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Edited by Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond



# The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity

*Edited by*

Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond

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# Abbreviations

Where abbreviated, Scriptura and Apocrypha citations take the following form:

<b>Book Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Genesis	Gen.
Exodus	Ex.
Leviticus	Lev.
Numbers	Num.
Deuteronomy	Deut.
Joshua	Josh.
Judges	Judg.
1 Samuel	1 Sam.
2 Samuel	2 Sam.
1 Kings	1 Kgs.
2 Kings	2 Kgs.
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.
Nehemiah	Neh.
Esther	Esth.
Job	Job.
Psalms	Ps.
Proverbs	Prov.
Ecclesiastes	Eccles.
Song of Solomon	Song
Isaiah	Isa.
Jeremiah	Jer.

*(continued)*

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<b>Book Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Lamentations	Lam.
Ezekiel	Ezek.
Daniel	Dan.
Hosea	Hos.
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad.
Jonah	Jon.
Micah	Mic.
Nahum	Nah.
Habakkuk	Hab.
Zephaniah	Zeph.
Haggai	Hag.
Zechariah	Zech.
Malachi	Mal.
Tobit	Tob.
Judith	Jdth.
Additions to Esther	Add Esth.
Wisdom of Solomon	Wisd of Sol.
Baruch	Bar.
Letter of Jeremiah	Let Jer.
Susanna	Sus.
Bel and the Dragon	Bel.
1 Maccabees	1 Macc.
2 Maccabees	2 Macc.
1 Esdras	1 Esdr.
Prayer of Manasseh	Pr. of Man.
Additional Psalm	Add. Psalm
3 Maccabees	3 Macc.
2 Esdras	2 Esdr.
4 Maccabees	4 Macc.
Psalms of Solomon	Ps. Solomon.
Epistle to the Laodiceans	Ep. Laod.
Matthew	Mt.
Mark	Mk.
Luke	Lk.
Romans	Rom.
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.

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<b>Book Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.
Galatians	Gal.
Ephesians	Eph.
Philippians	Phil.
Colossians	Col.
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.
1 Timothy	1 Tim.
2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Philemon	Phm.
Hebrews	Heb.
James	Jas.
1 Peter	1 Pet.
2 Peter	2 Pet.
Revelation	Rev.
Book of Jubilee	Jub.
Qur'ān	Q

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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

Lamin Sanneh and  
Michael J. McClymond

The worldwide impact of Christianity that made it the religion of societies and cultures emerging outside the European heartlands came into greatest prominence in the post-World War II and subsequent post-colonial periods. The scale of this post-Western resurgence was surprising, as was its timing. The retreat of Europe from its colonial territories was not, contrary to prevailing predictions, accompanied by the decline of Christianity, while nationalist mobilization and its mixed fortunes in the post-independence aftermath failed to halt the religion's momentum. Behind the forces of nation building and the integration into the community of nations, Christianity was expanding its reach and strengthening its appeal, thanks to the effects of vernacular Bible translation and the accompanying cultural adaptation that gave the religion the advantage of indigenous credibility.

For the first time, societies and cultures that had been previously non-Christian had their idioms and ways of life increasingly penetrated by Christian ideas and values, commencing an internal process of reorientation and the recasting of the central symbols of worship, ethics, and the aesthetic life. These changes give new meaning to the pace and significance of numerical expansion. It is not simply that membership has increased, sometimes exponentially, but that the meaning of being a Christian has undergone radical change from its Western heartland connotation. In the setting of primal societies where old attachments and plural loyalties continued to carry weight, conversion created an intercultural process of ongoing reciprocal exchange. The old vocabulary was given new promise of meaning and purpose in a fast-changing world, the kind of fulfillment that challenges and assures at the same time.

This is not just the consequence of contemporary global developments since the process originated in the indigenous ferment of mother tongue engagement in Scripture, and in personal dispositions expressed in worship, prayer, dance, and music. Rather, it

is the demonstration of Christianity's character as a world religion that is not tied to Western cultural delineations but that thrives in the multiple idioms of the adopted societies. These societies are not the heirs to Western Christendom in its Catholic and Protestant streams despite the legacy of colonial rule.

Without abandoning what gives them their distinctive character, these societies have joined the Christian movement on terms amenable to their self-understanding and aspirations, whatever the common overlapping themes with Europe's own contested heritage. The historical roots of Christianity in Palestine extended almost simultaneously to coalesce with diverse cultures in the Mediterranean world and beyond, with Jewish, Greek, and Roman influences converging with Coptic and Ethiopian materials to create a unique, expansive momentum.

As a religion with a worldwide following, Christianity embraced from a very early stage a kaleidoscopic spectrum of peoples and tongues in Asia, Africa, and Europe, drawing from the urban ethos of Roman civilization as well as from the desert and hinterland orientations of Egypt and Ethiopia a vision and an outlook that are worldwide in their scope. The formative period of Hellenization has its parallels in equally formative movements of indigenization and adaptation elsewhere and in other times.

Today, we see the religion adopted by communities stunningly diverse in their way of life and set in historical circumstances and conditions of life that defy any single uniform rule or standard. World Christianity as a rubric acknowledges this historical and cultural reality along with its resurgent contemporary expressions. We contend that these developments are not aberrations but constitutive of Christianity's original intercultural impulse as well as with the modern missionary movement that was its primary impetus.

Archbishop William Temple was a perceptive observer when he noted in 1944 that the worldwide appeal of Christianity was "the new fact of our time." It was not how his Western contemporaries viewed the religion's future. The ravages of war had taken a toll on morale, and Europe was in no mood to give any thought to the fortunes of a religion that attenuated neither the causes of conflict nor prevented the disaster that followed. But the gospel is not simply a function or reflection of actions undertaken outside its scrutiny and beyond its constraint, and Archbishop Temple's observation connects with the experience of the past and with growing evidence of the religion's worldwide appeal. Christianity has not ceased to be a Western religion, but evidence shows that its future as a world religion is being decided and fashioned at the hands and in the minds of its non-Western followers. A post-Christian Europe now must contemplate in post-Western societies an adapted and revitalized version of the faith that Hilaire Belloc boasted was once its distinguished patrimony.

Given the pace at which social, cultural, political, and economic changes are occurring around the world, it should come as no surprise that religious change is occurring as well. What might be surprising, however, is the accelerating pace at which changes are occurring. In many parts of the world, today's Christianity in its cultural scope differs markedly from its early forms in the high imperial era between 1880 and 1920. Even researchers whose work is focused on these changes may find it difficult to keep up. Perhaps the most obvious change is the rapid growth of Christianity in global regions that a century ago had only a small Christian population, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and parts of Latin America, and the corresponding statistical stagnation

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or decline in the traditional heartlands of Europe, Britain, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. In the twentieth century the two world wars in Europe, the spread of Communism, the rise of nationalism and the growth of secularism in Europe brought an end to the link between Christianity and Western culture.

Following World War II Christian expansion picked up pace in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. With only 4 million Christians in 1949, China had an estimated 117 million Christians in 2013. Moreover, in 2013 conversions to Christianity in China were occurring at a rate of 3.3 million per year, or an average of 9,000 per day. In the twentieth century in sub-Saharan Africa the Christian population mushroomed from about 9 million to 335 million – and the number is at present well over 500 million, with the pace not slackening. In Latin America, Evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism have competed credibly with Roman Catholicism as the dominant faith in many regions. During the last generation, millions of Dalits in India have converted to Christianity. While in the year 1900 nearly 80% of all Christians were European and North American, by 2001 the figure had declined to 40%, and by 2013 the percentage had further dropped to 34.5. As a result of these developments, it is now no longer adequate to confine Christianity to its old Western heartlands, or, indeed, to one geographical region.

These recent developments have revealed even more starkly what is true of Christianity from its origin as a religion characterized by diversity of form, style, practice, and territorial spread. The first disciples accepted the mandate of the Great Commission in the terms that embraced the whole world (Mk. 16:15, 20) and all tongues (Phil. 2:11). The time of the final consummation shall be when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ (Rev. 11:15). The Christian movement resembled what one scholar called “a patched wineskin filled with mixed wine.” The religion bore the imprint of an eclectic cultural heritage. As the *Epistle to Diognetus* of the second century put it, “The difference between Christians and the rest of humankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, nor practice any eccentric way of life . . . For them, any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country.” Irenaeus, the second-century Church Father of Lyons, declared that “as the sun remains the same all over the world . . . so also the preaching of the church shines everywhere.” Irenaeus pointed out that there were Christians among the Celts who professed the faith “without ink or paper.” In other words, their being illiterate was no barrier to conversion. Justin Martyr, a second-century Palestinian born of settlers in what is now Nablus, assured his contemporaries that the Gospel can boast of witnesses in every race, ethnicity, and mode of existence in which prayer and devotion continue to be made to God in the name of Jesus Christ. The early Christians believed that Christianity is a worldwide faith from the outset, that it is not a faith bound by territorial limits or by language and race. The current surge gives every reason to make that claim more credible now.

In the present post-Western phase, Christianity’s worldwide impact has become more visible with the publication of statistical studies. That fact has taken time to show itself in the consciousness of the modern West. Much of the scholarly work on World Christianity is taking place in Western academic and research institutions even though Christianity’s center of gravity has shifted to societies beyond the West. From the perspective of the West the theatre of engagement remains where scholars are



preponderant and resources available, which is the case in Europe and North America. However justified this attitude may be, it creates the optical illusion of scholarly preponderance looming larger than the conversion momentum now prevailing in post-Western societies.

As the early Christians contended, World Christianity is the movement of Christianity as it takes form and shape in societies that previously were not Christian, societies too dynamic to capture with empty forms and ephemeral concessions. In Africa Cyprian, though brilliant in his own right, became bishop of Carthage at a time of restricted literacy. Political and civic leaders were untouched by the religion, a situation well expressed by the Russian proverb that says that the early church had priests only of gold and chalices of wood. In the world of the early church we catch a glimpse of what has been so characteristic of World Christianity in our day, namely, of 'readers' who could not actually read bound volumes but instead "use the eyes of the mind to better purpose than many use the eyes of the face." Cyprian acknowledges the important role of illiterate converts, including illiterate clergy and even bishops in the church. Consequently, the "unnamed graves at Timgad or Souse move us more than the thrones of the mighty."<sup>1</sup> Along with persecution and repression, Christians had to contend with the challenging world of syncretism that surrounded them. A member of Augustine's congregation admitted to him, "Oh, yes, I go to idols; I consult seers and magicians, but I do not abandon God's church. I am Catholic."<sup>2</sup> The conclusion to be drawn from encounter with the church of the early centuries is that "Christianity, so far from being foreign, is grounded in the very lives and being of the people."<sup>3</sup>

It behooves us, thus, to see World Christianity as being not one thing, but a variety of indigenous responses through more or less effective local idioms, and largely without the mistrust, doubt, and reservations of the enlightened mind, what one writer calls "our modern crown of thorns." Without monasteries to hatch the faith, and monks and hermits to control demons and the supernatural world, and without the magistrate holding sway over Christian domain, as happened in late antiquity and beyond, Christianity has emerged in its contemporary phase without the instrument of political favor or legal enforcement. More often than not, it is political repression and persecution that has accompanied the rise of Christianity, a situation not too different from the condition of the first generation Christians.

A word may be in order here about the expression "Global" Christianity that carries echoes of the root idea that Western economic hegemony is necessary to Christianity, that growing communities of professing Christians around the world are evidence of the political and economic power of the West, and that churches in Asia and Africa are the religious expression of what was once Europe's political ascendancy, or else a reaction to it. Global Christianity as an expression also carries connotations of parallels with economic and the internet revolution that globalization has fueled, with the same forces of global trade and the electronic revolution leading the spread of a seamless environment of information and exchange without borders.

The idea of "Europeandom" captures well the carry-over echoes that have survived under the term "Global Christianity." With the decisive shift today into native languages, with the vernacular Scriptures and indigenous music as reinforcement, it is not

credible to persist with the description “Global Christianity,” in the first place because Global Christianity has no corresponding “global” language to channel it as Latin once did the church, and, in the second place, because the vast majority of new Christians have scant access to modern amenities, including electricity and the internet. In the bygone age of European Christendom when crown and cassock shared one purpose, writers justifiably could speak about the Christian discovery of indigenous societies and cultures, working with a top-down model of the religion. Today, we must speak of the indigenous discovery of Christianity with its logic of a bottom-up understanding of the church. It represents a sharp turn away from external direction and control, involving as it does the idea that indigenizing the faith means humanizing its theology and recasting its liturgy, music and hymnody. The new vocabulary of faith is not simply colorful and exuberant; it is expandable to fit the needs of a teeming world of spirit power.

