The assiduity of Mr. Edwards in exploring so many sources of knowledge, enabled him to impart various instruction in a chaste, elegant style” (p. 25). So reads Edwards A. Park’s tribute to Bela Bates Edwards (1802–52) given in June 1852 and reprinted in the October 1852 issue of Bibliotheca Sacra. Among Edwards’s several publications was his 431-page tome *The missionary gazetteer; comprising a geographical and statistical account of the various stations of the American and foreign Protestant missionary societies of all denominations, with their progress in evangelization and civilization, illustrated by engravings* (Boston: William Hyde, 1832).

This gazetteer relied heavily on several earlier compendia that were themselves influenced by a pioneering work by Hannah Adams (1755–1831): *An alphabetical compendium of the various sects which have appeared in the world from the beginning of the Christian aera to the present day. With an appendix, containing a brief account of the different schemes of religion now embraced among mankind. The whole collected from the best authors, ancient and modern* (Boston, 1784). The appendixes of the third American edition (1801) included “An Outline of World Christian Information: Public Freeway or Private Toll Road?”

“From “the poor heathen” to “the glory and honour of all nations”: Vocabularies of Race and Custom in Protestant Missions, 1844–1928
Brian Stanley

6 Noteworthy

12 The Making of the Atlas of Global Christianity
Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross

18 World Religion Database: Detail Beyond Belief!
Peter Brierley

20 World Religion Database: Realities and Concerns
Siga Arles

21 World Religion Database: Impressive—but Improvable
Robert D. Woodberry

23 The Legacy of Thaddeus Yang
David J. Endres

28 Celebrating Edinburgh 1910’s Centenary

29 Christianity 2010: A View from the New Atlas of Global Christianity
Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, and Peter F. Crossning

37 My Pilgrimage in Mission
W. Harold Fuller

42 Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Encounter with the Enlightenment, 1975–98
Timothy Yates

46 My Pilgrimage in Mission
Edward L. Cleary

50 Book Reviews

62 Dissertation Notices

64 Book Notes
Missionary Geography; or, a brief sketch of the state of religion throughout the world, with the means now using for its revival and propagation; and the present state of population in the different countries” and “A Missionary Table, containing a view of all the missionary stations in the heathen world, the number of missionaries in each, and all the societies by whom they are employed; also, a synopsis of Bible and school societies.”

Atlases, dictionaries, and encyclopedias of mission and world Christianity have been mission studies staples ever since these early works. The 2010 centenary of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference is an appropriate occasion to take stock of the current state of world Christianity and the new generation of reference tools that have emerged to track and analyze the movement. Accordingly, this issue of the IBMR carries reviews of a range of key reference tools, each groundbreaking in its own way, and each the fruit of decades of hard work by a laughably small team of dedicated and persistent scholars.

The latest of these is the extraordinary *Atlas of Global Christianity*, whose creation is chronicled in this issue by its editors, Todd Johnson and Kenneth Ross. A tantalizing sample of the Atlas’s breathtaking scope and factual density is provided by Messrs. Johnson, Barrett, and Crossing. Their eight-page survey serves as a kind of demographic odometer, showing us how far the world of Christianity has traveled in the century following the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference.

At €120 or $250—a modest amount, given the magnitude of the volume—the Atlas is well beyond the economic reach of most of the world’s Christian scholars, libraries, and churches. Although its subject matter attests to and vividly illustrates the fact that Christianity is a worldwide faith, the new heartlands of Christian growth and vitality will largely be denied its use.

Two other reference resources are available online only. One, the *World Christian Database* (www.worldchristiandatabase.org), is not discussed in this issue. For the other, the *World Religion Database* (www.worldreligiondatabase.org/wrd/wrd_default.asp), reviewers Peter Brierley (United Kingdom), Siga Arles (India), and Robert Woodberry (United States) offer candid assessments of its potential usefulness to scholars and practitioners in their part of the world.

In his review of the database, Siga Arles laments the sad irony that most of those whose faith is tabulated in such tools will be excluded from their use. How many institutions either inside or outside the West will be able to afford the $2,250 fee (www.brill.nl/wcdo) to access the data? But there are signs of hope—clouds the size of a hand—on the horizon. Dana Robert’s pioneering *History of Missionology* Web site at Boston University (http://digilib.bu.edu/mission), with its proposed freely accessible “Biblioteca Electrónica de Misología,” is one example. Two others are the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.dacb.org) and the movement toward open-source journals (www.doaj.org).

The IBMR, likewise, turns a conceptual corner with this issue. This has always been a *print journal*, with an available digital option for those willing to pay. As of 2010 we are an *on-line journal*—freely accessible to all—with a published print option available for paying subscribers. With this shift the scholarly research for which the IBMR is well known now becomes freely available to readers around the world, even those whose economic circumstances do not permit them the luxury of a subscription.

We celebrate the accomplishments of those whose “assiduity . . . in exploring so many sources of knowledge” has produced the remarkable reference tools featured in this issue. We hope that somehow, someday, and soon, this information will be universally accessible—an information highway on which even those who cannot afford to pay still tolls may travel.

—Jonathan J. Bonk
From “the poor heathen” to “the glory and honour of all nations”: Vocabularies of Race and Custom in Protestant Missions, 1844–1928

Brian Stanley

I imagine, if you can, that you are a child in England in 1844. You belong to a middle-class and pious evangelical family. You worship at the local Congregational chapel, and you save your spare pennies to place in a missionary box supplied by the London Missionary Society (LMS). Your parents have eagerly devoured a best-selling book by Robert Moffat, Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa, published two years previously, in which Moffat described his mission work among the Batswana, newly launched children’s periodical of the LMS, 100,000 copies of which are circulating through the denomination and wider afield.1 Are you sitting comfortably? Then I shall begin:

My dear children,

I have just been reading the book of Mr. Moffat, the Missionary, which tells all about his travels in Africa, where the black people live. He says, “The lions sometimes come to devour them; and when they (the people) cannot get away themselves, nor frighten the hungry lion away, the parents will throw one of their children to the lion, that he may take it and go back to his den.”

O how cruel this is to the poor little children! Your parents would not throw you to the lions. No, indeed; they are not so hard-hearted as those African fathers and mothers. But, then, you know the poor Blacks had not heard the Gospel, nor known anything about the love of Jesus, who took little children into His arms and blessed them, and said, “Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” If the black people had heard of Jesus Christ, they would not have given their children to the lions. O send Missionaries to tell them all about Jesus, the children’s friend! and when you give your money to send the Missionaries, say, “I am going to save the little black children from the lions.”

Your parents would not give you to the lions, because they know Jesus Christ, and, therefore, you should say, “Thank God for giving me Christian parents, who have been taught to love me and take care of me, both in body and soul.”

But the black people often love their children too. One poor mother kissed the hand of Mr. Moffat again and again, because he had brought her her boy, who had been taken away for a slave. Perhaps you will say, “Then, why do they ever give their little children to the lions?” Because they are so poor; some of them have no houses, and live in the open fields, and lie down at night in holes, and then, when the lion comes, they have no place to go to, and they are frightened; and you know, when we are frightened, we do what we afterwards wish we had not done.

But your parents have got houses, and we have no lions in England; because the Gospel of Jesus Christ has made us happier than the Africans. But if you will send the Missionary to them, they will soon have houses, and they will not lie down in the fields at night, and will not be frightened so as to give their children to the lions. O give some Missionary money to save the poor black children from the lions.2

I am sure there would have been several extra pennies in the missionary box the following morning. So was the foreign missionary movement racist in its foundational ideology? Many scholars of postcolonial inclination seek to persuade us that it was, and at first glance, a horrendous passage such as this suggests that they are right. Early Victorian children were being supplied with an absurd caricature of African cruelty and inhumanity, which was designed to arouse sentiments of pity or even contempt, and their emotions and vivid imaginations were being manipulated in order to exploit their very considerable fund-raising potential. Children reared on such crude images would undoubtedly have grown up with stereotypes of African (indeed all black) people, which would have made egalitarian relationships virtually impossible if they were ever to meet a real African later in life. However, we need to notice two important points about this extract.

First, it is, obviously, a fictional account of southern Africa written by someone who has never been there, and who has found in Moffat’s book what he or she was determined to find. Allegations of the gross inhumanity of “heathen” parents to their children were a standard trope of early- and mid-nineteenth-century missionary magazines: whether little children were being offered to the Ganges out of the blind zeal of Hindu idolatry or thrown to the marauding lions of the South African wilderness, contravention of the natural ties of familial affection was a defining mark of the absence of Christian civilization.3 You will hunt in vain in Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa for any passage describing parents abandoning their children to the lions. What you will find, in a chapter devoted to lion stories, is the exact reverse: an extended passage, with accompanying illustration, describing how the poor in their daily struggle for survival may sometimes feel compelled to leave their weak and aged parents out in the bush with minimal rations, with the predictable result that some have been “devoured by beasts of prey.” Moffat actually tells of starving African mothers who will give all their available food to their children and take nothing for themselves. For Moffat, the alleged inhumanity of Africans was defined, not by parental treatment of children, but by adult children’s treatment of elderly parents who had formerly denied their own needs for the sake of their children.4

Second, we should observe that the alleged inhumanity of African parents is explained, not in racial, but in social terms. It is attributed, not to any intrinsic biological deficiency of moral sentiment or intellectual capacity, but to what we would call social deprivation. The “black people,” the readers of the Juvenile Missionary Magazine are assured (though the assurance admittedly lacks total conviction), “often love their children too”; it is only “because they are so poor; some of them have no houses, and live in the open fields, and lie down at night in holes” that the
imagined cruelty is said to take place. Conversely, the supposed moral superiority of Britain is attributed in the first instance to material progress in basic living and housing conditions. At a deeper level, Britain’s advantage, even to the extent of the providential absence of lions from the landscape, is held to derive from the spiritual privilege and quality of communal life that a “Christian nation” enjoys: “But your parents have got houses, and we have no lions in England; because the Gospel of Jesus Christ has made us happier than the Africans.”

“Soft” Racism and Christian “Civilization”

For most of the nineteenth century, if the missionary movement can be accused of racism, the racism was of a “soft” kind. It was based, not on any notion of permanent biological inequality between races, but on obstinately deep-rooted convictions about differences between “civilized” and “uncivilized” peoples, which were explained in terms of a causal connection between Christianity and the regenerative process of “civilization.” The supposed inferiority of non-Western peoples was believed to be not intrinsic but environmental and conditional, hence in principle capable of transformation. If parental inhumanity to children was a symptom of the absence of Christian civilization, it followed that the implanting of the Christian message and its accompanying domestic values would remedy the defect. Through the ir rigation of the Gospel, Indian or African family life could and would become no less loving and divinely ordered than middle-class Christian family life in Britain was alleged to be.

In France and Germany the impact of the Enlightenment on ethnology was at best ambiguous. The egalitarian dynamic latent in the ideal of a humanity united by reason was undermined by the placing of humans squarely in the natural world, to be subdivided and ranked according to the same principles of speciation as the animal kingdom; in nineteenth-century France especially, ideas of polygenesis were widely accepted, enlarging the potential for ideologies of racial subordination. In the English-speaking world on both sides of the Atlantic, by contrast, much Enlightenment philosophy exhibited an overtly Christian character; the pervasive influence of evangelicism and the general acceptance of the historicity of the biblical account of human origins severely limited the appeal of polygenist theory until the later decades of the nineteenth century. In pre-Darwinian Britain, as also in the northern United States, concepts of the unity of humankind, its clear differentiation from the animal kingdom, and the attribution of the diversity of civilizational achievement between nations to varying degrees of degeneration from an original divinely revealed monotheism had near-paradigmatic status.

The flip and darker side of this civilizational and universalist discourse was, as the extract from the *Juvenile Missionary Magazine* graphically exemplifies, its intrinsic resistance to ideas of cultural plurality. Humanity had a single created origin but also a single redeemed destiny, and the temporal segment of that destiny was portrayed in terms set by the norms of Christian civilization familiar among the respectable families of England or New England. By the middle of the century, evidence was mounting from a host of mission contexts that the pursuit of Western patterns of civilization was not an unmixed blessing, as perceptive mission strategists such as Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn saw with sharpening clarity. But the policies of Anderson or Venn designed to achieve the indigeneity of native churches and the self-support of their ministry, though they attracted almost universal acclaim, were never permitted to place in fundamental question the commitment of the missionary-supporting public to reshape Asian, African, and Pacific societies according to Western notions of civility and respectability. Victorian missionary thought was not racist, but neither was it keenly sensitive to cultural difference, and these two features were integrally, even causally, related.

Even in the 1850s and 1860s, when postcolonial historians such as Catherine Hall maintain that humanitarianism succumbed to the new biological Anglo-Saxonism propagated by such authors as Thomas Carlyle and Robert Knox, the great majority of Anglophone evangelical philanthropy continued to subscribe to the ideal of a single humanity capable of being raised by the Gospel and propelled toward a single goal of Christian civilization. To be sure, such alarming episodes as the Indian Rebellion or Mutiny of 1857, the Governor Eyre affair in Jamaica in 1865, or, at a later date, the controversy over Bishop Samuel Crowther’s episcopate on the Niger subjected Western Christian faith in the essential unity and perfectibility of human nature to increasing and highly visible strain. Such apparent reverses on the mission field, coupled with the growing ascendancy of social Darwinist theory from the 1870s, produced a marked lengthening in the projected time-scale both of the wider process of civilization and, more specifically, of the devolution of power from foreign mission to indigenous church—yet these goals themselves remained largely intact.

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 took place during a period of uneasy transition between two phases of Western Christian discourse about the non-Western world. On one level, it marked the culmination of a century of Protestant enthusiasm for the regeneration of “heathen” societies to make them fit a Western blueprint of Christian civilization. The heady expectations that the world stood on the threshold of a religious and social transformation of millennial proportions, which were expressed both in advance of the conference and at Edinburgh itself, most notably by John R. Mott and Archbishop Randall Davidson, were in broad continuity with this tradition. The language of “heathenism” made frequent appearance in the drafts of some of the commission reports, as the predominantly liberal American members of Commission III, on Christian education,
A New Language of Human Difference

Nevertheless, one does not have to dig deep into the records of the Edinburgh conference to uncover a strikingly different vein of discourse, one that intersected with and at times entirely obliterated the older bipolar vocabulary of heathenism and Christian civilization. We might describe this new discourse of difference as groping toward a modern understanding of the differentiation and relativity of discrete cultural systems, but in 1910 it only rarely used the term “culture” in the sense with which we are now familiar. The valuable online version of the commission reports published by the University of Michigan enables one to search the reports for particular terms. The accompanying table shows the results for searches for matches of the four terms “culture,” “cultures,” “race,” and “races.”

The data suggest the following observations: First, the total absence of the use of the term “culture” in the plural accords with the claim of George Stocking that the plural and distinctively anthropological use of the idea of culture in the English-speaking social sciences emerged only after 1910, pioneered by the first generation of students of the American anthropologist Franz Boas.24 Not until the 1930s did the functionalist language of cultures as discrete integrated systems of human organization and mentality begin to displace the strictly empirical and more fragmented language of custom in the new colonial science of anthropology.

Second, although the singular term “culture” appears rather more frequently in the commission reports than I had expected, closer analysis reveals that in many cases the term carried a traditional, pre-anthropological meaning. Very often in the Edinburgh reports, particularly in John R. Mott’s Commission I report “Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World,” it denoted Christian character, was simply a synonym for civilization, or referred to a superior quality of refinement of ideas and civilization, although he did not see the process as an unmixed blessing.16

Nevertheless, it needs to be noted, in the third place, that there were occasional instances in the Edinburgh reports where the idea of culture was used in something approaching the modern sense to refer to the worldview underlying the body of custom of a particular people. In the Commission III report on Christian education, for example, ten of the twenty usages of the term “culture” were of this kind.17 The greatest concentration of such usage was in a section devoted to the development of a national spirit in China. It is significant that here the language of culture was intermingled with that of race: the Chinese, the report affirmed, “are a most conservative race” whose prejudices are connected with “a profound belief in their own culture and in the customs that depend on that culture.” Although currently ruled by the Manchus, “a northern race,” they had imparted their own culture to their political rulers, with the result that the Chinese have “reverenced the culture and the customs which have made them powerful and preserved them, and that their pride has been racial rather than national.”18

The task confronting educational missionaries, therefore, was “to seek to educate men who will explain Christianity in terms of Chinese thought, as St Paul expressed the everlasting truths of religion in terms comprehensible to Greek and Roman culture.”19 We shall return a little later to Charles Gore, the author of this report.

The fourth conclusion to draw from the table is the overwhelming preponderance of the language of race as the primary category that the reports employed in their accounts of human social diversity. To a greater extent than any of its predecessors, the Edinburgh conference was concerned to promote the scientific analysis of Asian and African societies in order to implement more effective strategies of evangelization. The conference encouraged missionaries to undertake the serious study of how indigenous custom and belief were interwoven in the diverse and colorful tapestries of corporate identity that formed the backcloth for responses to, and interpretations of, the Christian Gospel. Such varied tapestries of social and ethnic allegiance could not be described using the old terminology of heathenism. The vocabulary most readily available to the new, and what most of us would regard as progressive, missiological discourse at Edinburgh 1910 was the vocabulary of “nation” and, what makes us rather more uncomfortable, of “race.” Jeffrey Cox has recently suggested that “of anything that could be labelled ‘scientific racism’ there is no hint whatsoever” at Edinburgh.20 This judgment is strictly correct insofar as ideas of ineradicable biological difference between races continued to find no place in Protestant missionary thinking, but it is in danger of deflecting our attention from the salience that ideas of race occupied in the arguments of those who wished to see the emergence of recognizably Asian forms of Protestant Christianity.

“Race” in Missionary Discourse

In the Edinburgh reports and addresses, racialized perceptions of human identity sat uneasily alongside the traditional evangelical emphases on the unity of human nature. They shaped the
By what they were and what they said they illustrated the fallacy of the idea that the Oriental consciousness is radically different from the Occidental consciousness; and also the distance of the day when we may hope to receive from Asia any substantial modification of our interpretation of Christianity. It is probably inevitable and desirable that the new Churches should be closely similar to the older Churches which established them, but the prospect seems more distant than we have desired of the contribution by the great Asiatic races to our apprehension of that revelation of God in Christ which is richer than any one people’s confessions or any one race’s experience. For the present, if there are any grounds for anxiety, it is not because the native Churches are making innovations, for all of their innovations of doctrine or of polity are reproductions of incidents in the Church history of the West, but because they have as yet contributed nothing new to our understanding of the truth of God in Christ.22

Speer was representative of the conference leaders in his apparently progressive enthusiasm to see the Western churches receive from “the great Asiatic races” a “substantial modification of our interpretation of Christianity.” He had contributed an article to the conference Monthly News Sheet in March 1910 in which he argued that “humanity is so great and splendid a thing that its fullness can only be framed out of a world wealth of racial elements, bringing under the glorifying power of the gospel into the abiding City of God all those riches which no one race is great enough either to conceive or to attain.” Like others, he expressed profound disappointment that he could discover no distinctively Asian contributions to theology or church polity
in the addresses given in the Edinburgh conference (they were there, of course, for those who had ears to hear). The English Presbyterian China missionary John Campbell Gibson delivered an equally pessimistic verdict on the questionnaire replies submitted by Asian Christian leaders to his Commission II, “The Church in the Mission Field,” complaining of an all-pervasive “lack of independent thought among native Christians.”24 The Commission II report diagnosed the essence of the problem of both theological and financial dependency in mission-church relations as being the result of a disparity between the supposedly “vigorouss and progressive” races of the West and the “contemplative and mystical” spirituality of the Oriental races.25 Gibson appealed to ethnically undifferentiated caricatures of Oriental mysticism and the contrast between Chinese and Indian rates of progress toward an independent thought among native Christians.26 The report thus argued that the firm hand of missionary control was most needed as an “exotic” European implant while still maintaining the demands (so important to Gore) of catholicity:

The ideal method of propagating Christianity is that the Gospel should be received by each race through the ministry of evangelists from nations already Christian, but that the Church should pass as rapidly as possible under the control of native pastors and teachers, so that while all Churches hold the same faith, use the process of formation and following its founding assembly in 1948. Since 2002, Tveit has been general secretary of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations. An ordained Church of Norway pastor, he was a parish priest in Haram, More Diocese (1988–91), and an army chaplain during his compulsory year of national service (1987–88). Tveit is a member of the WCC Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the board of directors and executive committee of the Christian Council of Norway. He will replace outgoing general secretary Samuel Kobia, from the Methodist Church in Kenya.

Elected. Martin Junge, 48, a pastor and theologian from Chile, as the eighth general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland, effective October 2010. Junge will be the first representative from the Latin America and Caribbean region to hold that position, a seven-year term. Since September 2000 he has been area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean at the LWF Department for Mission and Development. He was president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Chile). He will succeed Ishmael Noko, an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, who was elected in 1994, becoming the first African to hold the LWF chief executive post.

Emilio Castro, a Methodist pastor from Uruguay who was World Council of Churches general secretary (1985–92), was honored October 14, 2009, by the Republic of Chile for his contribution to the defense of human rights in this South American country during the 1980s. He received the Orden de Bernardo O’Higgins, which is named for a central figure of Chile’s fight for independence in the nineteenth century. The order is an honor usually conferred on foreign citizens for their outstanding contribution in the field of arts, education, industry, commerce, or humanitarian and social cooperation.
same Scriptures, celebrate the same sacraments, and inhere in the same universal religion, each local Church should from the first have the opportunity of developing a local character and colour. It is also the ideal method that the Christian converts should, with their children, continue to share the education and social life of their own race and nation. In this way can “the glory and honour of all nations”—that is, their own distinctive genius and its products—best be brought within the circle of the Holy City.28

Gore was citing the eschatological vision of Revelation 21, where the Gentile kings of the earth bring the glory and honor of their respective nations as gifts into the holy city of the new Jerusalem. According to Gore, therefore, the appropriate standard by which to measure the success of Christian missions in Asia (Africa, as so often, quietly dropped out of the picture) was whether they could be shown to have contributed to the “development of an oriental type of Christianity, or as many oriental types as the varieties of national life and spirit shall demand.”29

In presenting the commission’s report to the conference, Gore reiterated the point, and this time he did extend the principle to the African “race”:

We look around, we see the profound and wonderful qualities of the Indian, and the Chinese, and the Japanese and the Africans, and we are sure that when the whole witness of Christianity is borne, when Christ is fulfilled in all men, each of these races and nations must have brought out into the world a Christianity with its own indigenous colour and character, and that the rising up of any really national Church will be to us, who remain, who were there before, life from the dead. We regard this question as central. We start from this. Are we, by means of education, training truly national Churches to stand each on its own basis, and bring out that aspect of Christian truth and grace which it is the special province of each separate race to bring out?30

Gore had no missionary experience, and it would be tempting to conclude that his contributions to the World Missionary Conference on the theme of race and nationhood were an eccentricity of Anglo-Catholic theory, which had no lasting practical impact on the Protestant missionary movement. There is evidence, however, that this was not the case. The encyclical letter issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920, when it considered missionary problems, returned to the theme of global catholicity, using language that is so similar to Gore’s words at Edinburgh that one can safely deduce his hand in the drafting: “Foreign missionaries should set before themselves one ideal, and one only: to plant the Catholic Church in every land. They must remember that the Catholic Church needs the fullness of the nations. They must long to see national life putting on Christ, and national thought interpreting His truth. . . . The foreign missionary . . . must leave to the converts the task of finding out their own national response to the revelation of God in Christ, and their national way of walking in the fellowship of the Saints by the help of the One Spirit. Thus will the glory of the nations be brought into the Holy City.”31

The Lambeth encyclical must have attracted the serious attention of leaders of the Anglican missionary societies but in itself was unlikely to wield much influence on the Protestant missionary movement as a whole. However, in 1928 the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) took up the subject on several occasions, at least some of which directly reflect Gore’s distinctive enunciation of the theme of interracial catholicity. The Jerusalem report “The Relations Between the Younger and Older Churches” cited the Lambeth encyclical at length in its section on ideals and policies for the development of the younger churches.32 The report also opened its definition of Christian indigeneity in terms that corresponded closely to Gore’s statements at Edinburgh in 1910:

A Church, deeply rooted in God through Jesus Christ, an integral part of the Church Universal, may be said to be living and indigenous:

1. When its interpretation of Christ and its expression in worship and service, in customs and 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.33

While these particular IMC pronouncements from 1928 do not refer explicitly to the concept of race, the Jerusalem meeting selected “The Christian Mission in the Light of Race Conflict” as one of its seven principal themes. The meeting issued an official statement in the name of the Council, which once again reproduced Gore’s Johannine phraseology as a theological framework capable of containing the idea of race within a wider unity:

Our Lord’s thought and action, the teaching of His apostles, and the fact that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is a community transcending race, show that the different peoples are created by God to bear each its peculiar gift to His City, so that all may enhance its glory by the rich diversities of their varying contributions. The spirit which is eager to “bear one another’s burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ” should permeate all inter-racial relationships. Any discrimination against human beings on the ground of race or colour, any selfish exploitation and any oppression of man by man is, therefore, a denial of the teaching of Jesus.34

By 1928 the category of race had acquired harsher and more problematic accents, which it had not possessed in 1910, as J. H. Oldham’s classic work Christianity and the Race Problem, published in 1924, amply testified.35 The conflict of races was now an anxious preoccupation of social policy both in North America and in colonial contexts such as East Africa, but such problems had not diminished the appeal of the vision first adumbrated by Gore at Edinburgh. The message from the Jerusalem meeting was that, with astute guidance from missionary hands, distinctive racial characteristics were still to be nurtured as the basis of indigeneity and hence also of a true catholicity within the church universal.

