee a loan for the production funds.

According to the agreement reached for the film, the Genesis Project undertook to do the production. Campus Crusade for Christ obtained the “missionary” rights for the film in the non-commercial areas of the world, while Warner Brothers was assigned distribution rights in areas of the world where there was a commercial market for the film and funds might be recouped toward production costs.

With the New Media Bible in mind, Heyman proceeded to film all twenty-four chapters of Luke for the New Media Bible. At the same time, and using the same sets, he produced the footage for the “Jesus” film. The difference in the two productions was that in the feature film the actors spoke English and material from the Gospel was selected to fit the length of a feature film, while in the Genesis Project’s Book of Luke the actors spoke Aramaic and nothing was omitted.

Warner Brothers released the film in October 1979, and it eventually played in 2,000 theaters in North America. Then it moved to ShowTime, HBO, and the Movie Channel. In the succeeding years most of the international distribution rights for the film were secured by Campus Crusade. In 1981 I returned to the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Jesus Film Project

Paul Eshleman, a thirty-five-year veteran of Campus Crusade for Christ, directed the 1976 “I Found It” evangelistic outreach to more than 200 U.S. cities. He was U.S. field director for Campus Crusade for Christ until being seconded to the Genesis Project (1976-81). Since 1981 he has directed the Jesus Film Project of Campus Crusade for Christ.
was launched to handle the translation and distribution of the film internationally. We were charged with raising whatever funding and staffing would be necessary for the effort. Our mission was to show the “Jesus” film to every person in the world in an understandable language and in a setting near where they live.

Two Decades of Progress

Over the last two decades we have seen the “Jesus” film become the most-watched, and the most-translated, film in world history. Because so many denominations and missions use the film, it is impossible to know all that is taking place through its use. The following highlights give an idea of where the film has gone and a sense of its spiritual impact around the world.

- 11 million students saw the film in Russian schools as a result of the CoMission initiative.
- It has been distributed to every member of the parliaments or congresses of several countries, including the Ukraine, New Zealand, and Mongolia.
- When the film was first screened in Mongolia, there were only a few known believers in the entire country. Now the film has been shown in every village of over 250 people, and there are 30,000 believers worshiping in 400 churches.
- Before she died, Mother Teresa asked for it to be shown in all her homes for the dying in Calcutta, India.
- Screenings have been done in over 400,000 villages of India in 51 languages.
- 55 language translations are available to be downloaded from the Internet. The language most requested, after English, is Arabic.
- Since 1999 over 1 million video and audio cassettes of the “Jesus” film have been sent into North Africa.
- In 2000, newspapers in Brazil sold the “Jesus” video as a special promotion to new subscribers. In this way 250,000 videos were distributed during the year.
- Stories of healing are a regular part of reports from the field. As people see Jesus heal people in the film, they have asked God for—and experienced—their own healing.
- Most important, coming from these showings have been over 115,000 new churches where new believers can grow in their faith.

Methods of Distribution

In order to give fullest access to the “Jesus” film, the project has developed a number of delivery systems.

Theater. We prepare 35mm films for release in theaters. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the “Jesus” film was one of the first major films from the West to receive widespread distribution, being shown in more than 2,000 theaters.

Television. National television offers one of the best means of getting the film to the high-rise apartments of the major cities and urban areas.

Personal access. The film is available in a variety of formats for personal use, including videocassette, CD (compact disk), VCD (video compact disk), and DVD (digital versatile disk). In China and South East Asia, VCD is the most popular format, outselling videocassettes 10 to 1. The DVD version of the “Jesus” film includes eight translations of the film on one disk.

16mm film. Though it is no longer a popular format in media-sophisticated countries, 16mm film remains the delivery vehicle of choice for most rural areas of the world. The Jesus Film Project is currently the largest buyer of 16mm projectors in the world.

Audio cassettes. A dramatized 90-minute audio cassette version was originally developed for schools for the blind in South Africa. It has, however, become a popular means of follow-up for the film showings and a wonderful evangelistic tool in its own right. It can be used in rural areas for both evangelism and follow-up. It is equally effective in certain other areas, where it can be played on car radios as listeners sit in traffic jams in the world’s large cities. India produced more than 1 million audiocassettes in the first six months of 2000. The United Bible Societies stocks them for nonreaders.

Radio. We have also produced a radio production entitled “The Story of Jesus.” It is based on the script, but more narration and new sound effects have been added. Currently, there are 212 audio/radio translations available, with over fifty more in process.

Strengths of the Project

On the human level, many factors help explain why the “Jesus” film has been so well received.

It is based on Scripture. To me, this is the most significant reason why the film has engendered such a wide response. Certainly there have been more exciting portrayals with more expensive sets and stars. But the power of the “Jesus” film is in the script—the Gospel of St. Luke. The film’s Jesus speaks no words outside those found in Scripture.

It is translated into every major language. Nothing can compare with the power of the Word of God if it is heard in an understandable language. A mother in India wrote to her son in New York, “Son, I have just seen a film about Jesus. And Jesus speaks Bengali!” It is difficult to overestimate the impact of hearing the Gospel in the language of one’s heart. From its inception, those of us involved in the Jesus Film Project have believed that no one should have to learn another language to hear the “greatest story ever told.” (The most-dubbed Hollywood effort, Gone with the Wind, stopped after thirty-three language translations.)

It relates to the developing world. Many people today still live in a first-century kind of environment. They still fish and farm for a living. Many wear sandals, and a wealthy man is someone who owns an oxcart. These people find Jesus’ illustrations extremely relevant; for them, some of the scenes could have been filmed in a nearby village.

It enables churches to be planted quickly. The “Jesus” film has provided a new model for church planting that greatly accelerates the process. In many areas, missionaries are finding that it takes only one showing of the “Jesus” film to identify enough interested new converts to start a new church. Many seminaries and Bible schools regularly send their students out to conduct film showings in order to help them plant a new church by the time they graduate. The “Jesus” film is simply a filter to find the ripe fruit that God has already prepared.

It calls for a decision. Wherever Jesus went, he called men and women to repentance and to follow him. The clear presentation of the Gospel included at the end of the film allows even the most inexperienced workers to give a powerful appeal for men and women to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

It contributes to unity in the body of Christ. One of the unexpected blessings coming from the release of the “Jesus” film has been the uniting of the body of Christ in many countries for cooperative showings. Many times we have missed the full impact and potential of John 17:23 (“May they be brought to
complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”). Throughout the world, pastors have gathered to discuss plans to show the film or distribute videocassettes to every home. Frequently during these prayer and planning sessions, long-standing grievances have been healed, sins confessed to one another, and relationships healed. It has made me wonder whether loving one another may be God’s greatest strategic plan for worldwide evangelism.

**The Follow-up Plan**

New believers need nurturing in their faith. The Jesus Film Project has developed follow-up strategies to help assure lasting results following film showings. First, members of local churches are trained in advance to help provide follow-up. They meet with those who come forward after the film to pray with them and write down their addresses for future visits.

Second, “New Life” groups are formed to disciple new believers, with elders from local churches leading the groups. Groups will often combine to form new churches.

Third, New Life Training Centers provide 100 hours of instruction for new church leaders in personal evangelism, personal follow-up, principles of starting a discipleship group, how to teach the Scripture, and much more. Half of the course is spent in the field. As a result, by the end of the training course many of the trainees have led people to Christ and have started a Bible study.

Finally, Media Response Centers coordinate follow-up from television and radio presentations of the “Jesus” film, as well as answer responses from the audio and videotape distribution. Every video, audiotape, radio or TV program offers an address where more information can be obtained.

**A Worldwide Strategic Plan**

The primary plan of the Jesus Film Project is to be a servant to the whole body of Christ. Though the organization itself has grown rapidly, internal growth has never been the objective. Helping everyone, everywhere to see the film has always been paramount. However, we have followed certain key principles to see this goal accomplished.

*We seek to build models of film-team evangelism.* Because these teams are always made up of nationals, they can demonstrate to believers what is involved in setting up and promoting evangelistic showings and in gathering new believers and serious inquirers into local churches.

Many advantages result from setting up models of ministry indigenous to each country. First, they provide direct feedback when a strategy is not working so that adjustments can be made. When Americans work with international partners, it is difficult for the international participants to inform American colleagues candidly when something is not effective; they simply quit using the resources. Having a few Jesus Film Project teams in every country allows us to learn lessons that can then be passed on to all users.

A second advantage of such teams is their recommendations on how to give the invitation more effectively. Although an informative five-minute presentation is included at the end of every film, in some cultures audiences will not watch it after the film has ended. In those places, the workers might pause the film at the crucifixion scene, explain that Jesus died for everyone, and give an opportunity for response right then. The process of finding out who is interested in knowing more is carried out in a variety of ways, depending on the culture and the openness of the country.

A third area of feedback from the teams is recommendations on how the film should be introduced or any slight variations that should be made. On the basis of such recommendations we have produced over thirty-five versions of the film for different audiences in order to gain a better hearing for the message. For example, we have editions with a Muslim-sensitive introduction, others with Asian introductions on why a Hindu or Buddhist should learn about Jesus, a Tibetan version, a caption/sign language edition, a “World Cup” edition (introductory testimonies of nine soccer players), and a “More Than Gold” edition (testimonies of ten Olympic athletes).

*We seek to establish ministry partnerships.* We want the film showings to benefit partnering churches and mission agencies. These and other organizations use the film for a variety of objectives, including church planting, Christian education, working among the preliterate, Vacation Bible Schools, summer camps, short-term mission trips, community saturation projects, pre-marital counseling classes, and English as a Second Language classes.

The biggest users of the “Jesus” film so far are the Church of the Nazarene, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, World Vision, Operation Mobilization, and the Roman Catholic Church. The great advantage of having many partners and distributors is that costs are widely shared. The disadvantage of trying to involve partners is that they usually have a very defined geographic target area and are not always committed to widespread coverage strategies.

*We seek to track progress.* One of our core goals is to preach the Gospel where Christ is not known (Rom. 15:20). Since the beginning of the project, we have tried to capture statistically how many people have seen the film by country and language, and what the results have been. The primary purpose of this exercise has always been to try to determine who has not seen the film yet—and continually to adjust strategic plans toward unreached areas.

As of March 1, 2002, our statistics show that, since 1979:

- 4,937,942,748 people have seen the “Jesus” film in 236 countries (shown on TV in 174 of these countries);
- 729 languages now have translations of the “Jesus” film (translations are in progress in an additional 253 languages; a new translation is completed every three days);
- 152,176,072 decisions for Christ have been indicated;
- 34,357,719 “Jesus” film videocassettes have been distributed, plus 54,640 DVDs, 1,247,666 VCDs, 14,729 film prints (8mm, 16mm, and 35mm), 8,716,340 cassettes of “The Story of Jesus” audio version, and 618,103 videocassettes of “The Story of Jesus for Children”;
- 2,797 full-time “Jesus” film teams, with 6,220 total workers, are operating in 108 countries;
- 1,524 denominations and mission agencies are working in partnership with the Jesus Film Project.