World Christianity has emerged under cultural circumstances today that are little different from the world of miracles, signs and wonders of the gospels, which obviates the need to invent a new name for it such as “Global Christianity” or the unwieldy “World Christianities,”<sup>4</sup> as if the “World Christianity” of one place or time must be distinguished from the “World Christianity” of another place or time. Furthermore, the emphasis in that designation on the variety of cultural expressions of Christianity easily overlooks the central theological idea of the one God in whose name Christianity justifies itself. Two books on early Christianity pushed toward this change in nomenclature: Jonathan Z. Smith’s *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (1990), and Bart Ehrman’s *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (2003). *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (2006–2009) uses the plural “Christianities” in the titles of three of the nine volumes. The perennial intellectual issue of the one and the many, or unity and plurality, seems to be alive and well today in studies of “World Christianity/Christianities.”<sup>5</sup> But this way proceeding makes for a confusing reading of the history of the religion. The developments involved today, however, go beyond merely adding more names to the books; they have to do with cultural shifts that require changing the books themselves. Denominational boundaries have now taken on fresh and urgent intercultural questions that demand a fundamental openness to the spirit of a diverse but common humanity.

Statistical surveys have provided quantitative data and analysis to support the picture of Christianity’s polycentric character. According to the *Atlas of Global Christianity* (2009), despite the worldwide growth of the church from 2000 to 2010 Christian affiliation declined sometimes by 4% in most of Eastern Europe, and in several Muslim countries. In Europe, Christian decline in terms of active membership was due mainly to the impact of secularization. In predominantly Muslim countries, decline was the result of Christian emigration fueled by Islamist agitation, civil conflicts, and prevailing persecution.

## “World Christianity” and Its Alternatives

When we examine the position in the contemporary West, “World Christianity” as a phrase did not appear in the titles of printed works prior to the 1930s, when it appeared

as the title of a journal published in Chicago, and as the title of two substantive works just after World War II – John Joseph Considine, *World Christianity* (1945) and Henry P. Van Dusen, *World Christianity* (1947). During the 1940s the phrase summed up Euro-American hopes for global Christian fellowship in a “World Church.” Henry P. Van Dusen of Union Seminary in New York City looked for a “World Christianity” marked not by multicultural differences but by worldwide, organic unity. Van Dusen predicted that by the year 2000 all Christian churches throughout the world would be organizationally united, except, that is, for “sects” and for Roman Catholics who he expected to remain outside the framework of unity. The ecumenical movement inaugurated by the founding of the World Council of Churches (1948), Van Dusen predicted, would succeed. The emergence of a “World Church” was needed, he thought, to check rising secular influence and international Communism.<sup>6</sup> What Van Dusen forecast did not happen. The fundamentalist, evangelical, and pentecostal “sects” that received only passing mention were able to establish strong new churches around the world. Catholics whom Van Dusen thought would remain aloof and unengaged took a huge ecumenical step toward the “separated brethren” of the non-Catholic churches at the Second Vatican Council.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, in the closing decades of the twentieth century the mainline Protestant project of ecumenical reunion made relatively little progress.<sup>8</sup>

World Christianity “encompasses analysis of the histories, practices, and discourses of Christianity as is found on six continents.”<sup>9</sup> In terms of *content*, “World Christianity” is not a substitute for “Third World Christianity” or “non-Western Christianity.” Yet the field does reflect a particular interest of the West in “under-represented and marginalized Christian communities, and this will necessarily result in a greater degree of attention being paid to Asian, African, and Latin American contexts, and the experience of women globally.” In terms of *methodology*, “World Christianity” is a field-encompassing idea that incorporates the contributions of historians, social scientists, linguists, theologians, area specialists, and various specialized areas of study (e.g., ethnomusicology, linguistics, etc.). World Christianity is therefore “not synonymous with mission studies, and by no means reducible to it.” In terms of *institutional context*, for the most part, World Christianity as a field of study has taken shape during the last twenty-five or so years within the institutional context of departments of religious studies, history, and theological seminaries. Yet this field “is open to but not restricted to theological studies, and neither is it solely the provenance of those committed to the Christian faith.” It embraces “contributions from all disciplines, regardless of religious conviction.”

## Organization of the Volume

Following this introduction to the volume, the “Historical Section” of the first part is divided into two phases – “The Roots (50–1750 CE),” and “Issues in the Modern Period (1750–2000 CE).” After the “Roots” section and the “Issues” section there is a “Thematic” part. Generally speaking, the “Issues” section presents essays that center on some currently debated or contested topic, while the “Thematic” part present essays that give an overview or survey of a topic. In the “Thematic” part there are essays that

treat the entire history of Christianity (e.g., Dries on “Women in Church, State, and Society”) and others that are confined to recent times (e.g., Freston on “Global Evangelical and Pentecostal Politics”).

The penultimate part is devoted to “Christianity Since 1800: An Analysis by Regions and Traditions.” The essays in this final part approach World Christianity in two different ways – in terms of world geography, and in terms of ecclesial traditions. While the topical and thematic essays in the first three parts may be of interest to specialized scholars and advanced students, the fourth part of the volume takes special cognizance of the educated general reader. The final essays in the volume look to the future rather than to the past, and take up the themes of the transmission of faith (Walls), demographic growth and expansion (Johnson), and secularization vs. pluralization (Martin). The volume includes a number of tables and illustrations, in connection with the essays on music (Schrag), art (Küster), architecture (Bains), Oceania (Ernst and Anisi), vernacular Christianity (Sigg, Pascal, and Zurlo), and demographics (Johnson).

Some essays in this volume provide information that is difficult to find or is accessible only to those with advanced linguistic skills. For example, Souad Slim and Georges Berbari base their account of Christianity in the Middle East on Arabic language sources not accessible to most Western readers. David Bains’s contribution on comparative church architecture breaks new ground, as does Volker Küster’s essay on Christian visual arts around the world, and the triply-authored piece (Sigg, Pascal, Zurlo) on indigenous and vernacular Christianity. Other essays, such as that of Paul Freston’s piece on global evangelical and pentecostal politics, draw on widely available information sources and yet offer a new synthesis and new approach for interpreting the data. By bringing together information that is widely scattered in the literature of different academic disciplines, the *Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* may serve as a point of departure for students of the subject, and provide direction for fresh research.

Because of the global spread of scholars and scholarship, the multiplicity of languages involved, and the many academic fields, disciplines, and sub-disciplines, researchers in World Christianity may remain unaware of one another’s work. One purpose of this volume is to bring together work taking place in various disciplines and far-flung global locations. Among the academic disciplines reflected in the present volume are: biblical studies (Collins), early church studies (Helleman, Sunquist), medieval history (O’Sullivan, Huffmann), Byzantine studies (Skedros), maritime history (Fernandez-Armesto), history of the book (Ferrell), Reformation history (Klaiber), history of slavery (Schmidt-Nowara), history of medicine and agriculture (Grundmann), educational history (Etherington), colonial history (Stanley), ideological analysis (Buijs), ecumenism (van Butselaar), Vatican II studies (Phan), Pentecostal-Charismatic studies (Anderson, McClymond), Bible translation (Sanneh), interreligious dialogue (Ganeri), women’s history (Dries), liturgical studies (Wainwright), law and religion (Witte, Green), history of music (Martin), ethnomusicology (Schrag), visual arts (Küster), architectural studies (Bains), media studies (Mitchell, Kidwell), political science (Freston), demographic and statistical analysis (Sigg, Pascal, Zurlo, Johnson), and sociology of religion (Martin). This is not to men-

tion the various subdivisions within the history of Christianity that appear throughout the volume.

## A “Word-Cloud” Analysis of the Text

Figure 1.1 comprises a “word-cloud” that gives a visual representation of the word usage within the entirety of the submitted text of *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*. The more frequently a given word is used, the larger that word appears in the “word-cloud.” Words that did not add anything toward understanding the content of the volume were eliminated. A rather different “word-cloud” appears if one looks not at the chapters themselves but on the chapter abstracts (see Figure 1.2), with the most prominent words such as Christianity removed.

## Ten Themes in the Essays

### *The status of “Europe” within World Christianity*

It is striking to see how frequently Europe is mentioned in the chapters that follow. Although no longer perceived as central, Europe is, nevertheless, crucial to the task of self-definition and re-definition involved in World Christianity. To be sure, since the 1980s the Europe-centered and Reformation-plus-Enlightenment story has to a large extent been displaced by a story of cross-cultural encounters of Europe with the rest of the world in maritime, colonialist, and missiological contexts. Yet even as Europe’s internal reality and conflicts have sunk in importance, Europe’s relationship to the rest of the world has continued to hold importance in the study of World Christianity. While today a smaller proportion of scholars of Christianity focus their primary attention on Europe as such, there is continuing interest in what we might call *Europe-as-perceived*. Among non-Europeans, this means that European Christianity is still a point of reference, though sometimes only as a foil. Where European Christianity did not offer a positive model to be imitated, it represented alienation and inauthenticity and so served to define those ideas and practices that non-Europeans repudiated.

The charismatic movement that became identified as “Ethiopianism” in Southern Africa and “African Independency” in West and East Africa, retained many traits of the historic mission-founded churches, including liturgy, hymns, music, doctrine, and church structure. “Ethiopianism” was a form of proto-nationalism and “an African remonstrance against the European captivity of the gospel” (Sigg, Pascal, and Zurlo). We should not, however, draw hard and fast lines in these newer churches. The repudiation of missionary control and domination did not necessarily mean the rejection of everything Western. Similarly, the mission-founded churches often incorporated indigenous religious materials into their worship and music. In most cases, too, what all these churches had in common was the vernacular Scriptures read and interpreted under conditions of mother-tongue appropriation. All of that is part of the primal energy that has propelled Christianity as it cut a path in its worldwide mission.







### *Missionary agency and indigenous impetus*

The terms “mission” and “missionaries” and its cognate forms appear more than fifteen hundred times in this volume. There is no way to tell the story of World Christianity without giving extensive attention to mission and missionaries. Yet one must hasten to add that the missionaries of World Christianity include many people who were never acknowledged or recognized as such. In Africa there were many regions in which European missionaries barely touched the hinterland communities, and the great task of evangelization fell to the lot of the many catechists, some known to us by name, others not, who set out for rural centers to spread the Christian message. Unfortunately, much of the older missionary literature gave little attention to local contributions to Christian mission. This requires today’s researchers to search out new sources of information, or else to read the old sources in the light of local initiative. The open access online data base of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (DACB) at Boston University School of Theology contains information on the names and stories of more than two thousand individuals, men and women, many of whom were leaders of the Christian movement in their societies.

### *The long encounter of Christianity and Islam*

Contact between Islam and Byzantium began with the birth of Islam in the seventh century and continued beyond the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE. Byzantine Christians generally viewed Islam as a Christian heresy and Muhammad as a false prophet. For their part, Muslims claimed that Christians were tri-theists and had expunged references to Muhammad from the New Testament. By the late ninth century, Byzantines had access to Greek renderings of at least certain portions of the Qur’ān, thus allowing for polemical responses to the text.<sup>10</sup> Muslim–Christian relations depended in part on political and socio-economic considerations. Both Byzantines and Muslims interpreted political success and failure vis-à-vis one another in terms of theodicy: success reflected God’s favor, while failure and decline were interpreted by the Byzantines as evidence of God’s disfavor due to infidelity toward God (Skedros). From the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Christianity and Islam both showed extraordinary dynamism, penetrating regions they had never before reached, winning new adherents, and thus coming to merit the name of “world religions” (Fernández-Armesto). Yet Christianity and Islam largely operated within separate spheres. Christianity could not compete with Islam in the interior of Africa. As a rival of Islam, however, Christianity had one big advantage: its adherents could carry it by sea. They could outflank Islam in Africa and penetrate areas deep into the heart of the continent. That was how missions gained footholds on the coastline of the Indian Ocean and in maritime Asia. The Ottoman government brought Christians under their imperial control, dividing them into millets as protected people and as subjects (*ra’aya*) of the sultan. The Millet system meant that each Christian community was given a degree of autonomy in managing its own internal affairs. In this period Christians suffered transfers of populations and abductions of their



children, transfers of ecclesiastical authority to rural areas and monasteries, and ecclesiastical offices being subjected to public auction. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Christians dealt with the new situation as best they could (Souad al-Rousse Selim). The rise of Islamism in the late twentieth century raised a host of new issues for Christian–Muslim relations. In predominantly Islamic regions, the issues for Christians are not just theoretical, but concern their basic personal and political freedoms (Witte and Green).