Edwin Smith, Henri Junod on “Lower Races”

As an Anglo-Catholic with an ingrained suspicion of Protestant tendencies toward sectarianism, Charles Gore possessed a stronger incentive than did most evangelicals to find a secure theological foundation for interracial catholicity. However, he is not the only example from the post-Edinburgh period of the way in which the new salience of the category of race supplied
Christian thinkers with the conceptual apparatus for an acceptance of a much greater degree of plurality within the emerging world church than had been conceivable in the mid-nineteenth century. There is plentiful evidence that those now revered as the founding fathers of missionary anthropology initially found in the language of race the tools they needed to develop an understanding of cultural differentiation. Edwin W. Smith, a British Methodist missionary in what is now Zambia, was among the most influential of such scholar-missionaries. Smith’s early anthropological writings were clearly influenced by evolutionary racial assumptions about Bantu peoples, though it is important to note that he later came to express regret for the title chosen by his publisher for his second book, The Religion of Lower Races, as Illustrated by the African Bantu.36

Another notable missionary anthropologist, less well known in the English-speaking world, was Henri Junod, a delegate at the World Missionary Conference. Junod was a Reformed missionary from the Swiss Mission Romande in Mozambique. By 1910 his transition from missionary entomologist (he was a butterfly collector) to missionary ethnologist was almost complete. His major study, in French, of the Baronga clan of the Thonga people, Les Ba-Ronga, had been published in 1898, and he was now hard at work on preparing a two-volume English-language edition.37 His endeavors came to the notice of Commission IV, “The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions,” and were mentioned in the commission’s report as an example of the serious scientific study of systems of non-Christian belief that they wished to commend to the missionary movement as a whole.38 As a result of his participation at Edinburgh, Junod also secured J. H. Oldham’s crucial backing for the publication of his English-language work.39

Junod’s The Life of a South African Tribe appeared in two volumes in 1912–13. It was for the most part a strictly scientific anthropological study; as such, it later attracted high praise from several of the architects of modern anthropology, including Bronislaw Malinowski, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Max Gluckman, and Isaac Schapera.40 Junod confined to certain paragraphs, located mainly at the conclusion of the second volume, his more prescriptive and mission-oriented comments on which aspects of modern civilization ought to be encouraged among the Thonga, and which might on the contrary prove fatal to them, as members of “a weaker race.”41 What is striking about Junod’s conclusion is the extent to which he makes generalized deductions from his ethnographic case study of the Thonga and applies them in social Darwinist fashion to the “South African tribe” as a broader racial entity comprising all the Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa. The “South African tribe” was, in Junod’s judgment, a weaker race whose very survival was in jeopardy under the corrosive impact of the vices of white “civilization”42 and the expansion of the racially superior Africander (Afrikaner) population, “formed by the amalgamation of some of the best stocks of the Aryan race.” It was therefore the sacred duty of

Racial theory was a plastic tool with the potential to be used for a variety of contradictory ideological purposes.

now friends of the South African tribe to work for its “salvation.” According to “a great law of the moral world,” pronounced Junod, “if a superior race does not work for the moral betterment of the inferior, the inferior causes the superior to degenerate.”43 The only salvation for the Bantu therefore lay in the regeneration that Christianity would bring and in the enlightenment of the mind through Western education.44 It is not surprising that some of the advocates of segregation in South Africa in the 1920s found intellectual support in Junod’s writings for their policies of separate development.45

The Contradictory Uses of Racial Theory

Postwar liberal philosophies of humanity, fashioned in the shadow of sinister Nazi theories of racial supremacy and fortified by the campaigns for civil rights in the United States and against apartheid in South Africa, have largely repudiated the concept of race and in its place erected a functionalist understanding of culture. We regard it as axiomatic that the apostles of race are the bad guys and the defenders of culture the good guys. That is why we have been so reluctant to acknowledge that in the early twentieth century the apostles of race included good guys as well as bad ones, and that both were the forebears of the current defenders of cultural diversity. We can of course distinguish the two concepts: ideas of race have no empirical foundation in biology or genetics, whereas ideas of culture are able to amass an impressive array of social-scientific evidence in their support. The vocabulary of race attributes to large ethnic blocs of humanity certain unchanging essential qualities and, on that spurious foundation, then arranges those blocs in a hierarchy of achievement. The language of culture, in contrast, is capable of yielding (though it does not necessarily do so) a much more fluid interpretation that gives proper recognition to the fact that cultural identities are always constructions, theoretical approximations to an infinitely diverse and constantly changing reality.

Nevertheless, we cannot escape the conclusion that questionable assumptions of racial essentialism and differentiation were foundational to the very aspects of early twentieth-century missiological theory that present-day Christians are inclined to view with greatest sympathy. Racial theory was a plastic tool with the potential to be used for a variety of contradictory ideological purposes, as recent work by Werner Ustorf and Colin Kidd has made clear.46 The same pseudoscientific theories of race that, with some justification, historians have blamed for weakening the mid-nineteenth-century missionary commitment to the creation of self-governing indigenous churches supplied the intellectual apparatus that enabled missions in the early twentieth century to develop theories of cultural plurality and hence of “accommodation” or “indigenization.” These theories were the necessary precondition for the development of Asian and, later, African theologies. They subverted, and eventually eliminated, the gross juxtapositions of “heathen” and “civilized” that had characterized mission discourse of the mid-nineteenth century. Yet they equally had a more sinister potential—the capacity to erode the unflinching commitment to the fundamental unity of humanity, which is the most attractive aspect of mid-nineteenth-century missionary thought. Modern concepts of plural cultures have emerged from the soil of concepts of plural races. It is now thankfully a truism of theological writing on world Christianity that all cultures have their contribution to make to the rich diversity of a redeemed humanity. As a recent book by Mark Noll, The New Shape of World Christianity, concludes, inspired by the same text in the book of Revelation as was Charles Gore a
century ago, “The kings—or, we might expand, the cultures of the world—with their glory will enter the heavenly city.” As Christians eagerly embrace the vision of a culturally plural family of God, they need to be vigilant that they do not fall unwitting prey to the racial essentialism that infused such language when it was first articulated.

Notes


10. Ibid., p. 171.


13. See http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-id?c=genpub;idno=193637; I have excluded instances in appendices reproducing other documents (e.g., the resolutions of the China Centenary Conference in Shanghai in 1907) but have included those found in the text of contributions to the World Missionary Conference debates. I have also excluded index entries and the missionary bibliography at the end of the report of Commission VI.


17. Report of Commission III, pp. 84 (5 instances), 85 (2 instances), 155, 253, and 385; for the other, more traditional sense of the term in this report, see pp. 45, 52, 82, 148, 160, 202, 254, 255, 324, 385, and 440.

18. Ibid., p. 84.

19. Ibid., p. 85.
The churches from the whole world are joined in the effort to reach the whole world. Although it has been documented that Western missionaries serving outside their countries still comprise the majority of world missions workers, the growth rate of majority world missionaries far outpaces that of the West. In recent years, while Western missionary forces are shrinking in numbers and possibly in influence, missions from the majority world have proliferated, bringing amazing progress and some challenges. Missions from the Majority World represents the thinking of 14 majority world mission scholars and 10 Westerners with lengthy experience in the missionary enterprise. The book shows the progress and challenges of missions from the majority world and illustrates this by case studies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In the past we have focused on the “why” of missions in terms of motives, the “what” of missions in terms of the content of the message, and the “how” of missions in terms of methodologies and strategies, but the “where” question, in terms of where we send cross-cultural workers, has simply been assumed; it has meant crossing a geographic boundary.

Alan R. Johnson introduces the idea of apostolic function as the paradigm of missionary self-identity that reminds us to focus our efforts on where Christ is not named. He then examines in detail the “where” paradigm in missions. He concludes by integrating missions paradigms that relate specifically to the “where” questions of missions today.

This popular two-volume guide is for health care in developing countries where expert medical care can be hard to find. Its intended use is in developing areas by those required by location and circumstances to render medical care for which they are not professionally trained. Reader–friendly and easy to navigate, this manual will allow the reader to find the best treatments and procedures in a variety of medical situations.

Each volume includes illustrations and instructions that assist in diagnosing and treating patients. Volume I includes medical principles and procedures for basic care and emergency situations. Volume II includes symptom, disease, drug, and regional indices to assist the reader in step-by-step diagnoses and treatment of patients. Newly-revised and 20% larger.
The Making of the Atlas of Global Christianity

Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross

The centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference has proved to be an evocative moment for many who are concerned with Christian mission.1 Today the limitations and shortcomings of the conference are readily demonstrable, yet still it stands as a highly significant landmark in the history of the Christian faith. Above all, it has proved to be emblematic of the transition, achieved through the missionary movement, by which Christianity became a truly worldwide faith.

Among many features of the 1910 conference that command attention is the atlas it produced that mapped the progress that had been made by Christian missionary effort at that time. Preparation for the conference was undertaken by eight commissions. The first commission, “Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World,” was something of a flagship for the conference. It was this commission, headed by the conference chairman John R. Mott, that engaged James Dennis and his colleagues to produce the atlas.2

An important question being asked today by those with Christian mission at heart is, Where are we 100 years after Edinburgh? One way of addressing this question is to create, once more, an atlas mapping the status of Christianity in the world today and tracking the key developments that have occurred in the hundred years since 1910.

Marking the centenary has prompted, among those who cherish the memory of Edinburgh 1910, a note of celebration. Yet this is tempered by a note of repentance, recognizing that much has been learned in the course of 100 years and that different approaches to the missionary task are required today. An atlas inspired by the centenary would have to take account of this perspective.3 For example, Edinburgh 1910 was guided by an expectation that other world religions would wither and die in the face of the triumphant worldwide spread of Christianity. Today we may rejoice that Christianity has indeed spread worldwide, yet it is clear that other world religions have not only survived but have undergone significant growth and renewal. Any atlas published in 2010 claiming to portray global Christianity must take account of this reality.

Mapping a Demographic Shift

Although some of the leading expectations of Edinburgh 1910 proved to be ill-founded, what stands out to anyone making an objective appraisal of Christianity in the world of the early twenty-first century is the extent to which it has achieved the worldwide geographic spread of which the delegates at Edinburgh dreamed in 1910. A religion that at that time was concentrated in Europe and North America, with isolated outposts in the rest of the world, has undergone an unprecedented demographic shift that has resulted in its strength increasingly being found in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia—often in areas where it was little known a century ago.4 The task of an atlas for 2010 is to map the extraordinary transformation that has taken place.

The worldwide spread of the Christian faith has been accompanied by a growing diversity in the forms in which the faith finds expression. This has even led some scholars to begin speaking of “Christianities” rather than considering the religion as monolithic.5 Yet there is an unmistakable commonality evident in such features as taking the Bible as the foundational text for faith, finding in Jesus Christ the indispensable clue to understanding God and the human destiny, and sharing bread and wine in worship to express one’s intimate relationship to Jesus Christ and a sense of the ultimate significance of his death. Present in a bewildering variety of circumstances and in a dazzling diversity of cultural forms, Christian faith is nonetheless marked by an irreducible unity and coherence that demands that we consider a global Christianity. What we have therefore attempted for the first time in the Atlas of Global Christianity is to take a fully ecumenical approach in mapping and describing the worldwide Christian faith.6 We include every Christian denomination whether Anglican, Independent, Marginal, Orthodox, Protestant, or Roman

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Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions (1910), Plate 1

All Protestant mission stations in 1910 shown by dots on map

See larger color map at www.internationalbulletin.org/1910map.
Catholic. Through maps, tables, graphs, and charts, supported by fifty-two interpretative essays, the Atlas traces the story of the spread of Christianity in every part of the world in the years since 1910. This involves recognizing extraordinary growth in some regions, as well as decline or stagnation in others.

Producing the Atlas

This atlas is descended from a long line of some 200 major surveys, dictionaries, atlases, and encyclopedias dealing with statistics of world Christianity. A number have been denominational or confessional; others have been interdenominational or ecumenical. While the present atlas issues from this broad stream of demographic endeavor, it owes a much more immediate debt to the work of David B. Barrett, editor emeritus of the volume. His preparation of the World Christian Encyclopedia (1982; 2d ed., 2001) and dedication to tracking the global demography of the Christian faith over four decades are the foundations on which this atlas has been developed. Another debt of gratitude goes to Patrick Johnstone, author of the widely used prayer guide Operation World (issued in several editions between 1974 and 2001), and his successor, Jason Mandryk, for their careful assessment of global Christianity.

Building a global team. An atlas of this size and scope required a remarkable global team assisting the two main editors. These men and women appeared, sometimes seemingly out of nowhere, at just the right time to take the project forward. All of these people worked sacrificially, with only small financial rewards. Our managing editor, Sandra S. K. Lee, a seminary graduate, greatly influenced the initial design of the atlas and managed the project with grace and efficiency. Sandra got married and gave birth to a son all within the confines of the three-year project! Associate editor Darrell R. Dorr, from the U.S. Center for World Mission, brought expertise from editing Mission Frontiers and had a special place in his heart for the lay reader. Associate editor Albert W. Hickman burrowed deep into the text, maps, and graphics, locating discrepancies with alarming frequency. Chris Guidry, our desktop publisher, brought previous experience from the

World Christian Encyclopedia and World Christian Trends projects to give a professional and attractive layout to the manuscript. Data analyst Peter F. Crossing, working remotely from his home near Wollongong, Australia, took great care in producing all the maps and tables. Bradley A. Coon, our information designer, wandered into the Center for the Study of Global Christianity in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, as a recent graduate of Gordon College and ultimately gave the atlas the attractive look that had eluded its fifty-year-old editors. William T. Duggin, electronic product designer, part of Youth With A Mission’s Network for Strategic Initiatives, appeared at just the right time to design the electronic Atlas of Global Christianity Presentation Assistant, a powerful but easy-to-use companion to the printed book. Finally, a twenty-something graduate student, senior editorial assistant Gina Bellofatto, came onto the scene early and did everything from writing to desktop publishing in order to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Many other students at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary also assisted in research and writing, and their names appear on the editorial-team page of the atlas.

From the outset of the project it was apparent that the resources, both in people and in technology, would be spread around the world. We had to work out not only how we would communicate but also how we would transfer and edit large files. We were fortunate to be able to use Adobe Acrobat® to manage the large files.

Methodology. Over the past twenty-five years, an enormous amount of data on religious demography has been collected and analyzed. New sources of information include government censuses (half the national censuses in the world include a religion question), records kept by religious communities (membership rolls), and published works by individual scholars (such as monographs on new religious movements). These data have been collated, analyzed, and published in a wide variety of ways, highlighting countries, regions, and, more rarely, the entire globe. Given the limitations of censuses (including incomplete and irregular global coverage, potential political bias swaying the findings, and the absence of many religious groups from censuses), any religious demographic analysis must consult multiple sources. The primary mechanism in the methodology behind this atlas is reconciliation of numerous sources, with a special emphasis on membership figures collected by religious groups themselves. Self-identification is thus the central organizing principle, whether the source of the data is polls, censuses, surveys, or membership rolls.

Databases. An essential component of the atlas is the collection of data used to generate all maps, charts, tables, and other material. As mentioned earlier, this collection is greatly indebted to David Barrett, our editor emeritus, who pioneered the techniques of collection of data from Christian denominations and analysis of those data. This eventually resulted in the first edition of the World Christian Encyclopedia. Perhaps more striking was the fact that Barrett accomplished this at a time when the academy had all but declared the death of religion. Barrett and his colleagues developed their methodology in great detail, which was improved over time. The World Christian Database (WCD, published by Brill Academic) was developed by Atlas coeditor Todd Johnson as a continuation of Barrett’s careful documentation of Christian
denominations around the world. The baseline years for data on churches in the two editions of the World Christian Encyclopedia were 1975 and 1995. When the WCD was launched in October 2003, it presented updated information on churches to the year 2000. In 2007, we updated all church data to 2005. Estimates for all Christian denominations in 2005 were reviewed throughout 2008 to ensure accuracy and later used for the 2010 projections that appear in the atlas. Thus, all Christian figures in the Atlas of Global Christianity are documented in the WCD. The World Religion Database (WRD) (also published by Brill) was launched in 2008. Similar to the WCD, the WRD reports more specifically on source material related to all world religions, while reconciling different estimates and presenting annotations on the analysis. The WRD is the source of all religious demographic figures in the Atlas for religions other than Christianity.

Mapping. Mapping technology has evolved in recent decades to the point where the editorial team was able to produce the maps to the quality required for publication. Although some of the maps in the atlas depict data by country, the majority depict data at the provincial, ethnolinguistic, and urban level. The provincial-level maps allow the reader to see much more detail within countries, including regional variations related to religion.

Projections to 2010. While the atlas was prepared over the years 2005–9, it was clear that the baseline for the data presented would have to be 2010, in order to preserve the 100-year analysis. To generate 2010 data, projections were prepared utilizing data from the years 2000 and 2005. Initially, these projections were purely mathematical, using an average annual growth rate over the five-year period under study and extrapolating for the year 2010. However, all of these projections were reviewed for accuracy, and many were lowered or raised to take into account events or anomalies. For example, the numbers of Christians in Afghanistan and Iraq have been severely impacted by wars initiated between 2000 and 2005, causing in the former case a dramatic increase in the Christian community (primarily expatriates) and in the latter a mass exodus.

The aim of our project was to address the entire presence of Christianity worldwide in all its various streams and traditions.

The Ecumenical Challenge

Edinburgh 1910 was a conference organized by the Protestant missionary movement, which was reflected in the composition of its commissions and the makeup of the conference delegations. In a groundbreaking move it did include Anglo-Catholic Anglicans and was memorably addressed by the archbishop of Canterbury. It did not include Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans and was memorably addressed by the archbishop of Canterbury. It did not include Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Pentecostals, or independents. In the course of the conference, however, a passionate concern for the unity of the whole church surfaced, to such an extent that it has become a commonplace that, as Kenneth Scott Latourette stated, Edinburgh 1910 was “the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement.”

An atlas inspired by the Edinburgh 1910 centenary and taking account of developments in the century following must attempt to be fully ecumenical. The aim of our project therefore became to address the entire presence of Christianity worldwide in all its various streams and traditions. Accordingly, one major section of the atlas is dedicated to analysis of the demography of six distinct Christian traditions: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Independent, and Marginal (the latter term describing movements substantially informed by Christianity but not holding some of its core doctrines). This section also considers Evangelicals and Pentecostals—major global movements of faith that cut across the historic divisions. Key to the ecumenical approach is not only breadth of coverage but also diversity of authorship. Each of the essays describing the above traditions is written by a scholar who is personally identified with the tradition in question. Their essays were required to be objective, historical, and analytic, but each was written from the perspective of someone within the tradition rather than that of an external commentator.

Furthermore, the ecumenical approach extends to all of the essays throughout the atlas. At every stage the maps and demographic data are complemented by succinct yet comprehensive analysis. It was a key objective of the editors that these essays should be written by a range of authors wide enough to be reasonably representative of world Christianity. This posed the challenge of recruiting authors from as wide a range of traditions...
as possible, while at the same time ensuring that the necessary expertise was available for addressing each topic. No simple quota system could be adopted, but the need for ecumenical balance was always factored into the search for the most appropriate author for each essay. The 52 essays were (co)authored by 64 writers. Any categorization is imprecise, since people can have multiple affiliations, but we can best describe the 64 authors as follows: 2 are Pentecostal, 3 are Eastern Orthodox, 7 are Anglican, 12 are Roman Catholic, and 40 are Protestant. The Protestant category is clearly the largest, covering a wide range from the historic conciliar churches to recent new movements. There are gaps, for no authors were drawn from the Independent or Marginal sectors. Nonetheless, on the whole it represents a breadth of ecumenical endeavor that would have been unimaginable a hundred years ago.

The North-South Challenge

An innovative feature of the Edinburgh 1910 conference was the inclusion of twenty delegates from the non-Western world—though with a total of 1,215 delegates it was still an overwhelmingly Western gathering. The challenge for an atlas created for the centenary was to have an authorship that reflected the marked changes that have taken place in the composition and leadership of Christianity worldwide. An innovative and crucially important feature of this atlas is that the geographic essays are written, almost invariably, by an author who comes from the region being discussed. In this way it seeks to enable each region to tell its own story rather than being subjected to analysis from elsewhere. This posed the challenge of identifying suitably skilled authors from every region of the world. Thankfully, the study of Christianity and of Christian mission is undertaken today in every part of the world. A variety of networks connect scholars engaged in the study of the faith. Through knowledge of the literature and familiarity with the relevant networks, the atlas editors worked to identify potential authors.

The North-South balance in the *Atlas* is less than perfect but nonetheless represents substantial progress. Of the 64 authors of essays, 3 are from Oceania, 9 from Latin America, 11 from Northern America, 12 from Africa, 12 from Asia, and 17 from Europe. By any standards, this represents a remarkable global spread, perhaps the most widely scattered group of authors to attempt a major work on world Christianity.

Mindful of the importance of gender balance, the editors also exercised a preferential option for women authors. Always such affirmative action had to be balanced with the need to have authors with the required knowledge of the topic in question. As it turned out, eighteen of the essay authors are women. Again, this represents a substantial advance on comparable multiauthor studies.

Assembling the Contributors

Crucial to the success of the atlas was the recruitment of authors who could supply original, authoritative, and comprehensive essays to complement the maps with appropriate interpretation and analysis. An early encouragement to the project was the high level of positive responses that were received when initial contact was made with potential authors. Apart from the prospect of receiving a copy of the atlas, there was no material incentive on offer, yet the potential significance of the project was sufficient to secure the acceptance of the great majority of those who were invited to write an essay. No less impressive is the fact that the vast majority of the authors went on to complete their assignments. Of the sixty-four people who originally accepted the invitation to write, only a handful subsequently withdrew when they found that their circumstances would not allow them to complete their essays.