**Difficulties and Challenges**

The “Jesus” film is simply a tool. It has limitations, and it may not be equally effective in every situation. However, because it contains the powerful words of Scripture, there are almost always some results when it is presented properly. Over the years we have faced a long list of challenges in the translation and distribution of the film.
Peoples On the Move
David J. Phillips
Introducing the Nomads of the World
Nomads - they inhabit every continent yet have “no abiding city”. Always on the move, they are often “invisible”, unrequited, despised and easily forgotten by settled citizens. This is the most comprehensive source of information on all the nomadic peoples of the world and includes maps, black and white photographs, people profiles and bibliographic data.

Church Multiplication Guide (Revised Edition)
George Patterson and Richard Scoggins
The Miracle of Church Reproduction
This book is very practical in addressing the areas of church multiplication and reproduction from ten points of view in response to Jesus’ command. Dr. Ralph D. Winter highly recommends this book.

WCL447-9 WCL, 2002 Paperback, 261 pages
Retail: $44.99 Discount: $14.99 Wholesale: $14.99*

Able to Teach Others Also
William Smallman
Nationalizing Global Ministry Training
Able to Teach Others Also is the handbook for the nationalization of ministry training programs. It provides the theological rationale, biblical models, case studies, basic principles, and a checklist for the process. The five criteria of nationalization are spelled out in measurable forms. Also included is a planning guide that can be used by any ministry training program or institution in any cultural setting. A key contribution of this work is the clear differentiation between surrendering the administrative control (nationalization) and the cultural definition (indigenization) of an institution. Both merit careful attention in transition plans.

WCL966-7 Mandate Press, 2001 Paperback, 240 pages
Retail: $45.99 Discount: $10.40 Wholesale: $8.80*

*Wholesale price: 3 or more of the same title.
Prices are subject to change without notice.
Translation challenges. The translation and dubbing must be as close to perfect as possible, which means that we often must redub portions of the film. For example, in the initial film edition of Zhuang, a language group in China, our translation of "angels" was actually "fairies." We fixed the problem. In Kinyarwanda (Rwanda), Mary asked, "Am I a virgin?" instead of stating, "I am a virgin." We changed it. In Ilocano (Philippines), when the translators needed a word for "prostitute," they used a term comparable to "hooker." Although it was good contemporary Ilocano, it offended local pastors, and they refused to show the film. We changed the word.

Missionaries and local churches sometimes fight to retain "Christian" words, which may lessen the impact of the film with nonbelievers. One disputed word is the name for Jesus, which in Muslim countries has been translated either "Yusu" (often favored by Christians) or "Isa" (the Arabic usage). We continually push for "Isa" because we are trying to reach Muslims. Some Christians have refused to show the film with this translation.

Finally, wrong voices or accents are sometimes selected. In many cultures around the world, Jesus is expected to have the accent of the highest caste or class. If a voice with a low-class accent is used, the viewing audience is limited. Sometimes we have faced the problem of communicating to warring tribes that speak the same language but with slightly different accents. Which tribal voice do you choose for Jesus?

Over the past twenty-one years the Jesus Film Project has spent more than $2 million to correct translation and dubbing errors and problems.

Distribution challenges. Without a doubt, the biggest distribution challenges occur in media-sophisticated urban areas, where residents have lots of media to choose from. There the delivery system of the film must be much different. Strategies of inviting nonbelievers to a church or hall are largely ineffective. Outdoor showings on a screen are inappropriate. For the urban, media-sophisticated areas there are at least four options: television broadcast on secular channels, house-to-house or mail distribution of videocassettes, secular radio station broadcasts, or home showings to friends and neighbors.

A different distribution challenge is urban areas where the church is small and there is no access to radio or TV, such as in Saudi Arabia, North Korea, or Algeria. Here the distribution of the film is limited to distribution by short-term "tourists," radio broadcast from the outside, port projects, and contact with vacationers when they are outside their countries.

A final problem in distribution involves disputes among Christian confessions as to who may show the film. The Jesus Film Project has never tried to prevent anyone from buying or showing a videocassette, which has caused some difficulty in countries where two different Christian groups (often Catholics and Protestants, or charismatics and noncharismatics) have the film. Each may be afraid of losing people to the other confession or tradition. We have been accused of selling "arms" to both sides. Our response is that the "Jesus" film is simply the Word of God on film. Every person should have access to God's truth.

All these steps require people and time. Without a commitment in advance to these steps, we have found that church-planting efforts will not be effective.

Lack of the incarnational message. TV and radio broadcasts can help identify those with a genuine interest in the Christian Gospel. But that is only the first step toward their eventual involvement in the "family." There needs to be an incarnational witness. Distribution of videos from neighbor to neighbor or friend to friend is the most successful. The most effective film showings are those where interested inquirers are able to interact with "live" believers who answer questions and form the beginning of an ongoing relationship. Many times it is the life of Jesus seen in the believer that produces the motivation to receive Christ.

Our Vision for the Future

Initially, our goal was to prepare a film translation for every language with at least 1 million speakers (which, in 1981, we thought meant 163 languages). Our current goal is much broader, as we now aim to include every language spoken by as few as 50,000 people—in all, 1,813 languages—which will allow 97.8 percent of the world's population to hear the message in their first language. Most of the remaining people will be able to understand the presentation via a trade language.

As the Jesus Film Project moves ahead in the new millennium, I am committed to see it continue to serve the body of Christ in every way possible. Currently, we have the following specific goals:

- Counselors must be trained separately for the men, women, and children who will respond. It is not effective to try to counsel them together.
- There must be a clear, effective invitation given at the end of the film.
- There must be a sufficiently lighted area available after the showing to meet with interested people, distribute literature, review the gospel presentation, and write down addresses for further contact.
- People must be prepared to do house visits where questions can be answered and relationships begun.
- A follow-up group must be established in a neutral location.
- Before the film is shown, someone must commit to lead the group of inquirers. This person is usually an elder from the church sponsoring the showing.

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As the Jesus Film Project moves ahead in the new millennium, I am committed to see it continue to serve the body of Christ in every way possible. Currently, we have the following specific goals:

- Continue to make the film available in the formats needed for new technology (for example, DVD and streaming on the Internet).
- Do more to equip churches, denominations, and organizations to use the "Jesus" film effectively in church planting.
- Prepare more written, video, and audio materials for the follow-up of new believers.
- Develop materials using the dramatized audio version of the "Jesus" film for follow-up after film showings. Such materials can powerfully reinforce what people see in the film and can engage family members and friends not present at the film showing.
- Translate all materials for "The Story of Jesus for Children." By 2010 at least 50 percent of the world will be under the age of eighteen, and we want to be at the forefront in reaching these young people.
Jesus in Africa
The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience
Kwame Bediako

Jesus in Africa is the first in a series entitled Theological Reflections from the South, which aims to make accessible some of the creative thinking emerging from the Southern continents.

1-870345-34-7 pp.124 $10.50

Health, Healing and the Kingdom
New Pathways to Christian Health Ministry in Africa
W. Meredith Long

Meredith Long explores health and disease from a perspective in which the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is transcended by relationships to God, the spirit world, the community, and the environment. Richly illustrated with stories, proverbs and metaphor, this volume demonstrates how the two pathways can merge into one, a pathway transformed by the only true Healer.

1-870345-36-3 pp.288 $24.95

Markets, Fair Trade and the Kingdom of God
edited by Chris Sugden and Peter Johnson

A collection of essays by development, business and missiological specialists concerning the nature of Christian mission in the global market.

The contributors challenge Christians to embrace a holistic understanding of Christian discipleship as necessarily including justice, and stimulate all Christians in their business and work callings to see justice as part of their witness.

1-870345-19-3 pp.168 $12.99

Faith in Development
A partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa
edited by Deryke Belshaw, Robert Calderisi, Chris Sugden

Foreword by James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank and George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury

Faith in Development is a handbook on development issues in a church context, which provides insight into the spiritual dimension of poverty. This book discusses the principles and practicalities of a partnership, covering a broad range of development topics, especially at the grass-roots level.

1-870345-21-5 pp.246 $24.95
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Ion Bria

My interest in mission has no connection with my family history. Neither the backgrounds of my parents nor the context of my high school education directly pushed me to take a university curriculum in theology. My father was an oil industry engineer, and my mother was a middle-class farmer with a large holding of land.

I was born in 1929 in Telega, Romania. My Christian environment was provided by the three pillars of a Romanian traditional village: school, parish, and extended family. A disciplined ecclesia domestica, having the Eucharist as a focal point, offered the common ecclesial and social space for the entire community. This was my introduction to Christianity. Later I was able to discern its essentials and to defend them.

The quiet of this “mioritic space” (Lucian Blaga’s way of describing the quietistic forms of Romanian belief) was abruptly interrupted by the storms of the Second World War (1939–45). With Romania allied with Germany against the Soviet Union, the oil fields in my region began to be exploited by the German military forces. Telega is located between Campina and Ploiesti. Their huge refineries supplying the anti-Soviet front were frequently the target of Anglo-American bombers in 1942 and 1944. The civilian population suffered morale and material damage because of the war. The village parish became fragmented into several communities. My mother offered her home as a prayer center for one of these communities. “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my house” (Acts 16:15). She decorated a room with icons like a chapel, where the local group met during the war, especially for the night vigil. The core members of this group were the believers from the Lord’s Army, a lay evangelical movement, active in the region. (They organized a campaign against alcohol, tobacco, and prostitution.)

I attended the informal services of this group (Bible readings, songs, prayers, meditation), where I was astonished to hear several prophetic voices speak about the imminent failure of both empires: Nazi and Soviet.

Soon after the establishment of a democratic pro-Communist government, reform of the national educational system in 1948 brought about the end of the ecclesia domestica. This marked the end of my secondary studies in Ploiesti (1940–48). By imposing a new system of instruction, the authorities humiliated the faithful Christians, including the devoted soldiers and heroes returning from the front, and marginalized them in the official political discourse. Many itinerant evangelists, preachers, catechists, and monks were abandoned and forgotten. By the beginning of the 1950s many people realized that the political neutrality of the country was compromised and that the freedom of the church was very much restricted. People were frustrated and scandalized.

In 1949, in my simple way, I imagined that somebody had to take up the defense of these uprooted Christians and express recognition for their commitment during the war, especially in taking care of poor families and people in need. I had no strategy to fulfill this project, but that was my intention when I changed from an engineering course in the oil industry to a seven-year course in theological studies (1950–57).

Developing a Christian Apologetic

“Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe? And he was speechless” (Matt. 22:12). My background in theology was limited to the time I spent, from 1945 to 1948, in the Zamfira Monastery, in the district of Prohova, where my sister became a nun. Here I read Christian hymnography, iconography, and hagiography. I was also very advanced in Latin and philosophy. During my seminary years I was privileged to encounter professors who pleaded for the apologetic dimension of Christianity. The work of Professor Ioan Mihalcescu before the war in proposing a “militant theology” was followed by a similar effort of Father Dumitru Staniloae (1903–93), who was imprisoned from 1958 to 1963 for his “confessing theology.”