### *Slavery and anti-slavery*

One of the important though neglected stories of modern abolitionism was that of the slaves who fought on the British side in the American Revolution. Their lives and experiences established a link between Enlightenment philosophy, radical social ideals, and Evangelicalism. They went on mission to Sierra Leone in 1792, before any British missionary society had been founded, and with the intention of establishing a new society under the influence of the Christian gospel. Throughout the Americas, European settlers and colonialists “opposed the evangelization of slaves because they feared that missionaries would preach abolitionism” (Dove). In the context of the early nineteenth-century religious awakenings in the United States, “Finneyite revivalism became closely associated with . . . abolitionism and antislavery, temperance, anti-Masonry, and women’s rights” (McClymond). Oberlin College became “a stronghold of abolitionism” and advocated civil disobedience in the face of the runaway slave laws that were designed to force runaway slaves to return to their masters (McGrath). In Jamaica, abolitionist Baptists founded Calabar College as an institute for theological training (Etherington). In the nineteenth century women began to play a prominent role in the abolitionist movement (Dries). A number of Anglicans were abolitionist leaders: Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and Olaudah Equiano (Ward). Abolitionists were opposed to the politics of the British Whigs who advocated a gradualist approach to abolishing slavery. Yet a strong counter-narrative existed just below the surface. In Jamaica in 1865, Governor Edward Eyre’s brutal suppression of a local uprising was supported by such prominent British intellectuals as Thomas Carlyle and Charles Kingsley, who both contended that “the abolition of slavery had been a failed experiment based on a false belief in human equality” (Etherington). What is more, “only in the evangelical and non-conformist world of the British Empire did it [i.e., abolitionism] lead to mass mobilization for the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery” (Schmidt-Nowara).

### *Colonialism and post-colonialism*

The European colonial project had its European detractors at every stage. The sixteenth-century Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas wrote an impassioned defense of Native souls in which he condemned Spanish enslavement of natives as a sin against Christian charity. Recently Christians have celebrated de las Casas as

an early defender of human rights and advocate for social justice (Porterfield). Yet Brian Stanley notes the case of the Norwegians and Germans who pressed “for British annexation to crack the nut of Zulu resistance to the gospel – another example of Christians backing imperialism for reasons that had little or nothing to do with nationalism.” During the 1920s in China, Christians became “targets of mass nationalism” and were “denounced as agents of cultural imperialism,” an experience “traumatic for missions and Chinese Christians as well” (Bays). Contrary to popular belief, there was no obvious improvement in attitudes toward non-European peoples and cultures on the part of European colonizers from the 1700s into the 1900s and “the inter-war period [1920s–1930s] was marked by the most blatant examples of the permeation of missions by imperial attitudes and ideology” (Etherington). When by the mid-twentieth century it became clear that colonial power in Africa and Asia was in its twilight, European church leaders responded in different ways. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many Western Christian leaders viewed the growth of nationalism with alarm, while others, such as Max Warren and Stephen Neill, “called for Western Christians to discern the hand of God behind the rising tide of nationalism” (Stanley). One of the surprises of the late twentieth century was the staying power of Christianity following the end of colonialism. “Many observers of the end of empire in the 1960s . . . predict[ed] inaccurately that Christianity, except possibly in the form of the African Independent Churches, would not long survive the era of decolonization” (Stanley). By the 1960s, “the Catholic Church’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et spes*) turned the Church towards the world and especially towards the poor. In the years following the council the emphasis on social justice and the theologies of liberation would find its inspiration in this document” (Rausch).

### *New ideologies and social teachings*

In the sociological study of Max Weber, capitalist economics is identified with Protestantism, and especially with Reformed or Calvinistic Christianity (McGrath). Because the shift to a market-based economy did not take place at the same time around the world, the effects of global capitalism have been uneven, have taken place at different times, and have led to different responses. With the full-blown emergence of industrialization in England and in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, a counter-reaction followed. Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church sought “to address the concern” raised by Marxism while rejecting the Marxist view of society (Buijs). Similarly, the Dutch theologian, politician, and eventual Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper, “developed his theological Calvinism into a worldview in which political and social questions could be addressed, criticizing unchecked capitalism without giving in to socialism” (Buijs). In North America, Christianity was a “carrier” of “influential forms of modern individualism, democracy, and capitalism . . . from this continent to other parts of the world” (Porterfield). In Australia, “workers sought to civilize capitalism, first by industrial power in unionism, and then by political power in the formation of the Labor Party” (Piggin and Lineham).

When sixty Catholic priests gathered in 1968 in Golconda, Colombia, and committed themselves to “revolutionary action against imperialism” and to “setting up a socialistic society” (Dove), it ushered in Liberation Theology as a critique of Western imperialism and capitalism.

### *The ambiguous status of Latin America*

How does Latin America fit into the larger narrative of World Christianity? Speaking broadly, there are tendencies in two directions. In one direction, Latin America can be viewed as inheritor of the heritage of European Christendom. In that form the early establishment of churches and other Christian institutions took place among indigenous peoples of the New World as early as the 1500s. In the second direction was the rise of evangelical and charismatic forms of Christianity that brought about a readjustment of perspective concerning the long historical experience of Catholic Christianity in Latin America. In the first instance, Latin America became an extension of Western European Christendom, embodying a New World form of Iberian Catholicism (i.e., Spanish and Portuguese), while in the second instance Latin America resembled the situation in sub-Saharan Africa, in respect specifically to evidence of the uncompleted evangelization of the indigenous peoples of both continents. The rise of Protestant and Pentecostal Christianity in both cases represents the completion of the process of evangelization which Catholic priests and missionaries began centuries earlier. The debate about the glass being “half full” or “half empty” is to a large degree a debate about how one interprets the historical experience of Latin American Catholicism from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.

### *Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Vernacular Christianity*

In its expansion during the twentieth century Pentecostalism has involved “reported healings or other purportedly miraculous occurrences accompanied [by] evangelistic preaching and . . . preludes to rapid church growth” (McClymond). The intense prayer, evangelistic fervor, and openness to the miraculous that characterize the Pentecostals, numbering some 623 million adherents in 2013, might help to set the long-term direction for Christianity around the world.<sup>11</sup> In 2015 Catholics numbered 1.239 billion. Africa is listed with a Catholic population of 198.5 million, representing an exponential growth from 27 million in 1960 (“Status of Global Mission,” *IBMR*, vol. 39, no. 1, January 2015, 29; “The Roman Catholic Church Worldwide (Changes from 2007 to 2012),” *IBMR*, vol. 40, no. 1, January 2015.) Mission from churches outside the West has been an increasing trend in statistical reports. Korean, Brazilian, Chinese, and African missionaries have been setting out to evangelize Muslims and Buddhists, and to preach to secular Europeans, what Philip Jenkins has called “the empire strikes back.” According to one report, in 2013 there were just under 20,500 Korean missionaries serving in over 160 countries.<sup>12</sup> An important reason for the relative success of new Charismatic groups is “their

openness to the forces of globalization” (Anderson), and their ability to employ emerging technologies of communication. In recent years Charismatic Christianity has developed a well-connected network of leaders and preachers.

Writers have called attention to a variety of religious development they describe as “Vernacular Christianity”. In the first generation or two when Christianity came into contact in with indigenous cultures in Africa and Asia, *a new, fluid* situation developed, characterized by *lack of fixed structures* in worship, doctrine, and decision-making. This stage of conversion is reminiscent of the newly converted Christian Vikings of the ninth century – a phase that more closely resembles the still-emerging twentieth-century churches than do the later Gothic cathedrals and official institutions of the high Middle Ages. Given the status of Christianity as a translated religion, and as such implicated in interpretation and adaptation, Vernacular Christianity can be seen to be only a stage in the progressive assimilation of the religion. The exotic connotations normally associated with the term should not mislead us about its position in the scale of religious profession.

### *Material culture, the visual arts, and technology*

A number of essays deal with material culture. One of these essays speaks of the “soaring, massive gothic cathedrals were built as multi-generational statements of faith in God and in the future” (Huffman). In Christian Orthodoxy, there is a strong supporting theology for the production and appreciation of visual beauty, since “the material world is not something to be despised or conquered, but transformed to reflect God’s kingdom” (Kenworthy). Christianity’s material cultures are enduring signs of cultural translation and adaptation. India’s contact with the Portuguese resulted in “a modified baroque style of art and architecture” (Küster) whose vestiges are seen still today in the city of Velha (Goa). Ethiopian Christianity developed its own distinctive forms of icon painting and architecture, involving subterranean churches carved out of solid rock. From a European perspective, one might be inclined to think that the golden age of Christian visual art had ended in the seventeenth century. Yet “the twentieth century saw a remarkable flourishing of ‘Christian art’” (Wainwright). Western missionaries were often wary of the introduction of African traditional motifs into Christian art. In missions around the world in the modern period, “Anglicans erected Gothic revival cathedrals . . . as a sign of their apostolicity [and] their legitimacy as the true church, independent of the state and of the Church of Rome.” In the African context, “the round church with the altar in the center reflects both the ideology of the liturgical movement and traditional African practice” (Bains). Though Christian mission work is often undertaken in isolation from material factors, yet “indigenous people who found the advantages of European technology easier to grasp than the benefits of abstract learning often welcomed institutions that promised improvements in agricultural productivity, blacksmithing, and wagon making” (Etherington). Modern medicine and agricultural technologies played a key role in the missionary enterprise as a whole (Grundmann), while communication technologies (radio, television, internet, cellphone, etc.) have been important in mission endeavors throughout the last century (Mitchell, Kidwell).

*Continuing debate over secularization and Christendom*

The issue of global secularization and the future of world religions was a major debate in the 1960s, initially through the work of David Martin, who has reprised and analyzed some of those debates for his essay in this volume. In the 1970s, a number of social theorists had second thoughts about secularization. At present, some of them see secularization as a process that is bound to affect all global cultures (Steve Bruce), while others adopt a more nuanced position (Jose Casanova, Charles Taylor). European secularity might not be the normative standard but, rather, something of a global exception. Earlier debates over what Europe has lost pointed to declining church attendance and diminishing Christian faith and adherence to Christian moral standards. That view has now given way to a fresh assessment of what Europe has kept. Whatever the verdict, the heritage of Christendom is still with us, though widely contested. While in 1900 the word “Christendom” was regularly used in a triumphalist way, by the year 2000 “some . . . thinkers have used the term Christendom to describe a tragic stage in the history of the faith, a curse marked particularly by the church–state alliance, with all the compromises that demanded” (Jenkins).

Yet “church–state” relationships have varied, in terms of “state” no less than in terms of “church.” In colonial contexts “there was equally great variation in the nature of the indigenous and colonial polities” (Stanley). Europe itself shows a complicated pattern. Some Christians there “have reasserted the need for the retention of symbols of the traditional church–state alliance, for example the crucifixes that commonly hang in schools and hospitals in Catholic nations” (Jenkins). Philosopher Jürgen Habermas suggests that for Western cultures “there is no alternative” to the “universalistic egalitarianism” that is “the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love.” Philip Jenkins suggests the possibility of a “new Christendom,” or “a wave of Christian states which may eventually form an African and Latin American axis in which faith is the guiding political ideology.” Yet Freston questions whether there is any evidence for this, or any clear attempt to create new “Christian” nations or states in the global South. Indications are that World Christianity is unlikely to create the conditions for a return to a discarded past. The challenge it presents, on the other hand, is one of charting a new course for church and society beyond ideas of political entitlement. For once Christianity seems poised today to become the faith of the people and not just the prerogative of polite society.

**Notes**

- 1 Ferguson (1967: 19).
- 2 Ferguson (1967: 25–26).
- 3 Ferguson (1967: 27).
- 4 There are only a handful of book titles with the plural form “Christianities” – prior to 1980. This includes: Adin Ballou, *Practical Christianity in Relation to Different Christs and Christianities* (1860s); James Frederick Buss, *The Two Christianities: Old and New* (1890); T. B. Forbush, *The Three Christianities* (1892); William Blackmore Marsh, *Five Christianities and the Jesus Way* (1928), and Heup Young Kim, *Asian and Oceanian Christianities* (1970).