This is not to say that all the authors found it straightforward to write their assigned essays, and certainly not that all found it possible to complete them on time! In fact, many were surprised at how difficult it was to write an essay on a large topic when strictly limited to 3,500 words. Most were already busy with their institutional and scholarly commitments, so it was not unusual to receive requests for an extension of the deadline because the essay was proving harder to complete than had first been anticipated.

A challenge to the editors was to judge the degree to which diversity of approach could be accommodated in the atlas essays. The authors are drawn from a variety of disciplines and include historians, sociologists, missiologists, ecumenists, religious studies scholars, theologians, and mission practitioners. Approach and method vary, thus casting light from different angles of analysis on the realities presented by global Christianity. Furthermore, some of the authors are seasoned scholars who are able to distill a lifetime’s reflection on their topics, while others are young, emerging writers who bring freshness and vitality to treatment of their themes. Whereas it is a virtue of the maps that they follow a uniform and consistent pattern in the different sections of the atlas, the authors of the essays have exercised freedom in engaging their topics in the most appropriate way, drawing on the particular skills and gifts they brought to the task. At the same time, editorial judgment was constantly required to ensure that the essays complied with the overall tone, ethos, and standards of the atlas.

For the editors, this wide circle of authors, scattered across the face of the earth, became a community of shared endeavor. Everyone was daunted by the scale of the intellectual challenge, yet was inspired by the objective of the project. Not infrequently the shared effort also took on a spiritual character as authors became engaged in prayer for God’s blessing on the common task. A pastoral dimension developed as authors struggled with personal, family, vocational, and institutional issues. Sadly, two authors died in the course of the project—Arturo Piedra and Ogbu Kalu. Many others experienced bereavement within their families or periods of illness or crises in their institutions. Only by overcoming much adversity was the atlas finally completed. Not without sacrificial commitment on the part of its authors would the whole effort have reached the finish line.

An Electronic Product

Early in the project, the editors felt that it would be essential to provide readers with a means of displaying the various graphic elements in the atlas in classrooms and conferences. A CD was
developed for the atlas that allows for a greater degree of interaction with the material presented and provides a method for efficiently and accurately incorporating selected elements into presentation software for use in a classroom or group environment, thereby increasing its value as a teaching and communication tool. In general, all of the maps, tables, charts, and graphs printed in the atlas are available on the CD, titled *Atlas of Global Christianity Presentation Assistant*, while the section text and analytic essays are not.

One of the important features of this electronic product is the ability to isolate maps of specific countries. Because of the space limitations of the physical book, the finest level of detail available in maps, charts, and tables is the twenty-one United Nations regions. The electronic product, in contrast, offers access to data on 239 countries, often at the provincial level. Thus, if one is studying religions in Sudan, there are a number of maps showing the religious composition of the provinces of Sudan, whether by majority religions, Islam, ethnoreligions, or Christianity. This feature also allows for easy setup of comparative maps, such as bringing up provincial-level data on Christians in Cameroon and the Philippines.

The other important feature of the *Atlas of Global Christianity Presentation Assistant* is the ability to relate data from different parts of the atlas to one another. For example, one could locate a “top 10” list of the growth of Christianity in Africa from part 2 and then a similar list of “top ten” African countries by missionary sending from part 5. These could be displayed and compared in table or map form or in both.

Contents of the disc can be accessed in two ways: by exploring a hierarchical file structure based on the printed book’s sections, or by running an interactive application. In the first case, the structure is designed as an electronic file system complementing the atlas itself. One can follow along in the physical copy of the atlas, locating files as needed. The interactive application represents an independent guide to the contents of the atlas, with more flexibility in locating and producing maps and other elements for presentation. In either case, the intent is to give the user quick access to areas of interest or study.

The hierarchical file structure contains static images of the maps, tables, charts, and graphs that can be explored on any computer equipped with a suitable disc drive. The images are stored in folders representing the five main parts and corresponding subsections of the atlas. Each image is suitable for display on a computer screen or for placement in any presentation software.

The interactive application allows the user to select specific maps, tables, charts, and graphs quickly, using a variety of search parameters not possible with the printed atlas. For example, enter a page number from the printed atlas, and a representation of that page appears in the application window; any of the elements on that page may then be selected to isolate it for screen display.

Another option is to access a list of maps contained in a particular atlas section; using the list, switching to similar maps in succession allows for quick comparison of different religion or language maps, for example. Also, one can browse the application’s table of contents, which mirrors that of the printed atlas, to find a particular part or section. Once a map, table, chart, or graph is displayed in the application window, it can be exported easily as a fixed image for inclusion in presentation software.

**Achievement**

In a fundamental sense, what the *Atlas* has to offer is a visual tour of the remarkable changes in global Christianity over the past 100 years. The story of the Southern shift has been told in many other books and encyclopedias over the past thirty years or so, but it has never been comprehensively mapped in vivid color.

The academic study of world Christianity has rightly focused much of its attention on particular forms of Christianity, especially in the non-Western world. This is a much-needed counterbalance to the false impression that Christianity is a Western religion. But Christianity is more than the sum of vastly different denominational, national, and linguistic manifestations. This atlas puts every Christian, Western and non-Western, black and white, man and woman, German and Papuan, in the same book under the unifying category “global Christianity.” With the corrosive fragmentation the world experiences every day in conflicts and struggles, it is salutary for Christians to return frequently to the focus of the prayer of Jesus “that they may be one” (John 17:11). The *Atlas* demonstrates that, notwithstanding the dazzling diversity of its cultural forms, the Christian faith is marked by an irreducible unity and coherence, which demands that consideration be given to global, or world, Christianity.

**Notes**

8. In 2008 Todd Johnson and Brian Grim launched the International Religious Demography project at the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University. The main publication to emerge from this effort is *the World Religion Database* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
Leading Across Cultures
Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church
James E. Plueddemann

Missiologist James E. Plueddemann presents a roadmap for cross-cultural leadership development in the global church. Integrating theology with leadership theory, the author shows how leaders can grow from an egocentric practice of leadership to a globally-minded approach that is grounded in knowledge of diverse cultural underpinnings.

“Must-reading for those who intend to seriously engage in leadership in the globalized mission/church context of the twenty-first century.”
—David Tai-Woong Lee, director, Global Leadership Focus, Korea

Kingdom Without Borders
The Untold Story of Global Christianity
Miriam Adeney

Miriam Adeney has ministered with Christians in the far reaches of the globe and has seen there the unmistakable influence of the Spirit. Through personal and corporate stories from the heart of this movement, her book pulls back the veil on a kingdom that knows no borders.

“A masterpiece of God at work across our planet.”
—Scott Moreau, professor of intercultural studies, Wheaton College, and editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly
World Religion Database: Detail Beyond Belief!

Peter Brierley

The World Religion Database (WRD) is exactly what its name implies—it covers every country of the world, it focuses on religions, and it is a most incredible database. The amount of work that has gone into producing such a prodigious assembly of facts about every country is enormous, and the editors must be thanked for their diligence, perseverance, and sheer dedication to a mammoth project that can only become more and more useful as time goes by, assuming it is kept up-to-date with the same diligence and resources that have gone into its initial framing.

The WRD is based on David Barrett’s World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE; Oxford Univ. Press, 1982; 2d ed., 2001). It exceeds the WCE, having been updated and extended in many useful ways. Todd Johnson, the lead editor of WRD, has done a brilliant job in making the WCE accessible in a modern format and deserves huge plaudits for so doing. The WRD is a truly remarkable resource for researchers, Christian workers, church leaders, religious academics, and any others wanting to see how the various religions of the world impact both the global and the local scenes.

It is always easy to criticize any grand compilation of statistical material by looking at the detail in one particular corner and declaring, “That number doesn’t seem right.” The sheer scope of this database, however, is incredible, and the fact that it exists and can be extended even further and updated as time goes forward in the framework of a respected university deserves huge applause for those responsible for it. Praise where praise is due, even if I am about to criticize it.

Most researchers coming to a world database would presumably look first at their own nation. Immediately a problem—mine is not listed. There is no United Kingdom (UK) in the WRD. The UK is composed of four countries, but they are not separately listed either, so I cannot look up, say, England. We sometimes talk of Great Britain, but that is not listed either. Ah, I have it—we are called Britain in the WRD. Why? That is not our name. America is not listed under “America” (despite what many people call it) but under its proper title of United States. Why is the UK treated differently?

The UK asked a question about religion in its latest census, 2001, which is listed as one of the sources for the British detail. That census indicated that the number of Christians in the country totaled 42.1 million, with the number of Muslims at 1.59 million. For 2005, however, the WRD gives the number of Christians as 48.7 million and the number of Muslims as 1.54 million, implying that the former has grown and the latter has declined. With a record number of immigrants from Muslim lands in the last few years, one might be skeptical that the number of Muslims has dropped, and it is certain, with every recent poll indicating the number of people with no religion as increasing, that the number of Christians has not increased from 72 percent in 2001 (the census figure) to 81 percent, as given in the WRD. So there is an immediate concern: if the figures reliably known from other sources are not reflected here, how can one be sure the accuracy of figures that are not so readily available?

The range of detail in the WRD is impressive:

- an excellent analysis of the population of each country (the number in metropolitan, urban, and rural areas)
- historical population figures (1900, 1970, 2000) and future estimates (2025, 2050), with the various rates of growth
- demographics on birth rate, death rate, adult literacy, life expectancy, household size, floor space, corruption index, peoples, and so forth, which provide enormous scope for Ph.D. students doing international cross-analyses
- a range of data on society—the number who are blind or deaf; the number of doctors, hospitals, and hospital beds; even the number of lepers (an unacceptable word today!); the murder rate; the number of schools and universities, computers, faxes, newspapers, phones, radios, TVs, people with AIDS/HIV; and on and on
- details of the religions in the country—the unique strength of the WRD. Eighteen different religions are used for the analysis, even if the figure is zero for some countries
- the population of the major cities and towns in each country
- the peoples of each country—a total of 105 in the UK (a number much greater than I would ever have guessed)—with their language, majority religion, and size

The accuracy of this information is not known, and some of it has clearly come from percentage estimates. For example, the 105 peoples in the UK total 60,244,831 (a total not actually given on that page, although it is elsewhere). Someone estimated the number of Mandarin Chinese speakers as 0.1 percent of this total,
and it is given as 60,245 people. The percent of Finnish speakers was estimated as 0.02 percent, one-fifth as many, and is given as a number—12,049, along with 12,049 Black African Americans, 12,049 Gibraltarians, 12,049 Koreans, 12,049 Latvians, and 12,049 Serbs. It might have been more convincing to give the percent either instead of or as well as the number. Six different language groups cannot have an identical number in the population. But this does illustrate one commendable feature of the WRD—it gives numbers to the final digit, not rounded, estimates though they may be, which can only be helpful when totaling various groupings.

My personal interest in the WRD was the religious breakdown, which follows the sixfold division used in the WCE, of Anglicans (counted separately from Protestants), Independents, Marginals, Orthodox, Protestants, and Roman Catholics. It also includes two other WCE groupings: the “unaffiliated Christians” and the “doubly affiliated.” Some of us wish that one day the non-Trinitarian Marginals such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Christadelphians might be excluded from the Christian total, and that some of the other key worldwide denominations such as the Baptists and Methodists would be separately identified. The wonderful “Table 2” in the WCE for each country that does give this detail is not included in the WRD as far as I could see—it is a religion database, not primarily a Christian database.

The “Religion and Survey” information, as it is headed, comes in three levels in the WRD, each supplying more detail than the one before. This is very helpful for those wanting either just a quick overview (Level 1) all the way down to those interested in as much detail as possible (Level 3), with Level 2 in between. Thus Level 3 for the UK breaks down the number of Buddhists into four different groups (Mahayanists, Theravadins, Lamaists, and Folk-Buddhists), with a broad indication of the source (the total for 2000 being given as 187,000, against the 151,000 measured in the 2001 census). It also breaks down the number of Muslims into Sunnis, Shias, and Islamic schismatics, although the total for these three subsections was 11 percent short of the total given for all Muslims. (The Buddhist subdivisions, however, added up to the total.)

The Christian figures do add up exactly to the total, but this is because the “doubly affiliated” negative figure is simply the balancing item to make them agree. In the UK total of 48.7 million Christians, 26.1 million are given as Anglican, the number marginally increased from the 26.0 given in the latest official Directory for 1996 for the Church of England. In the UK, however, there are also 93,300 Anglicans in the Church of Wales, 53,600 in the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and 410,000 in the Church of Ireland (although this includes [my estimate] 263,000 in the Republic as well). All these would regard themselves as Anglican and should surely be included in the total.

This illustrates the dilemma for the compilers of the WCE and WRD. The Church of England may claim 26 million people, roughly the number living in the UK who have been baptized in the church either as infants or adults. The WRD treats this as their official source. However, not all of these now regard themselves as belonging to the Church of England and so did not tick the “Christian” box on the census form. Result? The WRD puts the Christian percent as 81 percent, the census as 72 percent, with the difference virtually entirely in the group of people who have left (as other research has shown). Which source should the WRD trust or use? This is their statistical nightmare, and the WRD in this instance opts for denominational information and does not judge between the two (though perhaps it should).

This perhaps explains why some highly erudite commentators, such as Philip Jenkins, whose books on the world Christian scene have been so powerful and helpful, criticize the numbers in the WCE (and doubtless will those found in the WRD). Jenkins sometimes uses the CIA data instead, but there is no guarantee that is more reliable.

There is a huge implicit strength in the WRD even though one may argue with its individual numbers: it is an attempt on a worldwide basis to compile numbers for the different religions in a broadly compatible manner for each country. Yes, the numbers have flaws, but it is the same editors who are looking at the whole and trying to use the same values and criteria for each set of data. Do they make mistakes? Of course. Will everybody agree with their estimates? No. Does that make the database unreliable or useless? Not at all.

It is a highly useful tool that can only become more useful in the future as more data is added. It currently gives data in detail for each country for 2000 and 2005 and hopefully will extend this at five-year intervals. In twenty years’ time there will be a wonderful range of data, the trends of which will be hugely important. The existing trends, as given in the WCE and reproduced in the WRD, are the only ones that exist for the global religious community anywhere in the world. There simply is no other source as comprehensive, and Christian and religious commentators have no option but to use it, despite hang-ups on definitions and individual numbers.

The WRD shows Christians as one-third of the world’s population, but static. It shows the Muslims as one-fifth of the world’s population, and growing. These figures are not just for academic reflection and analysis but for strategic use and application. Such is the value of this magnificent resource, even if one finds the actual physical use of it online frustrating (be warned!).
Siga Arles

When my seminary in India obtained a copy of David Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE, 1982), it became the largest book in the seminary’s small library. Later, when I studied at Asbury Seminary in the United States, though I bought plenty of books, I found that the WCE was too expensive for me. I never owned a copy of it, despite being convinced of the value of the information in it. Printed resources are often beyond the reach of theological students or of people in ministry. For research, though, we could rely on the copy in the library.

“But it’s available now on the Net. You could easily download it from the Web. There is so much more material available!” Excited voices are heard in the corridors of modern theological centers of learning. Perhaps in the West, in the Northern Hemisphere, computers are easily accessible, and information from cyberspace is well within the reach of every student of theology or minister of the Gospel. For those in the East, in the Southern Hemisphere, this is not the case. With some exceptions, we in the South are not yet in the computer era. Either the cost is too much, or the electricity is unreliable. Things are improving, but conditions are still far from satisfactory.

Let me share a recent example that illustrates the realities of the Third World and conditions prevailing among Christians, despite the confident claims we hear of the liberating power of the Gospel. When we started a doctoral program in missiology in India, students were introduced to the mysteries of searching the Web. They were indeed excited when they found numerous articles relating to their subject areas of research. But they had to use the magic only in the school itself, with their computer times restricted by having to share it with many other students. Later, when they were in the field and needing to write their dissertations, they had no computer they could use. I was the dean, and my Governing Board gave me the job of raising funds. Generous donors gave enough to provide laptop computers for each of the doctoral students. The treasurer of our board, however, blocked use of the funds for the laptops. The board was quiet with an unholy silence. Time passed. The students completed their study and became doctors of philosophy in missiology. The money remained in the bank, and the scholars did not benefit. Even the donors kept an unholy silence! Such is the reality for money remained in the bank, and the scholars did not benefit.

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Let us now consider the WRD itself and its value for the rest of the world’s regions and peoples. In the process of collecting data, there is no danger. Surely the immense quantity of data collected is of great value. In the interpretation of the data, however, we can encounter pitfalls.

- The disease of numberitis. Some mission efforts are motivated heavily by a concern to win people to the church. The desire for denominational number growth motivates some to work very hard to improve the numbers, even by outright “sheep-stealing” through offering various incentives. Some groups have used the data simply to pat themselves on the back for an increase in their numbers. Nothing wrong in counting the numbers, but question-able attitudes and priorities can lead to problems. In this religiously plural world, where fundamentalist trends can so quickly unleash violence, number-oriented mission thinking can be a real negative.

- The distraction of quantitative emphasis. If we deal only with numbers, we end up grouping the nominal, the abnormal, the problematic, and the abominably back-slidden with all others in the faith community. In this way, we ignore the quality of the Christian community (as well as that of the other religious communities).

- The disappointment of the lack of priority. Over concern with the outward growth of numbers can mean an ignoring of the inward growth of spirituality, maturity, and integrity of life.

- The development of an attitude of superiority. Just as an Old Testament Jew may have felt superior to Gentiles, considering them as dogs, so we may be tempted to look to our numbers and lose sight of the missional priority of compassion and love, which should lead us to enter the world of humans with an incarnate passion for wooing them into the body. Chimes of joy over numerical superiority are false notes indeed.

- The danger of the religious divide of the human community. The more one counts up the numbers, the stronger the boundary lines tend to become between religious groups.
The whole process could thus become counterproductive for Christian mission.

Data collection for the sake of objective knowledge is beneficial. But data collection for the sake of a numbers-oriented approach to mission (as can be seen in some versions of the church growth movement) goes contrary to the paradigm shifts that the theology of mission has gone through in the twentieth century. That is, we need to examine carefully the intention and use of such research.

In the postcolonial setting, every human community typically strives to glorify its religion and culture, but none is allowed to dominate the others. Any hint at superiority is challenged. The equality of all peoples, cultures, religions, and nations; the dignity of every identity; and the right for all to promote their values—all these are insisted upon. Political and other unholy motivations cause religious fundamentalism to raise its ugly head and portray itself in militant violence, particularly against those who make exaggerated claims and look down upon others. In our present context, we must view the call to mission as a call to peace, a call to the unity of humankind. Christian mission should not be presented as a divisive force but as a unifying force. It should cement human communities with the love of God, which has been shed abroad in Jesus Christ. The hallmark of a Christian witness ought to be that of a peacemaker, reconciler, and bridge builder. To that end, missional involvement in the wider human community is to be present as salt, light, and leaven, as Jesus taught. Rather than pulling people out of their community, isolating them and adding them into our Christian community, we should work to make them followers of Christ within their existing communities, to dialogue, to extend the church as an inclusive community, to count them in, to develop religious harmony, and to seek peace with all. These paradigm shifts in mission perspective have developed in the past decades and need to become reality in our days.

The useful and hard work of data collection and presentation, particularly the outstanding contributions from the work of David Barrett, Todd Johnson, and their colleagues, should be placed in the hands of the church in mission for purposes that will lead to peace on earth, goodwill among men, and glory to God, as sung by the angelic choir at Christ’s birth. The purpose of God’s love and incarnation is to be the motivating factor in our use of data and the promoting of mission work. Set in the wrong hands with a stunted vision of the purposes of God, statistics and data can go amiss and actually work against harmony and cause undue friction within the human community.

A good thing is truly good when it is used with good intentions for good purposes and produces good outcomes. The WCE and now the WRD are commendable materials, whose data the church in mission should use wisely in promoting the reign of God in just, peaceful, and righteous ways for the welfare of the whole of human community. I shall certainly use these tools myself to enhance my own involvement in mission teaching and mission planning.

*World Religion Database: Impressive—but Improvable*

Robert D. Woodberry

The World Religion Database (WRD) is part of a most impressive data-collection project, requiring an extraordinary number of hours to create. The WRD can and will be improved over time, but we can only thank the editors now for their extremely valuable service, including their work of overseeing hundreds of people behind the scenes gathering the data. Although based on the World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE, 1982; 2d ed., 2001), WRD goes beyond it in several important ways.

First, for those interested in statistical research, WRD data are downloadable as Excel® files. Second, for many countries in the data set, WRD lists censuses and surveys that give alternate estimates of religious distribution. This is extremely helpful, since it allows scholars to compare WRD estimates with those of others and to evaluate the quality of data used to estimate religious distribution in particular countries. Third, WRD provides data on more countries, regions, and time periods than does any other source. Fourth, WRD provides incredibly detailed data. Previous versions had data at the national level, but WRD presents it by province and by people group. The amount of information is mind-boggling!

That said, we should note some weaknesses with the database. First, the Web site is difficult to navigate. Although a huge number of variables are available at the national, provincial, and people-group levels, it takes a lot of clicking around the site to find them all. The easiest way to use the Web site is to have a copy of the WCE (2d ed.) or the Atlas of Global Christianity and then look until you find the variables from these sources you are interested in. Ideally, the Web site would have one place to select four pieces of information: (1) the level of analysis (countries, provinces, people groups, people groups by country, or people groups by province), (2) the year(s) covered, (3) the variables you want displayed, and (4) whether you want the data formatted as a downloadable dataset or in the current format (which looks like a book but is very difficult to use statistically).1 Once users create these data files, there should also be a way to move quickly to particular countries or people groups without having to click through pages and pages of an alphabetical list.

Second, the editors seem to have constructed their estimates of religious distribution primarily from surveys of denominations and missionaries, not from censuses or representative surveys of individuals. Denominations, however, typically overestimate the number of members they have, and liturgical (and state-sponsored) denominations generally count anyone who has ever been baptized as a member—even infant baptisms of people who no longer claim Christian identity or attend church. Although
the editors may have also used survey and census estimates to moderate denominational reports in countries where such data exist, it is not clear whether or how they did so. The WRD thus seems to consistently have higher estimates of the percentage of Christians and lower estimates of the percentage of nonreligious than survey- and census-based estimates.

In places like Europe, this methodology may mask the degree of secularization. For example, Scandinavia is listed as one of the most Christian places on the planet. It may also distort the growth of Christianity in some parts of the Global South. For example, the World Values Survey estimates China was 3.3 percent Christian in 2001, but the WRD estimates China had twice as many Christians (6.41 percent in 2000 and 7.76 percent in 2005). While some people in China may hide their Christianity in surveys, and while survey sampling in China is not ideal,7 congregations may also exaggerate the number of adherents they have (there is substantial evidence of this type of behavior elsewhere). All extant survey-based evidence and the most careful China experts suggest percentages closer to the World Values Survey than those in the WRD. This is true even if we count everyone as a Christian who admits (1) having ever read the Bible, (2) attending church, or (3) believing God exists.3

The editors outline a general methodology for estimating adherence rates and religious change (they discuss birth rates, death rates, immigration, emigration, sending questionnaires to thousands of denominations, and analyzing estimates from censuses and surveys), but they do not describe how they came up with their estimate for each country. Nor is it clear how they know how many people from different religious groups immigrated or emigrated or how they combine estimates from surveys of denominations with censuses and scientifically representative surveys of individuals (where these data exist). Thus, although the level of transparency in WRD is a major improvement over WCE, more transparency is needed. Three things would radically improve the usefulness and face-validity of the data:

- Documenting how each estimate was calculated. A Web-based format is ideal for revealing this kind of information: most users would not be interested in the details, and costs to print such information would be exorbitant.
- Providing some measure of uncertainty with each estimate (e.g., standard errors or even a qualitative evaluation by the editors). Researchers could then integrate uncertainty into their statistical models or exclude cases with uncertain estimates. As it is, estimates for Afghanistan, Algeria, China, and North Korea appear as precise as estimates from Canada and Germany.
- Providing more than one estimate for each country in an easily usable form (e.g., mean religious distribution from surveys, mean distribution from censuses, mean from denominational reports, and WRD’s own best estimates). Because the WRD provides some estimates from surveys and censuses, scholars could go back and reconstruct some alternative estimates, but this would require lots of manual work. If alternative estimates and/or measures of uncertainty were easily available, scholars could test how robust their analyses are either by comparing alternative methods of estimating religious distributions or by limiting their sample to countries with higher-quality estimates. If the results are robust, this would mitigate criticism.

