Partnership. This deceptively simple term masks a complex reality. It commonly refers to some kind of formal or informal contractual arrangement between two or more persons or organizations carrying on a joint venture with a view to benefit of some kind, each incurring liability for failure and the right to share in the fruits of success. Partners may be persons, groups, organizations, or nations. Partnerships might be codified by civil or common law, or they may simply be informal, time-delimited arrangements for accomplishing a common cause.

Two of the essays in this issue focus directly on partnership. In her article Cathy Ross looks at a theology of partnership, exploring the implications for mission of something integral to all identities and agendas, divine and human. Leon Spencer, writing from his years of close association with Anglican theological education around the world, observes how haphazardly—and

Continued next page
exasperatingly—“partnership” has been understood and practiced since its first appearance in missiological parlance in a document entitled “Partners in Obedience” presented at the Whitby (Canada) International Missionary Council of 1947.

Since Max Warren’s famous Partnership: The Study of an Idea (SCM, 1956), which begins with the surprising comment that “partnership is an idea whose time has not yet fully come” (p. 11), the subject has been a mainstay of missiological discourse. Of course we know what is meant. Economic inequity in close social proximity has always engendered severe, even intractable, challenges for both churches and missions. At the deepest level of the Western psyche is the surety that he who pays the fiddler calls the tune. And so Westerners, who have traditionally provided the lion’s share of mammon in many partnerships, have exercised the lion’s prerogative in dictating the terms of their partnerships.

Compounding the material and cultural asymmetries that make partnership so difficult is the increasing awareness that, as William Burrows notes, formerly missionary-exporting lands are today in greater need of evangelization than formerly missionary-receiving lands. This reality raises questions not only about many of the deepest assumptions underlying the organizing, financing, recruiting, and training of missionaries in the West, but also about the nature and purposes of missions-related, task-oriented partnerships, which until recently have been largely defined and dominated by Western ecclesiastical entities, Catholic, Protestant, and Independent alike.

But quite beyond the inevitable and pervasive shortcomings suffusing our selves, our organizations, and our cultures, might it be possible that the term “partner” permits or even fosters an ecclesiastical distortion that is so fundamentally false that it perverts our grasp of the deepest verities? Although St. Paul was warmly appreciative of the church in Philippi for its “partnership in the Gospel” (Phil. 1:5 ESV), he most frequently and telling thought of the church in organic terms, repeatedly and emphatically insisting that it is the body of Christ (Rom. 12:1–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–31; Eph. 4:1–16). Indeed, his cheerful acceptance of the personal inconvenience and suffering that characterized his entire ministry derived from his absolute confidence that he was “completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Col. 1:24).

The deficiencies of the discourse of ecclesiastical partnership become apparent when applied to the organs of our own bodies. It would be bizarre to suggest that each of the thousands of parts that compose a healthy human being is in some kind of voluntary partnership with all of the others. Much more is at stake in the interconnections, interpenetrations, and interdependencies within us than the word “partnership” can be made to imply. A detached body part is dead. In the most profound and ultimate sense, as with the myriad parts of any living body, so all Christians are interconnected, utterly interdependent members of one body. As such, we dare not confine our practical thinking about how to fulfill the church’s mission to the restricted range of possibilities suggested or permitted by a contractual term, even one so potentially rich and intimate as “partnership.”

While mutual benefit is the ideal outcome of all partnerships, and though more is required of us—and promised to us—than can be encompassed by that ideal alone, just seeking to live in terms of this dimension of our faith is in itself of great value. Hanna Cheriyani Varghese (1938–2009), who was an artist in residence at OMSC, portrays her gentle vision of partnership in her painting Join Hands for Peace, above. The image is instructively symbolic. The fragile human chain—representing what St. Paul refers to as “the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15)—is only as strong as its weakest link, yet it is the divinely decreed framework for partnering in God’s work in God’s world.

—Jonathan J. Bonk

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Catholics, Carey’s “Means,” and Twenty-first-Century Mission

William R. Burrows

It is common to observe that geography is no longer an important aspect of world mission, yet a remark made by Marshall McLuhan (1911–80)—“We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future”—describes nothing so well as the mental furniture many of us use to image mission as something done by members of Catholic religious orders and Protestant mission societies working “overseas.” Indeed, “mission” and activities directed from North to South seem embedded in the DNA of missiology, no matter how we try to shed them. These images are outmodeled, yet they dominate our imagination because of the way they so nobly captured an aspect of the church’s missionary identity. The issue? Formerly missionary-exporting lands are today in greater need of evangelization than formerly missionary-receiving lands. The Roman Catholic Church, the focus of this article, thus faces a problem of where and, possibly more urgently, how pastoral care of the faithful and evangelization of the fallen away and nonbelievers should be directed. If I read the tea leaves correctly, the principal alternatives appear to be equally unattractive to the church’s episcopal and papal leadership, since (1) maintaining present policies seems to ensure that the current personnel shortage will hamstring efforts to mount a “new evangelization” in the West, and (2) reopening post-Vatican II debates on issues like the nonordination of women and whether to maintain celibacy for its priests threatens to dissolve basic Catholic theological and identity markers.

A Conundrum for Catholic Leadership

In the discussion that follows I seek to sketch the ways in which many Catholics look back at means of evangelization that served the church well for two centuries but that may need recalibration in an era that began in 1989 with the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the realignment of the world’s power blocs. In particular, I draw attention to the fact that Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have each called for a “new evangelization” in an era of globalization that, ironically, necessitates ceding more authority to men and women at the local level as opposed to maintaining fundamental church structures in the face of changing cultural vagues, and even forces as basic as the democratic spirit and new views of gender identity and social roles cannot be allowed to trump tradition.

As Sharon Welch has noted, without the right sort of “subjects” or people needed to carry on a mission, nothing will happen. Even more pointedly, she notes that the kind of “humanity envisioned [for mission] . . . does not come about naturally; it has to be achieved.” Welch is speaking about what she calls the “strategic knowledges” necessary to carry on liberation. It is my contention that historically missionary religious communities were zones of evangelical intensity where men and women were formed, to paraphrase Ephesians 4:23–24, “in the furniture of their minds to put on a new self, created to be like God in the kind of rightness and holiness needed in the apostolate.” That transformation, in effect, is the prerequisite “strategic knowledge” necessary to be a missionary of Christ—and such knowledge is much more than instrumental or conceptual.

It is not as simple as “modernizing” by ordaining married men or women, as many progressives have argued. First, because the Catholic Church has been engaged—quite properly, at least in my opinion, in many if not all its efforts—in resistance to the proposition that secular national and transnational organizations ought to be the supreme arbiters of morality. Second, because the papacy has resisted the demolition of tradition by much of academia since the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. In large parts of the Catholic world, there is at present no opposition to current ordination policies. Absent a broad-based clamor for change, imposing married or women priests universally at the behest of Western theologians runs the risk of ignoring the principle of subsidiarity, which involves allowing decisions to be made at the level closest to those being affected. More positively, the insistence of Rome on the maintenance of its rules for selecting leaders and making other decisions is integral to the reform project begun at the Council of Trent (1545–63), which aimed at producing a cadre of well-educated, ordained priests grounded in Catholic tradition as refined in the agenda of Trent. At least since the age of Kant and the Enlightenment, a piece of this agenda has quite properly insisted that modern canons of what is provable (for instance, in historical-critical scriptural studies) not be allowed to trump the Bible and Tradition as ways of knowing who Jesus of Nazareth is. In the Vatican’s view, in other words, it is essential to maintain a leadership cadre loyal to maintaining fundamental church structures in the face of changing cultural vagues, and even forces as basic as the democratic spirit and new views of gender identity and social roles cannot be allowed to trump tradition.

The question in the background throughout this article is whether the Catholic Church is wise or foolish to insist upon its traditions in the face of globalization and in the face of a mindset that has been influenced by democratization to believe that everything cultural is subject to change if a majority so desires. In resisting this worldview, is the church standing for deeper and more valuable tradition? When does the maintenance of traditions begin to occlude “Tradition” in the sense of passing on the core of Christian doctrine and experience? Is the church losing the ability to adapt its means of evangelization and pastoral care in an era of globalization that, ironically, necessitates ceding more authority to men and women at the local level as opposed to maintaining universal hierarchical structures?

Like the opening of the petals of a flower, or the peeling of layer upon layer of an onion, a number of interrelated and consequential developments unfold in the discussion that follows.

Catholic Recession and Protestant Advance

For background and context, we begin with the Catholic church’s adaptation to the challenge of Protestant missions in the late eighteenth century, an adaptation that set the stage for the current situation. To a large extent, these Protestant missions were sparked by William Carey’s provocative book An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens (1792). For Carey, the signs of the times indicated that
missionary societies were necessary as “means” to bring about the conversion of non-Christians, which was the animating goal of mission. While churches in countries such as England were favorable toward the mission ideal, Carey believed that neither ecclesiastical structures nor congregational or parish organizations were flexible enough to lead. For that function, mission societies were required.

The importance of Carey’s book and of the challenge posed for Catholics by the modern Protestant missionary movement can scarcely be overstated. Protestants argued for dispersing the organizational aspects of missionary work among scores of self-initiating voluntary societies, which were patterned, in turn, on earlier Catholic missionary orders and secular commercial practices.

Early modern Catholic missions began with the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. Building on the traditions of their Franciscan and Dominican forebears, Jesuits pioneered new means of evangelization in Europe and then carried those methods to their new missions. Under the inspiration and guidance of men like Francis Xavier (1506–52), Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), José de Acosta (1539–1600), and Roque González (1576–1628), Jesuits wedded a peculiarly modern evangelical fervor to the spirit of the Renaissance and exploited the shrinking of the globe accomplished by Spanish and Portuguese mariners. For reasons too complex to go into here, the Jesuits’ Japan missions were effectively ended by 1644. Their mission in China was stymied in 1724 by internal Catholic contentions as well as nationalistic rivalries among Catholic powers. As those conflicts grew, the Society of Jesus was suppressed by Pope Clement XIV in 1773, a suppression that also ended its influence in Latin America and reduced Catholicism there to subservience to Spanish and Portuguese colonial predation.

Samuel Moffett terms the fifty-year period after 1773 as one in which Catholic world missions slid into a period of steep decline. Although the Jesuits were refounded in August 1814 with the permission of Pope Pius VII, Catholics were largely in a reactive mode in the face of two geopolitical and religious vectors. The first of these was Protestant Britain’s position as the superpower of the day, which brought British customs and rules into ascendency, so much so that, even where other colonizing nations were locally more powerful, the terms on which commerce and colonization were carried on were largely set by a Britain that had very low regard for Catholicism.

The second was the development of the mission agency as a religious voluntary society. With Catholic missions in disarray, the stage was set for Protestants to enter into world mission with British Protestant hegemony behind it. Carey’s Enquiry, in effect, marked the emergence of currents that brought into being or informed groups such as the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1792), the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society (1799), the Basel (1815) and Neuendettelsau (1841) societies, and a host of others. Whether intentionally or not, these organizations owed a great deal to the famous Jesuit “way of proceeding,” that is to say, they were highly centralized organizations rooted in evangelical piety. They were flexible and were able to gather both personnel and money for missions. The mission societies used advances in technology and became the principal “means” that the Protestants used as they entered the mission fields of India, China, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Oceania.

More ambiguously, for all the creative dynamics it embodied, the Protestant missionary movement would splice the genes of nationalism and colonialism into what was emerging, tragically repeating patterns that had so wounded early modern Spanish, Portuguese, and French Catholic missions. Even more ambiguously, it would bequeath what may be termed an entrepreneurial spirit to the churches that were born. By this I mean that—unlike earlier periods of evangelization, which nurtured a spirit of organic “communion”—the new churches were entities that could merge, split, and follow innovating trends with little to inhibit them. Rivalries sprang up, not only with Catholics but also among Protestant missions, so much so that the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 was convened to overcome them. Edinburgh achieved many great things, but nurturing a spirit of communion among all the world’s Christians was not one of them. The missions so much embodied the modern spirit as the water in which they swam that they could not perceive the problems it caused.

The Catholic Response I: New Orders as the Catholic “Means”

The Catholic world awoke to the Protestant challenge during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Protestant missionary successes multiplied, Catholics realized that they needed to develop similar organizations to implement their own missionary ideals. A host of “orders,” both male and female, were founded that to a greater or lesser degree embodied three principles:

- The Jesuit way of organizing, financing, recruiting, and training missionaries, which brought men and women into the orders from every strata of society, nurtured bonds that would hold them together no matter how widely they were dispersed, and offered a structure in which ordinary people could achieve extraordinary results.
- A spirituality of self-sacrifice and total commitment to the church, which flowed from what can loosely be called the “French spirituality,” epitomized in Abandonment to Divine Providence, the classic work by Jean-Pierre Caussade, S.J. (1675–1751). Caussade counseled self-abandonment to God, obedience to the church, and finding God in the demands of daily life. This ethos of self-abandonment worked its way into the understanding of the missionary vocation in most nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catholic orders.
- Official recognition by papal authority and conformity to rules set up by the Holy See.

The missiological premise of these communities was twofold and completely in keeping with the philosophy of Carey and his appeal to “means”: first, to seek the conversion of the “heathens” and the establishment of the church, and second, to uphold the idea that mission demanded personal holiness. Long periods of
training, beginning with a rigorous one-or two-year novitiate, were required in the belief that one needed to turn one’s back on worldly values to convert oneself to Christ in one’s inmost being. The training process also socialized members into an ethic of self-abnegation and cooperation for the goal of the order. In each of the constitutions of the various orders, the Holy See insisted that two things be clear: on the one hand, the special “charism” of the order and devotion to the larger church; on the other, the primacy of becoming holy as the goal of becoming a member. (The language of “charism” in the parlance of religious orders reflects belief that the order’s founder was led by the Spirit to gather a group of followers to serve God in a special manner. The Passionist order’s charism, for example, was one of making manifest the love of God shown in Jesus’ undergoing his passion and death.) Holiness was a reflection of that charism and was the result of the Spirit’s leading a member to surrender to God by living out the charism.

Two other characteristics are also important. The first is that these orders were to be close partners of the pope, dedicated to planting the Roman Catholic Church. Their constitutions were all approved by Rome and contained clauses that inculcated loyalty to the Holy See and obliged the orders to undertake missions at the direction of the Holy See’s central missionary coordination agency, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (founded in 1622, now known as the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples). In a practice that continued until 1969, specific territories were entrusted to specific orders which then became responsible for staffing them.

Although less frequently recognized, a second characteristic is, I believe, extremely important for understanding what happened to the orders in the West after Vatican II. These orders had a utilitarian side that reflected the rise of capitalism in several important ways. They were organized bureaucratically around concrete tasks. They attracted men and women who were task-oriented. And they relied upon what might be called, in sociology-of-knowledge terminology, a constellation of beliefs and values that made the choice to join them “plausible” to youth who contemplated taking that step. The result was that the Catholic people as a whole viewed the vocation to religious life as a calling to a “higher way of life,” and they supported their children in embracing the option for celibacy that joining an order entailed.

Catholicism Faces Modernity

A recent book makes the case that issuance of the 1917 Code of Canon Law as a result of initiatives undertaken by Pope Pius X made the Catholic Church the world’s first truly global organization.12 Under that code, religious orders were granted special privileges to manage their own affairs without the interference of local bishops. The price for this “exception,” as it was called, was supervision by the Holy See. Thus religious orders were simultaneously a major means by which Catholicism grew and by which the Holy See exerted control of the results globally. But each organization also had its own particular spirituality and ways of approaching tasks. Despite the emphasis on obedience, the best communities were not ruled from the top down; instead, they were zones where individuals were respected and where ways were sought to utilize their particular gifts.

By 1959, when Pope John XXIII conceived of summoning the Second Vatican Council, the process of globalizing Roman authority had led to the church’s encounter with one of the paradoxical effects of globalization. That is to say, the force exerted to create global uniformity engenders a counterreaction at the local level as peoples seek to maintain their cultures against what they perceive to be an imposed hegemony. Viewed from the perspective of globalization, the Catholic Church was both the first truly global organization and among the first to feel the discontents such an organization causes. While organized vertically from local missions up to the level of the general council and superiors general residing in Rome, members of the orders were also inserted into local cultural realities. Moreover, members were used to having a voice in decisions within their order. Members of these orders embraced the winds of Vatican II theology, as it is my contention, as a way of opening up to adaptation at the local level, where the rigidities of canon and mission law often seemed ridiculous. Both men’s and women’s orders were among the groups that engaged most seriously in theological updating, and it is fair to say that many members came to feel a deeper loyalty toward newly discovered Gospel values than they did to Roman directives. This tension led to a great deal of what causes an impasse today in Catholic evangelization efforts.

The Catholic Response II: Women’s Orders as Integral to Modern Mission

It is important to observe that the orders that were instrumental in modern mission were not only male. Equally important were orders of women, some of them founded as branches of male communities, more of them as independent congregations. Indeed, their emergence may have been more important for the credibility and success of Catholic missions than the work of ordained men. There has been, I will admit, little serious study that can assess whether this hunch of mine can be proved. Nevertheless, several studies do point in this direction. A leading example would be the work of Dana Robert of Boston University.12 A seminal article by her, for instance, raises the question of the significance of the fact that world Christianity is predominantly a woman’s movement.13 A book recently published by Ana María Bidegain makes the case for the importance of the role played by Catholic women in the evangelization of Latin America.14 Susan

Religious orders were simultaneously a means by which Catholicism grew and by which the Holy See exerted control.

Smith has published an important book on the role of women in mission throughout the history of Christianity.15 Smith’s book has the disadvantage of surveying twenty centuries, but when one is finished reading it, one realizes that historical and theological studies of the expansion of Christianity have almost totally ignored women.

Why raise this issue? Not just because women’s issues are in vogue; indeed, many aspects of twentieth-century feminism are today regarded as ambiguous. Rather, it is because the role of women needs to be factored in as we consider why the new-evangelization agenda has not gotten off the ground. I propose we move forward with a look rearward, noting, as Rodney Stark has shown, that the attractive ethos of Christian communities gave the nascent Christian movement credibility in the first
Vatican II sought renewal based on this kind of insight, yet we must admit, if this is the criterion, the council failed.

women in the West is not overcome, we can predict that it will be difficult to attract the kind of “subjects” necessary for a new evangelization. If women do not believe they are respected or given equal rights, they will not work to bring people into the church or to improve the life of the church.

Likewise, if Catholicism is to be given a second chance as a vehicle for presenting the Christian message today in areas where such faiths and outlooks as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and secularism are predominant, it will be because women think Christianity both identifies for them something they want to be saved from and offers a community that enhances their ability to engender better futures for their families, cultures, and nations. This is not the same thing, I hasten to add, as endorsing the ordination of women or of married men everywhere in the world. The situation in different cultures necessitates different solutions, including solutions to the problem of cultures that retard the development of women and girls.

Catholicism at a Crossroad

In the rest of this article I address fundamental issues surrounding the need to find adequate “means” for evangelization of each new areopagus in the world, a term I borrow from §37 of Redemptor misio, John Paul II’s encyclical on the permanent validity of the church’s missionary mandate. In speaking of a “new evangelization” and of “many other forms of the ‘Areopagus’ in the modern world toward which the Church’s missionary activity ought to be directed,” John Paul is speaking of the need to move beyond geographic criteria for mission and instead to enter into an understanding of “new worlds and new social phenomena” that are created by social differentiation and stratifications, migration, demographic slices, and the reality of “cultural sectors” in which the Gospel is absent or poorly represented (e.g., the worlds of scientific research and international organizations).

Redemptor misio was issued to counter a notion that the pope believed had become prevalent, namely, the reduction of Christianity to the status of “merely human wisdom,” in which mission takes place in a “merely horizontal dimension” (§11).

He seeks, moreover, to bring to the fore fundamental teachings from Ad gentes (1965), the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. For both Roman documents, it is axiomatic that mission must move from being the activity of specialist volunteers in religious and apostolic life communities to an activity of the whole church under the guidance of bishops (RM 61–76, AG 28–41). The integrating element of mission is the attempt to make known the person, work, and ministry of Christ in God’s plan (RM 4–11), a work animated by the Spirit of God (RM 21–30).

Most missiologists heap praise on Redemptor misio. Yet as alienation has increased among men and women who—especially in the West—subscribe to a progressive interpretation of Vatican II, the notion of plantatio ecclesiae (planting the church) has dropped out of discussions of mission practice. Is it not ironic that so little seems to have been done to nurture the sort of communities that alone will produce the functional equivalent of the religious order “missionaries” for this “new evangelization”? The reality is that dioceses and parishes are struggling to maintain themselves. True, lay ministries take up the slack in many areas. David Gibson has written a much-acclaimed book on how the laity is transforming American Catholicism. Yet as much as Gibson makes the case for a transformation, I read him as proposing a path not unlike that taken by the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist, and other churches—denominations that are losing members steadily. Transformation for Gibson seems to be marked by how progressive and “American” the church becomes—but not by the standards of Western Catholicism at an Impasse

Why is this impasse not resolved? There are numerous possible explanations, but here I highlight the one that seems most persuasive to me. At Vatican II the scriptural ideal of service in the world with everyone responsible for testifying to God’s work in Jesus of Nazareth in every areopagus triumphed. But along with the triumph of the view that baptism confers a missionary vocation on every Christian came another set of insights that unfortunately were kept from maturing so consequences could be drawn from them. The insights I refer to were perhaps first and best captured in the modern era in Luther’s teaching on the vocation of all Christians to be active in whatever way of life they found themselves, coupled with a stringent critique of
monasticism as obscuring true Christian vocation. Luther, as he channels St. Paul on vocation, still has the power to command attention, and his insight marks his key contribution to the theology of mission, convincingly applying Paul’s message to societal conditions emerging in the early modern period.

In the post-Vatican II period, the adoption of the scriptural ideal first retrieved by the Reformers has become a veritable sensus communis fidelium (the common “sense” of the faithful) among Catholics, essentially replacing the medieval and its modernized French spirituality of celibate and religious life as “a more perfect way.” In Lumen gentium, chapter 2, “On the People of God,” Vatican II applied that renewed and wider vision of Christian identity to the mission of the entire church. But it did so looking backward through its tradition that religious and the clergy are set apart from the laity and called by God to be celibate.

Although it appears to be undiminished in broad swaths of Oceania, Africa, and Asia, the plausibility of religious life and priestly celibacy as a requirement for ordained leadership has waned in Europe and America. Though religious life as lived in monastic communities (such as the Cistercians and Carmelites) and in new kinds of communities—“in the world” (such as the Little Brothers and Sisters of Charles de Foucauld)—remains a “special call,” the days of numerically large missionary and religious communities founded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for specific tasks appear to be numbered unless there is a strong, shared commitment on the part of members to a hardly contemplative and semimonastic dimension. It is scarcely a secret that a large percentage of religious took the teaching of Vatican II to mean that this monastic or semi-monastic dimension was superseded by the need to take down the barriers and live in the world. Young people have not found the results attractive, at least not in numbers large enough to give most orders a vibrant future. According to a recent study, for communities to thrive they must have a way of life in clear contrast to the dominant society—one marked by a strong spirit of joy, the wearing of some form of religious habit, regular communal prayer, and insertion in the life of the people, especially of the poor. Even such communities, I suspect, will never enroll the numbers that American religious communities enlisted at their high-water mark around 1970 (35,000 religious order priests in the United States then, about 13,500 today, according to the 2009 National Catholic Directory; 173,000 women religious then, about 61,000 today, despite the fact that U.S. Catholics have grown from 48 million in 1970 to 68 million today). And those who remain in religious life are growing older, while few young members are joining what appear to be moribund communities.

**Gender Issues, Orders, and the Impasse**

I shift gears now to ask about the issue of gender in the church in the contemporary West. As is well known, in the aftermath of Vatican II, Catholic women discovered the possibility of serving God in venues other than religious life, just as women’s roles in society at large were undergoing major changes. In this context, many women religious found it difficult to operate in subordination to male authority structures, whose warrants in Scripture and Tradition seemed unconvincing to them. Whereas in an earlier era the “mission” of women religious was delineated as working alongside of, in support of, and under the direction of ordained males, many now began to work where and how their new consciousness led them.

The result? Not only did many women leave religious life altogether, but even many of those who remain are in serious tension with the hierarchy. They have a highly refined sensitivity to conditions in which men exert power despite lacking the qualities of character and insight that engender the genuine authority people gladly give to true leaders. The result is the alienation of many of the church’s most devoted members from a hierarchy they believe has refused to be open to the call of the Holy Spirit.

At another level, many religious orders, male and female, adopted the language of mission to express their raison d’être but understood that mission less as revolving around attracting converts to Christ and the church or church-related action. Instead, the ideal became action to promote human liberation and to alleviate suffering. To their critics, this new understanding seemed to downplay the importance of introducing people to saying yes to the promise of new life in Christ, of founding and guiding Christian communities, and of liturgically celebrating the Christian mystery. And the critics may have a point. Check the Web site of any dozen orders of men and women chosen at random. Bringing people to Christ is usually not listed as integral to their mission. But neither can anyone deny that in putting themselves at the service of the poor and oppressed, whether the poor be Christians or not, those making the option for such ministries have a genuine, Gospel-derived vision.

But these shifts were not the only changes to occur in the wake of Vatican II. While I simplify greatly, I think three things can be said to characterize what has been going on at the very top of the Catholic Church since Vatican II as it affects the orders and evangelization. First, several superiors general and others in a position to confirm their statements have told me flatly (on background and not for attribution) that Pope John Paul II had lost confidence in the orders and viewed many of them as saturated with a spirit of independence and dissent. When I asked for evidence, they related concrete situations in which religious orders were treated with calculated disrespect by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Apostolic Life, with the knowledge of the pope. One man pointed to words that were written by the pope, in a different context certainly but indicative of his mind-set. Speaking of true “renewal” in the church in Crossing the Threshold of Hope, John Paul notes that renewal “at one time . . . took place mainly through the religious orders” and names the Jesuits, Redemptorists, Divine Word Missionaries, Salvatorians, and Salesians. In this book, the pope seems to see more hope today in groups like Opus Dei and Communion e Liberazione, thus coming down on the side of the idea that the active orders are exhausted, at least in the West.

A second shift since Vatican II is that all popes since Paul VI have given evidence that they believe that the progressive wing of the church, in the vanguard of which are many members of the orders, is overaccenting critical studies of the Scriptures, is downplaying the divinity of Christ and the transcendent nature of the Gospel, and has become skeptical about the role of the church in the divine plan. Defending “Tradition” in these areas is the popes’ way of keeping threatening influences at bay.

