Missionaries as Heroes and Villains

When I asked Jamie Scott, author of two articles in this issue, to suggest a visual illustration for this editorial, he sent two cover images of Sky Pilot: Fighting Missionary of the Far North, a short-lived comic series (1950–51) featuring the heroics of fictional missionary John Hawks. My search for information on the comics led me to Beau Smith’s Web site “Busted Knuckles,” where in his column of March 7, 2005, he nominated the Sky Pilot series as “Manly Comic of the Week.” “As you can see by the covers,” he explains, Hawks “was a real man . . . [who] did most of his talkin’ with his fists. There is one great scene . . . where some hopped up lumberjack is beatin’ on a helpless Eskimo. Sky Pilot sees this and steps in. As he is removing the lumberjack’s teeth with his knuckles [he says], “The meek shall inherit the earth, as it is written, but sometimes they need a little help” (www.comicsbulletin.com/busted/11102310897158.htm).

Public perceptions of missionaries have typically oscillated between eulogy and vilification. Both extremes contain elements of truth, but neither can tell the whole truth. Conspicuously religious do-gooders have always been an easy and natural target for those of us whose own standards of piety are more relaxed. Sydney Smith’s wry explanation for the Anglican Church’s opposition to social activist and prison reformer Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) contains more than a little truth: “She is very unpopular with the clergy,” he observed. “Examples of living, active virtue disturb continued next page
our repose, and give birth to distressing comparisons: we long to burn her alive” (George W. E. Russell, **Sydney Smith** [London: Macmillan, 1905], p. 85n.).

Since the speakers of each human language have recourse to only a limited number of words and idioms and must with these address and describe an infinitely complex and varied world, we turn naturally to the use of metaphor. Given the immensity of the linguistic task and the limitation of linguistic resources (whether spoken, contemplated, or written), we drift instinctively toward stereotypes of all kinds—racial, social, cultural, religious, and vocational. The advent of mass media—radio, film, television, and the Web—has simply accelerated the dissemination of such stereotypes and has amplified the influence of the metaphors we favor, as well as the influence of our underlying personal limitations (and sins!). The worst generalizations smooth the way for us to practice war, torture, or genocide. Euphemisms are then woven into a cover that is used to hide our pathologies from ourselves and our posterity. Other generalizations leave us simply misguided or ignorant.

Take the word “missionary,” for example. The **Oxford English Dictionary** traces the word to the French *missionnaire*, which made its first published appearance in G. Sagard’s *Histoire du Canada*, published in 1636. Whether this derivation is correct or not, few speakers and readers of European languages during the past two hundred years can have been unfamiliar with the term, as missionaries pursued their vocations within the framework of European global hegemony. The word “missionary” has since constituted a virtual lexicon of flattery and disparagement. According to the online *Wiktionary*, the word means either “a person who travels attempting to spread a religion or a creed” or “a naive religious fanatic” (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/missionary).

Scott’s two essays examining the representation of missionaries in film and fiction are a first for the *IBMR*. His lead article, “Missions and Film,” surveys everything from silent movies to contemporary big-screen television. Whether sympathetic or hostile, visual depictions of missionaries reveal as much about those who produce the films as they do about the missionaries themselves. Literary portrayals of missionary subjects may be similarly judged. Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries have been featured in the fiction of both Western and non-Western authors for nearly two hundred years. Fiction allows for more nuanced and contextually satisfying portrayals of missions and missionaries than is possible in film, yet anyone—friend or foe—who is familiar with actual missionaries and specific missions cannot expect to be entirely satisfied, no matter how attuned they might be to the agenda of a given author.

The deeply human quest to understand and represent ourselves, our world, and the mysteries of Christian faith through language is poignantly conveyed by Stuart Foster in his article “Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs.” Not all of Mozambique’s Lomwe people read or write, but through singing and storytelling, histories are remembered, important values are reiterated and reinforced, theologies are shaped and transmitted, and the deep mysteries of faith are grasped and appropriated. Lomwe religious consciousness reflects both the unique insights and the limitations resident in the people’s communal narrative and reminds all of us, whatever our own narrative and worldview, expressed in whatever language, that we are similarly both enabled and limited.

Three articles in this issue feature missionary-scholars well known to, and admired by, many of my generation—Stephen Neill, Jacob Loewen, and John Carman. Even granted the limitations of language, it is by means of such stories that we learn how to live into our individual and collective futures.

—Jonathan J. Bonk

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**OVERSEAS MINISTRIES STUDY CENTER, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, U.S.A.**

(203) 624-6672  •  Fax (203) 865-2857  •  IBMR@OMSC.org  •  www.InternationalBulletin.org

**Editor**

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**Senior Contributing Editors**

Gerald H. Anderson

Robert T. Coote

Grace Inae Blum

IBMR@OMSC.org

(203) 624-6672, ext. 309

**Advertising**

Charles A. Roth Jr.

CA Roth Jr Inc.

86 Underwood Rd.

Falmouth, Maine 04105-1418

Mobile: (516) 729-3509

Fax: (914) 470-0483

carothjrinc@maine.rr.com

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Missions and Film

Jamie S. Scott

We are all familiar with the phenomenon of the “Jesus” film, but various kinds of movies—some adapted from literature or life, some original in conception—have portrayed a variety of Christian missions and missionaries. If “Jesus” films give us different readings of the kerygmatic paradox of divine incarnation, pictures about missions and missionaries explore the entirely human question: Who is or is not the model Christian? Silent movies featured various forms of evangelism, usually Protestant. The trope of evangelism continued in big-screen and later made-for-television “talkies,” including musicals. Biographical pictures and documentaries have depicted evangelists in feature films and television productions, and recent years have seen the burgeoning of Christian cinema as a distinct genre. In a related development, various denominations make use of film in proselytizing, and missions and missionaries also figure in educational videos.

Missions in Silent Movies

Although many silent pictures have been lost, their story lines remain, and stills have often survived. These films depict a variety of missions and missionaries in both domestic and foreign fields. On the home front, evangelicals battle urban poverty and American frontier savagery. The widely recognized film Easy Street (1917; dir. Charles Chaplin), for example, captures the sentiments of a generation of pictures. In this classic, the Hope Mission’s beautiful organist inspires a down-and-out Chaplin to join the police to bring order to South London’s slums. The renamed New Mission dominates the film’s closing sequence, as church bells accompany the on-screen apothegm: “Love backed by force, forgiveness sweet, Brings hope and peace to Easy Street.” Similar sentiments infuse other films set in London’s slums. In The Gift Supreme (1920; dir. Ollie L. Sellers) a mission singer wins over a disapproving father by giving blood to save his son, her lover, while a huge inheritance prompts a minister to quit a fashionable parish and open a mission in the Limehouse district in Madonna of the Streets (1924; dir. Edwin Carewe). In Recompense (1925; dir. Harry Beaumont) young lovers returning from World War I medical service in South Africa found an urban mission, and in The Black Bird (1926; dir. Tod Browning) a crippled criminal mastermind becomes a mission director to atone for his misdeeds.

American cities preponderate in silent pictures featuring domestic missions, especially New York. An Edison Company one-reeler, Land Beyond the Sunset (1912; dir. Harold M. Shaw), portrays the Fresh Air Fund, a mission created in 1877 by the Reverend Willard Parsons to provide summer holidays for inner-city children like the film’s abused New York newsboy, Little Joe. In Susan Rocks the Boat (1916; dir. Paul Powell) a society girl discovers meaning in life after founding the Joan of Arc Mission, while a disgraced seminarian finds redemption serving in an urban mission in The Waifs (1916; dir. Scott Sidney). New York’s East Side mission anchors tales of betrayal and fidelity in To Him That Hath (1918; dir. Oscar Apfel), and bankrolling a mission rekindles a wealthy couple’s weary marriage in Playthings of Passion (1919; dir. Wallace Worsley). Luckless lovers from different social strata find a fresh start together at the End of the Trail mission in Virtuous Sinners (1919; dir. Emmett J. Flynn), and a Salvation Army mission worker in New York’s Bowery district reconciles with the son of the wealthy businessman who stole her father’s invention in Belle of New York (1919; dir. Julius Steger). The Day of Faith (1923; dir. Tod Browning) has a reformed reporter join forces with a mission worker to perpetuate a deceased philanthropist’s philosophy, “thy neighbor as thyself.”

In 1924 two films featured urban American missions: in The Bowery Bishop (dir. Colin Campbell) a New York evangelist risks his own reputation to help an errant lawyer fulfill his responsibilities to a neighborhood girl and her baby; and in By Divine Right (dir. Roy William Neill) mission workers wed after the male protagonist invokes “divine power” to heal the injured child of a crooked politician competing for the desired woman’s affections. The film Fool (1925; dir. Harry Millarde) sees a missionary’s sweetheart marrying a millionaire’s son, though she and her father-in-law eventually come to realize that true happiness lies in the missionary’s life of service, not the millionaire’s self-indulgence. In When Danger Calls (1927; dir. Charles Hutchison) an honorable fire inspector rescues the philanthropic sponsor of an inner-city mission from corrupt politicians, and in Good Morning, Judge (1928; dir. William A. Seiter) an idle spendthrift turns crime-fighter to win the heart of a mission worker. As in these melodramas, true love and everlasting joy await self-assured benevolence also in the comedy For Heaven’s Sake (1926; dir. Sam Taylor), in which a wealthy playboy defies family and friends to finance a storefront mission and marry the evangelist’s aptly named daughter, Hope. Silent films portraying American frontier missions usually end happily as well. The early shorts The Mission Waif, The Mission Father, and The Mission in the Desert, all produced in 1911, depict successful missions in the American West. In Sky Pilot (1921; dir. King Vidor) a muscular Protestant evangelist finds love taming adventurers and civilizing the natives of the Canadian Northwest, while an indigenous rebel and his mission orphan wife accede to the governor’s mansion in The Diamond Bandit (1924; dir. Francis Ford), though a Roman Catholic priest loses his life helping the native South Americans in their fight for freedom.

Numerous silent pictures represent missions and missionaries in more exotic-seeming locales as well. In The Mystery of the Poison Pool (1914; dir. James Gordon) sub-Saharan cannibals, a

Jamie S. Scott, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Research Institute for the Advanced Study of Humanity, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia, teaches courses in religion and culture. He is the editor of Religions of Canadians (Oxford, forthcoming).
giant python, and a poison pool fail to quell the love between a young missionary and a diamond prospector wrongly accused of murder. In *Always in the Way* (1915; dir. J. Searle Dawley), an abandoned runaway reunites with her natural father in the United States after Zulus kill her missionary stepparents, and in *White Hands* (1922; dir. Lambert Hillyer) a reformed sea salt helps a Saharan missionary’s daughter, a drug addict, and a mysterious child called Peroxide return to civilization. *Love’s Wilderness* (1924; dir. Robert Z. Leonard) tracks the trials of true love between a medical missionary and an aristocratic ingénue from Louisiana via Africa and Canada to the French Guyanese penal colony of Devil’s Island. *A Daughter of the Congo* (1930; dir. Oscar Micheaux), which was criticized for racial typecasting, posits mission education as the salvation of a beautiful mulatto girl rescued from Arab slave traders by African-Americans of the Tenth United States Cavalry, who are keeping the peace in Liberia.

Other exotic settings include China, India, and Turkey. A film that is tragic in outlook, *Red Lantern* (1919; dir. Albert Capellani), tells of a mission-educated Eurasian girl who finds her affections spurned by the son of an American evangelist, styles herself as the Chinese Goddess of the Red Lantern, then commits suicide when her prophecies supporting the Boxer Rebellion fail. In *Eye’s Leaves* (1926; dir. Paul Sloane) adventurous lovers oblige a missionary to marry them as he reads psalms to the Chinese bandits they are fleeing, while in *Streets of Shanghai* (1927; dir. Louis J. Gasnier) a mission serves as a battleground between American marines and Chinese warlords. An Indian prince becomes an Anglican missionary in *The Rip-Tide* (1923; dir. Jack Pratt), then abandons Christianity to marry an Indian princess, while in *The Arab* (1924; dir. Rex Ingram) a Bedouin Muslim falls in love with an American missionary and prevents the massacre of a Christian community in Turkey.

Several silent pictures were also staged in the South Pacific. *A Woman There Was* (1919; dir. J. Gordon Edwards) dramatized a doomed romance between a young English missionary and a South Pacific princess, and *Godless Men* (1921; dir. Reginald Barker) has father-and-son pirates fighting to the death over the fate of a missionary’s ward after the father discovers that the ward is his long-lost daughter. In *Infidel* (1922; dir. James Young) an actress rejects her Christian upbringing, then rediscovers her faith when forced to choose sides between shady fortune-hunters and hospitable missionaries, while in *The Ragged Edge* (1923; dir. F. Harmon Weight) a missionary’s daughter rehabilitates and marries a wrongly accused alcoholic fugitive. An equally sobering scenario informs *Where the Pavement Ends* (1923; dir. Rex Ingram), in which a missionary and his daughter return home after his battle with a bar owner for the souls of native islanders ends in the publican’s death, and the daughter breaks the heart of a native chieftain, who then commits suicide. In *The Marriage Cheat* (1924; dir. John Griffith Wray) a missionary provides an island home for a traveler and her newborn when her womanizing husband drowns in a storm, while in *Breed of the Sea* (1926; dir. Ralph Ince) a disgraced divinity student turned pirate strikes a deal with an unscrupulous trader to guarantee a safe environment for the twin brother of the former in order to found a mission on an island in the Java Sea.

**Missions in “Talkies”**

In the late 1920s, films called talkies developed the more nuanced range of attitudes toward missions and missionaries that was foreshadowed in silent pictures like the light-hearted *Just Like a Woman* (1923; dir. Scott R. Beal and Hugh McClung), in which the heroine leads a double life as aspiring evangelist by day and frolicsome flapper by night, and the more unforgiving *Sadie Thompson* (1928; dir. William Cameron Menzies and Raoul Walsh), soon remade as the talkie *Rain* (1932; dir. Lewis Milestone), in which a hypocritical South Pacific missionary preaches morality to a prostitute servicing American servicemen then rapes her himself. Later she marries a marine, and the missionary commits suicide. Other less than sympathetic portrayals follow. On the domestic front, small-town America serves as the backdrop for confidence tricksters posing as evangelists in the comedy *Tillie and Gus* (1933; dir. Francis Martin), while *Elmer Gantry* (1946; dir. Richard Brooks) remains a classic depiction of the evangelical marketing of Christianity in the American Bible Belt. Missions in foreign fields also receive severe treatment. In *East of Borneo* (1931; dir. George Melford) a medical missionary serves as drunken court physician to an island despot, while in *Return to Paradise* (1953; dir. Mark Robson) a puritanical evangelist browbeats Pacific islanders, a theme reiterated in *Hawaii* (1966; dir. George Roy Hill). Paralleling the aspirations of a zealous missionary and an obsessed inventor, *The Mosquito Coast* (1986; dir. Peter Weir) confirms the perilous futility of blind fanaticism, a tragic theme humorously rehearsed in *Eversmile, New Jersey* (1989; dir. Carlos Sorin), which tracks an itinerant dentist’s evangelical resolve to bring the Eversmile Foundation of New Jersey’s “dental consciousness” to the darkened souls of Argentina’s Patagonia. *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (1991; dir. Hector Babenco) dramatizes the destructive tensions between fundamentalist Protestant and Roman Catholic missions competing for the souls of the indigenous Niaruna people in the jungles of contemporary Brazil.

Numerous talkies maintained the good repute of missions and missionaries, however, both in home fields and abroad. Domestic evangelism remained a popular film vehicle in the 1930s. *Madonna of the Streets* (1930; dir. John S. Robertson) features love and intrigue at a mission on San Francisco’s Barbary Coast, while *The Miracle Woman* (1931; dir. Frank Capra), inspired by the story of Aimee Semple McPherson, sees a blind man’s trust transform a disillusioned minister’s daughter from a sham revivalist into a genuine evangelist. In *Soul of the Slums* (1931; dir. Frank Strayer) a framed convict falls in love with an inner-city mission worker, forgoes revenge upon his accusers, and dedicates his life to her cause. Impersonating an evangelist in good faith brings unforeseen blessings in *Klondike Annie* (1936; dir. Raoul Walsh), but in *Arctic Manhunt* (1949; dir. Ewing Scott) fraudulently posing as a missionary to indigenous Alaskans fails to save a former convict from perishing in melting spring ice. Other American films include *Apache Rifles* (1964; dir. William Witney), in which love for a half–Native American missionary cures a cavalry officer’s prejudice toward Apaches; and the apocalyptic *Bells of Innocence* (2003; dir. Ali Bijn), which drops evangelists who are flying Bibles to Mexico into the middle of the Texas desert, where they battle the forces of evil. A few films dramatize English home missions as well. Benevolent missionaries save a young thief in *The Supreme Secret* (1958; dir. Norman Walker), a preachy picture set in London’s docklands and rereleased as *God Speaks Today* (1965); and the comic *The Missionary* (1982; dir. Richard Loncraine) finds a veteran of the African fields involved in sexual shenanigans with a wealthy benefactress when assigned to a slum mission for prostitutes in Edwardian London.

Other favorable images appear in pictures portraying overseas missions and missionaries. Once again, Africa, China, and the South Pacific prove popular settings. In *Trader Horn* (1931; dir. W. S. Van Dyke) the passing of a dedicated missionary inspires adventurers to good deeds in Africa, and the death of a British mis-

Talkies continue to reflect the status of China as a mission field, especially for Americans during the years of China’s War of Resistance against Japan (1937–45) and its civil wars (1927–37 and 1946–50). In *The Right to Love* (1930; dir. Richard Wallace) a possessive father sends his daughter to China as a missionary, where she finds love after all, while a missionary’s naive son returns to California from China seeking a wife and instead discovers a career as a political reformer. *West of Shanghai* (1937; dir. John Farrow) ends with a Chinese warlord sacrificing his life to enable an evangelist to marry the American oilman of her dreams, and *Shining Victory* (1941; dir. Irving Rapper) ends with a refugee Czech psychologist leaving for China as a medical missionary after losing his wife and research notes in a fire in Scotland. Medical missionaries make a World War II love triangle in *China Sky* (1945; dir. Ray Enright), while in *The Amazing Mrs. Holliday* (1943; dir. Bruce Manning) an evangelist smugly prophesies Chinese war orphans into the United States.

A few films feature Roman Catholic missionaries. In *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1944; dir. John M. Stahl) a priest harnesses his pastoral skills before returning to Scotland to minister to troubled youth, and in *The Left Hand of God* (1953; dir. Edward Dmytryk) American sisters provide shelter to a downed American merchant pilot posing as a priest who had been murdered, to avoid capture by Communists. In *Satam Never Sleeps* (1962; dir. Leo Carey) priests flee Red soldiers with an unlikely trio: a village girl, her infant son, and the Communist commander who raped the girl, fathered the boy, but now as a family man rejects Communism. *The Sand Pebbles* (1966; dir. Robert Wise) sees the gunboat *USS San Pablo* rescue occupants of the China Light Mission caught between warring factions up the Yangtze River, and in *Seven Women* (1966; dir. John Ford) American evangelists shelter refugees from the ravages of cholera and a Mongol warlord. A later variation on these themes, *Shanghai Surprise* (1966; dir. Jim Goddard), revolves around the efforts of a missionary nurse to obtain black-market opium for wounded Chinese soldiers during the Japanese occupation in 1937.

Different dramas characterize mission talkies set in the South Pacific islands, many taking advantage of their remoteness. In *The Vessel of Wrath* (1938; dir. Bartlett Cormack and Erich Pommer) a carousing remittance man attempts to stem a cholera outbreak to earn the love of a pious evangelist in the Alas Islands, a Dutch outpost in the South Pacific, while a remake called *The Beach-comber* (1954; dir. Muriel Box) transfers the action to the Welcome Islands, a fictitious British colony in the Indian Ocean, where the couple is sentenced to death by a tribal leader for failing to cure his daughter. In *On the Isle of Samoa* (1950; dir. William A. Berke) a fugitive gambler crash-lands on an uncharted Samoan island where a missionary persuades him to return to civilization to face the music. *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* (1957; dir. John Huston) stages a love affair between a shipwrecked American marine and a Roman Catholic nun on a Pacific island during World War II; a low-budget version of this film appeared later as *The Nun and the Sergeant* (1962; dir. Franklin Adreon). *The Last Flight of Noah’s Ark* (1980; dir. Charles Jarrott) tracks the efforts of a missionary to colonize a remote island with various animals, a place occupied by two Japanese soldiers still fighting World War II, while *Nate and Hayes* (1983; dir. Ferdinand Fairfax) pits a young missionary couple against swashbuckling pirates. *Angel in Green* (1987; dir. Marvin J. Chomsky) sees an American Army Special Forces Unit training a Roman Catholic sister and her island flock to defend themselves against terrorists whose raids have killed a missionary priest and decimated the island population.

South Asia provides settings for a few good missionsaries, while still others are depicted in locations as various as Haiti, Indonesia, and South America. If steamy relations among India’s colonial elites include a mission runaway in *The Rains Came* (1939; dir. Clarence Brown), *Black Narcissus* (1947; dir. Michael Powell) dramatizes the efforts of nuns of the Saint Faith Order to transform a Himalayan potentate’s former pleasure palace into an Anglican convent, school, and hospital. In the aftermath of India’s independence an evangelist’s blind daughter试探s a mercenary from running guns to Ghandahari rebels in *Thunder in the East* (1953; dir. Charles Vidor). In *White Zombie* (1932; dir. Victor Halperin), by contrast, a missionary helps to save a beautiful young woman from living death among Haitian zombies. Using Spain’s sale of areas of Brazil to Portugal in 1750 as an allegory for Latin American tensions in the 1980s, *The Mission* (1986; dir. Roland Joffé) examines relations between indigenous and non-indigenous interests in the contrasting attitudes of two Jesuit priests, one an idealist who preaches peaceful native resistance, the other a reformed slaver and fratricide who abandons his vows and leads armed opposition to European aggression. Based on World War II events, *Paradise Road* (1997; dir. Bruce Beresford) recaptures the will to survive of European women who were caught fleeing Singapore by the Japanese and were then interned in Sumatra, among them a British missionary who helps to form an a cappella ensemble to keep spirits high.

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Several talkies offer more ambiguous or even negative depictions of missions and missionaries, both at home and abroad. In *Laughing Sinners* (1931; dir. Harry Beaumont) a Salvation Army captain rescues a suicidal nightclub singer who turns her talents to urban evangelizing. She relapses, but the captain leaves the ministry rather than lose her. In *So Evil My Love* (1948; dir. Lewis Allen) a missionary’s widow falls under a villain’s spell in a shipboard romance and commits murder, repenting only when her lover double-crosses her. In *Black Robe* (1991; dir. Bruce Beresford) the earnest efforts of a Jesuit priest to convert Huron natives in seventeenth-century Quebec lead to his spiritual humbling and their falling easy victims to longtime enemies, the Iroquois, while in *The Apostle* (1997; dir. Robert Duvall) a Pentecostal preacher builds a new congregation among Louisiana’s rural poor before being jailed for having previously killed his wife’s lover, a curate at their affluent Texas church. Also set in Louisiana, *The Reaping* (2007; dir. Stephen Hopkins) sees a lapsed missionary turn to his former skeptical professor of theology, only later to recover a sense of the supernatural when apocalyptic horrors threaten the rural community of Haven.