I graduated with a dissertation entitled “The Infallibility of the Church” (1957). Following graduation, I strove to keep together topical, popular Christianity with academic approaches. Meanwhile the institutional gap between the state and the church became greater because of the level of antireligious legislation. My appointment as professor of systematic theology at the Seminary of Buzau (1957–61) and then at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1962–73) was a great opportunity to introduce classes to missiology and ecumenism. The curriculum made provision for classes on the subject “Missionary and Pastoral Guidelines,” but the content was poorly articulated. In fact, the theological schools were confronted with several challenges:

- Evangelization and theological education had to be practiced in the restrictive framework imposed by the state authorities. Normally, legislation did not affect the doctrinal content of the courses, but it did greatly restrict our communication with society, and especially the treatment of controversial issues such as religion and politics, and human rights. The best possible theological education for priests and monks was vital, since worship in the parish setting became the mainspring for mission.

- A few missiological subjects were included in other theological disciplines, such as pastoral care, liturgical practice, and ecumenism. Patriarch Justinian (1948–77) was inclined to call them the “social apostolate.” At the beginning of the 1960s the Orthodox Church in Romania still had a strong organized parish and diocesan system, and Romania did not appear to be particularly secularized. One problem remained: how to keep the “social apostolate” in line with the Gospel and liturgical spirituality. Social ethics became an area for ecumenical encounters and conversations.

- The theological faculty preferred to evangelize through pastoral ministry, trying to educate and to equip the worshipping community as an evangelizing people. Therein lies the origin of the concept “the liturgy after the liturgy.” But what about the prophetic way of confessing Christ in the midst of tribulations and the persecutions of a totalitarian regime? We recognized that the only way to identify with confessors and martyrs was through intercession, creating

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Ion Bria, a priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church, has served as professor of Dogmatic Theology and as a former director of the World Council of Churches unit on Unity and Renewal.
a prayerful and spiritual solidarity. The church is a communion of saints.

Expanding Ecumenical Opportunities

One of the significant developments in my pilgrimage in mission was the semester I spent at St. Augustine's College in Canterbury, an Anglican institute for missiological studies. In 1961, at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Assembly in New Delhi, the Romanian Orthodox Church became a full member of the WCC. The following year W. A. Visser 't Hooft, WCC general secretary, led a WCC delegation to Romania. He granted the Orthodox Church three scholarships for ecumenical studies. In the same year, due to the initiative of Metropolitan Justin of Iasi, Romania, later patriarch (1977–86), the church was involved in the preliminary work of preparing a pan-Orthodox synod. The church practiced an ecumenism on two fronts: ecumenical and pan-Orthodox. As a member of the ecumenical commission of the church, I was glad to affirm these openings. At New Delhi I translated the reports and later communicated them to my students.

In Canterbury I met professors and students from all dioceses of the Anglican Church. The missiological literature section in the library was impressive. I was asked to write a contemporary profile of the Orthodox Church. I traveled to London, Oxford, Paris, and Geneva and discovered that the perception of Eastern Orthodoxy in the West was largely determined by the writings and influence of Russian Orthodox theologians and philosophers living in diaspora. In Geneva I enjoyed meeting the staff of the Bossey Institute.

In the mid-1960s, when I obtained more information about the Second Vatican Council and new Western theological books and publications, I was shocked by the position and direction of some trends and centers established in the West after the Second World War. I compared the atheistic propaganda written in Romania with what was being published in the West about “the death of God,” the “separation” of state and church, the end of the “Constantinian church,” secularization as a triumph of the modern age, and humankind come to maturity (through evolution). The mockery of Reformed and Lutheran volkskirche theologies (including those from Eastern Europe) struck me as a scandal when at that very time the Orthodox in Romania were struggling to preserve the popular character of the faith through feasts and rites. While the Reformation churches appeared to abandon theologia crucis, the Orthodox responded through the veneration of the cross. In my mind, these trends in the West...

Noteworthy

Announcing

The Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, publisher of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, is pleased to announce the appointment of Dwight P. Baker as Program Director and Associate Editor, effective July 1, 2002. He will succeed Robert T. Coote, who retires June 30 after twenty-two years at OMSC. From 1995 to 2001 Baker was director of the World Christian Foundations study program at the U.S. Center for World Mission, Pasadena, California, where he also was Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Anthropology at William Carey International University. He holds a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from Purdue University and a Master of Divinity degree with a missions emphasis from North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago.

The Second European Missiology Conference, with the theme “Missio Dei Today,” will be sponsored by the German Society for Mission Studies, the Nordic Institute of Missiology and Ecumenism, the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, and the Ecumenical Francophone Missiology Association, August 22–26, 2002, in Halle, Germany. Contact Professor Theo Sundermeier—theo.sundermeier@urz.uni-heidelberg.de.

Personalia

Died. Olav Guttorm Myklebust, 96, Lutheran missiologist, November 29, 2001, in Oslo, Norway. Myklebust, a pioneer of the study of mission theology in Norway, was the founding general secretary of the International Association for Mission Studies and a board member of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. In 1946, he founded the Egede Institute for Missionary Research, Oslo, and a year later he launched Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon, which he edited until 1974. He also played an important role in establishing the Norwegian Institute for Missionary and Ecumenical Research.

Born in Bergen, he began his study of theology at the Free Faculty of Theology, Oslo, in 1924. After completing university exams he was ordained a missionary pastor in 1930 and was assigned to South Africa by the Norwegian Missionary Society.


David Harley, former principal of All Nations Christian College, England, was appointed General Director of OMF International, with headquarters in Singapore. The appointment became effective September 2001, following Harley’s several years as lecturer at Trinity Theological College in Singapore.

Miroslav Volf, Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School, and author of Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation (1996), received the Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his work exploring societal exclusion and inclusion. The University of Louisville and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary presented the prize in November 2001.

April 2002
appeared to be a second front against Orthodoxy, under the guise of the defense of human rights. I did not offer a formal missiology, but I tried to encourage the veneration of the cross as a spirituality raised in protest to this double ideological attack.

In 1968, as a token of religious freedom, the government granted permission to print Bibles. In Bucharest I met the officials of the London United Bible Society (UBS), to which I was seconded by the church for this project. Later, as a member of the WCC staff, I succeeded in opening a door to UBS work in the Orthodox regions of Europe. Several consultations were organized around the topic “Proclamation of the Gospel in the Context of Worship.” In June 1968 I defended my doctoral dissertation “The Doctrinal Dimension of the Church’s Unity.” On that occasion I expressed my gratitude not only to my tutor, Professor Staniloae, but also to the WCC for support in gathering an ecumenical bibliography.

**Introducing Orthodoxy to the WCC**

In my working group, as a delegate to the Salvation Today Missionary Conference (Bangkok, January 1973), I gave a testimony about the ecclesia domestica in a Communist context, in Romania. The language I used—“Proclamation of the Word in the liturgical community,” “the missionary dimension of the Eucharist,” and “mission as martyria”—was a great surprise for the conference participants. They had to agree that inasmuch as the liturgy is celebrated and people nourished with the bread of life, there is hope for Eastern Christianity. The commissioners invited me to apply for a vacancy on the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), dealing with studies and relations with the Orthodox.

Both Philip Potter, the new general secretary of the WCC, and Emilio Castro, the new director of the CWME, were interested to have a new picture of the Orthodox world; its missiology was an unexamined and neglected dimension. But the new entry point was the contemporary experience of Jesus Christ in Eastern Europe, an experience with the body of Christ. They had to agree that inasmuch as the liturgy is celebrated and people nourished with the bread of life, there is hope for Eastern Christianity. The commissioners invited me to apply for a vacancy on the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), dealing with studies and relations with the Orthodox.

During my work with the WCC (1973–94), I moved to various departments of the council, trying to elaborate the specificity of Orthodox martyria and to incorporate it and its contribution into the ecumenical movement. Through a series of seminars, consultations, studies, and visits, and with the participation of all Orthodox churches, faculties, and centers, it was possible to agree on several basic affirmations that constitute today the Orthodox contribution to an ecumenical missiology. (See Ion Bria, coeditor, *Dictionnaire oecuménique de missiologie. Cent mots pour mission* [Paris: Cerf, 2001].)

For example, the liturgical community is recognized as a paradigm in mission. Two Orthodox consultations—at Cernica, Bucharest (1974), and Etchmiadzin, Armenia (1975)—identified the substance of the “liturgy after the liturgy.” This study was sent as an Orthodox contribution to the WCC General Assembly in Nairobi, 1975. The phrase “liturgy after the liturgy” expresses the idea that the liturgy remains vital for the Orthodox living in a Communist context. The concept was a way to join the discussion about the “missionary structure of the congregation,” a new emphasis in the ecumenical context of the 1970s. (See *The Liturgy after the Liturgy* [Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996].)

Western missions invaded Eastern Europe, believing they needed to replace our Orthodox faith.
The Legacy of Shoki Coe

Ray Wheeler

Shoki Coe was born Chang Hui Hwang in Taiwan in 1914. When he stepped up to the podium at a 1972 World Council of Churches consultation to present his paper on contextualization, he roiled the pond of missiological thinking. How did this man of small frame, athletic build, and a deep sense of destiny come to conceptualize a wave that continues to reverberate through mission circles well beyond his death in 1988? Raised in a land dominated by Imperial Japan, Shoki Coe experienced the interplay of faith and oppression that would give him, and the church, a new perspective and vocabulary from which to assess mission.

Coe’s grandfather, a former Taoist priest, was the first in his family to turn to Christ. He frequently spoke to Coe of his conversion and of the wild past he had lived before Christ caught him. It was not until he was preparing for college, after his grandfather’s death, that Coe learned of his grandfather’s solemn vow to commit himself and his firstborn to ministry. This vow was made all the more significant by the fact that the first-born son died in a shipwreck while Coe’s grandfather and his family were moving to their first pastoral assignment. The second son—Coe’s father—was born out of this hardship and was not expected to live. This story both challenged and anchored Coe’s sense of destiny and helped him persevere through many trials, including the pressure of college entrance exams. In spite of a system that favored Japanese students over Taiwanese, he gained entrance to college in Japan.

For Coe, being part of someone else’s empire was an experience lined with acrimony. More than once he related the story of being accosted after school one day by a group of Japanese students hurling stones and insults. Coe was enraged by their taunt, “Chian ko lo!” even though he didn’t know what it meant. He struck back, pummeling the students until someone yelled “Chian ko lo!” that caused even the headmaster of the school to reduce the discipline Coe would face for fighting. His father explained that the expression literally meant that the Taiwanese were viewed as slaves, first of the Manchurian Chings and then of the Japanese who had conquered Manchuria. Coe’s innocence was shattered as he understood that he was doomed to live in his own land as a third-class citizen.