- The first three uses of the plural form are from Universalist, Swedenborgian, and Unitarian authors, thus giving the impression that the pluralized term was originally linked to groups that offered a critique of mainstream Christianity.
- 5 The total number of academic titles using the plural, “Christianities,” is minuscule in relation to the more common “Christianity” – less than 25 instances compared with more than 25,000 with the single form during the last century and a half. Yet the appearance of the plural form is significant as marking a shift in conceptualization away from the idea of a religious tradition or phenomenon that is broadly cohesive or unitary.
  - 6 Van Dusen (1947: 248–251) quoted in Robert (2009: 67).
  - 7 Roman Catholic Church, *Unitatis Redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism)*, no. 1 (1964).
  - 8 Kinnamon (2003).
  - 9 <http://www.journalofworldchristianity.org/index.php/jowc/about/editorialPolicies#focusAndScope>, accessed October 19, 2015. Further quotations above come from the same web page.
  - 10 Antonio Rigo notes that Nicetas of Byzantium around 870 CE wrote a refutation of the Qur’ān that extensively cited Greek translations of selected passages: *Nikēta Byzantinou philosophou programma tēs hypogegrammenēs anatrophēs tēs para tou Arabos Mōamet plastographē theisēs biblou*, in *Patrologia Graeca* 105, 669–805. Rigo adds: “The refutation of the Qur’ān by Nicetas . . . represents a direct and important witness to the existence in 9th-century Byzantium of a (partial) Greek translation of the Qur’ān.” Cited from Thomas (2015). See also: Argyriou (2005: 25–69); Trapp (1980–1981: 7–17); Versteegh (1991: 52–68).
  - 11 “Status of Global Mission, 2013, in the Context of AD 1800–2025,” *IBMR*, vol. 37, no. 1, January 2013, 33.
  - 12 Steve Sang-Cheol Moon, Hee-Joo, and Eun-Mi Kim, “Missions from Korea 2015: Missionaries Unable to Continue Ministry in Their Country of Service,” *IBMR*, vol. 39, no. 2, April, 2015, 85.

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# I. Historical Section

## A. The Roots (50–1750 CE)





## CHAPTER 2

# Jewish and Hellenic Worlds and Christian Origins

John J. Collins

According to the Book of Acts, the Apostle Paul addressed the citizens of Athens as follows:

Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of our worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things . . . For "in him we live and move and have our being." As even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." (Acts 17:22–28).

This speech is remarkable in many ways. The early Christians were not normally disposed to credit pagan Greeks with true piety. Paul's identification of the unknown god as the creator, who does not live in temples, would not have been widely accepted by Athenians, although some Greek philosophers (including Zeno, the founder of Stoicism) were critical of temples. (The great classical scholar Eduard Norden argued that the idea of an unknown god was utterly un-Greek [Norden 1913], but it is now known that such cults did exist [van der Horst 1994].) Paul cites some pagan authors. The exact source of the first citation is not known, but it is probably a Stoic formulation. The second is from a poet, Aratus, but Paul takes both quotations out of context. The Stoic formula would have lent itself most easily to a form of panentheism, the idea that that a divine spirit inhabits and moves the cosmos. But the passage shows that from a very early point those who preached the good news of Jesus Christ had to seek ways to relate their faith to the conceptual world of the Greeks. This encounter was fraught with the danger of misconception and misunderstanding, but it would have far-reaching implications for the history of Christianity.

The Christians did not lack precedents in this encounter, however. Paul and his colleagues were Jewish, born of Judean ancestry and worshippers of the God of Israel. Jews had lived in a Hellenic world for three centuries before Jesus was born. In that time they had learned to express themselves in Greek, acquired new ways of conceiving of their God, embraced much of Greek culture and figured out what they could not accept if they were to be faithful to their own traditions. In the process, they compiled an extensive literature, written in Greek (Barclay 1996; Gruen 1998; Collins 2000a). Most of that literature came from Egypt, where Judeans had migrated in large numbers after the conquests of Alexander, and where Greek was their primary language.

## The Greek Bible

Perhaps the most fundamental accomplishment of Greek-speaking Judaism was the translation of the Bible into Greek. According to the Letter of Aristeas, the Torah, or Pentateuch, was translated at the behest of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, in the early third century BCE, for inclusion in the library of Alexandria. The work was allegedly done by 72 translators; hence the Greek translation of the Bible became known as the Septuagint (LXX) or “seventy” (Jobes and Silva 2000; Dines 2004). The Letter has long been recognized as a Jewish composition, one of many works that were composed under Gentile pseudonyms in order to create the impression that Judaism was admired by Gentiles. (The Sibylline Oracles provide an extensive example of this phenomenon. There are also Jewish works promulgated under the names of Hecataeus, Phocylides, Orpheus, and Sophocles.) Most scholars think that the Torah was translated to meet the needs of Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora, although some now allow that the Ptolemy may have taken some initiative in the matter (Honigman 2003). The translation was exceedingly literal, so much so that it is often difficult to understand without recourse to the Hebrew. Nonetheless, some translation decisions had profound consequences. Arguably the most important of these was the translation of Exodus 3:13, where God discloses to Moses his divine name. The Hebrew, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, “I am who I am,” is notoriously enigmatic, and may be intentionally evasive.<sup>1</sup> The Greek translation (Ex. 3:14) reads *eimi ho on*, I am the one who is. The use of the Greek participle introduced the Greek idea of being, which could scarcely have been expressed at all in Hebrew. The Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, writing in the time of Christ, spelled out the implications in the following paraphrase: “tell them that I am He Who Is, that they may learn the difference between what is and what is not, and also the further lesson that no name at all can properly be used of Me, to Whom alone existence belongs” (*De Vita Mosis* 1.75). Philo inferred that the God revealed to Moses was absolute Being, in the sense in which Being was conceived by the philosopher Plato. The correlation of the Platonic idea of Being with the God of Israel became the foundation of a whole tradition of philosophical theology that has persisted down to modern times.

By the time the Greek translation was made, Hebrew speaking Jews no longer pronounced the divine name. Instead they substituted “the Lord,” *Adonai*. In the Greek, this was translated as *kyrios*. The word *kyrios*, however, could also be used with reference

to others besides the Most High. In the New Testament, it was used with reference to Christ. The fact that the same title could be used for Christ and also as a substitute for the divine name facilitated the early Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus.

The translation of the Bible inevitably raised the problem of finding ways to refer to God that would be recognized and understood by Gentiles. In the Persian era, it had become common to refer to the supreme God as “the God of heaven.” So in Ezra 1:2, King Cyrus of Persia is said to proclaim: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth.” Persians could understand this phrase to refer to Ahura Mazda, the high god of the Zoroastrians, while Jews could relate it to the God of Israel. In the Hellenistic period, too, at least some Jewish authors suggested that Jews and Greeks worshipped the same God by different names. The Letter of Aristeas has Aristeas explain Jewish worship to the Ptolemy: “These people worship God the overseer and creator of all, whom all men worship including ourselves, O King, except that we have a different name. Our name for him is Zeus and Dis” (*Letter of Aristeas* 16). This equation is put on the lips of a supposed Gentile, but we find the same idea in the fragments of Aristobulus, a Jewish philosopher in the mid-second century BCE, roughly contemporary with Aristeas. Aristobulus cites several verses from Greek poets that refer to Zeus, but removes the proper name Zeus and substitutes the generic word “God,” “for their intention refers to God, therefore it was so expressed by us” (frag. 4, quoted in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.13.7; OTP: 2.841). It is unlikely that Aristobulus would have ascribed to the God of Israel all the exploits attributed to Zeus by Homer. Hellenistic philosophers found the old mythology embarrassing, because of the immorality of the gods. They had developed a method of explaining the myths allegorically, so that the actions of the gods were understood symbolically. The refined, philosophical, understanding of Zeus can be seen in the hymn composed by the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes:

Most glorious of immortals, Zeus  
The many-named, almighty evermore,  
Nature's great sovereign, ruling all by law (Grant 1953: 152)

It was with Zeus so conceived that the Jewish authors wished to identify their God, although even then they would have understood the deity differently. The Stoics understood the divine power as a spirit immanent in the universe. The God of the Jews was transcendent. But an identification was possible insofar as both were understood as the ultimate power guiding the universe.

## Translating Deities

When Greek culture spread eastwards after the conquests of Alexander, the Greeks often tried to make sense of other religions by identifying the gods of other peoples with their own. So for example the Syrian Baal Shamem, Lord of the Heavens, was identified with Zeus Olympios. In many cases, these identifications were harmless, and acceptable to the non-Greek peoples. But they were sometimes problematic for Jews. In 168/167 BCE,

Antiochus Epiphanes set out to punish the people of Jerusalem for rebelling against the high priest Menelaus whom he had installed, although he was not from the high priestly line. He revoked the right to live according to their ancestral customs, and imposed new cultic observances. According to 2 Maccabees “the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their ancestors and no longer to live by the laws of God; also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and to call it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus-the-friend-of-Strangers, as did the people who lived in that place” (2 Macc. 6:1–2). (Gerizim was the site of the temple of the Samaritans, who worshipped the same God as the Jews.) The change of divine name does not seem to have been accompanied by further cultic changes in the case of the Samaritans, and it did not provoke resistance. In Jerusalem, however, the traditional festivals and observances were banned, and this is what gave rise to the Maccabean revolt (Collins 2005: 21–43). It was one thing for a Jewish philosopher in Alexandria to speculate that Zeus and Yahweh were different names for the same god. It was quite another thing to impose a change of name in the temple, and to introduce alien customs, which the natives found offensive.

One of the alien customs introduced by Antiochus IV Epiphanes involved another identification of Israel’s God: “when a festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreaths of ivy and to walk in the procession in honor of Dionysus” (2 Macc. 6:7). The idea that the God of the Jews was really Dionysus occurs in a number of other contexts. According to 3 Maccabees, a highly legendary story set in Egypt, Ptolemy IV Philopator attempted to have all the Jews in Egypt registered and branded with the symbol of Dionysus (3 Macc. 2:29). The story is unlikely to be historical, but the association of the Jews with Dionysus is significant. Plutarch, a Greek intellectual of the late first and early second centuries CE records a discussion among Greeks as to the identity of the God of the Jews. One of the participants argues that “the time and character of the greatest, most sacred holiday of the Jews clearly befit Dionysus.” He is referring to the feast of Tabernacles or Sukkoth, at the end of the wine harvest. He goes on to suggest that the Sabbath may derive from the cry “Sabi” used by devotees of Dionysus (Stern 1976: 1.557). This kind of speculation only reflects the curiosity of some Greek intellectuals about a strange people and their religion. The attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to force the Jews to make their cultic practice conform to Greek norms was exceptional, but it shows that the identification of Yahweh with a Greek deity was a hazardous move that was not always beneficial to the Jews.

## New Philosophical Concepts

Philosophically minded Jews found tools in Greek philosophy that enabled them to find common ground with Gentiles, without actually identifying their God with pagan deities. One such conceptual tool was the Stoic idea of the *Logos* (Word or Reason) or *Pneuma* (Spirit) as a way of expressing a divine presence in the universe. The Stoics conceived of the divine element not as a transcendent God but as a fiery substance that permeated and vivified all reality. While this rational element could be called Spirit or

*Pneuma*, it was conceived as a fine physical substance that could enter into things and persons. It was this Spirit or Logos that held the universe together. By the first century BCE, however, there were philosophers who combined this Stoic idea with the Platonic belief in a transcendent deity. These philosophers are known as “Middle Platonists” (Dillon 1977). Jewish intellectuals found this kind of Middle Platonism congenial. Philo of Alexandria conceives of the Logos as an intermediary being connecting God to the universe. We find a similar conception in the Wisdom of Solomon, which was written in Alexandria in the early first century CE. Wisdom adapts the Stoic concept of the Logos or *Pneuma* to describe Wisdom as a cosmic force. In this, it was building on the biblical portrayal of Wisdom in Proverbs 8 and Ben Sira 24, which personify Wisdom as a female figure who assisted God in the creation of the world. According to the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom has “a spirit intelligent and holy.” Because of her pureness “she pervades and penetrates all things, for she is a breath of the power of God.” “In every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets.” “She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and orders all things well” (Wisd. of Sol. 7:22–8:1). She is also the spirit of the Lord that fills the world, and holds all things together (Wisd. of Sol. 1:7), like the Stoic Logos (Winston 1985; Tobin 1992; Collins 1997: 196–202). This assimilation of Wisdom to the Logos is of obvious importance for the development of Christian theology, as Jesus is identified as the Logos in the prologue to the Gospel of John. The idea of the Logos/Wisdom was taken over directly from Hellenistic Judaism, and became one of the building blocks for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

## Natural Theology

Related to the role of the Logos in the cosmos was the idea that people could reason to the existence of God by observing the order and beauty of nature. There were hints of such ideas in the Hebrew Bible, e.g. in Psalm 8, but they were not developed into a philosophical doctrine. Greek philosophers, from Socrates to the Stoics, held that reason required that the beautiful and orderly movements of the cosmos require the presence of a controlling mind. This idea finds classical expression in the Wisdom of Solomon 13:5: “for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their creator.” The author of Wisdom is critical of pagan philosophers who failed to arrive at the truth, but has some sympathy for them because they were seeking to find God, even if they went astray. This kind of reasoning is fundamental to the tradition of natural theology, which is associated especially with the medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas (Collins 1998). It is not very prominent in the New Testament, but St. Paul reasons in this way when he holds Gentiles responsible for their errors: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God as shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (Rom. 19–20). The underlying assumption is that any intelligent person should be able to arrive at the knowledge of God, even without the aid of revelation.