Third, the recent popes have sought and seek to keep in one

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**The plausibility of religious life and priestly celibacy has waned in Europe and America.**

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ecclisial body elements that in Protestantism have splintered into a host of competing churches. But in doing so, they seem to be insisting on uniform discipline worldwide. At one level they have succeeded, but only at the cost of what the Dominican Timothy Radcliffe, in a 2008 address to Canadian religious, has called “sameness . . . the imposition of uniformity.” Religious orders, Radcliffe notes, used to break that pattern. They could do so once again.25

At a second level, as Peter Hünermann has written, the church in Europe as a whole is in a process of dissolution and operates in ways that contemporary Europeans consider standard in critical areas such as the observance of human rights.26

Hünermann wrote before the eruption of the clerical sex abuse scandal in the United States, Ireland, and Germany. Since then, the credibility of Catholicism among its active, alienated, and nonpracticing members, as well as among nonbelievers, has certainly not increased.

I am personally convinced that the impasse surrounding celibacy and the nonordination of women will continue to impede recovery of the church from its persistent low-grade fever. But in saying this, I am only drawing attention to a more basic question: Should the church return to being such a large-tent organization? That question brings the following two issues into relief.

• Catholicism since the beginning of the Middle Ages was a church of the masses. But belonging was at least as much a sociological fact as it was a matter of personal conviction. Is the challenge today, rather, one of discerning what sort of church we must become to be the community willed by Jesus in this age and in specific contexts?

• Is a more faithful church of the future likely to be a “contrast society,” a minority within a larger secular and religiously plural world, a community whose mission is to witness prophetically to Jesus and kingdom values?

It is virtually impossible, I believe, to imagine a reversal in the United States of the social changes that have made the traditional requirements for admission to ordained leadership implausible to the broad middle sweep of Catholic laity. And if we select only men who wish to be celibate and continue to bar women from ordained leadership, we will be restricting our potential leadership cadre to a very few. De facto, we will cease to be a broad-based sacramental church.

For people at the center-left and on the left, it is axiomatic that if the church is to solve its leadership problem, it needs to resolve the questions of the nonordination of women and married men in favor of the new outlook. The key question here is whether the church can make a change of this sort without losing a distinctive Catholic identity. With that question in mind, we do well to remember that the genius of the orders founded in the modern era was to practice a form of Christian life in which the contemplative gifts of monks were married to the practical effectiveness of groups that were simultaneously a part of the broader church and yet apart from it, acting as catalysts that brought specific charisms to bear in a host of ministries.

Conclusion

The conundrum faced by Catholic leadership today is one in which the old models seem unable to attract large enough numbers to carry on the missionary task, and more recent proposals for change seem designed to bend the church to conform to what modernity finds acceptable. Although I do not wish to calumniate the current cadre of seminarians, today’s models of priesthood and of training for priesthood do not seem up to the task. Certainly the numbers are not there.27 Yet to turn to the stock solutions of progressives—including my own proposals in the past—if one simply opts for a married male and female clergy, this change alone would not address the need to form the clergy as radically as the Ephesians ideal suggests. Seminaries and other forms of academic education seem to be the default funnels through which leaders would come, yet there is little to suggest that current models of preparation are able to transcend the problems caused by the professionalization of ministry, which amounts to a substitution of academic criteria for Ephesians 4 criteria.

Scott Sunquist’s recent article “Wrong Time, Wrong Place, Wrong Courses: The Dangers of the Unconverted Seminary” says much about the problem of the “unreformed seminary.”28 His title evokes the memory of a famous 1740 sermon entitled “The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry,” delivered by Gilbert Tennent during the First Great Awakening. The sermon presents the prospects for evangelization in mid-eighteenth-century America as dire if ministers themselves are not deeply converted; the life of many ministers reminded Tennent of unconverted “Pharisee shepherds” who were as “crafty as foxes” but lacked the spiritual qualities needed to be evangelizing ministers.29

Sunquist, a seminary professor and a scholar with great accomplishments, is not opposed to high academic standards. But he convinces me that contemporary models of seminary—or any other type of academic institution I can imagine—are less than promising as places to prepare the sort of missional leaders today’s church needs. Instead, as Sunquist says, seminaries in following the academic institutional model are preparing ministers for a “vanishing Christendom.”

Aware that I may be indulging in nostalgia for my formation years in the Society of the Divine Word (from 1958 through 1972), I cannot overcome my sense that the orders have a great deal of wisdom to contribute. The eminent Presbyterian missiologist Ralph Winter, aware of the pitfalls of purely functional mission societies and of bureaucratization of mission, wrote extensively on the fate of American Protestant societies. He shows appreciation for the way in which Catholic orders serve. Winter even goes so far as to say that he is “convinced that the Roman Catholic tradition, in its much longer experience with the phenomenon of the ‘order,’ embodies a superior structural approach to both renewal and mission.”30

If present impasses can be transcended, it may be that bishops and popes may appreciate the orders just as much as Ralph Winter did, and may encourage them to share their wisdom in a church that can figure out which parts of its history, as revealed in a rear-view mirror, must be attended to and which parts are

Contemporary models of seminary are less than promising as places to prepare the sort of missional leaders today’s church needs.

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This is a complete and practical introduction to storying, especially for people who want to learn about using biblical storytelling in cross-cultural contexts and who want to train others to become storytellers. It includes many fascinating accounts of the responses of tribal people to the first proclamation of the gospel through storytelling.

Full of innovative and groundbreaking insights, this study is packed with ideas, explanations, and constructive suggestions stated in clear and simple language. Tracing the movement of the biblical stories across multiple generations of telling and listeners, storytelling is found to be superior for knowledge transfer and for bypassing resistance to the gospel in oral contexts.

This new book makes the case for including literacy in evangelism and discipleship efforts in developing nations like India. Drawing on over 20 years of cross-cultural ministry experience, Don Edwards offers an insightful look at literacy’s key role in building a strong, healthy body of believers. Edwards looks at the crippling effects of illiteracy, examines Scripture’s view of literacy, and explains literacy’s value as a door-opener in communities that are resistant to traditional evangelism.

Readers will be challenged to share the gift of literacy as a tangible act of obedience to Jesus’ two “Great” commandments.

The Gospel is more than information about the death and resurrection of our Lord. It is an invitation to enter, by way of personal faith, into a relationship with the person referenced by our propositions. Our task as believers is to mediate saving communion with a personal being upon whom will our very existence is contingent. It is precisely this personal aspect of our message, the Gospel-as-Person, that is in conflict with the late-modern notions of the Self and social discourse.

Dr. Rommen describes how the late-modern phenomena of existential anxiety, social alienation, and epistemic uncertainty have resulted in what some have called “the loss of Self.” He also identifies ways in which that loss obstructs both the presentation and reception of the Gospel-as-Person. Finally, it shows how the Gospel-as-Person facilitates the recovery of the Self and social discourse, and how that message can be effectively presented.
mutable, thereby helping stewards well-versed in the ways of the kingdom to bring out both old things and new from the storehouse of missional tools (see Matt. 13:52). In itself, renewed regard for the orders will not solve all the Roman Catholic Church’s problems. But it would encourage these communities to renew their charismatic identity through the act of passing it on to men and women—celibate and married—who could, in their turn, pioneer new ways of invigorating the church and could mark out new forms of community so as to be present in and reach out to each new areopagus.

Notes

1. For these and other McLuhan quotations, see the McLuhan estate Web site, www.marshallmcluhan.com.


6. See Brocken, Journey to the East, pp. 185–203.

7. See bull of Clement XIV Dominus ac Redemptor, July 21, 1773; see William Bangert, A History of the Society of Jesus (St. Louis, Mo.: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972); see William F. Jaenicke, Black Robes in Paraguay: The Success of the Guaraní Missions Hastened the Abolition of the Jesuits (Minneapolis: Kirk House, 2008), for a synthetic account of the intrigues that led to the suppression of the Jesuits.


10. Orders of men include Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (founded 1816), Congregation of Holy Cross (1840), the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (1842), Salesians of Don Bosco (1845), Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1862), St. Joseph’s Society for Foreign Missions (“Mill Hill,” 1866), Comboni Missionaries (1867), Missionaries of Africa (1868), and Society of the Divine Word (1875). Orders of women include Marist Missionary Sisters (1857), Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions (1861), Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco (1872), Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (1877), Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (1889), and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1900).


14. See Ana María Bidegain, Participación y protagonismo de las mujeres en la historia del catolicismo latinoamericano (Buenos Aires: San Benito, 2009).


17. John Paul II, Redemptoris missio (encyclical on the permanent validity of the church’s missionary mandate, 1990), text available at www.vatican.va/en/documents/ENG0191_index.htm. See also the book edited by me for both the text of the encyclical and an authoritative commentary on it by its behind-the-scenes drafter, Marcello Zago, Redemption and Dialogue (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2009).

18. Mary L. Gautier and Brian T. Froehle have documented how lay leadership is emerging in the United States as ordained leadership declines, in Catholicism USA: A Portrait of the Catholic Church in the United States (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000).


21. See Ad gentes §§11–12.


23. See the recent study by Mary L. Gautier and Mary E. Bendyna, Recent Vocations to Religious Life: A Report for the National Religious Vocation Conference (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2009). This lengthy study (406 pp.) examines the attitudes of men and women who have joined religious communities in recent years.


27. According to the National Catholic Directory, there were 8,000 major seminarians in 1965, but only 4,900 in 2006. In 1965 the church ordained 1,575 new priests; in 2005, the number was only 454, a decrease of more than two-thirds. See John McCloskey, “State of the US Catholic Church at the Beginning of 2006,” www.catholicity.com/mccloskey/state_of_the_church_2006.html.


A Monumental Breakthrough in the Missiology of Vatican II and Its Reception by Ongoing Leadership in the Church

William Frazier

This study examines a missiological tension in the current teaching of the Catholic Church, a tension occasioned by the following passage of Ad Gentes, the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, promulgated by the Second Vatican Council in 1965:

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father. (Ad Gentes sec. 2, henceforth AG 2)

I deal first with the breakthrough aspect of this statement and its magnitude. Then I turn to consider how it has been received in a selection of postconciliar papal and Episcopal reflections on the relation between mission and church.

The Breakthrough and Its Magnitude

AG 2 is a breakthrough because it represents a step that had not been taken before in the Church’s official understanding of mission. Vatican II gave it expression for the first time. Before the council, the magisterium had never embraced the anchoring of church in the soil of mission. One sign of this is that no earlier version of AG 2 is footnoted in the conciliar text. Another is that the missiology that enabled the statement was little more than thirty years old in 1965 and, for the most part, was due to Protestant scholars and their missio Dei initiative.

As for its magnitude, AG 2 can be seen as a breakthrough of monumental proportions. To take AG 2 seriously is to affirm the priority of Trinity to mission, as well as the priority of mission to Jesus, to church, and to all the church embraces, including its nature and identity, its leadership and organization as a community. The Church of AG 2 is truly a missionary church anchored in the missions of the triune God.

Reception of Ad Gentes 2 by Catholic Leadership

If there is any truth in what I have suggested about the role of AG 2 in the missiology of Vatican II, one might expect it to occupy a place of prominence in postconciliar missiological statements, especially those of the magisterium. To obtain the hard data needed to address this matter, I consider direct or indirect references to AG 2 in the following four documents: Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975; the Holy Father’s apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN) is an effort to gather the main insights and conclusions of the Third Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which convened in 1974, to consider the topic of evangelization. Before reporting on my search for AG 2 in Evangelii Nuntiandi, I keep its details before us by citing it once again.

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father. (AG 2)

My examination of both the text and the footnotes of Evangelii Nuntiandi yielded not a single direct or indirect reference to AG 2, this despite the exhortation’s turning frequently to other teachings of Ad Gentes. AG 2 is never included in these consultations. On at least one occasion, however, this pattern may seem difficult to explain. I have in mind EN 14–15, where Paul VI affirms that the church “is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve,” born, he repeats, “out of being sent,” which explains why “she exists in order to evangelize” and why this activity points to her “deepest identity” and “most intimate being.”

But is not this also the message of AG 2? Why, then, would the Holy Father not make use of it to anchor his teaching in Vatican II? The main reason is that AG 2 and EN 14–15 are not saying exactly the same thing, and Paul VI must have been aware of the difference. Placing the two portraits side by side will help us recognize where they coincide and where they diverge.

AG 2

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

Paul VI affirms that the church “is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve,” born, he repeats, “out of being sent,” which explains why “she exists in order to evangelize” and why this activity points to her “deepest identity” and “most intimate being.”

Both portraits look to mission for the origin of the church. Both portraits find in mission the key to the nature and identity of the church. The portraits differ, however, when it comes to where mission itself finally originates. For EN 14–15, it is in Jesus and his apostles. For AG 2, it is in the missions of the Trinity. This may be the source of Paul VI’s evident uneasiness with AG 2. Through my survey I learned that Evangelii Nuntiandi is devoid not only of the defining trinitarian moment of AG 2 but of any trinitarian reflection at all. There are, of course, references here and there to the persons of the Trinity, including a final chapter devoted to the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelization, but at no place in the exhortation are trinitarian relationships and life taken into the Holy Father’s missiological reflection. Why? It is not clear. One thing is sure: for Paul VI, anchoring mission and church in “the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve” is preferable to anchoring them in the missions of the Trinity. Short of a broader investigation, we have no way of discovering the

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theological or doctrinal disadvantage he seems to have found in the latter alternative.

Catholic Bishops of America, “To the Ends of the Earth,” 1986. As before, we begin with the words we use to measure the most recent statement of the American bishops about mission:

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father. (AG 2)

At first glance, “To the Ends of the Earth” (TEE) would seem to be more receptive to AG 2 than Evangelii Nuntiandi. And in one sense it is. Whereas specific reference to AG 2 is totally lacking in Evangelii Nuntiandi, “To the Ends of the Earth” refers to it twice (TEE 2, 22). When we examine these two passages, however, we find that neither of them is a direct citation of AG 2. In the case of TEE 2 we have a general summary, and in TEE 22 we have what amounts to a paraphrase. One may wonder how close these descriptions come to doing justice to AG 2. Placing the three statements next to each other may help us decide.

AG 2

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

TEE 2

The Church, therefore, is missionary by her very nature. She continues the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit by proclaiming to the ends of the earth the salvation Christ offers those who believe in him. We are faithful to the nature of the Church to the degree that we love and sincerely promote her missionary activity.

TEE 22

The missionary task of the Church is rooted theologically in the Blessed Trinity. The very origin of the Church is from the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit as decreed by the Father.

Begging the reader’s pardon for the subtleties that follow, I will try to make my case for them as brief and clear as possible. The main difference between AG 2 and these two renditions of it in “To the Ends of the Earth” involves the difference between being and action. AG 2 has to do strictly with the missionary being that the church derives from the trinitarian missions. Action is implied, of course, but this is not the point of the statement. In TEE 2 and 22, in contrast, the nature derived from the Trinity by the church seems to be more in terms of action than of being. With no encouragement from AG 2, these expressions move directly to the missionary action the church inherits from the trinitarian missions. For TEE 2, it is the missionary action of the Son and the Holy Spirit that are continued when the church proclaims salvation to the ends of the earth. TEE 22 confirms this pattern by summing up what the Trinity bestows on the church as a “missionary task.” Of course, being may be implied here as action was above in the case of AG 2, but not as the point of the statements.

One of the by-products of associating mission more with the activity than with the very essence or being of the church is the tendency to deal with mission as one among other activities of the church, a good example of which lingers beneath the surface of at least one other section of “To the Ends of the Earth”: “We appeal to all educators to help give Catholics a better understanding of the task and demands of mission today. Theological studies should include a strong missionary emphasis, so necessary for the formation of future priests and leaders. Further, authors of catechetical texts should highlight the missionary responsibility of every Christian so that young people may be educated from an early age in this essential aspect of the Church’s life” (TEE 70).

Having referred to mission once again as “task,” the bishops ask educators to “include a strong missionary emphasis” in theological studies and to highlight mission in catechetical texts. This can be seen as a “one-among-others” arrangement. It portrays mission as one among other tasks of the church, one among other emphases in theology, one among other aspects of the church’s life. Mission in AG 2, however, is not one among other realities of the church. It is the reality in which the church itself and all realities belonging to the church originate.

Uneasiness with AG 2 is easier to explain in “To the Ends of the Earth” than in Evangelii Nuntiandi, although the reason in each case may be virtually the same. While neither document takes issue with AG 2 explicitly, the tension between the church of “To the Ends of the Earth” and the church of the conciliar formula can hardly be missed. Fueling the tension is a relentless affirmation of the pastoral identity of bishops in “To the Ends of the Earth.”

The bishops’ desire to produce a pastoral reflection on mission is clearly stated in the subtitle of their document: “A Pastoral Statement on World Mission” (see TEE 8). Their prevailing pastoral identity left them little choice. Even when they emphasize the missionary nature of the church along the lines of AG 2, as they do in TEE 2, they seem to maintain that the identity of leadership in that church is fundamentally pedagogical and pastoral rather than missionary. “The Church, therefore, is missionary by her very nature. She continues the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit by proclaiming to the ends of the earth the salvation Christ offers to those who believe in him. We are faithful to the nature of the Church to the degree that we love and sincerely promote her missionary activity. As teachers and pastors we are responsible for keeping alive a vibrant Catholic missionary spirit in the United States” (TEE 2).

If in the final sentence of this passage the bishops had described themselves as missionaries by their very nature, we would know how they reached that conclusion. As it is, however, we have no way of knowing how they can call themselves teachers and pastors instead of missionaries, without turning to some place in the tradition where the church is said to be by her very nature pedagogical and pastoral, and this by way of continuing the inner pedagogical and pastoral life of the Trinity, that is, by anchoring the pedagogical and pastoral dimension of the church as deeply in the heart of God as AG 2 anchors mission. This note of pastoral primacy in “To the Ends of the Earth,” arguably at the expense of the ruling primacy of mission in AG 2, has placed its stamp on the entire document.

One of the patterns that makes clear the pastoral identity of bishops in “To the Ends of the Earth” is the repeated reminder that bishops are not missionaries. They never apply the term to themselves. They make use of it only in the second and third persons: as in their desire to “affirm missionaries in their efforts,” as in their assurance that “our gratitude to you, the missionaries, is especially profound,” as in their reminder that “as missionaries you are sent to place yourselves at the service of the local church” (TEE 3, 72, 73). At best, the bishops of “To the Ends of the Earth” are pastoral animators of mission, supporters, promoters, and
guides of those to whom the term “missionaries” properly applies (TEE 3). Their responsibility for mission is radically a pastoral responsibility. It originates not in the missions of the Trinity as such but in the missionary endowment of the pastoral church. The difference this makes is that the identity of leadership in the church reflects the identity of the church itself.

Although the church of “To the Ends of the Earth” is said to originate in the missions of the Trinity (TEE 1, 22), to be essentially or by her very nature missionary (TEE 2, 4), to be founded as a missionary community (TEE 4), and to be so thoroughly infused with mission that “to say ‘Church’ is to say ‘mission’” (TEE 16), these pointers to the primacy of mission in the church seem not to be taken seriously in “To the Ends of the Earth” in deference to a church whose primacy is pastoral. Accordingly, the document consistently reduces mission to a function of the church, using language like “the mission of the Church” (TEE 5, 51) or “the Church’s mission” (TEE 3, 7, 49, 52, 55, 60, 62), expressions that imply the church’s ownership of mission instead of mission’s ownership of church.

If the classic New Testament commentary on the relation between mission and church (“As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” John 20:21), cited in TEE 1, had guided the unfolding of “To the Ends of the Earth,” AG 2 might have been more conspicuous by its presence than by its absence.

John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, 1990. Bringing AG 2 before our eyes once again will help us discover how the Holy Father makes use of it in his encyclical Redemptoris Missio (RM).

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father. (AG 2)

In much the same way as Evangelii Nuntiandi, RM makes little direct mention of this passage. It is never quoted in full. Part of it is included in RM 62. Twice it is paraphrased (RM 1, 49). It never appears among the document’s 178 footnotes. While the following words would seem to call for a direct reference to AG 2, none is provided: “This definitive self-revelation of God [in Jesus] is the fundamental reason why the Church is missionary by her very nature” (RM 5).

Does this pattern point to a measure of dissonance between the Vatican statement and Redemptoris Missio when it comes to the relation between mission and church? We can begin to answer this question by placing AG 2 side by side with words the Holy Father uses to relate his letter to Vatican II in general and AG 2 in particular.

AG 2

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

While these statements have some details in common, they are not saying exactly the same thing about the bond between mission and church. Along lines already discovered in “To the Ends of the Earth,” the difference between being and action is clearly in evidence here. Mission has to do with the very being of the church in AG 2, as distinct from something supplied to the church by the Trinity “in a dynamic way” (RM 1), as a “thrust” (RM 34), a “drive” or “activity” (RM 2, 33), a “service,” “work,” or “task” (RM 2, 21, 31, 34, 36, 86), indeed, as the “first task of the Church” (RM 34). We are dealing here with the difference between ontological and functional language. The ontologically missionary church of AG 2 appears neither in RM 1 nor anywhere else in the document. Despite a hint of ontological priority in the following words—“We are missionaries above all because of what we are as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries in word or deed” (RM 23)—neither here nor in references to the church as missionary by her very nature (RM 1, 62) does the Holy Father add (with AG 2) that these characteristics apply because she originates in mission.

When Ad Gentes 2 does not govern the bond between mission and church, the tendency is to subordinate mission to church. The following expressions of Redemptoris Missio could be taken in this direction.

Without the mission ad gentes, the Church’s very missionary dimension would be deprived of its essential meaning. (RM 34)

What about the term “dimension”? Is it strong enough to allow mission to escape subordination to church? Or should we understand it in its ordinary usage, giving mission partial and therefore dependent status in relation to church? Can we restrict mission to a dimension of the church and still call that church missionary by her very nature?

Missionary activity proper . . . is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian. (RM 34)

This mission . . . is one of the Church’s fundamental activities: it is essential and never-ending. (RM 31)

For each believer, as for the entire Church, the missionary task must remain foremost. (RM 86)

In its origins . . . mission is seen as a community commitment, a responsibility of the local Church, which needs “missionaries” in order to push forward towards new frontiers. (RM 27)

These statements apply one among other language to mission, which is said to be one among “other ecclesial activities,” “one of the Church’s fundamental activities.” Among other tasks of the Church, “the missionary task must remain foremost.” The local church has commitments and responsibilities, and mission is one of them. In a word, mission resides, even originates, within the church along with her other tasks and ministries.

The so-called return or “repatriation” of the missions into the Church’s mission, the insertion of missiology into ecclesiology, and the integration of both areas into the Trinitarian plan of salvation, have given a fresh impetus to missionary activity itself. (RM 32)

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This statement throws light on the tendency to subordinate mission to church in the other five quotations here. The incorporation of “missions into the Church’s mission” seems to affirm the priority of church over mission, an assumption confirmed on the theological level by “the insertion of missiology into ecclesiology.” When these two insertions are gathered into “the Trinitarian plan of salvation,” the bond between Trinity, church, and mission in Ad Gentes 2 comes to mind, not because the passages converge, but because they differ. While RM 32 and AG 2 both anchor church and mission in the bosom of the Trinity, the agreement ends there. In RM 32 mission presumes and derives from church; in AG 2 church presumes and originates in mission. This touches a deeper level than the Trinity supplying the church with a “missionary thrust” (RM 1).

When subordinating mission to church, Redemptoris Missio does not always use the term “church.” Sometimes it subordinates mission to pastorate, as in the following passage: “Particular churches should . . . make the promotion of the missions a key element in the normal pastoral activity of parishes, associations and groups, especially youth groups” (RM 83). Here mission seems to be reduced to a species of pastoral activity, much like the “missionary pastoral activity” of RM 75, an arrangement consistent with the notion that “the charge of announcing the Gospel throughout the world belongs to the body of shepherds” (RM 63), except for the beginning of that passage, where the responsibility for mission resides in bishops as pastors and not only or mainly as pastors of particular churches.

How have Ad Gentes 2 and its implications been received by Redemptoris Missio? The evidence points toward something like “with apparent reluctance.” Bringing this question with us, we turn to our final document.

John Paul II, “The Church Is Missionary by Her Nature,” General Audience Address, April 19, 1995 (CMBN). This document adds to Redemptoris Missio the Holy Father’s attempt to deal specifically and at some length with Ad Gentes 2. He makes this clear not only in the title but also in the opening paragraph of his address.

Heir to and continuation of the apostles who were sent to witness to Christ and to preach the Gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), the Church possesses the note of “catholicity” from which her “missionary” nature derives. This second characteristic, part of her mystery, comes “from on high.” The Second Vatican Council notes this in the Decree Ad Gentes, according to which, “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father” (AG 2). It is a mystery established by the divine trinitarian plan which is fulfilled in the Church and made manifest as permanently her own, since the day of Pentecost.8

In addition to quoting Ad Gentes 2 in this passage and affirming its importance, the Holy Father explains his understanding of the council’s teaching. In doing so, he sheds new light on his tendency to subordinate mission to church in Redemptoris Missio. The following words bring this tendency to mind: “the Church possesses the note of ‘catholicity’ from which her ‘missionary’ nature derives.” It would seem that if mission derives from catholicity, and if catholicity is a note or mark of the church, then mission derives from and is thereby subordinate to church. But is this really the meaning of AG 2? Comparing the two expressions may help us decide.

Ad Gentes 2 says nothing about catholicity and nothing about mission subordinated to church.

AG 2 says nothing about catholicity and therefore nothing about mission subordinated to church. What it does say is that the church is by her very nature missionary because she originates in mission. This is the only subordination clearly articulated in AG 2. The only way this can be reversed is by replacing “mission” with “missionary activity” in these texts, a pattern already pointed to in Redemptoris Missio (2) and repeated in the present document through terms like “missionary movement” (par. 3), “missionary drive” (par. 4), and “missionary dynamism” (pars. 3, 6, 11). What derives from and is subordinate to the church’s catholicity, therefore, is not her missionary nature but her missionary activity. According to AG 2, the church herself, including her catholicity, is missionary by her very nature because she derives from and is subordinate to the missions of the Trinity.

The church herself, including her catholicity, is missionary by her very nature because she derives from and is subordinate to the missions of the Trinity.