Despite these criticisms, we can appreciate the editors’ achievement in applying a relatively consistent methodology across the world. Furthermore, the WRD estimates are highly correlated with other cross-national estimates of religious distribution, a conclusion supported by an article by Becky Hsu and others.9 The WRD tends to have higher estimates of the percent Christian and lower estimates of the percent nonreligious, but the percentages tend to move up and down between countries, following a similar pattern. Hsu’s tests are limited to a smaller sample of countries that have better data (e.g., high quality international survey data), and WRD estimates are most questionable in areas that do not have these alternative estimates. Moreover, WRD estimates may influence some other sources, such as CIA estimates of religious distribution. Still, Hsu’s empirical work assures researchers that at least in the sample of countries with alternative data, statistical results are likely to be comparable.

To be fair, any work of this size is easy to criticize. The editors and their collaborators have gone to heroic lengths to estimate things that are extremely hard to estimate and have completed an incredible amount of work. Even identifying the censuses and surveys currently available on a world scale is a gargantuan task, let alone culling through mountains of qualitative evidence to estimate religious distribution in countries where no believable census or survey data exist. Yet because of the difficulty of estimating many of the numbers in the dataset, people who wish to study individual countries, provinces, or people groups should carefully compare WRD estimates with those of other sources (if they exist), and statistical analysts should do extensive robustness tests to determine, for example, whether overestimating the number of Christians in closed countries influences their results. Still, despite my criticisms, I will eagerly use these data in my research. I do not know of any better data available on such a broad scale and am amazed at the editors’ ability to provide even tentative estimates of religious distribution by province and people group.

Notes
1. Ideally, all variable labels would be at the top of columns, and only countries, province names, or people groups would be listed at the beginning of rows. Reconfiguring the existing data files into a more usable form requires knowledge of computer programming or lots of cutting, pasting, and relabeling. Given the high cost of subscribing, it would be desirable to be able to download usable data without a major investment of time to reconfigure it.
2. Surveys in China overrepresent urban areas and exclude areas like Tibet and Xinjiang that have minority unrest. Tibet and Xinjiang, however, are not centers of Christianity, and it would require truly heroic assumptions about the number of Christians in these sparsely populated regions for sampling to explain the differences between surveys and the WRD.
3. For example, see Elisa Jiexia Zhai, Raymond Huang, Byron Johnson, and Rodney Stark, “China’s Christian Millions: Empirical Speculation of Protestant Christianity in Contemporary China” (working paper, Baylor University, Institute for Studies of Religion, 2009).
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January 2010 23
The Benedictine priory at Xishan was a foundation for teaching and missionary work among the Chinese. Yang arrived there in 1934. The priory was by this time thoroughly Chinese in its character. As Yang related, “The buildings are entirely Chinese—inside and outside. At Sishan even the Church is decorated in the Chinese style, and the Gothic vestments, designed by one of the Fathers, are made in Chinese embroidery. The monks wear Chinese dress, eat Chinese meals (with chopsticks), and, with the exception of Holy Mass and the Divine Office, chant the prayers in Chinese.”

Yang’s years in China would be marked by the challenge of being an intermediary between his cultural heritage and his new life as a Christian monk. When his father, a devout Buddhist, had learned of Yang’s plans to convert to Christianity, he reluctantly gave his assent, replying that his son should follow his conscience if he found that a “foreign religion is better than our own.” Yang was not only convinced of the truth of Christianity but could also see that it was no more foreign to China than was Buddhism, which had been imported there from India. As a Chinese Christian missionary, Yang’s goal was simple. “In China, as anywhere else, the Universal Church cannot suffer indefinitely the brand of ‘Foreign Religion.’” Yang wished to show the compatibility of the Christian faith with the rich traditions of the Far East.

Yang and the Benedictines approached their missionary work in China through education. By 1936 the Benedictines at Xishan had begun a small grade school and also began teaching at the Sichuan diocesan seminary. The grade school grew to over two hundred students within a few years, mostly from local non-Christian families, though some families had already been converted. The monastery community flourished as it successfully attracted native Chinese vocations; by 1945 there were ten priests (including two Chinese) and seventeen Chinese in preparation for life as Benedictines. At the same time, the religious community was considering the founding of a house in urban Chengdu (Chengtu), the intellectual and cultural capital of western China, where the Benedictines would have greater opportunities to minister.

**Director of China Correspondent**

The Second World War greatly impacted the work of the Benedictines in China. The Nazi occupation of western Europe cut off the Benedictine priory from its mother abbey in Belgium and, with this, most of its financial resources. The priory at Xishan did not possess any land to cultivate rice or vegetables, and without funding from Europe its funds were quickly depleted. By 1943 the Benedictines were forced to close both the seminary and the school that they had staffed.

At the same time that the war was restricting the educational ministry of the Benedictines, Yang was asked to revive the publication of a defunct French-language publication, *Le Correspondant Chinois*, which had begun publication in April 1939. The revamped publication was to be in English for the benefit of U.S. servicemen serving in China. The first issue of the publication spoke to this need: “Since the arrival of American and other allied Forces in China, the Catholic missionary will realize that his work is no longer limited to his prewar Chinese flock.” Stating that “in war-time, the first casualty is truth,” the publication was to offer an account of the “real China,” including “Chinese culture and civilization past and present” from a Christian perspective. The publication was not to be overtly political aside from its editorial positions but aimed at printing primarily religious, cultural, and human-interest stories.

With support of the local bishop and his religious superiors, Yang began directing *China Correspondent* with its first issue in December 1943, continuing through the end of publication in September 1944. Working alongside Yang was the editor of the new publication, the American Passionist Cormac Shanahan (1899–1987), who had served as a China correspondent for the Passionists’ own mission magazine, *Sign. China Correspondent* featured articles from various Catholic priests serving in China, including Yang and Shanahan.

Yang’s directing of and writing for *China Correspondent* represented his earliest literary contributions to an English-speaking audience. Yang wrote on a variety of topics, including religion, culture, and current events. His writings evidenced admiration for both Chinese culture and Western thought. For instance, his article on political theory connected Chinese thought with Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (especially “government of the people, by the people, for the people”) and the rallying cry of the French Revolution (“liberty, equality, fraternity”). His article on religion in China pointed out the “startling similarity” between Chinese religious thought and the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus, especially the Beatitudes and the call to charity and love. For Yang, there was not an intellectual or spiritual divide between the Chinese and Westerners.

**Cultural Studies Institute**

The exchange between Western and Chinese culture, which Yang had highlighted in *China Correspondent*, continued to impact the goals of the Benedictines. A new Benedictine house was opened in October 1944 in Chengdu, where they planned to open the Institute of Chinese and Western Cultural Studies. The goal of the institute was to make “Chinese civilization better known to the West, and Western civilization better known in China.” In short, it was to foster understanding between “Oriental and Occidental peoples.” Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Republic of China, offered financial support to the institute, but additional help was needed to make it a reality.

Yang discussed the project with both the local bishop of Chengdu and the Chinese government’s ministers of education and justice. “We had reached the conclusion that funds were needed for the new venture,” Yang related, “and that under pre-
vailing circumstances only in the United States could funds be raised with any success.” With Europe in the grip of the Second World War, America provided the only possibility to raise the needed seed money for the institute. This realization spurred a visit by Yang to the United States that he described as a ten-month-long “loathsome begging expedition.” He departed on a U.S. military transport ship, arriving in San Pedro, California, on May 3, 1945. However distasteful Yang might have found his trip, he returned to China with enough money to begin funding the institute and to complete the main building of the new monastery of St. Benedict’s in Chengdu. The institute was formally inaugurated in the fall of 1945 and included a school of languages and training in arts and music. With the help of Chiang Kai-shek, a library of over 10,000 volumes was transported from Xishan to Chengdu. Yang served as both subprior of the community at Chengdu and vice president of the institute. As Chengdu was the location of several universities, the institute was ideally situated to initiate a Western-Chinese dialogue between students and scholars. Though short-lived, the institute was successful in bringing about such an exchange of ideas before Communist troops overtook Chengdu at the end of 1949.

Yang and the American Catholic Press

Beginning with his directing China Correspondent, Yang began to increase his literary output. Following the demise of the publication in 1944, Yang began writing articles for various English-speaking Catholic periodicals, including America, American Ecclesiastical Review, Catholic Mind, Catholic World, and Shield. Shield, published since 1921, was the official periodical of the Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade, an American mission support organization that had a special interest in China. Yang worked closely with J. Paul Spaeth, publications editor for the Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade, to offer a glimpse of the Chinese missions to students in America. Several of Yang’s contributions were published in Shield, while others were passed on to various American Catholic periodicals.

In addition to writing about Chinese culture and religion, Yang’s articles during these years were fiercely anti-Communist. In his contributions to Shield before the beginning of Communist control of China, Yang was optimistic about China’s future and the progress of the Catholic Church in that country. He saw the situation in China as involving one of the most important political and spiritual struggles of the twentieth century. As late as 1945 Yang wrote that it was uncertain whether China would become a Christian power or a bastion of Communist-inspired paganism. At that time, China was home to 4.5 million Christians, many of whom were optimistic that China would remain a land fertile for the spread of the Gospel message.

Yang pinned his hopes of a Christian and democratic China on the influence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Republic of China. An ardent supporter of Chiang, Yang attempted to garner American support by promoting Chiang as a true Christian leader. He once wrote, “Providential circumstances have brought the author in personal contact with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and this contact has long convinced him that the Chiangs are sincere believers of Jesus Christ and His teaching.” But Chiang and his Nationalist supporters ultimately lost ground in the conflict with the Communists, despite the support of the American “China lobby.”

Persecution and Expulsion of the Missionaries

With the founding of the Communist-led People’s Republic of China in late 1949, numerous Christian missionaries were expelled, imprisoned, or killed. By 1953, 125 native Catholic Chinese priests, 37 foreign Catholic missionary priests (including two Americans), more than 30 Catholic laymen, and numerous brothers, sisters, and seminarians had been killed. More than 3,000 missionaries had been expelled, and more than 850 priests and bishops had been imprisoned. The Catholic institutions confiscated by the Communists included three universities, 200 high schools, and 200 hospitals.

The Benedictines in Chengdu suffered from the Communist persecution, beginning with the arrival of the Communists on Christmas Day 1949. In early 1950 the Institute of Chinese and Western Cultural Studies was shut down, and its 10,000-volume library was confiscated. The Chinese government placed the Benedictines under house arrest and monitored their activities around the clock. One by one, between December 1951 and March 1952, they were asked to leave the country or were imprisoned.

In 1953 the Communist government expelled all foreign priests and religious brothers and sisters, including the Benedictines. Expelled from China, the monks sought permission for a canonical transfer of their monastery to America. With the permission of Cardinal James McIntyre of Los Angeles, they acquired the Hidden Springs Ranch at Valyermo, California, establishing the American foundation of St. Andrew’s Priory in 1955. There Yang continued his life as a Benedictine, along with several other monks who had been attached to the former priories in China. Yang died there on August 15, 1982.

Yang as Reverse Missionary

While Yang’s story is far from normative, it illustrates the role that missionaries in foreign lands played in educating Americans about the mission field and, in this case, China’s rich heritage. Yang’s goal was twofold: to foster greater understanding by Westerners of China, and to interest the Chinese in Christianity and the Benedictine monastic life. He wished to break down the walls between Chinese culture and Christian faith, showing them to be compatible and mutually enriching. Even before Yang became a reverse missionary in 1955, leaving China for America because of the expulsion of missionaries by the Communists, Yang had been utilizing the press to inform Americans about his homeland. First through China Correspondent and later through articles in various American Catholic publications, Yang attempted to foster cultural appreciation, political sympathy, and interest in funding Chinese missionary works.

Though the Chinese missions collapsed in the wake of the Communist takeover, the example of Thaddeus Yang points to...
the impact of native clergy in evangelizing their own people and their influence in eliciting support from Christians in Western nations for the sake of the missions. Yang’s missionary legacy highlights the importance of engagement between religion and culture and the possibilities for evangelizing historically non-Christian cultures. As an early native vocation to the priesthood, Yang shows the importance of indigenous leadership in emerg-}


ing churches. Yang represents an early generation of Asian-born Catholic priests, who today significantly outnumber Western missionary priests serving in the Far East. Yang’s journey, one that took him from Buddha to Christ and from China to America, broadens our understanding of the role of the indigenous Christian missionary within China.

Notes

1. Special thanks are due to fellow historians who assisted me in this research: Robert Carbonneau, C.P., of the Passionist Historical Archives, Union, N.J., and Luke Dysinger, O.S.B., of St. Andrew’s Abbey, Valyermo, Calif., and St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, Calif.

2. Yang relates that by 1945, more than 40 percent of priests ministering in China were Chinese, and about two-thirds of the Catholic sisters. See Thaddeus Yang, “China’s Future and America’s . . .” Shield 25, no. 1 (October 1945): 26.


6. Yang, “From Buddha to Benedict.”

7. Beginning about 1920, Lebbe began providing promising Chinese students with the opportunity to study in Europe. By 1924 over 200 students had come; they established the Catholic Association of Chinese Students in Europe. By 1927 the association had over 400 student members. Yang served as an officer in the student organization. See “Chinese Bonzes and Catholic Priests,” pp. 45–46, 48–49.


9. Also spelled as Lu Tseng-Hsiang. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1935. In August 1946 Pope Pius XII appointed him titular abbot of St. Peter’s of Ghent. He died January 15, 1949. Yang wrote about Tseng-hsiang in “China’s Premier—Catholic Monk,” an essay dated August 1944, folder 2, CSMC.

10. Yang, “From Buddha to Benedict.”

11. Pope Pius XI emphasized the need for mission territories to be entrusted to local, native clergy. His encyclical on the missions, Rerum Ecclesiae (1926), stated that the goal of the new churches in mission lands was independence, an indigenous clergy, and hierarchy. The move toward indigenous clergy in the missions was strengthened by the ordination of six bishops for China in October 1926.


18. The English edition was published monthly from December 1943 through September 1944, a total of ten issues. Henry A. Wallace, vice president of the United States, provided a complete collection of the publication to the Library of Congress on September 16, 1944.


24. Yang, “The Chinese Adventure of an Indonesian Monk.” Yang details his journey in his diary, with the title, “Across the Pacific,” dated March through April 1946, folder 11, CSMC.


29. Yang, “China’s Future and America’s . . .”
“The PhD in Intercultural Studies program trains students to be both theologically astute and anthropologically sensitive, so that they can better apply the Word of God critically in any human or cultural context. The faculty are all experts in their own right, and they contribute to the richness of the program not only by their theological insights but also by their years of significant intercultural experience. The diversity of the students, both in terms of their cultural background and their cross-cultural ministry experience, creates a unique community where theological and missiological thinking is forged in a highly stimulating context.”

— Doctoral student How-Chuang Chua came to Trinity after four years of church planting work as a missionary in Japan.

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32. Yang, foreword to Communist Persuasion, by Winance, pp. ix–x. See also Peter Zhou Bangjiu, Dawn Breaks in the East: A Benedictine Monk’s Thirty-three-Year Ordeal in the Prisons of Communist China (Upland, Calif.: Serenity, 1992), especially pp. 3–30. Brother Peter Zhou had been a monk at the Chengdu monastery before being arrested and imprisoned by the Communists. He joined the community at Valyermo in 1984 after more than three decades of separation from his religious confreres. Brother Peter had been feared dead for many years.
33. See Zehnder, Interview with Eleutherius Winance.

Selected Bibliography

Archival Collections

Works by Thaddeus Yang

Celebrating Edinburgh 1910’s Centenary

The General Council of Edinburgh 2010 announced details about the centenary celebration of the 1910 World Missionary Conference, widely recognized as the high-water mark of the modern missionary movement from the West and the beginning of the contemporary ecumenical movement. Building on the overall theme “Witnessing to Christ Today,” three key components of Edinburgh 2010 are an international study process, which has been developed globally (www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes.html); a series of regional gatherings around the world, which are being organized locally; and a four-day celebration, June 2–6, 2010, in Edinburgh, which is expected to bring together 250 mission leaders from around the world. The international study process “will engage with representatives from the worldwide church,” according to a media announcement from Kirsteen Kim, Edinburgh 2010 research coordinator and an IBMR contributing editor, to explore challenges for “the life of churches over the years to come.” More than a thousand people are expected to participate on Edinburgh 2010’s final day, which is being planned as a “day of celebration, thanksgiving, penitence, and recommitment.”


Other events commemorating Edinburgh 1910:

- Youth Assembly of the National Council of Churches of India, January 6–10, Kolkata, India (https://sites.google.com/site/neya2010).
- Jesus in the City urban mission congress, March 12–14, Belfast, Northern Ireland (www.jitc.org.uk).
- An international study conference on the theme “Christian Unity in Mission and Service,” June 11–13, Liverpool, England (jeyarad@hope.ac.uk).
- Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, October 16–25, in collaboration with the World Evangelical Alliance, Cape Town, South Africa (www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010).

Other events can be found listed at www.edinburgh2010.org/en/events/other2010projects.html.
This eight-page report is the twenty-sixth in an annual series in the IBMR. The series began in 1985, shortly after the publication of the first edition of the World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE; Oxford Univ. Press, 1982). Its purpose was to present, in summary form on a single page, an annual update of the most significant global and regional statistics presented in the WCE. The WCE itself was expanded into a second edition in 2001 and was accompanied by an analytic volume, World Christian Trends (WCT; William Carey Library, 2001). In 2003 an online database, the World Christian Database (later published by Brill), was launched, updating most of the statistics in the WCE and WCT.

In 2009 the team behind these earlier books published the Atlas of Global Christianity (Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2009), a visual quick-reference of the changing status of global Christianity over the 100 years since the epoch-making World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in June 1910. It is the first scholarly atlas to depict the twentieth-century shift of Christianity to the Global South. It is also the first to map Christian affiliation at the provincial level. The atlas is divided into five major parts.

Part 1 covers the world with maps on world issues and world religions, comparing the global context of 1910 and 2010.

Part 2 focuses on the Christian context, with thematic maps on major Christian traditions, including Anglicans, Independents, Marginals, Orthodox, Protestants, and Roman Catholics, as well as Evangelicals and Pentecostals.

Part 3 depicts Christianity by the United Nations regions (Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Northern Africa, etc.). Each region (and continent) is described in four pages, including a historical essay, maps, graphs, tables, and charts.

Part 4 views the world by languages, peoples, and cities.

Part 5 focuses on Christian mission by analyzing data on missionaries, finance, Bible translation, media broadcasting, and other forms of evangelization.

A CD with an interactive electronic product is included in the back sleeve. It contains presentation-ready files of all maps, charts, graphs, and tables for classroom use. We present here three two-page spreads adapted from oversize (10 × 14 inches) Atlas of Global Christianity pages.

Missionaries Worldwide, 1910–2010

The first two pages offer an overview of the statistics of national workers and foreign missionaries around the world in 2010. For quick comparisons, estimates are made of the numbers of foreign missionaries in 1910. One of the challenges in this appraisal is that traditionally these assessments are confined to specific denominations (Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox, etc.). Rarely are all Christian traditions combined such as they are on these pages. The growth in missionary sending from the Global South is apparent in these pages but lags behind the demographics of church membership.

World Christianity, 1910–2010

The next two pages offer a quick overview of the concentration of Christians around the world in 2010 in the context of the past 100 years. A comparison of the years 1910 and 2010 is displayed in the line graph, the maps, and the tables. In areas that were strongly Christian in 1910 (Europe, Latin America, Northern America, and Oceania, except for Melanesia) the main trend appears to be secularization, with percentages of Christians decreasing over the 100 years. In Africa and Asia, most regions saw a profound transformation in terms of Christian growth.

Personal Contact, 2010

A new area of research is assessing the amount of personal contact between Christians and non-Christians. In simple terms, the question being asked is, What percentage of non-Christians personally know a Christian? Data from our earlier analyses of evangelization were used to provide rough approximations of the answer. The results are startling, in the sense that Christians and non-Christians appear to be living in quite separate worlds. This distance has implications for Christian missions but is also problematic when it comes to dialogue, peace initiatives, environmental and health challenges, and many other areas of human interaction. Our hope is that highlighting the problem will help in planning solutions for the future.

Status of Global Mission, 2010

Finally, regular readers of the January IBMR issue will recognize our “Status of Global Mission” table. This year a few findings stand out. Buddhists, experiencing a resurgence in China (line 14), now outrank Chinese folk-religionists in order of size of religions globally. Protestants (line 30) are once again larger than Independents (due mainly to reclassification of some Independents). Based on new data on house churches, we have increased our estimate for the number of congregations in 2025 (line 42). We updated our Christian finance figures (reflecting inflation) for the Atlas of Global Christianity, and these appear on lines 51–57. Note that ecclesiastical crime (line 56), at $32 billion this year, still outranks giving to foreign missions, at $29 billion (line 57). Finally, our estimate for the unevangelized population continues to increase for the future, as Christian resources are focused mainly on the already evangelized.
Over the past 100 years, as global Christianity has been shifting gradually to the South, the number of foreign missionaries sent from the South has been increasing. In 1910 the vast majority of missionaries were sent from Europe and Northern America to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In 2010 the sending of foreign missionaries is more even across continents, although Europe and Northern America still have much higher per-capita sending rates than most countries of the Global South.

These pages depict foreign missionaries (those who cross national boundaries), but it should be noted that much of the growth of the missionary movement has been in home missionaries (those who work as missionaries within their own national boundaries). This is especially true with the largest missionary-sending countries in Asia and Africa (India and Nigeria, respectively). Thus, the combined numbers of Southern foreign and home missionaries are sometimes contrasted with only the numbers of Northern foreign missionaries, excluding the large number of home missionaries and other national workers in countries such as the USA and Britain. Note that we have reduced our estimates for the number of missionaries from 468,000 in 2006 to about 400,000 in 2010. This is due to a significant decline in sending from the Global North.

The table on the facing page reveals the significant variations in the number of national workers, missionaries sent, and missionaries received for each UN region. It is particularly instructive to compare workers or missionaries per million of the population (or per million affiliated Christians in the case of missionaries sent). For example, in 2010 Polynesia sends the fewest foreign missionaries of all but three other regions, but the most by far per million affiliated Christians.

Another profound change over time has been the distance that missionaries travel. In 1910 Northern American or European missionaries took lengthy and often hazardous journeys. Today, especially in the Global South, foreign missionaries often work in an adjacent country.

The vocations of missionaries have changed as well. One hundred years ago, large numbers of missionaries were involved in schools, hospitals, and other social projects. By the middle of the twentieth century many of these institutions were handed over to national workers. In the early part of the twenty-first century, Protestant and Independent missionaries are once again increasingly involved in social projects, ranging from microenterprise to schools.

Missionaries Worldwide, 1910–2010

The axes represent the total global missionaries sent (per million affiliated Christians) and the total global missionaries received (per million population).

i These regions send more missionaries per million affiliated Christians, and receive fewer missionaries per million population, than the global average.

ii These regions send more missionaries per million affiliated Christians, and receive more missionaries per million population, than the global average.

iii These regions send fewer missionaries per million affiliated Christians, and receive more missionaries per million population, than the global average.

iv These regions send fewer missionaries per million affiliated Christians, and receive more missionaries per million population, than the global average.