Other such films take place overseas. The Congo serves as the setting for *The Sins of Rachel Cade* (1961; dir. Gordon Douglas), in which a downed World War II flyer impregnates a medical missionary, who then seeks solace with a spurrous colleague when the flyer leaves. In *The Nun’s Story* (1969; dir. Fred Zimmerman), which also takes place in the Congo, a sister forsaes the veil after Nazis kill her father and her superiors wastefully redirect her medical skills from Congolese natives to European colonials. Elsewhere, in *The Better Tea of General Yen* (1933; dir. Frank Capra) a Chinese general prefers suicide to dishonoring an American missionary’s fiancée who captures his heart, and in *Ethan* (1964; dir. Michael DuPont) an alcoholic missionary priest dies defending the Filipino woman he loves. An evangelist’s nymphomanic daughter adds spice to the lives of Europeans seeking Oriental enlightenment in *Bali* (1970; dir. Ugo Liberatore), while in *Oscar and Lucinda* (1997; dir. Gillian Armstrong) an Anglican priest falls in love with a nineteenth-century Australian businesswoman, then wagers that he can safely transport her glass church into the interior. In *Dancing at Lughnasad* (1998; dir. Pat O’Connor) a missionary priest, gone native after twenty-five years in a Ugandan leper colony, returns to Ireland in 1936 to remind rural Roman Catholics of their pagan Irish roots.

A few musicals and made-for-television movies also feature missionaries. The musicals include remakes of the silent picture *The Belle of New York* (1952; dir. Charles Walters) and *Miss Sadie Thompson* (1953; dir. Curtis Bernhardt), a bowdlerized version of *Rain* (1932; dir. Raphaël Algoet) and *The Call* (1938; dir. Léon Poirier), a celebration of Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916), who gave up a family fortune to serve the Touareg people of the Sahara as the Trappist “Brother Charles of the desert.” *Abuna Messias* (1939; dir. Geofredo Alessandrini) serves as propaganda for Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia by glorifying the efforts of the Capuchin Franciscan Guglielmo Massaia (1809–89) to convert Gailla Coptic Christians to the Roman Catholic Church, while films like *L’Elle noire de demain* (*The Black Elite of Tomorrow*) (1950; dir. Gérard De Boe) and others document European missionary activities in various other foreign fields. The 1950s also saw the bio-pics *Battle Hymn* (1956; dir. Douglas Sirk), about Dean E. Hess (b. 1917), the American “flying parson,” who bombed German orphans in World War II and then saved Korean ones in the Korean War; *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958; dir. Mark Robson), about Gladys Aylward (1902–70), the English missionary who saved Chinese children from the invading Japanese in 1938; and *Molokai, la isla maldita* (1959; dir. Luis Lucia), about Damien de Veuster (1840–89), the Belgian Sacred Heart priest who worked with lepers on Molokai, Hawaii’s so-called island of the damned, a life that was revisited in *Molokai: The Story of Father Damien* (1999; dir. Paul Cox).

Later bio-pics and documentaries include *Mission to Glory: A True Story and Kino, the Padre on Horseback* (both 1977; both dir. Ken Kennedy), about the seventeenth-century Southwest missionary Father Francisco “Kino” Kin, who mediated between the Spaniards and the Apache; *Hudson Taylor* (1981; dir. Ken Anderson), about James Hudson Taylor’s Shanghai ministry; *Choices of the Heart* (1983; dir. Joseph Sargent), about Jean Donovan, the Irish lay missionary murdered in El Salvador in 1980; *The Law of Love* (1989; dir. Penelope Lee), about Jackie Pullinger (b. 1943), the English lay missionary whose work with heroin junkies in Hong Kong’s Walled City led to the founding of the St. Stephen’s Society for drug addiction; and *Mama Luka Comes Home* (1989; dir. Crawford Teller), about Helen Roseveare (b. 1925), the English evangelist who was beaten and raped during the Congo’s Simba Rebellion (1964) but returned in 1966 to renew her medical mission. *Chariots of Fire* (1981; dir. Hugh Hudson) is notable for contrasting the stories of Eric Liddell, a Scottish athlete and later Catholic missionary priests in conflicts between Europeans and samurai for control of sixteenth-century Japan. *Forbidden Territory: Stanley’s Search for Livingstone* (1997; dir. Simon Langton) updates the feature film *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939; dir. Henry King), which dramatizes American reporter Henry Morton Stanley’s 1871 expedition to find the Scottish missionary David Livingstone in central Africa, events that are also captured in the documentaries *David Livingstone* (1936; dir. James A. Fitzpatrick) and *Great Adventurers: David Livingstone, Journey to the Heart of Africa* (1999; dir. Robert Corsini).

**Films and Videos in Christian Missionizing**

It is important to note that Christian organizations also make use of film, often for overt missionary purposes. Many bio-pics (biographical pictures) and documentaries bring evangelists to the screen. The rare *In the Land of the Setting Sun; or, Martyrs of Yesterday* (1919; dir. Raymond Wells) tells of the origins of the Cayuse War (1848–55) in the murder of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, American Missionary Board evangelists who in 1836 brought agriculture, literacy, and the “White Man’s Book of Heaven” to Wailatpu, on the Walla Walla River in what is today Washington State. Other early examples are the Belgian silent picture *Missionnaires italiens aux Indes* (Italian Missionaries in the Indies) (1932; dir. Raphaël Algoet) and *The Call* (1938; dir. Léon Poirier), a celebration of Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916), who gave up a family fortune to serve the Touareg people of the Sahara as the Trappist “Brother Charles of the desert.” *Abuna Messias* (1939; dir. Geofredo Alessandrini) serves as propaganda for Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia by glorifying the efforts of the Capuchin Franciscan Guglielmo Massaia (1809–89) to convert Gailla Coptic Christians to the Roman Catholic Church, while films like *L’Elle noire de demain* (*The Black Elite of Tomorrow*) (1950; dir. Gérard De Boe) and others document European missionary activities in various other foreign fields. The 1950s also saw the bio-pics *Battle Hymn* (1956; dir. Douglas Sirk), about Dean E. Hess (b. 1917), the American “flying parson,” who bombed German orphans in World War II and then saved Korean ones in the Korean War; *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958; dir. Mark Robson), about Gladys Aylward (1902–70), the English missionary who saved Chinese children from the invading Japanese in 1938; and *Molokai, la isla maldita* (1959; dir. Luis Lucia), about Damien de Veuster (1840–89), the Belgian Sacred Heart priest who worked with lepers on Molokai, Hawaii’s so-called island of the damned, a life that was revisited in *Molokai: The Story of Father Damien* (1999; dir. Paul Cox).

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What practices is God blessing in raising up groups of Jesus followers among Muslims? And how shall we understand Muslim peoples and their access to biblical witness? In recent years, workers from a growing number of organizations have begun to discuss such questions. Their initial insights were refined by a broad group of workers in a consultation in the spring of 2007, further analyzed in subsequent months, and compiled in this volume. From Seed to Fruit presents the most recent worldwide research on witness to Christ among Muslim peoples, using biblical images from nature to show the interaction between God’s activity and human responsibility in blessing these peoples.

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missionary whose devotion to God drives him to compete in the 1924 Paris Olympics, and Harold Abrahams, a wealthy Jew who runs to claim equality for his people.

Other films in these genres include Light in the Jungle (1990; dir. Gray Hofmeyr), about the medical missionary Albert Schweitzer; Zamperini: Still Carrying the Torch (1992; dir. Michael O. Sajbel), about Louis S. Zamperini (b. 1917), a hero of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and World War II who builds a ministry among the young, the elderly, and athletes after being converted at Billy Graham’s first crusade in San Francisco in 1949; Obstacle to Comfort: The Life of George Mueller (1805–98) (1997; dir. Ken Connolly), about the “father” of over 10,000 English orphans, whose Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad trained and funded independent Baptist missionaries; and St. Patrick: The Irish Legend (2000; dir. Robert Hughes), a made-for-television reconstruction of the life of Eire’s patron saint. The Other Side of Heaven (2002; dir. Mitch Davis) lionizes the young John H. Groberg (b. 1934), an American Mormon missionary to Tongan islanders in the South Pacific in the 1950s. Particularly poignant, Beyond the Gates of Splendor (2002; dir. Jim Hanon) documents the murder of five missionaries by Waodani natives in Ecuador’s Amazon basin in 1956. The feature film End of the Spear (2005; dir. Jim Hanon) re-creates this story, while both pictures stress the eventual conversion of the Waodani and reconciliation between the families of the victims and perpetrators. Made for television, Mother Teresa (2003; dir. Fabrizio Costa) celebrates the Albanian Roman Catholic nun who founded Missionaries of Charity and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her humanitarian work, while The Black-Bearded Barbarian of Taiwan (2006; dir. Susan Papp) pays tribute to George Leslie Mackay, the Canadian missionary who became a national hero in Taiwan for his prophetic opposition to the 1885 head tax.

Christian organizations are often directly involved in producing and distributing films and videos celebrating missionary accomplishments. Early on the scene, for example, Wycliffe Bible Translators funded The Good Seed (1986), which portrays the missionizing of the Tzeltals in southern Mexico and of the Payas in the mountains of Colombia. More recently, New Tribes Mission released The Taliabo Story: The Search for the River of Eternal Life (1997), which details the conversion of the inhabitants of a remote Indonesian island. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship markets videos of the plenary addresses at Urbana, its triennial student mission convention. Some early titles of these videos include Declaring Christ as Lord in the City (1983), Helen Roseveare: Motivation for Missions (1987), and five others, all produced in 1990: Hope for Creative Access Countries, Hope for Racial Reconciliation in Mission, Hope for the Cities, Strongest in the Broken Places, and Students in World Mission (1990).

In a related development, Christian cinema has blossomed as a distinct industry. Styled as the film ministry of Evangelical Baptist Missions, for instance, Harvest Productions focuses on the role of the Bible in conversion, tailoring shorts to local markets in several languages, with captions for the deaf and hearing-impaired. Typical of Harvest’s extensive list, the films Yes and Goodbye and A Dream Begun dramatize the lives of Sonny, Laurie, and their son Brad, an American missionary family intent on evangelizing in contemporary France. Even more ambitious, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association’s World Wide Pictures (WWP) produces and distributes feature films as missionary vehicles. Its Road to Redemption (2001; dir. Richard Vernon) adopts the conventions of the road movie for Christian outreach, while other releases explicitly portray evangelists, such as Last Flight Out (2003; dir. Jerry Jameson), which pits a medical missionary against Colombian drug-runners. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has backed numerous films, from shorts like the early Worthy to Stand (1969; dir. Judge Whittaker) and the more recent Dear John (2004; dir. John Lyde) to features like Saints and Soldiers (2003; dir. Ryan Little), which dramatizes the exploits of a former Mormon missionary during World War II’s Battle of the Bulge (1945), and Suits on the Loose (2005; dir. Rodney Henson), in which posing as Mormon missionaries leads two juvenile delinquents to confront their dishonorable past. Also part of the Christian film industry, such events as the San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival and the itinerant Christian Film Festivals of America provide venues for proselytizing pictures. Mormons also fund the annual LDS Film Festival.

Christian educational institutions also promote visual missionary material. For example, a Web site of Southern Nazarene University (Oklahoma City, Okla.) lists the missiological film resources available in the university’s media center, categorizing materials under the headings “Cultural Anthropology,” “Compassion Issues,” “General Interest,” “History of Missions,” “Linguistics,” “Religions of the World,” “Strategy of Missions,” and “Theology and Biblical Basis of Missions” (http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/videos.htm). Secular videos used in public education also sometimes feature missions and missionaries. Such videos vary in focus, from the global reach of Christianity: The First Two Thousand Years (2001) to the regional concerns of The Pacific Century (1992), the ninth episode of which counts missionaries among American “sentimental imperialists” in Asia, to the denominational preoccupations of Get the Fire (2002), a U.S. Public Broadcasting Service Frontline program on Mormon missionary work.

The movies described here certainly do not exhaust the catalog of films and videos relating in some way to missions. Take, for example, what we users of English call “foreign-language films.” I have mentioned several hagiographic portrayals of celebrated Christian missionaries, but numerous fictional depictions also exist. In the Italian-Spanish Encricciónada para una monja (A Nun at the Crossroads) (1967; dir. Lucio Fulci), for example, natives rape a missionary nun, who must then give up her baby to remain in the order or abandon her calling to become a single mother. The Swedish Djungelaeventyret Campa-Campa (Jungle Adventure Campa Campa) (1976; dir. Torgny Anderberg) dramatizes tensions between Campa natives and a missionary priest who abducts two children from a home in the Peruvian Amazon to raise them as Christians. Bawa Duka (1997; dir. Drhamasiri Bandaranayake) explores the disruptive social and cultural effects of British colonial missionizing in early twentieth-century southern Sri Lanka, while the Swiss-German-French Flammen im Paradies (Fire in Paradise) (1997; dir. Markus Ihmhoof) ends in tragedy after a wealthy bride and a woman sailing to marry a missionary in late colonial India swap identities aboard a luxury liner. Such pictures suggest possibilities for comparative studies in mission history, theology, and film. Other religious traditions also include what we might meaningfully call a missionary impulse, which would merit further research. Movies projecting different takes on such varied religious phenomena as Jews for Jesus and Jews for Judaism, Muslim da’wah and Islamic jihad, Hindu shuddhi groups, the Hare Krishna movement, Zen Buddhism in the West, and Soka Gakkai could open doors for comparative studies in religion, mission, and film.
Missions in Fiction

Jamie S. Scott

Biblical portraits of the apostles are as much the products of fictional imagination as of historical fact, as are such early Christian texts as the Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity (ca. 203) and Athanasius’s Life of Anthony (ca. 357). Later writers have reworked these ancient portrayals throughout the centuries, from hagiographies like Jacob de Voragine’s Golden Legend (ca. 1260) to contemporary novels like Walter Wangerin Jr.’s historical drama Paul (2000) and Dan Brown’s Da Vinci Code (2003), which depicts the apostle Peter as ambitious and misogynistic. More important, though, the lives of apostles, martyrs, and saints epitomize two interlacing themes: the inner turmoil of the soul resisting apostasy and the public struggles of believers committed to spreading the Christian Gospel among nonbelievers. Though classic Christian proselytizing narratives from St. Augustine’s Confessions (398) to Dante Alighieri’s Divine Comedy (1321) play variations on such themes, the rise of the novel in eighteenth-century western Europe offered the most suitable vehicle for dramatizing missionary tales of discovery and self-discovery. Early Christian Europe or the Middle Ages sometimes provides the backdrop for missions in fiction; St. Augustine of Canterbury is the main character of Donna Fletcher Crow’s Glastonbury: The Novel of Christian England (1992), for example. Generally, however, novelists and short story writers have looked for inspiration to two great flourishes of missionary activity: the Portuguese, Spanish, and French Roman Catholic missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which in many ways was revived in the nineteenth century; and the British and North American Protestant missions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both periods saw Christian missions established around the world as spiritual outposts of Western colonial and imperial expansion.

Roman Catholic Missions in Fiction

Among the earliest depictions of Roman Catholic missions is Sydney Owenson’s The Missionary: An Indian Tale (1811), which is set in seventeenth-century Kashmir and dramatizes an unconsummated romance between the Portuguese Franciscan missionary Hilarion and the Hindu priestess Luxima. The Goan Inquisition sentences Hilarion to burn at the stake for apostasy, and Luxima prepares to commit sati on his pyre. A riot allows both to escape but also results in Luxima’s death, leaving Hilarion a lonely recluse back in Kashmir, where he worships by the sacred rivers at sunrise and sunset as Luxima used to do. Largely orientalist in ethos, The Missionary issues salutary lessons on cultural encounters; as one scholar has suggested, Hilarion unmakes Hindus but makes no converts, and he himself ends up neither one nor the other.

In a sense, both historically and thematically James Hilton’s Lost Horizon (1933) picks up where Owenson’s book leaves off. In May 1931 a plane crashes near the hidden lamasery of Shangri-La in Tibet’s Kuen-Lun Mountains. The crash strands a group of Westerners, including Roberta Brinklow, an indefatigable Protestant missionary. The lamasery’s high lama turns out to be the 200-year-old Father Perrault, a Belgian missionary who had traveled from Peking to Shangri-La in the early eighteenth century to found a Capuchin monastery. When Brinklow determines to start her own mission in Shangri-La, the high lama comments on her ambitions with a certain amount of indifference. He dies shortly afterward, his legacy a mysterious blend of Buddhism and Christianity.

Several other authors, some writing sympathetically, some from more ambivalent postcolonial perspectives, have portrayed Roman Catholic missionaries in the New World and elsewhere. Brian Moore’s Black Robe (1985) explores the interplay between indigenous and European cultures in eighteenth-century New France. Tormented by self-doubt and tormented by the Iroquois, the young French missionary Father Laforgue begins in the novel zealously intent on restoring the Jesuit mission of Saint Marie. He ends a sadder and wiser man, whose compassion for the doomed Hurons displaces doctrinal dogmatism. Another story, Willa Cather’s Death Comes for the Archbishop (1927), dramatizes nineteenth-century Roman Catholic efforts to revive the faith in the American Southwest after the United States annexed the New Mexico Territory at the end of the Mexican War (1846–48). The French Jesuit missionaries Jean Marie Latour and Joseph Vaillant journey west from Sandusky, Ohio, their conviction tested both by geographic adversity and by hedonistic frontier priests who gamble, drink, lie, and womanize, abusing Mexicans and Indians alike. A new cathedral in the desert almost apologetically symbolizes Latour’s nearly forty years of selfless service. Explicitly sympathetic, Bernice Scott’s fictionalized biography Juniper Serra, Pioneer of the Cross (1976) portrays the eighteenth-century founder of the California mission system in virtually hagiographic terms. By contrast, the huge cast in Almanac of the Dead (1991), by Native American Leslie Marmon Silko, includes missionaries in a radical critique of Christian complicity in the nonnative exploitation of North and South American indigenous peoples. The Native Canadian writer Tomson Highway consults upon a particularly harrowing instance of this exploitation in Kiss of the Fur Queen (1998), in which Father Roland Lafort, oblate of Mary Immaculate, sexually abuses Cree Indian boys in the church-run, government-financed Birch Lake boarding school.

Roman Catholic missions to Africa have also received mixed reviews in fiction. In Graham Greene’s A Burnt-Out Case (1961) the colonial leprosarium at a Roman Catholic medical mission in the Belgian Congo simultaneously symbolizes the fallen world and offers possibilities for spiritual renewal to the novel’s central character, Querry, a celebrated French ecclesiastical architect who begins the story consumed by apathy and ends realizing, “I suffer, therefore I am.” Indigenous African writers are often more

Jamie S. Scott, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Research Institute for the Advanced Study of Humanity, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia, teaches courses in religion and culture. He is the editor of Religions of Canadians (Oxford, forthcoming).
openly censorious of missions. In Nigerian Onuora Nzewu’s *Blade Among the Boys* (1962), Patrick Ikenga’s mother tries to rear her son as a tribal leader, fearing the Roman Catholic church will make him “a eunuch.” Ikenga rejects his birthright, becomes a priest, and allows the family line to die. Unlikable missionaries also appear in Nigerian John Munonye’s *The Only Son* (1966) and Malawian Legson Kayira’s *Jingala* (1969). In Munonye’s novel, Roman Catholic priests are “lunatics” who scorn African birthright traditions and conspire to remove boys who are only sons from their families to the mission school. Likewise, in Kayira’s novel a Roman Catholic mission school disrupts tribal ties by alienating Gregory, an only son, from his father, Jingala. More ambivalent, Kenjo Jumbam’s *The White Man of God* (1980) portrays the destructive effects of the bullying dogmatism of “Big Father,” who heads the Roman Catholic mission, upon Cameroon’s traditional Nso village life. At the same time, though, Jumbam suggests a common humanity between Europeans and Africans with his portrayal of Father Cosmas, a compassionate young priest who fights tirelessly to prevent an epidemic among the local people, only to die from the disease himself. By contrast, the mission school in *A Fighter for Freedom* (1983), by Zimbabwean Edmund Chipamaunga, is controlled by the white supremacist missionary Father Truss, who belongs to Ian Smith’s Rhodesian Front. Tinashe, a star pupil, becomes a leader in the liberation army, having realized that his father, who heads the school, is really only helping the white regime to oppress blacks. Also set in Zimbabwe, *Tsitsi Dangarembga’s The Book of Not* (2006) explores life for girls at the Roman Catholic mission’s Young Ladies’ College of the Sacred Heart.

**British and North American Protestant missionaries since the late eighteenth century have provided fruitful material for writers.**

Evangelical Missions in Fiction

The evangelical revivals that have spawned successive waves of British and North American Protestant missionaries since the late eighteenth century have provided fruitful material for writers. In Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) a choice between “the wild field of mission warfare” and “the parlours and the peace” of English country life faces the born-again St. John Rivers, who opts for the former and tries to persuade Jane to join him as “helpmeet and fellow-labourer” in India. In a more ironic vein, in *Bleak House* (1853) Charles Dickens’ Mrs. Jellyby lets her children starve while she raises money for missions to Africa. Another nineteenth-century British writer, Charlotte Yonge, draws upon the career of John Coleridge Patteson, a Church Missionary Society cleric in the Loyalty Islands, as a model for missionaries. Her *The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations* (1856). Notable for lauding the proselytizing efforts of Samoan converts in the South Pacific, this novel also endorses women as missionaries; the “perfectly feeckless” Norman and his wife, Meta, together make “a noble missionary,” while his sister Ethel ministers among the rough and ready in the remote English village of Cocksmoor. In a sequel, *The Trial* (1864), the family’s black sheep, younger brother Leonard, also sees the light and gives up “home, land, and friends, for the Gospel’s sake.” In a similarly enthusiastic vein, Sir William Wilson Hunter’s *The Old Missionary* (1890) paints a sympathetic picture of early nineteenth-century mission life in Bengal. In contrast, Herman Melville’s autobiographical novels *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) recognize that missionaries have improved morality, translated the Bible into the vernacular, and established churches and schools in the Marquesas, Sandwich, and Society Islands, but Melville laments their racial prejudice and insensitivity to local traditions, arguing that “they had exaggerated the evils of Paganism, in order to enhance the merit of their own disinterested labours.”

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Protestant denominational publishing houses were saturating the market with popular tales of British and North American missionary heroes carrying the white man’s gospel to benighted heathens. A brief selection of titles from North America alone would include William H. Withrow’s *Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher* (1880), Egerton Ryerson Young’s *Oновикапун; or, How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians* (1894), Ralph Connor’s *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (1898) and *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899), Norman Duncan’s *Dr. Luke of the Labrador* (1904), Basil King’s *Duncan Polite* (1905), Hiram A. Cody’s *The Frontiersman: A Tale of the Yukon* (1910), and Ernest Thompson Seton’s *The Preacher of Cedar Mountain: A Tale of the Open Country* (1917). All portray the missionary as a man mighty in flesh and spirit in the standard colonial and imperial romance model of fearless crusader, lone adventurer, and chaste lover. These novels proceed from action scene to action scene, exciting the sensibilities of a cloistered urban audience with descriptions of natural calamities and wild animal attacks, robberies and frontier bar brawls, tragic heroines and Roman Catholic perfidy. Similar lists of titles might be tallied for fiction set in various parts of Africa and, to a lesser extent, in India, Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific, with authors ringing changes on the romance formula by taking into account local differences in the kinds of natural challenges and spiritual trials that beset the muscular Christian missionary’s evangelical resolve. Occasionally, a writer of this era expresses ambivalence about Christian complicity with Western expansionism. In *Siri Ram, Revolutionist* (1912) and *Abdication* (1922), for example, Edmund Candler identifies the missionary presence in India with imperial power exercised in hypocritical self-interest.