Conclusion

When it comes to the relation between mission and church, the council’s Ad Gentes 2 has not been well received by the postconciliar documents considered in this article. Evangelii Nuntiandi and Redemptoris Missio neglect it, “To the Ends of the Earth” misses its implications, and John Paul II’s audience address “The Church Is Missionary by Her Nature” reads meaning into, rather than out of, the text. We can only speculate as to the reasons behind this development. For me, the most compelling of these is that the samples of magisterial missiology we have considered have not yet reached deeply enough into the bond between mission and church to realize that the church itself and not merely its missionary dynamism or catholicity originates in the trinitarian missions. Ad Gentes 2 views mission as the very being of the church, rather than as something with which it is equipped or endowed. I raise the question of depth because this language
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is used in *Redemptoris Missio* and the Holy Father’s audience address (CMBN) to encourage theological reflection on a matter still in need of refinement:

I earnestly ask theologians and professional Christian journalists to intensify the service they render to the Church’s mission in order to discover the deep meaning of their work, along the sure path of “thinking with the Church” (sentire cum Ecclesia). (RM 36)

In the depths of *Ad Gentes* 2 a genuinely missionary church struggles to reborn. One can hope that this indeed will happen as magisterial missiology continues to unfold.

Notes

6. Ibid.

From the Editors of the World Religion Database

Each of the three reviews of the World Religion Database (WRD) in the January 2010 issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* pointed to a number of strengths and weaknesses in the online database. The advantage of an electronic publication is that it is dynamic and can be updated as new information and suggestions for improvement are received. For instance, we have already implemented one suggestion by Peter Brierley: in our desire to be aligned more closely with United Nations terminology, we will henceforth use “United Kingdom” instead of “Britain” as the short name for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

When interpreting these reviews, it is helpful to keep in mind the existence of another database published online, the *World Christian Database* (WCD). The WCD has a closer relationship with the *World Christian Encyclopedia* because it provides much greater detail on Christianity, the sort that Brierley finds of interest. For example, a large number of Christian denominations are listed there, grouped by traditions, communions, and other networks.

In addition, arriving at the numbers shown in the databases is not quite as simple as pitting figures generated by the religious communities themselves against census and survey data, which are considered more scientific. In fact, figures from censuses and surveys can vary wildly, even when the same question is asked in the same year. It also is well-established that censuses and surveys, in some important cases, overcount majorities (e.g., Muslims in Saudi Arabia: 97 percent by World Values Survey reckoning, but likely closer to 92 percent when all non-Muslim expatriates are taken into account) and undercount minorities (e.g., Jains in the United Kingdom, many of whom checked the “Hindu” box in the 2001 census).

Furthermore, the limitations of population survey data are significant, not only because of varying sample sizes, but also because of different approaches to asking about a person’s religious affiliation. In Bulgaria, for instance, the estimate for “no religious affiliation” from the 1999 World Values Survey (30.4 percent) is much higher than from the 2001 census (3.9 percent). It is unlikely that religious “nones” (as used here, those who either say they have no religion or decline to specify a religion) decreased by 26.5 percentage points in just two years. The large discrepancy is likely due to how the question was presented to respondents in each case. The 2001 census questionnaire offered six choices. The only way a person would be counted as a religious “none” was either to say “none” in the “other” category or to offer no response at all. The census’s approach presumed that most people would choose one of the five specific religions mentioned. The World Values Survey, in contrast, did not begin with this presupposition. Instead, it posed a two-part question. The first inquired whether respondents belonged to a “religious denomination.” Only those who answered “yes” were asked “which one?” Our best estimates in the WRD attempt to reconcile a broad variety of such sources, paying special attention to groups that might be left out of governmental or social science accounting. In this category, we feel that the jury is still out on the number of Christians in China, which we will continue to monitor and document.

We hope increasingly to annotate the choices we are making by providing both source material and reasons for our estimates. Unfortunately, this is a painfully slow process. We also hope to make the WRD a repository for various estimates and sources so that users can construct their own sets of estimates based on their preferred sources. Given that the WRD is constantly updated, we especially welcome input and notification of new data sources to be included.

We particularly sympathize with the problem faced by Siga Arles and others with limited access not only to the Internet but also to subscriptions to the WRD. For this reason, we also make selected portions of the data available in other print publications as well as other databases, such as Pennsylvania State University’s Association of Religion Data Archives. And, as with any project of this magnitude and complexity, we are heartened by Robert Woodberry’s conclusion: “I will eagerly use these data in my research. I do not know of any better data available on such a broad scale.”

—Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim

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The Theology of Partnership

**Cathy Ross**

Partnership is an idea whose time has not yet fully come.” So wrote Max Warren in his little book on partnership in 1954. Max Warren was general secretary of the Church Mission Society from 1942 to 1963. He went on to say that an understanding of partnership may “afford a key to unlock many of the doors which at present divide, and by dividing disrupt our life in society, both national and international.” Now over fifty years later, those indeed seem to be prescient words. In the 1990s, Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama stated that the most pressing and urgent question facing the world was, Can we live together? In 2002 Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth, posed the same pertinent question in his superb book *The Dignity of Difference*, where he writes, “Can we live together? Can we make space for one another? Can we overcome long histories of estrangement and bitterness? . . . Can we find, in the human ‘thou’, a fragment of the Divine ‘Thou’?”

And finally, at the beginning of 2009, the forty-fourth president of the United States, Barack Obama, addressed this same question in his inaugural speech, where he referred to “greater cooperation and understanding between nations.” He rejected “protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions” and called for the renewal of “sturdy alliances and enduring convictions” always exhibited with “the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.” So perhaps the time has indeed come not only to explore this idea of partnership but also to work it out in our world. And if we can find a fragment of the divine Thou in the other, then we are a long way down the road to genuine partnership.

The word “partner” derives from the Anglo-French *partener*, an old legal term that denotes co-heirship. Warren points out that words are strange things—they come to us with all sorts of allusions and resonances, “trailing clouds of glory or of shame, and sometimes both.” And “partner” is just such a word. Co-heirship evokes overtones of ancestry, with suggestions of property rights, ownership, status, and dignity, as well as its underside of power, wealth, jealousy, suspicion, and litigation. These associations—both happy and unhappy, noble and ignoble—can unwittingly influence our approach toward a word and an idea. The simple dictionary definition of a partner is “one who shares, takes part, is associated with another in action.” Although this seems straightforward enough, we can see the potential for a relationship that can lead us to the heights or into the depths. “Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17) shows us the sublime heights to which partnership can aspire. However, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him” (Mark 12:7) reveals the dark side and the depths to which it can descend.

**The Concept of Partnership**

Partnership, then, is constituted of three factors. First, there must be the acceptance by each one concerned of genuine involvement, a committal of oneself to the other partner in trust. This element of trust is foundational and inescapable. We trust the other with the “keys,” if you like; we respect their cultural way of being and doing. We learn to give up control and share the responsibility. Second, partnership involves a ready acceptance of responsibility, a readiness to serve the purpose of the common enterprise. And finally, involvement must carry with it a readiness to pay the price of partnership, to accept all the liabilities and limitations that arise. Involvement, responsibility, liability—without these there can be no true partnership. In proportion as they are accepted, the partnership becomes more satisfying and creative.

Now, these three factors presuppose the continuity within the partnership of the identity of each partner. Neither partner can become so absorbed or assimilated that his or her own identity is lost. The conscious identity of each partner must survive; the possibility must remain present that either partner can contract out of the partnership, thereby ceasing to be responsible or liable. This is precisely because the essence of partnership is that it is a relationship entered upon in freedom by persons who remain free. It is a dynamic relationship that is continually growing and developing, not one that is static and stale.

This may all sound rather dry and heavy—involvement, responsibility, liability—a little like a school motto. Stiff-upper-lip attitudes and dogged perseverance will see us through! But of course partnership, at its most basic level, is a relationship between persons, and we as people are dynamic, wonderful, unpredictable. So in addition to talking about the three factors that make partner relationships, we need to think about the way good relationships work in general, what we look for in them. So what do we seek in relationships? We are looking for love, for mutuality, for understanding, for compassion, and sometimes (often even?) for forgiveness. Paul Tillich has some helpful insights here: “In order to know what is just in a person-to-person encounter, love listens. It is its first task to listen. No human relation, especially no intimate one, is possible without mutual listening. . . . All things and all men, so to speak, call on us with small or loud voices. They want us to listen, they want us to understand their intrinsic claims, their justice of being. They want justice from us. But we can give it to them only through love which listens. . . . Listening love is the first step to justice in person-to-person encounters.”

Perhaps in order to allow partnerships to grow, we need more being, more living, more listening, and less talking. Ivan Illich says something similar: “Only the very brave . . . dare . . . to go back to the helpless silence of being learners and listeners—the holding of hands of the lovers—from which deep communication may grow. Perhaps it is the one way of being together with
Mutual forgiveness is the only way forward; without it, any partnership is bound to dissolve or at least fragment.

both partners practice giving and receiving in a spirit of mutual respect can enrich the relationship. This giving may be as simple as acknowledging that the other whom we encounter is a person. No more than this, but no less.

Sacks maintains that our moral responsibility grows out of face-to-face relationships when we see how what we do affects others. Obama knew this when he announced: “To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” He used that wonderfully evocative image of the open hand being extended in friendship, which can be grasped and reciprocated only if the other will unclench the fist and give the open hand. This minimum of giving can lead toward a maximum of self-sacrifice if required. In terms of partnership, this means responsibility. To be in a partnership means to be committed to giving within the partnership and through it.

Finally, Tillich speaks of forgiving—a powerful and essential dimension of any human relationship, of any partnership. This means the acceptance of all the liabilities and limitations that may arise from relating with others whose weakness and sin may injure us, just as for them it involves the acceptance of the liabilities and limitations that follow from our weakness and sin. Mutual forgiveness is the only way forward; without it, any partnership is bound to dissolve or at least fragment.

So the concept of partnership means acceptance of genuine involvement, acceptance of responsibility, and acceptance of liability, all of it seasoned with intentional listening and seeing, giving and forgiving. How do we do this in a world that behaves so differently—in a world rife with unequal power dynamics, in a world where the powerful are heard and the powerless are not, where the wealthy can choose to give and the poor are forced to receive, where grudges are nursed and revenge considered a sweet dish, where forgiveness is often an alien concept?

The Theology of Partnership

Let us now consider a theology of partnership, which means that we will consider it as an idea that is ultimately about God and an idea that is consistent with God’s creative and redemptive purposes. I wish to explore three ideas here. First, that partnership is an idea essential to the very nature of God. Second, that partnership speaks of God’s relationship with humanity. Third, that partnership indicates the true relationship between human beings.

First, partnership is an idea essential to the very nature of God. I do not think that it is pushing the idea too far to say that we see partnership in the Godhead. God is a community. God is not a monad but a community of three divine persons. God is also one God. These realities allow not only for relationship but also for unity and diversity. This Trinitarian understanding of God, expressed so beautifully in the icon by Rublev, means that we experience God in relationship with the other, in partnership, within community. The concept of the Trinity allows space for the created individual, but only in relationship to the other. So each person of the Trinity has its own divine nature, expressed in relation to the other persons of the Trinity. There is the space to be each divine person, as each person relates to the other. They cannot each exist without this relationship. I did say before that an aspect of partnership appropriate to humanity is the freedom to withdraw, which of course is inappropriate when considering the Trinity. But each person of the Trinity is a distinct person in a love relationship with the other persons of the Trinity, just as we in a partnership are distinct individuals but existing in relation to and with the other. Feminist theologian Catherine la Cugna comments: “In Rublev’s icon, the temple in the background is the transformation of Abraham’s and Sarah’s house. The oak tree stands for the Tree of Life. And the position of the three figures is suggestive. Although they are arranged in a circle, the circle is not closed. One has the distinct sensation when meditating on the icon that one is not only invited into this communion but, indeed, one already is part of it. A self-contained God, a closed divine society, would hardly be a fitting archetype for hospitality [or for partnership]. We should not miss the significance of the Eucharistic cup in the centre, which is, of course, the sacramental sign of our communion with God and one another.”

Paul Fiddes, in his book Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity, urges us to do more than just imitate the triune God by actually participating in the Trinity. He claims that this participation enables us to truly appreciate the other because of our engagement with the other. Engagement in the life of God means an experience of otherness—the otherness of God from humanity, the otherness of the Creator from the created. He writes, “Nothing in the world can prepare us for this gulf of otherness in a God who abides in the unity of love. . . . Because it is an otherness which arises in participation within God, it can only be known through participation. To engage in the relationships in God means that we are brought up against the challenge of the alien, the radically different, the unlike; but at the same time we have the security of experiencing a fellowship more intimate than anything we can otherwise know.”

Our ego is broken...
open by encountering the Thou in the other, and through the Thou of other people we can meet the transcendent Thou, God.

This leads us to the second idea of partnership, which speaks of God’s relationship with humanity. In the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus we see most fully and clearly the self-revealing activities of God. In the incarnation God communicates himself to us and establishes a relationship with us. Referring back to the concept of partnership, we see that God is first involved with us in a supreme act of trust, manifest in the incarnation. Moreover, God is responsible for our redemption. Finally, God’s self-emptying, supremely upon the cross, was the liability accepted by God for our creation and was God’s freely chosen means for our redemption, should we choose to accept it.

It is important to remember that we are free to respond to God or not. Without this freedom there is no true partnership. It is not a forced relationship—we should not be compelled to enter into a partnership. Jesus never compelled people into a relationship with him. Think of his approach to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:9) or his dialogue with Nicodemus (John 3); in Jesus we find a model of love and respect. Love cultivates mutual sharing, mutual serving, mutual forgiveness, and mutual suffering. Love is not feeling sorry for, giving charity to, or taking advantage of. It means coming alongside, somehow trying to feel what others feel, experiencing what others experience, taking a walk in someone else’s shoes. How do we do this in a world of asymmetrical power relationships?

God’s involvement with us is met by our freely chosen involvement with him. To become involved with God, however, means to accept responsibility. We are laborers together with God, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 3:9. As we are caught up in this relationship with God, we are called to share his will and purposes. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:19–20, “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself . . . and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

This responsibility by which Christians express their obedience to God, their willing involvement with God, is not an easy thing. In fact this partnership with God, between God and humanity, becomes discipleship. Jesus reminds us that persecution is the least of the difficulties we can expect. Our partnership with God and with others can lead to our suffering and to sharing the sufferings of others. We do this by being present, by feeling their pain, by reacting with compassion, and by joining them in solidarity.

Third, partnership indicates the true relationship between human beings. Warren quotes Bertrand Russell, who recognized the inherent difficulty of true partnership. “Equal co-operation is much more difficult than despotism, and much less in line with instinct. When people attempt equal co-operation, it is natural for each to strive for complete mastery, since the submissive instincts are not brought into play. It is almost necessary that the parties concerned should acknowledge a common loyalty to something outside all of them.”

As Christians, we know the solution to this as disciples of the risen Lord. Perhaps the nearest word in the New Testament to partnership is koinonia. Its most basic meaning is “partaking together in” or having a share. The word stands for participation. As Warren writes, “We are then, to seek first for the inward bond which holds the fellowship of the Christians together, which inward fellowship is then externally manifested by the life of fellowship, with its almsgiving, sharing of property and breaking of bread, which we find in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.”

In Galatians 2:9 and Philippians 1:5 the emphasis is on partnership in proclaiming the Gospel. What is common here is the transcending loyalty to God—“all are equally involved, all have committed themselves to God in trust, all have a share in a common responsibility, all recognise that they belong together, that if one member suffers they all suffer, all have a liability for each.”

Partners share the sufferings of one another. Walker Brueggemann explains suffering thus: “Suffering made audible and visible produces hope, articulated grief is the gate of newness, and the history of Jesus is the history of entering into the pain and giving it voice.”

David Bosch writes about “victim-missionaries,” who, “in contrast to exemplar-missionaries, lead people to freedom and community.” Could we say the same of “victim-partners”? Again in 2 Corinthians Paul teaches about “the validity of paradox, about a God who, in spite of being all-powerful became weak and vulnerable in his Son.” We live in relationship with a crucified God. Do we in our involvement with him and as his ambassadors live likewise? Koyama complained that too often Christianity exhibits a “crusading mind” rather than a “crucified mind” and that it suffers from a “teacher complex.” What attitudes do we exhibit when we enter into partnership? Do we adopt a crusading mind and teacher mentality, or are we disciples and partners with crucified minds, giving up our rights, manifesting the courage to be weak—living the paradox of a crucified, almighty God? Victim-missionaries are not powerful and successful, nor are victim-partners. In this asymmetrical and uneven world, victim-partners will not create what has been described as “a relationship of controlling benefactors to irritated recipients of charity,” in which recipients end up experiencing a complex mix of gratitude and resentment at the same time.

Are we disciples and partners with crucified minds, giving up our rights, manifesting the courage to be weak?

Perhaps we see the practices essential to partnership most clearly in Paul’s letter to the Philippians, where he thanks them for their partnership in the Gospel. Paul and the Philippians were partners in many ways—in giving, receiving, working, praying, rejoicing, struggling, and suffering. They shared in a common project with Paul and were partners with him in the defense and the confirmation of the Gospel. Partnership in the body of Christ is emphasized in the passages that speak of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12). Each person is dependent on the gifts given to everyone. Here Andrew Kirk describes partnership...
as “participating in the life of one another in such a way that the needs of all are met (Rom 12:6–13).”

An example of sharing material resources is given in 2 Corinthians. Paul expounds the principles of partnership as he exhorts the church in Achaia to match the generosity of the churches further north (2 Cor. 9:1–4). The churches of Macedonia and Achaia are sharing together in a particular ministry on behalf of the church in Judaea. The churches in Judaea who will receive this token of love have shared the Gospel with them, just as “Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things” (Rom. 15:26–27). Note that they are in partnership not only with one another but also with God. God will provide them with more than they could ever hope to give, as long as they go on sharing (2 Cor. 9:8–11), and God will receive the praise and thanksgiving.

Sharing in suffering is another practice of partnership that Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians. He writes that the Christians in Corinth are sharing in his and Timothy’s sufferings (2 Cor. 1:7). In fact, they are all sharing in the sufferings of Christ, which continue in the sufferings of his body, the church. This is a deep participation in the broken body, and every member feels the suffering of every other member. The suffering may have many causes: persecution, hardships while traveling, hunger, thirst, sleepless nights, insults, exposure to cold, misrepresentation, hard work—these are some of the ways listed in 2 Corinthians 6 and 11. Perhaps suffering is not only the most difficult but also the most profound manifestation of partnership. The San Antonio Report, a WCC statement on “mission in Christ’s way,” acutely observes, “Participation in suffering and struggle is at the heart of God’s mission and God’s will for the world. It is central for our understanding of the incarnation, the most glorious example of participation in suffering and struggle. The church is sent in the way of Christ bearing the marks of the cross in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:19–23).” Partners share in the sufferings of one another, and the incarnation is indeed the supreme model for this.

So some of the practices of partnership are giving, receiving, working, praying, rejoicing, struggling, and suffering. But there is one issue that distorts all the fine ideals and makes the practice of partnership difficult and demanding. This is the issue of power. It is difficult to have a truly mutual relationship when the two parties possess unequal power. But that is the reality of our world today. We know that money, resources, education, land, access to technology, ownership, and much more are unfairly and unequally distributed.

The model of the incarnation can help us. We can let go of our pride and power, our privilege and sense of entitlement, insofar as we empty ourselves following Christ’s way depicted in Philippians 2. We seek to empty ourselves of our pride and ethnocentrism, our feelings of cultural, religious, and technological superiority, which blind and grip us all. We seek to empty ourselves of the need to initiate, control, dominate, impose, manipulate, and run ahead in partner relationships. We seek to empty ourselves of autonomy and independence. Bosch’s insights about vulnerability and “victim-missionaries/partners” are also helpful reminders for us to adopt an attitude of humility and of considering others better than ourselves. A related issue here is what the partners are seeking to share. Money, resources, education, land, technology, ownership, and power may be unfairly distributed and may lead to distorted exchanges. But what else are we seeking to share? Stories, traditions, ancient knowledge and customs, inheritances, joy, kindness, goodness, beauty, sustainability, difference—these too are to be shared and can restore a balance where there may be uneven power dynamics.

Conclusion

So we have seen that partnership is a high ideal and a wonderful idea when practiced well. It can indeed lead us to the heights or take us into the depths. It is not an easy ideal. Joint heirs with Christ or such intense jealousy that it annihilates the partner.

Some of the requirements for authentic partnership are counter-intuitive to the human condition—vulnerability and suffering, self-emptying and humbling ourselves, submission, listening and learning. Bertrand Russell reminded us that cooperation is more difficult than despotism. And yet the attitudes of listening, giving, and forgiving go a long way toward enabling partnership to work in fragile human conditions and a broken world.

Tillich reminded us that listening love is the first step toward justice in human encounters. Giving is an essential part of partnership. Partnership is a high ideal whose time has come. God can transform all our partnerships so that something new can be created, something that neither partner could foresee. Listening, giving, and forgiving—these three attitudes can lead us not only into genuine partnership but also into the adventure of living.

Notes

2. Ibid.
5. Warren, Partnership, p. 11.

17. Ibid., p. 11.
18. Ibid., p. 10.
Global Awakening
Mark Shaw

“Mark Shaw's bold thesis . . . opens edifying vistas for Christian believers of all sorts who have become aware of momentous shifts in the nature of Christianity around the world, but who have needed a solid theological guide for understanding what is taking place. Along with Michael McClymond’s Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America, this book is the most impressive study of worldwide Christian revival to have appeared in a very long time.”

—Mark Noll, University of Notre Dame
Leon P. Spencer

Partnership has been an oft-used term in missiological circles for many years, rooted especially in the transition from mission to church. As Hong-Jung Lee has described this evolution, we have moved historically from “pioneer” to “parent” to “partner.” The use of the term partnership in this context may be dated from the 1947 meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC), where there was talk of all churches being “worthy partners in the task of evangelism.” The IMC chose the phrase “partners in obedience”—obedience being to the Great Commission. When the council met again in 1952, that phrase yielded to “partners in mission.”

Anglicans—who represent my tradition—captured the partnership theme when, at a congress in Toronto in 1963, they used the phrase “mutual responsibility and interdependence,” explaining it this way:

Each church must radically study the form of its own obedience to mission and the needs it has to share in the single life and witness of our church everywhere. Mission is not only a giving to others, it is equally a sharing and receiving. . . . Every church has both resources and needs. If planning and responsible partnership are to be truly mutual, we must everywhere ask ourselves, systematically and with the best help we can gain from any source, what we have, what we need, and where we are called of God to share in major partnership with our fellow Christians. . . . Mission is not the kindness of the lucky and the unlucky; it is mutual, united obedience to the one God Whose mission it is.

A Filipino declaration took a similar view, suggesting that “partnership implies a reordering of relationships” characterized by “mutual trust and the recognition of and respect for each other’s identity,” a partnership in which we “minister to one another, listen to one another, critique one another, and trust one another.”

The catch is that we have often failed to live into these visions of partnership. The World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism declared in 1973 that “partnership in mission remains an empty slogan.” Even when it happens “in a formal sense, the actual dynamics are such as to perpetuate relations of dominance and dependence.”

South African missiologist David Bosch quoted an Indonesian church leader’s response to the Western churches during moratorium days: “The partnership [is] for you; the obedience [is] for us.”

The situation is complicated by the reality of great disparities in material resources between partners. This factor has been widely recognized, but it is interesting to note the observation of Breman Niles, the general secretary of the Council for World Mission, that “partnership is almost always among unequals. The problem is not inequality in partnerships.”

The situation is further complicated by the question: What do churches in the Global South have to give to those in the Global North? Writ-
Seminary communities need to reflect upon their **theologies of partnership**, especially scriptural foundations.

perceived problem or need. This has been especially true of informal relationships, which have often made Westerners intensely aware of the striking needs facing the theological institutions their friends represented. These links have revealed institutions with substantial concrete needs, and first steps toward partnership have often been found in a project to address a particular need that a friend from the Global South has put before us. The neediness of seminaries in North America has tended to be less material and, in a sense, more intangible. In the United States, for example, the interest of SCOM in partnership emerged as an answer to the perceived parochialism of American seminarians. More on the theme of neediness below.

At its best, seminary partnerships have offered what Norma Cook Everist wrote about poignantly, “possibilities for partnership in believing the other is someone from whom I can learn.”

Full stop.

**Things to Strive for in Seminary Partnerships**

Even if the literature on partnership is somewhat limited, what is there—and what has been quoted here—is often strikingly on the mark. My expectation is that those reading this article will tend to affirm warmly the theology and vision for faithful global partnership. No doubt some church traditions remain attracted to the more historic patterns of mission relationships, but broadly speaking, the difficulty is our fully living up to an agreed-upon vision, not the vision itself. This failure in praxis is not a product of hypocrisy—saying the nice words and then going about our business in patronizing or manipulative ways. From the problems of expense and communication to the challenges of theological diversity and levels of academic program, **living** partnership is, simply, tough.

If, then, the difficulty is praxis, here are five aspects of partnership in theological education that I believe will help to move us from the “not yet there” toward authentic partnership. Seminary partnerships need to:

- Be theologically grounded
- Reflect authentic mutuality and shared discernment
- Respect local initiative
- Be transparent
- Be sustainable

*First, theological grounding.* Partnership has been called “close to the biblical notion of koinonia.” It is grounded in God’s indwelling, a message of hospitality, of mutuality of guest and host. Both seminary communities, separately and when possible together, need to reflect upon their *theologies* of partnership, especially scriptural foundations.

In my recommendations to SCOM, I suggested that, within its structures, a seminary community needs to examine critically how a partnership would or would not serve its institutional mission and priorities. That may not sound like theological reflection, but it is. Is a theological institution called into this partnership? How does it understand its own neediness before God and neighbor? What kind of commitment does a seminary really want to make? This discipline is critical. Otherwise, what we have are projects, nothing more.

*Second, authentic mutuality and shared discernment.* These first two points are cousins. The former implies, but the latter emphasizes, process. A partnering *process* involves shared exploration of priorities, and when those are discerned together, all sorts of other things fall into place. In a template for a formal agreement I drafted, I included this commitment: “We declare our intention to engage in shared discernment of ways in which our partnership may serve the ministry of theological education, our institutions, and the formation of those entrusted to us by the church.”

How do we do that? First and foremost, we take the *time* to do it. The temptation is to jump into a project, for the newness of the relationship and the energy are there. But in a recent reflection about the last of the Millennium Development Goals, to “create a global partnership,” I wrote that we (Americans) needed “to allow ourselves to be needy too, to see in these goals a message to us. It may mean that, contrary to dominant American impulses, we are just quiet for awhile, we listen, we don’t organize anything or do anything for ‘them.” We just are.