Sending and receiving of missionaries by UN regions/continents

The graph to the right shows sending and receiving for all UN regions and continents. Missionaries received is per million population, suggesting the potential impact on the entire population of the region of service. Missionaries sent is per million affiliated Christians, indicating the strength of mission sending by the Christian community. Both axes use a logarithmic scale because the data values vary by several orders of magnitude. Lines plotted at the average values of these variables separate the data points into four quadrants, described more fully above. Note that only one region, Eastern Asia, appears in quadrant i (above-average sending and below-average receiving). In quadrant ii (above-average sending and receiving) one primarily finds the Global North. In the past, these regions would have been in quadrant i, but all the regions of the Global North have become strong receiving regions. In quadrant iii, both missionary sending and receiving are below the global average. This is where most Asian regions reside, largely due to their enormous non-Christian populations. Quadrant iv contains the other traditional mission fields of the twentieth century: Latin America and Africa. These regions still receive large numbers of missionaries but are gradually moving toward quadrant ii as they send more of their own missionaries.

National workers

Numbers of national Christian workers, although still relatively large, are declining in most European countries. Brazil has large numbers, and so do India and China, where Christianity is growing more rapidly. India, in fact, has as many national Christian workers as Germany; only the USA has more.

Missionaries received per million population

Numbers correspond to table on the facing page.
Northern America and Europe continue to send the bulk of cross-cultural missionaries today (over 65%). This is due largely to the financial strength of these Christian-majority countries. Brazil is an exception; most of its missionaries are Roman Catholics working in Latin America, the USA, and Europe.

Christian-minority populations. This map shows that the countries with the most Christians also receive the largest numbers of missionaries. This makes some sense if one considers that invitations are a major factor in missionary sending. Sponsorships are also more likely where the Christian population is large.

Missionaries today are sent from everywhere and are received everywhere. But from the standpoint of evangelizing non-Christians, one can see a problem: countries with largely Christian populations receive relatively more missionaries than countries with Christian-minority populations.

### Missionaries sent, 1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Sent p.m.c.</th>
<th>Received p.m.**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>124,228,000</td>
<td>11,663,000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>33,030,000</td>
<td>5,266,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Africa</td>
<td>19,443,000</td>
<td>207,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>32,002,000</td>
<td>3,107,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>6,819,000</td>
<td>2,526,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>32,993,000</td>
<td>557,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>1,028,365,000</td>
<td>25,123,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>Eastern Asia</td>
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<td>2,288,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>South-central Asia</td>
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<td>5,182,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-eastern Asia</td>
<td>94,104,000</td>
<td>10,124,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Europe</td>
<td>427,154,000</td>
<td>403,687,000</td>
<td>39,950</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>European</td>
<td>178,184,000</td>
<td>159,695,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<td>Northern Europe</td>
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<td>60,326,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>298</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Europe</td>
<td>76,940,000</td>
<td>74,532,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>Western Europe</td>
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<td>109,134,000</td>
<td>11,450</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
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<td>Caribbean</td>
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<td>Central America</td>
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<td>South America</td>
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<td>45,925,000</td>
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<td>91,429,000</td>
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<td>600</td>
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<td>5,206,000</td>
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<td>Melanesia</td>
<td>1,596,000</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>408</td>
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<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>89,400</td>
<td>68,600</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,538</td>
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### Missionaries sent and received and national workers, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>National workers</th>
<th>Sent p.m.c.*</th>
<th>Received p.m.**</th>
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<td>Eastern Africa</td>
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<td>1,777,378,000</td>
<td>734,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Africa</td>
<td>129,583,000</td>
<td>105,830,000</td>
<td>1,807,353,000</td>
<td>865,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>206,295,000</td>
<td>174,922,000</td>
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<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>56,592,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
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<td>1,810,000</td>
<td>710,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
<td>1,562,575,000</td>
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<td>810,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
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<td>Central America</td>
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<td>348,575,000</td>
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<td>Oceania</td>
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<td>1,527,000</td>
<td>810,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia/New Zealand</td>
<td>25,647,000</td>
<td>18,816,000</td>
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<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>680,000</td>
<td>653,000</td>
<td>1,527,000</td>
<td>810,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p.m.c. = per million affiliated Christians; not shown in table  ** p.m. = per million population
World Christianity, 1910–2010

The map to the right depicts the percentage of Christians in each province of state in 2010. Presenting the data in this way reveals patterns that are obscured in a country-level depiction. For example, the percentages of Christians among the total populations of Egypt and Sudan are comparable. Depicting these data only on the country level, however, would mask both (1) the strong variation in Christian percentages among provinces within each country and (2) the fact that Sudan has a much greater inter-province variation than does Egypt. Similarly, India has a far lower percentage of Christians than does France. Individual provinces in India, however, have larger percentages of Christians than most of, or even any province in, France.

Percentages tell only one part of the story, of course. A significant factor to remember when interpreting the province-level data on the largest map on this page is population per province. For example, a province whose population of two million are all Christians is home to fewer total Christians than a province of 22 million that is only 10% Christian. The map to the right does show the relative strength of Christianity in its provincial and national context. This is most useful in comparing the concentration of Christians globally.

The smaller map on this page shows the percentage of Christians in each of the world’s countries in 1910. Despite the major global changes in the distribution of Christians over the last century, Christians still represent approximately one-third of the world’s population: 34.8% of the global population in 1910, decreasing slightly to 33.2% in 2010. This is because the growth of Christianity in Africa and Asia has been offset by its relative decline (as a percentage of adherents, although usually not in absolute numbers) in most of the rest of the world. Northern America’s percentage of Christians, for example, decreased by 15.4 percentage points over the past century, and Europe’s decreased by 14.3 percentage points. Africa’s, on the other hand, increased by 38.5 percentage points between 1910 and 2010.

In 1910 nine of the ten countries with the most Christians were in the North; the exception was Brazil. The shift of Christianity southward over the following century has left the USA, Russia, and Germany as the only Northern countries on the comparable list for 2010.

Seven countries had no reported Christians in 1910, but in 2010 Christians are present in each of the world’s 239 countries. Of the ten countries with the fastest Christian growth between 1910 and 2010, six are in Africa and four in Asia.

Concentration of Christians by continent, 1910–2010

Although the “World” line on the graph above does not seem to indicate any great change in global Christianity over the past century, the internal demographic make-up of Christianity in fact has changed dramatically. Latin America, Northern America, and Europe all started out in 1910 at almost 100% Christian, but in 2010 only Latin America retains such a high percentage. Northern America and Europe have dropped to around 80% Christian, and Oceania has returned to that level from its peak toward mid-century. Christianity in Africa had the most drastic change of any continent, growing from a mere 9% Christian in 1910 to almost 50% in 2010. Asia’s change, though small in terms of proportion (from 2% Christian in 1910 to just 9% in 2010), still represents strong growth in absolute numbers, especially since 1950. The growth of Christianity in Africa (and, to an extent, Asia) is what held the global Christian percentage steady between 1970 and 2010.

Concentration of Christians by province, 2010

Over the past 100 years Christianity has experienced a profound shift in its ethnic and linguistic composition. In 1910 over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and Northern America. By 2010 this has fallen to less than 40%, with the majority of Christians located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

What does it mean for the future of Christianity that its center of gravity continues to move south and east? Three areas can be mentioned briefly here: (1) Southern Christians will move beyond Northern Christianity’s recent dominance in theology and ecclesiology by producing their own reflections and by looking back to the earliest Christian centuries, when they were in the majority. (2) The dominant languages of Christianity are shifting south. Already by 1980, Spanish was the leading language of church membership in the world. (3) Christians are in increasingly close contact with Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. This will potentially intensify both conflict and dialogue.
Christians by UN region, 1910 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1910 Population</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>% Population</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>% Population</th>
<th>Christians % 1910</th>
<th>Christians % 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>124,228,000</td>
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<td>1,052,012,000</td>
<td>494,668,000</td>
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<td>33,050,000</td>
<td>5,266,000</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>332,107,000</td>
<td>214,842,000</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>5.58</td>
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<td>129,583,000</td>
<td>105,830,000</td>
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<td>206,295,000</td>
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<td>8.56</td>
<td>8.61</td>
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<td>56,592,000</td>
<td>46,419,000</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>307,436,000</td>
<td>110,084,000</td>
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<td>352,239,000</td>
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<td>1,777,378,000</td>
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<td>129,700,000</td>
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<td>13,315,000</td>
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<td>730,478,000</td>
<td>585,739,000</td>
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<td>290,755,000</td>
<td>246,495,000</td>
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<td>98,352,000</td>
<td>79,610,000</td>
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<td>74,532,000</td>
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<td>152,913,000</td>
<td>125,796,000</td>
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<td>109,134,000</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>188,457,000</td>
<td>133,838,000</td>
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<td>71.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>78,269,000</td>
<td>74,477,000</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>593,696,000</td>
<td>548,958,000</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>92.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>8,172,000</td>
<td>7,986,000</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>42,300,000</td>
<td>35,379,000</td>
<td>83.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>20,777,000</td>
<td>20,566,000</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>153,657,000</td>
<td>147,257,000</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>95.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>49,320,000</td>
<td>45,925,000</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>397,739,000</td>
<td>366,322,000</td>
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<td>Northern America</td>
<td>94,689,000</td>
<td>91,429,000</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>348,575,000</td>
<td>283,022,000</td>
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<td>82.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
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<td>5,650,000</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>35,491,000</td>
<td>27,848,000</td>
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<td>78.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia/New Zealand</td>
<td>5,375,000</td>
<td>5,206,000</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>25,647,000</td>
<td>18,816,000</td>
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<td>1,596,000</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>8,589,000</td>
<td>7,847,000</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>91.4</td>
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<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>89,400</td>
<td>68,600</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>575,000</td>
<td>532,000</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>92.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>680,000</td>
<td>653,000</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global total</td>
<td>1,759,797,000</td>
<td>612,028,000</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>6,906,560,000</td>
<td>2,292,454,000</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year, between dates specified

Christian growth rates*, 1910–2010

- **Africa**: 3.82% to 2.14%
- **Eastern Asia**: 2.68% to 1.41%
- **South-Central Asia**: 2.63% to 1.65%
- **South-Eastern Asia**: 2.58% to 1.86%
- **Western Asia**: 0.57% to 1.97%
- **Europe**: 0.37% to 0.54%
- **Latin America**: 2.02% to 2.05%
- **Oceania**: 1.61% to 1.61%
- **Australia/New Zealand**: 1.29% to 1.57%
- **Melanesia**: 3.53% to 1.70%
- **Micronesia**: 2.07% to 1.88%
- **Polynesia**: 1.63% to 1.66%

**Global total**: 1.33% to 1.38%
**Personal Contact Between Christians and Non-Christians**

With a global total of over two billion, Christians make up one-third of the world’s population. It therefore might be expected that a significant number of non-Christians would have some kind of personal contact with a Christian. This is not the case, however. One reason is immediately obvious: Christians are not evenly distributed globally. Some countries have large Christian majorities, while in others Christians constitute small minorities. Yet within a country, or even a city, adherents of different religions can be isolated from each other in many ways, including geographically, ethnically, socially, and economically.

In order to estimate the number of non-Christians who have personal contact with a Christian, a formula has been developed and applied to each ethnolinguistic people group. Thus, for every non-Christian population in the world, there is an indication of Christian presence and contact. Summing values for each country, region, and continent produces a global total. Although these numbers are estimates, they offer a preliminary assessment of a critical shortfall in Christian mission.

Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims have relatively little contact with Christians. In each case, 86% or more of these religionists globally do not personally know a Christian. Agnostics and atheists are in closer touch with Christians than other religionists (except in Asia); this is not unexpected, since many agnostics and atheists in the West are former Christians reacting against Christianity. It is interesting that ethnoreligionists have more contact with Christians as well, likely because ethnoreligionist peoples were a major focus of Christian mission in the twentieth century.

Non-Christians in Asia are more isolated from Christians than in any other continent in the world. At least two factors contribute to this: (1) isolation of Christians in majority Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim cultures; and (2) relatively fewer Christian missionaries sent to and within Asia than to the rest of the world.

Muslims in Africa have only slightly more contact with Christians than the world average for Muslims. Christians in the Global South face a formidable challenge in their lack of contact with non-Christians, especially Muslims. Additionally, there is a sizable difference between the percentage of Muslims in Europe who know Christians and the corresponding percentage in Northern America. This is likely a reflection of the tendency of European Muslims to isolate themselves (or to be isolated by others) in Muslim communities.
Non-Christians who know a Christian, 2010

By contrast, in countries where Christianity is the majority religion have high percentages of non-Christians who know or have personal contact with Christians. Latin America, Northern America, Europe, Middle and Southern Africa, and parts of Oceania represent this situation. In many of these countries adherents of different religions often live and work nearby, making it difficult not to interact with one another.

Personal contact between Christians and non-Christians, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Buddhism</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Non-Christian</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>461,464,000</td>
<td>62,797,000</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>941,485,000</td>
<td>123,225,000</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1,082,537,000</td>
<td>110,576,000</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>276,177,000</td>
<td>38,630,000</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>45,700</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Africa</td>
<td>158,139,000</td>
<td>20,509,000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7,544,000</td>
<td>988,000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Northern Africa</td>
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<td>2,600</td>
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<td>760</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,590,000</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1,182,000</td>
<td>339,000</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13.2</td>
<td>19,900</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>62,797,000</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>941,485,000</td>
<td>123,225,000</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1,082,537,000</td>
<td>110,576,000</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
<td>276,177,000</td>
<td>38,630,000</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>45,700</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>South-Eastern Asia</td>
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<td>20,509,000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7,544,000</td>
<td>988,000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Asia</td>
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<td>6,700</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1,103,000</td>
<td>256,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>71,400</td>
<td>22,100</td>
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<td>27,700</td>
<td>7,900</td>
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<td>1,820,000</td>
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<td>183,000</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>524,000</td>
<td>107,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>50,400</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,300</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>253,000</td>
<td>56,800</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,400</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global total</td>
<td>468,736,000</td>
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<td>14.0</td>
<td>948,507,000</td>
<td>124,840,000</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>1,549,444,000</td>
<td>205,952,000</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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</table>

*Country populations > 100,000

#### GLOBAL POPULATION

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
<th>Value 3</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
<th>24-hour change</th>
<th>mid-2010</th>
<th>2025</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3,698,683,000</td>
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<td>229,000</td>
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<td>8,010,511,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>8,412,291,000</td>
<td>19,639,433,000</td>
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<td>342,000</td>
<td>26,941,790,000</td>
<td>31,318,685,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid-2000</td>
<td>3,839,007,000</td>
<td>13,601,278,000</td>
<td>51,972,179,000</td>
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<td>453,000</td>
<td>61,995,170,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trend % p.a.</td>
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<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.14</td>
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#### WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Megacities (over 1 million population)</th>
<th>Urban poor</th>
<th>Urban slum dwellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>176,000,000</td>
<td>1,073,600,000</td>
<td>1,061,467,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>125,000,000</td>
<td>762,500,000</td>
<td>4,164,140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>68,000,000</td>
<td>238,000,000</td>
<td>2,434,120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>18,000,000</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>12,345,100,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in US$, per year)

<table>
<thead>
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#### CONCLUSION

The status of global mission in 2010, in the context of the 20th and 21st centuries, highlights significant growth and expansion, particularly in urban poor and slum dwellers, and in membership and financial contributions within Christian organizations. The trends indicate a steady increase in the number of Christian workers, membership, and financial contributions, reflecting the ongoing growth and development of the Christian movement globally.
My Pilgrimage in Mission

W. Harold Fuller

Early in childhood, I wanted to write, but I had no idea my “mission” in life would be to do so. Father, a mission leader, lined our hallway with shelves of used books he would pick up for five cents apiece. Adventure, travelogues, and biographies tempted us six children to read ourselves into other worlds. At night I even found ways to read past “lights out”—with an extension cord smuggled under the blankets. Less tempting in our childhood were theological books and a two-volume set of Miller’s Church History. My four sisters set about earning the princely sum of fifty cents each if they read the latter work, but The Boy’s Own Annual adventure stories were about the limit for my brother and me, the tail end of the family.

Father, from British Columbia, had wanted to be a missionary to China, but in those days a heart condition ruled that out. Instead he pioneered on the Canadian prairies on horseback before ending up on the coast of British Columbia. When marriage and a family came along (I was born in Vancouver, October 24, 1925), he kept God’s call to missions ever prominent, and four of us children did become missionaries. As well, Dad was an editor, likely giving me the idea of writing. Anyway, my parents thought something in the arts was in my future because our family doctor, discovering a heart murmur, ruled out all robust pursuits; I was not supposed even to run upstairs.

So as daily rest periods dragged by, I dreamed of producing a book—“logically” starting by making the cover. However, that was as far as the five-year-old got. Instead, I later scribbled on the back of used envelopes or anything to hand (during the Great Depression, notepads were beyond family resources). Ideas often ended up as paper scraps bearing precious thoughts—some undecipherable because written in the night.

Meanwhile, “English” became a passion, making me a linguistic pest to my sisters and brother. For instance, I crusaded against the word “got,” which I regarded as a lazy “weed word” that displaced description verbs; I listed some 156. But I became extreme, using substitutes such as “purloined” in place of the strong Anglo-Saxon “stole.” An elementary schoolteacher told me I should become a journalist—likely because when I did not know the answer to a question, I would resort to verbiage!

My first publishing break came in my teens, when in Toronto, to which we had moved in 1928, a little boy wandered past our house, crying. He had lost his way home; could I help? I brought him to the local police, who soon located his parents. The Toronto Globe and Mail published my news item in their “Local” column. It amounted to no more than an inch of copy, but I was a published reporter—wow!

Meanwhile, my heart condition cleared up (another story of God’s provision). During World War II, in order to avoid army conscription, I enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy. Fresh out of the cocoon of a puritan home, I suddenly found myself in the Battle of the North Atlantic, escorting food convoys across to Europe. As I wrote in a poem, it “changed the boy into a man,” but the turbulent world of a sailor’s life also revealed to me man’s sinful nature.

After discharge, I enrolled in a correspondence course in journalism. That helped me understand the five W’s (who, what, when, where, and why) and their changing priorities in news. The Toronto Star offered me a “copyboy” apprenticeship (obsolete these days), but I was headed out west—ostensibly to study at Prairie Bible Institute (PBI), in Three Hills, Alberta. I had announced that goal in my boyhood, when Prairie grads who passed through our home impressed me.

As I was leaving home, my father said, “Write to tell us when you’ve given everything over to the Lord!” He knew that I was in a rebellious mood. I stomped off, furious at his remark. My secret plan was to stay at PBI only until Christmas break and then head to the West Coast, volunteering on a merchant ship headed for Australia. “Then I can see the rest of the world!” I thought.

Only a Pile of Ashes?

But the first few months at PBI radically changed my plans—and my spiritual life. The Fall Conference speaker, Armin Gesswein, brought powerful messages on the Christian life. Students lined up for hours to confess their sins, until Principal L. E. Maxwell had to send everyone off to bed. I knew I was not right with God, but still rebelling, I despised the lined-up “repentants.” Instead, I sat out the sessions; but the Holy Spirit was sitting right beside me, gently convicting. After a sweaty struggle I gave up, next day writing home: “Harold Fuller is now only a pile of ashes!” At least, so I thought. It was a rather grandstand statement, for the ashes of one’s ego have a way of standing up again. I had much to learn about “the victorious life” as I stayed on for the full course.

Academically, PBI’s excellent English course attracted me, and in my junior year I ended up grading the essay papers of seniors (they never knew!). PBI’s Sunday radio broadcasts gave me the outlet of writing (and narrating) the weekly children’s story. Pumped up with ambition, I confided to Principal Leslie Maxwell my desire to follow a writing career. “Forget it, young man!” the soldierly Maxwell barked. “First get something to write about.” Years later, “L.E.” told me he never so counseled anyone else, but somehow he sensed I was putting ambition ahead of personal walk with God.

Maxwell was right. Writing for the public could feed one’s ego: what power I would have as the public read my thoughts! I remembered my father’s advice, “We must become willing for

W. Harold Fuller, a missionary journalist, joined SIM in 1951. He soon afterward became editor of African Challenge, Africa’s largest circulation monthly. The most recent of his twelve books is Sun Like Thunder: Following Jesus on Asia’s Spice Road (Bangalore, 2009). Lorna Fuller, an editor herself, has been his most constructive critic.

—harold.fuller@sympatico.ca
Writing was now a question not of pride but of survival. In fact, my name never appeared in African Challenge.

Facing Goliath

I ended up assisting in producing a magazine that combined news, general interest articles, features for women and children, a fiction story, and educational materials, as well as Bible studies. It was an instant seller. Teachers ordered bulk quantities because schools lacked teaching materials. News vendors sold Challenge along with the daily newspapers. Six months later the editor left over a disagreement with the business manager, predicting the magazine would fail within a month. I thought he might be right. My teenage cockiness had gone. When the mission asked if I could handle editorship, I could only reply like David: “God, who enabled me to slay the lion, can help me handle Goliath.”

The magazine did survive, its circulation growing astronomically for an African monthly in the mid-1900s. It gained the highest circulation on the continent until a secular monthly overtook it in South Africa, where literacy was greater. If I had ever wanted to write, now a publishing tsunami inundated me. As each issue’s deadline approached, I would work through the night, often lying across my desk to catch forty winks.

Writing was now a question not of pride but of survival. In fact, my name never appeared in the magazine. I signed simply as Editor or Columnist. Short-handed at first, I had to handle reporting, writing, and editing—plus layout, art illustrating, and photography. As reinforcements arrived and we were able to train African staff, God gave Challenge a quarter-century span of life as a mass-circulation evangelist and Bible teacher. Readers—sometimes 400 a month—wrote in for spiritual counseling. In many villages, readers formed Challenge Reading Clubs to share the magazine and discuss articles. We estimated that some fifteen people read each copy.

Themes spoke to readers “right where they lived.” For instance, most believed that witchcraft caused such phenomena as solar eclipses. They were amazed when we published a cover photo of a total eclipse weeks before one did take place (we used a photo from an earlier eclipse elsewhere). Inside the magazine, diagrams and explanations enabled teachers to give a science lesson—and articles presented the truth of the Creator-God’s love for humankind.

One of our most popular issues featured the topic of juju, occult magic and spiritism. The cover featured a juju mask, a grotesque distortion that could strike fear into anyone threatened by it. Fetishes provided a lucrative livelihood for witch doctors and a powerful way for chiefs to keep their subjects in order. Christians believed that juju had satanic power. Through Bible studies and personal stories, we emphasized the greater power of the living God and protection for followers of Jesus Christ. That juju issue featured the testimonies of African Christians who had found deliverance from Satan’s power and who had inner peace. Readers flooded our counseling department with positive response, including professions of conversion.

Challenge had the privilege of promoting Billy Graham’s 1960 Nigeria Crusade. For the meetings, we published a cover photo of the evangelist with a message by him and a pullout section of crusade songs. The issue sold out early. Graham and his team blessed our staff with a personal visit. Among other evangelical leaders who dropped in were Carl Henry, cofounder of Christianity Today, and Kenneth Taylor, who paraphrased The Living Bible and founded Tyndale House Publishers. Such leaders maintained an ongoing interest in SIM’s literature ministries. Later, when I became SIM director for Nigeria and Ghana, Kenneth Hansen, cofounder of ServiceMaster, on three occasions came to teach our pastors and missionaries biblical principles of time and organizational management.