Between World Wars I and II this skepticism increases, and critical portrayals of Protestant missions and missionaries begin to outnumber sympathetic depictions. Three short stories set in very different parts of the world epitomize this trend. Edith Wharton’s “The Seed of the Faith” (1919) tells of the American missionary commits suicide, while she moves on to Australia, a woman changed for the better not because of Davidson’s moralizing but because she has found love with a serviceman. The third short story, E. M. Forster’s “The
Life to Come” (1922), explores interracial homosexual relations. Vithobai, a tribal chieftain in central India, identifies the love of Christ with Paul Pinney, the young English missionary who offers it. Renaming him Barnabus, Pinney manipulates Vithobai’s devotion, colluding with colonial officials and land speculators to dispossess the chieftain of his heritage and royal authority. A decade later Pinney visits the dying Vithobai, hoping to alleviate his guilt with one last gesture of reconciliation. Vithobai stabs the missionary through the heart and hurls himself from the roof where he has been languishing, naked and alone.

Numerous novels of the interwar years elaborate on the ambivalence toward missions and missionaries characterizing these short stories. In Sylvia Townsend Warner’s Mr. Fortune’s Maggot (1927) Timothy Fortune leaves the Hornsey branch of Lloyd’s Bank and joins the Church of England to serve as a missionary on the volcanic island of Fanua in the South Pacific. Equipped with a used harmonium and a sewing machine, Fortune makes one convert in three years, the boy Luelli, whose purity inspires a deep love in the missionary. When the volcano erupts, killing Luelli, Fortune loses his faith and leaves the island, reflecting on the contrasts between South Pacific innocence and the civilization that produced World War I. C. S. Forester’s The African Queen (1935), by contrast, celebrates missionaries and the war, though somewhat ironically. In 1914 Reverend Samuel Sayer and his spinster sister Rose are running a mission in German Central Africa. Samuel invokes God’s wrath upon the Germans, “as another Samuel had once prayed for victory over the Amalekités,” but local military activities force the mission to close, and the shock kills Sayer. Unwillingly liberated from her brother’s ecclesiastical paternalism, Rose finds love with the Canadian river rat Charlie Allnutt, as the pair avenge Samuel’s death by sinking the German steamer Königin Luise, which dominates Lake Wittelsbach.

Other writers of the interwar period depict missionaries at work in Africa, as well as in South Asia and Australia. Joyce Cary’s Aissa Saved (1932) features the Shibi Mission, run by Mr. Carr and his wife, Hilda, on the banks of the River Niger in southern Nigeria. Transfixed by the strains of his favorite hymn, “None of Self and All of Thee,” the missionary fails to stop African converts from interrupting a rain-making festival at the pagan village of Kolu across the river. Bloodshed ensues, and the lapsed convert Aissa is captured and sentenced to death as a Christian witch. She escapes and reconverts, vowing to give herself over more fully to Christ. Chanting “All de tings I lak de mos / I sacrifice dem to His blood,” she decapitates her infant son Abba in a rain-making ritual that conflates Carr’s teachings about Christ’s self-sacrifice with African juju traditions of sacrificial appeasement. In The African Witch (1936) Cary ironically turns these events on their head, so to speak. Modeled loosely on Albert Schweitzer, the medical missionary Dr. Schlemm ministers in northern Nigeria not as an evangelical enthusiast but as a humane figure of quiet dignity and moral reasonableness. For his troubles, though, Schlemm is murdered by a fanatical convert who parades his head as a triumphal trophy of indigenized African sacrificial Christianity. Less violent, Rumer Godden’s The Bank and joins the Church of England to serve as a missionary on the volcanic island of Fanua in the South Pacific. Equipped with a used harmonium and a sewing machine, Fortune makes one convert in three years, the boy Luelli, whose purity inspires a deep love in the missionary. When the volcano erupts, killing Luelli, Fortune loses his faith and leaves the island, reflecting on the contrasts between South Pacific innocence and the civilization that produced World War I. C. S. Forester’s The African Queen (1935), by contrast, celebrates missionaries and the war, though somewhat ironically. In 1914 Reverend Samuel Sayer and his spinster sister Rose are running a mission in German Central Africa. Samuel invokes God’s wrath upon the Germans, “as another Samuel had once prayed for victory over the Amalekités,” but local military activities force the mission to close, and the shock kills Sayer. Unwillingly liberated from her brother’s ecclesiastical paternalism, Rose finds love with the Canadian river rat Charlie Allnutt, as the pair avenge Samuel’s death by sinking the German steamer Königin Luise, which dominates Lake Wittelsbach.

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In the postwar era we see still further elaborations of missions in fiction, some sympathetic, some antagonistic. Several North American writers have located their work in China. Cornelia Spencer’s The Missionary (1947) explores tensions among American clerics whose mission serves as troop barracks and shelter for the wounded in China’s brutal civil conflict, while John Bechtel’s The Year of the Tiger (1946) depicts missionaries as beacons of faith and hope when World War II threatens to overwhelm the Tsui clan. John Hersey’s historical novel The Call: An American Missionary in China (1985) embodies over one hundred years of the Protestant missionary presence in China in the person of David Treadup. Interned by the Japanese, this American evangelical realizes that his long career as educator and agricultural reformer has expressed more of an impulse to serve fellow human beings than a divine call to save souls. Other North American novelists depict missions and missionaries in other locations. Charles E. Mercer’s Rachel Cade (1956) portrays an American nurse at Dibela in the Belgian Congo. The mission doctor dies, and, left alone, she finds herself cursed by local shamans for climbing the sacred Mountains of the Moon. Also involving Africa, Alice Walker’s The Color Purple (1982) reverses the Middle Passage, representing Nettie’s letters about Reverend Samuel’s missionary work among the tribal Olinka as the vehicle by which Celie, her horribly abused sister, recovers her psychological health and spiritual identity. In First and Vital Candle (1963) Canadian Mennonite writer Rudy Wiebe suggests that both

Roman Catholic and Protestant colonial missions were interested only in imposing ecclesiastical disciplines upon Arctic Inuit peoples, whereas later nonconformist Protestant missionaries, like the novel’s “Good News Man,” the Reverend Joshua Bishop, convert by example. In Australia we find Randolph Stow’s To the Islands (1958), which portrays a disillusioned Anglican missionary who, mistakenly believing he has killed an Aborigine, flees into the desert, not to avoid justice but to explore the frontiers of his tormented soul.

The decades on either side of the new millennium have also produced a flurry of novels depicting missions and missionaries, many of them set in Africa. “Pagan Coast,” the first part of Crossing the River (1993), by black British writer Caryl Phillips, describes how Nash Williams, an emancipated slave sent as a missionary to Liberia by the American Colonization Society in the early nineteenth century, feels alienated in both the United States and Africa, suffers an identity crisis, disappears, and dies.
Other missionaries to Africa face further challenges. English lay missionaries Ralph and Anna Eldred, confronted with the violence of South African apartheid and with the sale of an infant son for body parts to a spirit healer in Bechuanaland, discover that radical evil transcends race in Hilary Mantel’s *A Change of Climate* (1994). Less despairing, *Swimming in the Congo* (1995), a collection of short stories by Margaret Meyers, explores the interplay between Protestant and tribal African beliefs from the perspective of a seven-year-old. Growing up at the Boanda Mission Agricultural Institute in the Belgian Congo of the 1960s, little Grace Berggren negotiates her way among the *ndoki* spirits of enchanted forests and the narrow dogmatism of her parents, for whom even ballet lessons are sinful. Late colonial Belgian Congo also provides the setting for Barbara Kingsolver’s *Poisonwood Bible* (1998), which portrays the American Baptist missionary Nathan Price, whose crazed zealou2sness eventually so infuriates the villagers of Kilanga that they burn him, still preaching, from his perch atop a colonial coffee plantation *tour de maître*, to be dragged to his death by animals. We find a more salubrious picture in *Joshua’s Bible* (2003), by the African-American writer Shelly Leanne. Set in the 1930s and 1940s, this novel revolves around Joshua Clay, a Philadelphia preacher sent to South Africa by a white mission because he is black. Abandoning the mission board’s instructions to preach in English from an English Bible, Clay turns to a Xhosa translation and takes a leading role in the struggle against racism. Ranging from the early twentieth century to its close, Owen Sheers’s *The Dust Diaries* (2004) reimagines the career of Arthur Cripps, an eccentric missionary in Southern Rhodesia and an obscure relative of Sheers.

Other recent novels are set in parts as various as the Indian Ocean, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and the Sudan. In Julia Blackburn’s *The Book of Colour* (1995) a nineteenth-century English missionary’s obsessive efforts to “civilize” the natives on an island in the Indian Ocean engender a cursed legacy of madness for his descendants. *Tapu* (1997) and *Slow Water* (2003), by New Zealanders Judy Corbalis and Annamarie Jagose respectively, both draw widely upon historical events. Beginning in 1814, *Tapu* follows the story of missionaries Thomas and Jane Kendall, who violate the *tapu* world of the Maoris they hope to convert. *Slow Water* fictionalizes the scandal surrounding William Yate, who in 1836 is returning by ship from London via Sydney to the Anglican mission in Waimate, New Zealand, when he falls foul of fellow missionary Richard Taylor. Disgraced by Taylor’s allegation that he indulged in a homosexual affair with a crew member, Yate ends up back in Dover, England, where he serves as chaplain of St. John’s Mariner Church, ministering to seamen till his death in 1846.

Contemporary American authors take us to other mission fields. In Nora Okja-Keller’s *Comfort Woman* (1998) and *Fox Girl* (2002), for example, American missionaries in Korea patronize the victims of Japanese violence in World War II and preach the superiority of the United States to the “throwaway children” of American servicemen from the Korean War. John Dalton’s *Heaven Lake* (2004) follows Vincent Saunders from Red Bud, Illinois, to Touliu, Taiwan, where he loses a job teaching English in a Presbyterian Bible school after having an affair with a student. Mainland China then serves as the backdrop for a series of lessons in self-discovery for the compromised missionary. More uncompromising, Philip Caputo’s *Acts of Faith* (2005) follows the career of Quinette Hardin, an American missionary from Iowa who works with a human rights group buying back slaves from Arab raiders in Sudan’s civil war in the 1990s. Hardin immerses herself in local ways in order to save souls, then marries a commander of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army, rationalizing their armed resistance to the Muslim government in Khartoum as a front in the global war between good and evil.

**Indigenous Writers and Christian Missions**

Echoing themes from novels depicting Roman Catholic missions, several of the late twentieth-century novels mentioned above dramatize postcolonial issues arising from encounters, conflicts, and occasional accommodations between Western and non-Western cultures. Not surprisingly, these themes dominate the work of indigenous writers attempting to come to grips with the European and North American colonial and imperial presence and its aftermath. The British legacy in Africa, for example, has by itself inspired a small library. In Akiki K. Nyabongo’s early novel *Africa Answers Back* (1936) Mujungu finds in biblical stories far more meanings than his missionary instructors intend, including scriptural backing for polygamy. More subtle, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), by the celebrated Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, portrays the missionaries Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith as the two faces of colonial Christianity, one benevolent, the other autocratic. For Achebe, African converts also play a crucial role. In *Arrow of God* (1964), for instance, John Goodcountry, a native Christian missionary, and Ezeulu, the titular head of the priesthood of the traditional god Ulu, embody the clash between tribal Igbo and European Christian mores. Ezeulu miscalculates the strength of his control over the tribe, which turns from the cult of Ulu to Christianity. The symbol of the python captures this tension: the snake functions at one moment as a sacred native totem, at another as a Christian figure of original sin. Another giant of the contemporary African literary scene, Kenya’s Ngugi wa Thiong’o, also embodies the ambiguities of the missionary presence in Africa in his novels. In *Weep Not, Child* (1962) Ngugi writes warmly of the missionaries, who “never talked down to Africans” and whose school seemed “a paradise where children from all walks of life and of different religious faiths could work together without any [race] consciousness.” But in *The River Between* (1965) the efforts of missionary Livingston to ban female circumcision create conflict between the traditionalist Kameno and the Christian Makuyu. Dividing to conquer, the missionary misconceives the nature of Christian charity. Neither the Christian convert Joshua nor the traditionalist Kabonyi, who both attend the mission school, shows compassion for Muthoni, who dies from a badly performed circumcision, as the river between the two communities carries the girl’s body “into a darkness that no one could fathom.”

The effects of missionary teachings on traditional ways also preoccupy other indigenous African writers. In Francis Sefororny’s *The Narrow Path* (1967), for instance, the upbringing of a Ghanaian boy in a strict mission household leads to conflict with his father and the fracturing of the patrilineal line. In another story, missionary deception makes a martyr of Ndatshan, the main character in...
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Stanlake John Thompson Samkange’s *The Mourned One* (1975). A native teacher at the mission school, Ndatshan is falsely accused of rape and sentenced to death. The missionary testifies against him, “his brother in Christ, but not his brother in law . . . a white man first and a Christian second.” In Zimbabwean Dambudzo Marechera’s *The House of Hunger* (1978), the ethical authority of the Anglican missionary church is compromised by its conniving with Ian Smith’s racist Rhodesian regime. Also set in Zimbabwe, Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) dramatizes the ambiguous effects of a British mission school upon the traditional roles of Shona women. Religion and politics also intertwine in André Brink’s *Praying Mantis* (2005), which reimagines the Bethelsdorp ministry of the London Missionary Society’s J. T. van der Kemp and James Read, who served on the eastern frontier of the Cape colony at the turn of the nineteenth century. Abandoning the Khoi convert Kupido Kakkerlak, who loses his desert congregation but not his personal faith, the mission epitomizes the mixed messages between imported Christianity and the indigenous faith it spawns. Indeed, from early in the twentieth century to the present, similar issues preoccupy not only indigenous African novelists but also writers from various formerly British domains. A pair of examples will have to suffice. Set in India, Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Untouchable* (1935) satirizes the Christian missionary Colonel Hutchinson, whose inability to persuade Bakha, a lavatory cleaner, of the benefits of conversion leaves Hutchinson convinced that technology in the form of the flush toilet is a more likely cure for the ills of untouchability. By contrast, *Sweet Water—Stolen Land* (1993), by the Aboriginal Australian Philip McLaren, fudges historical and geographic facts to create a murder mystery. The German Lutheran missionary Karl Maresch sets up the Neuberg Mission near Coonabarabran, New South Wales, but fails to attract converts. This failure turns him into an insane serial killer of settlers, who in panic blame Aborigines for the murders and herd them off the land and into the mission, thus justifying the murders in the evangelist’s crazed mind.

**Missions in Modern Popular Fiction**

We find a wide array of Christian missionary stories in modern popular fiction, especially in the United States. Sympathetic treatments of missionary endeavors include Catherine Marshall’s *Christy* (1967) and Margaret Craven’s *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* (1967), both of which tell of missions in remote communities in North America. Marshall’s Christy Huddleston, guided by the Quaker missionary Alice Henderson, grows in faith as a teacher at the mission in poverty-stricken Cutter Gap, in Tennessee’s Great Smoky Mountains. Craven’s Mark Brian heads an Anglican mission in the Kwakiutl native village of Kingcome, on British Columbia’s northwest Pacific coast, where he works to prevent alcoholism, modern housing, and residential schools from overwhelming the traditions of salmon fishing, totems, and the potlatch.

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**David A. Kerr**

1945–2008

David A. Kerr, 63, a distinguished professor in World Christianity and ecumenics, with a specialty in Christian-Muslim relations, held professorships in England, the United States, Scotland, and Sweden. In the autumn of 2005 he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s Disease), to which he succumbed on April 14, 2008.

David was born on May 16, 1945, to Agatha Jean and Wilfred Kerr. His father was a minister of the English Congregational Union, and his maternal grandparents were missionaries in China (1921–27). He grew up in London and read Arabic and Islamic Studies in the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies. It was in London that David first met Gun Holmström, who had come from Finland to London to learn English. They met in the church where David’s father was ministering and were married in Finland in 1970.

From London, David read theology at Oxford University under Professor George Caird. After theological studies David wrote his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Albert Haurani on church-state relations in Lebanon. For the period of this research and afterward as a BBC journalist and broadcaster, David immersed himself in the history and contemporary situation of the Arab world.

In 1973 David went to Selly Oak Colleges in England, now part of the University of Birmingham, where he took up responsibilities for teaching Islamic studies. There, in 1976, he founded the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. David’s predecessor at Selly Oak, John B. Taylor, speaks of David’s passion for describing Islam both accurately and respectfully, two of the hallmarks of David’s work. Yusuf Qamar and Abdullah Bawhab, two of the most senior members of the Muslim communities of Birmingham, who both studied under David’s direction, speak warmly of Muslims’ respect for his scholarship, gentle critical guidance, and willingness to journey alongside students in their path of self-discovery. During this time Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, now a senator in the Pakistani government, coauthored with David the seminal Chambesy Statement (1976) on religious liberty entitled “Christian Mission and Islamic Da’wah.” (The full statement appears in the *International Review of Mission* 65 [October 1976].)

From Birmingham David and Gun made their way across the Atlantic in 1987 to Hartford Seminary, in Hartford, Connecticut, where he became the director of the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Modern Popular Fiction.
With the late twentieth-century rise of the evangelical right in the United States, Christian publishing became big business, and its vast catalog of pulp fiction often features missionaries. A few examples will suffice. Typifying evangelical adaptations of the Western romance, Alan Morris’s Bright Sword of Justice (1997) presents Hunter Stone, who trails outlaws to a Blackfoot Indian village where he falls in love with the beautiful missionary Reena O’Donnell. One of the outlaws turns out to be Reena’s brother, and Stone must choose between love and justice. In other evangelical romances women take the lead roles. The Calling of Emily Evans (1990), by the Canadian writer Janette Oke, features an inspirational young woman called to start a church in a nineteenth-century pioneer prairie settlement. Stephanie Grace Whitson’s Valley of the Shadow (2000), by contrast, describes the triumphs and hardships of Genevieve LaCroix, an eighteen-year-old Sioux who is sent for an education to the Renville Mission at the time of the Dakota Sioux uprising of 1862. Her loyalties divided between the missionary and his wife and her family and friends, Genevieve puts her faith in God to show her the way forward. Evangelical heroes and heroines are also portrayed in overseas missions. In Jeffrey W. Bennett’s Under the Lontar Palm (2001), for instance, a dispute between Indonesian tribesmen leaves the missionary Raymond Springer dead. His wife, Marta, continues their call with the help of a Vietnam veteran, John Braddham, who flies missionaries over Irian Jaya for Prayer on a Wing in order to gain experience for a career as an airline pilot.

Other authors, less willing to take the American evangelical agenda at face value, dramatize its ambiguities. For instance, the loosely autobiographical No Graven Image (1966), by Elisabeth Elliot, explores the mysteries of the divine will. The twenty-five-year-old Margaret Sparhawk ministers to the Quechua in Ecuador’s Andes Mountains. The shocking death of a much-loved convent causes Sparhawk, like Job, to question the foundations of her own faith: “And does He now, I asked myself there at the graveside, ‘ask me to worship Him?’” Still other writers simply satirize evangelical certainties. Frank Schaeffer’s Calvin Becker trilogy, for example, features Ralph and Elsa Becker, Reformed Presbyterian missionaries from Kansas, and their son, Calvin. In Portofino (1992) Calvin wryly observes his parents’ efforts to convert Roman Catholics; in Saving Grandma (1997) he celebrates his grandmother’s heathen ways while they fret over her soul; and in Zermatt (2003) a hotel waitress initiates him into the pleasures of the flesh while his parents forbid dancing and Mad magazine.

Mission Fiction in Other Languages

Finally, we consider fictional depictions of missions and missionaries in languages other than English. The widely celebrated novel Silence (1966), by the Japanese writer Shusaku Endo, tells the story of Sebastian Rodrigues, a young Portuguese priest who travels from Macao in the 1630s to work among Japan’s persecuted Christians as atonement for the apostasy of his mentor, Christovao Ferreira. As God remains silent, Rodrigues produces a bronze image of Christ in order to save tortured peasants. He later takes a Japanese name and wife and presides over an underground church.

More frequently, though, missions and missionaries appear in the growing national literatures of Europe’s former colonial and imperial domains, notably in Latin America and Africa. In the early Brazilian novel Simã (1857), by Lourenço da Silva Aratújo Amazonas, for instance, Carmelite missionaries help na-
tives displaced by Portuguese colonizers to transform the jungle into an agricultural settlement. In Herculanó Inglêz de Souza’s *O missionário* (The Missionary) (1891), by contrast, Father Antônio de Morais abandons noble intentions to convert the native Mundurucus, takes a mistress, and pursues personal ambitions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Other Brazilian novelists have dramatized the Guaranítica War (1752–56) and its aftermath, which destroyed dozens of mission settlements, saw the powerful Jesuits expelled from Portuguese and Spanish possessions, and helped determine the modern borders of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Érico Verissimo’s *O continente* (The Continent) (1943), Manelito de Ornellas’s *Taraju* (1945), Aely Cheuiche’s *Sepé Taraju* (1978), and Rui Nedel’s *Esta terra teve dono* (This Land Has an Owner) (1983) ring the changes on the relationship between the Jesuits and the legendary Sepé Taraju, who served as prefect of the Mission of São Miguel before becoming a native guerrilla defender of the mission settlements against Portuguese and Spanish colonial forces. Religion and politics intermingle in other Brazilian fiction too. Against the backdrop of the military coup of 1964, time among the Xingu natives inspires the young priest Nando in Antonio Callado’s *Quarap* (1978) to become a political activist, while Darcy Ribeiro’s *Maira* (1976) portrays Italian Jesuits competing to transform the lives of Mairum natives with apocalyptic American evangelicals whose mission station is shaped like a flying saucer. Similar themes permeate other Latin American fiction as well. Mario Vargas Llosa’s *El hablador* (The Storyteller) (1987), for example, laments the way in which Roman Catholic missionary efforts to convert the Machiguengas along the Urumba River in Peru’s Amazon rain forest have contributed to the loss of tribal culture.

In African vernacular fiction, numerous short pieces celebrate the triumph of Christianity over native superstition. Images in fiction portraying missions have ranged from the heroic to the hypocritical, from the comic to the catastrophic. As the interplay of cultures continues apace worldwide, the panorama of missions and missionaries portrayed in vernacular and in English-language and other national literatures will doubtless grow more varied and more colorful. Mindful of the frequently mixed motives of their former mentors, for example, indigenous churches now send missionaries to preach the Gospel in former colonial and imperial centers in Europe and North America, and we may expect to see these figures featuring in future short stories and novels. At the same time, ironically, lecturers in Western seminaries and theological colleges, equally aware of the checkered record of colonial and imperial missionizing, today include mission fiction in their syllabuses to add a degree of human ambiguity to the idealistic image of the missionary enterprise so often portrayed in less self-reflective mission histories and misiological treatises. Lastly, localized literary studies promise multiplied opportunities for comparative readings in missions, missionaries, and fiction. In some cases we have translations of literary classics, such as Anthony C. Yu’s glorious rendition of Wu Cheng’en’s Chinese epic, *Journey to the West* (1977–83 [orig. ca. 1595]), which describes the adventures of the Buddhist monk Xuánzàng, who traveled to India to obtain scriptures for the propagation of Buddhism in China. In other cases, a plethora of best-selling contemporary novels invites novel studies analysis, from Salman Rushdie’s magic realist classic *The Satanic Verses* (1988), which works on one level as an ironic critique of extremist tendencies in certain kinds of Muslim proselytizing, to Myla Goldenberg’s more conventionally imagined *Bee Season* (2000), in which Aaron Naumann finds Hindu rituals transplanted to New York more satisfying than the Jewish traditions of his father, a cantor and scholar of Kabalah. Aaron abandons plans to become a rabbi and converts to the Hare Krishna movement.
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Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs

Stuart J. Foster

This article reflects on the theology that has taken root among Christians in one part of Africa. It also models one method of listening to people who have a lot to say but who tend not to write down much.