## The Immortality of the Soul

Another way in which traditional Jewish beliefs were modified by the encounter with Greek philosophy concerns the immortality of the soul. Prior to the second century BCE, there is little evidence for belief in a meaningful afterlife in Judaism. Righteous and sinner alike were expected to go down to Sheol, where there would be no inquiry made about them. In the early second century BCE, however, new ideas appear in the early apocalyptic literature, in the books attributed to Enoch and Daniel. The Book of Daniel was written during the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, and is largely a promise of divine deliverance. The deliverance, however, was not only on the level of the people as a whole, such as had often been predicted by the prophets. It also entailed a resurrection of the dead, some of whom would rise to everlasting contempt and others to everlasting life. The wise, who emerge as the heroes in the time of persecution, would shine like the splendor of the firmament and be like the stars forever (Dan. 12). In the Book of Enoch, the righteous are also told that they will become companions to the host of heaven and that the gates of heaven would be opened to them (1 Enoch 104). In the idiom of these writings, to become like the stars means to join the heavenly host, or the angels. The astral imagery may be indebted to Greek conceptions of astral immortality (Collins 2000b).

Contrary to what is often claimed, the earliest Jewish formulations of resurrection do not entail a resurrected body of flesh and blood. Rather, the spirits of the righteous are lifted up to heaven to enjoy an angelic kind of life. The Book of Jubilees (second century BCE) says of the righteous that “their bodies will rest in the earth but their spirits will have much joy” (Jub. 23:26–31). It would not be correct to say that that these texts envision an incorporeal afterlife. Rather, they imagine “a spiritual body,” as St. Paul also does in 1 Corinthians 15, in the way that a ghost has a body, even though it is a spirit. The Dead Sea Scrolls suggest that members of the sectarian community had already passed from death to life, in the sense that they were already communing with the angels. Consequently, the Scrolls do not address death as a problem or speak of resurrection. The Jews who wrote these texts in Hebrew and Aramaic did not ground their eschatology in a clear doctrine of the make-up of the human person.

The more philosophically oriented Jews of Alexandria, however, developed such a doctrine, with the help of Platonic philosophy. Philo expounds the creation of the human being in Genesis 1 by arguing that the image and likeness of God is with respect to the mind, the sovereign element of the soul (Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* 69). Death is the separation of the soul from the body, as Plato had taught. The death with which Adam and Eve are threatened in Genesis is the death of the soul. For Philo, ordinary death was part of the plan of creation, and was no great catastrophe, as the soul is immortal. The Jewish thinkers did not accept the Platonic view of the soul without modification. They do not clearly accept the idea that souls are pre-existent (although Wisdom of Solomon 8:20, “being good, I entered into an undefiled body”) gives a nod in that direction. Also, they sometimes suggest that only the souls of the righteous are immortal. According to the Wisdom of Solomon, the righteous only seem to die, but their souls are in the hand of God, and they are at peace (Wisd. of Sol. 3:1–3). The idea of the



immortality of the soul became the standard view among philosophically sophisticated Jews (not necessarily among all Greek-speaking Jews) (Collins 1997: 178–195), and later became standard in Christianity. Both Jews and Christians, however, still retained beliefs about resurrection that were quite un-Platonic, and in the case of Christianity these beliefs were reinforced by the resurrection of Jesus.

## The Common Ethic

We have noted that Greek philosophers used allegorical interpretation to make the traditional stories about the gods palatable to a morally sophisticated age. Jewish philosophers did likewise with the biblical stories. The earliest examples are found in the Letter of Aristeas and the fragments of Aristobulus. Aristeas acknowledges that Gentiles found Jewish purity laws, and especially food laws, troublesome. The High Priest responds that these laws form a hedge around the Jews, to prevent them from being corrupted by contact with idolators. But all these laws have symbolic meanings: “Do not take the contemptible view that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive preoccupation with mice and weasels or suchlike creatures” (paragraph 144). Rather, birds of prey are forbidden because they symbolize injustice. Animals that chew the cud are symbols of memory and thoughtful rumination, and so forth. This is obviously an apologetic strategy to explain a set of practices that seemed quite irrational in terms that could win the respect of educated Greeks. Similarly, Aristobulus is at pains to explain passages that ascribe bodily parts to God as symbolic. The hands of God, for example, symbolize his power. He concludes: “For it is agreed by all the philosophers that it is necessary to hold holy opinions concerning God, a point our philosophical school makes particularly well” (frag. 4, quoted in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.8; OTP: 2.281). The assumption here is that the truth is one. If the great philosophers spoke the truth, then they and Moses must be saying the same thing. This method of interpretation was perfected in the voluminous writings of Philo of Alexandria in the early first century CE. It plays a fundamental role in the biblical interpretation of the Christian Church Fathers.

Aristeas is somewhat exceptional among the Hellenistic Jewish writers insofar as he addresses head-on the aspects of Judaism that a Greek would have found strange and repelling. Most of the Jewish literature that has survived in Greek passes over these issues in silence (Collins 1997: 158–177; Collins, 2000: 155–185). Both Philo and Josephus (the Jewish historian who wrote towards the end of the first century CE) give summaries of the Jewish law that make no mention of the purity and dietary laws (Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.1–9; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.190–219). These summaries emphasize the belief in one God, and lay great emphasis on sexual practices. Jews were distinguished in the Greco-Roman world for rejecting homosexuality, abortion, and infanticide. Abortion and infanticide are not explicitly condemned in the Bible, but were abhorred in Jewish tradition. A similar view of ethical requirements is found in a poem attributed to Phocylides (a Greek poet of the sixth century BCE, who wrote proverb-like sentences), which has long been recognized as a Jewish composition. Pseudo-Phocylides is remarkable insofar as he does not refer explicitly to Jews or

Judaism at all. His work is recognized as Jewish only because its concerns are similar to those of Jewish writings, and it occasionally uses biblical language. Consequently, some scholars have questioned whether he was necessarily Jewish at all, and suggest that he may have been a “God-fearer,” that is, a Gentile who had a sympathetic interest in Judaism and its law.

Such God-fearing Gentiles play a prominent role in the Book of Acts in the New Testament. They are also known from inscriptions around the Mediterranean world, where they are called *theosebeis*, those who revere God. It is not apparent that these “Godfearers” were organized in any way, or that their beliefs were standardized. In many cases, they may be people who befriended Jewish communities or contributed to their upkeep. But it is likely that some gentiles were attracted by the Jewish law and subscribed to it in some respects (Feldman 1993: 342–382). According to Josephus,

The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed. (*Against Apion* 2.282)

The Roman satirist Juvenal paints a picture of gradual adherence, from one generation to another:

Some, who have had a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine’s flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of humans; and soon they lay aside their foreskins. Being wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practice and revere the Jewish law. (*Satires* 13:96–106)

Interestingly enough, these passages suggest that many people were attracted to the more distinctive, and irrational, aspects of Jewish observance, including the dietary restrictions. Most of the Jewish writers, however, downplay these kinds of observances and focus instead on the kinds of beliefs and practices that Jews and enlightened Greeks could share.

There does not seem to have been any organized Jewish missionary activity in the ancient world, although Gentiles were occasionally attracted to convert because of contact with Jews (Goodman 1994). The most famous story in this regard concerns the royal house of Adiabene in the first century CE (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.34–48). A Jewish merchant taught the women of the royal household to worship God in the Jewish manner. Through them, he also won over Izates, the crown prince. His mother Helena had already been converted by another Jew. When Izates wished to be circumcised, however, his mother tried to stop him, fearing that his subjects would not accept him if he adopted foreign ways. The merchant, Ananias, supported her, arguing that one could worship God without circumcision. Izates was later persuaded to be circumcised by another Jew (Collins 1985).



The idea that one could worship God without circumcision forms important background for the preaching of Paul. Much of the literature of the Hellenistic Diaspora emphasizes the ethical aspects of Judaism, and is silent on the ritual aspects. We should not necessarily conclude that the ritual aspects of Judaism were neglected. Philo shows that there was a spectrum of Jewish observance:

There are some who, regarding laws in their literal sense in the light of symbols of matters belonging to the intellect, are overpunctilious about the latter, while treating the former with easy-going neglect. Such men I for my part should blame for handling the matter in too easy and off-hand a manner. They ought to have given careful attention to both aims, to more full and exact investigation of what is not seen and in what is seen to be stewards without reproach. (*On the Migration of Abraham* 89–90)

Philo was more critical of those who did not appreciate the symbolic meaning at all, those who had what the Letter of Aristeas called “a crude and uncouth disposition.” But while he emphasized the symbolic meaning of the rituals, Philo realized that community life needed their literal observance.

Nonetheless, the fact that some Jews decided that it was possible to serve God without circumcision was of great significance for the subsequent spread of Christianity.

## The Limits of Assimilation

In many respects, Hellenistic Judaism anticipated Christianity in finding ways to express the biblical tradition in Greek language and idiom. The adaptation of Greek philosophy was especially important. Both Jews and Christians found common ground with philosophically minded Greeks, especially those who were inclined to monotheism and who were critical of crude mythology and idolatry (Athanasiazi and Frede 1999).

But while Hellenistic Jews, especially in cities like Alexandria, were eager to be accepted as akin to the Greek citizens, they realized that there were certain lines that they could not cross if they were to maintain their own identity. The most important of these lines concerned the worship of gods other than Yahweh. The attempt of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to impose such worship on the Jews led to armed rebellion in the time of the Maccabees. In Alexandria, the refusal to take part in the local cults constituted a barrier to citizenship, and also to social integration. The Jews, like other ethnic groups such as the Idumeans, had their own semi-autonomous organization, called a *politeuma*. (Many scholars argue that we should speak of Judeans rather than “Jews,” as they were identified as an ethnic group with ancestral customs.) At least the upper-class Jews wanted to enjoy the same rights as citizens, but most of them were not willing to pay the price of participating in the cults. (There were always exceptions to this. The nephew of the philosopher Philo, Tiberius Julius Alexander, abandoned Judaism to pursue a career in the Roman army, and became prefect of Egypt.) Some Alexandrian Greeks resented the attempt to enjoy the privileges of the city without participating in its cultic life. Apion the grammarian, a bitter opponent of the Jews, asked: “why then if

they are citizens, do they not worship the same gods as the Alexandrians?" (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.65). Tensions escalated, and violence broke out in 38 CE, in the time of the emperor Caligula. After Caligula's death, his successor Claudius issued an edict that confirmed the right of Jews to "live in a city not their own," but cautioned them "not to aim for more than they already have." Violence broke out again in 66 CE, and finally the Jewish community in Alexandria was virtually wiped out in 116/117 CE, in the course of a Jewish revolt (Collins 2000: 113–152). But the case of Alexandria was exceptional in this regard. Other Jewish communities, in Rome, Asia Minor and other places, continued to prosper and enjoyed good relations with their gentile neighbors.

Viewed from the perspective of later history, the Hellenistic Jews must be credited with introducing a distinction between cult and culture, which anticipated to a degree the much later distinction between religion and culture in Western society (Collins 2005). It is a commonplace that religion was not distinguished as a separate sphere of life in antiquity. Worship of the gods was integrated in all aspects of society. Yet the Jews of the Hellenistic age embraced Greek culture, but refused to participate in the worship of the pagan gods. This distinction was difficult for Gentiles to comprehend, as we can see from the question of Apion cited above. It set a precedent that was followed by Christians, as they increasingly found themselves at home in the Roman world. It enabled both Jews and Christians to develop and preserve their distinct identities, while adapting their way of life in all other respects to the cultures in which they lived.

## Note

- 1 It may be an attempt to adapt the divine name Yahweh, which seems to be a verb in the third person, to first person speech (Childs 1974: 68–69).

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## CHAPTER 3

# The “Triumph” of Hellenization in Early Christianity

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Historically, the theme of “Hellenization” is rooted in post-exilic Judaism under the Hellenistic rulers, the successors of Alexander the Great upon his early demise (323 BCE). Third-century BCE Maccabeans saw Hellenization as a threat and corruption of Jewish belief and custom. Taking their cue from the Maccabean revolt, and assuming a strong contrast between Judaism and Hellenism, nineteenth-century historians depicted early Christianity as a (Hegelian) synthesis of these two elements (Hengel 1980: 52). Judaism was associated with “authority” or “revelation” and “particularity,” while Hellenism was thought to represent “reason” and “universality” (Martin 2001: 33–34). Hellenism was regarded both negatively as a temptation to paganizing (Jaeger 1961: 107), and positively for contributing to the “universal” character of Christianity.