When Coe was twelve years old, his brother, A-Eng, and his mother died within six months of each other. He was still reeling from these losses when his grandfather died. He would later recall that year as the worst year of his life, but also as the time of his first religious awakening. Coe slowly gained appreciation for the shaping effect such events (context) had in forcing him to reflect honestly on the biblical word (text) with its impact in providing comfort, definition, and meaning. Coe’s search for God in unexpected events provided the theological bedrock for his formulation of the concept of contextualization.

Cementing a Global Perspective

Coe completed his undergraduate work (1934–37) in philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. Back at home in Taiwan at age twenty-three, and just ahead of the closure of Taiwan by Japan, he was able to leave for England, thanks to the intervention of a college friend who was a Japanese official. In England he pursued theological education, first at Overdale College, Birmingham (1937–38), then at Westminster College, Cambridge (1938–41). His friends and professors recognized that he possessed a deep understanding of Kierkegaard, Brunner, and Barth. He had few rivals as a philosopher, and was unbeatable at table tennis, according to Boris Anderson, a fellow student and future co-worker. For several years following graduation in 1941, and prevented by the war from returning to Japan, Coe gave instruction in Japanese at London University’s School of Oriental Studies. During this time he also met and married his wife, Winifred.

Coe’s time in England gave him a global perspective crucial for his eventual return to Taiwan, a perspective that shaped his thinking when he ultimately emerged as a global Christian leader. Not only did he have his own cross-cultural experience on which to draw, he was also engaged in the international student
mission movement. He attended the 1939 Amsterdam World Christian Youth Conference as a representative from Taiwan with the Japanese delegation. He later attended the Oslo conference in 1947 as a “senior friend.” These events planted a vision of the global church in Coe’s mind that guided his actions and reflection in ministry, later moving him to consider the unity of the church and its organic nature.

Taiwan and the Context of Contextualization

In 1947 Coe returned to Taiwan with Winifred and his young son, David, to a joyful and tearful reunion with his father and his brothers and sister. He was appointed a teacher of English and Scripture at the boys’ school in Tainan that he himself had attended when his father was first appointed pastor at the East Gate Presbyterian Church. In 1948 the Ninth Assembly of the Southern Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan voted to reopen the Tainan Theological College (closed in 1940 by the Japanese government), and the following year the synod appointed Coe principal of the school, a post he held until 1965.

During his eighteen years of service in Taiwan, Coe found himself in a region caught in the throes of radical social change. He would later describe the situation of postwar Asia as “a world where one of the key words is change, not only ordinary change but radical change, not merely radical change but sometimes revolutionary change. Thirty or more years ago when I was a student in Japan, to speak a word like revolution would have been a very extraordinary thing. You would have been suspect, but nowadays, the word revolution is spoken everywhere. We are living in a revolutionary world; we are talking about a revolutionary Asia. . . . Our whole structure has been transformed into a more and more urban and more and more industrialized society. . . . This is the context in which the church is set to serve.”

Coe’s concept of the church’s task grew from his recognition of the significance of these changes. The methods of the traditional three-self movement were inadequate to address the reality of the context in which Coe found himself and the church in Taiwan. A new method of assessment, which he labeled “contextualization,” was needed to effect truly incarnational ministry. Coe described contextualization as a continual interplay between the transcendent text of Scripture and the ever-changing context in which it must be interpreted. He recognized that effective incarnational ministry depends on a continual willingness to face Scripture’s summons to transformation in the midst of changing social, political, and economic circumstances.

Secularization, both in the academy and in Asian society at large, posed a significant challenge for the church’s interaction with the surrounding culture. Missionaries from Europe and America had been founding Christian schools in Asia since the middle of the nineteenth century. Asia’s deep respect for education and its tradition of centuries of scholarship in the Confucian pattern created openness to education but also tension over the best approach. Postwar Asia saw an accelerated growth in government-sponsored schools, which were established to help countries keep pace with the rapidly changing body of knowledge necessary to succeed. New secular education theories brought to the surface the inadequacies of mission practices that placed indigenous people into structures and processes designed by missionaries. These structures, based on cultural perspectives that were alien to the recipients, failed to address the challenges present in the indigenous culture.

Secularization also severed Asian societies from the sanctions of traditional religious structures. The response of the Christian community to this secularization took different forms, but ignoring the changing context was a common failure. Some viewed Christianity primarily as a leisure-time activity or a form of cultural enrichment. Churches found themselves competing with a deluge of new activities and distractions. Other Christians found comfort in retreating to a kind of antiseptic enclave, safe from possible infection by secularism. Regardless of the method each group employed as a buffer against trauma, all were thrown into the midst of change. In the face of the increasingly complex society to which they ministered, graduates of the theological schools began to voice their qualms about the relevance of their education for their pastorates. Coe understood the danger and warned that the church could easily become a peripheral activity irrelevant to people’s needs.

During their years in Taiwan, Shoki and Winifred had three more children, Michael, Eileen, and Andrew. Winifred worked alongside Shoki at the Tainan Theological College as an adjunct instructor. However, difficulties in her last pregnancy and the uncertainty of the political situation led to a difficult decision. When the Coes had entered the country in 1947 they were advised to keep Winifred’s (and their son David’s) British citizenship intact. Because of this, the Nationalist Chinese government refused to acknowledge Coe’s marriage and listed him as a bachelor on his passport. Shoki and Winifred’s refusal to register their children as Chinese citizens led to growing political pressure.

In 1959 they decided it was best for Winifred and their four children to return to England for their health and safety. So from 1959 to 1965 Shoki and his family were separated as he fulfilled his commitment to the church in Taiwan. The separation and its reasons were painful enough; however, the story did not end there. A pastor aligned with a dissident church faction exploited the anomaly on Coe’s passport to accuse him of fornication, resulting in an emergency resolution put forth in the 1966 General Assembly (after he had already left Taiwan) to have him censured for having lived with a woman without marriage and for fathering four illegitimate children! Coe was already under pressure from the Nationalist Chinese authorities due to his participation in the Self-Determination Movement of Taiwan. He accepted that struggles with the political realities that faced him as a Taiwanese Christian were an essential part of the context of his ministry. But now he felt the sting of betrayal by politically motivated fellow Christians. These events strengthened his conviction that contextualization involved a lifestyle of sacrifice for the work of the mission of God. Contextualization was more than just a theory to be bantered about in conference circles.

Reunited with his family in England in 1965, Coe was now virtually exiled from his beloved Taiwan because of his public support for an independent Taiwan and the questions over his citizenship status. Because of this impasse, he obtained a British passport and accepted a position as director of the World Council
of Churches Theological Education Fund (TEF). The de facto exile continued for two decades. In 1987 the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was able to secure permission for him to visit Taiwan to take part in the church’s discussions on Taiwan’s identity and role in world affairs.

**Contextualization: An Emerging Perspective**

The changes Coe witnessed in postwar Asia prodded him to reassess the church and its mission using what he called “textual cum contextual criticism.” His approach was to allow the text (Scripture) to provide the vocabulary and the perspective needed to wrestle with a changing context. *Joint Action for Mission in Formosa: A Call for Advance into a New Era,* published under his Taiwanese name C. H. Hwang in 1968, modeled the process and became a seminal work toward formalizing contextualization as a way to theologize about the church in culture.

Several key theological categories shaped Coe’s description of contextualization as an approach that went beyond indigenization, yet without compromising the message of the Gospel. He started his theological assessment with eschatological terms. For him, the “present and not yet” tension of living in the “fullness of time” set the stage for understanding the church’s role as an agent of the mission of God (*missio Dei*). The mission starts with Jesus Christ who entered time as the ultimate example of contextualization. “No longer need time be a terror or a meaningless cycle—for Christ entered time, and so fulfilled the divine purpose once for all. Now our times may be kairos, times fulfilled, since Christ, the kairos—the fullness of time—has entered into them.” For Coe, this kairos of fullness and fulfillment impels the church into its context so that it is not permitted to withdraw into hiding. Coe fervently desired the impact of the future order to be felt concretely in the present.

Coe clearly saw that national and ethnic identity (context) has a profound influence on individual and group identity and sense of value. “This determines the basic structures and general style of life in society as a whole, and so becomes its coordinating principle.” “To be faithful to its call, the Church must not shirk its God-given opportunity to live and work in the very heart of this new social revolution.” Coe saw that “for God to love the entire community of man in all its confusing multiplicity of activities does not mean that everything is equally acceptable to Him as an expression of His will.”

Coe’s convictions about contextual ministry led him to insist that numerical growth represented an urgent and unfinished task for the church. Population statistics were not mere ciphers for Coe; they stood for persons for whom Christ died. Therefore, he paid attention to the demographics of the church’s context and asked questions about the natural limits to growth and what contributed to these limits. In Taiwan he identified ways that ethnic differences, urbanization, and political situations influenced the way the church structured itself, sometimes in conflict with its mission. Growth for Coe did not mean accommodation. It did mean that the Gospel contextualized must transform the cultural context itself.

**Refining the Concept**

Coe’s move to head TEF gave him more time to devote to reflection on his work in Taiwan and the benefit of a wider venue in which to discuss and observe the church in action. It was during his tenure with the WCC that he did most of his writing. Prior to 1965, he had written a few papers on the changing face of theological education in which the germinal seeds of the contextualization concept were emerging. However, his responsibilities to Tainan Theological College and as moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (a position he held for an unprecedented two terms) left him little time to write. After his retirement from the WCC in 1979, Coe had hoped to write out many of his views in book form. However, his involvement in the Self-Determination Movement and then Winifred’s failing health absorbed his time, leaving us with only a few essays and a posthumously published collection, *Recollections and Reflections,* edited by Coe’s longtime friend Boris Anderson. Coe was a thinker, but a thinker in action with little time to write.

During his years with TEF, Coe formulated the criteria by which he assessed variances in contexts in relation to the transcendent Word. “To take the context seriously does not necessarily mean, it seems to me, taking all contexts equally seriously, because all are not equally strategic for the *missio Dei* in the working out of His purpose through history.” Coe’s missiological reflection recognized the interrelationship between Word, world, and church as conditioning whatever action should be taken by the church. However, Coe did not grasp at relevance for its own sake. He sought relevance that made the Gospel’s summons to repentance clear and practical in its ramifications for the individual and society generally.

Coe was aware of dangers in his contextualized approach to theology and outlined the two foremost concerns. First, wrestling with text and context can produce a chameleon theology that simply changes the message of the Gospel to fit with the context. This fails to critically assess the context in light of the *missio Dei.* Coe endorsed a dialectic approach to theologizing that viewed awareness of and participation in God’s agenda (contextuality), and awareness of interaction between the Word and humankind’s situation (contextualization), as two inseparable yet distinct parts of the process.

Second, Coe recognized the possibility that contextualization could reduce theologizing to vacuous utopian delusions that fragment the church into mutually competing and self-serving agendas. Contextualization must be deeply concerned with the catholicity of the Gospel and, in Coe’s mind, contextualization is the authentic way of achieving vital catholicity. Coe saw catholicity as a gift modeled in the incarnation of Jesus who became flesh in a particular time and place. The Word becoming flesh models our responsibility to take our own concrete, local contexts seriously. This does not leave us free to indiscriminately manipulate the contexts; rather it forces us to the cross where we must recognize that certain aspects of our cultural assumptions must be deconstructed for the sake of reconstructing a perspective more in line with the *missio Dei.* The process is at times painful but necessary, as Coe knew all too well.