Across northern Mozambique, in thatch-roofed and tin-roofed buildings, under mango trees and along the roads, Lomwe Christians sing. Usually without instruments and in groups of a half dozen to thirty or so, people gather, practice, then sing their songs. For the leaders, words are scribbled in notebooks, hand copied from one group to another, adapted freely, original author unknown. Repetition is important because most people do not have the notebooks. But repetition with variation keeps people’s attention. A song may challenge the men, then the women, the young people, the preachers, a different group in each verse, with the same theme. The music is not written down; it is memorized. Rhythms and volume are important. No one is paid; everyone is a volunteer. This is a living, local tradition.

The songs are not mere entertainment, even though the singers clearly enjoy themselves. During weekly worship in Lomwe-speaking Protestant churches, the most common introduction to the time for singing is *olahere wa mashuventute*, or “young people’s preaching.” Comments and prayers in response afterward routinely use the same kind of language, noting that these songs speak the Word of God to God’s people just as much as when a senior church leader reads a passage from the Bible and speaks on it. A check of the clock shows the prominence that Christians give these local songs. Routinely, one-quarter to one-third of a worship service is devoted to singing groups, which often is substantially more than the time taken by the spoken sermon. On special occasions, when Christians from half a dozen local congregations meet together, time for this singing takes an even larger proportion. (This does not count the time given to translated hymns from the official hymnbook. Hymns have high prestige, but they tend not to be sung with quite the same verve as the local songs.)

The local songs are in fact oral theology. Laryea writes of “the many ordinary Christians whose reflections on the gospel can be discerned in their prayers, songs, testimonies, thank offerings and sermons. They are the ones who are now beginning to set for us the parameters and framework for doing theology in a new key.”

Similarly, Bediako argues that “academic theological discourse will need to connect with the less academic but fundamental reality of the ‘implicit’ and predominantly oral theologies found at the grassroots of many, if not all, African Christian communities.” As Christians speak to each other in their songs, they reveal their understandings of God and his revelation. That understanding is then the starting point for any further reflections on both their own context and the inspired text in which God speaks. This is theology understood as a “hermeneutical spiral” between text and context. There can be genuine progress in understanding despite a cyclical process, but it begins with where people are.

This article presents one model for studying oral theology. It summarizes key themes in the author’s collection of 263 songs from Lomwe-speaking Protestant churches in northern Mozambique. Some 1.3 million people in Mozambique speak Lomwe, a language of the Bantu family closely related to Makhuwa. They are traditionally matrilineal and politically decentralized, but today they exhibit all the variety and complexity of a people who have experienced the traumas of harsh colonialism, followed by Marxism, followed by a civil war that left Mozambique in 1992 as the poorest country in the world. Since then, the relentless forces of urbanization and globalization are leaving their mark. Amid all these changes, the Christian message has had a huge impact, so that now most Lomwe speakers would claim to belong to a church. The largest number are Roman Catholics (the state church under colonialism), but many Protestant groups are rigorously represented.

The lyrics of the songs analyzed here were collected between 2000 and 2003 in several dozen local churches in northern Zambézia province. The songs come from three sources: 83 were jotted from the handwritten notebook of Domingos Alexandre Matupa while he was an active member of the youth singing group at the Serra church of the Igreja União Baptista in Gürüu, and 33 songs are prize-winning entries in a district-wide contest held by the youth groups of Igreja União Baptista churches in Alto Molocê. The young people’s leadership determined the best songs by their own criteria. No attempt was made to rate the relative popularity of any of the songs in these three groupings. Some may have been sung only once, others many times. But all are popular in the sense of being locally produced and used.

It is important to note several limitations of the approach taken in this article. It focuses on public words, not private action. Everywhere in the world these are very distinct spheres, and the links between them can be hard to trace. The 263 songs from five different Protestant denominations are representative, but are not a statistically precise random sample. They reflect my exposure and experience. Conclusions are suggestive and subject to corroboration and correction by other approaches.

Themes

The most prominent themes in these songs are judgment, the return of Christ, repentance, sins, death, and life as a journey.
Through their songs the Lomwe Christians, who live fragile lives in an uncertain, dangerous world, repeatedly remind each other of their accountability to God.

The coming judgment. In various ways, song after song mentions judgment. Places, people, and events from the Old Testament are not particularly prominent. It is thus striking that, apart from Jesus himself, the Bible characters most frequently mentioned or alluded to are Noah and Lot. There is the plaintive, dramatic call as people doomed to drowning bang on the closed door of the ark:

Koo Koo / Knock, knock
Yaamanana nsele / They banged the door
Nihulele Noowa! / Open up for us, Noah!
Nootholowa / We’re done for. (song 126)

As another song on the same subject has it, Ishavi sookushiwa ti mwaneene Muluku, “God himself has taken away the keys” (85).

Songs also mention the searing heat of fiery punishment as Sodom is consumed:

Makalume yaamorela muSootoma / Flames fell on Sodom
Achu oocheka yinlaka owaye, owaye / Sinners wailing, Owaye, owaye!
Oororomela yiipaka aleluya, ee, aleluya / Believers singing, Alleluia, yes, alleluia! (86)

Several songs devote a stanza each to Noah and to Lot. Their stories are punctuated by refrains that make it clear the events are not historical curiosities but relevant realities. They are patterns for the judgment still to come:

Annaka waaca mahiku annavira / My brothers/sisters, the days are passing
Masooso aatepa elapo ya vathi / Much sickness is on the earth
Muhakhu weotepa elapo ya vathi / Much wealth is on the earth
Annaka nivileele, narinoonaka iha / My brothers/sisters, endure, even though we see these things
Nnaruva niila—Ayi, aiy, aiy / We will wait—Ayi, aiy, aiy
Shuventute, shuvenile—Ayi, aiy, aiy / Young people, children—Ayi, aiy, aiy
Asitiithi ni Asimai—Ayi, aiy, aiy / Fathers and mothers—Ayi, aiy, aiy. (79)

The theme of judgment is found in at least 28 percent of the collected songs, with the dominant tone one of warning and fear. Judgment is not as often seen as a hope for vindication, a reassurance that God will put right all that is wrong.

The return of Jesus. A similar pattern is clear in the second most prominent theme in these songs (mentioned in 17 percent): Jesus is coming back. This is a keynote of Christian hope through the ages. Among the Lomwe this theme is tied with a challenge to persevere and to trust because rescue is coming.

Nkoonani annaka, mahiku yaala tawoophia / Look, my brothers/sisters, these are dangerous days
Hankoni nilipisherye ovekela / Come on, let’s be strong in our praying

Ophikeya aruule Yeesu moolusha / Until Jesus the Savior comes. (198)

Yet, more often, the return of Christ is simply linked with judgment day, and the warning is to be ready or be doomed.

Annaka oolelo ninnoona inenueryo / My brothers/sisters, we see the signs
Woosha woomalavo, aKiristu / Christians, time is running out
Nlipe noovekela, aKiristu / We must be strong in our praying, Christians
Apiwiya onnamorwa / The Lord is coming
Arwooka, anipwamwe tho niri aaweela / When he comes, may he also find us holy.

Call to repent. The above warnings call for a response: ocharuwa, “repent!” (used twenty-four times in these songs), often with the quite specific explanation that this means to stop sinning and confess to the church authorities. Two songs tell clearly who should hear the confession:

Chiri, chiri, wooshavo anna / Truly, truly, it’s late, brothers/sisters
Mulokeho soocheka sanyu wa arummwo / Confess your sins to the leaders. (75)

Munnaka kinoolopola wi wakhulano yoocheka / My brother/sister, I warn you that if you have a sin
Olokohe warumwo, olotwee mwipapo ya vathi / Confess it to the leaders, have it talked through on this earth
Apiwiya Yeesu yarwaaka namwipelo / So when the Lord Jesus comes we can sing to him
Aleluya, aleluya, hosana / Alleluia, alleluia, hosanna. (161)

Naming and denouncing sin. Sins are also prominent in Lomwe songs. These songs may tend to be sung overwhelmingly by people of junior status, but they pull no punches in naming and denouncing sins, including those of their elders.

Paapa oyere moetepano / Father, you are too lazy
Anapapa onweene waririmu mooyeleela / Fathers, you have failed the kingdom of heaven. (141)

The song goes on to explain that these people do not get ready to go to church; rather, they smoke cigarettes. The refrain of another song lists other sins: Owooka okakamela, woosela, ooha-paliwaka ommululeela, spoophwinerya, “to cheat on an engagement, to be vain, to be drunk in daylight, idols” (246). Of course, it is not just the elders who sin. Another song tells of a young man who has gone off to the big city. He has no time to come to the young people’s meeting. When he comes back, he wants everyone to be impressed with him, so he bathes all the time and puts on cologne (93). While the Ten Commandments are mentioned in one song (228), the specific sins named tend to be those public offenses that disqualify someone from participating in the insider
group that is the church. Most often, however, sins are not specified but are referred to in general terms. The root ocheka, “to sin, offend,” is used in thirty-seven of the songs, and its synonym onanara, “to be dirty, wrong,” in fourteen.

The finality of death. Death is a related theme in these songs (mentioned in at least thirteen songs referring to people). It is coming and must be reckoned with. Occasionally, too, the focus is on the death of Jesus, which saves and demands a response of trust (six times). Hardly ever is it metaphorical, referring to a renunciation of evil in the Christian life. Most often it is the literal end of human life. One common, blunt song is used to introduce new stages of a worship service, the offering, prayers, or singing:

Elukuluku ela ti ya ovelela/ovekela/twiipela / This is the time to make an offering/pray/sing
Vathivu wa mukiye haasivo ovelela/ovekela/twiipela / Underneath the grave there is no offering/praying/singing. (18)

Death is both inescapable and unpredictable: Nivekele, okhua honasawanyeya, “Let’s pray, death can’t be figured out” (73). Another recommendation is: Nreherye mirima sahu niwikhu nokhwa vatulushiwe, “Let’s prepare our hearts so we are saved on the day of death” (109). This is because Achu masana nasaneene anakhwana mootutusha / Tens of thousands of people die suddenly
Ehikanlevo elukuluku yoomwavya Muluku / Without any time to seek God. (246)

Life as a journey. A pervasive theme is that life is a journey. This metaphor does not depend on just one or two key terms. One song tells almost the whole story, using mukwa, “journey”:

Voorwa Apwiya mahiku oomaliha avo / When the Lord comes those last days
Muchu ocheka hanarowa wirimu / The person of sin will not go to heaven
Nyenza ocimulwana onaya vanukwahani / But a repentant is going on a journey
Mukwa moomano wa Apwiya / A journey going to the Lord. (258)

Similarly, song 236 affirms that wirimu mukwa, “heaven, is a journey.” The second verse states, Elapo ya vathi hayivo yooph-woanela, “There is nothing worthwhile in this land below,” and goes on to make some recommendations.

Nlipisherye mirima, nimuchare Yesu avo / We must strengthen our hearts, we must follow that Jesus
Nimvurherwe mivwe ethu avo / We must wait for that king of ours.

Besides references to mukwa, “journey” (7 songs), there are others to ephiro, “path, way” (11 songs). But much more common than these nouns are verbs of travel and motion. Wecca, “to walk,” is found in 22 songs and is used to mean manner of life in all but five instances. Other basic verbs of movement are oroona, “to go” (used in 16 songs), and oya, “to go [someplace]” (7 songs). Another key verb is ochara, “to follow,” used in 15 songs, more than half of the times for following Jesus. People need to ocimula, “set out” (3 songs), to make sure they do not oholo, “remain behind” (10 songs), so that they can ophiya, “arrive” (18 songs), and ovolwa, “enter” (14 songs). Of course, travel implies people will ohiya, “leave behind,” some things (16 songs) and ovoira, “pass by,” others (11 songs). On the way, someone must ohoolela, “lead” (with ohoolela, 10 times). Okusha, “to take [with],” is used in 32 songs (and in 21 of them refers to God or Jesus coming to take his own to be with him).

Narrative Summary

Besides listing their most prominent themes, another way to analyze these songs is to look for their underlying narrative. Narrative is a fundamental component of worldview. Missiologist Tom Steffen argues that “symbol-based narrative [story] serves as the primal foundation of worldview and social structure.” Facts and symbols “make sense” only when placed, either implicitly or explicitly, within a narrative. Similarly, cultural anthropologist Paul Bohannan declares, “People live by stories—they use stories to organize and store cultural traditions.” New Testament scholar N. T. Wright contends that “worldviews are at the deepest level shorthand formulae to express stories”; narrative is basic to human life, not a substitute for some more abstract “real thing.”

There is no established methodology for distilling a narrative from a body of songs, so my attempt that follows is merely suggestive. It develops from noting recurrent, strong contrasts both between the present and the future, and between this world below and God’s world above. It also tries to incorporate the themes already noted. Especially the journey metaphor connects contrasting times and spaces. In the songs believers are seen as being on a journey from this land here below, which is full of troubles and sins, to the wonderful place above, heaven, where God is. God and Jesus help us along the way, and Jesus is coming to meet us. Satan tries to stop us. We must watch out and work hard because we may not make it. At any moment the journey could be ended by death or Jesus’ return.

Temporally, mahiku yaalo, “these days,” contrast with mahiku ookuchula, “last days.”

Mahiku yaalo a mutano / These days, this season
Nivilele. Sazeha simutepa / We must endure. Trials abound. (16)

In “these days” faith flees and love ends (29), the earth tilts (46), we fall into sin (93) and are tricked by the devil (133). These days are dangerous (117, 161, 193), especially in the sense that it is a hard time to live as a faithful believer. In contrast, four times it is stated that “the days are ending” (25, 184, 228, 243), and eleven songs refer to mahiku ookuchula or oomaliha, “the last days” or “final days” (42, 52, 70, 104, 131, 160, 175, 225, 228, 233, 258).

Spatially, elapo, “land, earth,” stands against wirimu, “heaven, sky.” There are 99 specific references to the concept of elapo yela ya vathi, “this land here below,” in the 263 songs. Wirimu, “heaven,” is used 56 times, and its major synonym, osalu, “[the place] above,” a further 7 times. Supremely, wirimu is the place of God (18 times) it is linked directly with Father, God, or Lord). By extension, it is also the place of life:

Mi koosueela wirimu wokhataluw okumi / I know that in heaven there is life. (24)

It is also the place of peace (133 and 168) and of praise (91, 105, 140, and 147). Sometimes this spatial concept is most striking when none of the typical vocabulary is used:

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Notes


5. For me, text and context are not equal. Scripture is authoritative. When Scripture is reduced to mere echoes of the context, when it is used to buttress preconceived opinion, then it is not being heard. God has decisively revealed himself in Scripture. While he is active in human contexts, it is Scripture that ultimately shapes how people should discern and understand that activity. If the questions and urgent issues of the context drown out Scripture, theology will become insipid, with no word from God addressing the human condition. Although Scripture is final, no person or group has a final, exhaustive understanding of it. Others, and the questions arising from their contexts, will bring out more light.

6. The full text of the songs can be found in Stuart J. Foster, “An Experiment in Bible Translation as Transcultural Communication: The Translation of F’-‘Z Covenant’ into Lomwe, with a Focus on Leviticus 26” (D.Th. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2005), pp. 202–24. Song number references in the text are to the listing in this document.


8. The practice of traditional religion is not publicly prominent among Lomwe speakers at the present time. Traditional chiefs, who also have a priestly role in traditional religion, exist but have limited influence after the vicissitudes of colonialism and civil war. Other traditional specialists also continue but in many cases belong to churches as well.


10. Anonymous authorship and the freedom to adopt and adapt from others mean that it cannot be claimed that all the songs are original local compositions. However, they have been appropriated by Lomwe believers and integrated into their worship. While it might be fascinating to attempt to trace influences from and interactions with other cultural and religious traditions, such a project is outside the scope of this study.


16. For the author’s contributions on this question, arguing for communicating the committed faithfulness of God using the Old Testament concept of covenant, see “An Experiment in Bible Translation,” esp. pp. 176–201.

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**History of Missiology Web Site**

The History of Missiology Web site (http://digilib.bu.edu/mission) is a collaborative project of the Boston University Theology Library and the Center for Global Christianity and Mission at the Boston University School of Theology. The site provides access to classic writings in the history of Protestant mission thought, including works on mission theology, theory, and strategy. Written by cross-cultural missionaries, mission administrators, and mission promoters, these writings provide unique insight into the beginnings of Christianity in the non-Western world, the founding of indigenous churches, and early theories of comparative religion. Mission thinkers produced some of the first ethnographic studies of people in primal societies, as well as histories of encounters between Westerners and people from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. They also reflected on the implications for Christian theology of varied religions and cultures.

The site consists of several sections. The first, “Missionary Biographies,” provides biographical sketches, photos, bibliographies, and links to digitized texts in the public domain by missionaries, missiologists, and mission administrators. At present there are approximately eighty biographies, most of them taken from permission from the *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, 1998), edited by Gerald Anderson. The next section, “Books,” contains a “digital library” with full texts of scanned missionary writings, searchable by keywords, topics, authors, and titles. Over 1,000 books are currently in the digital library, and texts are available for free download in both PDF and DjVu formats. Because mission studies represents one of the major strengths of the Boston University School of Theology library, the digital library is a way both to expand the collection and to extend the availability of texts already held in library archives. Other sections of the Web site include quick links to the Edinburgh 1910 reports and other scholarly sites important to mission history and theory.

The impetus for this Web site originated from doctoral seminars at Boston University on the history of Protestant missiology. Because of the obscurity of historic mission texts, the collection began with digitization of texts in the public domain. The provision of biographical data on each missiologist stems from the priorities of the course, which focuses on the social and contextual dimensions of mission theology, theory, and strategy. Prepared with the assistance of the Instructional Technology Grant Program at Boston University, the initial design offered an interactive site with bulletin board, blogs, and live chat to allow students to engage in online conversations about the texts.

The Boston University Theology Library and the Center for Global Christianity and Mission are committed to providing a permanent home for the site on the theology library servers at Boston University. The digital collection is being built through collaboration with other theological schools in the Boston Theological Institute, the Overseas Ministries Study Center, and other interested partners. Future plans include scanning and providing classic Protestant mission texts in Spanish. Plans are underway to crosslink the “Legacy” series from the IBMR to expand the biographical data on the missionaries and missiologists. Scholars with ideas about how to improve the site, or who wish to collaborate in providing additional texts, should contact Jack W. Ammerman, head librarian (jwa@bu.edu), or Dana L. Robert, professor of world Christianity and history of mission (drobdan@bu.edu), both at the Boston University School of Theology. Robert is an IBMR contributing editor.

—Dana L. Robert
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**C O M E.** Not long after I began teaching in Bangalore (South India), someone asked, “Which institution do you recommend for a Ph.D. in Mission Studies?” My answer was “Asbury Theological Seminary.” A decade later, as a faculty member at Asbury, I realize how right I was! What an experience it has been to join the team I so admired where a well-balanced emphasis on both spiritual life and high academic standards distinguishes the quality of this scholarly community.

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My Pilgrimage in Mission

John B. Carman

My first task as a missionary was to help Indian Christians better understand their Hindu and Muslim neighbors. This somewhat novel assignment was warmly supported by the church council that ordained me and by the mission society that sent my wife and me to India. While some Christians may find it difficult to consider that task appropriate for a missionary, I received both understanding and support from my fellow missionaries and from many other Christian friends in India and elsewhere. I believe that seeking to understand the deepest feelings and convictions of those belonging to other religious communities is implicit in Christian love of neighbor. It is also essential for those preparing to share the Gospel with “every nation and tongue.” Although a commissioned missionary for only six years, I sought to continue my special vocation during my thirty-seven years at Harvard Divinity School.

There are at least three kinds of pilgrimage. John Bunyan’s pilgrim was on a one-way journey to the heavenly city, but many pilgrimages are round-trips: journeying to a sacred place and then returning home to resume the round of daily life. Then there is a third type: a “wandering around” while adhering to some monastic discipline.

Many of the contributors to this series have been able to look back on a lifelong “journey” of missionary service. While I am old enough to do the same, I feel that I must look ahead, for I am still far from completing my major scholarly and theological project. My many smaller journeys have brought me home wiser, but not so obviously blessed as the hajji, the Muslim pilgrim who triumphantly returns home after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca. My journeys back and forth from India to the United States might qualify as “wandering around,” but I have experienced them neither as voluntary exile nor as ascetic deprivation. Living in multiple homelands has enriched my life.

Where Did I Start?

At the age of twelve I joined the Christian church by baptism on confession of faith, but from my birth in South India in 1930 I was part of the worldwide Christian mission. Both my parents were the children and grandchildren of Baptist ministers in the United States. My parents became American Baptist missionaries in India because of the inspiration they received through the Student Volunteer Movement and because of the missionary tradition of their church in Rochester, New York, which supported them throughout their forty years in India. All six of their children were born in India; my first sister died as a baby. Of the five of us who went to the United States, four returned to work in India for longer or shorter periods, three in mission service. My father, John S. Carman, was a doctor who spent fifteen years in charge of a mission hospital in what was then Hyderabad State and later worked for twenty years at the Christian Medical College and Hospital at Vellore, first as professor of surgery and then as director.

During my boyhood in India, up to the age of twelve, I was keenly aware of belonging to the Christian community in general and to my parents’ work in particular. I knew that Christians were a small minority in India but linked to a worldwide movement that crossed national boundaries. I remember how impressed I was to see two visitors, one Japanese and one Chinese, walking arm in arm on a sightseeing tour, for I knew that Japan and China were at war. I understood that the Gospel was to be expressed both by preaching and by loving service, following Jesus’ example. I knew that the vast majority of Indian people belonged to other religions and were not part of the Christian community, but I understood that they were to be given hospitality and respect. I sometimes visited the ruins of a medieval Hindu temple nearby, and I was well aware that our state had a wealthy Muslim ruler, in that state called the Nizam, but a population that was 90 percent Hindu. My first interreligious discussion was with the son of a Muslim official when I went over to his house to play. We were both about ten.

My interest in Indian culture and religion took on new life during my first year at Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania, when John Flight’s course in comparative religion and a series of lectures by Arnold Toynbee awakened me, not only to “encounters between civilizations,” but also to the fact that I had grown up in the midst of what Toynbee considered the most important event in the twentieth century, the first large-scale encounter of Eastern and Western religions. Through the rest of my college years I tried to give specific shape to a strong sense of calling. I eventually decided to go to Yale Divinity School to prepare for ordination as a Christian minister and missionary, and also to continue my study of other religions, especially the religions of India.

My Vocation in India

I interrupted my study at Yale for two years, going to the Netherlands as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Leiden. My time at Leiden had important intellectual consequences for me. It was also the place where I met and later became engaged to a fellow student, Ineke Wichers. For a long time it was uncertain whether Ineke, a diabetic since childhood, would get medical permission to go with me to India and therefore whether we could even be appointed. During her year in the United States before our marriage, she received a provisional approval for three years.

The officers of the mission society were extremely supportive of my vocational plans, and I had the great good fortune that a new study center was just starting in India, headed by Paul Devanandan and M. M. Thomas, that could use my services as a research fellow. We did need, however, to secure a visa from the Indian government, which had recently turned down many
I taught at the Baptist seminary in Ramapatnam, on the coast of Andhra Pradesh. Here we were much closer to the church life of most Indian Christians than we had been in Bangalore, with much of the teaching and all of the worship conducted in Telugu. We were, however, living in a large old bungalow that dwarfed the new homes built for the Indian faculty members. Were we separated from the rest of the seminary community by economic disparity or social status, or were we simply accepting our niche in a traditional social hierarchy? Perhaps both. Certainly the issue of equality versus hierarchy has beset both foreign missionaries and Indian Christians for centuries. In any case, we were grateful for our hospitable inclusion in the community and for the willingness of our students to consider a more positive approach to their Hindu neighbors.