Adolf von Harnack’s classic statement of this approach to Hellenization (Harnack 1904; 1961; 1978) was especially influential for incorporating anti-Catholic use of the theme from sixteenth-century reformers as they sought to take Christianity back to an earlier, simpler expression of the faith (*ad fontes*) (Bryan 2002: 149–153). Hellenization, and particularly Platonism, took the blame for many objectionable aspects of the Roman Catholic tradition (Smith 1990: 7–9, 13, 7–20). More recently another German scholar, Martin Hengel (1974; 1980; 1989), questioned the basis of Harnack’s position by claiming that even before the Maccabean revolt, Palestinian Judaism was Hellenized almost as much as was Diaspora Judaism. Hengel’s position is now widely accepted as a “new orthodoxy” in scholarship (Collins 1989: 227).

The present essay examines Martin Hengel’s contribution against the background of Harnack’s work. While recent scholarship on relevant topics (like Gnosticism) has undermined crucial features of Harnack’s approach, central views on the repudiation of dogma are maintained. We note particularly the rejection of dogmatics by proponents of contextual theology who consider this discipline unnecessary and irrelevant for the expansion of Christianity in the “two-thirds” world.

The term "Hellenization" is based on the Greek verb *hellênizein*, "to speak Greek accurately" (Hengel 1980: 76–77, 158; Jaeger 1961: 6, 107). The noun *hellênismos* represents the process of accepting or incorporating aspects of Greek culture (education, sports, or a lifestyle focused on the theatre and stadium). *Hellas* was the name Greeks used for their own territory; *Hellên* their mythical first ancestor. Within the Hellenistic kingdoms a degree of cultural pride accompanied the process of "Hellenization"; the Greeks regarded themselves as agents of civilization, designating those who did not speak Greek as *barbaroi*, literally, those who speak an unintelligible *barbar*, and are therefore backward and uncivilized (Hengel 1980: 55–56). Hellenism represented education, good government, and an aristocratic lifestyle.

## Hellenization of Post-Exilic Judaism

Using a policy established by Alexander himself, Hellenistic rulers founded cities and assigned mercantile and military colonial settlements where the ruling class remained carefully segregated from the subject population (Hengel 1980: 53, 55–56, 59). Among cities established by Alexander the Great, Alexandria may be regarded as a model of the Hellenistic colonizing policy; it was founded at the mouth of the Nile (331 BCE). The ruling Hellenes used local people to do their work, but did not make it easy for them to gain civic rights (Hengel 1974: 1.25–27; 1980: 60). In Alexandria, the Jews presented a "third force" between Greek citizens and the native population. We know of Jews who acquired a Greek education in the gymnasium (*ephebate*), adopted Greek names, and learned the language to work as bilingual officials in responsible administrative positions (Hengel 1980: 58, 60, 62). The Hellenized population was united by use of the Greek *koinê*; Greek-speaking rulers usually did not bother to learn the local language (Hengel 1980: 76).

For the Hellenization of Judaism in pre-Maccabean Palestine (333–175 BCE) Hengel acknowledged scarce documentation, and the need to extrapolate from otherwise unexplained phenomena (1980: 51–52). Yet he affirmed adoption of Greek ways by the Jerusalem aristocracy, and rejected a sharp distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism (Hengel 1974: 1.311; Millar 1978: 9). Important factors include early favorable reports on the Jews by Greek writers like Theophrastus (Momigliano 1975: 85) and Hecataeus (Hengel 1974: 1.255–256); the Tobiad romance (Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.4.1–11; Hengel 1974: 1.269–272); translation of Torah as the Greek Septuagint, allegedly by 72 Palestinian Jewish elders (ca. 270 BCE) (Hengel 1974: 1.102; Bickerman 1988: 101–16); and the virtual equation of Torah with traditional Greek wisdom, as in Ben Sira (ca. 180–175 BCE) (Feldman 1977: 375–376; Hengel 1974: 1.131–153; Millar 1978: 9).

Under the Ptolemies, third-century BCE Palestine remained relatively peaceful and prosperous, witnessed by archeological finds of coins and trade materials (Hengel 1974: 1.32–57). With Seleucid rule in the second century BCE, Hengel notes significant change for Syria and Palestine. In return for contribution to the royal treasury, the Seleucids granted some cities the status of a Greek *polis*, ruled by an aristocratic *gerousia* (Sanhedrin) (Hengel 1974: 1.23–27; 1980: 64). Although Greek education

through the gymnasium may not have been established in Jerusalem before 175 BCE, since it involved pagan rites (Feldman 1977: 378), Hengel argues that a Greek political constitution assumes a class of “Hellenes” with a lifestyle focused on the gymnasium, stadium and theatre (Hengel 1980: 64–66; Grabbe 1992: 1.149–153).

The Maccabean revolt was motivated by interference with traditional Jewish custom (Torah and food laws, Sabbath, sacrifices, circumcision) under the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes; he also made demands on the temple treasury, and insisted on the Jews honoring Olympian Zeus as *Theos Epiphanes*, the deity with whom he identified himself (Millar 1978, 10–20). The role of Jewish Hellenizers in establishing this cult provoked a strong reaction from Maccabeans; they demanded removal of the gymnasium and nudity in sports, re-establishing circumcision as sign of the covenant (1 Macc. 1:11–15). For these events Hengel (1974: 1.287) considered the role of Jewish Hellenizers more significant than that of Antiochus (2 Macc. 4:7–14).<sup>1</sup> Other scholars (Millar 1978, 3,5) have focused on royal orders and royal officers interfering with temple rites (2 Macc. 6.1–2). Millar (1978: 10–20) pointed to Antiochus’ invasion of Egypt (169/8 BCE) as motivation for his persecution of Jews.

Were the Maccabeans seeking political dominance, more than religious freedom (as Hengel argued)? The question is not really appropriate, since antiquity knew a far closer intertwinement of politics and religion than is now commonly assumed.<sup>2</sup> Palestinian Jews continued using the Greek language, and accepted Greek educational institutions. Nor did Maccabean rulers interfere with cities governed by a Greek constitution, imposition of taxes, or traders using the crossroads position of Palestine (Grabbe 1992: 1.149–150). Examination of Hengel’s position by outstanding scholars like Millar and Feldman has raised questions of detail, without dislodging his basic thesis that Hellenization of Judaism did not end with the Maccabean revolt; it simply took on more subtle forms (Collins 1989: 227; Hill 1992; Hurtado 2008: 73–74; Maston 2012: 273–274).

## Hellenization of Early Christianity

Hengel’s position on Palestinian Judaism as Hellenistic Judaism has important implications for early Christianity: Hellenization was a factor from the beginning. This undermines a longstanding view of early Christianity as a type of Hegelian synthesis of East (Hebraic Palestinian Jews) and West (Hellenized Diaspora Jews and Gentiles). Indeed, Hengel argued for Hellenized Judaism as a *praeparatio evangelica* for the Messiah (Hengel and Lichtenberger 1981).

For use of *hellênizein* in the New Testament, we note recent use of Hengel’s approach to recognize that the Pauline distinction between Hellenists and Hebrews probably differentiated varying emphases within Judaism.<sup>3</sup> Just as the term *Hellênistês* refers to those of Greek descent, and (Diaspora) Jews known for using Greek, or exhibiting a Greek lifestyle, so also the term *Hebraios* (as in Acts 6:1), indicating Jewish descent and strict observance of the law, may represent believers adopting a traditional Jewish lifestyle (Walton 2012: 315).

What then of early Christianity? To begin with, we recognize the ongoing impact of Harnack’s position on Hellenization from his work on the history of dogma and

the expansion of early Christianity, in spite of its reliance on the outdated nineteenth-century contrast between Judaism and Hellenism. The present essay seeks to discover why Harnack's conception has defied critical changes in scholarship. We turn briefly to three key moments in that discussion: (1) Logos theology; (2) Gnosticism as acute Hellenization; and (3) gradual Hellenization of the Christian Church reacting to Gnosticism.

### *Logos theology*

The gospel of John presented Jesus as the *Logos*, the Word: "In the beginning was the Word." In his defense of Christianity Justin Martyr (*Apology*, 2.10) used that statement to claim Jesus as the Truth far superior to philosophical truth claims of Greek thinkers: "philosophers and legislators . . . did not have complete knowledge of the reason (*logos*) which is Christ." In the Old Testament God had spoken in creation, but in the New Testament this Word became incarnate, as the full revelation of God (*Apology*, 2.6, 8; Harnack 1961: 2.220–221). Identifying Jesus with the *Logos*, Justin presented him in terms familiar to a Greco-Roman audience, while adding a new layer to the meaning of *logos* for speech and reason, or (since Heraclitus and the Stoics) a rational principle active in uniting the cosmos (Chadwick 1967: 77; Helleman 2002: 137–138; 2005: 7–10).

In Justin's apologetic strategy Harnack (1978: 203–204) recognized the beginning of Christian thought aligning itself with a Greek school of philosophy (Harnack 1961: 1.14–16, 20; Rowe 1994: 80–81). Harnack regarded Justin's adaptation of Greek *logos* thought as a positive kind of Hellenization, using the tools of the opponent to defeat them, and thus preparing for the ultimate triumph of Christianity (1961: 1.22).<sup>4</sup> Even so, he was concerned about the impact of "the spirit of Greek philosophy." For Harnack (1961: 1.17) this meant a crucial turn in the history of Christianity, namely, the beginning of Christian dogma (Rowe 1994: 79–80).

### *Gnosticism as acute Hellenization*

A far more negative form of Hellenization arose with Gnosticism and its radical use of philosophical concepts to represent religious themes. Harnack (1961: 1.227–228) identified this "acute Hellenization" as secularization (*Verweltlichung*) of the gospel (Rudolph 1987: 31–32). Gnostics accented the Docetic Jesus (divine, but lacking an ordinary human body) (Rudolph 1987: 157–158).<sup>5</sup> At issue is the relationship of body and soul, flesh, and spirit (Latourette 1975: 122–123).

If Harnack's designation of Gnosticism as philosophical appears surprising, we need to remember that his interest was aroused by the recent publication of *Pistis Sophia* (Rudolph 1987: 27–28). And he relied heavily on second-century "heresiologists" Irenaeus and Tertullian, who identified links between Gnostic groups and Greek schools of philosophy (Rudolph 1987: 9–12). Moreover, Harnack focused on communities associated with Valentinus and Basilides, characterized by a teacher–student relationship more typical of a philosophical school (Rudolph 1987: 215).

Perception of Gnosticism changed dramatically with the 1945 discovery of a library of gnostic manuscripts hidden in clay pots at Nag Hammadi (Ferguson 2003: 301–306; Rudolph 1987: 34–44).<sup>6</sup> The documents are characterized by revelatory and esoteric pronouncement, mythologizing exposition, and reflection on Old Testament themes, especially Genesis. The term *gnōsis*, for which the movement is named, refers not to philosophical, but soteriological knowledge, needed to elude enslavement to cosmic powers (Pelikan 1971: 81–82; Rudolph 1987: 55–56).

As a result of these developments, scholars have effectively abandoned the *philosophical* characterization of Gnosticism. They recognize superficial acquaintance with Greek philosophy, used to gain credibility in that cultural environment (Armstrong 1978; Carroll 1994, 293–300). Few scholars now regard Gnosticism as a heretical form of Christianity, although both Simone Pétrement and Edwin Yamauchi (Yamauchi 1994: 46–47) still support that view (Desjardins 1994a: 66). Many accept an essentially independent origin within the Hellenistic world (Yamauchi 1994: 29–30, 44), or they follow Quispel and Birger Pearson in seeking its roots in (sectarian) Judaism (Desjardins 1994b; Helleman 1994: 437–438). Harnack’s key statement on Gnosticism as acute Hellenization and secularization of the gospel has been largely abandoned.

### *Hellenization in the reaction of the Christian Church*

Outstanding early Christians like Irenaeus successfully rejected the gnostic interpretation of Jesus Christ. But the church also formulated the “rule of faith” as a standard for acceptable teaching, to combat gnostic thought. And it determined the “apostolic succession” of church leaders from the earliest time. Indeed, hierarchical structures were streamlined, and bishops gained more authority. Harnack deplored such determination of teaching, worship, and discipline as incipient elements of Roman Catholicism.

Harnack also noted accentuation of Justin Martyr’s adoption of Greek philosophical terms to express Christian teachings conceptually. Although the Gnostics had rejected an authoritative role for the Old Testament, the church maintained the authority of these Scriptures through an allegorizing approach in interpretation (Harnack 1961: 1.224–125, 227–228). Harnack understood the church’s reaction to Gnosticism as a dialectical struggle against Hellenism in which dogma, defined as the “spirit of Greek philosophy at work on the soil of the Gospel,” appeared as an even more dangerous form of Hellenization (Harnack 1961: 1.17, 227–228; Rowe 1994: 82–84). In its negation Gnosticism had gained a subtle victory over the church. As it characterized the defense against Gnosticism, Hellenization carried the high cost of intellectualization of Christianity through Greek philosophy. And loss of freedom through institutionalization meant displacement of personal experience of the gospel (Harnack 1978: 211–212; Rowe 1994: 84–85).