Taking time permits both institutions to discover the other, especially related to academics and theological perspectives. When one offers postgraduate degrees and the other, external diplomas, the issue is not that one institution is weaker; rather, it is that curriculum, resources, and teaching methodology are likely to differ. When one focuses upon evangelism and another on prophetic witness, or one upon a particular denominational tradition and another on ecumenism, or when the two differ in approaches to biblical interpretation, it is clear that there will be challenges, however much both may affirm a spirit of theological inquiry. Building relationships that lead to an honest discern-
ment of shared needs is time consuming, but it is of critical importance. And given historical tensions—religious, political, economic—partnerships may simply but profoundly mark a “process of reconciliation.”

Whether partners enter into a ministry of reconciliation or not depends upon the degree of homogeneity, especially theological, that they possess. This is a critical matter for shared discernment. One solution to partnership challenges is to choose partners who share theological and ecclesiological perspectives. The Third Anglican Global South to South Encounter in 2005 said as much when they declared that “shared theological foundations are crucial to authentic fellowship and partnership in mission and ministry.” Alternatively, Michael Wilkie, a USPG (United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) mission appointee serving in theological education in South America, observed that it is “more important than ever that differing traditions of theological interpretation talk to each other if mutual understanding and respect are ever to be found. I think probably the key issue is tolerance and openness to viewpoints that are radically different. . . . I think if links are limited to only those that are theologically compatible, then no way forward will ever be found since prejudices will continue to be strengthened since they will never seriously be challenged.”

What better way to promote theological discourse—which seems to me to be an obvious intent in seminary partnerships and fundamental to theological education—than to enable faculty and students to engage with those whose commitment to the faith is deep but whose interpretation of the faith as Scripture and tradition speak to us today may differ significantly? Discourse that is firmly grounded theologically yet indicative of an openness to theological inquiry is essential for the life of the church universal. As Andrew Wingate writes, “I will be forever thankful for my British academic training in biblical languages and biblical criticism, but it was in Tamilnadu Theological Seminary [in India] that I became excited about applying the Bible to life.”

Discernment also addresses neediness, of both institutions. David Bosch offered a rather intriguing commentary on needs, which he tested against standards for “true mutuality.” He argued that the “fatal mistake” in relations between Western and Global South churches—and by extension, seminaries—was that our partnerships have historically involved “the same kind of commodities.” Reciprocity was expressed in an exchange of the same commodities that those in the West already had in abundance. “Genuine reciprocity,” he argued, “can only develop where the two respective partners do not receive the same as they have given.” The purpose of a partnership is to serve the needs of each institution. It is not an exchange.

As noted earlier, the neediness of theological institutions in the Global South has dominated partner activities, whether those needs be books or buildings or libraries. But it is worth a reminder that we should not immediately presume that they are all concrete project-oriented needs. Martin Conway, the former president of the Selly Oak Colleges and a distinguished British ecumenist with strong Asian ties, recalls that on a recent trip to Beijing his host took him to a new theological college established by the China Christian Council:

We were able to meet the Vice-Principal and were startled to hear him say that one of the most important things they needed to work on is a much fuller degree of international partnerships than they have inherited from the earlier, much smaller and less well suited, college in the centre of the city. So I guess that he was aware how vital it is for his students to have mental and spiritual horizons that are much wider than those of China itself, whose very success and sense of self-importance, now so much, much higher than it has been for many years . . . can so easily drown out the message of Jesus.

What do Western seminaries need that a partnership could provide? Again and again my interviewees spoke of intangibles. Phrases like “global awareness,” “a broadening experience of the world,” “a sense of what it is to be a global Anglican,” “a window on the world,” and “an incarnational presence” were commonplace. And institutions in the Global South can offer those things. Sandra McCann, an Episcopalian serving at Msalato Theological College in Tanzania, observed that “what Tanzanians have to offer is an example of Christ-like hospitality and a rich worship experience and a living example of joy and deep faith in the midst of poverty.” Grant LeMarquand points out significantly that students at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry (Ambridge, Pa.) return home from global experiences “realizing that they are in a missional situation here.” They have found a “new way of seeing home.”

I would judge that the most important thing in any theological education these days in the USA is to transmit a profound awareness that Christians are serving the purposes of a God . . . who is God of all creation and of all peoples, by no means mainly or most effectively of U.S. citizens! This is something absolutely crucial to the sense of what the truth of Christian faith is, as to any programme of international relationships, and if it isn’t learned pretty early in a person’s theological pilgrimage other “basic” truths can all too easily take over as the unseen but invariably dominant point of view. . . . So any exchange or partnership or visit to or from a comparable class or person from another part of the world is a vital tool for precisely this most important grasp of the universal basis of our faith and the truth to which we are to devote our lives.

An important point. But Mortimer Arias, formerly the president of Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano in Costa Rica, adds the caveat that “mutuality requires seminaries in the North to be specifically careful not to use the rest of the world . . . for the sake of their global education.” No doubt ise is the key word in that warning.

Yes, Western seminaries do note some tangible benefits: students and faculty gaining fluency in Spanish, for example, or the possibility of lectures on global Anglicanism (or any other tradition) from another perspective in the world. But the emphasis tends to be on expanding horizons.

Finances are often the dominant challenge to authentic mutuality, leading to a difficult partnership “when economic and academic resources are disparate”—that reality is historic, and obvious. It is not going to change anytime soon, even if...
North American seminaries are struggling financially, so the task is to work through financial inequities in a manner that creates and sustains a mutual and authentic partnership. Key to that is an analysis of power, for it is from a position of power that wealthier institutions, religious and secular, have historically abused relationships.

That said, if mutuality is to involve a sharing of vision for the partnership and an honest conversation about the needs of each institution, it is not an exercise of power for a Western seminary to say that a particular initiative sought by a partner is not one it wishes to embrace or fund. By now we should have moved past the flawed view that whatever a partner wants is what we should do—in either direction. That is not partnership.

Third, local initiative. Also in a seminary partnership agreement I drafted: “In this process of discernment we will recognize that the ultimate decision about programs at one of our institutions resides with that institution, yet we commit ourselves to listen to and learn from one another as we consider our diverse needs.”

This parallels a key principle named in a valuable document, “Ten Principles of Partnership in the Anglican Communion.” Western seminaries no longer are to declare what a partner “needs,” nor is either partner to initiate programs at their own institution to address perceived needs of their partner without shared discernment.

Fourth, transparency. This too is one of the “Ten Principles,” which the Anglican document simply explains as “we are open and honest with one another.” That seems fair enough, but in cross-cultural settings it is a minefield. I well recall the genuine hospitality Kenyan colleagues offered a visiting expatriate as he advanced his plans for a theological education by extension (TEE) curriculum a few years back. His plan had merit, and they valued the many aspects of TEE, but it was clear that two dynamics were at play. One was that hospitality demanded a courteous openness that seemed favorable; the other was that the proposal really did not accord with their immediate priorities. He left convinced that a commitment had been made; they watched him go, noncommittal but satisfied with the genuine hospitality with which he had been welcomed. Transparency? “Open and honest” is itself a vision of relationship but expressed in sometimes circuitous ways, and not quite what more-direct Westerners have in mind. And the Western model is not the standard.

Fifth, sustainability. Two questions arise. One is whether partners want to sustain a partnership, or a particular initiative of it. Just because something exists does not mean that it must continue to exist. The second question is how to sustain a partnership when it is desired by both partners.

In one form or another, what I frequently heard in interviews had to do with the will to sustain the relationship. Among faculty, staff, and seminarians, there will always be those who value a partnership more than others. Everyone at a seminary need not be committed in substantive ways to the partnership. But whether a partnership is formal or informal, an institutional discipline, where structures reflect upon the contribution seminary partnerships can make to the mission of the seminary, should be tested against the energy and enthusiasm—the will—of key individuals to see that the institution fully lives up to the responsibilities of partnership.

Sustain for how long? The Anglican Communion, like other traditions, has valued time limits in companion links, and this may wisely apply to seminaries as well. There is an understanding that dates are flexible and that links may be renewed, but the limits free either partner from the unsatisfactory phenomenon of just letting the partnership quietly die. Instead, timetables encourage evaluation, and as critical an exercise as this may be for any specific activity, it needs to be undertaken for the relationship as well—an emphasis that deserves more attention than it sometimes receives. With that process, the partners may reach shared decisions about the future. Whether a partnership is renewed or ended, or even dissolved earlier than anticipated, partners should provide opportunities to celebrate the relationship. The quest for relationships of integrity across the church universal deserves celebration.

Here I have tried to underscore aspects of partnerships in mission, whether in theological education or otherwise, that the church seems to know. The catch is that partnership takes time and work, and it is far easier to agree to “Let’s do something together” than it is to engage in theological reflection together about our call to ministry together, to invest in relational qualities that are authentically mutual, and to demonstrate “mutual responsibility and interdependence.” Institutions and programs that engage in ministerial formation can be, ought to be, a model for this vision of praxis throughout the church universal. It is time for us to do it. Past time.

Notes
1. The Seminary Consultation on Mission, a program of the Episcopal seminaries in the United States, asked me to be a consultant on partnerships, and I presented my recommendations to that body in September 2008. This article draws from my experience with partnerships generally and this recent consultancy in particular.
2. Hong-Jung Lee, “Beyond Partnership, Toward Networking: A Korean Reflection on Partnership in the Web of God’s Mission,” International Review of Mission 91 (October 2002): 577–78. Actually, Lee added a fourth stage: Participant. He argued that there is something “incomplete and tentative” about partnership, an “acquisition.” Maybe he is right. But partnership, properly understood, strikes me as more relational than participatory. Authentic partnership is an entry into something that is potentially profound and transforming, and there I am content to leave it.
5. Ibid., pp. 21–23.
10. I am writing as an American, but I seek in this article to avoid phrasology that will speak of “us” and “them.” While Europeans/Westerners/North Americans/people of the Global North bear considerable responsibility for partnership failures, they do not do so exclusively. My hope is that this article might speak to all of us. The terms “West” and “Westerner” have their inadequacies, and “Global South” is not yet in universal use, but unless the context is more specific, I use those terms in this article.
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In January 2010 editor Jonathan Bonk announced that the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH turned “a conceptual corner” when it was transformed into “an online journal”—freely accessible to all—with a published print option available for paying subscribers. “With this transition, he said, “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.”

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The print edition of the IBMR will continue to be published, but all readers and mission-minded persons are invited to register also for the e-journal.

—Daniel J. Nicholas
Managing Editor
There is a tension between reaching the unreached and teaching them all that Jesus has commanded—between search and harvest theology. In the Great Commission, Jesus sends us to evangelize, but also to teach. Choosing one over the other is a false dichotomy; complete obedience demands a balanced approach.

"Ultimately it is my prayer that those who read Reaching and Teaching will gain an understanding of how to balance the tensions of time, the need, and faithfulness that results in Kingdom advance and faithfulness to what Jesus has commanded us to do."

-David Sills, D.Miss., Ph.D

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Siga Arles

From the first millennium of the Christian era in India, only mere fragments of Christian literature have survived, held at places such as the Orthodox Seminary in Kottayam, Kerala. Cyril Bruce Firth lists the few items that are available, mentioning other authors who have summarized the material. The situation does not change up through the first half of the second millennium; Firth again remains our source and guide.

The situation begins to change with the arrival of Francis Xavier to the Indian subcontinent in 1542. Some information from the following century and a half has survived relating to Roman Catholic mission activities. By the time Protestant missionaries Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau entered India in 1706, the art of printing made it possible for writings to be preserved and widely read. Ziegenbalg translated the New Testament and printed it within a short span of two decades at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Missiological Literature in India Before 1947

When William Carey and his team developed an educational enterprise at Serampore, West Bengal, they were able to assemble a surprisingly large number of printed books. These volumes are still available at the Carey Library and Research Centre (CLRC) at Serampore College (founded in 1818). The very first major Christian literature work in India was the Bible translations that Carey undertook in the early nineteenth century. The first apologetic writings were the correspondence between Carey’s associate Joshua Marshman and Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Christian colleges and their founders gave added impetus to the development of Christian literature in India.

By the middle of the nineteenth century indigenous writers were appearing such as Lal Behari Day, Keshub Chandra Sen, K. M. Banerjee, and, later, Brahmanabandhab Upadhyaya. A few, such as Pulney Andi, who had the vision of a national church of India, gave thought to indigenous shaping of the church. Until the twentieth century, however, there was almost no indigenous Indian Christian literature. Most written documents were prepared by Western missionaries and colonial masters, with very few by Indians. The materials were exploratory, apologetic, and evangelistic in nature. Kaj Baagø, Robin Boyd, and M. M. Thomas—as noted by D. A. Thangasamy—have done excellent work in summing up the nineteenth- and twentieth-century roots from which Indian Christian theology was to grow. Baagø identified early Indian Christian writers in his Pioneers of Indigenous Theology in India (1969). Boyd continued the survey in his doctoral research at Edinburgh, summarizing the earliest contributors and then moving on to consider the early, middle, and later pioneers of Indian indigenous theology. His Introduction to Indian Christian Theology (1969) has become the standard textbook at the B.Th. and B.D. levels for the course in Indian Christian theology. In The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (1969), Thomas demonstrated that even some from outside of the church affirmed Christ and his significance, including Ram Mohun Roy, Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, and M. K. Gandhi.

Such explorations into the early formation of indigenous theology ultimately led to the kind of mission studies that gave rise to an indigenous missiology for India. We will not be able to pursue the argument, but we should note that some reject the idea of an autonomous missiology, claiming that theology properly includes missiology, or vice versa. For them, there is a smooth transition from Indian Christian theology to missiology. Others hold that missiology is distinct from theology, although theological insights may be included within the formation of missiology, depending on the specific context.

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI; founded in 1914 as the National Missionary Council; in 1923 becoming the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon; and bearing its present name since 1979, following the separation from it of the Councils of Burma and Sri Lanka) has played a central role in Indian mission studies. Kaj Baagø highlights the NCCI’s achievements, mentioning in particular the Lindsay Commission’s study Christian Higher Education in India (1931), Waskom Pickett’s Christian Mass Movements in India (1933), and Charles Ranson’s The Christian Minister in India (1945), all of which deepened thought on mission and ministry in India. Mission understanding, methodology, and practice in India prior to independence benefited from the founding of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies in 1930 and the attempt to initiate a similar center for the study of Hinduism.

At the 1923 All India Conference of Indian Christians, K. T. Paul, the conference president, spoke on the topic “The Responsibility of Christian Citizenship in India.” Later, at the 1930 Serampore Convocation, Paul asked, “What is the place of the Church of Christ in the currents of India’s thought and feeling and aspirations and action? Is it an effective factor in determining India’s standards, in the evolution of its corporate conscience? What is the contribution of Christian citizenship to public opinion in India?” We could thus justifiably say that mission study in the Indian setting was holistic right from the start. Prominent names contributing to its growth include in particular J. G. Shome, E. C. Bhattry, Pandita Ramabai, Narayan Vaman Tilak, O. Kandasamy Chetti, H. A. Krishna Pillai, P. C. Mazoomdar, R. P. Dutt, Manilal C. Parekh, and Vedanayakam Samuel Azariah.

On August 15, 1947, the colonial period ended, and India became independent. The Indian National Congress took control of administering the nation, in keeping with the mood of the age. The church in India likewise experienced freedom and began to take charge of its ministry and mission. Six weeks later, on September 27, five major church groups united to become the Church of South India, thereby taking a step toward overcoming Western denominational divisions. A similar unification of seven major church groups took place in 1970 with the founding of the Church of North India.
The church in India faced the need of developing both indigenous leadership and indigenous theology. A question commonly raised is, Was the church at heart a pro-British group, or were Christians fully engaged in the political struggle for freedom? Arthur Jeyakumar proves that in Tamil Nadu the Tamil Christians were as much involved in the freedom struggle as their Hindu neighbors.12

Mission Studies After Independence

In the mid-twentieth century we begin to feel the heartthrob of the church in India as its theological leaders search for identity, purpose, and expression. What is Christian identity within the pluralistic context of India? What is the church as a community within the factional communalism—of casteism, linguisim, regionalism, racism, tribalism, and religious divides—that is rampant in India? What is the mission of the church in India? These questions were at the forefront for the Indian Christian church as the British were preparing to leave the country. At Pune in 1942 the Indian Theological Conference considered the topic “Our Theological Task.”13 The members of the Rethinking Group in Madras addressed the theme “Rethinking Christianity in India” at the time when the Western world was exploring the meaning of Kraemer’s Christian Message in a Non-Christian World.14 The neoorthodox defense against the growing liberalism of Western scholars, along with the Indian Christian response, began to lay the foundations of Indian Christian theology. The neoorthodox impulse rejected culture religion and any program of merely earthly betterment, insisting on the radical otherness of the Gospel. Facing the challenge of the times, the National Christian Council of India tackled these issues by setting up the Christian Institute for the Study of Society (1951) and the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns (1954) among other structures. The NCCI also promoted exploration of the understanding of ministry and mission in the Indian context by sponsoring conferences, study programs, and symposia.

Arguing for a Christian concern for society, P.D. Devanandan desired to create a theology that reaffirmed a positive approach to other religions and cultures. He proposed that Christian social concern should be not merely political or economic but primarily theological, rooted in and governed by the insight that “our faith stands for the redemption of the whole man,” here and now.15 E. Stanley Jones argued that movement of social justice to the forefront of secular preoccupations was evidence of the present reality of the kingdom of God.16 Devanandan and, later, M. M. Thomas took this social mission seriously and developed the ideal of the church’s mission as social action for justice. Under their leadership the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS), set up in 1957, began to develop the various aspects of this theology for the mission of the church. CISRS grew dominant, and as Philip Potter attested, it impacted the way the World Council of Churches developed its contextual theology of mission.17

The literature produced by CISRS could well be identified as the inaugural set of books for mission studies in India. The titles below indicate the kind of studies that were undertaken; they covered the social, political, economic, and religious challenges facing the church in mission.

by P. D. Devanandan: The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual (CISRS, 1958); Resurgent Hinduism: Review of Modern Movements (CISRS, 1958); Our Task Today: Revision of Evangelistic Concern (CISRS, 1958); The Dravida Kazhagam: A Revolt Against Brahminism (CISRS, 1959); The Gospel and Renascent Hinduism (SCM, 1959); Christian Concern in Hinduism (CISRS, 1961); Christian Issues in Southern Asia (Friendship Press, 1963)

by Devanandan et al.: Presenting Christ to India Today (CLS, 1957)

edited by Devanandan and Thomas: Cultural Foundations of Indian Democracy (CLSC, 1955); India’s Quest for Democracy (CLSC, 1955); Community Development in India’s Industrial Urban Areas (CLSC, 1958); The Changing Pattern of Family in India (CISRS, 1960); Problems of Indian Democracy (CISRS, 1962)

by M. M. Thomas: Salvation and Humanisation (CISRS, 1971); The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ (CISRS, 1976); Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel (CLS, 1977)

compiled by Thomas: Christian Participation in Nation-Building (NCCI, 1960)


edited by Thomas and R. W. Taylor: Tribal Awakening (CISRS, 1965)


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In addition, CISRS published numerous articles in its journal *Religion and Society* and in the *National Christian Council Review*.18

During the same period the Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC) was founded at Whitefield in Bangalore. The ECC held numerous conferences and published books and reports, all of which also contributed to mission studies in India.19 It sponsored a variety of programs, some of which were politically oriented:

Democratic Socialism, Democracy, and Dynamics of Change
Federalism in India
Food and Hunger Crisis
The Judiciary and the Parliament
Media and Politics
National Goals
Panchayat Raj as an Instrument of Democracy
Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Secularism in Indian Constitution and Practice
Women in Indian Politics After 1947

Other programs were more sociologically oriented:

The Bengali Novel and Social Life
The Cancer of Corruption
The Christian Family in the Industrial Society
Cinema and Social Change
Communalism in Indian Politics
Concept of Liberation in South India Fiction
Dialogue on Eradication of Underdevelopment
Harijan Oppression in Independent India
Health Service
Human Rights
Social Responsibility
Value of Human Life in Suicide, Violence, and Abortion

Mission concern was expressed in programs such as The Christian in a Secular World, Christian Responsibility, Mission in the Light of Emerging Theology, The Role of the Laity, What Is Mission? and What Mission Is Not. ECC also explored the wider role of mission and education. For example, the program for village school teachers studied education as a key to social change. During the third quarter of the twentieth century, the ECC studied concerns specific to women, youth, the media, and the law, each of which provided much food for thought for the church in mission in India. The ECC offers its seminar reports as books, as well as publishing thought-provoking papers from its events in its journal *Theology for Our Times*. Each issue focuses on a main theme involving areas of concern for the church in mission. Three of the themes have been “Evolution of a Paradigm in Theology for Asia” (June 1998); “Economics, Ecology, Ecumenism, and Religion” (August 1999); and “Religious Fundamentalism: Ethical Challenges” (July 2008).

Paralleling the efforts of NCCI, CISRS, and ECC, the Senate of Serampore College established its *Theological Text Books Programme* and began to publish study books for theological students at the B.Th. and B.D. levels. Some of these were directly helpful as mission studies material, especially Cyril Bruce Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 3d ed. (CLS, 1976); Gabriel Dietrich and Bastabaan Wielenga, *Towards Understanding Indian Society* (Centre for Social Analysis, TTS, 1997); and Henry H. Presler, *Primitive Religions in India* (CLS, 1971).20 During the 1960s and 1970s this series accomplished much good work but became less active in the 1980s. Now it mainly reprints older titles.

As indicated, the Christian Literature Society (CLS) became the publishing house for the Theological Text Books Programme. With early pioneers of literature ministry such as J. N. Farquhar, CLS has had a long history of providing Christian literature for India. But this role appears to have faded, for it lacks contemporary vibrancy. In 1958 the British Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge established its Indian wing, ISPCK, which also has a glorious history of publishing missional and theological books that have significantly helped the church in mission. A noble venture that ISPCK undertakes is to donate a set of books to each first-year theological student in India. ISPCK also partners with institutions to bring out fresh books in theology and missiology.

Besides the work of NCCI, CISRS, ECC, and publishing houses such as CLS and ISPCK, India has seen a trend of various theological institutions holding mission consultations and conferences and then publishing the essays presented, along with additional evaluatory reports and interpretative introductions. Such a series has come out of the Centre for Mission Studies (CMS) of Union Biblical Seminary (UBS), in Pune, published by ISPCK. Begun in 1982, this effort has so far produced a dozen books, which have made important contributions to Indian missiological literature. This scholarly series, which is mainly from an evangelical perspective, has been particularly valuable because evangelical mission literature in India has otherwise been almost exclusively devotional or promotional in nature. This UBS effort has thus been most welcome and, it is hoped, can be sustained. The series includes:

*Good News to the Poor: The Challenge to the Church* (1997)
*Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity* (1998)
*Conversion in a Pluralistic Context* (2000)
*The Indian Church in Context: Her Emergence, Growth, and Mission* (2002)
*Missiological Education: Theological Integration and Contextual Implications* (2009)21

In honor of Ben Wati, UBS also published a Festschrift, *Mission and Missions* (1998), which brought together essays relating leadership, ethics, and the task of mission.22

Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai, developed Summer Institutes, which have enabled its faculty members to interact each year with specialists on selected mission topics, particularly in the Indian context. The result has been a series of books, including *Frontiers of Dalit Theology* (1997) and *New Horizons in Christian Mission: A Theological Exploration* (1999). Earlier, the institution published *Debate on Mission* (1979).23

The Tamilnadu Theological Seminary (TTS), Madurai, has published a series of books relating to the many challenges facing Christian mission in India. Their titles include:

by Gnana Robinson: *Good News to the Poor* (1984); *Let Justice Roll Down like Waters* (1984); *First World Fundamentalism Frustrates the Poor* (1987)
by Robinson and Carr: *Solidarity of the Oppressed* (1981)
Also, an earlier volume edited by Samuel Amirtham, *A Vision for Man* (CLS, 1978), belongs in this series of TTS publications. In addition, *Sidings with the Poor* (Madras: CLS, 1989), by TTS faculty member Gnana Robinson, is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the area of mission among the poor. This seminary has been active in exploring a variety of ways that the church might enter society with the Good News of Jesus Christ, some of which have been expressed in multiple programs, including:

- Arulagam (“House of Grace”; a home for destitute women and their children)
- Education for the Social Welfare of the Oppressed
- Inba Illam (“Home for the Old and Needy”)
- Makal Nagar (a home for Sri Lankan refugees)
- Peoples Association for Social Action
- Peoples Movement for Women’s Rights
- Rural Theological Institute
- Siloam Farm (a home for lepers)
- TECCA: Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action

A flow of reports, articles, and books has emerged from the activities, experiences, and struggles of these many programs, which have pursued mission in various settings. They have provided the rudiments of an authentic and indigenous missiology, exactly what the Indian church needs for its reflection, learning, and involvement.

Other institutions have also published relevant studies that relate broadly to mission. An important one is *Ecumenical Missiology* (2002), from United Theological College, Bangalore. Also, its journal *Bangalore Theological Forum* discusses theology and the concerns of contextual ministry that underlie mission activities. Several of its current and former faculty members have probed deeply into a variety of mission-related topics. Here we could mention Christopher Duraisingh, Franklyn J. Balasundaram, Arvind Nirmal, Gnana Robinson, Jayakiran Sebastian, John Mohan Razu, Nalini Arles, and Sathianathan Clarke, who have had significant impact in areas such as Asian theology, Dalit theology, patristic theology, globalization, counseling, pastoral care, and theological education.

The South Asia Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), also in Bangalore, has published a series of books, some from theses written by their students and others by faculty members and visiting scholars. Here we could mention four titles, all published by SAIACS Press: *Insights into Openness: Encouraging Urban Mission* (2000), by Atul Y. Aghamkar; *Bridges Across Cultures* (2003), by Achenkunju Pappi, John Philip, and George Edward; *Welcoming the Gospel in Ihrakhand* (2003), by R. George Edward; *Tribes in Transition* (2004), edited by H. Hrangkhuma; and *Road to Delhi: J. Waskom Pickett Remembered* (2005), by Arthur G. McPhee. Founded in 1981 as a center specializing in missiology, SAIACS has evolved into an institution for postgraduate theological studies, Christian leadership training, and research. Among other degrees, it offers the doctor of missiology.