**Legacy of Service**

Shoki Coe died in 1988 in England following a life of service as a church leader and theological educator. Coe contributed both conceptually and procedurally to missiology in the formulation of contextualization, offering a model that moved significantly beyond indigenization, which often simply placed indigenous individuals into the institutional and presuppositional forms of an alien Western culture. Coe recognized that the use of an outsider’s categories in evaluating a culture would never meet the a priori values of indigenous peoples. Coe’s approach of using biblical motifs to frame theological reflection enabled him...
to avoid the danger of losing the message in a quest for relevance.

Within a decade of Coe's introduction of the term "contextualization," it gained widespread currency in both main-line and evangelical circles. Although, as Charles Kraft reports, evangelicals were at first wary of the concept because of its World Council origins, by 1978 it was being featured prominently in evangelical books, journals, and consultations. Since 1980, important studies from both Protestant and Roman Catholic perspectives have produced a body of literature that testifies to the importance of the concept for missiology.18

Coe’s concern with contextualization went beyond academic exercise. His life modeled the personal cost of engaging in a contextually appropriate ministry to the world. He was passionately Taiwanese, yet his very name reflects the changing contexts of his life and is, in part, the legacy of his political context. As Kosuke Koyama noted, “He had to change the form of his name from Chinese to Japanese and then to European spellings. The metamorphosis of his name epitomized his idea of contextualization.”19

Notes
2. Ibid.
5. The necessity of an emic perspective and sensitive cross-cultural participation as peers in mission is illustrated in Coe’s reflection on discussions held in 1952 between himself and Charles Leber of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA about the development of a Christian university in Taiwan and its relationship to the Theological School in Tainan. (See Recollections, p. 211.)
6. A division of the International Missionary Council, the TEF was set up to encourage development of appropriate theological education in the Two-Thirds World, providing books, money, and so forth.
9. Ibid., p. 129.
10. Ibid., pp. 24, 35, 37. Coe applied this in both universal and local terms. His observations on the church in Taiwan include much that is applicable to the church in any location. The church in Taiwan during the sixties suffered from isolation, irrelevance, judgmentalism, exploitative tendencies, and class stratification. Coe illustrated the process of contextualization as the operation of a lighthouse. The church had to lead out in direct involvement in the community rather than attempting to pull a few individuals out of the community into a structure designed just for them. The church cannot effectively contextualize its message if it caters to the temptation to “withdraw from the challenge, to be content with the role of comfortable, middle-class, introverted ‘religious clubs’” (ibid., p. 40).
11. The quest to understand the factors that limit church growth is not limited to contextual factors for Coe. Coe identifies the spiritual side of church growth in his discussion on curricular reform in training institutions. He emphasizes Christian formation as the preeminent step toward preparing men and women to minister to their context. Christian (spiritual) formation is to be complemented by theological formation and ministerial formation. These three ingredients form the essential triad of training needed to insure an adequate expression of “missio Dei, in its concrete, historical context” (“In Search of Renewal,” p. 239).
12. See Kosuke Koyama, “Spiritual Mentors: Christ’s Homelessness,” Christian Century (July 14–21, 1993): 702–03. Koyama, a “son” of Coe, quotes Coe as saying, “The gospel must be culturally contextualized, yet it must ‘gospelize’ the cultural context itself. The incarnation is the ultimate event of contextualization. This means that the gospel remains a stumbling block and no contextualization can domesticate it.”
16. This is especially evident in his wrestling with the definition of catholicity. “True catholicity could not possibly be a colorless uniformity, but must be a rich fullness of truth and grace, which unfolds and manifests itself as we take the diversified contexts in time and space, where we are set, and respond faithfully as the Incarnate Word did on our behalf, once and for all. The true and authentic catholicity will become fully ours as we not only draw basic power from the same gospel, but as we are committed wholly to serve the same Missio Dei in the diversified contexts” (Coe, Recollections, p. 274).
17. In Coe’s words, we “must be open constantly to the painful process of decontextualization, for the sake of recontextualization” (ibid., p. 275).

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Works About Shoki Coe


INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH
The Story of the Dictionary of Asian Christianity

Scott W. Sunquist

Reference works are multiplying like rabbits on the outback. A quick check in your local theological library will show that if you haven’t looked through the reference section in the past year or two, you are out of date. There are dictionaries and encyclopedias on slavery (I know of three), religion in America, regions of the world (in various languages), religions and belief systems, and countless more. As a result, one can do a quick study on a region, say Nigeria or the Gold Coast, from the perspective of slavery, religion, politics, or customs and folklore. Of the making of reference works, there is no end.

I suppose it was the French Encyclopedists who got us in this pattern of thinking that we really can know everything, or at least something about everything. Exactly a quarter of a millennium ago the first volume of Diderot’s twenty-eight-volume work was published, to an international outcry of disdain. The Encyclopedists claimed that if civilization were to be destroyed, it could be rebuilt from the Encyclopédie. The multivolume work was to establish an Enlightenment view of the cosmos and a “scientific” way of thinking about reality. It was a product of its time, a perspective that would dominate the Western approach to politics, science, social science, and religion for two centuries. We learn something about the period by reading this reference work. In fact we learn a great deal about the period and about Western culture by reading the original Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers, as it was to be called.

A Dictionary of Asian Christianity (DAC) is a small work by comparison, with none of the grandiose claims of the work of the eighteenth-century philosophes. And yet there is a historical context that helps to explain the method, content, and concern of this reference work. First, the DAC comes out of a period of contextualization of theology and praxis in global Christianity. With independence movements and nation-building after World War II came rapid growth in national church movements and their accompanying theologies. Also, national church leaders began to be trained more rapidly and at a higher level than ever before, many of them after the 1960s taking interest in their own Indian church histories (which is good) but are often quite ignorant of the history of their Christian brothers and sisters in Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan (which is not so good). In the same way Korean students study Korean church history on non-Christian religions, as well as articles on specific movements within these religions. Again, newer understanding of the contextualization of Christianity has brought awareness that local religious expression is part of that context. At times Christianity adopts some of the practices (such as the early morning prayers in Korea), and at other times it resists such practices (such as the refusal of Christians in northern Thailand to cremate their dead because it is a Buddhist practice). In other instances non-Christian religions have risen up against Christian expression. Whatever the response may be, local churches develop in a religious or pseudoreligious context in all places in Asia.

Nationalism and its evil cousin racism are another part of the acknowledged context that shaped the DAC. In most countries the growth of nationalism has been both a good and a terrible thing. National identity has helped to develop local, indigenous leadership, but it has also produced, through competing eschatological visions, terrible wars. Concern for ethnic survival and self-determination has also produced good and bad results. One of the great problems for churches globally is the unholy mixture of ethnocentrism (or racism or nationalism) with Christian loyalty. A brief example will clarify what I mean. In most countries in Asia church history is a required seminary course (meaning mostly Western church history), and in addition the national church history is taught. Indians are learning their own Indian church history (which is good) but are often quite ignorant of the history of their Christian brothers and sisters in Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan (which is not so good). In the same way Korean students study Korean church history (which is good), but they know next to nothing about Japanese or Chinese church history. Thus, the seminary may be seen to be reinforcing nationalism—a problem similar to what we experience in the West.

At a recent centennial celebration of the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Seoul, I asked an audience of about 350 Koreans (85 were missionaries) if anyone had ever heard of the great Chinese evangelist John Sung. Only one person raised his hand, and he is a missionary to Vietnam (seven years). He told me that he is still running into people who remember the great revivals in the 1930s under Dr. Sung. The DAC was designed in part to combat some of the divisions of Christianity in Asia and to fill in areas that are neglected during seminary training.

Many articles cross national boundaries and recognize regional or continental themes. Articles on religious orders (where possible) cover the work in various countries of Asia. Issues such as Communism, colonialism, nationalism, and Bible translations

Scott W. Sunquist is Professor of Mission and Ecumenics, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Taking Stock: Theological Education in South East Asia

Seremban, Malaysia—The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) held its quadrennial general assembly, November 24–28, 2001, on the new campus of the Malaysia Theological Seminary, fifty miles from Kuala Lumpur. Eighty-three representatives from eighty theological schools in twelve countries participated. Many also took part in a preassembly workshop for seminary administrators on management skills and fund-raising.

Established in Singapore in 1957 (as the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia), with sixteen mainline Protestant schools as founding members, it was the first formal regional association of theological schools in the non-Western world. The name was changed in 1981 to reflect the wider concerns and involvement of the association. Today the membership of ninety-two schools in fourteen countries, with approximately 9,000 students and 900 faculty members, has broadened to include evangelical, Pentecostal, and Adventist schools, with ten new schools joining in the last year. No Roman Catholic schools are members, but Roman Catholics participate in some programs sponsored by ATESEA.

Executive directors who have served the association are John R. Fleming (1959–68), Kosuke Koyama (1968–74), Emerito P. Nacpil (1974–81), and Yeow Choo Lak (since 1981). The executive office is located near Manila, Philippines.

ATESEA serves as an accrediting agency for member schools in the region and publishes the Asia Journal of Theology (begun in 1959 as the South East Asia Journal of Theology). It also sponsors the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST), a federated faculty, founded in 1966, that is organized in seven regions of South East Asia. The graduate school has awarded 197 master of theology degrees since 1969, and 67 doctor of theology and doctor of pastoral studies degrees since 1978. The SEAGST provides opportunity for contextualized graduate studies in Asia and thereby seeks to advance "brain-gain" and counter the "brain-drain" of Asians who go to the West for extended, expensive periods of study and separation from Asia, but too often do not return to Asia or have difficulty adjusting when they return.

Michael Gilligan from the Henry Luce Foundation, New York City, addressed the assembly on the topic "Theological Education Facing Challenges of Market Economy." He warned against "the risk of new forms of colonialism" that comes with globalization, and he pointed to the SEAGST as an illustration of an effective way to cooperate in theological education. It was announced at the assembly that the Luce Foundation had awarded $225,000 over three years to the SEAGST for support of faculty development, especially in Indochina, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and eastern Indonesia.

During the assembly, the participants:

- received the report of a delegation that had visited Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in March 2001 to assess the needs of the various contributions produced, is a very difficult task. In the

Each country group worked out for itself, over a two- or three-day period, what entries should be included. The relative length allotted to each country was determined by the length of time of Christian presence, the size of the Christian population, and the overall influence of Christianity upon the nation. Thus, China, India, and Indonesia have the largest entries in the DAC, and countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Laos have much smaller sections. Many more entries were suggested than could be included, and many more assigned than were written. Nonetheless, by giving regional groups the final say, ecumenical consensus was produced, local ownership of the project was developed, and the final product reflects the general historical concerns of national church leaders. (A total of fourteen national and regional meetings were held.)