For Harnack, Christianity was transformed from a living faith to a matter of authoritative dogma, as statements to which one must give assent (Harnack 1978: 204, 207; Rowe 1994: 79–80, 82–84). In his historical work on Christian dogma Harnack sought to redress such a problem (Rowe 1994: 85–86). He wanted the churches of the Reformation to keep alive the true New Testament faith, as the essence of the gospel.



Throughout the twentieth century we note echoes of Harnack's concern for a vibrant living faith and his rejection of an intellectualist, doctrinally accented Christianity, as well as a scholastic view of truth (equating faith with intellectual understanding), as in the work of Leslie Dewart (1966).<sup>7</sup> At the same time considerable effort has been devoted to refuting Harnack's understanding of Greek philosophy (Rowe 1994: 88–90). And we note the romantic idealization of his approach to early Christianity, focused on the experience of simple trust, as a pure evangelical and a-temporal "essence" of Christianity, serving as foil for the metaphysical speculation of dogmatic theology (Harnack 1978: 204–205, 236–237; Helleman 1994: 437).

The 2006 Regensburg address of Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University," may be regarded as part of an ongoing attempt to refute Harnack's program of "dehellenization." Arguing for the integration of reason (*logos*) with God's very own nature, and the harmony of biblical understanding with the best of Greek philosophical inquiry, Pope Benedict (2006: 707–708, 710) sought to reclaim a "critically purified Greek heritage."<sup>8</sup> The Pope's intentions were derailed by vigorous Muslim response to his remarks on Islam, but a number of Catholic scholars have tried to recover his argument for the role of theology in the university (2006: 709).<sup>9</sup>

Even without fully accepting the Pope's agenda on reason and faith, we recognize the important outstanding issue of Harnack's position on dogmatic theology. That view still carries weight in missiological reflection on systematic theology as an unnecessary complication of the simple gospel message. Of course, strong negative associations for dogmatics in our time are only partly due to Harnack; we also note the role of post-modern relativism and "political correctness," where any claim to truth is considered arrogant, and any claim to authority inherently "oppressive" (Sauter 2007a: 61). Even so, Harnack's verdict on "dead orthodoxy" has deeply influenced anti-intellectualist rejection of anything "dogmatic." And this presents a challenge for the Christian Church using the historic creeds to support its presence and work in our world. With Schrodtt (1978: 335–339),<sup>10</sup> Hengel (Hurtado 2008: 75) and others, Rowe (1994: 91) has responded by pointing to the symbolic value of the creeds formulated in the "rule of faith" to oppose gnostic positions.

## Hellenization and Contextual Theology

Contextual theology presents us with one form of contemporary theologizing which continues to show the impact of Harnack's verdict on Hellenization as intellectualization of the faith. In the well-known essay, "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture" (1996a, originally published in 1982), Andrew Walls presented a visitor from outer space who comes down to observe various phases in the history of Christianity. What one age finds important is neglected by the next. On the second descent this visitor discovers Nicene Christianity, or the Hellenistic/Roman phase (Walls 1996a: 3–4). And in the discussion of the Nicene gathering we find language distinctly reminiscent of Harnack's focus on intellectual expression of truth for the genesis of orthodoxy from codification of right belief, stated propositionally (Walls 1996b: 18–19). The *Greek* character is revealed in a degree of arrogance with respect to these statements; the *imperial* aspect of Hellenized Christianity is seen in its close association with centers of political power.

Such an understanding of Hellenized Christianity is serves a specific purpose in a discussion of indigeneity, or contextual theology, a modern form of theologizing focused on socio-economic and political realities which typically values *doing* over *thinking* (Sauter 2007b:106). Dogmatics is viewed as the result of intellectualist academic concerns (Sauter 2007b: 113). Appreciating the local, situational character of theologizing, contextual theology favors plurality. Hellenized Christianity is regarded as but one form of Christianity among others, and its theological concerns reduced to historical interest (Walls 1996a: 10).

In a significant recent discussion of the issue, Gerhard Sauter (2007b) recognizes popularization of the term “context” in repudiation of the legacy from European and North American colonial powers (2007b: 102). But he notes a problematic transfer of the definition of “context” (for the linguistic context in which a text is embedded) to the surrounding circumstance, as a determinant of interpretation (2007b: 102–103,105). What the text says, then, is not as important as what it *can mean* under certain circumstances. Witness to biblical truth is mediated by analysis of the given situation (2007b: 107).

If Walls has made positive use of contextual theology, it is also clear that for him the indigenizing principle does not have the last word. For he recognizes the “pilgrim principle” as a *universalizing* factor which values the ultimate significance of Jesus Christ, fostering *community* and historical continuity with all Christians (Walls 1996a: 6–7). And Walls notes parallels from early Christianity in the relationship of new African Christians to their non-Christian past.<sup>11</sup> But there is a tension between the *indigenizing* and *pilgrim* principles (1996a: 14). The gospel proclaims God’s acceptance of Christians as they are, conditioned by time, place, and socio-cultural circumstances (1996a: 7–8). But God’s transformation of the convert to become what he wants, typically results in pushing that Christian to be out of step with their own culture, for Christianity itself means adopting and incorporating conceptions from its earliest days (1996a: 8–9, 11).

## Conclusion

How then should we evaluate the theme of “Hellenization,” and appreciate the phase of Christianity when things “Greek” were dominant? There was a time when the majority of Christians spoke Greek, and Greek was the language of the great early ecumenical councils: Nicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon. Early New Testament manuscripts were written in Greek, not in Hebrew or Aramaic, the languages familiar to Jesus. Today many read the Scriptures in their mother tongue. The Bible is and remains God’s Word, whatever the language. It is not necessary to hear God’s Word in Greek. Yet, when it comes to translation effort and close exegetical work, the Greek New Testament has a special role. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament is also special, as the version most frequently used for Old Testament quotations in the New.

Many aspects of the long-standing position on “Hellenization” in the history of Christianity owed to Harnack have been superseded by the new understanding of Gnosticism given with the Nag Hammadi manuscripts, and through the recent work of Martin Hengel. We also realize that these new approaches have not undermined Harnack’s understanding of Hellenization and the influence of Greek philosophy, as the key to the history of dogma and intellectualization of the faith. In redressing what he considered harmful

in the history of dogma, Harnack was incredibly successful, perhaps more than he might have anticipated. Overtones of authoritative pronouncement connected with the concept of dogma are now widely considered intolerable, even within faith communities.

Even so, recent scholarship does point to modification of such a negative appreciation of dogmatics in the teaching ministry of the church, particularly in an affirmation of communal searching of the Scriptures to reach consensus on its meaning (Sauter 2007a: 55–56).<sup>12</sup> The teachings most universally accepted by Christians world-wide are rooted in the early ecumenical councils, beginning with the Nicene Council of 325 CE, called to address the Arian interpretation of Christ. It was attended by some three hundred bishops from all regions of the Roman Empire, east and west. They affirmed his nature as fully divine. After centuries of persecution, the church had suddenly been given legal status, and its leaders were surprised to find the emperor Constantine now looking to Christianity as the key to unity and renewed morale in the empire. In the face of schism (Donatists, Melitians) and heretical views (Arians), he had called the council primarily to safeguard the unity of the church itself. This is why the example of Walls' visitor at the Nicene council is unfortunate (Walls 1996a; 3–4); it ignores the significance of this first empire-wide gathering of the Christian Church only recently emerging from centuries of oppression as an illegal body in the empire.

In subsequent years it became clear that if the emperor called a council, and used the power of the state to implement its decisions, he also had the power to undo its work. Bishops learned of the influence wielded by those working close to the centers of power. And later debates around critical terms like *homoousion* (same in essence) or *physis* (nature) to describe the person of Christ, do not make for edifying reading. There is some justification for Harnack's critique of theological discussion turned into political manoeuvring. Many key terms in the debates had their roots in philosophy, and may well have contributed to an intellectualizing of the faith. But "dead" or "dry" these dogmas certainly were not. And to blame all the problems which arose on "Hellenization" requires considerable stretching of the evidence.

If these early councils serve to characterize the Greek or Hellenized phase of Christianity, we would call for special appreciation of their contribution in the history of Christianity. They represent the only occasion that the entire church, from East and West, was able to meet and achieve a degree of unanimity on important issues. Decisions on questions like the deity and humanity of Christ followed on decades of discussion. This is also the reason why the conclusions of these early councils carry an authority quite unlike decisions of any later Christian councils.

## Notes

- 1 Feldman (1977: 381) notes Hengel's reliance on E. J. Bickermann, *Der G-tt der Makkabaer*, Berlin: Schocken, 1937. On Hengel's use of V. Tcherikover, see Grabbe (1992: 1.154).
- 2 In this connection Grabbe (1992: 1.149) makes an unfortunate distinction when he designates Hellenism as a culture, "whereas Judaism was a religion."
- 3 See Steve Walton (2012: 314–315), who refers to H. A. Brehm on the distinction of *hebraios/hellênistês*.

- 4 For a similarly positive evaluation see Walls (1996a: 14).
- 5 On Basilides' rejection of Jesus suffering on the cross, see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.24.4.
- 6 The documents were presented in English translation as *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. James M. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1977, with a 4th revd. edn. in 1996.
- 7 Focusing on the historicity of thought, Dewart's radical "dehellenization" of dogma would abandon the conception of *logos* and the doctrine of the trinity (Dewart 1966: 143–147, 191–193). For interaction with his work (by outstanding theologians like B. Lonergan, J. Pelikan, and H. Cox), see G. Baum, *The Future of Belief Debate*, New York: Herder & Herder, 1967.
- 8 The pope recognized three stages of dehellenization: the *sola scriptura* theme of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation; nineteenth-century liberal theologians (especially Adolf von Harnack) liberating Christianity from philosophical/theological elements; and contemporary cultural plurality, regarding the synthesis of Christianity with Hellenism as only one example of inculturation, and thus not binding on subsequent generations (708–709).
- 9 See especially Thomas G. Guarino (2007), "The God of Philosophy and of the Bible: Theological Reflections on Regensburg," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 10 (4): 120–130. Also James Schall (2007), *The Regensburg Lecture*, South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, a defense of the rightful role of reason in human faith for the Christian tradition.
- 10 Here Schrodt summarizes his argument on the continuity of Christian exegesis and dogmatics as witness to truth, and teachings rooted in credal formulations, embedded already in the New Testament.
- 11 Walls (1996a: 12–13) compares Okot p'Bitek accusing Mbiti of continuing the missionary (mis-)representation of "decent paganism," with Celsus accusing Christians of misrepresenting their views; on similar analogies in the writings of Bediako where he also compares modern African and early Christian theologies, see Helleman (2005: 6).
- 12 Sauter is not alone; see also Richard Heyduck, *The Recovery of Doctrine in the Contemporary Church: An Essay in Philosophical Ecclesiology*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2002. Addressing the marginalization of doctrine (defined as the "speech act of the church" (2002: xi, 38, 193), Heyduck develops the position of George Lindbeck (in *The Nature of Doctrine*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) on Christianity as a dramatic narrative in which (authoritative) doctrine guides the life of the church (2002: x, 38–39, 191, 200–201).

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## CHAPTER 4

# Ancient Eastern Christianity

## Syria, Persia, Central Asia, and India

Scott W. Sunquist

Earliest Christianity developed at the intersection of three continents, caught between two major empires. The early followers of Jesus spread in all directions from the eastern Mediterranean world of the Roman Empire especially to the east, across the Persian Empire. By the end of the first century, Christians speaking Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, and Greek were found not only in the Roman regions of Asia, but also deep in the Persian (Parthian) Empire. In Roman Asia, Christians were persecuted because of their uncompromising monotheism and therefore their unwillingness to honor the *genius* of the emperor. By contrast, as Christianity spread into Parthian Asia, Christians had greater freedom. Parthia, even though Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion, had developed a peace based upon tolerance of other religions: it became known as a “Parthian Peace.” This tolerance allowed for Christianity to develop, for Christian refugees from the Roman Empire to find a home, and for other religions to prosper.

The centers of earliest Asian Christianity that we are aware of were major trading centers along the Silk Road, client kingdoms of Rome and Persia, and political centers: Antioch, Aleppo, Edessa (Urfa), Nisibis, Kirkuk, Arbela, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and by the seventh century, Kashgar, Samarqand, Almalik, and Chang’an (Xian). Thus, by the time Christianity had spread to Scandinavia (less than 2,000 miles) it had already spread to the heart of China (over 4,000 miles), had grown, developed, been persecuted and declined. There were bishops across central Asia before the Tsar of Russia sent his delegation to learn about Christianity in Constantinople.