Other educational institutions and cooperative enterprises have also published journals that have been a major avenue for sharing mission study material. Much mission-related information has appeared, for example, in the reports and articles in the following journals (* = irregular or short-lived in appearance):

- *Asian Journal of Theology*, SATHRI, Bangalore
- *Bangalore Theological Forum*, UTC, Bangalore
- *Dharma Deepika*, Deepika Educational Trust, Chennai
- *Indian Church History Review*, Church History Association of India, Bangalore
- *Indian Journal of Missiology*, Indian Institute of Missiology, Trichy, Bangalore
- *Indian Journal of Theology*, Serampore College and Bishops College, Kolkata
- *Journal of Tribal Studies*, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam
- *National Council of Churches Review*, NCCI, Nagpur
- *Religion and Society*, CISRS, Bangalore
- *Theology for Our Times*, ECC / ISET, Whitefield, Bangalore
- *TRACI-ETS Journal*, TRACI, Delhi
- *UBS Journal*, Union Biblical Seminary, Pune

Individually, the impact of these journals varies. The strongest are *Religion and Society*, *Indian Church History Review*, *Bangalore Theological Forum*, and *National Council of Churches Review*.

Among Roman Catholic publications, four journals have been among the most popular publications for mission studies: *Indian Missiological Review* (later *Mission Today*), *Integral Liberation*, *Jnanodaya*, and *Third Millennium*.

The Indian Social Institute at Delhi and Bangalore, as well as the Centre for Social Action in Bangalore, has done tremendous service by producing contextual studies and relevant research writings to help the cause of mission. I encourage each of my missiology students to buy the series of works published by the Centre for Social Action because of their general relevance. Important books in this series include the following:

- by John Maliekal: *Indian Political Parties and Ideologies* (1977)

Other books deal with caste, the eco-crisis, the five-year plans of the government of India, industry, medical needs, and slums. These studies provide crucial contextual knowledge for mission students concerned with developing action plans.

The Fellowship of Indian Missiologists (FOIM), formed in 1991 at the initiative of Jacob Kavunkal and some of his associates, soon began to hold conferences for missiologists from all the churches of India. Papers presented were later published in a FOIM series. At first they were unrelated collections of essays, but in later years they were tied to a theme. Volumes published so far have been:

- *Bible and Mission in India Today* (1993)
- *Christ and Culture* (1994)
Perspectives on Neutics research. Some of these publications have particularly impacted Bangalore, has published books to enhance scholarship and center, the books and has become an attractive low-cost publisher. Tiruvalla in the recent past has developed a series of missional 


Dalit studies have taken center stage in recent years, for the issues have been portrayed as an example of apartheid, and the world community has increasingly been interested in the plight of the oppressed untouchables of India and has desired their liberation. I list here seven recent studies:


These books, which are but the tip of the iceberg, all deal with Dalit theology and its implications for mission and mission studies.

One important area needing much further work is documentation and histories of the various Indian mission fields and mission organizations, of which India has a large number. Most have no written history. We have a desperate need to document the vision, purpose, founding, early struggles, later growth, challenges, and prospects of each of the groups laboring throughout India. When I was chairman of the board of governors of Christian Outreach Uplifting New Tribes (COUNT), Hyderabad, we released two volumes during the Silver Jubilee celebrations giving the history of COUNT and acknowledging those who were instrumental in setting its vision.30 The India Missions Association (IMA, founded 1977), the national federation of missions in India, has occasionally prepared statistical data on either state or national levels. It has published Transforming the Indian Cities: Profiles of Selected 100 Cities (2004),31 as well as several hundred profiles of Dalits and megapeople groups. Such efforts are overdue; we need initiatives and support structures to accomplish this task as soon as possible.

Beside institutional efforts, we must acknowledge that many individuals have done important research and have published their findings, adding to the collection of mission study literature. For instance, F. J. Balasundaram presented his EATWOT in Asia: Towards a Relevant Theology (1993), based on his doctoral study at the South Asia Theological Research Institute.32 Milton Jeganathan wrote Mission and Education (2002), Lalsangkima Pachuau wrote Ethnic Identity and Christianity: A Socio-Historical and Missiological Study of Christianity in North East India with Special Reference to Mizoram (2002), and Mary Schaller Blaufuss wrote Changing Goals of the American Madura Mission in India, 1830–1916 (2003), all three arising from their doctoral studies at Princeton. My own doctoral thesis from the University of Aberdeen was published as Theological Education for the Mission of the Church in India: 1947–1987 (1991), with a second edition titled Missiological Education: An Indian Exploration (2006).33

In some cases, scholars outside of the church have contrib-

In some cases Festschriften have made valuable contributions to mission study. These include volumes honoring the following individuals:

- Ben Wati: Mission and Missions (1998) (mentioned above)
- Brian Wintle: Biblical Theology and Missiological Education in Asia (2005)

Several consultation reports have appeared as books with collections of essays. Wisdom from many scholars has been made available for all to learn from and to incorporate in forming mission theology and praxis. An example of this kind of mission studies is Education as Mission (2004), a report of a consultation held at Ishvani Kendra (Center for the Word of God) in Pune. Another is Emerging Indian Missiology: Context and Concept (2006), by Joseph Mattam and Joseph Veliamangalam.35 Such “emerging” is accentuated by many initiatives, as identified above.

Sofar, we have only a few textbooks for missiological studies in India. We could mention, however, volumes edited by Sebastian Karotemprel, Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology (1995); Abraham P. Athyal and Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Mission Today: Challenges and Concerns (1998); Yesudas Athyal, Mission Today: Subaltern Perspectives (2001); and Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj, Missiology for the Twenty-first Century: South Asian Perspectives (2004).36

S. Devasagayam Ponraj established Mission Educational Books (MEB) in 1987 and has published mission training books for grass roots missionaries, including the writings of missiologists such as Samuel Jeyakumar, J. J. Harris, and J. N. Manokaran. Books published by MEB include:

- J. J. Harris, Evangelicals Are True Eucenicals (2006)
- Samuel Jeyakumar, Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion (1999)

In 1994 I founded the Centre for Contemporary Christianity (CICC), with a vision of working toward the renewal of ministry, mission, and theological education. CICC initiated the series Studies in the Gospel Interface with Indian Contexts to publish mostly postgraduate research documents dealing with the Indian situation in mission history and methodology.38 As of January 2010, twelve volumes have been published. By year of publication or reprinting by CICC, they are:

- Siga Arles, Missiological Education: An Indian Exploration (2006)
- Geomon K. George, Religious Pluralism: Challenges for Pentecostalism in India (2006)

Some of these were Ph.D. dissertations written at major institutions such as Aberdeen, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and SATHRI that either were not published or were prohibitively expensive in their original publication. CICC has brought them out in affordable editions. It seeks to identify and publish any research document that is of value for the continuing development of mission in India. Presently, the theses written for the Consortium for Indian Missiological Education (CIME) are being processed for publication, the first of which was by Ebenezer Dasan as noted above.

A second series produced by CICC is its Missiological Classics Series which reprints significant older works (and some fresh works), making them available to the increasing number of mission students in India. Thus far the series has published David Bosch, Transforming Mission; Jan Jongeneel, Missiological Encyclopedia (2 vols.); Luis Bush, The Catalysts of World Evangelization; Stephen McDowell and Mark Beliles, Liberating the Nations; and Hendrik Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. Forthcoming volumes include G. V. Job et al., Rethinking Christianity in India; O. G. Myklebust, The Study of Mission in Theological Education (2 vols.); and other books by authors such as Andrew Walls, Jan Jongeneel, Wilbert Shenk, Charles Van Engen, and Charles Kraft.

In 2009 CICC started the quarterly Contemporary Christian as a means of promoting the publication of relevant themes, case studies, and methodological insights for mission in present-day India.

Overall, mission study in India has steadily progressed. In the past it was hobbled by divisions between Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and those supporting the ecumenical movement. Increasingly, however, the various groups have been more willing to learn from each other and have demonstrated a greater
willingness to engage in cooperative ventures. Mission study is occurring more holistically; overall, there is much hope for Christian mission in India. Some in India do still hold to old-style conservative thinking, wishing to shape mission in patriarchal or colonial ways. But relevance is becoming a key factor, and many are active in research and publication with a goal of helping the church to learn, profiting as much as possible from the modern emphasis on efficiency and productivity. Contemporary humanity requires, not a message that is heard as mythological or mystical, but one communicating realistically and authentically about the God who cares and renews. A missiology of this type, which in our broken world strives to reflect Jesus Christ, the crucified and living one, is the kind of Indian missiology that key leaders will increasingly be exploring and fostering in the days to come.

The Future of Mission Studies in India

The church in India has long been introverted and isolated. We could characterize its mission approach as remaining within the four walls of its respective denominations, relying on pamphlets and posters to invite people to come to its meetings. Despite the voices that emerged asking the church to become involved in nation building, the overarching tendency was to stay away from the world (which God so loved) and to try to missionize through campaigns, crusades, and conventions. Much of the missionary attempt has been sporadic, based on emotion and enthusiasm, without thoughtful training or insightful effort understanding the context. Efforts in constructing a missiology that will lead the way into the future. Missiology’s vision should be large, not settling for the narrow goal of expanding a denomination, but aiming high to infiltrate and shape the entire Indian community with the salt, light, leaven, and wisdom of the eternal Gospel, truly reflecting Jesus Christ, the living Head of the church.

Notes

1. Cyril Bruce Firth, An Introduction to Indian Church History (Madras: CLS, for the Indian Theological Library of the Senate of Serampore College, 1961).

2. For information on this period, see Anthony Mathias Mundadan, History of Christianity in India, vol. 1, From the Beginning Up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century, new ed., and Joseph Thekkedath, History of Christianity in India, vol. 2, From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century, new ed. (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 2001).

3. A beautifully constructed modern building on the Serampore College campus houses the CLRC archives. These are a gold mine for information on this period, see Anthony Mathias Mundadan, History of Christianity in India, vol. 1, From the Beginning Up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century, new ed., and Joseph Thekkedath, History of Christianity in India, vol. 2, From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century, new ed. (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 2001).

4. The educational work of Scottish missionaries Alexander Duff, John Wilson, William Miller, and others provided the foundation for the nation of India, as well as the mission task of the church. See J. C. Ingleby, Missiologies, Education, and India (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000).

5. The need is urgent now for us in India to produce the missiology that would make us relevant and effective. Missiology should be taken up in unity and integrity. Such unity is not to be confined within the ecclesial community but should spread even to the wider world of our common humanity. Such a venture should bring the theoretician and the practitioner to work closely together. The missiology we need should be holistic from the start. It should appeal to the total human need and total creation to be redeemed. Instead of an unnatural dualistic outlook, we need to make sure that we view evangelism and social transformation as the two sides of a coin, as the two partners in a wedding. Specific tasks and priorities for the future include:

- documenting existing indigenous missions and their work in India
- developing archives to preserve the available literature
- systematizing bibliographic indexing of books and articles for research
- creating a master list of libraries and their holdings
- collecting oral histories before the present older generation is gone
- training proper librarians, archivists, and Web researchers
- training a sufficient number of postgraduates to be teachers
- holding consultations to bring together theoreticians and practitioners
- conducting field research to collect and preserve data for study and missional work
- identifying methods of mission involvement that are most relevant in the Indian setting
- overall: developing an authentic, indigenous missiology for India

All branches of the church—Roman Catholic, ecumenical, evangelical, Orthodox, and charismatic—should unite their efforts in constructing a missiology that will lead the way into the future. Missiology’s vision should be large, not settling for the narrow goal of expanding a denomination, but aiming high to infiltrate and shape the entire Indian community with the salt, light, leaven, and wisdom of the eternal Gospel, truly reflecting Jesus Christ, the living Head of the church.

Notes


8. See www.nccindia.in/aboutncc/vision.htm.


10. Located at Hyderabad and now named the Henry Martyn Institute—International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations, and Reconciliation, the institute continues to offer seminars, courses, and degree-oriented programs. It also publishes the scholarly Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute.


13. See the findings of the Pune conference, summarized in Marcus Ward, Our Theological Task: An Introduction to the Study of Theology in India (Madras: CLS, 1946).
“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.


19. See Arles, Missiological Education, chap. 6, “The Contribution of the Ecumenical Christian Centre,” pp. 129–39. The reports, books, and journal that follow can be obtained directly from the ECC.

20. There were several streams in this textbook series. They were written by various authors, edited by the committee, published by the Senate of Serampore College, and printed by the CLS, Madras.

21. The UBS Centre for Mission Studies publishes these volumes in collaboration with ISPCK. The author has contributed several articles to this series, including “Perspectives on Theological Education,” in The Church in India, ed. F. Hrangkhuma and Sebastian Kim (Delhi: ISPCK, 1996), pp. 194–206; “The Place of Missiology in Theological Education,” in Leadership and Mission, ed. Mark T. B. Laing (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), pp. 169–83; and “Historical Developments of Missiological Education in India” and “Impact of the International Missionary Council in Reshaping Missiological Education,” in Missiological Education, ed. Ebenezer D.Dasan and Frampton F. Fox (Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), pp. 1–26 and 27–38.


25. These books are available from FOIM. The earlier volumes were printed by St Paul’s, Mumbai, and the later ones were published by ISPCK, Delhi.


27. Publication details are as follows: Kumari, ed. (Chennai: Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, 1999); Meshack, ed. (Tiruvalla: Christava Sahithya Samithi, 2007); Ralte et al., Women Re-shaping Theology (Bangalore: United Theological College; Delhi: ISPCK, 1998) and Envisioning a New Heaven and a New Earth (Nagpur: NCCI; Delhi: ISPCK, 1998).

28. The volumes edited by Hrangkhuma are a SAIACS consultation report and a FOIM conference volume; both were published in Bangalore. Longchar’s titles were published in Jorhat, Assam, by the Tribal Study Centre, Eastern Theological College. Ponraj’s volume was published in Chennai by Mission Educational Books (MEB), an initiative to produce mission training books for grassroots missionaries of India. Also in the MEB series Ponraj has published Church Growth Studies in Mission: Principles and Practices of Church Growth in Indian Mission Context (1991); Church Planting Approach to Mission: Principles and Practices of Planting Churches in an Indian Rural Context (1991); and An Introduction to Missionary Anthropology: The Principles and Practices of Communication of the Gospel in Cross-Cultural Contexts of India (1993). Thanzaau’s volumes were published in Bangalore by the Asian Trading Corporation for the Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, Aizawl.


32. Publication details: Jeganathan (Chennai: Church of South India, Department of Mission and Evangelism, 2002); Blaufuss (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003); and Balasundaram (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1993).

33. The first edition, published in Frankfurt by Peter Lang, was too expensive for wider circulation. I therefore prepared a second edition, published in Bangalore by the CfCC. It includes an epilogue covering developments from 1987 to 2005.


36. L. Stanislaus, ed., Education as Mission (Delhi: ISPCK, for Ishvani Kendra, Pune, 2004); J. Pattam and J. Veliamangalam, Emerging Indian Missiology (Delhi: ISPCK, for FOIM, 2006).


38. To order CfCC publications, contact the Centre at Cc94@gmail.com.


40. This was exactly the point made in Lausanne Occasional Paper 21 (1982): Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment, a joint publication of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship.
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Anthony J. Gittins

Historically, pilgrimages were communal undertakings, and their value—from long before Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales to long after—owed as much to one’s faith and one’s company as to the shrine at destination’s end. Pilgrims would certainly know where they were bound, but relatively little else. They believed that grace did not depend on completion or arrival but on the firmness of intention and singleness of purpose, whether one actually arrived or died en route. This image has always been a powerful stimulus to my sense of being called as a disciple and sent to participate in God’s mission as Jesus was: vocation and co-mission are two sides of a single coin. But over the years I have significantly modified my understanding of pilgrimage and of my part in the missio Dei.

Initial Preparation

Born in 1943 in Manchester, England, into a Roman Catholic family some generations deep, I grew up with no doubts about Christianity in principle, yet with gradually developing concerns about some of the practice I witnessed or heard about. The life and actions of Jesus always seemed far more attractive than the rather pedestrian or prosaic lives of many people I knew. Even before 1960, materialism and increasing consumerism were magnets for many, and I was by no means immune to the attraction; yet I wanted something different, though I was unclear as to exactly what. In my own immediate family, thank God, there were many role models: honest, upright people who were law-abiding, socially responsible, and religiously faithful.

In that era, when American Westerns romanticized the Wild West and young English boys wanted nothing more at Christmas than a sheriff’s badge and a toy six-gun, or a bow and arrow and Indian headdress, the figure of the missionary and the image of “the missions” were also romanticized. “Missionary” applied only to professionals (which, for Catholics, meant priests, brothers, and nuns/sisters), so any boy knew perfectly well that the way to be a missionary was by becoming a priest or brother. Celibacy would later be understood as a distinguishing feature of missionaries, but a youngster would have little or no real grasp of what that implied until the hormonal tides began to flood. Catholic families might pray for a son or daughter to be called to this life, for the vocation was deeply respected, but there were no priests in the generations above me. One aunt was be called to this life, for the vocation was deeply respected, but there were no priests in the generations above me. One aunt was

Looking back, I always had a strong desire to help people, and an equally strong aversion to proselytism or deviousness of any kind. Whatever “salvation” might mean, I was convinced that God—who by definition was just and loving—already cared about and “saved” the people long before I might show up, and were real missionaries. I first met them when I was about six years old and they were visiting my aunts. I vividly remember being captivated by their larger-than-life personalities, their tales of Africa, and—as I would recall in later years—their palpable sense of joy and fulfillment. One looked like a bodybuilder and mesmerized me with tales of snakes and wild animals. Of course I knew that missionaries, whether in “darkest Africa” or in China, were not only cast in the heroic mold but were saintly as well as fearless and adventurous, but I was attracted by the combination of wholesome holiness and courageous commitment to a noble cause.

When I was about eleven and in school in Manchester, our religion teacher, a priest with flair, assigned a topic—a “project,” he would say—to everyone in class: we had the whole term to compile a file or scrapbook to illustrate it. To my great dismay, my topic was “Father Peyton’s Rosary Crusade,” which I had never even heard of. The boy next to me was no less dismayed at his topic: “African Missions”; he, also, had no idea what that entailed. For me, this was too good an opportunity! I asked if he would swap topics; he, having no knowledge of either, had nothing to lose and graciously agreed. And with that slight subterfuge, my pilgrimage in mission entered its earliest conscious stage.

Immediately I wrote to the two African missionaries, excitedly telling them of my project. I soon received a package with exotic postage stamps of Sierra Leone, West Africa (designed by another Holy Ghost Father), containing dozens of photographs of the mission compound, building works in progress, the hospital my two aunts supported, and “missionary-in-action” photos aplenty. They told me that the people in the photos were the Mende, though that meant little to me. I spent the following weeks mounting photographs and including careful explanations. Given the rather exotic circumstances of the African missionaries and of my project, I aced the course and treasured the scrapbook for years after.

By now, though, the “missionary thing” was becoming part of me. And when—not entirely by chance, as I later felt—yet another Holy Ghost Father came to my school on a promotional-cum-recruitment drive, I signed up immediately. When, subsequently, he visited my home, he and my father discovered they had been at the same school (my current school) at the same time nearly thirty years before. At this point, I begged my parents to let me go away to study to become a missionary. Devout and dedicated though they were, they quietly refused, saying that my grades were not good enough and that I was not (yet) the kind of stuff of which good missionaries were made; I could not go until I improved substantially. It was excellent psychology. I repeated the grade, came out near the top, and within a year had developed a real taste for study, and had begun to believe that I would be able to meet future academic challenges. The following year, short of my fifteenth birthday, I left home for the junior seminary, in which over the next four years I completed my high school education and began to think much more concretely about the call to the missionary life.

Looking back, I always had a strong desire to help people, and an equally strong aversion to proselytism or deviousness of any kind. Whatever “salvation” might mean, I was convinced that God—who by definition was just and loving—already cared about and “saved” the people long before I might show up, and...
that their eternal chances certainly did not hang on my arrival. I was quite familiar with the mantra “outside the church no salvation,” but it was never convincing as stated, and never the reason for my wanting to be a missionary. My first conscious motivation was simply to work for people less fortunate than myself because of poverty or straitened circumstances; Africa to me represented a continent of “have-nots,” which seemed to be unjust and remediable. Insofar as helping others (loving my neighbor) was also a Christian thing to do, I did indeed expect to work within the context of a Christian community—indeed, of a Roman Catholic mission. But I knew that much of Africa was Muslim, and I cannot remember ever thinking that evangelization justified proselytizing, although certainly it would entail working with, for, and among anyone—of whatever faith—I encountered. If people were interested, I would be happy to instruct them in the faith and receive them into the church, but that was not a primary motive.

**Seven Years of Theology**

In 1961, having “taken the habit,” I left England along with six others for the novitiate in south-central France. This was an intense year of discernment, spiritual direction, and initiation into a religious order. We learned about the vowed life, and we thought, prayed, and attempted to discern whether the missionary call (along with lifelong celibacy) was possible, desirable, and fulfilling. After that year I did make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, with the hope of making them permanent after three years. Returning via Paris to England, we “newly professed” students were graciously received and hosted by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the just-elected general superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Three months later Vatican II began, and he would set his face against the impending changes, soon resign his post, and become known worldwide as the founder of a breakaway group, the Confraternity of Pius X. But my memories of that brief encounter remain golden: he was kindness itself.

The years of Vatican II (1962–65) coincided with my study of philosophy and theology in England, and I was ordained a priest in 1967, completing my studies the following year. This was a heady decade: the “swinging sixties,” with student riots in Paris and Chicago and the aftermath of Vatican II, which brought sweeping changes to the liturgy, ecumenical relations, and the understanding of the place of the church in the modern world. By now my peers were getting married and pursuing their careers;
for me it was a time of intense introspection and discernment. By the 1970s the enormous social and ecclesial changes were bringing a massive and widespread shift in the understanding of the individual, of freedom, and of the Christian vocation. As some of the clerical elitism was challenged and as new mantras were chanted, particularly “the church is missionary by her very nature” and “every Christian is missionary by baptism,” the religious orders suffered a quite unforeseen, dramatic, and very rapid decline of about 40 percent across the board as many people left and far fewer came to join the ranks. This was widespread across Europe and North America, and it signaled the end of an era of overseas missionary work that, in the Roman Catholic experience, had started about 150 years previously.

**Becoming a Missionary (1967–72)**

Occasionally still, an overly romanticized view of pilgrimage allowed me to imagine myself striking out on a long, lonely, and arduous bush path somewhere in “darkest Africa,” plodding on with gritted teeth and grim determination, but sure to arrive at journey’s end and certain to become a hero. But gradually I learned that real pilgrimages are more about steadfastly staying the course than triumphant arrival, more about being part of a confraternity than being a lone ranger, and more about waiting for the slower and more needy members than striding briskly ahead. A pilgrimage’s success was measured by the daily commitment to remain faithful to the journey, not simply by reaching the journey’s end. Lessons like these were taught implicitly as I learned the meaning of community life, an essential component of the Catholic missionary tradition.

I also learned that the future unfolds in quite unexpected ways. Members of religious orders, theoretically at least, anticipate this fact when—attempting to discern the will of God through the directives of their superiors—they vow obedience. Although a person chooses a particular religious order consistent with the vocation to which he or she feels called, people do not choose precisely where they will serve or the terms of their service. I had been accepted into the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, which had been founded in the 1840s for the evangelization of Africa, and I hoped to serve there. But it gradually became clear that I would be required to continue with further studies after ordination. That was fine because I assumed the studies would point me in the direction of Africa and help me become a better missionary. But one day, quite unexpectedly, I was told that I would be sent

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**University (JNU), New Delhi, will explore the history of Christianity in India and South Asia from multidisciplinary perspectives, under the theme “Encounters, Engagements, and Experiences in India and South Asia.” For details, contact Joy L. K. Pachuua, xty@gmail.com.**

The Centre for Mission Studies invites submission of abstracts for a forthcoming book “Witnessing to Christ in Diverse Contexts,” which also will be the theme of a consultation being planned for January 12–14, 2011, at the Centre for Mission Studies, Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India. The consultation and book will examine how the understanding of the concept of witness and related terms such as evangelism and mission vary in modern understanding. The impetus of witness is related to the theology of the Holy Spirit,” according to the announcement from the CMS 2011 coordinator, Frampton F. Fox, frfox@eroan.net.

The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST), now part of Africa International University, will offer a Master of Theology in World Christianity degree. The fifteen-month program, commencing in September 2011, focuses on theological and historical developments primarily in Africa and Asia, with some reference to Latin America and the Global North. Mark Shaw, James Nkansah, Diane Stinton, and Stephen Morad are the faculty for the M.Th. program. NEGST’s Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies program will also offer a World Christianity track beginning in 2011. NEGST is sponsored by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. For program information, write to Shaw at markshaw2020@gmail.com.

**Personalia**

**Died. Tokunboh Adeyemo,** 65, evangelical African mission leader, scholar, and general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), March 18, 2010, in Nairobi, Kenya. Adeyemo was AEA general secretary from 1978 to 2002, during which time he represented AEA (www.aefafrica.org) on the International Council of the World Evangelical Alliance (then WEF) and served as chairman of the council. He was chancellor of the recently formed Africa International University. Earlier he served as principal of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology during its formative years. After retiring from AEA, he founded and was executive director of the Centre for Biblical Transformation, which provides training for African church leaders. Born into a royal Muslim family, Adeyemo committed his life to Jesus Christ in 1966 after listening to a tent evangelist. Adeyemo is author of *Salvation in African Tradition* (1997) and general editor of the *Africa Bible Commentary* (2006).

**Died. Steven de Gruchy,** 48, South African theologian and head of the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg, February 21, 2010, of drowning while river rafting in South Africa. Known for research on the social history of Christianity in South Africa, he addressed interdisciplinary issues involving the dialogue between faith and development and the interface between religion and public health. De Gruchy conducted research for the World Health Organization and UNAIDS. Since joining UKZN in 2000, he contributed to discussion of the Christian church on issues such as poverty, environment, food security, and HIV/AIDS.

to study canon law in Rome. The idea upset me deeply. Not only did I have absolutely no inclination toward law studies, but also I knew that such studies would lead to a desk-bound teaching position, something else I had no attraction to and had never even considered. I wanted to be a “bush missionary” like the priests who had been my initial inspiration and who were, in the 1960s, still in Sierra Leone. But I had indeed taken a vow of obedience.

Nevertheless, the changes initiated by Vatican II included the complete revision, and then the consequent suspension, of all courses and degrees in canon law! I felt that this development was indeed providential. I was then told that I must still do further studies, but to my astonishment, I was invited to suggest an appropriate subject. As the word “anthropology” sprang to my lips, my superior sprang to his feet: for an instant I thought he was actually going to hit me. In fact, he virtually embraced me (something totally out of character for both of us) and said enthusiastically that I should apply to universities immediately!

So in 1968 I went to Edinburgh, Scotland, for an M.A. in social anthropology. The professor was an expert on the Mende people of Sierra Leone. Years before, when he was doing his own research in Africa, the priests I had known from childhood had given him hospitality! He was also the most boring lecturer I ever heard. The irony was that he was speaking of the very people I had seen in the photographs that constituted my cherished scrapbook more than fifteen years earlier.