Reaching Readers at All Levels

In the early years of Challenge, I would not have had time for romance—or a wife could have sued me for desertion! But as we developed staff, I developed an interest in the business manager’s secretary, who also happened to hail from Canada. I proposed to Lorna Parrott on a rain-forest trail (poor girl—what could she say?), and later an African pastor “tied the knot” for us. Canada’s Weekend magazine, a supplement in twenty-six newspapers across Canada, carried a three-page photo spread under the title, “The Bride Wore White in Darkest Africa.” (Such a title would never be used these days!) Four years later, the same national magazine ran a cover photo story with a more positive heading: “Canadian Boy Calls Nigeria Home: An ordinary child among other evangelical leaders who dropped in were Carl Henry, cofounder of Christianity Today, and Kenneth Taylor, who paraphrased The Living Bible and founded Tyndale House Publishers. Such leaders maintained an ongoing interest in SIM’s literature ministries. Later, when I became SIM director for Nigeria and Ghana, Kenneth Hansen, cofounder of ServiceMaster, on three occasions came to teach our pastors and missionaries biblical principles of time and organizational management.

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or police at a checkpoint demanded a cash bribe, I would casually produce a copy of the magazine—and that was the end of the confrontation.

In the mid ’90s, full-color Communist literature was also available on the street, but Challenge readers recognized that the Christian magazine was more relevant to their lives. Not only students and the “man on the street” read the magazine; politicians and government leaders also were regular subscribers. The premier of Nigeria’s Western Region, Obafemi Awolowo, complained to our agent that his children had run off with his copy of the Christmas issue—could he please have another? Nigeria’s first president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, was a regular reader, as was General Yakubu Gowon, who led the nation during its civil war.

In Ghana, a copy of Challenge helped change the life—and career—of William Ofori-Attah, one of Kwame Nkrumah’s cabinet ministers who fell from the president’s grace and landed in prison. Guards allowed the prisoner only his reading glasses, a copy of Challenge, and a Bible supplied by the Gideons—all harmless items, the guards reckoned. “Until then, I had never known the way of salvation,” Ofori-Attah told us later. “But there in my cell, all my sins came before me—and I cried out to the Lord to save me.” After a coup freed him, he became chair of our Ghana cellular network.

In Nigeria for his 1960 evangelistic crusade there, Billy Graham confers with editor W. Harold Fuller about a special crusade issue of African Challenge.

Although I had written countless articles, what about that book I had dreamed of writing? My first, a travelogue on Africa, came out in 1968. Among others was one on South America (1990). I recently completed my twelfth—a research tome on Asia, but written as a travelogue. Although Solomon said, “Of the writing of books there is no end,” my wife, Lorna, says this must be my last. “How about our memoirs?” I ask mischievously. A special bonus of our marriage is the skill Lorna has picked up in writing and editing. We critique each other’s work—and still stay together!

In publishing for new literates, one fear I harbored was losing skill with the English language. Actually, the opposite happened. Communicating to new literates in simple vocabulary and syntax was more important than being “literary.” I had to keep to fairly simple English (although not as limited as Basic English, which, in a pinch, can be written using only 650 different words). If I used a word that a new literate might not have learned, I made sure context would reveal the meaning—thus increasing the reader’s vocabulary. Words and constructions must not have double meanings. For instance, what would a news headline such as “Graham Draws Large Crowds” mean? Was he an artist?

Our grandchildren will tell you that word games have been the result, as we purposely play with double meanings. “Fuss pot!” they might tease me. Campus Crusade for Christ’s Bill Bright had his own description. “You’re a wordsmith!” he once commented as I fine-tuned a purpose statement for CCC.

Of course, publishing always has its dangers. In Africa a
though God had to cut my early ambitions down to size, he has in turn allowed me to realize far more than I dreamed of.

I offered for missionary service in Africa, I had become willing to spend my life in some remote village, sharing God’s Word and mentoring believers. Instead, the people on six continents and numerous islands of the sea have been my mentors, as I have learned about life in many colors and watched people respond to the Word of God. I myself have had to learn first, before leading seminars not only in communicating but also in missiology, management, and leadership skills.

Participation in the Study Group Leaders’ Forum, held twice a year by the Overseas Ministries Study Center and now called the Mission Leadership Forum, has been a growth experience for me. Ever since I joined the group shortly after its inauguration in the late 1970s, it has broadened my understanding of mission. Church and mission practitioners from a wide cross section of disciplines around the globe have shared invaluable insights. The biggest benefit, though, has been the opportunity to discuss and examine each other’s conclusions. Doing that in a refreshing spirit of Christian fellowship, aided by Scripture exposition, adds up to meaningful peer interaction. I was glad to write a brief history of the study group for its twentieth anniversary, at Gerald Anderson’s request.

What Has All This Taught Me?

I can think of five simple conclusions to my story:

- We can never outgive God. Turning our lives over to him does not result in loss but in much personal blessing.
- God sometimes has to bring us face-to-face with seeming calamity to make us trust.
- The Lord still calms life’s storms with his “Peace, be still!”
- Nothing God gives us—whether talent, experience, or relationship—is wasted.
- Nearing the end of my own life, I realize that, as Isaiah said, we do indeed “fade as a leaf.”

Many younger people do not recognize the names of church leaders and Christian politicians who have meant so much to my generation. But this is as it should be; we are not immortal icons. The Lord raises up his anointed servants for each generation’s tasks, and he it is who continues his work.

Over the past eighty-plus years, pursuits other than writing have also stretched me, but they have enriched my writing. Now I can only say, “Thank you, Lord, for your Word. And thank you for giving us the gift of language to make known the Living Word!”
“A well-balanced emphasis on spiritual life and high academic standards distinguishes the quality of this scholarly community . . .

I challenge students to dig deeper, to develop a level of analytical and reflective thinking. I serve at a seminary committed to academic excellence and to missions and evangelism.”

Dr. Lalsangkima Pachuau
Associate Professor of History and Theology of Mission
Director of Postgraduate Studies

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Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Encounter with the Enlightenment, 1975–98

Timothy Yates

Lesslie Newbigin (1909–98) and Stephen Neill (1900–1984) were fellow workers for the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, as both were also missionaries in India and bishops. Both played important roles in the formation of the Church of South India (CSI) in 1947. Where Neill came from an Anglican background, Newbigin had trained for Presbyterian ministry but became a bishop in CSI at its inception.

This article is mostly concerned with the period after Newbigin’s return to England from India in 1974. His life and missiology have already attracted much interest. Before Newbigin died, George Hunsberger wrote Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin’s Theology of Cultural Plurality (1998), which the subject regarded as a good account, although somewhat demurring at the idea that election was the key to his theology. The year 2000 saw the publication of two studies, Geoffrey Wainwright’s Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life and Michael Goheen’s “As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You” J. E. Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology, and there has been a further set of essays edited by Thomas Foust, George Hunsberger, Andrew Kirk, and Werner Ustorf entitled A Scandalous Prophet: The Way of Mission After Newbigin (2002). There is also an ongoing application of his theology to contemporary concerns in the Gospel and Culture program in both the United Kingdom and the United States, and a sister network in New Zealand, the Deep Sight Trust, aims to provide a complete and comprehensive bibliography of his writings at www.newbigin.net. We await the biographical work of Eleanor Jackson, fellow worker in the WCC and in India.

Background, Preparation, and India Ministry

In this article, which concentrates on Newbigin’s encounter with modernity and postmodernity after 1974, some background to the cluster of writings of that time can be provided by his autobiography Unfinished Agenda of 1985. He was born in Northumberland, England, to a ship-owning father. He went to a Quaker boarding school and to Queens’ College, Cambridge. He seems to have arrived at the university as a thoughtful agnostic. He became drawn into the activity of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) but still described himself as “interested but sceptical.” A fellow student, Arthur Watkins, football captain and deeply committed Christian, had much to do with Newbigin’s move into Christian faith; “he made me want to pray.” Newbigin wrote of Watkins. Newbigin had a formative experience when helping with a Quaker group, serving among the unemployed of a mining community in the Rhondda Valley in Wales; one night the men came back roaring drunk, and the young Newbigin was at a loss. His despair at their lot and his own inadequacy led to a vision of the cross “spanning the space between heaven and earth, between ideals and present realities with arms which embraced the whole world.” He wrote: “I was sure that night, in a way that I had never been before, that this was the clue which I must follow if I were to make any kind of sense of the world. From that moment I would always know where to begin again when I had come to the end of my own resources of understanding or courage."

By his second year at Cambridge Newbigin was already a reader of the International Review of Missions, but at that stage he had no thought of either ordination or missionary work. In the same year, however, at an SCM conference in Swanwick in Derbyshire, he had an experience of calling, against his previous intentions. “There was a tent set aside for prayer. On an afternoon near the end of the week I went into it to pray. . . . While I was praying something happened which I find it hard to describe. I suddenly knew that I had been told that I must offer for ordination. I had not been thinking about this. But I knew that I had been ordered and that it was settled and that I could not escape.” He anticipated terrible disappointment in his father, whose only son and natural successor in business he had been, but his father never wavered: “I must do what God called me to do,” he said; “there was not the faintest hint of disappointment or reproach.” At nearly seventy, rather like Abraham, the father was capable of an act of great faith in his son.

Lesslie became an SCM representative in Scotland in 1931, trained for ordination at Westminster College, Cambridge (a Presbyterian college), between 1933 and 1936, and sailed for India in September 1936. By then, on his own account, his personal study of Paul’s letter to the Romans, with the help of James Denney’s commentary in the Expositor’s Greek Testament series, had been as determinative of his theological outlook as the letter had been for Augustine, Martin Luther, and Karl Barth. In particular, Newbigin had added to his vision of the cross in Wales an equally clear understanding of the finished work of Christ as an objective atonement; he wrote, “At the end of the exercise I was much more an evangelical than a liberal.” He had also met Helen, daughter of Irish missionary parents, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, also an SCM representative and already offering for missionary service. They married and then spent most of the period 1936–74 in India, with some painful periods of separation. Newbigin had a large role in the creation of CSI and became bishop of Madurai in 1947. He worked for the International Missionary Council between 1957 and 1965 and was largely responsible for the integration of IMC with the WCC, which took place finally after great debate at the New Delhi assembly of the WCC in 1961. From 1965 to 1974 he served in India as bishop of Madras in CSI.

Polanyi’s Enlightenment Critique

By the time of his retirement in 1974, Newbigin was already an established theological writer, with books like The Household of God (1953) and Honest Religion for Secular Man (1966), to name only two. More important for this article, he had digested works that were profoundly critical of the European Enlightenment,
providing him with a range of issues that he was to address from 1974 until his death. Perhaps the most significant of the thinkers he was reading was the Hungarian professor of chemistry Michael Polanyi—in particular, his books Personal Knowledge and The Tacit Dimension. The first was a course of Gifford Lectures of 1951. In the preface to the published version of 1958 Polanyi wrote: “I start by rejecting the ideal of scientific detachment. . . I want to establish an alternative ideal of knowledge” by which “the personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding . . . does not make our understanding subjective. Comprehension is neither an arbitrary act nor a passive experience, but a responsible act claiming universal validity. Such knowing is indeed objective in the sense of establishing contact with a hidden reality. . . . It seems reasonable to describe this fusion of the personal and the objective as Personal Knowledge.”

Polanyi wanted to rebut “scientism,” the exaltation of the empirical and the so-called neutral intelligence, by arguing that all discovery is based on “fiduciary acts.” Scientists, for example, believe in order and believe that their inquiry will reveal aspects of an ordered universe. Polanyi returned to Augustine, where a fiduciary act is prior to discovery: credo ut intelligam (I believe in order that I may understand). Belief, Polanyi argued, is the source of all knowledge, and he referred to books 1–9 of the Confessions.

In the 1950s Newbigin thus found in Polanyi a critique of Enlightenment presuppositions where all is brought to the bar of a supposedly neutral intelligence. Polanyi posed a different approach to epistemology, a more well-rounded theory of knowledge, where more than pure reason was involved and (a theme dear to Newbigin’s heart) the pursuit of truth was a passionate one, expressed in personal commitment. For Polanyi, it is by personal commitment that we choose to rely on certain “tools” and integrate them into an overall “focal” awareness. He used the examples of the learning process of trial and error in learning to ride a bicycle or to swim, where doing and commitment are involved, not just pure thought. Such personal knowledge also has the advantage of avoiding the dangers of the detaching effects of analysis.

**Newbigin on the Enlightenment**

The Other Side of 1984. By the time Newbigin came to write his first essay addressing the assumptions of the Enlightenment, in a booklet for the British Council of Churches entitled The Other Side of 1984 (1983), he had come (in company with the archbishop and philosopher William Temple) to the view that the direction taken by European thought following the Frenchman René Descartes—the way of radical skepticism, doubting everything except one’s own thinking processes—had been a disaster. Cogito ergo sum (I think, therefore I am) is essentially individualistic and makes the individual’s reason supreme.

The Enlightenment developed a sharp division between fact and value: facts are demonstrable, empirical, and verifiable, and are contrasted with values, which are open to debate, private, and unverifiable. The next stage was to say in the modern way, “You have your truth, and I have mine.” Absolute truth is unattainable. This was a long way from the truth claims of “universal intent” that he had found in Polanyi and was to apply to the Gospel. Enlightenment approaches to truth, as he saw them, had led to the disappearance of hope. He wrote of the England that he returned to in the 1970s: “There is little sign among the citizens of this country of the sort of confidence in the future . . . [of] the earlier years of this century.” And, “Our civilisation has so completely lost confidence in its validity,” and that in the space of a generation.  

The so-called Enlightenment framework had proved inadequate: Kant’s sapere aude (dare to know) and “have the courage to use your understanding” led to a form of understanding that no longer satisfied. Newbigin quoted Polanyi to the effect that the Enlightenment’s “incandescence” had “fed on the combustion of the Christian heritage in the oxygen of Greek rationalism and the fuel was exhausted, the critical framework itself burnt away.” One crucial example offered is the way, under Enlightenment presuppositions (supplied in this instance by Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” in the realm of economics), that economics and ethics part company. William Blake, the visionary of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was right in judging that “any sphere of human life which is withdrawn from the Kingship of Christ [has] fallen under another rule.” For Blake it resulted in “dark Satanic mills” (from his poem now known as the hymn “Jerusalem”). Economics detached from Christ’s lordship becomes satanic, not neutral or beneficial, proceeding placidly under the influence of an unseen hand.

**Foolishness to the Greeks.** In his 1986 book Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Modern Culture, which resulted from his B. B. Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1984, Newbigin returned to these themes. By withdrawing into a private sector, Christianity had indeed secured for itself a place to be, but it had surrendered the crucial field. He quoted William Gladstone, the prime minister of Victorian times, to the effect that in the Roman Empire Christianity presented itself to the state as a public faith and not as a subjective experience. As Newbigin viewed contemporary Britain, he saw a pagan society, one “far more resistant to the gospel than the pre-Christian paganism.”

In modern states, when the pursuit of happiness by the greatest number of citizens is the aim, such a teleology has replaced the ancient wisdom that the true end of man is to glorify God: it offers only a this-worldly hope and so constitutes a vast change of outlook. A theologian like Friedrich Schleiermacher, who had encouraged a retreat into religious experience, may have provided a hiding place, but he had made no provision for challenging the public ideology of the culture.

Today, Newbigin wrote, nothing less than a conversion of the mind is required, out of the West’s generally accepted “plausibility structures” (a phrase of Peter Berger’s) to ones where “the living God” is recognized, “whose character is rendered” for us in the pages of Scripture. The church will need the language of testimony, in the way that Jesus testified before Pilate, an encounter that demonstrated that truth-bearing is a public act and that the church, as a community of testimony-bearing people, is never just a private society. There can be no return to the old post-Constatinian Christendom, but neither can the church “go private.” To do so is “in effect to deny the kingship of Christ over all life, public and private . . . to deny that Christ is the truth by which all other truth claims are tested.”

Once more he returned to the economy. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1926), by Christian economist R. H. Tawney, had shown that both Luther and Calvin had asserted the government of God in the economic realm. Nevertheless, Newbigin was as suspicious of Islam’s absolute identification of the law of the state with the law of God (the sacralizing of politics) as he was of aspects of the Religious Right in the United States. Of both he wrote that “the total identification of a political goal with the will of God always unleashes demonic powers.” In the Old Testament, the idolatry associated with the true religion of Yahweh is more dangerous.
than that associated with the Baals. In Christian understanding, a state is needed that both acknowledges the Christian faith and "deliberately provides full security for those of other views." In realms like religious education, however, he believed that the state cannot be neutral, a view he brought to bear when used as a religious adviser on the Birmingham religious education syllabus and at odds with another adviser used, John Hick. Denominations, which had in the United Kingdom bedeviled efforts at religious education in schools earlier in the century, he viewed as leading to a fragmentation that was disastrous, causing the church to be unable to confront society as a whole. The need was "to return again to the form of the Catholic church"; meanwhile, a body like the WCC was in his view indispensable.12

The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. How many writers will publish a book as penetrating and substantial as Newbigin’s next major work, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (1989), in their eightieth year? As a background to this remarkable achievement, two items that preceded it deserve notice, which appear in some talks Newbigin gave in Scotland. First, he told the story of his meeting with an Indonesian general in Bangkok in 1980 at a conference called Salvation Today. Newbigin had heard this man say sotto voce in a group meeting, “Of course the question is: can the West be converted?” The second is a quotation from Carver Yu on the disintegration of the West, characterized, so Yu wrote, by “technological optimism and literary despair.” The main book resulted once again from a course of lectures, this time at the University of Glasgow; the Alexander Robertson Lectures for 1988. Newbigin contrasted the call in the New Testament to proclaim the truth with the attitude of the contemporary church. The latter offers its beliefs “as simply one of many brands available in the ideological supermarket,” by which approach it lacks the kind of offense that the truth of the Gospel seen as governing public life might give. He wanted by contrast to challenge the plausibility structures of post-Enlightenment society and make the resurrection the epistemological starting point, so that all reality is understood in its light. The tendency in modern society is to ask not whether religious belief is true or false but whether those who hold the belief are sincere. Newbigin returned to Polanyi for his approach to truth claims, but in doing so, he began to face up to the issues of postmodernism, where claims to truth are seen as manifestations of the will to power in the manner of Nietzsche. If the ontological basis for language is removed (i.e., its reference to agreed reality), then “the language of values is simply the will to power wrapped up in cotton wool.” For Newbigin, the modern resort to “what is true for me” is “an evasion of the serious business of living . . . a tragic loss of nerve in our contemporary culture . . . a preliminary symptom of death.”13

We know from Wainwright’s book that C. N. Cochrane’s study of the breakup of the civilizations of Greece and Rome, Christianity and Classical Culture, had influenced Newbigin at this point. Once the pursuit of truth as reality was surrendered and a kind of willed multiplicity entertained, syncretistic and polytheistic, civilization was doomed to decay.14

Newbigin quoted Jürgen Moltmann, who had written of European literature that it is “characterised by cold despair, loss of vision, resignation and cynicism.” This lack of hope, discerned by Newbigin as the context for the proclamation of the Gospel, had produced a world where “it is difficult to find Europeans who have any belief in a significant future worth working for.” By contrast, faith enables people to be at the same time realistic and hopeful—realistic because we know that no human project can eliminate the powers of darkness, but hopeful because in “doing resolutely that relative good which is possible now . . . we offer it to the Lord who is able to take it and keep it for the perfect kingdom which is promised.” He quoted Reinhold Niebuhr: “We have an absolute duty to choose the relatively better among possibilities, none of which is absolutely good.”15

Newbigin argued that it is an illusion of post-Enlightenment individualistic culture that the Gospel is addressed to the individual. Rather it is addressed to societies, nations, and cultures. Furthermore, it is a myth that human beings have to hear in the “rarefied atmosphere of pure neutrality of the Enlightenment.” Such modernity did not “provide enough nourishment for the human spirit.” Pluralism in society is a fact, but when pluralism is accepted as a principle, then society becomes pagan, for it worships gods other than the true God, a characteristic not of secularity but of paganism. In such a society, the congregation has to become the hermeneutic of the Gospel, providing public truth and giving coherence and direction to society. He wrote, “The only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.”16

Truth to Tell. Newbigin returned to these basic themes once more in a little book of 1991 called Truth to Tell. It can be seen both as a useful first way into his thought and also as a summation of it. Here again the emphasis is on the Gospel as public truth: the need for truth claims over against the loss of nerve in the West; the criticism of the Cartesian search for certainty by way of radical doubt as a dead end; the combination of objective discovery in science, for example, with subjective involvement as learned from Polanyi, so that all knowing is personal knowledge; the need to insist that the Gospel is not just “true for us” but true universally; and the rejection of individualism in favor of “a community of love,” which is “the reality for which and from which all things exist”—so that the rejection of relatedness is fatal, for in relatedness lies the true road to freedom. Rejection of relatedness is demonstrable in Western society in the breakdown of marriage, the breakup of families, and the development of consumerism, “where the free market is made into an absolute . . . [that] becomes a power which enslaves human beings.”17

Newbigin in Perspective

Before proceeding to a conclusion, I want here to enter some cautions, based in part on the evaluative essays in A Scandalous Prophet and in part on my own reflections. The first caution is a fundamental issue: how far is Lesslie Newbigin’s profile of the Enlightenment to be accepted as it stands? It is interesting to note that even Hendrik Kraemer, whom Newbigin admired greatly as man and writer, in his great book The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World conceded that the onset of the Enlightenment in Europe had a liberating effect on intellect and culture, for very long subject to the dominance of hierarchies and authorities, whether aristocratic or papal, civil or ecclesiastical. Kraemer admitted that the new approaches blew open the doors of an

Newbigin wanted to make the resurrection the epistemological starting point.
often stifling room and let in much-needed air and oxygen.  

Andrew Walls, in his essay of assessment, admitted himself to be a son of the Scottish Enlightenment (and Scotland was the home of Adam Smith and David Hume, central figures of it) and makes the intriguing suggestion that Christianity used the Enlightenment syncretistically, much in the way of Clement of Alexandria and the early apologists with Hellenism, though Walls does not say this explicitly. He does, however, give the example of the Scots missionary Alexander Duff, of the nineteenth century in India, who is an outstanding example of such syncretism, putting equal weight on the Bible and on European learning as the way to convince educated and cultured Brahmins of the truth of the Christian faith. Walls cites Origen, who wrote of the Israelites using Egyptian gold to cover the tabernacle: “There was a Christian appropriation of the Enlightenment which was not at all a betrayal of Christian faith. It was an indigenisation of Christianity in Western terms. It was syncretistic.”

Walls accepted that Enlightenment presuppositions can be shown to be of little consequence, for example, to emerging African Christianity, where there is what he calls “an open frontier between the natural and supernatural worlds,” creating “open spaces left vacant by the older theology.” Although Newbigin saw the Enlightenment as the great enemy, the combination of evangelicalism and Enlightenment in someone like Duff produced a man “absolutely confident as he faces the powers of India in a universe of knowledge of which the Bible is the centre and the sun and in which politics and economics and the natural sciences have their proper place that comes from the rational Calvinist model he had learned at St Andrews,” a reference to the ancient Scottish university. Possibly Newbigin himself had second thoughts on such negativity. Lynne Price, in her essay in the same work, tells us that at a late stage in the final draft of _The Other Side of 1984_, Newbigin introduced some paragraphs that were more positive about the definite gains of the Enlightenment, as removing “barriers to freedom of conscience and intellectual enquiry.”

As a second caution, I agree with Bert Hoedemaker that the kind of global Christianity that Newbigin sought and that resulted in the formation of the WCC in 1948, expressed also in the inauguration of CSI in 1947, looks today like a project based on modernity rather than on the postmodern understandings of the present. For myself, however, whatever the prevailing fashions, I believe that Newbigin’s search for visible unity among Christians (which in CSI included a united church of Congregationalists, Methodists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians) was built on a true vision of the potential of a God-given unity across barriers—based, as he based it, on the High Priestly Prayer of John 17 and, as it can also be, on the Letter to the Ephesians. But I am aware that our own generation, skeptical of large so-called metanarratives, is inclined to look askance at such overarching projects. This does not mean Newbigin’s efforts were wrong, even if currently intellectually and spiritually unfashionable.