Four months before leaving India at the end of our term, we learned that Ineke’s eyes were beginning to show signs that could lead to her eventual blindness. Three weeks later I received a completely unexpected letter inviting me to apply for a three-year appointment at Harvard Divinity School and its new Center for the Study of World Religions. Ineke’s medical report made it uncertain whether we could return to India after our furlough, so I wrote back asking if I could commit myself for only one year, in case we were able to return. It was under these circumstances that we came to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1963 to begin thirty-seven years on the Harvard Divinity School faculty. We moved into an apartment at the center, where we and our three children lived off and on for eighteen of the next twenty-six years. Fortunately, Ineke did not lose her sight; some years later it was saved by repeated laser surgery.


When we arrived at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Professor Robert Slater was starting his final year as the first director. During the 1930s he had been an Anglican missionary in Burma, where his interest in studying Buddhism had been stimulated by conversing with Buddhist monks. He conceived of interreligious understanding as a process involving students and scholars who were trained in their own tradition and open to learning from others in a way that would lead them to greater insight about their own religion. I was entirely in agreement with this approach, but I soon realized that many of our American students had rather different motivations. Many from a Christian background were partially or totally estranged from their family’s tradition. Some were drawn to a Western form of some Asian religion; others were following a more secular approach to studying all religions.

Among faculty and students at the divinity school there were at least two other points of view: Unitarians who sought enrichment from many religious sources, and neoorthodox Protestants who had come to Harvard after President Pusey’s revival of the divinity school ten years before. Some of the latter had opposed the new program in “world religions” because they feared that it

The villagers’ celebration of both Hindu and Christian festivals was an embarrassment to church leaders.

I had the unexpected opportunity to learn about a village Hinduism very different from the devotional tradition I was studying in Bangalore.

leaders, but it was part of a situation of permeable religious boundaries that left many non-Christians open to dreams of Jesus the Healer.

I had the unexpected opportunity to learn about a village Hinduism very different from the devotional tradition I was studying in Bangalore, but strikingly similar to the religious environment of the Christians among whom I had grown up, less than 150 miles away from the site of our study. How such village Hinduism should be related to Christian efforts at interreligious dialogue was and still remains outside most Christian reflection on dialogue.

For the last year and a half of my missionary term, Ineke and I taught at the Baptist seminary in Ramapatnam, on the coast of

applications from prospective American missionaries. After a few months our visa was approved, and we reached India in December 1957.

During my four years in Bangalore with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, my first task was to participate in the institute’s efforts to promote Christian understanding of Indian religions. This involved my assisting with a series of conferences and publications, including a report on our first organized dialogue between Christians and Hindus.

My second task at the institute was to write my Ph.D. dissertation for Yale on the theology of the eleventh-century Hindu leader Ramanuja. This involved not only studying his writings with a Brahmin scholar from his Srivaishnava community but also trying to understand the home and temple worship of his followers. In the process, I discovered a magnificent collection of devotional poems with learned commentaries, as well as a number of traditional biographies, filled for the most part with stories about Ramanuja. Could this religious leader as described in the biographies be the philosopher who wrote Sanskrit commentaries on the Vedanta Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita? I believed that there were strong historical grounds for affirming the later community’s picture of their great teacher, but I could not prove this in the dissertation to the satisfaction of more skeptical Western historians, so I had to return to this issue in the following decades.

The third task while I worked at the institute was unexpected: assisting a presbyter of the Church of South India, the Rev. P. Y. Luke, to conduct a study of some village congregations north of Hyderabad. (The results of this study were published in 1968 as Village Christians and Hindu Culture.) At the time this project seemed to me a fascinating but costly distraction from my study of Hindu theology, making it difficult to finish my dissertation before Yale’s deadline. In retrospect, my involvement was most fortunate, for the study of these village Christians turned out to be also a study of the village religion in which they still participated. Their dual affiliation, including their celebration of both Hindu and Christian festivals, was an embarrassment to church

and society.
would dilute the school’s renewed commitment to training Protestant ministers. I agreed with the school’s emphasizing ministerial training and Protestant theology, but I believed that these goals could be better pursued by increasing Christians’ understanding of other religions. In the following years the neorthodox voices in the faculty became more muted, and the student body became increasingly diverse, including Roman Catholics and Jews, and also a few Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims.

Throughout my years at the divinity school, I conceived of my role not only as teaching Western students about Eastern religions but also as encouraging students, both Christians and adherents of other religions, to affirm their own faith commitments at the same time that they were seeking to understand the faith of others.

The other half of my vocation at Harvard concerned the center community, which consisted of faculty members and students in world religions and visiting scholars from around the world.

I was surprised to find out how striking the similarities are between very different faith traditions in naming the attributes of God.

Some of these lived in the twenty center apartments, and some elsewhere. During my sixteen years as director (1973–89), Ineke and I were the “innkeepers” or “shepherds.” We offered hospitality as a joint vocation, though one in which Ineke played a more active role, both in providing food and in offering friendship. I was the administrator and the convener of frequent colloquia, which enabled our members and occasional guests to share both their scholarly work and their personal experience. I was also one of the teachers and the adviser of many of the doctoral students in comparative religion, encouraging them in their exploration of widely different subjects and learning much from them in the process.

A frank exchange of different religious convictions was rare in these community gatherings but sometimes happened in informal conversations. Western Christian students who were happy to study other religions were often unwilling or unable to present a Christian theological position comparable to what they expected from adherents of other religions. Fewer and fewer of our American students had previous training in Christian theology, and even those with a theological degree were often more interested in the “other religion” that was the primary focus of their doctoral studies. Christians from other countries, in contrast, had both previous training and personal interest in Christian theology, as well as a keen interest in some other religious tradition.

Various Directions in My Scholarly Writings

Many of my comparative writings have been articles contributed to conference volumes on particular comparative topics, including thanksgiving, mysticism, pilgrimage, scripture, holiness, and divine attributes. I have also written a few articles on Christian-Hindu relations, as well as articles on the nature of dialogue, interreligious encounter, and the task of interreligious understanding.

My first book-length publication was The Meaning of Religion (1960). This was an English translation of the Dutch lectures on phenomenology of religion by W. Brede Kristensen, a Norwegian scholar who taught for many years at the University of Leiden. His emphasis on understanding ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern religions as they were conceived by their own adherents greatly influenced the next generation of historians of religion in Holland. Kristensen’s writings and the work of his students, especially that of Gerardus van der Leeuw, helped shape my dissertation study of Ramanuja’s conception of God.

I had originally planned to develop a Christian interpretation of the Hindu doctrine of avatara. The actual dissertation was limited to one Hindu thinker’s vision of a God who transcends finite beings but graciously comes down into the world to save them. I had to limit myself, moreover, to gaining a comparative understanding of Ramanuja’s thought, postponing for later study a Christian evaluation. The dissertation was completed in 1962, and its revision, The Theology of Ramanuja, was published in 1974. Two later books address historical and comparative questions raised in the dissertation.

The Tamil Veda (1989) was written in collaboration with Dr. Vasudha Narayanan, a young Hindu scholar from Ramanuja’s own tradition. Addressing the historical issue in my dissertation just described, we tried to show how the first written commentary on an important cycle of Tamil devotional hymns, a commentary by Ramanuja’s younger cousin and disciple Pillan, bridges the gap between Ramanuja’s Sanskrit writings and the new theological emphases of his later followers.

Majesty and Meekness (1994) took the polarity of supremacy and accessibility central to Ramanuja’s view of the Supreme Lord and explored whether this and other polarities were also present in other religious systems with a personal conception of supreme reality, or God. I included Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu examples. Several times in my research I was surprised to find out how striking the similarities are between very different faith traditions in naming the attributes of God. The book title took the first part of a phrase in a sermon of Jonathan Edwards: “majesty and meekness, justice and mercy.”

In my introduction I wrote that this book was intended to stand at the “edge” of Christian theology, based on a comparative understanding of doctrines of God, an understanding that utilizes Christian terminology but that does not evaluate these various doctrines systematically according to a particular Christian theology. Perhaps it would have been better to introduce that book as a “doorway” into Christian theology, for in the last three chapters I focused on several Christian theologians’ treatment of radical contrasts in God’s nature. Now I want to go through that doorway, addressing many theological questions, including those from my original dissertation plan, fifty years ago.

From Understanding to Assessment

For several years in the 1970s we were fortunate at the center to have with us Dr. and Mrs. J. L. Mehta, whom I had met some years before in India at Banaras Hindu University, in Varanasi. He taught Indian philosophy there, but he had written his dissertation on the modern German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Several times we taught a course together entitled “India and the West: The Problem of Understanding.” I was impressed with his analysis of a major difference between modern Western and traditional Hindu views of “understanding,” the former holding...
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the object to be understood at a distance for the sake of clearer comprehension, the latter incorporating the outside object within itself for the sake of greater truth. Following Heidegger, Dr. Mehta considered my distinction between understanding and evaluation artificial, while I, following Kristensen, considered an understanding of another religion that “swallowed up” its object to be disrespectful of that religious community’s view of itself.

During his farewell address at the center before returning to India, Dr. Mehta shocked me with the following remark: “If I have to find fault with Professor Carman’s role in these joint courses, it is that he has been altogether too gentle with me all along. . . . In order to be fruitful, the dialogue must be conceived also as a mutual challenging, a calling out to the other to come out in the open, and it needs being conducted as a liebender Kampf [loving struggle], to use Karl Jaspers’ striking phrase.” I regret that my quest for greater understanding of Hindu thought inhibited me from engaging in the kind of debate that Dr. Mehta wanted. I was trying to widen my understanding from the ideas of a single thinker, Ramanuja, to his broader devotional tradition. Later, in Majesty and Meekness, I moved to a comparison of similar concepts of God in various religions, a comparison that included several Christian thinkers. A year before that book was published (1994), I had announced in my divinity school convocation address that I would no longer postpone my development of an inclusive Christian theology of religion.

I started by exploring Justin Martyr’s doctrine of the “seed-sowing Word” as a key to interpreting God’s presence in Hindu religion. I presented a preliminary form of my interpretation as the three Mission Lectures at Princeton Seminary in 1997.

My book on this subject is still unfinished because I have recognized a paradox. My theological judgments, whether positive or negative, need to rest on an understanding of the Hindu tradition as close as possible to what Hindu participants themselves feel and express. Yet incorporating any Hindu belief or practice within a Christian framework requires a reinterpretation that Hindus would not recognize as authentic. (Such reinterpretation may be similar in approach to what Dr. Mehta meant by the Hindu inclusive “understanding.”) Awareness of this paradox makes it necessary for me to move back and forth between empathetic understanding and theological assessment, rather than simply advancing from understanding to evaluation.

For my present project, moreover, I need to learn from the insight of those in India who have responded to the Gospel, whether famous converts or village Christians, not neglecting those Hindus who seem to have rejected Christianity but claim to have learned from Christ. Fortunately, I am now engaged in a common enterprise with Christian theologians around the world, walking in the same pilgrimage.

Justin Martyr believed the Divine Word (logos) to be partially present in some of the Greek philosophers. The book I am now writing considers whether his doctrine of the “seed-sowing Word” is a useful key to interpreting God’s presence in Hindu religion. For Justin, however, the logos was continually engaged in a battle with demonic powers, who he thought had caused the death of Socrates, thus prefiguring Jesus’ death on the cross. Justin’s view of the mystery religions in the Roman Empire was quite negative. Their points of similarity with Christian worship, he held, were the result of the demons’ imitation of the true sacraments. This negative side of Justin’s approach to others’ faith anticipated the approach of many Christians in later centuries.

Because most past Christian interpretation of other religions has been negative, I have thought it better to begin with the positive side: looking for expressions of the Divine Word in Hindu traditions will be more than enough for this book. However, Christians do have to face the reality of resistance to God in all religions. No one has exposed this issue more thoroughly than Karl Barth, but he has clearly stated that we Christians may apply negative judgments to other religions only with great caution, and only if we first take seriously God’s judgment on our own religion, our own practice of Christianity.

Retirement and Renewal

By the time I retired in 2000, Ineke had already survived several crises, including a heart attack and bypass surgery, but the last year of her life was one of sharp decline, leading to her death in June 2003. That summer I traveled across the country, visiting relatives and friends. I also renewed acquaintance with an old friend, Ann Rogers. Ineke and I had known Ann and her husband, Minor, since 1970. Minor and Ann had been Episcopal missionaries in Japan for four years, and later both taught at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia; Minor taught Buddhism until his death in 1991, and Ann taught Japanese. My friendship with Ann blossomed, and we were married in October 2004. Renewal marks our life together in South Portland, Maine. I make occasional trips back to Harvard Divinity School and recently coauthored a short history of the Center for the Study of World Religions.

I am enjoying an active retirement and a new partnership with Ann, but writing this essay is a reminder that my pilgrimage is not over. In 2000 at my retirement dinner at the divinity school, our son Peter followed a day full of laudatory speeches by challenging me to write something accessible to a larger audience. I am not sure whether my unfinished book, Seeds of Christ in Indian Soil, will accomplish that, but I am sure that all Christians need to learn more about how the Divine Word has spoken—or sung—in a “thousand tongues.” Without that presence of the Word, I believe that human beings around the world would have neither words nor tunes to sing “our great Redeemer’s praise.” One Indian translation for logos is sabda, which means “sound” as well as “word.” Truly, the Divine Son is the Resounding Word.

Ramanuja and his followers often said that the Lord was the Way as well as the Goal. I can affirm that statement as a Christian pilgrim who seeks to discover the Divine Word in many places, confident in the Lord who is with me and sustains me. My personal journey may or may not extend through writing two more books. The Word endures.
The Legacy of Jacob A. Loewen

Harvey G. Neufeldt

Jacob A. Loewen was a missionary, anthropologist, translator, and writer. As a young boy in a Mennonite village in the USSR, Jacob Loewen could not in his wildest dreams have imagined becoming a missionary in Colombia, a college professor in Kansas, and a translation consultant in South America and Africa. Loewen’s life was fascinatingly mercurial, considering, for example, his family’s escape from the USSR, his earning a Ph.D. degree, the remarkable education he received from native tribes in non-Western societies, and, in his later years, his confrontationally prophetic stance and consequent virtual exclusion from Mennonite Brethren (MB) churches in British Columbia. There were, however, abiding constants in Loewen’s remarkable life, mainly his deep love for the Bible and his firm conviction that the Bible needed to be accessibly translated into as many languages as possible. Loewen asked the question, “God, how would you have said this if you had spoken in our language in the first place?” which was more than an academic question for him—it was his passion.1

Early Life and Education

Jacob Loewen was born in 1922 in Orenburg Colony, a Mennonite settlement in Russia near the Ural Mountains, to Jacob and Katherine Quiring Isaac. Jacob Sr. died while Jacob was still an infant. Jacob’s mother then married Abraham Loewen, and together they immigrated to Canada in 1929 as part of the last group allowed to leave the Soviet Union before Stalin closed the borders.2

Upon arriving in Canada, the Loewen family lived for three years in Manitoba before moving to British Columbia. While residing near Kronsart, Manitoba, ten-year-old Jacob had his first conversion experience. He soon discovered, to his and his mother’s disappointment, that the “once and for all” conversion experience advocated by some evangelical Mennonites of that time did not immediately solve all his behavioral problems. In 1934 the Loewen family moved to Yarrow, British Columbia, a village primarily of Russian Mennonite immigrants who had come to Canada during the 1920s. Yarrow left an indelible impression on Jacob. It was a place where he struggled to attain first-class status.3

Loewen’s education was heavily influenced by his immigrant experience and his family’s poverty. He dropped out of public school after completing eighth grade and attended Yarrow’s Mennonite Brethren (Elim) Bible School during the late fall and winter months. After graduating from Elim, he enrolled in Chilliwack High School for one year before registering as a conscientious objector in 1942. He worked nights as a conscientious objector in Toronto Western Hospital and attended lectures at the Missionary Medical Training School in the afternoons. In 1945 he married Anne Enns, and together they left for Hillsboro, Kansas, where Loewen attended Tabor College, a Mennonite Brethren liberal arts college.4

Loewen graduated from Tabor College in 1947, already set in his ways as an “evangelical soul winner,” confidently proclaiming the superiority of Christianity over other religions. Following graduation, both he and Anne enrolled in the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), held at the University of Oklahoma. Shortly thereafter they prepared to leave for Colombia as missionaries under the auspices of the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions.5

Mennonite Missionary in Colombia

Jacob and Anne Loewen arrived in Colombia believing that they would be MB missionaries for life and that they were called to evangelize the Chocó Indians. Along with fellow missionary David Wirsche they moved in 1948 to Noanamá, at the junction of the San Juan and Becordó Rivers, in order to make contact with the Waunana tribe. Not until his fifth year in Colombia, however, was Loewen finally released from other duties (including supervising the construction of buildings at the mission station) to undertake full-time study of the tribe’s language. This language study became the basis for his master’s thesis at the University of Washington in 1954.6

Loewen’s experiences with the native people forced him to “reexamine his assumptions about the superiority” of the Western worldview and the exclusiveness of Christianity. Loewen gradually reached the conclusion that God had been present among the tribe long before the arrival of the Christian missionary. He also began to realize that many biblical truths were communicated in the form of metaphors and that “these kinds of metaphors could be found in a number of cultures.”7 Most important, he learned that in attempting to communicate God’s Word to the Chocó Indians, the missionary could find valuable contact points in the tribal culture to which the Christian Gospel could be linked. On one occasion, Loewen and Wirsche were invited to attend a Waunana beseeching ceremony held in response to a perceived crisis in the community. Despite their limited knowledge of the language, Loewen and Wirsche felt compelled to give the Waunana a message of hope. Using Waunana myths as contact points, they presented the people with a simple message. Unbeknownst to them, the Waunana who were present at the meeting shared this message with all the tribal families along the river. They

Harvey G. Neufeldt, Professor Emeritus, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, Tennessee, a former resident of Yarrow, British Columbia, served with Loewen as coordinator of the Yarrow Research Committee and as coeditor of two of its volumes on the Yarrow immigrant Mennonite community.

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then decided as a group to “give God their hand” and “walk on God’s road.” This group conversion challenged the predominantly individualistic conversion emphasis in Loewen’s own evangelical theology.

Tabor College, Panama, and Paraguay

After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Washington and while waiting for an assignment from the MB Board of Missions, Loewen joined the Tabor College faculty as professor of languages and anthropology. His increased efforts here “to cultivate channels for the Spirit of God’s work” in his life were important for his spiritual development. He applied ideas gained from a lecture by Elton Trueblood “on how to listen to the Spirit of God” and from Theodore Reik’s Listening with the Third Ear. Reik explains how in his work he often had “to listen with . . . a kind of radar system to locate the actual problems in his patients.”

While at Tabor College, Loewen became involved in an important experiment in Panama that would further inform his understanding of missions. By the time he had left Colombia in 1953 to enroll at the University of Washington, the Colombian government had drawn a new concordat that would effectively assign the indigenous people and their education to the Roman Catholic Church, thereby ending the MB mission to the Indians. When native children were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in Catholic schools, several parents “stole” their children back and fled to Panama, encouraged by reports that Loewen and Wirsche were there. (Loewen had arranged periodic visits to Panama to study the language of the Chocó Indians.) While on a flight to Panama, Loewen and Wirsche met Panama’s minister of education and shared with him their interest in embarking on a literacy project among the native population. Although skeptical about the natives’ ability to learn to read, the minister invited them to conduct the literacy experiment. Loewen’s study of the Waunana and Emperá languages and the stories he had collected from tribal elders provided the basis for the two series of graded booklets drawn up by Wirsche. The primers, field tested in the summer of 1959, embedded the Spanish syllabary in the primers so that once the people learned to read in their own language, they could read Spanish as well.

Translation consultants had to guard against missionary translators’ incorporating their own doctrinal biases into the text.

Wirsche and Lampe joined the project, and theMB Board personnel to impose doctrinal systems and behavioral codes on the indigenous church.

During his tenure at Tabor College Loewen was asked by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to conduct an anthropological study of efforts by Mennonites in Paraguay to resettle native Indians living near three Mennonite settlements in the Gran Chaco: Menno, Fernheim, and Neuland. By 1960 the Mennonites were facing a growing Indian population and its increasing demands for land. The threat of an armed uprising in 1962 by a band of Chulupí near the Neuland Colony, following a drought that had left many of them without work and food, forced the Mennonite Resettlement Board in Paraguay to ask for assistance.

Loewen’s study embroiled him in interchurch and interracial disputes. The MB Board of Missions, reluctant at first to endorse the study, hoped to separate the land question from any analysis of the predominantly MB mission, Licht den Indianern (Light to the Indians). Such a separation was impossible, however, because the mission had played a leading role in the establishment of Indian settlements, beginning with the settlement near Yalvesanga in 1946. Loewen’s research project exposed the divergent Indian and Euro-Mennonite views on racial politics and the underlying racism within the colonies. The Paraguayan Mennonite settlers were miffed by Loewen’s descriptions of racist policies embedded in their colonies’ institutions and of the discriminatory behaviors of settlers and local governmental officials.

Translation Consultant

Though Loewen found his teaching experience at Tabor College rewarding, he was not content to remain in the ivory tower. So in 1964, when he had the chance to join the American Bible Society (ABS) as a translation consultant for South America, and given the unlikelihood of receiving an appointment by the MB Board of Missions in the near future, Jacob and Anne Loewen “jumped at the opportunity.”

Before 1970 all ABS translation consultants were recruited by Eugene Nida, a brilliant linguist who had joined ABS in 1943. The translation consultants, many with graduate degrees in linguistics and/or theology, were drawn mainly from former missionaries who had already demonstrated skill and interest in linguistics and translation. As a translation consultant in South America, Loewen worked with translation teams composed largely of expatriate missionaries, including SIL personnel, assisted by native-tongue speakers. Since translation teams often were composed of members drawn from several denominations, the translation consultant had to guard against missionary translators’ incorporating their own doctrinal biases into the text.

Serving as a translation consultant for South America proved, for the most part, to be a satisfying experience for Loewen. He became immersed in “dynamic equivalent translation,” a concept promoted by ABS. Its goal was to provide readers of Scripture in a contemporary language the same understanding and emotional experience that readers of the original texts might have had. A guiding question was Loewen’s “God, how would you have said it if you had first spoken it in this native language?” Translators needed to move from a more literal word-for-word translation to one that conveyed the equivalent meaning. Loewen observed how difficult such translation often was for expatriate translators. While working with translation teams, he “sought to listen with the ‘third ear’ whenever confronted by a problem in the text.” Serving as a translation consultant also launched
Loewen’s publishing career. His articles on numerous topics, including contact points between tribal religions and Christianity, confession, the role of myth in religion, and empowerment of indigenous people, appeared in numerous scholarly, religious, and church periodicals, most notably in *Practical Anthropology*.

When Loewen requested support to set up several native-tongue translation teams in Latin America, Nida consented, despite initial reservations. Loewen’s report on the experiment at the Bible Society’s 1969 workshop in Spain received enthusiastic support from attendees from the Developing World, but many expatriate missionary translators were unenthusiastic. It may have seemed to them that native translation teams would end the work that the missionaries themselves felt called by God to do.