In my second year in Edinburgh I knew two things for sure: that when I went to Africa, it would be to Nigeria, where the members of my English Province were now working; and that my recent discovery of linguistics (through a single elective course) would be life changing. Nigeria should not be a problem, especially as my anthropology professor had dulled my enthusiasm for the Mende people; but after taking the linguistics elective, I was invited by that professor to concurrently do another M.A.—in linguistics. This was my second year of a four-year M.A. program, and from then on everything I studied became intensely interesting and stimulating as I learned many things I came to believe would be of critical importance to my “real” missionary life later. Anthropology and linguistics introduced me to worlds and ways of thinking I had never imagined, and to theorists and practitioners who would shape my future as missionary, theologian, and teacher. In 1971 I proposed writing my M.A. thesis, which was to be on a topic in either linguistics or social anthropology, on the phonology of an unwritten Nigerian language. But the Nigerian civil war, which had ended in 1970, had disrupted the whole country, and I could not get a visa. After some reworking of the dissertation topic, I went to Albany, New York (where I had worked as a hospital chaplain the previous two summers), to research the topic “Patterns of (Verbal and Non-Verbal) Communication in the Care of Terminal and Dying Patients.” It fit the academic bill and set me on course for spending many of the following twenty-five summers there. This was like a second or parallel pilgrimage and an aspect of mission that had never occurred to me before. The aggregate of time spent as hospital chaplain was about five years, and it probably sowed a seed that would later germinate as I became involved in primary health care in rural Sierra Leone.

I graduated, still expecting to be sent to Nigeria. But that country was still in turmoil, my community there was disrupted, and I chafed and waited impatiently for six months. Then I asked to go to Sierra Leone and the Mende people if a visa was not forthcoming for Nigeria. It was not, and to my immense surprise and gratification, I was sent to Sierra Leone, arriving by sea late in 1972, almost twenty-five years after having been mesmerized by the two missionaries visiting Manchester.

Sierra Leone (1972–80)

The bishop of Freetown (another Holy Ghost Father!) sent me a formal letter of invitation and, knowing that I had recently graduated in anthropology, posted me “as far away as possible” from anything he construed as civilization. I found myself in a remote area, but among the same Mende people my uninspiring professor had spoken about in Edinburgh. The situation was perfect: no roads, no electricity, almost no English spoken other than by local teachers—and an open-ended apostolate. There were over 240 villages or hamlets, and gradually I worked out a schedule. I would ask the local chief’s permission to talk to the people, and if—dimly echoing Abraham in his bargaining with the Lord—I could find twenty-five, twenty, ten, or even six who showed any interest, I would visit that village every month. Thirty villages was the most I could manage, trekking normally twenty to twenty-four days each month. Evangelization meant lots of walking, staying overnight in the villages, and speaking with the people about the Christian faith and its relation to their actual lives. Some were interested, most were not, but virtually everyone was warm and courteous. I did have a Christian community where the mission station was located and another across the river ten miles further north. Most weeks we would have Eucharist there. We also had a network of Catholic primary schools, open to all, from which it was hoped that some pupils would grow into mature Christians. My work was absorbing, but in eight years I believe I baptized only eleven people: two were a married couple and another five were from a single family.

I was also doing ethnographic research, having received a scholarship from the Social Sciences Research Council in England; my subject was Mende traditional religion. In 1977 I received my doctorate from the University of Edinburgh for a dissertation entitled “Mende and Missionary (1864–1977),” an account of the contact and relationships between the missionaries of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Mende people (later published as Mende Religion [Nettetal, Ger.: Steyler Verlag, 1987]). On returning to Sierra Leone in late 1977, I simply continued with conventional missionary work in the villages and a continuing commitment to gaining deeper anthropological understanding of the people.

Sierra Leone, London, Chicago

In 1980, when I really did feel a deepening affinity with the Mende people, whom I had repeatedly assured that I would stay with all my life (that was the usual expectation of Catholic missionaries), my English superior came on visitation and, to everyone’s surprise, appointed me as director of theology students in England. The very respectful and highly formal representations by the people who begged him to let me stay fell on deaf ears. A month later I was in London, already co-opted to teach mis-
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Who Cares About Mission History? or, The Elder Who Refused to Let the Word “Heathen” Pass His Lips

Paul Jenkins

I was part of a morning prayer session of former missionaries. The leader for the occasion had recently returned from abroad to parish work “at home.” He began with a story about one of his church elders who, a few weeks before, had refused to read the Bible passage set for the coming Sunday morning service because it included a word he was not prepared to let pass his lips—Heiden (“heathen”). He had sent an e-mail to his pastor and the other members of the parish council arguing that, if you started talking about “the heathen” again, you might just as well reintroduce the whole battery of words of prejudice and discrimination that had dropped out of normal usage since the collapse of colonial pretensions. One of the others started with “N” in both German and English.

I suppose the point of this anecdote is that, in lively congregations, “mission” can be a much-debated issue. But the story set off strong echoes in my own head and memory. As an English-speaking mission archivist in a German-speaking world, I have spent much of my life translating from German into English—thousands of photo captions, to start with. I very rarely translated the Heiden or heidnisch of the nineteenth-century German mission writers into its literal English equivalent. I would, in other words, agree with that church elder. The word “heathen” is too loaded everywhere, too liable to stop conversation before it has really started. It is also liable if used freely in the present tense to turn too many researchers away from using mission records in their work—an important point for a mission archivist. Instead, in my translation work I usually use the more neutral term “non-Christian.”

I listened with one ear to my colleague’s attempt to justify having that biblical passage read in the set traditional translation; “heathen,” he seemed to be arguing, meant something different and less insulting when it was used in the biblical texts. And anyway, the nineteenth-century missionaries who used the word “heathen” so constantly were “children of their time,” and much had to be forgiven them because of that.

I fear my mind was too full of skepticism for worship that morning, and too concerned that Christian self-criticism—in my view, a key root of the dynamics of renewal—should not be blunted by easy excuses and special pleading. How far can an exposition from a Bible dictionary really negate what the people concerned may well feel has been centuries of insult? And as for passing the word “heathen” so constantly were “children of their time,” and much had to be forgiven them because of that.

More and more, though, my thoughts also turned to the question of whom such arguments were being directed at, anyway, and why that church elder was being marginalized by having his objections pushed to one side. Is it really enough for us Christians to discuss on our own the centuries of mission that lie behind us, doing so behind walls that protect us, for example, from the rage that possesses many people when they hear the word “heathen”? I remembered an adapted slogan: questions concerning mission are far too important to be left to comfortable discussion among mission enthusiasts. The test of the appeal to the biblical understanding of a word like “heathen” is not whether the definition we are offered is correct and true—“truths,” of course, being a highly debatable issue in this context. I am surely not the only Christian to find the nationalism we meet in parts of the Bible highly unpalatable and no reflection of Gospel truth. The test we need to use is whether this kind of discussion helps or hinders open contact in mutual respect with other faith communities. The utility of referring to the missionaries as “children of their time” has to be judged not least by whether it contributes to the incorporation into discussion among Christians of the widely varied reputations mission has in non-Christian circles.

Three Attitudes Toward Mission History

Looking back on my experience as a former mission archivist and educationalist, people in the West can, for the sake of argument, be divided into three categories when one starts to talk about the history of missions. There are those who are loyal and pro-mission and who have never really allowed themselves to be confronted with the serious problems that many exponents of mission have created in the past. Others are strongly anti-mission, intellectually and emotionally, and short of a light on the road to Damascus are hardly likely to change their views. But there are many people between these two categories. They may be critical and active Christians, like the elder who refused to let the word “heathen” pass his lips. Or they may be people with no Christian identity but ones who can be won for a critical, balanced, well-informed, and open-ended discussion of mission’s past, and its present, too. These categories stand up to examination when I think of my experience in Europe.

The pro-mission loyalists seem to live in a world in which, I suspect, the end intended justifies the means, so that the critique of past mission effort vanishes into insignificance over against the need to applaud and build up Christian witness now. My sense is that the erosion of the significance of postcolonial critiques of mission in such circles has reached a point at which large numbers of people and significant amounts of money get invested in a kind of retro style of mission that sees no need for a clear distinction between the mission style of the nineteenth century and that of today.

The anti-mission exponents of a “never again!” attitude are mostly dominated by a perpetrator/victim view of what happened in the past, with mission(aries) as the active factor, indigenous people as victims. They have no room in their minds for

Paul Jenkins was archivist of the Basel Mission (1972–2003) and concurrently, from 1989, lecturer in African history at Basel University, Basel, Switzerland. He co-led a project to upgrade the preservation and accessibility of historical photographs in the Basel Mission archive. Earlier he taught at the University of Ghana (1964–72). —paul.jenkins@gmx.ch
the idea that “receiving” communities may well have had their own policies about what to do with missionaries, which they followed according to the possibilities open to them, and which made missionaries and their message vectors in changes that indigenous communities were interested in attempting. Many people in the ranks of these refuseniks also have, consciously or unconsciously, an often unspoken mission of their own: the abolition of any kind of religion. They are apostles of secularism, and if they are involved in a discussion of a past in which institutions of mission were involved, they will adopt a radically negative, indeed nihilistic, stance or, alternatively, downplay the importance of mission by passing over it in silence—an attitude that makes assessing missions’ past performances much more difficult than it would otherwise be.

But then there is the middle group, which can be interested by seeing that innovative analyses of mission are possible, not least, of mission’s past. They may have a degree of dormant Christian identity, not satisfied with the Christian activism they see around them, knowing about systemic problems with mission in the past but open to the idea that Christian insights may lead to new forms of activism that make sense in the new situations that are constantly evolving around us. Or they may well be totally outside the churches and have no Christian identity but nevertheless have an eye for effective new social and educational programs, as well as a readiness to reconsider the activities of past idealists that have been painted in too dark colors by their detractors. Archives that are run by people prepared to develop new ideas about what has been going on in mission can do a lot to create new and positive profiles for the idea of mission. An example would be to make use of the postindependence insight that churches with indigenous roots have developed in the past in and around Western missions—that there is such a thing as the history of indigenous Christian communities.

In view of the size and potentiality of this middle group, a mission archive where the staff is prepared to respond positively to all questions, even the most critical ones, and can develop innovative ideas about how to answer them has, to my mind, a major role to play in presenting mission in public life in the West. And as our “mainstream” Protestant missions celebrate their bicentenaries, one could argue that one of their main tasks is to promote nonsuperficial discourse about a past that, in the way it has linked grassroots communities here and there over many generations in the search for the meaning of a common ideal, presents a unique history of supranational fellowship. We should also be heavily involved in the analysis of past idealists, to try to make sure they are fairly treated in the literature and to learn from them about the fundamental conditions under which we modern idealist-activists try to live and act.

The Study of Mission History in India

So much for the West. When I retired in 2003, my former employers encouraged me to work to develop relations between Indian scholars—both inside and outside the churches—and the archive I had been running. India was a country that, up to then, had been only on the margins of my consciousness, and indeed on the margins of work in the archive I was running. I was fascinated to find that the same threefold classification of mission history’s “public” obtains in India, and that if we are aware of this, then we are faced with an invitation to take part in a very interesting and challenging Indian dynamic.

There are pro-mission loyalists in India, and they must represent the greater part of the population of Indians with a Christian identity. Expanding this sentence would immediately lead us into complications, for it would involve formulating separate comments for the Orthodox, the Roman Catholics, and the Protestants. But the basics would be true for each. Each Christian identity maintains an affirming and largely uncritical attitude toward its past. (Bob Frykenberg’s observation that the story of St. Thomas in India is canonical among Orthodox Christians could probably be extended, with appropriate substitutions, to many other confessional/regional foci of identity.) The thesis is also complicated by a sense of the tensions between the formal founding myths of each regional confessional identity and the informal oral know-how about how to survive as a minority group in each different regional constellation of powerful religious and caste groups. Because of this tension, by no means all pro-mission loyalists in India are committed to a retro style of mission activity that would attempt to emulate the aggressive tactics of the founding fathers. Nevertheless, the general attitude toward the past mirrors the minority status of Christians in India and holds to an outlook enmeshed in unresolved issues revolving around the traditional Christian claim that evangelization is legitimate whether the evangelized communities agree to it or not. On the other side stands the widespread Hindu feeling that evangelization and conversion are always illegitimate—without being careful to define what is meant by these terms.

The anti-mission voice in India is strong and has evidently existed as an organized body of thought and practice at least since the early nineteenth century. In the last couple of decades it has achieved a degree of mobilization never seen before, among other things being given prominent political voice by the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, the Hindu nationalist party), which was established specifically to represent the Sangh Parivar—the community of pro-Hindu and anti-Christian, anti-Muslim, and anti-Buddhist groups in national and state politics. It is thus not difficult to hear voices in the Indian media arguing that the real threat to India is conversion (as, for instance, was being asserted by a Hindu leader in Karnataka at the beginning of the campaign for the recent general election). The intellectual scope of Hindu nationalism is quickly evident, with its insistence that real India is Hindu India (including a campaign to rewrite Indian history with an overwhelmingly “saffron” wash) and its willingness to produce strongly argued (if wrong-headed) tracts against Christianity, like Arun Shourie’s massive and hostile statements of what he believes is the essence of Christian theology and missionary motivation.

But what about the middle ground? Indian secularists are more alarmed by Hindu fundamentalism, most visible in the BJP, than by anything else. Christians, with their claim under the Indian constitution to enjoy nondiscrimination in the setting of general freedom of religion, have the kind of political attitudes that correspond to the secular values adopted with Indian inde-
pendence. And people sensitive to the question of historical truth—a large community in a country with such a huge and talented body of critical intellectuals—have been provoked by BJP pretensions to ask questions. They are against the BJP’s picture of Hinduism as the victim of colossal Muslim and Christian aggression and seek to clarify the real history of religious interaction in India. They look for a balanced assessment of the causes that have operated to develop, out of the decay of the Mughal Empire, a major modern nation, “the world’s largest democracy,” and one of the intellectual and technical powerhouses of the world. This involves a search for the roots of rationality and modern education, which in turn leads to a reassessment of the role of missions in the history of India in the last two or three centuries. I meet secular non-Christian intellectuals who are curious, indeed passionate, about getting access to the Basel Mission archive in order to work on the questions they find important; they are passionate about having a balanced mission history rewritten as part of a general new approach to the history of religions and their institutions in India.

A caveat needs to be entered here, however, with huge implications for the potential dynamic of a multilateral reassessment of mission history that would give India its proper place in our general scheme of things. Work with mission documents from India during the period of high colonialism—say, from the beginning of the nineteenth century till the interwar period—involves reading the products of a form of mission with unpalatable colonial characteristics. On the whole, we see an overvaluation of thoughts that went on in white heads, and an undervaluation of thoughts on the part of what one Basel Mission pastor called “brown people.” And the attacks written by most missionaries of the nineteenth century till the interwar period—involves indeed often remembering less creditable sides of what our ancestors did, which we conveniently forget. Being prepared to be told about these is a valuable antidote to too-simple and too-comfortable views of the past developed within a specifically Christian, and indeed often within a specific confessional, discourse. They are also a valuable spur to thinking new thoughts and developing a mission history that encompasses all the people touched by a process of mission, not simply those who joined the mainstream institutions involved.

If, indeed, one is associated with the kind of mutual history that has grown up over generations of supranational contact linked to the work of one missionary society (as is the case with the Basel Mission in parts of Karnataka and Kerala), I believe that one has a moral duty to explore and clarify such relationships. Nobody should be allowed to disparage such a history without meeting strong and articulate replies. Rather, reanalyzing it and re-presenting the product of mutual exploration should be seen as a major part of the witness that missionary movements, along with their indigenous counterparts, can give to the power of Christian insights and motivation.

And if secular tendencies are creating a broad curiosity about mission archives and a preparedness to think new thoughts about mission history—as seems, judging by my experience, to be the case in India—it would be a betrayal of what we stand for to let such an opportunity for productive encounter pass us by.

Notes

1. This is just one example of the kind of theme that can interest a broad range of people. Others are the whole tangled but fascinating history of mission and women, the place of mission education in each nation’s history of modernization, the intellectual history that happens everywhere when Gospel impulses become the subject of broad discussion inside and outside the churches, and mission contributions to practical development.

2. During the colonial period the criticism among Christians in India of unreformed colonialist missionary pretensions grew and grew, but the impact of Independence has been to create many church situations fully free of overseas missionaries. This development has allowed what was once a sharp critique to change into an idealization of distant figures seen through a kind of golden haze. (As I wrote the first draft of this paper, I was receiving photographs of the consecration service of a new bishop of the Karnataka South Diocese of the Church of South India, the old heartland of the Basel Mission there. In a large cathedral in Mangalore, full of people, not one white face was to be seen.)


4. People who follow Indian politics closely will know that the BJP suffered painful defeats in the last two Indian general elections, and that conflict within the party has, since the election in the spring of 2009, been acute and angry. We should not regard this as a sign, however, that the BJP is losing its potential to influence political and social life, for it still contains highly talented politicians and through an activist organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is deeply rooted in the life of most districts in India. There is, however, a real question about its ability to command stable majorities. As a Hindu nationalist party, it is bound to take sides in tensions between castes. It may succeed in buying off lower-caste and Dalit groups—Brahmin politicians have been doing just that for a couple of millennia! But to an important extent, the BJP’s poor showing in the last two general elections is probably due to the mobilization of the lower-caste and Dalit population against the pretensions of the “twice born,” implicit in the existence of the BJP. Uncertainty about
Emerging bedraggled from imperial repression and reeling from the sudden inrush of Greek science and philosophy, Christianity achieved at the hands of Constantine a measure of guarded cohesion before splintering further under Justinian in the sixth century. The Christological controversy, which had taken its toll by the time of the rise of Islam in the seventh century, survived into the Islamic phase with renewed vigor. Rather than flinching, the fledgling Islamic movement set upon the Christian world from two different directions: from without, by the sequestration of territory, in the east against Byzantium and in the west against Spain; and from within, by Islamic criticism of Christian Scripture and of Christian doctrines. In the centuries following the collapse of the Roman Empire, Christianity was consolidating its hold on the Mediterranean before the rise of Islam in the seventh century challenged it seriously. In time, the caliphate ing its hold on the Mediterranean before the rise of Islam and subsequently.

Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology.

The Legend of Sergius Bahîrâ: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam.

Lamin Sanneh, a contributing editor, is D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity, Yale Divinity School, and Professor of History, Yale University.

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have become so complex that I should perhaps make clear that the heritage of the Basel Mission in the West has been divided, for all practical purposes, between Mission 21 in Basel and the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland (EMS, Association of Missions and Churches in South-Western Germany) in Stuttgart. These have inherited, respectively, the Swiss and German parts of the movement that grew up in support of the Basel Mission. Responsibility for contact with the former Basel Mission fields has been divided between these two organizations, and it is EMS in Stuttgart that carries on the work of the Basel Mission in India in ways appropriate to the situation since 1947 and in partnership with the Church of South India.
Christianity’s historical claims as such, including the crucifixion and resurrection, a reflection, perhaps, of Christianity’s acute intellectual Hellenization out of its Jewish Palestinian milieu. Territorial landmarks simply vanished in the rarefied atmosphere of Greek philosophical abstraction, allowing Islam to offer material peace in place of the bitter Christological disputes that brought suffering to the people.

In *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, David Thomas, a professor of Christianity and Islam at the University of Birmingham, England, collates some of the earliest representative Islamic texts on Christianity’s doctrinal teachings, introduced here in a parallel Arabic-text-and-translation format, with introductions that place the texts and their authors in historical context. The four such texts assembled here attest to Islam’s intellectual self-confidence, as well as to its territorial ascendancy, showing Christianity to be only a marginal threat that is undeserving of serious intellectual attention. Islam’s political advantage gave it impetus to reduce Christianity to an incoherent bundle of contradiction as a leftover religion Muhammad came to finish off. Under Muslim pressure, Christians were unable to make much of the historical priority of Jesus or to offer a satisfactory explanation for Islam. The Qur’an and the traditions laid explicit stake to the Christian ground; it would be anachronistic to expect any parallels in comparable Christian sources. This reduced Christianity to an enclave religion now subsisting on foreign ideas and concepts adopted outside and against the religion’s birthright. Muslims sensed an inherent advantage in this situation.

Islamic arguments about Jesus are driven by the desire to rehabilitate him fully and finally as a figure of the Qur’an, an action that discountenances Christian claims; and with Christianity discounted, Muhammad can claim the final word on any number of subjects. In contrast to Islam’s strict monotheism, for example, the Trinity is adjudged to be wrong and indefensible, making Christology the rock of stumbling. The false view of prophethood that Christology propagates is remedied by the status of Muhammad as prophet and magistrate and by Islam’s defense of God’s unity: God does not beget, nor is he begotten (Q 112). In the fourth and last text of Thomas’s book, ‘Abd al-Jabbar, the renowned Mu’tazilite scholar writing in the tenth century, mounts a spirited attack on the Trinity, saying that God cannot be at the same time internally differentiated as three persons and uniform as one substance, as Christians contend. Much of this theological disputation is directed to Muslims who share the confused and confusing picture of Christianity it portrays rather than to Christians in terms of engaging them with respect to their own theology.

The works Thomas has so ably collated and discussed with impeccable erudition bring into full view the nature and range of Islamic refutations of Christianity, and it is impressive to think that the basic thrust of these refutations, often presented as unassailable proofs, has withstood the test of time. Islamic theology has not budged from this position for over a millennium now, and it is for that reason sobering to reflect that, even with the post-9/11 burst of Western scholarship on Islam, the ground has scarcely shifted. The only difference is that Western apologetics have tended to veer toward panegyrics by endorsing anti-Christian Islamic strictures either explicitly or by default, which would lead anyone to wonder how pertinent all this is to Islam’s territorial view of religious authenticity, not to say anything about its willingness to take seriously a Christianity that has long been dispossessed of the birthplace of its founder.

The common themes between the two religions fissure predictably into contested claim and counterclaim, in large measure because the truth claims of Islam make reconciliation with Christianity’s theological system impossible. The Muslim argument thrives from a double advantage—for one thing, with disagreements among Christians proving intrinsic contradiction, and for another, with the reinforcement that comes from Christians’ acknowledging the truth of those parts of the Qur’an in which they recognize themselves. In this way Islam outflanks Christianity in its incompleteness and in its disagreements.

The story of Baḥrā, which lends support to the argument of the incompleteness of previous revelations, is the subject of Barbara Roggema’s *The Legend of Sergius Baḥrā*. Roggema, at John Cabot University in Rome, is a lecturer in the history of the Islamic world. In this book she offers critically annotated texts in Syriac and Arabic, with accompanying translation and introductory commentary, on the legend of Baḥrā. In Muslim sources Baḥrā is the Christian monk of Syria who, endowed with foreknowledge of Muhammad’s call to prophethood, singled him out for future greatness when he hosted the young Muhammad and his uncle, Abu Talib, to a meal on one of their caravan trading trips to Syria. As the one who saw in Muhammad exalted marks of prophethood, Baḥrā is proof of Christianity’s foreshadowing the coming of Islam, indicating the conclusion also of the mission of Christianity. Muslim apologetics prefers to see Baḥrā as the quintessential true Christian in order to seize him as a stepping-stone to Islam. Appropriately, Baḥrā fulfills his function by testifying to the fullness of time for the culmination of Muhammad’s prophetic witness.

In their effort to resist being delegitimized, the Eastern churches responded by disseminating stories of Baḥrā as an ample Christian mouthpiece well positioned to refute Islamic claims. In effect, the Christian Baḥrā exuded the confidence of the Muslim original. The historical setting is the eighth-to-ninth century, which is the period of the high Islamic Enlightenment, a time when for the first time Christian theologians bestirred themselves from their complacent view that Islam was a laughing matter to the realization that the religion was a formidable force that could not be dismissed or ignored. Christians realized that the most serious challenge was Islam’s contention that it has a fuller, truer account of Abraham and Jesus, making it the fulfillment of their message and thus a transcending of both Christianity and Judaism. In his correspondence with Caliph ‘Umar II, the Byzantine emperor Leo III, for instance, elects on historical grounds to ridicule Muslim claims that Abraham saw and visited the Ka’bah. For their part, Muslims promoted the Abrahamic tradition of the Ka’bah by appealing to the authority of the revealed, impeccable Qur’an. This put Leo III in the awkward position of having to contend with the Muslim view of the Qur’an as infallible against his own historical observations about Abraham.

The fruit of her dissertation, Roggema’s book is a meticulous and skillful compilation of relevant materials in Syriac and Arabic. The *Legend of Baḥrā* is the church’s way of providing in retrospect for Muhammad’s Christian catechism, and thus indicating a reinstatement of Christianity against Islam. It draws on Islamic sources and models and refocuses them toward Eastern Christological apologetics. Accordingly, the role of Mary in the Qur’an as Virgin Mother (Q 3:38; 4:168; 19:17; 66:13) is fleshed out with the story in Luke’s Gospel. Christian polemics here is defensive, with apologists using the Qur’an against Islam for that purpose.

These scholars used the prayer of guidance in the opening chapter of the Qur’an, for example, as proof that Christianity...
is the guidance in question, as the Qur'an testifies (Q 5:50). The view that the Qur'an implicitly acknowledges the merit of Christianity was a critical element of Christian apologetics, even though Muslims view such evidence as proof of Islam's finality. Muhammad for that reason brings a revelation so that "the People of the Book may know that they have no power over anything of God's bounty, and that bounty is in the hand of God; He gives it unto whomsoever He will" (57:29–30). Christian critics must now contend with the argument that the legitimacy of Islam is nothing less than a function of God's unfettered bounty. The weak side of this argument, however, is how consistent God's bounty is with Islam's own claim of finality, with Muhammad as indispensable. Closing the door after Muhammad seems arbitrary, given the reasons for forcing the door in the first place.

Reflecting the reality of Islamic power, the Legend has Bahtrā appealing for protection of Christians under Islamic rule. For example, Bahtrā speaks of a future age in which Muslim rule will exempt monks from payment of taxes, a reference to the actual historical situation. An interesting discussion concerns worldly pleasures in paradise, with Muslim apologists drawing on Gospel accounts to support the qur'anic picture of physical gratification. Christian exegesis of the Qur'an in the eighth century played a crucial role in the evolution of Muslim exegesis, and it is plausible to believe that such exegetical work helped shape the earliest biography of Muhammad. Job of Edessa, a ninth-century Christian scholar of Greek science and philosophy, offered a dissenting opinion by propounding a spiritual view of heaven in which physical laws operate on matter in a fashion that our present finite state cannot allow us to comprehend, thus offering a picture of heaven uncluttered by contingent sense impression. In later centuries and drawing upon such ideas, Avicenna and Ibn al-'Arabi, for example, came to a similar conclusion.