Much editing work had to be done to ensure consistency, but overall, the process worked well. An additional U.S. $25,000–$50,000 would have been helpful to allow the editors to review the material that was completed for each country or region, comparing it with the coverage of all other countries.

The larger survey articles, which required contributions from various countries that were then combined in a large article covering all of Asia, will be among the most helpful, but they were also the most difficult. It is very difficult to find someone in Asia who can write an accurate article on Franciscans or Methodism for all of Asia. These articles are very helpful in studying the various areas of influence of churches, religious orders, and movements upon Christianity in Asia. And yet combining the various country articles, not to mention getting the various contributions produced, is a very difficult task. In the early stages of the project, before we knew how extensive educa-
and opportunities for theological education in Indochina;
• considered the impact of information technology in theological education, especially in library organization;
• discussed means for the advancement of contextual theological scholarship, using the “Critical Asian Principle,” first adopted in 1972, which “seeks to identify what is distinctively Asian, and use this distinctiveness as a critical principle of judgment on matters dealing with the life and mission of the Christian community, theology, and theological education, in Asia”;
• recommended three mandates for the next quadrennium: empowerment of women to work toward an authentic community of women, men, and children; diminishing theological-cultural divisiveness; and production of theological literature dealing with theology and globalization;
• celebrated the two decades of leadership by Yeow Choo Lak as executive director of the association and dean of the graduate school (Lak retires in June 2002);
• elected Sientje Merentek-Abram, professor at the Christian University of Indonesia in Tomohon, as the new executive director and dean. She has been chairperson of ATESEA since 1997 and is the first woman to be executive director and dean. She is an ordained minister of the Christian Evangelical/Reformed Church of Minahasa and is currently moderator of the General Synod of Churches in North and Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. She has a D.Theol. from SEAGST in Old Testament.
• elected Lo Lung Kwong, dean of Chung Chi College, Theology Division, Chinese University of Hong Kong, as its new chair;
• reelected Thu En Yu, the principal of Sabah Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, chair of the ATESEA Accreditation Commission.

The Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA), chaired by Hsiao Ching Fen in New York City, with Marvin Hoff as executive director, is an ecumenical agency that provides financial support to ATESEA and SEAGST as partners in the ongoing development of theological thought and education in the region. Established in the 1930s to support Nanking Theological Seminary in China, FTESEA expanded its work to South East Asia in the 1950s. Today FTESEA continues its relationship with Nanjing Theological Seminary and the Commission on Theological Education of the China Christian Council, as well as its partners in South East Asia. Two denominations in Canada and eight in the United States are members of FTESEA.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson, Senior Contributing Editor of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, is vice-chair of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia.

Notes

1. A few exceptions might be mentioned (Jesuit church growth in Japan and “Vietnam” in the seventeenth century), but in none of these cases was a Western colonial power a dominant influence. The Philippines is the one exception.

2. Most of the meetings (for Thailand, Myanmar, India, China, Korea, etc.) were national, but in the case of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, we did work both from Thailand and from Singapore.

3. For example, the articles on colonialism, Jesuits, Methodism, nationalism, and Pentecostalism.

4. For a fuller discussion of the method and process of this project, see the preface and introduction in the DAC.
Book Reviews

A Dictionary of Asian Christianity.


A Dictionary of Asian Christianity (DAC) is a major publication event, not only for Asian Christians but also for the whole Christian and non-Christian world. The editors, contributors, and patrons of DAC must be congratulated for undertaking such an important enterprise. This is an ecumenical venture and the first major dictionary on Asian Christianity. With 1,260 entries by nearly 500 scholars, it will be of immense help to anyone interested in Asian Christianity.

Excellent articles are to be found on colonialism, contextualization, the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, interreligious dialogue, the padrando, the Paris Foreign Mission Society, Pentecostalism in Asia, and United Theological College in Bangalore, to name only a few. In general, the regional articles, including those on China, Japan, and the Philippines, are comprehensive and informative. The DAC is strong on biographical material. Most entries have useful bibliographic notes.

As may be expected in such a large volume, covering two centuries of Christian history in diverse regions, religions, cultures, languages, political systems, and colonial backgrounds—and with limited archival resources—the dictionary has its weaknesses. The contributions appear to be weighted in favor of the Far East countries, resulting in South Asia being underrepresented. Sectional editorial boards were mandated to assure balance, but it seems to this reviewer that they fell significantly short in some cases. There is no overview article on India, and there is little about the development of Christianity in India from 1500 to 2000; yet articles are devoted to early Christianity in India, to the churches of North East India, and to Indian interpretations of Christ. Of forty-six contributors from India, only three are Roman Catholic, even though the Catholic Church in India is by far the largest Christian group in the country.

Some entries give a one-sided and incomplete picture. The entry on the Salesians is a typical example. It covers mostly the Philippines, which has only about 300 members, while the 2,500-member Salesians of India are passed over in silence. Large Catholic orders such as the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel, Franciscan Clarist Sisters, and Adoration Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, each numbering between 3,000 to 6,000 members in India, are not mentioned, while much smaller groups are included.

With perhaps half or more of the dictionary's articles devoted to biography, one wonders why no recognition is given to such outstanding figures as Duraiswami Simon Amalorpavadass, Bede Griffiths, and Raimundo Panikkar. Constant Lievens, S.J., one of Asia's greatest evangelists, is credited with the conversion of more than 70,000 Adivasis of the Chotanagpur area within a five-year period at the close of the nineteenth century. Yet he receives no mention.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the DAC is a great work. The language is crisp and readable. Against the odds of finding good contributors, keeping time limits, and difficulties of communication, it is a wonder that the volume was completed. The quality of the production is excellent, and Eerdmans is to be congratulated for bringing out such a handsome volume.

—Sebastian Karotemprel, S.D.B.

Sebastian Karotemprel, S.D.B., a contributing editor, is Professor of Missiology at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome, Visiting Professor of Missiology at Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, India, and a member of the International Theological Commission, Rome.

Preparation and Fulfilment: A History and Study of Fulfilment Theology in Modern British Thought in the Indian Context.


Paul M. Hedges, currently teaching in China, studied the pivotal period from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, when non-Western religions first became widely known in the Western world. He has looked at the responses of many people to this new knowledge, including English theologians, scholars of the newly established departments of religious studies at British universities, and missionaries in India. The concept of fulfillment was widely proposed as the key to understanding how the Christian message relates to non-Western religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism. As "lower" religions are fulfilled by "higher" religions, so Christianity as the "highest" religion fulfills the religious expectations in the hearts of all human beings (p. 28).

After introductory materials, the author deals with the birth and growth of fulfillment theology. He discusses a variety of persons and conferences from Frederick D. Maurice to the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (1910) and John N. Farquhar, culminating in the analysis of Farquhar's Crown of Hinduism (1913), which proclaimed, "The religion of Christ is the spiritual crown of the Rigveda" (p. 300).

In the final chapter, the criticisms of fulfillment theology by Alfred G. Hogg and Hendrik Kraemer are discussed, and conclusions are drawn. Questioning whether classical fulfillment theology is still a viable paradigm, Hedges opts for a notion of fulfillment that is far from that of Farquhar, his predecessors, or his immediate successors, pointing instead to today's globalization, which requires dialogue and adaptation. According to Hedges, "Elements of one tradition may be useful... adding depth and meaning to the religious life. In this way each religion may be said to find its fulfillment in every other tradition" (p. 395).

Although this study has some repetitions (e.g., the same quotation from William Temple appears on pp. 53–54 and 380), overall it is well done. The historical research is stronger than the systematic analysis. Hedges correctly points to the link between fulfillment theology, on the one hand, and, on the other, logos theology...
and the concept of religions as “schoolmasters” to bring people to Christ (see Gal. 3:24). He could have clarified, however, the different roots of these concepts. Whereas logos theology is primarily rooted in creation and fulfillment theology in history, the concept of religions as schoolmasters is a pedagogical idea developed in the eighteenth century by Enlightenment philosophers such as Gotthold E. Lessing. Hedges’s study has an excellent bibliography but unfortunately lacks an index.

—Jan A. B. Jongeneel

Jan A. B. Jongeneel, a contributing editor, is Professor of Missions at the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. He is author of Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia (1995 and 1997).

Christian Missions and the Enlightenment.


In an excellent chapter introducing the eight essays of this volume—all originally delivered at conferences sponsored by the North Atlantic Missiology Project—Brian Stanley argues that missionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stand in a more complicated relationship to the Enlightenment than is often alleged. If the modern missionary movement was a child of the Enlightenment, it was sometimes a rebellious one, and the strength of this volume is that its authors resist the prevailing tendency to “explain” the missionary movement as a simple by-product of the era’s intellectual ferment.

For example, Andrew F. Walls maintains that missions theory in the period derived less from Enlightenment thinking than from a Christendom mindset that antedated it. Chapters by Jane Samson and Brian Stanley suggest that a belief in the equal depravity of all peoples sometimes tempered the cultural pretentiousness missionaries inherited from their time.

The great importance of the Scottish Enlightenment, which domesticated the Aufklärung’s anti-Christian elements, figures prominently in several essays. A particularly fine chapter by Ian Douglas Maxwell explores the Scottish debates on missions between 1750 and 1835. Another by Natasha Erlank contends that the “civilizing” consensus that emerged from these debates dimmed Scottish enthusiasm for missions among the Xhosa (considered less “civilized” than the Indians) until they received the imprimatur of that donor of educational missions, Alexander Duff.

Though Walls’s essay locates the origins of the modern missionary movement in pre-Carey continental developments, the book’s focus remains decidedly British. This collection of essays is not about missions during the Enlightenment, nor even about British missions of the period (Johannes van den Berg’s Constrained by Jesus’ Love still remains the standard on that topic). It is rather an engaging if somewhat piecemeal examination of the influence of the Enlightenment, important but not deterministic, on subsequent missionary efforts.

—Chad Mullet Bauman

Chad Mullet Bauman is a doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, studying in the program of Mission, Ecumenics, and the History of Religions.

The Dialectical Development of Doctrine

A Methodological Proposal

by

Charles Dickinson

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If Christianity—including Christian faith and theology—is to avoid becoming totally out of touch with the world—a museum piece at best, a force of baleful reaction at worst—it must constantly update itself by constant interaction, dialogue, dialectic with all the important intellectual currents, movements, disciplines of today. In the process, it must not lose its soul, or else it becomes useless. But, as Friedrich Schleiermacher said, it must open its windows to the world, lest it become irrelevant or even harmful.

Historians and theologians have traced the development of Christian doctrine, and even offered theories to explain it. On the other hand, various observers of the church in the world—perhaps most notoriously Max Weber—have interpreted how Christianity and the world have, for better or for worse, reacted upon one another. But going beyond such works, The Dialectical Development of Doctrine combines the two themes by proposing a necessary two-way dialectic between theology and the world, a dialectic absolutely essential to the healthy growth and development of both our faith and our understanding of the world, as well as of the culture which we continue to create and will bequeath to our children.
Global Missiology in the Twenty-First Century: The Iguassu Dialogue.