The United Bible Societies (UBS), organized in 1946 under the leadership of the British and American Bible Societies and given responsibility for Africa, decided that in the matter of training native-tongue speakers, Africa provided a better environment than Latin America. Consequently, in 1970 Loewen was assigned to Central East Africa, with responsibilities in Angola, Zambia, and Rhodesia (later renamed Zimbabwe) and with some advisory roles in South Africa. He reported to the UBS office in London. In 1979 he was transferred to West Africa, with responsibilities in Ghana, Benin, Niger, Upper Volta (later Burkina Faso), and Togo.

In Africa, Loewen worked to increase the role of local churches in the translation and review process. In the “oral-group reviewing” approach someone would read the text aloud to local church reviewers. If a listener heard something that seemed odd or unnatural, the group would mark the section in question. In this way, even individuals with limited literacy could participate in the translation process, and the church itself could claim at least some ownership of the translation. This approach reinforced Loewen’s belief that God spoke to the whole church and not only to selected experts or ordained individuals.

Working as a translation consultant presented personal problems for Loewen. Despite the many years he had spent in non-Western countries and his extensive training in anthropology, he experienced extreme culture shock in West Africa. He eventually came to the realization that he himself was still operating as a “colonial missionary.”

Loewen’s last years in Africa were increasingly problematic for him. He was frustrated by what he considered to be increasing bureaucratization within the United Bible Societies. His superiors, in turn, found him difficult to deal with, especially when he expressed strong disagreement with the UBS’s stated translation goals for the 1980s in those African countries assigned to him. In 1984, UBS terminated Loewen’s appointment as translation consultant in West Africa.

In 1982 Jacob and Anne Loewen relocated from West Africa to Abbotsford, British Columbia, from where Loewen commuted to Africa until his forced retirement. He planned to write and, as needed, serve as a consultant to mission organizations or international service agencies. He also hoped to communicate to churches and friends what people in non-Western cultures had taught him. This, however, became increasingly difficult, especially when he shared with them his conviction that while “Jesus was the way” to salvation, he was not necessarily the only way. After a pastor charged Loewen with heresy, MB provincial leaders cautioned churches against inviting him as a speaker. He and Anne, meanwhile, joined with several other individuals to organize Central Valley Fellowship, a group open to exploring alternative theological ideas. Loewen continued to do some consultant work and research in the area of missions and Anabaptist history. On June 4, 1993, Loewen had a massive stroke that ended his travels and any possibilities of future consultant work. He then turned all of his attention to writing.

**Loewen the Scholar**

From the 1950s, Loewen was a prolific writer; whenever he encountered a situation or problem new to him, he discussed it in a publication. In his publications one sees Loewen the missionary, the anthropologist, the counselor, the storyteller, and the autobiographer. It is fitting that his article “Religion, Drives, and the Place Where It Itches” was selected as the lead article in *Culture and Human Values*, a collection of papers selected from his many publications in *Practical Anthropology*. A Chaco Indian, when asked to evaluate the missionaries’ programs in his region, replied, “They are scratching where it doesn’t itch.”

Undoubtedly, many of Loewen’s publications were motivated by his concern that missionaries and fraternal societies provide a message and assistance that actually scratched where their audience itched. But it also seems that for him publishing was a way to scratch his own itches.

While Loewen’s early writings were primarily those of a missionary or publicist submitting news reports to Mennonite newspapers and magazines, by the mid-1950s he was writing as an anthropologist and a linguist with firsthand missionary experience. His publications appeared in professional journals such as the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, *Bible Translator*, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, *Journal of Church and Society*, *América Indígena*, and especially *Practical Anthropology*, where his articles became its “backbone” for a time. Underlying many of his publications, and made explicit in “Missionaries and Anthropologists Cooperate in Research,” was the plea for missionaries to use anthropological tools to inform their ministry, since all “missionary and development programs are really programs of cultural change.”

A trip Loewen took to Paraguay in 1963 for the MCC provided the backdrop to one important set of publications. His analysis of the land-settlement issue appears in his comprehensive report to the MCC and in an abbreviated form in “From Nomadism to Sedentary Agriculture.” The article “The Way to First Class: Revolution or Conversion?” is both intriguing and problematic in that it addresses the issues of power and racism but leaves them unresolved. Loewen’s fascinating discussions of the indigenous concept of the “innermost,” which were published in several articles in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and *Practical Anthropology*, highlight the need for cross-cultural understanding.

Colombia and Panama also proved to be laboratories for Loewen to rework his concept of missions. The articles “Good News for the Waunana” and “Bible Stories: Message and Matrix,” as well as his 1969 publications on myths, present the argument that much can be learned by listening to natives’ stories and studying their festivals. Loewen challenges a commonly held Christian assumption that syncretism is to be avoided at all costs. It can be detrimental, as he demonstrates in “Shamanism, Illness,
and Power in Toba Church Life,” but it can also be beneficial, as he illustrates in “Confession, Catharsis, and Healing” and “Confession in the Indigenous Church.”

Loewen addressed the basis and character of missionary communication across cultures in a series of seminal articles. Several deal with the concept of reciprocity or the search for equal status between speaker and receptor. Another fundamental concept is sponsorship (the expatriate waiting to be sponsored or invited by members from the native tribe before preaching to them). Implied in reciprocity and sponsorship is the concept of self-exposure, or transparency, as discussed in “Self-Exposure: Bridge to Fellowship.” All of these articles call for a rethinking of the missionary’s role, and urge accepting the role of missionary as catalyst, as argued in “The Church: Indigenous and Ecumenical.”

Loewen challenges a commonly held Christian assumption that syncretism is to be avoided at all costs.

Noteworthy

Announcing
The United States Catholic Mission Association, Washington, D.C., will hold its 2008 annual conference October 24–26, in Baltimore, Maryland. Michael Amaladoss, S.J., director of the Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions, Chennai, India, and Dianne Bergant, C.S.A., professor of Old Testament studies, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, will address the conference theme “Mission: A Journey of Hope.” Baltimore was chosen because the first Roman Catholic archdiocese in the United States was formed there 200 years ago.

The Centre for the Study of Christianity in China moved as of April 1, 2008, from Oxford to become part of the Centre for Theology, Religion, and Culture at King’s College, London. Director Christopher Hancock says the research institute, founded in 2005 to partner with scholars inside and outside China who are active in the field of Sino-Christian studies, will supervise doctoral studies and sponsor other research in the field. For more information, visit www.cscic.com.

With support from the Japan International Christian University Foundation, Yale Divinity School Library scanned more than 350 documents and photographs related to the Nanking Massacre. These resources do not provide a comprehensive understanding of what occurred in Nanking during 1937 and 1938, but they link readers to the observations and photographs of Westerners who remained there after the Japanese invasion. Visit www.library.yale.edu/div/Nanking. The library also archives material from four agencies active in the Himalayas: United Mission to Nepal, Nepal Church History Project, International Nepal Fellowship Worldwide, and Central Asia Fellowship. These four archives were housed at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh but have been relocated to Yale. Other digital collections of Yale Divinity School Library are noted at www.library.yale.edu/div/digiproj.html. Martha Lund Smalley is special collections librarian and curator of the Day Missions Collection.

After retiring from the Harvard Yenching Library, the university library with the most extensive East Asian holdings outside Asia, John Yung-hsiang Lai has been publishing the archives of church history in Taiwan—in print and also digitally (www.laijohn.com). These archives are of significant value for research on the early history of Christianity in Taiwan. A former president of the Chinese American Librarians Association, Lai has included digitally archived documents in Chinese, English, Japanese, and Taiwanese.

Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, Trinity Theological College, Singapore, updated the online index of Tianfeng (www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/epub/tf/tfindex.htm), a Chinese theological journal. Tianfeng, or Heavenly Wind, is published by the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council. Its reports and analyses are of value in understanding the Chinese church, in particular in the crucial period from 1947 to 1963, said Poon.


The Panama experiment is covered extensively in Loewen’s publications and reports to the MB Board of Missions. The most comprehensive account, written some twenty-five years after the initiation of the Panama experiment, is Loewen’s retrospective piece “Developing Moralnets: Twenty-five Years of Culture Change Among the Choco.” It pulls together many of the ideas he had covered in previous articles, such as empowering the indigenous church, the role of the missionary as a catalyst and culture broker sponsored by the receptor community, and the need for reciprocity in missions. This article summarizes his rationale, goals, and personal evaluation of the twenty-five-year commitment he and Wirsche made “to help the Choco Indians of Coastal Colombia and Panama develop a set of values and a social milieu which would make them morally free, socially valuable persons who could function with self-respect both in their own society and in the national society in which they found themselves” (p. 231). In keeping with a belief of Loewen’s that a missionary should serve more as a “spare tire” than as a “driver,” the article focuses on the role of the native church, the Iglesia Evangélica Unida, as a “moralnet.” It should provide a religious and moral base for its members as it helps create a “strong cultural framework . . . for resocializing adults and for socializing the next generation according to the new values” (p. 242).

Loewen’s writings after 1970 turn increasingly to issues of translation, the role of native-tongue speakers in the translation...
process, and why one should take cross-cultural perspectives seriously in seeking to understand the Bible. Many of these ideas are briefly summarized in “My Pilgrimage in Missions” and are dealt with in more detail in The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective and Educating Tiger.

Loewen turned to autobiography to scratch the itch brought on by his stroke in 1993. First there was I’ve Had a Stroke. Then, pondering the question of what might give meaning to his post-stroke years, he found the answer in writing. God, he believed, had called him to write three “testimonies”: one to his grandchildren (Educating Tiger), one to fellow missionaries and Christians (The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective), and one to the MB Church (Only the Sword of the Spirit). In the meantime he published two other autobiographical pieces, “My Pilgrimage in Mission” and “My Personal Pilgrimage Toward Peace.”

Educating Tiger seeks to trace Loewen’s “intellectual and spiritual development” (p. 2). With its poststroke perspective, it traces his struggles to relearn and rethink several key concepts as they relate to Christian life and missions. He deals with topics such as conversion, the Spirit of God, sharing the faith, truth, prayer, mission service, culture and religion, his personal journey toward Anabaptism, and, finally, life’s unfinished business. In many cases he begins with the incomplete answers he received in his early education and then describes the insights he learned from others, including non-Western Christians. While encourag-
ing North American evangelicals, including the MB Church, to give up their ethnocentric views, he does not use the MB Church as a whipping boy. Perhaps most controversial is his conviction that religions other than Christianity also contain truth and can be redemptive (p. 153). He describes the broadening of his understanding of missions from one of “saving souls” to one that shows a “concern for the whole person” and his understanding of the missionary changing from that of a “dyed-in-the-wool nondenominational soul winner” to that of a catalyst (p. 179).

One underlying theme of The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective is the need to read the Bible with multicultural lenses. In his earlier publication, “Pastoral, Evangelistic, and Missionary Discourse” (1987), Loewen had discussed three different forms of speech or religious communication: pastoral (the speaker and receptor share similar worldviews and religious assumptions); evangelistic (the speaker and receptor share a similar worldview but do not agree on key religious premises); and missionary (the speaker and receptor share agreement on neither worldview nor religious premises). Viewed in this light, The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective functions in part as a missionary and evangelistic discourse as Loewen attempts to explore the worldviews and religious premises of biblical writers and thereby help unlock some of the Bible’s meanings for Western readers.

Loewen traces differing conceptions of the universe, the afterlife, and the spirit world as recorded over time in the Jewish and

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**Personalia**

**Appointed.** Brian Stanley, as chair of World Christianity and director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh, effective January 1, 2009. He replaces T. Jack Thompson, who is retiring. Stanley is currently director of the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity in the Cambridge Theological Federation and is a fellow of St. Edmund’s College, Cambridge. A noted mission historian and an International Bulletin of Missions and Ministry Research contributing editor, Stanley is editor of Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire (2003) and Christian Missions and the Enlightenment (2001). Most recently he coedited World Christianities, c. 1815–c. 1914 (2006), volume 8 in the Cambridge History of Christianity.

**Appointed.** Birger Nygaard, director of Areopagos Foundation, an Oslo-based mission society that concentrates its work in China, Denmark, and Norway. He succeeds Knud Jorgensen, director for ten years. Nygaard was head of the Areopagos office in Copenhagen, Denmark, and previously was general secretary of the International Association for Mission Studies. Jorgensen will continue to work for Areopagos (www.areopagos.org), with tasks relating to Asia and to planning the Edinburgh 2010 mission centenary conference.

Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C., named Jon P. Kirby, S.V.D., to the Finian Kerwin Chair of Mission Studies. An anthropologist and missionary who has served for more than thirty-five years in Ghana, Kirby is professor of cross-cultural studies and Christian ministry and a visiting lecturer at the Center of Global Christianity and Mission at Boston University School of Theology. He is founder and former director of the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, a study center operated by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Tamale, Ghana, and the Society of the Divine Word Ghana Province. Since 1986 Joseph Donders, M.Afr., has been director of Washington Theological Union’s Mission and Cross-Cultural Studies Program.

**Tite Tiénotu** has been elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the Christian International Scholarship Foundation (http://cisf.org), Lake Forest, Illinois, an organization that supports proven Christian leaders from Africa, Asia, Latin America, eastern Europe, and the Middle East to attain advanced theological education, primarily at the doctoral level. Tiénotu, a contributing editor, is senior vice president of education, dean, and professor of theology of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

**Died.** Clyde Cook, president (1982–2007) of Biola University, La Mirada, California, on April 11, 2008, at home following a heart attack. Cook was born on June 1, 1935, in Hong Kong, a third-generation missionary. From 1963 to 1967 Clyde and his wife, Anna Belle, served as missionaries in the Philippines with Overseas Crusades. Returning to Biola in 1967 as an assistant professor of missions, he helped develop Biola’s program in cross-cultural education. In 1978 he became president of O.C. Ministries (Overseas Crusades).

**Died.** John Orme, 70, missionary executive and educator, former executive director of the International Foreign Mission Association, February 24, 2008, following heart surgery. Orme was a missionary in Central America and a pastor in Michigan before being appointed IFMA executive director in 1990, a post from which he retired in December 2006. His legacy to the agency, now called CrossGlobal Link (www.crossgloballink.org), includes emphases on member care, contingency planning, child protection, and leadership development.
Christian scriptures. Incorporating ideas previously published in “Which God Do Missionaries Preach?"31 the section entitled “God and the Sacred” challenges the uniqueness and exclusivity of Christianity as it is often expressed within the evangelical community. The book’s chapters on spirit possession, exorcism, and illness probably present the greatest difficulties for Western Christians. Loewen argues that the “fundamental characteristic of North American Christianity is an acute schizophrenia.” The church theoretically assents to “the New Testament spirit world,” but “in everyday life North American Christians are firmly rooted in, and for all practical purposes are operating on, the premise of a material universe” (p. 147). Postmodern critical thought informs his work, especially his argument that absolute truth “does not lie in any one worldview, any [group of] worldview[s], or even all worldviews together” (p. 16). In keeping with his penchant for autobiography, the book ends with a section entitled “The Bible in My Life.”

Only the Sword of the Spirit, coauthored with Wesley Prieb, can be described as a letter to the MB Church. This church, torn throughout its history between its ethnic Mennonite roots and Pietistic, evangelical leanings, has struggled to find its identity. Loewen experienced the same struggle in his own life, embarking on a pilgrimage from ethnic Mennonitism to North American

The book is a letter written to a church the authors love but from which they feel themselves to be increasingly estranged.

soul-winning evangelicalism to a discovery of an Anabaptist vision (i.e., a life of discipleship that takes seriously Menno Simon’s “swordless lifestyle”) (p. 10). There is no vindictiveness in this book; rather, it is a letter written to a church the authors love but from which they feel themselves to be increasingly estranged.

Only the Sword is not easy to describe. On the surface, the first sections appear to be a history of the Anabaptist/Mennonite movement, tracing aspects of its development from the time of Menno Simons to the present. The book discusses the origins, growth, and subsequent decline of the Anabaptist vision in the various Anabaptist/Mennonite communities in Europe and North America. The historical chapters, especially those dealing with western and northern Europe, North America, and Russia, are at best a compilation of brief outlines based on material drawn from other published sources and supplemented by heavily value-laden summaries or conclusions. Whether the focus is on Mennonites in the Netherlands, Prussia, Russia, or North America, the analysis is the same. In each case, as Mennonites achieved first-class economic, social, and political status, they compromised many of their core Anabaptist values and practices.

In evaluating this book, one needs to keep in mind the kind of discourse employed by the authors. To a large extent it serves an evangelistic function (as described in Loewen’s 1987 article “Pastoral, Evangelistic, and Missionary Discourse”—to convert a constituency that has greatly compromised the Anabaptist vision, to challenge it to accept a life of discipleship that includes a nonresistant lifestyle. Loewen and Prieb do not seek to portray their stance as neutral; value-laden assertions occur throughout the book. All definitions of concepts, including their definition of the Anabaptist vision, contain both a descriptive and an evaluative component. Loewen’s and Prieb’s discussion of Menno Simons’s vision, from which they derive twelve “distinctives” that serve as a measuring stick for a life restricted to the sword of the Spirit, is no exception.34

The bulk of the discussion is devoted to Mennonites in Russia and North America. In Russia, Mennonites “underwent a breathtakingly sudden shift from a people in pilgrimage, seeking religious freedom and basic human rights, to a stratified class society with economic, political and religious power vested in a privileged minority that controlled both church and state” (p. 98). The authors assert that despite Pietism’s positive influences, with its emphasis on a personal emotional experience, it “proved to be a big temptation to Anabaptist Mennonites to switch from discipleship and community to make their religion primarily inward, personal and individualistic” (p. 120). In addition, the Pietist and Baptist influence brought with it a military orientation that many Mennonites were not able to ignore. The emergence of the Selbstschtz (armed self-defense) units within the Mennonite community in reaction to Russian postrevolutionary violence marked the end of four centuries of continued avoidance of military participation.

Most of the discussion of North American Mennonites concerns their views on citizenship and property, social class and wealth, the interpretation of Scripture, church structure, and the Mennonites’ vulnerability to outside influences (p. 144). Using British Columbian Mennonites as a case study, the authors analyze the loss of the focused canon (one that “placed primary emphasis on Christ’s teachings” (p. x)) and the inroads of dispensationalism, evangelicalism/fundamentalism, and modernity. In addition they discuss power abuses resulting from the rise of professional, paid clergy and members’ accommodations to the commonly accepted business practices of society.

After completing the three testimonies, and with his time running out, Loewen organized the Yarrow Research Committee in 1998. This committee is now in the process of publishing a series of books, based in part on material Loewen had collected over the past decade. The Yarrow project helped Loewen address his need to come to terms with a community and a church that had, on occasion, been reluctant to accord him first-class status. In his perceptive review of Richard King’s study of the school at Mopass, Loewen makes a comment that is perhaps more self-revealing than originally intended: “Regardless of how remote the missionary may feel toward the setting of his origin, it is there that he desires to get recognition.”35

During Loewen’s last years, his health deteriorated to the point where he could no longer write or even read. He died on January 27, 2006, survived by his wife, Anne, and their four children—Glady, Joyce, Sharon, and Bill—as well as six grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. Throughout his life as a missionary, anthropologist, and linguist, many found him to be an original and exciting thinker and practitioner. His appeal to missionaries to use anthropological tools and insights to inform their work, his commitment to empowering indigenous peoples long before it became established practice in many mission programs, and his efforts to include native tribal churches in the translation process are all part of his legacy. This legacy was recognized by the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists, which selected Jacob and Anne Loewen as one of three Anabaptist missiologist couples and individuals for special recognition at their meeting in Winnipeg in 2007. But Loewen was also a source of controversy
and an irritant to his superiors in the Bible societies and the Mennonite Brethren Church. His controversial and confrontational presence makes him something of an enigma, especially in the context of his pilgrimage toward peace. If one could ask him about that reputation today, he might well shrug his shoulders and reply, “God and I are still working on that!”

Notes


3. Loewen interview, August 2–3, 1996.


14. H. R. Wiens to Jacob A. Loewen, August 19, 1963, JLP, box 4, folder Paraguay; Loewen interviews, July 31 and August 1, 1996; Jacob A. Loewen, *Paraguay Report* (preliminary draft), JLP, box 5; Jacob A. Loewen, “The Way to First Class: Revolution or Conversion?” in *CHV*, pp. 91–107; Calvin Redekop, taped interview by author, Abbotsford, B.C., May 9, 1998; Frieda Kaethler to Jacob Loewen, August 17, 1972, JLP, box 11, folder K–Misc. To the credit of the Mennonites in Paraguay, it should be noted that of all land settlement projects undertaken by religious institutions in the Paraguayan Chaco prior to 1960, theirs was the most successful.


17. Loewen interview, December 26, 1996.


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The Literary Legacy of Stephen Neill

Dyron B. Daughrity

Stephen Charles Neill (1900–1984) was one of the twentieth century’s most influential writers on Christian missions. His long, distinguished career can be measured by his sixty-five books and his lectures, given on every continent. He served the church in many capacities, leaving his mark nearly everywhere he went. After a stellar student career at Trinity College, Cambridge, Neill became a missionary to South India. He spent two decades there (1924–44), rising to the bishopric of the Tinnevelly diocese in 1939. In the late 1940s he served as assistant bishop to the archbishop of Canterbury, which led to a position in Geneva with the World Council of Churches (WCC) as associate general secretary. In 1952, with the support of the International Missionary Council (IMC), he embarked on a book-publishing venture, World Christian Books. In the 1960s he served as chair of ecumenics and missions at the University of Hamburg. In the early 1970s he chaired the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi. He spent his final decade at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

Though Neill held important posts, it was his writings that gained him international acclaim. C. F. D. Moule labeled him “the indefatigable reader and writer,” noting in particular “the astonishing number and the consistently high quality of books Stephen Neill wrote.” Gerald Anderson remarked, “Neill spoke and wrote well. That combination is rare.” In an interview Hans-Ruedi Weber summed up what many attested: “Neill was a very, very gifted man.” A decade after Neill’s death Timothy Yates wrote, “Stephen Neill must be regarded as one of the intellectual giants of his generation.”

This article explores Neill’s amazing literary legacy in mission-related topics. We organize his writings here into three categories: studies on India, World Christian Books, and historical studies.

Studies on India

Stephen Neill not only loved India but understood it deeply. Although his family had a long history with the subcontinent through missions, business, and the civil service, it was a surprise when Neill, a standout scholar, abandoned a coveted fellowship at Trinity in 1924 in order to set sail for a missionary post in rural South India. There he came under the supervision of Amy Carmichael (1867–1951), a notable mission personality with as tenacious a mind as Neill’s. It was thus not surprising that the relationship did not long endure. Neill’s gifts, however, were quickly snatched up by others, and he lived in India for twenty years, becoming fluent in Tamil and Malayalam and learning to read Urdu and Sanskrit. After leaving Tinnevely in 1944, Neill visited India about every other year, as he and his sister Isabel kept a house in Coonoor, a hill station in modern-day Tamil Nadu.

Neill’s first Indian book, Out of Bondage (1930), was prefaced with the words “The life of India is in the villages” (p. 5). This little-known work gives an overview of Christian life in the South Indian village. At the time of writing, Neill had been in India for about three years and had just finished a short tenure on the staff at Alwae Union Christian College in North Travancore, in modern-day Kerala. By the time the book was published, Neill had moved to Palamcottah in Tinnevelly, modern-day Tamil Nadu. The book, which reveals an insatiable mind and a focused effort to fully understand his environment, could be considered something of a “manner and customs” text. It provides remarkably detailed descriptions of the geography, flora, architecture, and people, although a sophisticated understanding of caste is lacking, exhibited in statements such as, “But now caste has had its day, and its reign is visibly coming to an end” (p. 20). The text conveys an optimistic view of what the West will eventually do for India. An unmistakable feature of this work is Neill’s urgent concern for those “who are living in this world without Christ” (p. 135).