Geoffrey Wainwright in his helpful overview gives us chapter headings that well communicate Lesslie Newbigin’s diverse contribution: confident believer, direct evangelist, ecumenical advocate, pastoral bishop, missionary strategist, religious interlocutor, and Christian apologist: all these he was. One thing that comes through any assessment of his life is the exceptional integration that he achieved of _evangelical_ and _pastoral_ engagement and of _theological commitment_. Would that more in positions of Christian leadership could hold these two poles so well in creative tension!

I close with some words of Newbigin’s own on conversion, from his excellent little book _The Open Secret_ (1978), a splendid introduction to missiology for students of missionology: “Conversion is to Christ. It is primarily and essentially a personal event in which a human person is laid hold of by the Living Lord Jesus Christ at the very centre of the person’s being and turned toward him in loving trust and obedience. . . . [To confess Jesus as Lord is possible] only because I have been laid hold of by Another and commissioned to do so. It is not primarily or essentially my decision. By ways that are mysterious to me, that I can only faintly trace, I have been laid hold of by one greater than I and led into a place where I must make this confession and where I find no way of making sense of my own life or of the life of the world except through being an obedient disciple of Jesus.” He would want to say that it was by God’s grace alone. We can add, however, that he became one of the outstanding disciples of Jesus Christ in the twentieth century and continues to challenge and inspire into the twenty-first.

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**Notes**

1. See also Geoffrey Wainwright, “Newbigin,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, ed. Timothy T. Larsen (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), pp. 472–75, which provides a particularly helpful short digest of his life and work.


3. Ibid., pp. 15–16, 17.

4. Ibid., p. 31.


6. Ibid., p. 266.

7. Ibid., pp. 61, 62–63.


9. Ibid., pp. 21, 11, 40.


11. Ibid., pp. 64–65, 94, 100, 102.


20. Ibid., pp. 151, 150.


My Pilgrimage in Mission

Edward L. Cleary

Despite the Depression (I was born in 1929), I had a secure boyhood in a neighborhood where the image of strong males, Catholic and Lutheran, at prayer was common. Somehow my best friend, Dave, a Lutheran, and I acquired a sense of mission. Both denominations were turning outward to a postwar world in which Yankee Christians, flawed as Dave and I thought we Americans were by imperialist Teddy Roosevelt history, would have an unspecified role.

My parents believed in subtle hints, and that included the presence in the family circle of lots of young priests, including missionaries, from the local Dominican priory. I resisted these hints, was sure at age seventeen that I did not want to be a priest, and went to Journalism School at Marquette University to be a sports writer. But two years later, the reading of Thomas Merton’s _Seven Storey Mountain_ and the attending of a young Dominican’s ordination to the priesthood made writing about games seem trivial, and I thought Dominican life a better choice. With this abrupt change, my parents counseled a year’s wait before entry into the Order, bought me a used car with character and a tux to make sure I was in the dating game, and left my future to Providence.

First Assignment

After eight years of preparation, I waited with greater anticipation than I had ever known in my life for my first assignment as a Dominican priest in 1958. The man who held my fate in his hands—the regional superior, called a provincial by Dominicans—was coming to Dubuque, Iowa, where my relatively large class of twenty-four priests was completing its final year. The provincial would be asking each of us what we would like to do for the next three years or so, with the strong likelihood that the first assignment would indicate the direction of most of our adult lives.

The Dominican world in the late 1950s was open to a great variety of opportunities. The Chicago province to which I belonged had men teaching in forty colleges, maintained twenty-seven parishes, and had a wide array of other ministries for its 400 members. Assignment to either Bolivia or Nigeria, the Chicago province’s two new mission fields, were certainties for some of my class. I wanted neither. With that in mind, I was ready with a carefully constructed list of seven possible assignments other than the missions, when the provincial said, “Well, Father Edward, what would you be thinking you might like to do, say for the next few years, knowing, of course, that I have vacancies to fill and the church has needs to be met.” I started with my strongest non-Bolivian aspiration: “I would like to teach in college in the States, for many reasons.” (The inner voice that reminded me that one could teach overseas was repressed.)

The provincial’s face registered no response to my expressed wishes. He said nothing for fifteen minutes, and I could not read his face, since he was turned away, looking out the window at the newly budding trees. I plunged further into the list of ministries other than Bolivia. After the seventh item on the list—high school administration—I gave up. In panic and feeling the need to say something further, I blurted out: “There is a rumor I’m supposed to go to Bolivia.” “That will be just fine,” he said and wrote on his memo pad: “Cleary—Bolivia.” The shape of my life, as tied to the missions, was fixed for fifty years thereafter, although that was not clear at the time.

Mission Training

Preparation for going to the missions was mostly indirect. From the first day of reception into the Dominican Order, we student-brothers understood that we were part of a transnational group with almost 800 years of history. That we were an international religious family was made clear not only by histories recounted in classrooms but also by the routine presence of foreigners in the houses where we lived. In the first year, novitiate Angel de Alvear, a former bon vivant from Spain, was a fellow novice. And Raymond Bruckberger, the chaplain-general of the French Resistance, was living with us at St. Peter Martyr Novitiate, Winona, Minnesota, while he wrote his memoirs in self-exile, waiting for President Charles de Gaulle to call him back to France.

The liturgical cycle of readings and commemorations was the richest source of storytelling and reflection on missionary life. The Order, following its founder, St. Dominic, had special yearly celebrations for St. Paul as missionary. Then, too, we listened each year to liturgical lessons that included Dominic sending out his small band of followers to all corners of Europe and later generations of missionaries following Marco Polo to China. The liturgy presented the lives of a large number of recognized saints. Most of them seemed to have been missionaries. Frequently they were celebrated stereotypically in bunches, as Saint X and companion martyrs, or grouped together as the Martyrs of Tonkin. “Missionary” and “martyr” seemed to be synonymous; to be a missionary was clearly a risky occupational path. It seemed to me in my late twenties that the ordinary daily life of a Christian minister in the United States was hard enough without having to face heightened challenges, and maybe martyrdom, overseas. If it were up to me alone, I would not be a missionary.

Furthermore, church history classes brought many caveats about life in foreign lands through historical accounts of every imprudence imaginable wrought by Dominicans, ranging from too much zeal to supine laziness. Something noteworthy nonetheless occurred in the spread of Christianity through Dominican preaching and teaching and through the simple holiness of missionaries from Norway to South Africa.

History also showed missionary life as a key element of the Order. Through the centuries of the Order there never seemed to be a period in which there were less than 20 percent of the men on the missions. When I entered the young Chicago province (founded in 1939) in 1950, it had no missions. But the large increase of priests and brothers among us after World War II brought a call from Rome, first for missionaries to Japan, and then to Nigeria and Bolivia. So the possibilities of a mission assignment for me greatly increased.
That missions might be part of my future was reinforced when Mission Academia was inserted in the drowsy evening schedule after the day’s tight class schedule. This was the single direct preparation for mission. The Mission Academia was mandated by Rome in the 1950s to instill mission awareness in future priests. Mission Academia was an oddity, pasted into a strict regimen of philosophy and theology. It consisted of semianual convocations of students from all years of study, without faculty presence.

Despite its limitations, Mission Academia worked well because it was run by older students who were mostly World War II veterans who had served overseas. They ran the meetings as if most younger students, as myself, were green and callow recruits, unaware of the great complexities of foreign life.

The strongest and mostly implied theme of the Academia was spirituality. A missionary could make a lot of mistakes, it was understood, but he or she would not go wrong by emphasizing growth in a life of prayer for the mission-receiving populations, as well as for the missionary. The value of the Academia came back to me when I was reminded recently that two otherwise quiet students of that time had surprised me with their forceful presentations at Academia meetings. Fifty years later they were recognized for their holiness by the mission churches where they worked.

Bolivia

Informing my parents, who were still living in suburban Chicago, about the overseas location of my first assignment was not going to be easy, since I was an only child, and for reasons that were never clear to me, my parents were sure I would be teaching in Oak Park, Illinois, eighteen city blocks from our home. The norm for Bolivian missionaries in 1958 was three years’ residency in country before coming home for leave. My missionary vocation was harder, by far, on them than on me. But they fully embraced a vocation as missionary parents.

Money was tight in the days of greatly expanding numbers of vocations and new mission foundations, so another young Dominican and I took a Grace Line freighter, instead of Pan American Airways, from New York to Mollendo, Peru, where two older Dominicans met us in a Jeep station wagon for the 500-mile overland trek on unpaved roads to La Paz, Bolivia. That we had an accident on the so-called Pan-American Highway and were stranded in Puno, Peru, where Maryknoll missionaries took care of us was just a routine occurrence among many surprises I faced. We were able to patch up the Jeep and arrived at La Paz on my birthday in August 1958.

I was awe-struck and shaken by strangeness. At 12,000 feet (3,650 meters) above sea level and built by the Spanish in a ravine to be sheltered from cold winds, La Paz then looked like no city I had ever seen. There were few tall buildings (which, in my mind, characterized a modern city); rather, there were endless stretches of adobe huts set precariously along the ravine walls. The people on the streets were mostly Indian and poor. My new home setting looked like a crater on the moon, populated with no one who looked like my relatives. What had I gotten into? For a hour or two I was shaken, cut adrift from everything I knew, and slightly cotton-headed from mountain sickness. But after the long descent into the strange city, I was welcomed by thirty missionary men and women from various countries, waiting at the bottom of the ravine where my new home was. They were there to introduce us to a new life, one in which we would be pulling together. I felt better immediately.

There was much to do besides teaching. Everything about Bolivia then seemed open to whatever one would wish to do as a missionary. The needs seemed infinite, and Bolivians by then had stabilized the revolution of 1952, freeing the Indians from land servitude and welcoming U.S. assistance. Most of our suppertimes were spent discussing future plans, and then we spent the evenings working with adult Catholic lay movements.

Our plans resulted in our turning the national major seminary back to the bishops and in creating the Instituto Boliviano de Estudios y Acción Social (IBEAS—Bolivian Institute of Social Study and Action). In a word, this was what was called a development institute, one based on the ideas of Louis Joseph Lebret, a French Dominican. The institute called for a major shift in the conception of our roles as missionaries. We would basically act as motivators and theological advisers (asesores) for lay movements. These movements recruited laborers, teachers, and professionals for what was called the Christianization of society. We would not emphasize construction of buildings or institutions, though we would hope to motivate others to do that, if they so wished. We would teach teachers. In a word, we saw ourselves as dedicated to empowerment of the laity in the church and in society.

While my residence remained in the city, I spent the week-ends as a pastor in priestless remote rural areas with a team of catechists and medical personnel. Then one summer I traveled 700 miles by bus to lowland Bolivia to become pastor of Buena Vista and the only priest in the province of Ichilo. The parish house had fallen down, and the church, built by Jesuits in the eighteenth century, was in danger of falling down with the return of the season of torrential rains. I lived in the local boardinghouse

A missionary could make a lot of mistakes, but he or she would not go wrong by emphasizing growth in a life of prayer.

Universities of Chicago and Pittsburgh

When I returned to living at La Paz, the high altitude and poor diet took its cumulative toll on my digestive tract, which had had anomalies from birth. After a year of poor health, I returned to lowland living at Chicago, first to teach at St. Xavier University and then to enter doctoral studies at the University of Chicago in the mid-1960s. This was a time of great intellectual and political ferment in social science at the University of Chicago. The faculty and all my classmates in the program on education and development had extensive overseas experience, mostly in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. We students educated one another about sub-Saharan African education, Latin American rain forests, and tribal clans in Afghanistan, as well as raising questions about foreign involvements in other countries. We bonded for life, as
became clear when we gathered to bury our Chicago mentors years after graduation. We also absorbed the expectation that we were to publish before and after graduation.

The only foreign country I really knew was Bolivia, and since my health had greatly improved, I returned to La Paz to conduct research for my dissertation on education and development in Bolivia. I had scarcely stepped off the plane when I was elected vicar provincial for Bolivia and president of IBEAS. My Dominican brother-electors said they saw the election as a way to keep me in Bolivia for another three years. Thanks, I thought sincerely. IBEAS as an institute was probably a great idea, and it worked well for a while. One can look at a dozen or more of our studies and publications at the Library of Congress in Washington (see especially works by Jaime Ponce García, such as *El Clero en Bolivia* [La Paz: IBEAS, 1970]), or a visitor could have viewed thousands of rural teachers, cooperative–credit union people, lay theologians, and community leaders we trained in the 1960s and early 1970s.

By deciding that I had to write a thousand words a day, five days a week, I was finding both disciplined footing and a public voice.

*El Clero en Bolivia* [La Paz: IBEAS, 1970]), or a visitor could have viewed thousands of rural teachers, cooperative–credit union people, lay theologians, and community leaders we trained in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The enterprise came crashing down. I was back for a few weeks at the University of Chicago writing my dissertation when word came to me, as vicar provincial for Bolivia and president of IBEAS, that Marxist students from the National University of San Andrés at gunpoint had taken over our building, which was unfortunately situated right next to the university. The students claimed they wanted our building to house the sociology department because there was not sufficient room for them at the poorly endowed university. I returned as quickly as possible to La Paz and lived for some weeks in my room and office in the building as students stood guard on the grounds with rifles. The papal nuncio, the archbishop, the president of the country, and I met a couple times. Eventually a compromise was reached. We would move on to other work—there was plenty to do—and the building and library would become the main building of the newly created National Ministry of Planning.

After another year in Bolivia, it was clear that I had to finish the dissertation and move back to the United States. I found a good landing place at the University of Pittsburgh, which was then the university with the most interest in Bolivia. I was invited to join the faculty and to bring along a Spanish-language journal I cofounded, *Estudios Andinos*, and I became assistant director of the Center for Latin American Studies. The university provided money for discretionay travel. My travels and my vision expanded to Colombia, Guatemala, and other parts of Latin America. But I also belonged to the University Center for International Studies and gratefully accepted short-term assignments to Indonesia and Afghanistan, where I had direct contact with Muslim teachers.

**Aquinas Institute**

In 1976, after ten years mostly in strongly secular university environments at Chicago and Pittsburgh, I was invited by the Aquinas Institute of Theology, then in Dubuque, Iowa, to become its academic dean. Aquinas was fully involved in ecumenical theological education with its sister schools, Wartburg Theological Seminary and the University of Dubuque’s School of Theology, where persons such as Samuel Calian and Donald Bloesch provided strong counterpoints to my vision at the time. Frequent contact with the biblical and theological scholars of other traditions was a priceless gift.

The advantage of belonging to a religious group with a missionary tradition came in the form of a question from an old Dominican priest at Dubuque, who asked simply one day if I was going to the Latin American Bishops Conference at Puebla, Mexico, in early 1979. I replied that I had neither the budget nor the time to do so. But encouraged by the old and wise man, I found the money and the time. Hence I saw close up the new pope, John Paul II, witnessed a historic event, and made lifetime friends, including Father Bob Pelton from the University of Notre Dame. From then on, seeing for myself the religious situation in Latin America filled in winter semester and summer vacation breaks. The Dominican houses in all the Latin American countries offered hospitality.

This effort of building bridges between the United States and Latin America was reinforced when a young Dominican of the California province joined me in many of these trips. Having another generation to mentor is another advantage of a missionary order. Brother, now Father, David Orique is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and was driven by love of Bartolomé de Las Casas, the seventeenth-century Spanish Dominican missionary. I do not share his interest in Spanish colonial history or his willingness to spend long hours with very old books at the Library of Congress or Yale’s Beinecke Library, but I was led by him to help maintain a Web site focused on Las Casas ([www.lascasas.org](http://www.lascasas.org)), which has fairly heavy traffic.

**Writing**

When the Aquinas Institute in the early 1980s moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and acquired new emphases, I asked for and received from the Chicago province a sabbatical period at age fifty to write my own first book. Columbia University’s Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies provided space and visiting-faculty status. Having time for a full-time writing life was a new experience, but the city was a great distraction. Within a week of living there, I decided that I had to write four pages (a thousand words) a day, five days a week—or else had to do something distasteful, such as putting my room in shape. The rule, ceteris paribus, has stuck with me through twenty-five years and resulted in eleven books and numerous articles. I was finding both disciplined footing and a public voice.

Whether publishers or readers were listening to that voice was a serious issue in the early 1980s. When I finished a manuscript about the Latin American church, New York friends introduced me to an acquisitions editor for Academic Press. The principal reader of my manuscript for that publisher fell sick from asthma and sat on the manuscript for a year while the salesmen at the firm reported that they wanted no more books on Latin America. At a special lunch when I expected to sign a contract, the acquisitions editor delivered the bad news about no more books on Latin America at that publishing house. Clearly the publishing world was a jungle! But I took the train an hour north of Manhattan to Maryknoll, where I talked to Philip Sharp, a founding editor of Orbis Books. He accepted the manuscript almost immediately. The manuscript became *Crisis and Change: The
It was no longer possible or useful to describe and analyze the church in Latin America only in terms of the Catholic Church.
Book Reviews

Atlas of Global Christianity.


The Atlas of Global Christianity is being produced in conjunction with the centennial of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missions Conference. It self-consciously mirrors the Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions, produced for Edinburgh 1910. The change in name reflects the change in focus between these two impressive volumes. In 1910 the focus was on foreign missions, and the atlas documented the locations of Protestant mission stations around the world and the personnel at each station. This earlier atlas was primarily a planning tool for mission organizations and contained tables of statistics by mission organization and country, contact information of the mission organizations from each country, a series of maps, and a list of mission stations. These maps reveal the countries and provinces in which Protestant missions had established stations and the types of services the missions provided in each country; they were valuable for working out comity agreements or identifying regions where missionaries had not yet gone.

The 2010 atlas, however, focuses on world Christianity. Rather than showing mission stations, it displays the distributions of Christians (and of other religious traditions) by country, province, major city, and ethnolinguistic group. The data highlight the localities and people groups where few have converted, regardless of historical missionary prevalence. The maps alone are an astonishing achievement, especially in their electronic version, available in the Atlas of Global Christianity Presentation Assistant, an enclosed CD. Global Mapping International (which created the maps) has constructed maps not only of all the countries and provinces in the world, but also of all the world’s ethnolinguistic groups (at least all those identified so far by Wycliffe/SIL). Having spent much time in the past decade creating digital maps and linking them to historical data to measure the social impact of missions, I know how difficult and time consuming this project was.

Moreover, the editors have either collected or estimated a wide variety of statistical information for each country, province, major city, and people group—for example, what percentage adhere to each of the major religious traditions, how these percentages have changed since 1910, and what proportion of these changes are because of emigration/immigration, births/deaths, and conversion/defection. The atlas even provides data on religious liberty at the province level for the whole world. The amount of work needed to collect and estimate these data is mind-boggling. I do not fully trust many of the numbers at the national level, let alone at the province, city, or people-group level, but even having these best estimates is extraordinarily valuable. The data come from the World Religion Database (WRD) (which I and others review elsewhere in this issue of the IBMR). While I wish the editors made the impression of the estimates clearer, I still feel indebted to them (and those who worked behind the scenes) for providing these incredibly detailed estimates. I plan to use them in my research but would warn against taking any individual number too literally and against doing statistical analysis with the data without robustness checking. Despite all the careful work that went into creating these estimates, in areas without censuses and high-quality probability-sampled surveys, they are still estimates and contain random error and probably some systematic error.

The graphic presentation of the data both in the atlas and in the accompanying Atlas of Global Christianity Presentation Assistant is extraordinary and makes patterns much easier to see than flipping through tables and tables of data (e.g., in the WRD). The CD allows people to easily copy and paste maps and figures into Word® documents or Powerpoint® presentations, even though the most detailed maps are not reproduced to scale.

Another distinction between the 1910 and 2010 atlases is the space provided for interpretive essays and the types of people recruited to write them. The 1910 conference produced a series of edited books about topics of interest to missionaries, almost all of which were written by Europeans and North Americans. However, these were published separately from the statistical atlas. The 1910 atlas had no interpretive essays in it to help ordinary people make sense of the avalanche of information it contained. The 2010 atlas, in contrast, contains a broad range of short, helpful essays on each major religious group, on religious change in each region of the world from 1910 to 2010, on missionaries sent and received from each region of the world, and on various other topics. Most of the regional essays are by scholars from the areas they describe (i.e., not by Europeans or North Americans). The editors have done a wonderful job recruiting not only the most widely known scholars of missions and world Christianity but also a truly global sample of scholars.

While the separate volumes of essays from 1910 were much longer and were designed to shape missionary strategy, the essays in the 2010 atlas are designed to give helpful overviews that are accessible to ordinary people, yet informative to scholars. I found them clear, concise, and helpful. Although a few regional experts I asked to read specific essays disagreed with some of the information and interpretations reported in particular essays, the essays provide a great introduction to each topic for nonexperts and provide helpful short bibliographies for those who want more detail. In sum, while experts may quibble about particular estimates or particular interpretations in individual essays (as will always happen with a project of this size), the amount of valuable information in the atlas is truly extraordinary. While I encourage caution in using the numbers, I plan to use them and am impressed that the editors and those who helped them could pull off such an amazing collection of data and maps.

—Robert D. Woodberry

Robert D. Woodberry is Director of the Project on Religion and Economic Change and Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

Festival Elephants and the Myth of Global Poverty.


This volume should prove to be a wake-up call for agencies and individuals working cross-culturally. The author brings his decades of experience as an anthropologist, development worker, and administration consultant to bear on the problems that can be encountered when finances, poverty, personal gain, and cultural complexity are mixed. Cochrane's description of the
failings of international aid can be painful to read but is relieved at various points by his dry humor. To make his point, the author uses the metaphor of festival and worker elephants. The former are trained for public festivals. They are noisy, colorful, highly visible, and relatively useless for everyday tasks. The latter are hardworking, persistent, and more or less invisible compared with their festival relatives. Cochrane uses the two to illustrate differing approaches to social and economic problems that are encountered across the globe. Festival elephants tend to operate through high-publicity and highly funded international relief projects based on the myth that there is one form of international poverty and one way—lots of money and big, one-size-fits-all programs—to solve it. The other approach is like the worker elephants: down in the sweaty dirt of a local job, aware of what is needed in, and unique to, the specific setting, and properly trained to do it. My own observations from development experience in the former Soviet region in the early 1990s left me nodding in agreement as I read Cochrane’s critique. In the latter part of his book he tells of his recent work as a mining industry consultant. This very pragmatically based part of his career produced numerous practical, “worker elephant” results. Their effectiveness was based on awareness of, sensitivity to, and cooperation with local people and needs. Some international workers may be offended by the festival elephant metaphor and its implications. Idealists may object to the pragmatism of the author’s mining industry work. Regardless, anyone working internationally can benefit from a careful reading of this well-informed book.

—John W. McNeill

John W. McNeill is Professor of Anthropology and Intercultural Studies at Providence College and Seminary, Otterburne, Manitoba. He worked with YWAM for more than thirty years in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.


European missionaries in the twentieth century were successful in proclaiming Christianity in Africa. Africans did not merely convert to Christianity, however; they understood the God presented in European accoutrements in terms of their own spiritual awareness and existential realities. Thus Africanized and crafted in indigenous idioms, God became African and grew in significance on the continent. By contrast, in Europe, the largest missionary-sending continent of the twentieth century, Christianity declined as it became vulnerable to the secularism strangling the church. African Christians started asking why the Europeans had abandoned God. They wondered what Africans could do to rekindle the fire of European Christianity and what role African Christian immigrants could play in Europe in this respect. How God Became African answers these questions with the depth of scholarship they deserve.

According to Gerrie ter Haar, professor of religion and development at the Institute of Social Studies at The Hague, Christian immigrants in Europe are there to stay. She argues that while many factors have led them to Europe, “poverty, human rights violations, and the absence of peace and security” (p. 89) in Africa have been the major contributing “push” factors.
The main “pull” factor has been a mission reversal whereby Africans are inspired to proclaim the Gospel in Europe. It is hoped that through this development, Europeans will become stimulated to regain the love of God they have abandoned.