In this attractively presented documentation of the World Evangelical Fellowship Iguassu Dialogue in Brazil in October 1999, William Taylor and some thirty-five contributors have produced a landmark compilation of global evangelical missiological reflection. As at Lausanne in 1974, Latin American evangelicalism has injected dimensions of the heritage that have been at risk. The influence of Samuel Escobar and the stimulus of the late Orlando Costas are apparent.

Iguassu may have been a painful experience for some participants, but its very willingness to consider hard questions helped the event rise above a simple restatement of familiar themes. Here there are credible signs that people have been willing to acknowledge that the future of evangelism requires taking on board the viewpoints and experience of an international constituency.

It is seldom easy to keep, or even bring, “thinkers” and “doers” together, yet the Iguassu Dialogue placed a high value on being “reflective practitioners.” What this conveys about process and attitude is as significant as what is said in the Iguassu Affirmation. The regional surveys suggest that if the authors were given a template, they did not feel constrained to follow it in order to say what they believed important. The general lack of defensiveness is remarkable. The conference also set itself to listen to voices from other parts of the Christian tradition, including Celtic spirituality, Nestorians, Moravians, Copts, and Jesuits. The photos and biographies give a sense of context through the personalities and stories that lie behind the papers. The bibliographies are valuable.

We are already seeing WEF move with greater confidence since Iguassu, but the faith and openness recorded here is a gift to the church at large.

—John Roxborough

John Roxborough is a Presbyterian minister and lay training coordinator, Presbyterian School of Ministry, Knox College, Dunedin, New Zealand. He taught previously at the Bible College of New Zealand in Auckland, and at Seminari Teoloji Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.


The consequential place of Christianity in modern Africa and the significance of African Christianity in the history of Christianity are issues that have been the focus of much scholarly attention for over three decades. Here, one of Africa’s leading church historians presents a fascinating and perceptive study of some of the most perplexing challenges that have confronted the African church in the recent past and the nature of the churches’ responses.

The study is divided into two parts. The first focuses on the disjuncture between poverty and power in the African Christian experience—the salient question being why widespread poverty and suffering persist in the face of powerful Christian forms. Important points of discussion include the emergence of a distinctive African vision despite Western missionary control, the myriad challenges confronting the church as a result of the massive failure of the state in the postcolonial period, the failure of various Western-inspired solutions, the links between poverty and environmental abuse, and the need for solutions or development models that are rooted in Africa’s “predominantly religious and ecologically-sensitive” worldview (p. 64).

The second part analyzes the responses of both mainline churches and proliferating Pentecostal groups, with a primary focus on the political challenge. Not until the mid-1980s, the author suggests, did the mainline churches (outside South Africa) find a political voice, after decades of seeming powerlessness because of dependence on Western traditions and collusion with a rapacious state. By far the most effective response, he argues, has come from the “modern” Pentecostal movement, which emerged in the 1970s (though with antecedents dating to the late nineteenth century). The significance of this movement as an agent of change and empowerment in the face of considerable crises is linked to its deep roots in the African primordial worldview (foreign influences notwithstanding) and earnest preoccupation with spiritual power/warfare, victorious living, and a “holiness ethic.” The discussion is sharply defined by the author’s conviction that “only a spiritually-alive, prophetic church will be a tool of hope amidst the political stagnation which has befallen Africa” (p. 102).

—Jehu J. Hanciles

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

Footprints of God: A Narrative Theology of Mission.


What looks at first like a contrived title for a “narrative of theology” turns out to be a refreshingly accurate account of this book’s dynamic contents. The reader is taken on a voyage of discovery with twenty-five of Charles Van Engen’s doctoral students from around the world seeking answers to basic questions such as What is missiology? And What is theology of mission? As they explore biblical, cultural, and personal stories, they are surprised to find themselves tracing the “footprints of God.”

There is a natural flow to their journey. First following Jesus Christ as the motivation, means, and goal “of the way.” Then viewing the relational aspect, the context of real persons living real lives “in the way.” Finally, getting the direction in focus, “on the way” to the kingdom of God.

Each “hiker” maps out his or her own path on the faith pilgrimage. A Bengali from India struggles with proclaiming Christ in a pluralistic setting; an American missionary seeks to understand what conversion, “the moment of knowing,” means to the Aymara people of Bolivia. Others wrestle with the strange connection there seems to be between kingdom growth and suffering. How to explain it? A Dutch missionary finds help from...
Rediscovering the Celts: The True Witness from Western Shores.


A remarkable quest is underway—to recover the vision, life, and power of the “Celtic” Christianity that began with Patrick’s fifth-century apostolic movement to the Irish, spread to Scotland, England, and continental Europe, reached the “barbarian peoples,” re-Christianized Europe, preserved Greco-Roman learning, and thereby “saved civilization.” This quest has produced a wave of new books about Celtic Christianity. Fortunately, readers can skip more than half the books! Some authors look into the Celtic pool and see their own reflection; others produce only retread material.

The books most worth reading fall into four categories. The ancient sources are now available in good English translations, from Patrick’s Confessio to Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People. Some books, like those of Esther De Waal, focus specifically on Celtic Christian spirituality. Other books, like those of Ian Bradley, introduce Celtic Christianity as a whole. Finally, books like John Finney’s Recovering the Past, Douglas Dale’s Light to the Isles, and my own Celtic Way of Evangelism focus on the Celtic movement’s distinct approaches to mission and evangelization.

Martin Robinson, director of mission and theology for the British and Foreign Bible Society, has produced in his Rediscovering the Celts a work positioned between the third and fourth categories. The book addresses many issues in the ongoing discussion about what Celtic Christianity was; indeed, the author presupposes the reader’s familiarity with the Synod at Whitby, the controversy around Pelagius, and much else.

The book also presents many specific insights about Celtic mission, including insights not found in the work of previous writers. Robinson shows, for instance, how the Celtic mission penetrated Europe’s countryside, which the older, Roman, urban-based church had never accomplished (p. 43). His mission-related insights on Scripture, imagination, spiritual power, Trinity, community, nature, primal religions, and a dozen other topics make Rediscovering the Celts a useful text.

—George G. Hunter III

George G. Hunter III, former dean of Asbury Theological Seminary’s E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, is the Distinguished Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at Asbury.

Margaret R. Wynne served as adjunct professor of the Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, and from 1995 to 1999 was assistant director of InterVarsity Missions.

Missions in a Global Context

No Other Gods before Me?


This book explores the idea that we are all unique and that knowing who we are means discovering who God is; that the need to know who we are as individuals is a major reason why people seek alternative ways of living; and that the Gospel offers the only satisfying story of life.

Change Across Cultures


The book is a fresh presentation of the message of the Gospel, focusing on the ways different cultures respond to it. It covers issues such as secularization, pluralism, cultural identity, and the role of the church in the modern world.

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The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 "drew attention to the appalling standard of training that was given to the majority of missionary candidates. It called for the situation to be remedied and made suggestions regarding both the nature and the content of that training." (p. 70).

Harley proceeds from that point to consider how the provision of training changed over the next seventy years. He surveys briefly the changing discussion of missionary training by both the international missionary bodies and international conferences of the period and analyzes the provision made in Britain itself by the Conference of British Missionary Societies and the missionary training institutions, of which there were twelve by 1980. At the heart of the study are four colleges: Mount Hermon Missionary Training College, established in 1911; Ridgeland Bible College (1919); All Nations Bible College (1923); and All Nations Christian College, formed from a merger of the three in 1971. All were "evangelical, interdenominational colleges," "had close associations with the Keswick Convention and were influenced by its teaching," and "had strong links with faith missions," many of whose candidates they trained (p. 18). Detailed comparisons are systematically made between the "doctrinal basis and character," the training programs, and the nature and selection of the students attracted to the different colleges.

Harley’s general picture is of conservative, isolated institutions, hostile to the ecumenism of the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches, unimaginative and slow to change in their approaches to theology and the tasks of Christian mission. This was a position that changed markedly after 1962 under the leadership of David Morris and the merger that he masterminded. A doctoral dissertation presented at the University of Utrecht, this is a dense but informative study, based on a wide range of archival and oral sources.

—Andrew Porter

Andrew Porter, Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King’s College, London, where he has taught since 1971, recently edited and contributed to The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3, The Nineteenth Century (Oxford, 1999).

Gender or Giftedness—a Study on the Role of Women.

By Marilyn B. (Lynn) Smith, Manila: World Evangelical Fellowship Commission on Women’s Concerns, 2000. $10 plus shipping (available from WEF, Wheaton, Ill.).

This thorough study of women’s roles in Christian ministry is remarkable for several reasons. First, it has been produced by the Women’s Commission of a conservative Christian body that unequivocally states its belief in “the Holy Scriptures as originally given by God,
divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.” Second, the author presents her study objectively, irenically, and biblically. Third, while rejecting radical feminism, the author goes beyond traditional limits on women using their spiritual gifts. Fourth, the author and her commission members come from twenty nations, some of which are dominated by the most intolerant male attitudes (religious, cultural, and social) imaginable, attitudes that continue to be reflected in many evangelical churches.

Coming from a global, multicultural, evangelical background, Gender or Giftedness demands our attention. In place of the emotional rhetoric one might expect in discussions of this topic, the author presents an objective study of the historical background of the debate and a scholarly examination of the key Scriptures cited by scholars on both sides. Her thesis reflects extensive research, documentation, and integrity. Smith has held positions of responsibility in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, WEF’s Commission on Women’s Concerns, and Tyndale Seminary (Toronto).

This volume is enhanced by study questions at the end of each chapter. Regardless of one’s views on the role of women in ministry, the reader will benefit by reviewing the basic questions Smith and her commission raise: “Does gender determine ministry or does ministry flow out of call and giftedness? On what basis do we make this decision?”

—W. Harold Fuller

W. Harold Fuller, a Canadian, served for twenty-six years in Nigeria with the Society for International Ministries (SIM) and served for many years as vice chair of the World Evangelical Fellowship.

African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings, and Expressions.


This book is volume 3 in a proposed twenty-five-volume “World Spirituality” series. Under a board of forty-three editors and advisers, the series is meant to provide “an encyclopedic history of the religious quest.” Olupona’s random assortment of twenty essays by twenty-one contributors, though lacking neither profundity nor interest, simply does not exhaust the stated topic. As the contributor of “Art and Spirituality” noted incidentally, “unfortunate omissions and unreliable generalizations are inevitable” (p. 251).

The editor’s introduction attempts to integrate the disparate contributions and identify the volume’s initiator as Charles Long, outstanding African-American historian of religions, who provides the foreword. The essays are divided into four parts: cosmologies and sacred knowledge (chaps. 1–4); authority, agencies, and performance (chaps. 5–11); Africans’ encounter with other religions (chaps. 12–17); and African spirituality in the Americas (chaps. 18–20). The chapters are of uneven length (between 7 and 34 pages), each concluding with a bibliography of up to 53 titles. While this volume might stand alone, its significance is best seen when used within the series.