In 1934 Neill wrote three books while on furlough at Oxford. The first, Annals of an Indian Parish, while extremely useful for the biographer, is little more than a published diary. The second, a booklet entitled The Remaking of Men in India, is a specialized study of mission conversions and the problems involved both for the converts and for missionaries. Neill argues that converts must be pulled out of their conditions of “extreme squalor” and “must learn to come clean to church . . . [as] cleanliness comes next to godliness” (p. 10). The third, Builders of the Indian Church, is more substantial. It was widely read and came to be something of a standard text in the Christian colleges of India. Comprehensive yet concise, this historical text surveys Christianity in India by looking at prominent figures. Neill begins with the Thomas Christians of the Malabar coast and proceeds to discuss the missionaries Xavier, Robert de Nobili, C. F. Schwartz, William Carey, and Alexander Duff. There is a chapter on the Christian women of India, headlined by Pandita Ramabai of Pune. It is a short yet sophisticated work, as by this time Neill was something of a veteran, having been in India for a decade. His command of the history of missions in India is evident. Equally clear is his grasp of the current ecumenical climate in India. Neill wrote with excitement about the possibility of a united Christian presence in South India, and he eventually became a major player in the union discussions. These hopes were realized in 1947 with the formation of the Church of South India.

While Neill published four books during his bishopric (1939–45), they are only peripherally concerned with missions and deal more directly with theological themes. His next major contribution to missions, The Cross over Asia (1948), was the re-

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Dyron B. Daughrity is Assistant Professor of Religion at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California. He is the author of Bishop Stephen Neill: From Edinburgh to South India (Peter Lang, 2008).
sult of a four-month tour of the major non-Roman churches of eastern Asia. By this time, Neill had left India and was serving as associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches. The tour, sponsored jointly by the WCC and the IMC, aimed to ameliorate the problem of the vast gulf that had developed during the Second World War between the Western churches and the younger churches. Neill was the perfect choice. His trip proved to be a success in that a major WCC representative was able to establish strong connections with Asian Christian leaders and to report the state of the younger churches to the churches of the West. Neill visited thirteen regions in all: the Philippines, China, Formosa (Taiwan), Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Siam (Thailand), Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), India, and Pakistan. This book is one of Neill’s best. The tour of these younger churches established Neill as the point man for a consciously emerging world Christian movement.

While the 1948 trip provided a cache of material for Neill to draw upon for publishing many articles, his first love, India, remained his subject for book-length studies. In 1954 he published Under Three Flags, a passionate study of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) that explores their histories, religions, and languages, history, languages, and philosophical traditions is extensive, but translations were made immediately. Neill was at his best in these volumes; he was able to establish strong connections with Asian Christian leaders and to report the state of the younger churches to the churches of the West. Neill visited thirteen regions in all: the Philippines, China, Formosa (Taiwan), Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Siam (Thailand), Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), India, and Pakistan. This book is one of Neill’s best. The tour of these younger churches established Neill as the point man for a consciously emerging world Christian movement.

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World Christian Books

Stephen Neill lived and worked in Geneva from 1947 to 1962. He began his time there in a joint position working for the archbishop of Canterbury and for the WCC. By 1952, however, Neill was no longer assistant archbishop, nor was he on the WCC executive staff. Rather, he was serving as general editor and director of World Christian Books (WCB). The chief goal of WCB was to publish “good simple literature” that would be made widely available “in the languages of the Younger Churches.” The output of World Christian Books was considerable. Besides publishing seventy “simple” books in thirty-five languages, WCB published more scholarly efforts, including Concise Dictionary of the Bible (1966) and Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission (1970).

WCB was conceived by Stephen Neill shortly after 1950, when he took a long tour of Africa, such as he had done in Asia in 1948. Both tours were projects of the IMC. Neill visited many African theological schools, taking extensive notes and returning with a sense of the pressing need for getting basic theological books into the hands of clergy and teachers. This trip resulted in Neill’s—with strong support from Charles Raven, an influential professor of divinity at Cambridge—proposing a massive enterprise for producing basic theological books that could benefit leaders of the younger churches.
Chrysostom and His Message (no. 44), and Paul to the Colossians (no. 50). The books were not sophisticated, prompting Kenneth Cragg and Owen Chadwick to write that the books “betrayed quality and originality and standards.” Nevertheless, they were very useful to the meager libraries so often found in the regions of the younger church. Most important, these books were designed to be relatively easy to translate. From Tamil to Swedish, Arabic to French, Malayagasy to Chinese, the books were produced and translated at breakneck speed. Neill was motivated by his strong belief that the younger churches needed him to work hard and fast. Neill’s global connections uniquely equipped him to acquire an impressive ensemble for authorship: George Appleton, Bishop V. S. Azariah, H. B. Dehqani-Tafti, Giovanni Miege, C. F. D. Moule, D. T. Niles, Gerhard von Rad, and many more.

One volume published by WCB deserves mention here: Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission (1970), edited by Neill, Gerald Anderson, and John Goodwin. This remarkable work was the brainchild of Neill, who quickly realized he would need significant help to carry it through. He first recruited Anderson, who had recently edited a well-known text, The Theology of Christian Mission. Next, Neill and Anderson approached John Goodwin, who eventually succeeded Neill as general editor of World Christian Books. It was a colossal undertaking that required assembling a cast of 200 experts from all continents, including David Barrett, Kenneth Cragg, Norman Goodall, Carl Hellencreutz, Chung Choon Kim, Kenneth Scott Latourette, Franklin Littell, Donald McGavran, Lesslie Newbigin, S. J. Samartha, Andrew Walls, and Max Warren. No such work had been attempted since Edwin M. Bliss’s Encyclopaedia of Missions in 1891. At 700 pages and totaling around 2,000 entries, the work represents a major contribution to missions scholarship. Neill and his colleagues drew up three lists: geographic regions, great missions, and general subjects of interest “ranging from acculturation to witchcraft” (as stated in the preface). Neill’s herculean contribution was to write about 20 percent of the articles. The Concise Dictionary is still extremely handy; it deserves to be updated.

Historical Studies

Besides Neill’s work on mission in India and with the WCB, he was a prolific church historian. No mere academician, he manifested an unflagging desire to equip the church and its leaders through his writings. His historical studies were always warm, friendly, and almost pastoral. Rather than writing to an audience, he wrote for his readers, conveying the sense that he genuinely wanted to help his readers understand the material.

In the 1950s and 1960s Neill produced a number of books that were serious scholarly contributions. Cragg and Chadwick wrote of this period in Neill’s life that the quality of his books changed. Now he made “that series of contributions to knowledge which . . . brought him election to the British Academy.” Neill began this series of useful books with a sweeping 334-page history of the church, The Christian Society (1952). His thesis was that the organic nature of the church prevented it from stagnating or becoming monolithic. The global awareness this history reveals is striking. It is not Eurocentric, and in this respect Neill was ahead of his time. He gave serious attention to Byzantium, to Christian interaction with other religions (particularly Islam), and to the age of expansion by focusing less on the heroic missionaries and more on the recent evolution of the younger churches.

Two years later Neill worked with Ruth Rouse to produce A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517–1948 (1954). The usefulness of this volume need not be emphasized here, other than to note that this work, possibly more than any other of Neill’s books, continues to serve the missiological and ecumenical communities as a reference. It is an essential text, “a fundamental contribution to historical studies.”

In 1957 Neill published his chief missiological treatise, The Unfinished Task, which we could call his theology of mission. Although dated and no longer in demand, it is a sophisticated analysis of the mission situation in the midst of colonial decline. Neill’s global purview is obvious. In this text he clearly emphasizes the younger churches, what he terms “the dynamic minority.” As time has shown, however, the days of the younger churches’ being the minority were numbered. Neill was one of the first to see clearly the trend of Christianity “moving south.” The Unfinished Task sold well and put Neill on the missions lecture circuit, where he remained the rest of his life. It also prompted his next book, Creative Tension (1959), based on his Duff Lectureship of 1958. In this follow-up, Neill focused his sights on missionary strategy by covering four themes: the approach to non-Christian religions, rising nationalism, the partnership of the older and younger churches, and “approach to mission.”

During this period Neill produced one of his best-selling books, Anglicanism (1958), a classic introductory text that warmly introduces the Anglican way. Many Anglicans still cut their teeth on it, which has led to many printings and at least four editions. Neill had a passionate devotion to his denomination. Twenty years after Neill’s death, Gerald Anderson, who knew him well, once mentioned Neill’s “Anglocentrist” tendencies. Anglicanism is a great book, written by one of the most Anglican churchmen of the twentieth century.

Neill’s next major work, A History of Christian Missions (1964), was one of those rare books that everyone in a particular field reads. According to Cragg and Chadwick, this book “could have been written by no one else of his generation.” Neill’s book was volume 6 in the prestigious Pelican History of the Church series, which put him in the company of Henry Chadwick, Owen Chadwick, Alec Vidler, R. W. Southern, and Gerald Cragg. This book, more than any other, established Neill as an important scholar. Almost instantly he became established as one of the chief historians of the expansion of Christianity. This masterpiece continues to be used in university and seminary courses. It is actually the first in a Neill trilogy on the academic study of missions history. Neill’s follow-up to the Pelican volume was a considerable work in itself entitled Colonialism and Christian Missions (1966). Both of these works are striking in their readability, balanced assessment, and genuinely global approach. Neill was as acquainted with Japanese and Russian colonial rule as he was with British. These works make clear his voracious appetite for reading, in many languages. His descriptions of significant historical figures gives one the sense that Neill had told some
of these stories a hundred times and now had found the perfect venue. His penchant for highlighting obscure events in history enlivened what could have been mundane.

The third book in this missions trilogy was a slender volume produced in 1970 entitled Call to Mission. It was vintage Neill. He took the complicated, scholarly material from the two former books and re-presented it for a larger audience. Neill knew that many laypeople had a deep interest in missions. More than most leaders, Neill knew that Christians without higher education needed to know what was going on in missions studies. Such a perspective governs this fascinating, 113-page practical guide. Simple chapter titles say it all: “Why Missions?” “What the Missionaries Did Wrong,” “What the Missionaries Did Right,” and “Where Do We Go from Here?” This was Neill at his very best—communicating an enormously complicated subject in a way the average person could comprehend. Precisely this skill prompted Gerald Anderson to describe Neill’s literary genius as “Encyclopedia Britannica in Time Magazine form.”16

Neill bequeathed other historical texts to the world of missions, including Twentieth-Century Christianity (1961). This edited volume drew together significant names from across the ecumenical spectrum, including Roger Aubert, Robert Handys, Vasil Istavridis, D. T. Niles, and Max Warren. In 1963 Neill and Hans Ruedi-Weber coedited The Layman in Christian History, a compelling study of the laity. This project, which was sponsored by the WCC’s Department on the Laity, claimed to be “the first book ever to present a history of the place of laymen in the life of the church from the earliest times until today.”17 In 1968 Neill gave the Bampton Lectures at Oxford, which were published as The Church and Christian Union. This study on the nature of the church in an ecumenical context is important for the missions scholar, for it explicitly addresses missions themes throughout. Neill was always keen to point out that, historically, ecumenism is firmly rooted in the modern missionary movement.

Finally, we must briefly mention Neill’s historical writings on other faiths, two of which deal with interreligious dialogue from a Christian perspective. One was originally Neill’s Moorhouse Lectures, delivered at Melbourne in 1960 and published the following year as Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions.18 Clearly, his missionary years had equipped him for understanding the religions of India, including Islam. But in these lectures he covered other world religions as well, for which he had undertaken new, extensive study. He was no doubt helped by his passion for taking on new subjects, mixed with chronic insomnia and his lifelong state of bachelorhood. Neill’s timing was prescient; he had a remarkable ability to anticipate the next hot topic. He became one of the early proponents of a Christian model for interreligious dialogue.

Years later, Neill’s second major work on interreligious dialogue appeared: Salvation Tomorrow (1976), which had a more missiological focus. It was based on Neill’s Chavasse Lectures at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. To understand this book best, the theme of the Fifth Assembly of the WCC, at Nairobi in 1975, should be kept in mind: “Confessing Christ Today.” Neill’s ability to speak about interreligious dialogue, missions, and ecumenism in a unified manner is clearest here. He made his thesis explicit in the subtitle: The Originality of Jesus Christ and the World’s Religions. His Christology remained firm—some would say uncompromising—until the end of his life. This belief was explicitly reinforced in 1984, the year of his death, when The Supremacy of Jesus was published. Neill’s commitment to Jesus Christ was evident in his final declaration that Jesus was, in his view, “The Central Point of History” (introduction).

Neill’s indefatigable work ethic made his missiological literary legacy rich indeed. Toward the end of his life his pace only increased. The year 1984 was his most productive in terms of published books. By 1984, however, Neill was aware that his course was run, and he was eager to bequeath his knowledge to the next generation. Gerald Anderson was one who utilized the bishop’s gifts whenever he was in the United States, as Neill was a frequent guest of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, in New Haven, Connecticut. Thanks to Anderson, we have a series of videotaped lectures by Neill, given at OMSC only weeks before his death.19

Notes
6. The IMC joined the WCC in 1961.
13. Ibid., p. 609.
17. The quoted words are from the volume’s dust jacket.
18. This book was revised and published again in 1984, just weeks before Neill’s death, under the title Crises of Belief.
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Works About Stephen Neill


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Anthony Norris Groves (1795–1853), a freelance missionary in Baghdad and India, is a neglected figure in mission historiography. Originally an Anglican, he was closely associated with the early Christian (or Plymouth) Brethren, notably through his brother-in-law, George Müller.

This book by Robert Dann, which is based on a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Liverpool, aims to rescue Groves from his neglect by missiologists. In many respects it is a work of impressive scholarship, founded on wide reading in both primary and secondary sources. Dann rightly identifies Groves as one of the principal forerunners of the “faith mission” tradition, as Groves not only repudiated the conventional apparatus of mission support but also was skeptical of the linkage of missions with Western civilization.

Dann wears his admiration for Groves on his sleeve, and this book has the resulting strengths and weaknesses of a panegyric. No interpretation of Müller or Hudson Taylor can afford to ignore Groves, but Müller’s decision to run his orphanage on “faith” principles owed more to the example of A. H. Francke, as recorded in H. E. F. Guericke’s biography, than to Groves. Some of Dann’s claims for the influence of Groves lack substance. The undoubted parallelism between Groves’s principles and those of Roland Allen, for example, does not prove indebtedness, for there is no evidence that Allen had read Groves’s Memoir or any of his writings.

A more important issue raised by this book, however, has less to do with history than with the interpretation of the New Testament. Dann commends Groves as possessing greater firsthand insight into the problems of cross-cultural mission than Henry Venn or Rufus Anderson, yet he is ambivalent about missiologies constructed on the premise of cultural differentiation. This ambivalence stems beyond traditions of national narratives to a more cross-cultural and comparative perspective.

The editor, Jonathan Bonk, allowed the contributors considerable scope to develop their topics, and the results are generally of very high quality. Nonetheless, it is not always easy to use this volume, and it does require some hunting and imagination to track down some subtopics. The index is very helpful, but the See also notations are not used consistently. For example, the entry on war does not cross-reference China or opium, although the discussion of missionaries and the Opium Wars would have been a good supplement to the war entry, which focuses mainly on U.S. history, using the Civil War and World War I.

In addition, readers will inevitably find gaps or sections that do not deliver what one might expect. The entry on art, for instance, covers only Asian Christian art. Most disappointing to me was the entry on North America, which is really just a survey of the church and faith in the face of its now-dominant nominalism. There is a passing reference to the denominations that sent missionaries abroad but nothing is included about domestic missions to the Chinese, Jews, and others. Missions to the Native American peoples are discussed but only in the separate entry on that topic.

It is worth noting that the concept of mission is not treated parochially as a Western or Christian phenomenon. There are interesting essays on “reverse missions,” from the South to the North, as well as discussion of mission activity in Buddhism and Islam. While some entries take a pro-mission stance or address the concerns of practitioners, as in the very lengthy entry on models of contextualization (which argues the case for missiological anthropology and contextualization as necessary for “effective Christian missions” [p. 95]), the vast majority adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity.

With its strong commitment to cross-cultural, comparative study and to ecumenism, this volume deserves a wide readership among students of religious history, comparative religion, and globalization. It will prove a worthy addition to any reference library.

—Margo S. Gewurtz

Margo S. Gewurtz is Professor of Humanities at York University, Toronto. A Canadian, her scholarship focuses on Sino-Western cultural contacts; she has published numerous essays on Canadian missionaries and their Chinese coworkers.
Religion in New Spain.


In this volume, sixteen professors of Latin American history and related fields offer recent revisionist scholarship on religious culture in diverse regions and indigenous groups in Mexico throughout the colonial period. The editors, Susan Schroeder and Stafford Poole, provide excellent introductions and a creative organization of the sixteen essays. Schroeder is professor of colonial Latin American history at Tulane University in New Orleans, and Poole is a Roman Catholic priest and research historian. The scholars mine a wealth of resources and listen to indigenous voices to demonstrate that “native populations in New Spain had great agency in the shaping of colonial religion” (p. 2). They nullify the stereotype that the Spanish conquest annihilated indigenous culture and religions. To the contrary, “religious convergence and continuity were the rule for colonial natives who selectively used the Catholic church and Spanish legal devices to maintain what was theirs” (p. 2).

Part 1, “Encounters, Accommodation, and Outright Idolatry,” analyzes the ambivalence of Mixtecas with two hearts and one God who converted nominally without abandoning traditional beliefs. It also examines the defiance of Zapotecos who hanged those who reported their native communal rituals. Part 2 shows native sexuality, body language, and moderation resulting in spontaneous cultural syncretism. Part 3 recounts miracle healings of children and studies paintings of the Virgin of Guadalupe, demonstrating the role of popular native beliefs in launching the cult. Gender is treated in part 4 in the writings of native visionary nuns, and part 5 deals with the Inquisition and racism, idolatry, witchcraft, blasphemy, and toleration of Jewish converts. Part 6 explores the musical conquest and the indigenous use of music to construct identity and the use of parody and parallel liturgy in rebellion and martyrdom. In part 7, local native elites reverse roles and appropriate a procession for sociopolitical purposes.

The diverse mosaic presented in this work gives a provocative picture of cultural convergence in Mexican Catholicism.

—Sherron George

Sherron George, Liaison and Theological Education Consultant for South America for Presbyterian World Mission of the PC(USA), resides in Brazil.

from his endorsement of Groves’s “primitivism,” that is, his belief that the New Testament contains a single blueprint for church and mission practice. Living by faith, Groves believed, was “the method intended by the Master when he originally entrusted the Great Commission to his disciples” (p. 170). If the New Testament enjoined one missionary method and one ecclesiology, it followed that Groves “did not expect Indian churches to be very different from English churches” (p. 252). Dann cites with evident approval the Indian Brethren leader Bakht Singh, who claimed that what was needed in the Indian churches was “not Western nor Eastern culture but Biblical culture” (p. 252). Dann’s case is more subversive of missiological orthodoxy than he admits, but it deserves careful evaluation.

—Brian Stanley

Brian Stanley, a contributing editor, is Director of the Henry Martyn Centre and a Fellow of St. Edmund’s College, Cambridge.


John Corrie, a tutor in mission studies at Trinity College in Bristol, England, has assembled a notable international roster of Protestant evangelical authors to write the more than 160 articles in this very welcome handbook of missiology. More than the usual reference dictionary, it contains substantial essay articles on major issues and themes in mission, with a focus on theological aspects, arranged alphabetically from Accommodation to Zion. Each article includes an up-to-date bibliography.

In his introduction Corrie describes the integration of theology and mission that shapes the outlook of this work: “All theology is intrinsically missiological since it concerns the God of mission and the mission of God. This means that all theological categories are inherently missiological and all missionary categories are profoundly theological.” The aim is to “think missiologically about theology” and at the same time to “think theologically about mission” (p. xv).

The dictionary features articles on central Christian doctrines and helpful essays on relating the Christian message to people of other religions; on theologies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and on issues that reflect the wholeness of God’s mission to redeem humanity and all of creation, including human rights, HIV/AIDS, and gender.

Contributors from the Majority World have written most of the articles. With an emphasis on contextualization, it is especially instructive to have their perspectives on topics such as ancestors, culture, development, ethnicity, marketplace theology, power, syncretism, terrorism, and witness, along with other rubrics.

This reference work is a rich addition to the resources that are needed for more informed and effective participation in God’s mission.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Christian Responses to Asian Challenges: A Glocalization View on Christian Higher Education in East Asia.


This volume, edited by two scholars of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), commemorates the fifty-fifth anniversary of Chung Chi College, one of the four constituent colleges of CUHK and the only one with a religious (Protestant) background. The editors collected twenty-one articles written by Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scholars and by two Westerners (Robert D. Woodberry and Mark R. Mullins). Most articles focus on Christian higher education in a single nation: China, Japan, or Korea. Two articles, however, compare

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Dr. Judith E. Lingenfelter, former director of the Ph.D. program in intercultural education in the School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University, has spent a lifetime learning and teaching cross-culturally. Her recent writing includes Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnation- al Model for Learning and Teaching (2003), which she co-authored with her husband.

Dr. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter is professor, provost, and senior vice president at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has served as consultant to SIL over the last two decades in Papua New Guinea, Borneo, Philippines, Africa, and Latin America. He also contributes regularly to mission conferences and training seminars. His most recent publication, coauthored with Dr. Paul R. Gupta, is Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church Planting Movement (2006).

Dr. Diane B. Stinton

Dr. Diane B. Stinton is professor of theology and coordinator of the Master of Theology in African Christianity program at Daystar University, Nairobi, Kenya. Previously she taught in the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies and was assistant chaplain at Daystar. A Swahili speaker, she was a part-time lecturer in African Christian theology at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. A Canadian who was born in Angola, Dr. Stinton is a member of the International Association for Mission Studies, the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, and the Ecumenical Symposium of East African Theologians. She is author of Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology (2004) and editor of Aspects of Contemporary African Theology (forthcoming).

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the situation in China with either that in Japan or that in Korea, and two articles are not geographically specific: Woodberry’s chapter “The Social Impact of Missionary Higher Education” (pp. 99–120) and Kim Hyun Sook’s chapter “Changing Paradigms in Theological Education: Dreams and Visions of Higher Education” (pp. 421–40).

The editors of this volume introduce the new term “glocalization” to emphasize “the interactive relationship between globalization and localization, the interplay and the mutual influences between them. Hence, glocalization not only emphasizes the ‘global,’ but also the ‘local’” (p. 3).

This volume on Christian higher education in China, Japan, and Korea is focused on topics such as nationalism and cosmpolitanism, Christian identity and visions, and indigenization processes. The concluding chapter states that “all the Christian institutions in the three countries have contributed to the development of modern civil societies in carrying out their missions. . . . The enterprise of Christian higher education is . . . a global undertaking which includes the enterprises of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean counterparts as well” (p. 548).

Over 20 percent of the world population lives in China, Japan, and Korea (2007 est.). It is therefore very important to know what is happening in these nations, and it is time to prioritize studies done by scholars who are in East Asia. This Chung Chi College volume gives exceptional insight into what is really happening in these countries—a struggle for Christian identity (adaptation and creativity) amid religious and ideological pluralism and “internal secularization.” It is exciting to observe the increasing freedom of Chinese scholars to do vital research in the history of religions, including the history of Christianity.

—Jan A. B. Jongeneel

Jan A. B. Jongeneel, a contributing editor, is Professor Emeritus of Missiology at Utrecht University. He is also editor of the series MISSION (Boekencentrum, Netherlands) and the series Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity (Peter Lang, Germany).