The book has seven chapters. In the first three, the author takes readers into the African spiritual world. She argues that Africans do not separate the world of the primordial universe from the natural world. They cross the open frontiers between the two at will. “In Africa, ‘religion’ refers to the widespread belief in an invisible world, inhabited by spiritual forces or entities that are deemed to have effective powers over the material world” (p. 1). The tone of the last four chapters is more theologically reflective, encouraging African immigrant churches in Europe to engage the West in practical ways. The African church in Europe is strong and is meeting the spiritual and existential needs of those it serves. But it also faces challenges, including ethnocentrism, paternalism, and the notion of swart gevaar (Afrikaans: “black threat”; i.e., fear of black presence).

The book is a powerful contribution to our understanding of immigrant churches in Europe. It successfully comes to terms with African spirituality and raises an important point in stating that “African Christianity reflects a strong element of continuity with the continent’s original religious traditions” (p. 99). The book has given rise to populist middle-class religion, thriving in the established and nonestablished churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. While populist movements often weaken resistance to authoritarianism by turning inward for renewal, the movements in the Philippines cannot be so easily pigeonholed. For many charismatic Christians personal renewal is the only way to induce the rich to change. The new movements often see their work as providing opportunities for the poor, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, renewal for their corrupt and immoral government. The political attitudes these movements encourage seem to foster both democratic and theocratic tendencies.

This excellent study will hopefully not be the authors’ last.

—Paul D. Matheny

Paul D. Matheny is Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics and Coordinator of the Ph.D. Program in Religion at Philippine Christian University/Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines.
justice-seeking religionists and their secular allies around the world.

Some readers may find this book emotionally satisfying, especially if they share the author’s obvious distaste for doctrine, creeds, hierarchy, clerical authority, Pope Benedict XVI, and the menace of fundamentalism. As an argument on behalf of a serious and important thesis, the work disappoints. Cox is no doubt correct in his belief that the time of the Constantinian church has passed. His case for global Christianity as a resurgence of nondogmatic, apostolic-era faith remains to be made.

—Stanley H. Skreslet

**Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890–2000.**


For centuries Islam has been practiced along the Tanzanian coast. Only during the colonial period, however, did it penetrate into the southeastern interior, where 80 percent of the people are now Muslim. Felicitas Becker sets out to find out how and why they were converted. She then analyzes the changes that took place there during the rest of the century.

Becker describes the colonial state as meddlesome, unpredictable, and feared—but most of all, distant. The region was matrilineal, noncentralized, and unsuited to indirect rule. So Islam grew in the tenuous links between the village and the state as the population adjusted to a changing way of life. It was an area with little economic potential and therefore marginalized by the administration. The introduction of taxation obliged young men to trade with or seek employment at the coast, where they became Islamized, despite the disapproval of many of their elders. During the 1920s Islam spread in the interior through local proselytization, acquiring a less hierarchical, more egalitarian character than it had at the coast. Islam was eventually perceived by traditionalists as making a person patient, cooperative, and calm—attractive and necessary qualities in an impoverished and conservative society.

The founding of rural mosques was followed by the establishment of madrasas (qur’anic schools). Becker provides a fascinating description of their operation. The memorizing of the Qur’an in a foreign language was seen as the acquisition of esoteric and powerful knowledge. There was little interest in mission or government schools, and the Muslims even campaigned against attendance at them. Changes in ritual and family relationships are investigated, as well as the political implications during the years before and after the country’s early-1960s independence. The Muslims in that part of Tanzania supported the independence movement before 1961, but have since become disenchanted with the national government’s refusal to establish close links with Middle Eastern states. The interests of Christians (who are twice as numerous in the country as a whole) have been a more powerful influence on foreign policy than Muslim concerns for relations across the Indian Ocean.

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women were reluctant to speak before their menfolk, they spoke freely when interviewed in their own courtyards. She liberally and appropriately quotes from them. Footnotes are printed on the relevant pages—there is no need to hunt for them at the ends of chapters!

This is a thorough and sympathetic history, a great pleasure to read.

—Francis Nolan

Francis Nolan, M.Afr., was a missionary in Tanzania for thirty-four years.

Christian Mission and Education in Modern China, Japan, and Korea: Historical Studies.


The essays in this volume were presented at the 2007 Korean conference of the North East Asia Council of Studies of History of Christianity. Based on the feedback at the conference, the editors prepared the presentations for publication. Scott Sunquist, Jan A. B. Jongeneel, and Stuart Macdonald are the three Western scholars represented in this volume; the other twelve are Asians.

The essays address the theme of the conference, which was “Mission and Education.” Sunquist begins the volume with an intriguing essay on the new streams of thought that affected missionary Henry Luce in the 1920s and 1930s; Jongeneel contributes a chapter entitled “Christian and Missionary Education in the Netherlands and in Indonesia as Challenge” in the general section of the book. The other three sections concern China, Japan, and Korea.

The section on China includes essays on cultural imperialism and cultural exchange; on the birth, growth, and decline of the Chinese Volunteer Movement for Ministry in twentieth-century China; and on new perspectives on the Chinese Christian colleges since the 1980s. The book also includes two essays on Japan and three on Korea.

The appendices include reports from the first NEASCHC conference in 2000 through the sixth conference, in 2007. Several of the essays are very broad and general, although they do present interesting insights into mission and education.

—Marvin D. Hoff

Marvin D. Hoff retired in December 2006 after serving for twenty-nine years as executive director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia. He recently edited Chinese Theological Education: 1979 to 2006 (Eerdmans, 2009).

Beyond Christendom:
Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West.


Hanciles paints on a broad canvas. The backdrop consists of long vistas across the history of the church, allied to contemporary demographic and migration
studies. This sets the scene for detailed studies of the African immigrant churches currently being formed in the West. In superbly crafted prose Hanciles argues that our understanding of globalization must include recognition of the active agency of non-Westerners, and that world mission must be reconceived, post-Christendom, in light of renewed confluence of mission and migration—“every Christian migrant is a potential missionary” (p. 6).

The book is convincing in its demonstration that globalization is not a one-way process of advancing Western hegemony but that, on the contrary, it is being significantly shaped by non-Western agency; and in showing that the face of Christianity in the West is being changed through the advent of immigrant churches, which represent the contextually shaped faith of non-Western communities. It is less convincing in regard to the “transformation of the West.” While Hanciles offers both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the new immigrant churches, he concedes that, so far, their impact has largely been limited to people who are already part of their transnational communities. What remains to be seen is whether they can develop the capacity for cross-cultural mission, which would enable them to impact people in the Western mainstream, where secular (post)modernity holds sway. “Pastoral detention center or missionary springboard?” (p. 349).

The movement of immigrant non-Western Christianity is painted in largely positive hues (missionary hagiography revisited?). This may be a necessary corrective to earlier neglect, but it highlights the need for more critical and nuanced accounts to be developed in the future. No one should attempt any such exercise without thoroughly engaging with Hanciles’s ground-breaking book—a must-read for anyone seeking to discern the emerging shape of mission in our time.

—Kenneth R. Ross


These newly translated letters record the conclusion of a decade of endeavor by an international group of Jesuit missionaries under Belgian leadership to establish a mission north of the Zambezi in what is now southern Zambia. Their publication
completes the English version of an original two-volume work in French. The first volume (published in 1979) described the establishment of a Jesuit house near Gubuluwayo (in what is now Zimbabwe), the capital of Lobengula, chief of the Ndebele. In this second volume we learn how the Jesuits’ journeys beyond Gubuluwayo were dogged by misfortune, disease, and death, despite incredible courage and fortitude on the part of Henri Depelchin, Karel Croonenberghs, and their companions. The geographic extent of the proposed mission and the distance from its base in South Africa made the enterprise impracticable.

Although they are a record of ultimate failure, the letters give a vivid account of the journeys and of the hazards caused by hostile chieftains, ox-drawn wagons, river rapids, and life-threatening sickness. They are a testimony to the faith and zeal of these missionary pioneers. Both Depelchin and Croonenberghs eventually returned to Belgium, whence the former was reassigned to India. Jesuits returned north of the Zambezi in 1905, and the mission became the field of Polish members of the society.

The work of editing these texts was carried out by Roberts, formerly professor of history at the University of Zimbabwe. It could hardly be bettered. There is an excellent introduction, brief biographies of the missionaries, copious notes, and a list of those who gave their lives. The book’s appearance is due to the initiative and enthusiasm of Fr. Eddie Murphy, S.J.

—Aylward Shorter


Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.


Conversion to Christianity assembles essays dealing with conversion to Christianity in ten societies, ranging chronologically from the fourth to the nineteenth centuries and geographically from Constantinople, created by Emperor Constantine to be a Christian city, to the Mariana Islands, converted by Spanish Catholic missionaries. The quality of these essays is high,
and they deal in comparative fashion with significant issues.

Looming over the book is the figure of Constantine I. Several writers refer to a “Constantinian model of conversion,” which they oversimplify but which serves as a recognizable package. It involves (1) the conversion of a great man, generally in response to a pressing need, often victory in battle; (2) the conversion of his entire society, top-down, by force; (3) the melding of the Christian religion with the imperium; and (4) the belief that this process can happen quickly. Editor Calvin Kendall comments, “Violence is the persistent subtext of the narrative of the conversion of peoples to Christianity” (p. 5).

The authors, authorities in their areas of specialization, illustrate how this package functioned in the minds and behaviors of elites and missionaries, and they demonstrate its limitations on the ground. Several writers query the “great man/top-down” model of missionary expansion. According to Jonathan Shepard, the conversion of Emperor Vladimir of Russia (around 988) was preceded by anticipatory conversions among his subjects and the role of significant women. Other writers point to the incompleteness of conversions accomplished by state power; in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, Laura Hebert points out, the great temple of Aphrodite dominated the local skyline 170 years after Constantine’s accession. Patrick Provost-Smith illuminatingly demonstrates that the Constantinian package was at the heart of debates among Catholic missionaries to China in the 1580s. Jesuit Alonso Sánchez, impatient with Matteo Ricci’s attempt to inculturate the Gospel in a Confucian society, urged Spanish king Philip II (called “el Nuevo Constantino”) to authorize Spanish troops to open China by force to the operation of missionaries. The defeat of the Spanish Armada rendered this idea impossible.

Authors occasionally allude to conversion with a nonviolent subtext, the model of the pre-Constantinian Christians. Having no temporal power and being willing to suffer for their witness, missionaries in this tradition—often non-Westerners—made a major impact on worldwide Christianity. Studies of the spread of Christianity in the Persian Empire from the fourth century onward, or in twentieth-century West Africa through William Wade Harris, would have complemented the essays in this useful volume.

—Alan Kreider

Alan Kreider teaches church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, and is the author (with Eleanor Kreider) of Worship and Mission After Christendom (Paternoster Press, 2009).


The Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) is perhaps unique among national SCMs in being the subject of a major scholarly history. Renate Howe, associate professor at Deakin University in Australia, is a distinguished social historian with long involvement in the social, political, and religious life of Australia. The narrative begins with John R. Mott’s visit to Australia in 1896 and the consequent missionary enterprise, especially in Korea, China, India, and the

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Pacific. It continues through the rise of the modern ecumenical movement, touches—perhaps too briefly—on the split between the SCM and the Evangelical Union, and describes the golden days of the ASCM (ca. 1930–65), followed by the stormy decade starting in 1968. For the next twenty years, although the movement had lost much of its influence in the university, many of its senior members exercised a remarkable influence in the public sphere.

We read the illustrious names of ASCM women and men who opposed the infamous “White Australia” policy. Others entered local, state, and federal politics and worked to provide universal health care and proper housing. Some established Australia’s constructive presence in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Others promoted land rights for Australia’s indigenous people. Still others became heads of universities and colleges. In recent decades the movement has sought to demonstrate gender equality and sexual inclusivity in its own life.

The word “influence” in the book’s title is justified by the fact that the ASCM did indeed influence political and social justice issues to the point where many wrongs were righted by government action. For how many movements can a similar claim be made? It was a costly influence, possible only through the readiness of many people to suffer for their Christian political commitment—such as Herb Feith in Indonesia, Frank Engel in Aboriginal communities and in Southeast Asia, and Margaret Holmes pioneering a new life for political internees and refugees. For the influence, of which the movement was an effective public channel, was nothing other than the influence of Christ, “the inspiration of our political struggle” (p. 361). The chapter entitled “Lo, Here Is Felawschippe” recalls the worship, Bible study, fellowship—and silence—that were at the heart of the ASCM.

It was largely a lay movement, concerned with being “university within the university.” A professional theologian might have told the story differently, but Howe’s account is genuine lay theology. Her distinguished public profile will ensure that her book is studied in Australian corridors of power. But its message is for all who seek to practice the politics of informed Christian conviction.

—Robin Boyd

American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism.


Thomas S. Kidd, associate professor of history at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, has contributed a number of excellent volumes on the history of American evangelicalism. With American Christians and Islam he adds to that legacy a valuable historical survey of evangelical perceptions of Muslims and Islam in the last 300 years. He has limited his survey to writings by American evangelicals, without much reference to the broader Orientalist scholarship in Europe. As helpful as that larger context would have been, Kidd’s approach accurately captures the isolationist approach with regard to scholarship on Islam that has persisted in the North American evangelical community.

Focusing on the two themes of missionary outreach to Muslims and eschatological interpretations of Islam, Kidd traces these themes from the Great Awakening in the eighteenth century to the proliferation of books on Islam written by evangelicals after 9/11. He convincingly demonstrates that the vilification of Islam is not a recent phenomenon but has been a consistent theme in evangelical writings. At the same time, however, he argues that there have always been others in that community who have persistently advocated a more moderate approach. Kidd states that it is not his intention to evaluate the accuracy of the depictions of Islam he examines but to investigate the American fear of, and theological engagement with, Islam. Nevertheless, his position is not that of a neutral observer but that of a “practicing Christian” concerned that “too much American Christian writing on Islam has cultivated sensationalized ideas about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, at the expense of charitable understanding” (p. xiii).

The strength of the book is its use of a wide range of primary sources, bringing together nineteenth-century writings on prophecy both by those following a historicist model and by those committed to dispensationalism, especially as expressed in the growing Zionist movement. With regard to missions, Kidd not only has examined published missionary and travel narratives but also has incorporated extensive archival research of missionary correspondence. The range of material covered in this slim volume is impressive, but gaps are inevitable. It would have been helpful to have more on the work of Presbyterian missionary E. M. Wherry and his commentary on the Qur’an, as

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well as some mention of the Anglican missionary T. P. Hughes, who spent the last thirty-five years of his life in America, writing prolifically about Islam. Such omissions do not, however, diminish the invaluable contribution this book makes to our understanding of the history of evangelical attitudes toward Muslims and Islam.

—Alan M. Guenther

Alan M. Guenther is Assistant Professor of History at Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, Saskatchewan. He worked as a missionary in Pakistan from 1988 to 1992.

**Africa and the New Face of Mission: A Critical Assessment of the Legacy of the Irish Spiritans Among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria.**


The missionary enterprise is an essential part of the Christian faith. Emil Brunner’s famous statement “the church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning” still rings true today. As a field of study, however, mission studies is constantly being redefined and always calling for new analysis, understanding, and modalities. *Africa and the New Face of Mission* is about the compelling story of the missionary odyssey of the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Congregation (Spiritans) among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, explaining clearly the dynamism and missionary agenda of the Spiritans in Nigeria. Their task has often been beset by daunting challenges and obstacles, but the Spiritans have stood the test of time and made enduring contributions to the propagation of the Good News in different parts of southeastern Nigeria.

The book opens with a powerful and poignant foreword by the late Ogbu Kalu. In an incisive first chapter, Ebelebe describes Igbo culture at the time of encounter with Christianity, including Igbo cosmology, ethics, economy, and politics. It provides good insight into the cultural context in which the Christian message was eventually immersed. The chapter underscores the fact that no missionary work can be carried out in a cultural vacuum. It also boldly affirms that no serious study of the missionary enterprise in Africa can ignore the traditional worldview, ethos, and culture, which must significantly shape the message being introduced. The rest of the book deals with important issues such as the history of the Spiritans, the sources of Irish Spiritan mission theology in Igboland, the major trends in mission theology today, the Igbo Catholic Church, and the changing face of mission today. This book presents a compelling account of the efforts of the Spiritans to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ with an agenda shaped largely by the sociopolitical and faith perspective of Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This volume makes significant contributions to the larger discourse on mission studies. Ebelebe writes with clarity and conviction. His study provides an important African perspective on the theology and raison d’être of mission, on which the future of the Christian church necessarily rests.

—Akintunde E. Akinade

Akintunde E. Akinade, from Nigeria, teaches world religions and Christian-Muslim relations at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar.

**Chinese Theological Education, 1979–2006**


This collection of essays and reports edited by Marvin D. Hoff goes far in helping readers understand the steady growth and organization of Christianity in post-Mao China (i.e., after 1976). From 1979 to 2006 Hoff was executive director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA). Over these years Hoff personally demonstrated that contemporary missiology requires patience over the long haul, as he served variously as guest traveler, listener, banquet guest, report writer, planner, financier/fund-raiser, group participant, risk taker, and host.

Charles Forman explains FTESEA’s historic service “as a new avenue of service” (p. 2) that emerged in theological education for all of Southeast Asia. Consequently, seeking new opportunities for relationships when China opened in the late 1970s, Bishop K. H. Ting of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary turned to FTESEA for international aid. Daniel H. Bays’s summary of Christianity in twentieth-century China explains that sufferings and the “startling” (p. 14) growth of Protestant, Catholic, and evangelical Chinese have occurred under bureaucracies such as the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Bays notes that the “key issue was registration of [these] congregations” (p. 14). (He dates the Catholic beatification...
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Catholic Pentecostalism and the Paradoxes of Africanization: Processes of Localization in a Catholic Charismatic Movement in Cameroon.


Catholic Pentecostalism, Ludovic Lado’s published Ph.D. dissertation, is a religious anthropological study of Ephphata, a Catholic charismatic movement in Cameroon (see www.fraterniteephphata.com). Unlike the situation in other African states, where such movements are founded by laypeople on the fringes of church life, Ephphata was founded, and still is led, by Meinrad Hebga, an accomplished Catholic priest and theologian. Throughout the sub-Saharan Africa the interventionist nature of Pentecostal theology, especially its emphasis on sickness and healing as spiritual issues, has led either to mass drifts into Pentecostal churches or to the “domestication” of Pentecostalism within historic mission denominations. Lado demonstrates that, despite his claim that Ephphata is originally a North American import, African religious concerns are at the heart of its activities.

Following a general introduction, Lado presents Ephphata as “a function of Hebga’s creative agency mediated by the Catholic Church as a major player on the global scene” (p. 8). The desire of Hebga to incorporate spiritual renewal into an otherwise very liturgically structured Catholic Church has brought strains and challenges (p. 3). One of the book’s most critical observations is that, although much has been done to “indigenize” the Catholic liturgy in Africa since Vatican II, “neither Catholic sacraments nor Western medicine have been able to fill the ritual void created by the displacement of local rituals” (p. 13). The challenge to respond to the deep spiritual questions that Africans bring to the church has led to the increasing incorporation of renewal movements within historic mission churches. That point is underscored by the concrete examples Lado uses to demonstrate the relevance of Ephphata in Cameroon as a process in the Africanization of Christianity. Given the centrality of witchcraft and healing in Ephphata rituals, Lado’s claim that the movement is entirely imported from the United States is difficult to sustain. However, this point must not take away from the fact that this is an important book for those seeking to understand the nuanced evolution of Christianity in Africa as a non-Western religion.

—J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu


This is an Indian reprint of Hendrik Kraemer’s classic book, which was first published in 1938. The value of the volume is enhanced by a substantial new introduction by Jan A. B. Jongeneel of Utrecht University, in which he claims that this book was “the most significant missionary/missiological study of the twentieth century” (p. xxvii). Six new indexes/appendixes facilitate reference to the study.

Kraemer, formerly with the Netherlands Bible Society in Indonesia, was professor of the history of religions at the University of Leiden when he was commissioned to write a study volume in preparation for the meeting of the International Missionary Council to be held in Gambirsch, Madras, in 1938. Although it is never mentioned specifically, Kraemer’s work was largely a response to and repudiation of Re-Thinking Missions, the so-called Hocking report of the Laymen’s Foreign Missions Inquiry (1932). In contrast...
to the optimism and theological relativism of Hocking, Kraemer emphasized the discontinuity between “Biblical realism” and non-Christian religious experience. Some American and Indian theologians argued that this Barthian concept was neither biblical nor realistic. Discussion of the book, however, dominated the Tamarama conference, and Kraemer’s work provided a forceful theological perspective until well after World War II.

Still today it is important to digest what Kraemer had to say and to assess its continuing validity, especially for a theology of religions in regard to the Christian attitude and approach in mission to people of other faiths.

Those who wish to obtain a copy of the book may contact the publisher at cfcc94@gmail.com or arles@sify.com.

—Gerald H. Anderson

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


Boundless Faith provides a powerful corrective to some contemporary understandings of the mission outreach of the American church. Based on extensive interviews among church leaders and church members in the first half of 2005, combined with a great deal of secondary research, Wuthnow provides a sociologist’s perspective on how the American church is both affected by and contributing to globalization.

Resulting from the ease of international travel and international communication, increasing immigration, and the growing number of international partnerships between Majority World and American churches, globalization has “tempered American Christianity … by exposing the most devout Christians to other religions and other ways of being Christian” (p. 250). The result is an American church that is becoming increasingly transcultural, “responding to the realities of globalization by actively and intentionally engaging in activities that span borders” (p. 6).

Wuthnow’s research identifies a series of factors that drive this movement toward increased global outreach. First, the number of local churches around the world is skyrocketing; there are many more potential ministry partners around the globe. Second, the American church is awash in financial resources; Wuthnow estimates that the overseas spending of American churches has risen to almost $4 billion annually. Third, the number and size of faith-based humanitarian organizations have grown enormously. Finally, the number and size of the megachurches continue to grow; their size enables them to engage directly in global outreach.

Wuthnow concludes by casting doubt on what he calls “three widely held assumptions about American Christianity” (p. 235). Some have argued that American Christianity is withdrawing from global mission engagement on the grounds that the church is growing rapidly around the world without the need of American help. Wuthnow’s research demonstrates that the opposite is the case.

Another commonly asserted myth is that local congregations are turning inward as church members seek self-help and therapeutic support. The magnitude of global engagement makes it clear that this statement simply is not supported by the facts.

Finally, some argue that the growing engagement of Christians on issues relating to American foreign policy is largely an evangelical phenomenon related to their support of a formerly Republican administration. This claim, too, cannot stand in face of the evidence. Wuthnow shows that American faith communities focus more on criticizing than supporting administration foreign policies, and that all Christian traditions are demonstrating increasing interest in foreign affairs.

Upon finishing Wuthnow’s intriguing book, one is left with a provocative and urgent question. The growing and cutting edge of the Christian church has moved to the global South and East, as we commonly hear. The center of gravity for theology, worship, and even mission to the poor is also moving to the South; no longer is the United States, or the West in general, the center of the Christian mission endeavor.

Yet the American church mobilizes $4 billion a year and sends out tens of thousands of short-term workers, along with record numbers of missionaries and relief and development professionals. How is this asymmetry of power to be reconciled and managed? What does genuine North-South partnership look like? How does the American church subordinate its role in a global church with a center in the South? What does a post-American mission world look like? Wuthnow alludes to this issue only briefly, since it is beyond the scope of his book. American Christians will have to struggle with these questions with some urgency.

—Bryant L. Myers

Bryant L. Myers is Professor of International Development in the School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.
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