The figure of Christ understandably dominates the intellectual exchange of Christians and Muslims, whether relating to Christ's prophetic role in history or to his status as the incarnate image (surah), sometimes the "veil" (hijab), of God. One Christian theologian uses "veil" in this sense for the incarnation: waa-tattakhidha laha hijābān, "so he betook for himself a veil." It evokes the line "veiled in flesh the Godhead see" of Charles Theodore, a Christian apologist, says that the qur'anic verse here reflects "the view that the whole world will be regulated by our Church, think that the whole world will be regulated by our church embraces the values from which sprang the impulses of war."

The controversy of Bahtrā is germane to the early Christian estimate of Islam's authenticity, so that apocryphal imputations to Bahtrā of views Christians preferred that he had professed served the purpose of an apologetnic response to Islam's expanding mission. Christians could not let the claim stand that Muhammad obtained any valid religious teaching from Bahtrā, for that would buttress Islamic claims of finality, nor could Bahtrā simply be dismissed out of hand, lest that play into the argument that Christians could not face the truth, even if it came from one of them. Accordingly, Bahtrā is reclaimed as a repentant monk after his collusion with Muhammad, with the tone of his rehabilitation acquiring the exaggerated style of a penitent whose early death interrupted his fledgling mission to Islam. The well-known Apology of al-Kindi belongs to this apologetic genre and betrays a level of desperation that shows an alarming thinning of Christian ranks on the religious front. Islam had by then virtually closed off all the major corridors of circulation around the Mediterranean, forcing European states, including the Carolingians under Charlemagne, to sue for concessions from Baghdad. That was how Constantine-Cyril and Methodius reported to Baghdad for permission to embark on their mission to Moravia and beyond. The Apology of al-Kindi became a staple of European medieval polemic against Islam. When we remember that by that time Europe was slowly being awakened to the intellectual treasures that Muslim scholarship was making accessible in Arabic translations, from Gerard of Cremona and Hermann the German to Michael Scott and John of Palermo, the accompanying polemic even of Dante was necessarily defensive and reactionary. The alleged unreasonableness of Islam was in spite of Islam's demonstrated intellectual excellence. Europe complained because Europe had fallen behind, with major disasters of war, plague, the witch craze, and fire lurking just beyond the horizon. When the Dominican William of Tripoli warned of the menace of Islam, he might have been referring with equal credibility to the lethargy and divisions of Christian Europe. As Sir Richard Southern pointed out, when the curia condemned the ideas of Dante and Meister Eckhart, among others, and European princes turned on one another instead of uniting against Islam, for example, it showed Europe's cultural impulse flagging. Despairing of a splintering Christianity and its worldly distractions, John Wycliffe added his own aggrieved twist by giving voice to this sense of Western uncertainty vis-à-vis the Islamic world, declaring, "We Western Mahomet-s, though we are only a few among the whole body of the Church, think that the whole world will be regulated by our judgment and tremble at our command." It was that attitude that provoked Islam into existence, Wycliffe challenged. The remedy for Christianity, he felt, was a return to suffering and poverty as Jesus taught, values that were the opposites of worldly power, secular dominion, and self-will. The church had followed Islam in making laws for aggrandizing power and in requiring blind obedience from believers. Christendom had reduced orthodoxy to a tawdry matter of morals and practice and made a commodity of doctrine. It is little surprising, Wycliffe insists, that warfare should find ready soil in the church, for by embracing the world the church embraced the values from which sprang the impulses of war.
Q. Who is planting new churches among unreached towns and villages of India?
A. Native missionaries serving with indigenous evangelistic missions.

Q. Who provides financial assistance to the indigenous missions of India?
A. Christian Aid is assisting more than 200 India missions. They are winning souls and planting new churches among more than 400 different tribes and nations.

Q. How is Christian Aid financed?
A. Christian Aid is supported entirely by freewill gifts and offerings from Bible-believing, missionary-minded Christians, churches and organizations.

Q. Are other indigenous missions in need of financial help for their missionaries?
A. Christian Aid is in communication with more than 4000 indigenous missions, some based in almost every unevangelized country on earth. They have over 200,000 missionaries in need of support. All Christians who believe in Christ’s “Great Commission” are invited to join hands with Christian Aid in finding help for thousands of native missionaries who are now out on the fields of the world with no promise of regular financial support.

For more than 50 years Christian Aid Mission has been sending financial help to indigenous evangelistic ministries based in unevangelized countries. Currently more than 700 such ministries are being assisted in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. They deploy more than 75,000 native missionaries who are spreading the gospel of Christ among unreached people within more than 3000 different tribes and nations.

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When you contact Christian Aid, ask for a free copy of Dr. Bob Finley’s 285-page book, REFORMATION IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.
Christians was hard to kick, and before long the encounter with Islam revived the old Christological conflicts, and Sergius Bahtrā was recruited to serve the part of factional catalyst. Cranked up in turn as Arian monk, Nestorian partisan, Jacobite insinuator, hostile witness, guileless victim, and interfaith mercenary, Bahtrā comes full circle, having meanwhile executed an adroit errand for the beleaguered Christian imagination. The Islamic epicenter was the pivot of the literary epicleses depicting his diverse roles, proving that Islam was no laughing matter after all, but also that the initiative for serious engagement had drained itself in a tide of fabrication of anti-Islamic polemic and mutual Christian recrimination.

Al-Ghazali wrote about the importance of a religious perspective on philosophical arguments over the fundamental claims of religion, saying that if faith were based on a carefully ordered argument about miracles as supernatural proofs of prophecy, it is likely that faith would be negated by an equally well-ordered argument showing how difficulty and doubt could undermine such proof. As an object lesson, that procedure can be applied to the fascinating role of Sergius Bahtrā as the Islamic nettle that Christians were all too eager to grasp, only to be stuck with him after he ceased to be of any evident advantage.

It is unlikely, though no less regrettable, that current interest in Islam as a touchstone of Western tolerance and open-mindedness will rise much above press and media obsession, including President Obama’s much-admired Muslim peace offensive, to the level of critical reflection and balanced engagement, the point at which the books reviewed here will prove their real value and merit. The Islamic Enlightenment was not simply a convenient cargo delivering Greek learning to the West; it was a profound intercultural event in which the Christian world saw itself reflected in surprisingly bracing and self-revealing ways. The books noted here are installments of the Brill series “History of Christian-Muslim Relations.” In these times of retrenchment in academic publishing, it is a thankless entrepreneurial investment to commit to this scale. It is all the more reason to welcome the series as an invaluable service to scholarship and to interfaith understanding.

Notes

1. The Qur’anic verse numbering I am using is the Flügel version used in Blachère, Bell, and Arberry, among others. It is a slight variation of the Cairo edition.

Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies Takes a New Approach to Doctor of Missiology

In 2006 Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of Intercultural Studies, Pasadena, California, introduced a new approach to study for the doctor of missiology degree. Incoming students form nonresidential cohorts built on a significant commonality, and they work together throughout their four years in the program. Often students come from a common region or share a common research interest. In some instances they may come from the same mission or denomination, enhancing solidarity among the students as they work through the program.

A strength of the nonresidential-cohort approach to doctoral study is that it enables students to remain within their ministry context while completing their studies. They can both continue in ministry and obtain a doctoral degree. Each cohort meets yearly for an intensive two-week seminar facilitated by School of Intercultural Studies faculty. Twice during the program the students travel to Fuller’s campus in Pasadena; the seminars during the other two years may be held at predetermined sites germane to the purpose and goals of the cohort.

The program followed by the cohorts consists of four modules that focus in turn on (1) missiological foundations and program design, (2) relevant theoretical literature and research methods, (3) the nature of leadership in relation to the organizational, topical, or regional focus of the cohort and the dynamics of change, and (4) integration of the previous three years’ work into a coherent whole that results in a completed dissertation.

The annual two-week seminar is preceded by reading relevant to the topic and followed by writing of a paper that lays the groundwork for an aspect of the dissertation. Throughout the program students critique each other’s work both in writing and in oral responses to student presentations made as part of the modules. Between the annual seminars students go online to communicate with professors and other members of the cohort. They use the Internet to participate in threaded discussions, to share their critiques of the readings, and to conduct research. The program builds on the master of arts program in global leadership, which also uses a cohort/modular format.

Members of the School of Intercultural Studies’ first cohort have now completed their dissertations. The number of students enrolled has grown to the point that more students are now enrolled in the D.Miss. program than for the Ph.D., which is primarily an on-campus program. The cohort approach around which the D.Miss. program is built affirms the field orientation and focus that led Donald McGavran to found the school in 1966.

For detailed information about the doctor of missiology program, go to www.fuller.edu/academics/school-of-intercultural-studies/dmiss/about-cohorts.aspx.

—R. Daniel Shaw

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Book Reviews


It is difficult to know whether the magnificent second volume of the Handbook of Christianity in China will be of greater value to scholars or to students. This grand tome of a reference volume, weighing in at over four pounds, has been long awaited in the ever-growing world of Chinese Christian studies. Given its size and cost, the volume is clearly aimed at libraries, but it will be a truly impoverished library that cannot afford to stock such a comprehensive work of scholarship. Following on from volume 1 (2001), edited by Nicolas Standaert, Gary Tiedemann’s volume, which will surely remain the reference work on late Qing and twentieth-century Christianity for some time to come, picks up the story just before the first Protestant missionary steps foot in China in 1807. Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox histories are all covered in both the reference material and a series of analytic essays.

It is worth taking some time to grasp the structure of this volume of a thousand-plus pages, since much searching among the indexes, appendices, and sections might be saved by doing so. The book follows a three-part overall structure, separating out the late Qing China, Republican China, and the People’s Republic (PRC). A codex presents a concluding essay on the Bible in China across the two centuries, a welcome theological survey to complete an overwhelmingly historical volume.

The three-part political/chronological division is mainly functional, and each part comprises four parallel sections: Sources, Actors, Scene (i.e., background situation in China), and Themes. The “Sources’” section for each era lists Chinese primary sources (histories, plus provincial, municipal, and local archives) and Western primary sources, both printed and manuscript, listed by denomination and country, alongside translations, periodicals, and special collections. As Tiedemann notes, the proliferation of mission societies (to more than 400) in the early twentieth century means that some players are listed with only bare details in the appendices. The achievement in producing this wealth of up-to-date reference material in the Handbook should not be underestimated; it is a major strength of the volume.

Some data are fairly specialized, such as the table in the appendix on Roman Catholic Jurisdictions, 1924–46, listing the hundreds of different prefectures and vicariates apostolic. Even here, though, it is useful to have the pinyin names of districts alongside the earlier Romanization and the characters, as it is to have a reference list of the Chinese names of all the Protestant mission societies. Snapshot data sets—such as statistics on the numbers of priests, brothers, sisters, catechumens, and churchgoers by district in 1940, or the number of Protestant places of worship or communicant members in 1950—give a basis for understanding growth and for teaching about the reach of the Chinese church. And someday someone may need to know that, while the first mission society operating in China was the Order of Friars Minor in the thirteenth century, the latecomers in the Society of St. Sulpice (1934) and the Order of Discalced Carmelites (1947) had barely arrived before they were expelled. Tiedemann generously thanks his advisory board and assistants, but he should take the credit for this immense task of data-gathering. Students at undergraduate and graduate levels now have a first port of call to help them with source queries for almost any question related to Chinese Christianity. Since no researcher in the field can be aware of all of the sources available in each language, including the various European languages included, whose resources have been underutilized, the volume also serves as a reference tool for experts.

For the general reader and for most students, the essays and articles will be the focus of interest. Fifty essays, by thirty leading scholars in the field, cover topics from conversion methods, to opium, to communities of Chinese women religious. The geographic scope is widened in the PRC section to include Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. The concentration of such scholarship in one volume is its forte; in short but authoritative essays, the reader can trace key historical events from the Taipings, to the Boxers, to the effects of the Korean War, and can learn of the key figures and actors and follow the ideological debates that accompanied such events. Some of the essays are helpful because of their rare perspective; a short chapter by Alexander Lomanov on the rebuilding of the Russian Orthodox mission, 1900–1917, covered a gap in my knowledge, for example, and the inclusion of a biographical essay by Fredrik Fällman on the Swedish Protestant mission is presented as a foil to understandings of mission driven by imperial goals. Other essays are useful because they distill a well-known period or topic into a concentrated few pages of value to the general reader: P. Richard Bohr’s article on Taiping religion is an excellent example of this.

In such a full historical survey, there are inevitable imbalances. Whereas the late Qing period enjoys some 400 pages of essay text, and the Republican era 300, the period from 1949 to the present is allotted a rather scant 100 pages. This may be a function of the quantity of material available, but it betrays one of the volume’s inherent biases: toward missiological and historical studies. There is almost nothing on worship or liturgy in the church, for example, and very little on the theology of the emerging independent Chinese church. I would have liked to see a more detailed treatment of the thought of some early twentieth-century theologians, such as Wu Leichuan or T. C. Chao, and more coverage of the establishment of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement church in the 1950s. Only one mainland Chinese historian appears among the essay writers, although several are from Hong Kong. The acronyms of the Western mission societies are allotted several pages of space, but there is no attempt at a list of contemporary Chinese churches. Given the expertise of the editor and the difficulty of providing accurate contemporary data, this is understandable, but a shortcoming nevertheless.

The foreign-centeredness of the discourse is at times a question of ordering. The first article in the section “Actors” in the post-1950 part, by Beatrice Kit Fun Leung, is devoted to missionaries, although they were definitely not the key players in the church in this period. Leung’s article is, moreover, old-style mission history, a play of religious orders and numbers. History is ever interpretation, but noting at the outset that “the exile of Chinese clergy and religious was not due to expulsion but flight from the hardship imposed on them in political purges” (p. 795) obscures the greater story of those Chinese clergy who did not take flight, and Leung’s story immediately shifts to Hong Kong and relief programs rather than staying with those who remained. In contrast, in
A History of Bible Translation.


More than just a “history,” this edited volume is a veritable library of material reflecting on the background, theories, methods, and experiences of Bible translators from the Septuagint to the present. The book, the first in a series of publications by the Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, New York, and well summarized by Dieudonné Bessong and Michel Kenmogne in their chapter on contemporary Africa, encompasses a “history, though not chronological . . . [and] critical analyses hinging on the examination of . . . translators’ competencies and training, technology, manuscript preparation, communication, cultural politics, media and the Bible translation perspective” (p. 353). A wonderful collection of plates depicting ancient translations, regional examples, and photos from the annals of the American Bible Society, as well as an extensive bibliography and three indexes (Scripture references, languages, and subject-author), all contribute to the value of the book, which I will gladly recommend to my translation students.

The volume is organized into four sections delineating history, epistemology and theory, methodology, and “The Field Today.” Robert Hodgson, Jr., dean of the Nida Institute, writes the foreword; Philip Noss presents an introduction and overview, and a section editor introduces each section. Chapters are written by subject specialists who discuss the history, arguments, theoretical controversies, and principles relevant not only to understanding their topic but also to enabling application to readers’ interests, whether historical, theoretical, geographic, or cultural. Following this structure entails some repetition, which readers may find somewhat distracting.

The writers are not afraid of controversy, citing secular and Christian theologians, as well as critiquing issues from translator identity to the use of computers and the relevance of the medium in which a translation appears. Clearly, “translators never work in a pure and clean, ahistorical . . . world in which they follow translation-theoretical agendas. Rather, they serve commissioners and audiences in specific times and places” (p. 273).

Of central importance is a clear recognition of a shift from missionary/expatriate approaches in a colonial environment to national approaches in a postcolonial/missionary era. By its very nature, Bible translation (BT) implies ongoing research in the changing dynamics of scholarship and living languages. This includes a critical discussion of the shift from Nida’s mid-twentieth-century dynamic equivalence approach to a contemporary use of relevance theory. Debates over the style and focus of the text reflect arguments that have raged through the entire history of BT.

Theological issues are paramount in translations of the Bible. Translations by their very nature are intended to be used, and they reflect how people apply Scripture to their lives. Controversy over the development of so-called local theologies springing from vernacular translation has permeated BT history. Indeed, BT means doing theology, as Noss points out.

This volume, then, presents past experience and current thinking on what is recognized as the greatest translation enterprise in the history of the world—making God’s Word available in the world’s languages. It delineates long-standing controversies, contemporary challenges, and ongoing sociocultural and ethical issues that will continue to characterize translation in its role as mission. Noss and his Bible Society associates clearly and forthrightly reflect on issues that translators face as they render God’s communication to all adherents, where even state churches may run Bible studies, house groups, and English-language worship services led by lay preachers, in a context (in the Protestant church, at least) where many churchgoers now attend both TSPM and house-church services. Reference volume cannot really allow itself the luxury of polemic discourse, a further reason why the late Qing and the Republican eras are covered more strongly and in more detail.

I began with the difficulty of gauging which audience this second volume of the Handbook of Christianity in China would appeal to more. Another difficulty has arisen: that of doing justice to this splendid volume in a short review. I can only recommend that anyone interested in the recent history of Christianity in China take a trip to the nearest academic library and dip into the Handbook—it will prove a long and absorbing visit.

—Chloë Starr

Chloë Starr is Assistant Professor of Asian Theology and Christianity at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.


Marika Björkgren-Thylin’s book is an insightful, detailed, and readable adaptation of her doctoral thesis. It is unusual among dissertations for being so well written.

The author shows an understanding of the Thai cultural and religious milieu that is quite remarkable for someone who has not lived in Thailand except for the months she did her research. Her analysis of the religious situation, particularly the Christian churches already in existence and the Norwegian and Finnish Lutheran reactions to these preconditions, is unprejudiced and on the mark. She, like many of us, including the first missionaries from the Norwegian Missionary Society, wonders what the necessity of founding a rival church was. Was the reason only to make certain that there was a Lutheran church in Thailand? Personally, I do feel the Lutheran Church in Thailand, the indigenous church resulting primarily from the Norwegian Mission Society and the Finnish Lutheran Mission in Thailand, has provided a dimension, particularly in liturgy and theology, lacking in the older Protestant churches in Thailand.

Thailand is a thoroughly Buddhist society. To the extent the Christian church does exist, it is surprisingly strong and influential, but it also bears a clear resemblance to American folk Protestantism, which is “low church” in worship and simple in doctrine—that is, not very compatible to Lutheranism of any sort, particularly Scandinavian Lutheranism. These are the realities that any new Christian mission arrival must face. Björkgren-Thylin understands the situation well.

The research for this dissertation and resulting book is comprehensive and deep. Björkgren-Thylin’s work is, in short, excellent.

—William J. Yoder

William J. Yoder, a retired missionary of the PCUSA, served in Thailand for forty-seven years. He is Dom Emeritus of the McGilvary College of Divinity, Pazay University, Chiang Mai, Thailand. He also volunteers as Liaison for Southeast Asia for the PCUSA. He was born in Canton, Ohio, and resides in Chiang Mai.

South Korea occupies a unique position on the religious map of the world. Normally a country is either secular, like China, or it is dominated by one particular religion, as in Buddhist Japan, Islamic Indonesia, or Hindu India. Korea is neither. Official census records show that over half of the

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South Korean population has adopted a specific religious affiliation, so Korea cannot be called a secular society. Yet no one religious community dominates. According to those same census figures (from 2005), 22.8 percent of Koreans said they were Buddhists, and 29.2 percent said they were Christians. Moreover, in a part of the world in which countries that have substantial Christian communities, such as the Philippines and East Timor, tend to be predominantly Catholic, in Korea Protestants outnumber Catholics almost two to one.

Timothy Lee, a professor at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, is the leading authority in North America on Korean evangelicals. In this insightful study he explains how Protestant Christianity, especially evangelical Christianity, became the most vibrant religious force in South Korea in the second half of the twentieth century. Lee argues that a tradition of enthusiastic revivals, dating back to the first decade of the twentieth century, has drawn Koreans into evangelical churches and, once they were there, filled them with proselytizing fervor, which has then brought even more Koreans into those churches. Koreans found those revivals, and the evangelical Christianity behind them, attractive for a couple of reasons. First of all, modernization had rendered traditional religions irrelevant to many Koreans in search of spiritual guidance in a rapidly changing world. In addition, evangelical Christianity, seen as a manifestation of modern—that is, Western—civilization, offered hope for salvation not only from sin but also from the many secular problems Koreans encountered in the twentieth century, such as Japanese colonial rule and the threat of Communism from the north. The result is a South Korea with many more Protestant churches than Buddhist temples and with 75–90 percent of the people in the pews of those Protestant churches professing an evangelical approach to Christianity.

This book is trying to understand why evangelical Christianity has been so much more successful in South Korea than elsewhere in Asia.

—Don Baker

Don Baker is Director of the Centre for Korean Research and Associate Professor of Korean History and Civilization in the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.


Helen Barrett Montgomery was a woman of the middle way. She deftly positioned her reform efforts on behalf of women between the radical feminism of the post–Civil War era in the United States and the model of the middle-class Victorian wife and mother. Her Baptist upbringing formed her theological center. At Wellesley College she discovered the twin ideals of academic rigor and Christian womanliness (p. 28). With those ideals, Barrett became a social reformer who emphasized women’s emancipation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (p. 3).

Montgomery took a passionate yet pragmatic approach to problems of education, working-class women’s rights, women’s equality, and ecumenical mission. As a school board member in Rochester, New York, she spearheaded reforms that created kindergartens and emphasized group learning geared to students’ ability (p. 164). Her “domestic feminism” uplifted women as wives, mothers, and spiritual leaders, claiming that the methods and virtues involved could reform the political process (p. 81). As a leader and apologist for the women’s ecumenical movement, she argued that women could work together without sectarian divisiveness for the sake of the Gospel (p. 31). Montgomery advanced mission theory, expanding the idea of foreign missions to include statecraft, philosophy, art, and the history of the kingdom of God (p. 204). Her theories of “woman’s work for woman” and “world friendship” (p. 202) emphasized ecumenism in Christian mission and working together with women of other religions for the common good. That broadening influence led to success both with the Women’s Jubilee in 1910 (the women’s alternative to Edinburgh 1910) and with work of the Rochester’s Women’s Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU) for economic justice for working-class women.

Scholar and pastor Kendal Mobley brings Montgomery’s story to life without sacrificing accuracy or critical reflection based on in-depth research. This book speaks from another era, illuminating issues we grapple with today—education, equality, economic justice, ecumenism, and Christian mission. Elizabeth Barrett Montgomery presents a model for contemporary women who want to be feminist but not radical, Christian but not fundamentalist.

—Frances S. Adeney

Frances S. Adeney is the William A. Benfield Jr. Professor of Evangelism and Global Mission at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. She is the author of Chris- tian Women in Indonesia: A Narrative Study of Gender and Religion (Syracuse Univ. Press, 2003) and, with Terry Muck, Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-First Century (Baker Academic, 2009).


Richard Harvey, the academic dean and tutor in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies at All Nations Christian College, in Ware, Hertfordshire, England, has produced a remarkable study of the history and development of Messianic Jewish theology that will be a standard reference for many years to come. Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok, professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, who was Harvey’s doctoral adviser, judges this to be “an outstanding study of seminal importance” (quoted on the front cover).

Harvey describes Messianic Judaism as “the religion of Jewish people who believe in Jesus (Yeshua) as the promised Messiah. It is a Jewish form of Christianity and a Christian form of Judaism”: it is “a bridge between the worlds of Judaism and Christianity” and, as such, “presents a challenge to the self-understanding of both the Church and the Synagogue” (pp. xi–xii, 1). It is estimated that there are 150,000 Jewish believers in Jesus worldwide; “more than 100,000 are in the USA, approximately 5,000 in Israel, the remainder being found throughout the approximately 13 million world Jewish population” (p. 2).
After a critical review of the most significant studies of Messianic Judaism since the 1970s, Harvey discusses the key theological issues facing the Messianic movement, namely, “the doctrine of God, the person of the Messiah, the theory and practice of the Torah and the future of Israel” (p. 12). In his mapping of the theological territory in these most needed areas, he limits his resources to theological material written by Messianic Jewish theologians who have been active in the modern Messianic movement, which shows where the movement is today. He concludes with an assessment of the future of messianic theology and offers questions for future research.

Well written and richly documented, Harvey’s work will be widely appreciated and used as a valuable resource for understanding the Messianic movement and the challenges it presents.

_Jews and the Gospel at the End of History_ is a Festschrift honoring Moishe Rosen, the influential founder of the Messianic Jewish mission “Jews for Jesus.” In addition to a personal tribute to Rosen by Susan Perlman, there are fourteen essays by scholars from both inside and outside the Messianic movement. They address Jewish, Messianic Jewish, and Christian issues in three areas: evangelism, ethics, and eschatology. Three brief examples:

J. I. Packer argues that in the Letter to the Romans Paul “laments stubborn unbelief on Israel’s part when confronted with the gospel” but “looks ahead to a great ingathering of Jews into the believing community at some future date” (pp. 21, 25). Paul urges Jewish and Gentile Christians together to join him “in glorifying God for his wisdom in what is happening” (p. 26).

Steve Cohen, in his compelling essay on Jewish evangelism “Opportunity, Opposition, and Obedience,” tells of an incident in the 1970s when he saw Moishe Rosen being arrested by police and given a citation to appear in court for distributing evangelistic literature in the Los Angeles airport. This led eventually to a victory in the Ninth District Federal Court and ultimately to the unanimous Supreme Court decision allowing literature distribution at the Los Angeles International Airport. As a young Jewish believer, Cohen had learned a lesson from Rosen about how obedience, with opposition, “brings good opportunities to broadcast the gospel!” (p. 70). Cohen joined the staff of Jews for Jesus and later founded the Apple of His Eye Mission Society, which he directs for the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

David Brickner, successor to Moishe Rosen as executive director of Jews for Jesus, concludes the book with a challenge about the importance in mission to proclaim not only the first coming of our Messiah but also “the second coming of Christ to our Jewish people,” which is “our blessed hope” (p. 264).

Moishe Rosen, a legend in modern missions, died May 19, 2010.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson, a senior contributing editor, is Director Emeritus of the Overseas Ministries Study Center.