Here is an extraordinary account of the day-to-day interactions between priests and Indians in a colonial society that favored the Spanish conquerors and worked against the conquered Indians in Upper Peru. Despite the Spanish priest’s religious significance and important role in the community, he devised many notorious and scandalous ways to extract material gain from the Indian communities (through excessive fees for baptisms, weddings, funerals, saints-day celebrations, and commercial activities). Other sources of benefit for the priest included domestic services, cooks, muleteers, sacristans, bell ringers, and cantors for mass. Nicholas Robins argues that the priests’ use and abuse of these charges and demands for services created unbearable tensions and conflicts that eventually led to the great Indian Rebellion of 1780–82, with its tragic human loss. Robin uses extensive primary documentation in his significant research.

Within the larger context of conflicts between the royal authorities and the church, the Spanish Bourbon Crown began to curtail some of the church’s power and
privileges; one result was the expulsion of the Jesuits from the colonies in 1767. Robin shows that this empowering of the royal authorities affected the economic interests of the parish priests, “forcing” them to devise ways to maintain and increase their income by further exploiting the Indian communities.

The significance of Robin’s work is that it can also provide lessons to be learned in present-day Latin America, particularly in those countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and others) where in some way the exploitative system against the Indian communities persists. Tragic human loss may be avoided by providing justice and retribution where state and society have inherited unjust and exploitative relations and structures.

—Tito Paredes

Tito Paredes is the Director of CEMAA (Evangelical Center of Andean-Amazonian Mission) in Lima, Peru, and Professor of Anthropology and Mission in the PRODOLA program of the Evangelical University of the Americas, San José, Costa Rica.

In Theology in the Context of World Christianity, Timothy Tennent addresses two contemporary realities that have been coming into increasingly clear focus in recent times. First, the center of gravity for Christianity has shifted into the South of the Majority World; second, non-Christian world religions are part of the everyday context for most Christians. These realities imply that Majority World Christian theology needs to “be heard as part of the normal course of theological study in the West” (p. 15) and that theological issues arising from the encounter with non-Christian religions need to be part of Christian theological reflection. “Theology is our attempt to understand the biblical revelation within the framework of our particular historical and cultural setting” (p. 251). The genius of Christianity is that it is both culturally and theologically translatable, meaning that “kerygmatic essentials of the Christian faith [can] be discovered and restated within an infinite number of new global contexts” (p. 16).

Tennent does not abandon systematic theology, despite its acknowledged limitations. The book has a chapter for each of the eight classical doctrines of systematic theology (God, revelation, humanity, Christ, salvation, Holy Spirit, church, and last things) to demonstrate how to do theology in the way he recommends. For example, the chapter on the doctrine of God is entitled “Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?” The doctrine of humanity is framed by guilt and shame. Christology focuses on Christ as healer and ancestor in Africa. The ecclesiology chapter addresses the much-discussed issue of Muslim believers and their relationship with mosque and church. The excellent concluding chapter is entitled “The Emerging Contours of Global Theology.”

Readers will no doubt challenge different aspects of this wide-ranging work, but it provides an excellent guide for restoring the natural connection between missiology and theology in today’s world.

—Gorden R. Doss

Gorden R. Doss is Associate Professor of World Mission at Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. North American by birth, he grew up in Malawi (1954–70) and later served there as a missionary, working in theological education (1976–82 and 1987–97).

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Christian Education Worldwide:
Mission Possible—the Role of Mission Schools in the Twenty-first Century.


For too long the disciplines of missiology and Christian education have been separated by a wall of benign neglect. While missiologists concentrated on distant cultures, Christian educators ignored the global church. Christian Education Worldwide helps to break down this wall of neglect. The aim of the book is to investigate how Christian education functions in worldwide mission.

Christian education is broadly defined as educational ministries in the local church, in parochial schools, and in church-related universities, Bible colleges, and seminaries. Stone also quotes a delightful definition by Cassandra Jones: “Christian education is a lifelong discipleship process that is experienced in family life, worship, [and] Bible study” (p. 1). While the primary emphasis of the book is on the role of formal schooling in missions, it would have been helpful if this broader understanding of Christian education were more prominent in the rest of the book.

A short history of missions makes the important point that throughout the centuries, Christian education has gone hand in hand with mission efforts. Stone looks at Christian education using theologies described by Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder: Type A, saving souls and extending the church; Type B, discovery of truth through interfaith dialogue; and Type C, liberation and transformation (p. 33).

Subsequent chapters give a short overview of the history of missions and a list of theological schools in Brazil, Chile, Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, Palestine, India, Indonesia, Korea, and Japan. The author also provides a brief snapshot of Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, and evangelical/Pentecostal schools. The book clearly demonstrates the historic interdependence between Christian education and missions.

—James E. Plueddemann

Blood and Fire, Tsar and Commissar: The Salvation Army in Russia, 1907–1923.


Tom Aitken, a New Zealander, is a freelance writer and lecturer in history, literature, and the arts. This book is the twenty-seventh in the Paternoster series.
“Christian History and Thought” and is the second volume in this series on the international Salvation Army. Aitken reviews Salvation Army history beginning with its 1865 birth as an East London home mission. Before its reconnoitering visits to Russia in 1907, the Army had spread its Christian empire to areas of British imperial influence in North America, Central and South America, India, Japan, Africa, Australasia, and western and northern Europe. The Army was part of a mass of missionary activity established to “civilize” the heathen, to turn the population toward a robust evangelical Protestant faith. In many cases the Salvation Army met political and religious resistance to its novel militancy. Aitken covers the Army’s revivalist tactics and the resistance to it in Russia (apart from a company of fellow evangelicals like Lord Radstock and V.A. Pashkov) from the Russian Orthodox Church and culture. A master of Russian literature and religion, Aitken in his analyses superbly captures the struggle of the Army to establish its corps (churches), make converts, wrestle with the state and church, and provide social services. What the Army began in 1907 as a campaign against dreaded anarchy, rampant drunkenness, and other social evils ended with the Bolshevik war on religion in 1917–23. Aitken does not cover the return of the Salvation Army to Russia following the collapse of the Soviet regime, but he does pay tribute to Salvationists who remained true to their calling.

Students of Christianity will find this to be an impressive work in a neglected field of mission history.

—Norman H. Murdoch

True Confucians, Bold Christians: Korean Missionary Experience; A Model for the Third Millennium.


Antton Egiguren Iraola, a Spanish-born Franciscan, is associate professor at the Catholic University of Leuven. In this rich study he issues a compelling call for a return to the kenotic model of Jesus. “One of the strongest personal convictions that grew from my years in Asia is that mission is the result of falling in love with the historical Jesus. It is this love that is capable of activating a missionary praxis that proceeds from compassion” (p. 79).

Drawing on twenty years of missionary experience in Thailand and Korea and his fascination with Catholic mission in China, the author explores strategies associated with these three fields. They include conquest (characteristic of the early mission to the Kingdom of Siam), the accommodation model of Matteo Ricci in sixteenth-century China, and the kenotic model as lived out with great courage by Korean Confucian scholars who embraced the heart of the Christian message while fully engaging “in a transforming intercommunication with their own culture and people” (p. 35).

Ricci’s seminal writings played a critical role in Korea in introducing the faith to a scholarly Confucian community in the eighteenth century. Virtually bereft of officially sanctioned clerical guidance, the members of this community thought their way through to a thoroughly contextualized understanding of Christian essentials and their implications for social transformation, which boldly challenged the status quo. Fresh winds of Confucian reformist scholarship were then blowing, provoking stiff resistance from an entrenched conservative hierarchy with much at stake politically. The Christian Gospel was seen as subversive, but the Christian Confucian scholars were committed to living out the imperatives of the Gospel whatever the cost. The story of their devotion to Christ and the courage with which they accepted the consequences of radical obedience to what they believed the Gospel required is deeply moving. In the end the movement was cruelly crushed, resulting in the martyrdom of virtually all the leading figures and hundreds of ordinary believers. The Protestant mission arriving at the end of the nineteenth century owed much to the seeds sown in blood by these “true Confucians and bold Christians.”

Given its price, this eminently readable and extensively documented resource may have less of a readership than it surely merits.

—Paul A. Rader


The dynamic growth of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa during the past half century constitutes one of the most interesting developments in the history of religions. This study, which traces the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania, opens a window on a neglected field in this arena, namely, the way minority Christian denominations have developed into dominant churches in some societies.

Christian Remnant—African Folk Church highlights two poles in the thought and development of Adventism in Tanzania. The “remnant” motif, stemming from the Millerite movement, indicates a sectlike people with the felt responsibility of proclaiming an end-time message worldwide. “Folk church” designates a minority that has become a religious majority, but in a certain tension with its social environment.

The initiative for this mission, which arose in the Adventist Church in Germany under the leadership of L. R. Conradi, was informed by the German Protestant concept of reaching a Volk in its entirety. This concept, together with the comity principle, fostered the development of folk churches. There were successes and setbacks, tensions with colonial
African Immigrant Religions in America.


During the period of slavery (1619–1865), the African population in the United States grew from a few hundred to roughly 4.5 million. This “African-American” population has become a permanent feature of American society, both contributing to and incorporating by its culture in profound ways. Since the late 1960s, however, the United States has been the chief destination of a new wave of African immigrants. By 2005 there were 1.2 million new African immigrants officially residing in the United States. They have received scant attention in immigrant studies and recent assessments of America’s new religious diversity, however, partly because of their relatively small numbers and partly because affinity with the much larger African-American population renders them virtually invisible. The publication of African Immigrant Religions in America is the first major work to address this deficit.

This book includes contributions from a number of leading African scholars in the United States. Its central claim would surprise many: namely, that within a matter of only a few decades, the new African immigrants are already “making significant social and cultural impact, especially through the proliferation of religious communities” (p. 1). A couple of chapters provide inviting overviews of African Muslims, highlighting their

“remnant” ecclesiology inspired a strong sense of mission and corporate identity. Purpose and identity have been examined in the folk church by Sabbath worship services, Sabbath-school Bible-study lessons, camp meetings, and involvement in evangelistic outreach teams. Observance of the Sabbath, though difficult at times, has reinforced the sense of corporate identity.

This is the most analytic and thoroughly researched study of the establishment and development of the Adventist Church in a single country of which I am aware.

—Russell L. Staples

Russell L. Staples, Professor Emeritus of World Mission at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, was engaged in pastoral ministry and theological education in South Africa and Zimbabwe for twenty years.


In this book Francis Masuku, a Lomwe Roman Catholic priest from southeastern Malawi and spiritual director and lecturer at Kachebere Majerian Seminary, explores the encounter of Christian and traditional African spiritualities among the Lomwe, who migrated in the twentieth century from Portuguese-ruled Mozambique to British-ruled Malawi, where 90 percent of them became Roman Catholics.

Masuku first reviews the theological, historical-contextual, and anthropological concepts of spirituality. He then summarizes the coming of the Catholic missionaries, painting a bleak picture of their well-meaning efforts to plant the Gospel in Malawi. This section suffers from a lack of historical perspective. Discussion follows of missionaries after Vatican I (1870), who imposed their religion and Western culture on willing converts without knowing much about African Traditional Religion, which they dismissed as simply paganism, idolatry, or superstition. Any religious dialogue that took place happened privately in the lives of the Lomwe Christians, as the missionaries would have seen their views as syncretistic.

In subsequent chapters Masuku deals with the contemporary relationship between Christianity and Lomwe Traditional Religion. The discussion, which is based on fifty in-depth interviews with priests, nuns, catechists, and lay Catholics, shows a good understanding of Lomwe culture and Traditional Religion. The interviews reveal that Catholic leadership, though now Lomwe, still strictly rejects Traditional Religion. The priests show some good insights into the possibilities Vatican II (1962–65) offers for religious dialogue, but they do not communicate any of these points to the laity, who still believe that their ancestor veneration, spirit possession, and initiation rites (which, according to the church’s teaching, are paganism or idolatry) involve serving multiple gods.

Masuku’s major theological contribution is to show that the Bible is open to people of other cultures, as revealed by God’s covenant with all people, by the universal presence of God’s wisdom, and by the existence even in Jesus’ days of faith outside of Israel. Such theology, as represented by Karl Rahner, for example, is solidly based on Vatican II and related documents. Masuku maintains
Think on These Things: Harmony and Diversity
By Wisnu Sasongko

“I paint what I can see, what I can touch, what I can feel—a utopia of love expressed in the reality of life. All of that inspires me in my artistic way,” says Wisnu Sasongko, a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Art, Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta. This book includes “All Dreams Connected,” a 28-minute DVD about Sasongko and his art.
96 pages and a DVD, $29.95

Christ on the Bangkok Road: The Art of Sawai Chinnawong
Sawai Chinnawong of Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, is known for portraying Christianity through a Thai graphic idiom. Sawai is an ethnic Mon whose Buddhist ancestors migrated to Thailand from Myanmar. His drawings and paintings, inspired by traditional art from central Thailand, reflect a deep Christian faith.
80 pages, $19.95

Look Toward the Heavens: The Art of He Qi
He Qi, a noted contemporary Chinese Christian artist, is a professor at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He hopes to help change the “foreign image” of Christianity in China through his art and, at the same time, to supplement Chinese art the way Buddhist art did in ancient times.
128 pages, $19.95

A Time For My Singing: Witness of a Life
by Nalini Marcia Jayasuriya

“I come from a land of rich, ancient, and diverse cultures and traditions. While I carry the enriching influences of both West and East, I express myself through an Asian and Christian consciousness with respect for all confessions of religious faith,” says Nalini Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka. Her book offers richly diverse and evocative expressions of faith from an Asian perspective. Her reminiscences are included.
128 pages, $19.95

For Sale: Sacred Art by Asian Christians
More than 150 pieces of sacred art by Asian Christians, including some of the works reproduced in these art books, are now available for sale. For more information and to view the online gallery, visit www.OMSC.org/art.html.

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Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church.

Philip Wickeri’s study of K. H. Ting (b. 1915), today the only Protestant bishop in China, arises from over twenty-five years of friendship with Ting. Based on interviews with the bishop and on his writings, the book is the first exploration by a trusted “old friend” of Ting’s life and contemporary Chinese church history. To Ting, the welfare of the Chinese church and the nation are bound together. In fact, an equally fitting title for the book, and for Ting’s consuming desire, might have been “Reestablishing the Church and the Chinese Nation.” A concern for “running the church well” underpins Ting’s life and work.

The importance of the book, however, goes beyond its content and conclusions.
Hannah Moore: A Biography of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary and Teacher.


Hannah Moore (1808–68) was a young child at the beginning of the Second Great Awakening. She came of age in an era in which missionary work and the abolition of slavery were intertwined, especially among northern Protestant denominations, whose adoption of evangelical religion fueled strong concerns about the evils of slavery and the importance of abolition. In Hannah’s thirty-five years of mission work, she became increasingly convinced of the need both to abolish the evil of slavery and to save souls.

Moore was a feisty woman in a time when women were expected to be pious and to be submissive to their (male) superiors. It was unusual for an unmarried woman to have a career other than schoolteaching, ideally close to family.

The genesis of this book occurred when Isabel Weigold, the town historian of Willington, Connecticut, found a letter in the Willington Historical Society archives that was postmarked Kaw Mendi, West Africa. The writer was Hannah Moore, at that time the only white woman at a mission there, working under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Weigold began a five-year research project that uncovered over 150 letters from or to Hannah Moore. The result is a well-constructed biography of an amazing woman who devoted her life to the less fortunate, first among the Cherokee and then among the Mende.

While in West Africa, Moore became acquainted with the story of the Amistad slave mutiny from the men and women who returned there after their trial and imprisonment in New Haven, Connecticut. The details of her life— including missionary work from Oklahoma to Africa, battles with tropical diseases and other health hazards such as the loss of sight in one eye, disputes with her superiors, acceptance of Seventh-day Adventism, and, finally, homelessness—are so fascinating that the reader will most likely be turning pages eagerly in anticipation of the next adventure of Hannah Moore.

—Camille Forman

Camille Forman is a retired librarian from the University of Connecticut.

A Social History of Christianity: North-West India Since 1800.


John Webster, who went as a missionary to Punjab, India, in 1963, has pondered the subject matter of this volume for over forty years. The richness, complexity, and maturity of thought that can develop over such a long period of time are wonderfully evident in this work. A Social History of Christianity is thoroughly researched, well organized, and lucidly written.

A number of features greatly strengthen this particular history of Christianity. The first is that it is set in the changing social, political, economic, and religious context of Northwest India. Christianity is thus rightly seen as part and parcel of a much larger and variegated tapestry of society over time. The second strength is its ecumenical scope. Such a history could be credibly written by focusing on mainline Protestantism, but the inclusion of Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and Pentecostals in the story gives the reader a much fuller and more accurate picture of the nature of Christianity in this part of India. A third feature worth noting is the attempt to tell the story of the Indian Christian community, not primarily that of the Western missionaries. This is extremely difficult to do, given that many of the sources for such a history are missionary sources. A fourth feature is the rich analysis of Dalit, or outcaste, communities, which make up the great majority of Christians in Northwest India. Here Webster’s previous scholarship on the Dalits stands him in good stead.

I highly recommend this work to anyone interested in the history of Christianity in India. The focus on one region of India allows the author to portray the complexity of Christian experience there and adds greatly to our general understanding of Christianity in the non-Western world.

—Arun W. Jones

Arun W. Jones is Associate Professor of Evangelism and Mission at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas.

The State of the American Empire: How the USA Shapes the World.


Not everyone agrees that the United States is an empire. In a review essay in Foreign Affairs (July/August 2006), Alexander J. Motyl takes umbrage at those who characterize America in this way, arguing that “Washington may be imperious, but it is not imperial.” While scholars may disagree how to describe the geopolitical status of the United States, there is no disagreement that it is the dominant world power today.

This atlas is designed to highlight the multiple relationships the United States has with other nations. It is replete with empirical data that describe and measure their scope. Already by the end of World War I, it was clear that America had replaced Britain as the leading world power. By the end of the twentieth century, that dominance was even more pronounced.

This profile of the United States is presented in chapters on energy, trade, capital, people, military, security, soft power, ideas, and the future. Each topic is summarized and then depicted in excellent maps, charts, and graphs. World data tables at the end of the book summarize population, gross national income, energy use, CO₂ emissions, balance of trade with the United States, legal emigrants to the United States, military spending, arms imports from the United States, and land area for all the member states of the United Nations as of 2005.

As the single largest consumer of oil—60 percent imported from other parts of the world—the United States is preoccupied with national security, which means maintaining control over the sources of supply. There are 500,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in some 735 military bases around the world. Whether U.S. foreign and military policies in the post–Cold War era have made the country more secure is far from certain, but it is generally conceded that conduct of the war on terror after 9/11 has eroded international confidence in the United States.

This is an excellent resource that should be in all academic libraries.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Wilbert R. Shenk, a contributing editor, is Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.
September 8–12, 2008 How to Develop Mission and Church Archives. Ms. Martha Lund Smalley, special collections librarian and curator of the Day Missions Collection at Yale Divinity Library, New Haven, Connecticut, helps missionaries and church leaders identify, organize, and preserve essential records. Cosponsored by First Presbyterian Church (New Haven). Eight sessions. $145

September 15–19 The Internet and Mission: Getting Started. In a hands-on workshop, Mr. Wilson Thomas, Wilson Thomas Systems, Bedford, New Hampshire, and Dr. Dwight P. Baker, OMSC associate director, show how to get the most out of the World Wide Web for mission research. Eight sessions. $145

September 22–26 Doing Oral History: Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story. Dr. Jean-Paul Wies, director of the Jesuit Beijing Center, Beijing, China, and Ms. Michèle Sigg, DACB project manager, share skills and techniques for documenting mission and church history. Cosponsored by Wycliffe International. Eight sessions. $145

October 6–10 Communicating Gospel Truth to the Totally Unreached. Rev. Ajith Fernando, Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka, leads participants in considering how the Gospel can be communicated to people with worldviews that are very different from the biblical worldview. Cosponsored by Christian Reformed World Missions, CrossGlobal Link, Rolling Hills Covenant Church (Rolling Hills, California), and the U.S. Center for World Mission. Eight sessions. $145

October 13–17 Culture, Interpersonal Conflict, and Christian Mission. Dr. Duane H. Elmer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, helps Christian workers strengthen interpersonal skills and resolve conflicts among colleagues, including host-country peoples. Cosponsored by Episcopal Church / Mission Personnel and Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod World Mission. Eight sessions. $145


November 3–7 Understanding the Western Missionary Movement IV: The Second World War and the Old Age of the Western Missionary Movement. 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 fourth Distinguished Mission Lecture series—five lectures with discussions. Consultation with participants on topics of interest. Cosponsored by Areopagos, American Baptist International Ministries, Evangelical Covenant Church World Mission, United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, and Wycliffe International. $115

November 10–14 Mission in Europe—East and West. Dr. Peter Kuzmi, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, explores the new context and new role for missions in a changed Europe, both East and West. Cosponsored by Black Rock Congregational Church (Fairfield, Connecticut) and Wycliffe International. Eight sessions. $145

November 17–21 Multicultural Partnerships: Strategies for Training and Leadership. Dr. Judith E. Lingenfelter, Biola University, and Dr. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, Fuller Theological Seminary, focus on strategies for building communities of trust and for equipping leaders to empower team members from different cultural backgrounds to work more effectively together. Cosponsored by Christar, InterVarsity Missions, Mennonite Central Committee, Moravian Church Board of World Mission, SIM USA, and The Mission Society. Eight sessions. $145

December 1–4 The Gospel of Peace Engaging the Muslim Unmmin (Community). Dr. David W. Shenk, Eastern Mennonite Missions, explores the church’s calling to bear witness to the Gospel of peace in its engagement with Muslims whether in contexts of militancy or in settings of moderation. Cosponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions–Global Ministries and St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church (Livingston, Montana). Eight sessions. $145

December 8–12 Exploring Images of Jesus in Various Cultures. Dr. Diane B. Stinton, Daystar University, Nairobi, examines God’s revelation of Christ as recorded in the New Testament and then explores human reflection on Christ in later centuries and across various cultures. Cosponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and World Vision International. Eight sessions. $145

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Alonso, Carlos.

Bigart, Robert J., ed. Latin translation by James M. Scott. French translation by
Elizabeth A. Hubble.
A Pretty Village: Documents of Worship and Culture Change, St. Ignatius
Mission, Montana, 1880–1889.

Zealous in All Virtues: Documents of Worship and Culture Change, St.
Ignatius Mission, Montana, 1890–1894.

Brady, Bernard V.
Essential Catholic Social Thought.

DeNeui, Paul H., ed.
Communicating Christ Through Story and Song: Orality in Buddhist Contexts.

Ekka, Jhakmak Neeraj.
Christ as Sacrament and Example: Luther’s Theology of the Cross and Its
Relevance for South Asia.

Fuchs, Lorelei F.
Koinonia and the Quest for an Ecumenical Ecclesiology: From Foundations

Mathiesen, Gaylan Kent.
A Theology of Mission: Challenges and Opportunities in Northeast Asia.

Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds.
Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism.

Mullin, Robert Bruce.
A Short World History of Christianity.

Tan, Kang San, ed.
The Soul of Mission: Perspectives on Christian Leadership, Spirituality, and
Mission in East Asia; Essays in Appreciation of Dr. David Gunaratnam.

Van Engen, Charles, Darrell Whiteman, and J. Dudley Woodberry, eds.
Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness: Insights from Anthropology,
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Van Gelder, Craig, ed.
The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual
Ministry.

Wijzen, Frans, and Robert Schreiter, eds.
Global Christianity, Contested Claims.

Winston, Arlita Morken.
Heart-Cry: God’s Cry of Love for All People, Heard by One Man and Shared
with the World.
€15.35 / £10.18.

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