—Clyde Curry Smith

Clyde Curry Smith is Professor Emeritus of Ancient History and Religion, University of Wisconsin–River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin.

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In two of his last public addresses before his death in 1998, delivered at Samford University (“The Gospel as Public Truth” and “The Missionary Mandate”), Bishop Newbigin articulated his compelling vision for the Church and the Christian Gospel in the modern world. It was a vision that had distinguished Newbigin as one of the most incisive and insightful religious leaders of the 20th century. 90 minutes

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Willi Henkel, O.M.I., was presented with this Festschrift on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. As director of the Vatican Mission Library and the library of the Urban Pontifical University, as editor of *Bibliographia Missionalia*, and as a professor, researcher, and author, Henkel has given years of valuable service to the worldwide church and missiological scholarship.

The title of this collaborative volume is drawn from the fourth chapter of *Redemptoris missio*, while its theme focuses on the chapter's main section, entitled "The Parameters of the Church's Mission *Ad Gentes*" (par. 37), that is, the territorial, social, and cultural contexts. Part 1, by far the longest of the book's three parts, moves from one region to another in describing various factors of the territorial context from a variety of perspectives. The articles of part 2 describe aspects of the social context, such as a sociolinguistic analysis of the term "inculturation" and mission in the context of globalization. The study in part 3, dealing with the cultural context, considers the worlds of communication and scientific research. A way of "closing the circle," these final articles return to the heart of the work of Willi Henkel in discussing the role of the university, the library, and *Bibliographia Missionalia* for evangelization and missiology.

The thirty-six authors, most of whom are associated with the renowned Urban and Gregorian Pontifical Universities, have written in Italian (22), English (7), Spanish (3), German (2), and French (2). One minor defect of such a collection is that the outlines of the individual articles in the general index are not presented evenly. However, in the end this Festschrift is perhaps the first serious in-depth study of a central aspect not only of the fourth chapter but of the entire document of *Redemptoris missio*.

—Roger Schroeder, S.V.D.

Roger Schroeder, S.V.D., is Assistant Professor in the Cross-Cultural Ministries Department and Director of the Master of Divinity Program at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He worked as a missionary in Papua New Guinea for six years.

### The Continuing Conversion of the Church


This book is the fifth in the Gospel in Our Culture Series, dedicated to fostering a "missional encounter of the gospel with North American culture." Darrell L. Guder, newly appointed professor of mission at Princeton Theological Seminary (previously professor of evangelism and church growth at Columbia Theological Seminary) and currently secretary-treasurer of the American Society of Missiology, has been a key participant in the Gospel and Our Culture Network, editing *Missional Church: A Vision for the...*
Sending of the Church in North America. The Continuing Conversion of the Church continues Guder’s commitment to the evangelization of the West and the renewal of the church in North America.

The book is divided into three useful sections. Part 1 begins with a biblical and historical overview of the missio Dei. Part 2 considers the possibilities and challenges inherent in the working out of God’s mission. It stresses that the Gospel must continually be translated into contemporary cultural contexts so that the saving story of the triune God can be witnessed to in every age and place. Guder cautions, however, that the radical truth and challenges of the Gospel are typically compromised by human agency, resulting in a reductionism that hinders the church from witnessing to the fullness of God’s mission. The final part of the book is thus a practical investigation of how both local congregations and the wider church in the West can live beyond our reductionisms of the Gospel. Through the “continuing conversion of the church,” the body of Christ can be more faithful to the missio Dei.

This readable and very well-documented book is a vital resource for church leaders who seek to orient their faith communities to God’s mission. For widely read missiologists the book does not present a lot of new material. Rather, its contribution lies in challenging North American churches to go beyond their institutional captivity emphasizing personal and individual dimensions of salvation. In so doing, the book confronts the church anew with the “Gospel in our culture.”

—Ian T. Douglas

Ian T. Douglas is Associate Professor of World Mission and Global Christianity at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has previously served as a missionary in Haiti and on the world mission staff for the Episcopal Church, USA.


On December 13, 1937, Japanese troops swept into Nanjing (Nanking), then China’s capital, and, during seven genocidal weeks, shot, bayoneted, and beheaded between 260,000 and 350,000 unarmed Chinese soldiers and civilians. They also raped an estimated 20,000–80,000 girls and women. Most of the twenty foreigners (including fourteen missionaries) who chose to remain in the city ministered to 250,000 Chinese sheltered within the tiny Nanjing Safety Zone organized by John H. D. Rabe, a German businessman and Nazi Party member.

Eyewitness to Massacre contains letters and diary excerpts of ten American missionaries who staffed the Safety Zone: three pastors, two YMCA workers, three professors, a physician, and the acting president of Ginling Women’s College. The documents reveal the horrific dimensions of cruelty and chronicle the missionaries’ urgent efforts to protect and feed the living, treat the wounded, bury the dead, and intercede with Japanese authorities. These startling eyewitness accounts (supplemented by one missionary’s clandestine film footage) became the outside world’s information lifeline to the Japanese atrocities.

This important book was edited by Professor Zhang Kaiyuan, a noted

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Japanese advance. He was assisted by biographies, the relief activity report, and School Library, which houses the Zhang’s introduction, missionary historian who himself had fled the historical context. The book demonstrates the continuing importance of mission archival research. It also complements other publications that, in the tradition of Iris Chang’s best-selling Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II (1997), refute the Japanese government’s ongoing denial of the Nanjing atrocity.

In the end, Zhang’s book goes beyond the historical account to explore the imperatives of faith. Its pages reveal the missionaries’ unique combination of courage and improvisation. Moreover, in between hastily written lines, these ten Christians contemplate the nature of evil and the meaning of mission. They conclude that the missionary is sent to love others, regardless of personal cost, and to help reconcile all of God’s children.

—P. Richard Bohr

P. Richard Bohr is Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, St. Joseph and Collegeville, Minnesota.

Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life.


Bishop Lesslie Newbigin (1909–98) was one of the most important missiological and theological thinkers of the twentieth century. In this book Geoffrey Wainwright, Cushman Professor of Christian Theology at Duke University, honors Newbigin’s significant contribution by portraying him in patristic terms as a “father of the church.” This remarkable comparison is developed in a genre that Wainwright calls a theological life, by which he means both “a theological biography that concentrates on the theological thought of its subject” and “a way of doing theology that takes sanctified life and thought seriously as an intrinsic witness to the content and truth of the gospel” (vi).

Wainwright’s method is to distinguish ten roles in Newbigin’s life: confident believer, direct evangelist, ecumenical advocate, pastoral bishop, missionary strategist, religious interlocutor, social visionary, liturgical preacher, scriptural teacher, and Christian apologist. (I would have added one more—contextual thinker.) With a chapter devoted to each role, the author has selected books and articles by Newbigin, including some that are not widely known, to illustrate the designation. This approach reveals the rich diversity of Newbigin’s contribution to the church, while also capturing the inspiring character of Newbigin’s life and writings.

The problem in this approach is that when so many angles of vision are employed and so many books and articles given careful attention, it is difficult to provide sufficient historical context or critical analysis. It is also sometimes difficult to see the burning missionary impetus that stood at the center of Newbigin’s life and influenced every part. Nevertheless, Wainwright has given us an outstanding book that gives us a window into Newbigin’s greatness. Wainwright’s personal knowledge of Newbigin, his mastery of Newbigin’s thought, his own rich ecumenical experience and theological insight, and his clear and elegant writing style all enhance this fine work.

—Michael Goheen

Michael Goheen is Associate Professor of Worldview Studies, Mission, and World Christianity, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, Canada.


Through the use of Scripture, apocryphal and Gnostic literature, and the writings of a few women (both classical Christian and “heretical” writings), Mary T. Malone “cobbles together” (her oft-used phrase) the story of the theoretical and practical effects of Christianity on women in the Western world in the first millennium after Christ. The book is divided into three parts: New Testament times (first century), approaching the “Golden Age” (2d–5th centuries), and introduction to the Dark Ages (6th–10th centuries). Selected bibliography highlights books that have become standard feminist methodological approaches to history and theology. Malone, who recently retired from St. Jerome University and the University of Waterloo, includes a short list of English translations of primary sources she has referenced in her effort to make women’s story “visible.” A five-page dateline
provides a chronological rendering of significant persons and events related to Christian women in the period.

Several themes emerge in this engaging and informative narrative. The dominant motif is the gradual diminution of women’s story in Western Christian history and theology. A second theme illustrates women’s “double bind,” reflected in interpreting “flesh” as evil and tempting (p. 151), and the presentation of virginity for women as the ideal, but with marriage as the reality.

Chapter 9, “Women as Monastic Missionaries,” is of special interest for mission studies. In the context of a Europe overrun by non-Christian tribes, monasteries were themselves mission tools. Hospitality, writing, and production of books were part of the mission task. Malone’s clearest portrayals are the Anglo-Saxon nuns, Leoba (a relative of Boniface), Hugelbica (who wrote one of the first travelogues in German), Walburga, and Roswitha. Women in monastic settings assumed “quasi-episcopal” power in some cases (p. 199), but eventually ecclesial interpretations of enclosure inhibited a role in mission for women. The book leads us to think about a comparative examination of the effect of Christianity for Eastern and Southern churches.

—Angelyn Dries, O.S.F.

Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., is Associate Professor in the Religious Studies Department, Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and author of The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History (Orbis, 1998).

The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again.


George G. Hunter III has tapped into the current interest in all things Celtic to provide a splendid discussion of how we might draw on the resources of early Celtic Christianity in reevangelizing the West. Hunter has done his homework, even though he breaks no new ground in terms of original research. The bulk of the material is historical in orientation. We are given a nice tour of the situation as Patrick found it, including the new community and new life the Gospel brought, the wonderful phase of Irish missionary work, the Celtic way of communication, and the perspective that guided their evangelism as a whole. Hunter writes in a pleasing manner throughout. His ear and eye are clearly driven by a deep affection for the Celtic way of evangelism.

The final chapter provides a fascinating attempt to show the significance of the ancient Irish tradition for today. Here I found Hunter much less convincing. To be sure, he deftly deploys many contemporary analogies that relate to the Celtic tradition. But Hunter is well aware that Celtic Christianity is impossible without monasteries, a feature that one cannot imagine modern Protestants being prepared to retrieve. Moreover, it is unrealistic to think that one could have the Celtic way of evangelism without having Celtic Christians to carry it out. We simply do not have the kind of spiritual depth and theological consensus that was at the heart of the Celtic tradition.

—William Abraham

William Abraham, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, is the author of numerous books on the philosophy of religion, Scripture and tradition, evangelism, and church renewal.

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December 2–6
Islam and Christianity in Dynamic Encounter. Dr. J. Dudley Woodberry, Professor of Islamic Studies, Fuller School of World Mission, outlines principles for Christian presence and witness within the Muslim community. Cosponsored by SIM International. Eight sessions. $125

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