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The excellent essays collected in *India and the Indianness of Christianity* have been presented in honor of Robert Frykenberg, a long-time friend and a historian of high caliber who has contributed significantly toward a better understanding and interpretation of Christianity in India. Ably introduced and edited by Richard Fox Young, an Indologist who teaches the history of religions at Princeton Theological Seminary, this volume highlights some important but largely neglected personalities, historical events, and theological issues, and it opens up new avenues and perspectives for further investigation into the church and mission history of India. Its fifteen significant essays by prominent historians and theologians from around the world include two who have Indian roots but are not residents of India. Young’s introduction provides a very valuable chronology and highlights the academic contribution of “Bob” Frykenberg, and the final two chapters provide crucial archival information on Indian/South Asian collections in the United Kingdom and the United States.

These essays, carefully chosen to highlight key aspects of the emergence and development of the Indian church, provide unique information about individuals who contributed to the Indianness of the church. The volume carefully points to “Indian” participation in enabling, sustaining, and promoting Christian mission in India, at the same time showing the “ancient Indian church’s” struggle with modern missions. It further attempts to show how Hindu pundits played a role in providing knowledge (or mis-knowledge!) of Hinduism to Western missionaries, and it highlights the attitudes of Indian Christians toward their Hindu neighbors.

Unfortunately, the essays almost entirely neglect the reality and significant presence of the Dalit population in the Indian church and the contribution of Dalit leaders in shaping the church. Furthermore, one could have wished for more Indian contributors. Overall, however, this volume is extremely valuable for providing insights that are unique but largely unknown, highlighting significant but little-known Indian Christians, and providing fresh clarity and directions—if...
not new methods of reinterpreting the history of Christianity in India from an Indian perspective. —Atul Y. Aghamkar

Atul Y. Aghamkar is Professor and Head of the Department of Missiology and Urban Studies at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India.


Jeffrey Klaiber’s history of the Jesuits in Latin America emphasizes inculturation, the defense of marginalized groups, and creative adaptability. These three themes serve him well in explaining the Jesuits’ spectacular successes during the colonial period. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuits founded dozens of missions in what is now Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay which eventually functioned as quasi-independent indigenous republics for 180,000 Indians. Despite constant threats from Spanish and Portuguese colonists who wanted to enslave the mission Indians and to steal their land, the Jesuits managed to foster prosperous, culturally rich Christian societies that featured vernacular music, drama, and catechesis and that defended themselves with their own militias. Klaiber’s three themes also apply well to the twentieth century, when Jesuits played a leading role in defending the rights of workers, peasants, and indigenous groups. Priests such as Miguel Pro (Mexico) and Ignacio Ellacuría (El Salvador) gave their lives in the defense of the poor and oppressed in situations of grave injustice, while many other Jesuits such as Juan Luis Segundo and Jon Sobrino played leading roles in the development of liberation theology.

Klaiber’s three themes, however, do not seem to be the most helpful perspectives through which to view the Jesuits’ traditional vocation of educating elites. He does not devote enough attention to analyzing the Jesuit role in education, even though during many periods of the society’s history there were far more Jesuits involved in teaching than in indigenous missions or scholarship. Also, the distinctive Jesuit vow of obedience to the pope needs more attention. While Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola pledged to call black white if the pope told him to do so, Jesuit liberation theologians, in particular, appear to have adopted a more critical attitude in recent decades. For instance, in 1985 Juan Luis Segundo wrote a book rejecting the pronouncements of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican’s enforcer of orthodoxy and the future Pope Benedict XVI, asserting that Ratzinger was destroying the teachings of Vatican II. Klaiber notes Segundo’s ideas but does not deal with the obvious question of how Latin American Jesuits came to understand their vow of obedience to the pope.

—Todd Hartch

Todd Hartch, Associate Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, teaches Latin American history. He has written Missionaries of the State: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, State Formation, and Indigenous Mexico, 1935–1985 (Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006).

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Soichi Watanabe, whose art was hailed by Christianity Today as “The Good News in Oil and Acrylic,” is a member of the Asian Christian Art Association and a native of Japan. His paintings have been displayed in numerous solo exhibitions, including “Prayer for Peace” at the Ein Karem Gallery, Tokyo, in 2006, and “The Prodigal Son Returns” at Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, in 2009. For the Least of These: The Art of Soichi Watanabe is a colorful 96-page rendition of his evocative creativity.

For the Least of These
The Art of Soichi Watanabe

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Mother Tongue Theologies: Poets, Novelists, Non-Western Christianity.


Mother Tongue Theologies is a collection, in five parts, of fourteen literary interpretations of writings of mostly poets and novelists, covering Orthodox Russia, Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and Native America. The focal point in each part is the engagement of Christianity with local cultures, as interpreted by the authors. While addressing the important emerging issues and challenges of Christianity through literature, the essays are meant to reflect global differences in the ways Christianity has been received worldwide.

This volume’s essays show how cultural contexts, through their intrinsic elements, provide the vehicle for the translation of Christianity across cultures. Conversely, translation allows Christianity to infuse the mother tongues of its adherents with theological content. Just as the faith is able to break out of its Euro-Western mold to “embrace the recipient culture without losing its original gospel message” (p. 172), it also invariably subsumes literary creation in non-Western contexts. The writers’ experiences of appropriating this process of “Christianity’s cross-cultural transaction” (p. 172) thus sharpen the interpretative tools they employ.

Occasional mistranslations that neglect the basic message of the Gospel in non-Western contexts block its internalization by both its bearers and its recipients (p. 173).

The reader who anticipates encountering authors in the collection theologizing in their mother tongues may, at first glance, consider the first part of the title, Mother Tongue Theologies, somewhat misleading. However, the justification for Darren Middleton’s selection lies not only in the personal, religious, and sociological themes treated by the authors but also in the intricate link between works of fiction and non-Western Christianity. Noticeable in the authors’ interpretations are their “intuitive associations” (p. 107) with biblical images and symbols, while employing indigenous linguistic forms and cultural categories. The collection makes interesting reading and will be greatly appreciated by students of theology and literary enthusiasts in any culture.

—Maureen Iheanacho

Maureen Iheanacho, a Nigerian, is on the staff of the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission, and Culture, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana, where she has served in mission for fourteen years as Executive Assistant to the rector.

Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China.


This is truly a landmark book. I believe it will become one of a handful of must-read books for anyone interested in the church in China in the twentieth century and today.

So why is the book so important? It is not just because it is meticulously researched, or because its main ideas are presented cogently and persuasively, or that it is written in an elegant style that makes it a pleasure to read. Indeed it is all of those things. But its real importance lies in the new ideas it conveys in our understanding of Chinese Protestant Christianity in the twentieth century, including the decades down to the very recent past. Essentially, Lian Xi describes sectarian, apocalyptic, and millenarian characteristics deriving both from the missionary movement of the early twentieth century and, more important, from the well-established Chinese religious inventory of traditional popular religious movements.

Lian covers all the groups that should be touched on from the early 1900s on: the True Jesus Church, the Jesus Family, the “spiritual gifts” movement, the major conservative evangelists such as Wang Mingdao and John Sung, always setting them in context, especially comparing them with the missionary-led sector of Protestantism. He is especially perceptive on Watchman Nee and the local church (or Little Flock). His hypothesis is that all of these tapped into the potent, and potentially antigovernment, millenarian
traditions of native popular religions to fashion creatively powerful movements that resonated deeply with Chinese dynamics already present on the popular scene.

In the last part of the book Lian brings the continuation of these popular movements right down to the early twenty-first century. He establishes conclusively that the Watchman Nee tradition was the source of practically all of the “evil cults” that have bedeviled both government and the Three-Self movement. The popular appeal of these cults (e.g., the “Shouters,” “Established King,” and “Three Grades of Servant”) is striking. This book is truly essential for understanding China today.

—Daniel H. Bays

Daniel H. Bays, a contributing editor, is Professor of History and Director of the Asian Studies Program at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is working on a history of Christianity in China from the beginning to the present.

Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora.


Madagascar, Africa’s largest island (with a surface area two and a half times that of Britain), features prominently in the history of the western Indian Ocean. Ocean of Letters provides a fascinating historical account of the Malagasy people from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, focusing on how their vernacular languages survived in a context of slavery or forced dispersion, colonization by successive European powers, and Christian mission. This carefully researched study elucidates elements of the African story in the colonial context that are less well known to historians of Christian mission than the well-documented concurrent developments on the Atlantic coast of Africa.

In the period spanning 1501 to 1900, nearly half a million Malagasy slaves were taken to a variety of destinations on the Indian Ocean, some as far as Indonesia. This book focuses on the Malagasy slave populations that ended up in European colonies and settlements around the Indian Ocean. Its central argument is that, contrary to the persistent assumption that vernacular languages in enslaved societies were lost through processes of creolization or hybridization, the ancestral languages of the Malagasy survived beyond emancipation due as much to forms of indigenous resistance as to colonial interests and Western missionary purposes. In essence, the imperialist project and foreign missions were complicit in a program of vernacularization that reinforced indigenous cultural identity, even in exile.

For European missionaries (both Roman Catholic and Protestant), evangelizing mission encountered an African religious universe that permitted broad penetration, but often on African terms. Missionary effectiveness required “intellectual apprenticeship” to this indigenous world to gain some comprehension of African spiritual priorities, which required learning the vernacular tongues. Significantly, the earliest translation of the entire Bible into an African language was the Malagasy Bible produced by British Protestant missionaries in 1835. Such a translation validated African concepts and gave rise to Malagasy refugee evangelists.

Larson, who grew up in Madagascar as the son of Protestant missionaries, writes as a historian of Madagascar. His familiarity with local idiom and use of archival sources lend considerable credibility to his carefully developed arguments. He also avoids unhelpful revisionism. Some colonial administrators and even foreign missionaries were vociferously opposed to vernacular literacy, and the process of translation often assimilated the native tongue to new ecclesiastical concepts in ways that, at least initially, befuddled nascent Christian communities. He makes clear, however, that in the richly diverse cultural milieu of colonial society, the Malagasy made active choices that allowed participation in the creolization process without sacrificing ancestral languages and cultural practices.

In this fascinating account, Larson demonstrates how scholarship in African languages can add considerably to our understanding of the African experience in contexts of globalization and missionary expansion.

—Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu J. Hanciles, a Sierra Leonean, is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity and Globalization, and Director of the Center for Missiological Research, at Fuller Graduate School of Intercultural Studies, Pasadena, California.

Edited by Deborah Gaitskell and Wendy Urban-Mead. Special issue, Women’s History Review 17, no. 4 (September 2008).

This issue of articles on “Biblewomen”—national women engaged in direct pastoral or evangelistic ministry, specifically in Asia or Africa—is a valuable contribution to the larger study of women in Christian mission. Although scholars in recent decades have made clear progress in addressing this topic, writings specifically on Biblewomen are still difficult to obtain.

This special issue of Women’s History Review brings together rare historical studies of Asian and African Biblewomen, as well as stories of women who had significant influence in the two continental contexts. This volume expands Dana Robert’s Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers (2002), which broke valuable new ground with the introduction of studies on Asian women.

Seven of the nine articles in Transnational Biblewomen were presented in preliminary form at a conference in London that considered the role of indigenous female evangelists in the expansion of Christianity in Asia and Africa. The organizers of the conference were also interested in “links between devout women activists in . . . nineteenth-century Britain and mission models evolved in other parts of the world” (p. 492). Such interest is on display throughout the collection and the content of the articles, for they discuss not only indigenous women evangelists but also nineteenth-century British and American women’s groundbreaking missionary activities that promoted the expansion of roles for national women in the mission fields.

Six of the nine articles focus on Asian women (three in China and one each in Burma, Korea, and India), and two on African women (in Kenya and Zimbabwe). Two of the studies of Asian women—one on a group of Chinese Catholic laywomen called “institute of virgins,” by R. G. Tiedemann, and on Korean Biblewomen, by Christine S. Chang—are particularly excellent. They reveal the authors’ vast knowledge of the larger historical, cultural, and religious context of the period, as well as their comprehensive research.

The two articles on African women, by Elisabeth McMahon and Wendy Urban-Mead, focus on individual women leaders whose lives reveal ways that African women found to participate in pastoral and evangelistic ministries. These two articles also provide some answers to the question of empowerment, which is discussed in the introduction as one of the main questions considered by the original conference.

They provide examples of women finding sources of empowerment that enabled them to function in the less hierarchical mission and cultural contexts of Africa.

This volume makes an invaluable contribution to the ongoing effort to reconstruct the history of women in mission. Their contributions have indeed been indispensable for the churches, but their names and stories have too long remained unknown and untold.

—Katherine H. Lee Ahn

Katherine H. Lee Ahn is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Church History at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and the author of Awakening the Hermit Kingdom: Pioneer American Women Missionaries in Korea (William Carey Library, 2009).

Evangelization and Religious Freedom: Ad gentes, Dignitatis humanae.


Evangelization and Religious Freedom is part of an eight-book series by Paulist Press that commemorates the fortieth anniversary of Vatican II. The book has two sections: Stephen B. Bevans on Ad gentes, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, and Jeffrey Gros on Dignitatis humanae, Declaration on Religious Freedom. Following the pattern of the series, each document is explored through a four-part process: the contextual and historical development of the document, major points to be noted, how the implementation of the document has been or has not been realized, and the current state of questions that the church needs to consider: What strikes the reader is the extraordinary tension and turbulent history of the development of each text and how this tension continues to be lived out as the church reflects on forty-plus years of implementation.

Bevans points out that Vatican II needs to be understood as a missionary council, for “mission is what gave the council its basic direction” (p. 3). While Ad gentes (AG) must be understood in the context of other key council documents that also strive to address the evangelizing
mission of the church, the importance of AG to the church’s understanding of itself as “missionary by its very nature” is unrivaled. Bevans names all the hot buttons of contemporary theology of mission, such as inculturation (or contextual theology), proclamation and dialogue, and interreligious dialogue, and he notes the broader contexts of globalization, migration, and women in mission. Recognizing that the tension around inculturation has not diminished over the decades since AG, he identifies at least three perspectives of mission that are competing and is hopeful that a synthesis may emerge.

Gros provides an excellent historical context for the development of Dignitatis humanae (DH) and, as with AG, how the tension of divergent views present during the drafting process continues to the present day. Gros notes that in affirming the need for religious freedom, DH “makes a remarkable statement of fact” by recognizing “the past failures of the Church” (p. 187). Gros suggests that “distancing the Catholic Church from centuries of dominance . . . may be considered one of the most dramatic turns in the teaching of the council” (p. 188). Gros identifies a number of questions that were “left intentionally open by the council” around the role of freedom and human dignity, including its role in the procedures of the church, pluralism, and ecumenical implications. Gros also names the hot buttons, particularly the issues raised by Dominus Iesus (2000), in which other religions were declared “objectively speaking . . . gravely deficient.” Noting the time required for change to be implemented in the church, Gros projects, “We will learn how the Second Vatican Council is interpreted as the centuries progress” (p. 193).

Bevans and Gros succeed in recording the scene, providing rich context, and raising the questions for readers to think critically and evaluate these two important Vatican II documents. They provide no panacea—just judicious questions that can assist in shaping constructive and ongoing conversation.

Gerard M. Goldman

Gerard M. Goldman is Principal and Director of The Broken Bay Institute, Sydney, Australia, affiliated with the University of Newcastle, Australia.

The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience.


To best enter the lives of Ethiopians and understand their worldview, one must study their religion, for “religion has always constituted a vital part of Ethiopian society” (p. 1). Unfortunately, however, Ethiopians—both foreign and national—have given scant scholarly attention to this major aspect of the society. Tibbe Eshete’s work, in both its content and its scope, is exceptional and represents a real breakthrough.

This work of Eshete, an Ethiopian scholar, thus for the first time brings the evangelical movement in Ethiopia into the academic orbit. As the bulk of his research indicates, the movement was limited to the grassroots level and was mainly contained in oral tradition. Even though Eshete’s main focus is the history of evangelical Christianity in Ethiopia, he gives significant attention also to general church history and to the history of missions in the country. As academic disciplines, these are three distinct subjects. Eshete gives us all three in one volume.

Often when the Gospel is preached and those who receive it pay a high cost for the privilege, there is an enormous growth and expansion. As the author notes, “Persecution had long constituted part of the spiritual repertoire of evangelicals in Ethiopia” (p. 276). Furthermore, when Christianity clothes itself in the local culture, speaks in a heart language of the recipients, and pervades the values and norms of the nationals so that they actually become transformed into the people of God, the impact is deep and lasting. “People could read the Bible . . . and apply [its words] to their daily life” (p. 76); its message was “reappropriated and contextualized” (p. 89). Generalizing, we can say that Christianity is more effective when it is translated than when it is transplanted.

I have found this to be a seminal and timely study, one that is fully in step with—and that contributes richly to—the history of global Christianity.

Alemayehu Mekonnen

Alemayehu Mekonnen, an Ethiopian, is Associate Professor of Missions, Denver Seminary, Denver, Colorado.

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Tools for Transformation
Tena Huizenga was a missionary nurse working under the auspices of the Christian Reformed Church of America (CRC) from 1937 to 1954, mostly at the Lupwe mission station in British colonial Nigeria. Aunt Tena, Called to Serve reproduces an extensive selection of her correspondence during her career. Aunt Tena was an energetic letter writer with a sharp eye for the pathos of everyday life and some real skills at narration. She was also someone who (as the letters to her attest, especially those from her African mentees) exuded a Christian spirit of caritas. This collection offers at once both a glimpse of the nurturing Christian world that sent her out as a missionary nurse and the evolving Christian world she helped create in Nigeria.

Three things should be emphasized about Aunt Tena, Called to Serve. First, it is a very large book. Aunt Tena wrote lots of letters. And others, most particularly her brother Peter, wrote almost as many in return. Most of these letters are printed as part of this collection.

Second, the book was not edited with a scholarly audience in mind. Aunt Tena achieved some renown in the CRC as one of their most dedicated and successful missionaries. A biography, In the Master’s Service: The Life of Tena Huizenga, by Shawn Brix, was published in 1994. Much of the material published here is of such a detailed, personal nature that it would resonate only with fellow members of the Christian communities in which Aunt Tena participated. This point can be applied especially to the three hundred or so pages of letters to Tena from her brother Peter. The Huizengas grew up as part of the Dutch Reformed community of Chicago, and Peter’s letters provide a wry social commentary on life within that community in the years before, during, and after the Second World War. With her fellow missionary and close friend Jen- nie Stielstra, Aunt Tena also exchanged hundreds of letters over the years.

The third point to be made is that these materials collectively offer a most helpful picture of social life on a mission station and the interpersonal dynamics between missionaries and African Christians, expatriates and indigenes. Coming from a thickly layered social universe in Dutch Chicago, Aunt Tena endured a loneliness that was palpable in her early writings. Yet the book has very few misses from the last stages of her career. Perhaps this is because as matron (some of her African correspondents addressed her “Mother”) to an equally complex social universe in Nigeria, she found little time to write.

—Andrew E. Barnes

How Latin America Saved the Soul of the Catholic Church.


Despite the dramatic rise and evangelical energy of Pentecostalism (a movement that has won many converts at Rome’s expense), Latin American Catholicism is still, by Edward Cleary’s calculation, in vigorous health. The number of Catholic priests in the region increased by 40 percent between 1964 and 2004 (in Mexico, it doubled), and the number of seminarians sextupled in the thirty-two years after 1972. Crucially, the Latin American church is taking on an increasingly indigenous aspect. One of the most obvious signs of vibrancy is the transformation from a religious culture that once only received foreign missionaries to one that now sends its own missionaries to other parts of the world. Cleary sees this as an indication that the church is “reaching a key point in its maturity” (p. 171).

Cleary does an excellent job of charting the revitalization of Latin American Catholicism over the past four decades. Liberation theology, with its commitment to righting social wrongs, undoubtedly struck a popular chord. The new roles offered to the laity (not least as catechists) and the emergence of grassroots organizations (notably, Base Christian Communities) also earned the church many plaudits, even when such initiatives were sometimes treated with suspicion by the hierarchy back in the Old World. The church also championed human rights, acted as a peacemaker, and did much to lay the seedbed of Latin American democracy. Such contributions reaped rich rewards, and Cleary reveals that, among the region’s institutions, the Catholic Church ranks higher in opinion polls than the government, the media, the police, or the military.

Cleary sees Catholic spiritual life in Latin America as brimful of confidence in its popular religiosity, encounters with indigenous faith traditions, and more recently the Catholic charismatic movement. The region’s theology has also matured beyond all expectation: forty years ago it was “derivative” (p. 106); today it is one of the engines of Catholic thought. Cleary is sometimes a little too dismissive of the Pentecostal challenge, and occasionally too devoted to past victories, but he amply demonstrates that rumors of Latin American Catholicism’s impending demise have been greatly exaggerated.

—Jonathan Wright

Jonathan Wright, an independent scholar from the United Kingdom, is the author of The Jesuits: Missions, Myths, and Histories (Harper Collins, 2004).

Dissertation Notices

Anderson, Richard.
“How Do Chaplains and Leaders Stay Faithful to Their Evangelical Distinctives in the USÄF?”

Kipuke, Esaho.
“Membership Decline Crisis and Proposed Solutions for the Retention in the Central Congo United Methodist Church.”

Sinclair, Paul.
“Factors Influencing North American Missionary Men to Remain Sexually Pure.”
From All Nations, To All Peoples
Seminars for International Church Leaders, Missionaries, Mission Executives, Pastors, Educators, Students, and Lay Leaders

September 13–17, 2010
How to Develop Mission and Church Archives.
Ms. Martha Lund Smalley, special collections librarian at Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, Connecticut, helps missionaries and church leaders identify, organize, and preserve essential records.

September 20–24
The Internet and Mission: Getting Started.
Mr. Wilson Thomas, Wilson Thomas Systems, Bedford, New Hampshire, and Dr. Dwight P. Baker, OMSC associate director, in a hands-on workshop show how to get the most out of the World Wide Web for mission research.

October 11–15
Nurturing and Educating Transcultural Kids.
Ms. Janet Blomberg and Ms. Elizabeth Stephens of Interaction International help you help your children meet the challenges they face as third culture persons. Cosponsored by Park Street Church (Boston).

October 18–22
Culture, Interpersonal Conflict, and Christian Mission.
Dr. Duane Elmer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, helps Christian workers strengthen interpersonal skills and resolve conflicts among colleagues, including host country people. Cosponsored by Baptist Convention of New England and Naugatuck Valley Community Church (Naugatuck, Connecticut).

October 25–29 [ NOTE CHANGE OF DATE ]
Doing Oral History: Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story.
Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest, director of the Jesuit Beijing Center, Beijing, China, and Ms. Michèle Sigg, Dictionary of African Christian Biography project manager, share skills and techniques for documenting mission and church history. Cosponsored by St. John’s Episcopal Church (New Haven).

November 8–12
Ethics and Mission in an Era of Globalization.
Dr. Peter Kuzmič, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, and Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, from firsthand experience leads participants in reflection on ethical challenges facing mission today. Cosponsored by Greenfield Hill Congregational Church (Fairfield, Connecticut), St. John’s Episcopal Church (New Haven), and Trinity Baptist Church (New Haven).

November 15–19
The Church on Six Continents: Many Strands in One Tapestry—II.
Dr. Andrew F. Walls, honorary professor, University of Edinburgh, and former director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, presents OMSC’s sixth Distinguished Mission Lectureship series, five lectures with discussions. Cosponsored by American Baptist International Ministries, Evangelical Covenant Department of World Mission, Mission Resource Center of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, SIM USA, and Wycliffe International.

November 29–December 3
Leadership, Fund-raising, and Donor Development for Missions.
Mr. Rob Martin, First Fruit Institute, Newport Beach, California, outlines steps for building the support base, including foundation funding, for mission. Cosponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions.

December 6–10
Russian Church-State Relations: Challenges and Opportunities for Mission.
Dr. John W. McNeill, Providence College, Otterburne, Manitoba, and a senior mission scholar in residence at OMSC, examines points of tension and cooperation between church and state over the sweep of Russian history.

All seminars cost $175. Full information—including content descriptions, seminar cosponsors, directions, schedules, and links to register—may be found at
www.omsc.org/seminars.html or e-mail study@OMSC.org

**Book Notes**

*Indigenous Apostles: Maya Catholic Catechists Working the Word in Highland Chiapas.*


*De Neu, Paul, ed.*
*Family and Faith in Asia: The Missional Impact of Social Networks.*

*Fuller, Harold.*
*Sun like Thunder: Following Jesus on Asia’s Spice Road.*

*George, Sherron Kay.*

*Hamrin, Carol Lee, ed., with Stacey Bieler.*
*Salt and Light: More Lives of Faith That Shaped Modern China.*

*Hayman, Arnolis. Edited, with an introduction, by Anne-Marie Brady.*

*Kling, Fritz.*
*The Meeting of the Waters: Seven Global Currents That Will Propel the Future Church.*

*Kozelsky, Mara.*
*Christianizing Crimea: Shaping Sacred Space in the Russian Empire and Beyond.*

*Martin, Kathleen J., ed.*

*Russell, Letty M. Edited by J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott.*
*Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference.*

*Scott, Waldron Byron.*
*The Renewal of All Things: An Alternative Missiology.*

*Stansell, Ron.*
*Missions by the Spirit: Learning from Quaker Examples.*

*Troll, Christian W. Translated by David Marshall.*
*Dialogue and Difference: Clarity in Christian-Muslim Relations.*

*Go Forth: Stories of Mission and Resurrection in Albania.*

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**In Coming Issues**

*Mission Is Ministry in the Dimension of Difference: A Definition for the Twenty-first Century*  
Titus Presler

*Can Christianity Authentically Take Root in China? Some Lessons from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Missions*  
Andrew F. Walls

*Reconfiguring Home: Telugu Bible Women, Protestant Missionaries, and Christian Marriage*  
James Elisha Taneti

*Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first Century Model for Enabling Mission*  
R. Daniel Shaw

*The Missiology of Old Testament Covenant*  
Stuart J. Foster

*A “New Breed of Missionaries”: Assessing Attitudes Toward Western Missions at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology*  
F. Lionel Young III

*Ferment at the Margins: Philippine Ecclesiology Under Stress*  
Paul D. Matheny

*In our Series on the Legacy of Outstanding Missionary Figures of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, articles about*  
Thomas Barclay  
George Bowen  
Hélène de Chappotin  
Lydia Mary Fay  
Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz  
Arthur Walter Hughes  
Thomas Patrick Hughes  
Hannah Kilham  
George Leslie Mackay  
Lesslie Newbigin  
Constance Padwick  
Peter Parker  
James Howell Pyke  
Pandita Ramabai  
George Augustus Selwyn  
Bakht Singh  
Carl Thurman Smith  
James Stephen  
James M. Thoburn  
M. M. Thomas  
Harold W. Turner  
Johannes Verkuyl