However, the history of the very earliest communities outside of the Roman Empire is shrouded in mystery and filled with half-converted saints and zealous ascetics. Asian Christianity did not develop a unified ecclesial order until the early fifth century. The vast territory, severe persecutions beginning in the third century, and the influx of refugees and Roman “heretics” gave a unique diversity to Asian Christianity that was

not known in the West. It would be the waves of persecution – from Indian, Chinese, Persian, and Arab rulers – more than the theological diversity that prevented Asian Christianity from having a major influence in Asia until recent times. The pattern of Asian Christianity has followed the general story of ascetic missionaries, growth under tolerant rulers, and then sudden changes in fortune under a new regime or dynasty. This pattern was first seen in Persia and India in the early centuries of Asian Christianity and it has been true through the twentieth century up to the present day.

## Earliest Asian Christianity

The earliest followers of Jesus in non-Roman Asia were mostly Semitic peoples who spread the faith both through migration (trade) and intentional apostolic activity. Although no records remain, it is likely that some of the earliest of Jesus' Asian followers were in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost and the origin of the Jewish Church. Of the Asian pilgrims mentioned in Acts 2, three groups would be considered Iranian: those from Parthia (which would probably be Northeast Iran today), the Elamites, and the Medes. Mesopotamia, or present-day Iraq and Syria is also mentioned, so it is likely that some of these earliest converts would have brought the new faith back to their villages. What evidence we do have of early Asian Christianity is sparse. The *Odes of Solomon* may be the earliest Asian Christian worship book, with hymns, small sermons and liturgies. However, it is not clear if all of the *Odes* were written in Syriac (the language of early Asian Christianity), Greek, or both languages. Neither is it clear if *Odes* came from western Syria (Antioch) or eastern Syria in a location like Edessa. What the *Odes* do reveal is an early tradition of a Semitic theological style. Most of the hymns and sermons in the Syrian language were written in parallelism like the book of Psalms in the Bible. Their Christology is not orthodox as would be defined in the fourth century, but it expresses an emerging acceptance of the divinity of Jesus and a primitive Trinitarian formula. The following, from Ode 7, is a Christological hymn, which shows the poetic style of early Asian Christian literature, both liturgical and homiletic.

He became like me, that I might receive Him.  
In form He was considered like me, that I might put Him on.  
And I trembled not when I saw Him,  
Because He was gracious to me.  
Like my nature He became, that I might understand Him.  
And like my form, that I might not turn away from Him.  
The Father of knowledge is the Word of knowledge.  
He who created wisdom is wiser than His works. (Charlesworth 1977: 35)

Other evidence of early Asian Christianity includes the record of Asian rulers confessing the faith, the earliest record of a church building, and later records of bishoprics that indicate extensive missionary activity during the first three centuries. We look at each one of these. According to the late fourth-century Syriac work, *The Doctrine of Addai* (Deleanu 2012), and confirmed by semi-converted court official Bardaisan (*The*



*Book of the Laws of Countries*; Drijvers 1965) the King Abgar V of Osrhoene (capital city, Edessa) came to faith soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *The Doctrine of Addai* claims that King Abgar sent a delegation to bring the miracle worker Jesus of Nazareth to Edessa to cure him of his leprosy. A letter dictated by Jesus is recorded stating that Jesus was very busy, but after he returns to his Father, he will send a disciple to bring healing. Such an early royal conversion, plus the remarkable claims that Jesus sent a letter to the king and that the emissary Hanan drew a picture of Jesus and brought it back to Abgar, are unlikely. What is much more likely, or even certain, is that the later Abgar VIII (177–212), who ruled during the time of Bardaisan (154–222), came to faith and led his nation to follow Jesus of Nazareth. It was recorded in the *Chronicles of Edessa* (Moffett 1992: 58) that the church of the Christians was destroyed by a huge flood in 201. Christians were thus worshipping publicly, in all likelihood with the support of the government since Bardaisan was a court official and his *Book of the Laws of Countries* (Drijvers 1965) was a type of apologetic for the faith as he understood it.

Bardaisan's theology as expressed in the *The Book of the Laws of Countries* (Drijvers, 1965), is a unique insight into how early "royal theology" was developing in Asia and, at the same time, it is a window into cultural practices of second-century western Asia and eastern Europe. Clearly with little outside guidance, Bardaisan seems to be giving an apologetic for the Christian faith as he understands it, while comparing Christian belief and practice with other cultural practices. Expressed as a dialogue, Bardaisan answers questions from his interlocutor, Avida, about God, the practices of various cultures and then, in the middle of the dialogue is a fascinating paragraph on what Christians do and what they believe. Positively speaking, Christians in all cultures ("nations") worship on the first day of the week, fast, attend to the reading of sacred texts and are called by the name of their sovereign: *Christians*. Negatively speaking, "we" Christians do not follow many of the customs of the cultures in which we live.

The brethren who are in Gaul do not take males *for wives*, nor those who are in Parthia two wives; nor do those who are in Judaea circumcise themselves; nor do our sisters who are among the Geli consort with strangers; nor do those brethren who are in Persia take their daughters for wives; nor do those who are in Media abandon their dead, or bury them alive, or give them as food to the dogs; nor do those who are in Edessa kill their wives or their sisters when they commit impurity, but they withdraw from them, and give them over to the judgment of God; nor do those who are in Hatra stone thieves to death; but, wherever they are, and in whatever place they are found, the laws of the several countries do not hinder them from obeying the law of their Sovereign, Christ; nor does the Fate of the celestial Governors compel them to make use of things which they regard as impure. (Drijvers 1965)

Fate, a very strong Asian astrological concept, still had power for Bardaisan, but not final authority in a person's life. This was a theology not concerned with Christological or Trinitarian formulations, but with defending the universality and missionary nature of this new Asian religion.

Another small kingdom on the border between the Roman and Persian Empires that accepted the faith of Christians was Armenia. Tradition has it that the missionary Addai, mentioned above, traveled in the region as the first to bring the teachings of

Christ to villages in Armenia. By the time of the national conversion under the King Tiridates III ca. 310, many of the villages were following Christian teachings with Syriac texts from Syrian regions of the Roman Empire. Credit for the conversion of the King and the nation usually is given to Gregory the Illuminator (ca. 240–332). The Armenian culture was soon transformed by the immediate translation of biblical and extra-biblical texts into Armenian. Armenian culture adopted Christian teachings and worship thoroughly and unlike any other Asian culture to the present day.

A third nation that received Christianity as its national religion in Asia in this early period was Georgia. Although tradition awards Georgia as the missionary field of the apostle Andrew, there is no direct evidence that he established churches by the early second century. However, Christian communities were common by the third century in eastern Georgia (Rapp 2010: 138); through the work of Georgian apostolic monks the faith spread, and in 337 King Mirian III (aka Mihran, 284–361) came to faith. Georgian Christianity, like Armenian, quickly became part of the fabric of the culture through the development of a Georgian Script and the translation of the Bible and other sacred texts within the first century of the king's conversion. Not until the tenth century did theological and ecclesial uniformity develop in Georgia; diversity of beliefs and practices built around the Georgian Bible marked the first half millennium of Georgian Christianity.

Although the earliest Asian Christianity outside of the Roman Empire was diverse in language and cultural expressions, it was led by the Syrian forms and teachings and by the Syriac language (Vööbus 1958: iv–ix). Thus, most of the early Asian Christian writings were more biblical and allegorical and less philosophical than what developed in the Hellenistic world. Syrian Christianity was also ascetic and monastic in expression, more than in other regions. This asceticism, however, shaped the Asian Church to be strongly missionary and, ironically, to engage social issues and eventually to become the seedbed of both ecclesial and social leaders. Syrian missionary monasticism left its formative character on the church in Armenia, Georgia, Osroene, central Asia, India, and even to China. Monastic life was both missionary and scholarly, leaving behind the great treasure trove of early Asian Christian literature: biblical, spiritual, allegorical and poetic (Murray 1975).

## India

Although there is no definitive proof of when Christianity first arrived in India, it is accepted among most Indian Christians that the Apostle Thomas first brought Christianity at the end of the first or beginning of the second century. This is not impossible for trade, both by land and sea, was common between the West and South Asia in the early centuries of the Common Era. However, there is no reliable documentary evidence for the arrival of the first Christians or the first Christian missionaries in India. The apocryphal *Acts of Judas Thomas*, written in Syriac and dated to the early third century, tells how the Apostles, after Jesus' ascension, divided up the world to evangelize all the nations and Thomas was awarded India (Moffett 1992: 24–44). Unwilling to go, he was sold as a slave to a merchant going to India whereupon he worked for King

Gundaphar. In India, Thomas led people to faith and he cared for the poor. Thomas, according to this account performed miracles of healing, raising from the dead, exorcism, and he preached to bring about conversion. The form of Christian life Thomas endorses in this book is very ascetic or world denying. It reflects more of the Syrian Christian communities than the teachings of the apostles found in scripture. However, there may very well be elements of truth at the core, for there was a King Gundaphar in India (in the north, however, not along the southern coast) and the type of resistance does reflect the forms of persecution that Christians encountered from Hindus in India.

According to the historian Eusebius, it was not Thomas, but another apostle, Bartholomew who first came to India. Eusebius, as well as St. Jerome, refer to the story told by Egyptian theologian Pantaenus when he returned from a visit to India in the second century. Pantaenus went to help the persecuted Indian Christians after an Indian delegation came to Alexandria. His visit was some time in the last two decades of the second century. This story, which has much more history to it than the Thomas legend, reveals that a robust witnessing community existed in South India by the 170s. How they got there, and whether Thomas or Bartholomew were the evangelists, we may never know. We do know that these Christian communities, mostly along the southern coasts (both the southeast and southwest coasts), have existed since the second century and they suffered persecution from Hindus in the early centuries. All traditions (Greek and Syriac, as well as Indian) agree with this.

## Early Theologies and Theologians in Asia

As we noted above, the earliest Christian theological writings were translations of Scripture (in Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian), and early liturgical writings like the *Odes of Solomon*. Bardaisan represents the earliest attempts at a royal apologetic, with all the mixed motives and understandings involved in such an enterprise. The earliest Asian Christian literature and the richest literature for the first thousand years was in Syriac and it was written between Antioch in the west, and in Persia and India to the east. The first major theologians from Persia would have to be Tatian (110–180), Aphrahat the Sage (writing from 325 to 345) and Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306–373). In the life and thought of Tatian, we see the cultural theological trends from Asia and from the Mediterranean. Tatian came from Mesopotamia, but studied in Athens and traveled to Rome and even met Justin Martyr. What Tatian experienced in the ancient scholarly tradition in the Hellenistic world was far beyond what he had seen in Persia. It is likely that he was converted during his travels (probably in his study under Justin in Rome) and then he returned to Persia to establish a school of his own. The school which he established was very ascetic in its Christian life, highly critical of Western religion (as seen in his *Oration to the Greeks*) and focused on the life of Jesus as viewed through a single gospel narrative: the *Diatessaron*. The *Diatessaron*, probably composed by Tatian in Syriac (and immediately translated into Greek, or vice versa) became the standard life of Jesus for over two centuries in the Syriac speaking world. Later, Ephrem of Edessa would write a commentary on the *Diatessaron*. Tatian, the first real Asian theologian was proud of his Asian heritage, although his scholarly abilities all came from his academic sojourn in the West.

Unlike Tatian, Aphrahat remained in Persian territory. Aphrahat, “the Persian Sage,” is known solely for his *Demonstrations*, written between 336 and 345, a series of 23 short writings that give us one of the only windows into early fourth-century Persian Christianity. Little is known of Aphrahat’s life except that he was most likely a member of the Sons of the Covenant, a basic monastic form of Asian Christianity. The first ten demonstrations or treatises prescribe for the reader how to live the Christian (not just ascetic) life. It is like a guidebook for the Christian life. Other treatises are actually letters, including a letter to a synod of bishops, and the final nine deal with relations with Jews. Aphrahat’s context was very different from those of the Christians in the Roman Empire. His theological concerns were to promote a spiritual and practical theology that would help Christians to live faithfully and would, at the same time, correct the teachings of the Jews. His was an independent Christian tradition, with no knowledge of the Christological or Trinitarian controversies of the West. Persian Christianity, we see with Aphrahat, was an independent and vital tradition of Asian Christianity.

Ephrem, “The Harp of the Holy Spirit,” is the best known of all Syriac writing theologians. He is recognized as a saint by both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches for his saintly writings and life. His writings, more than any other in Asia shaped the theology, structure, liturgy, even hymnody of the Persian Church. Orthodoxy was established as much by Ephrem as any other single author in Persian Christianity. His influence was great both because of the variety and the extent of his writings. Ordained only as a deacon, Ephrem was possibly a member of the Sons of the Covenant, giving a sense of community Christian life to his writings. Born in Nisibis to a Christian family, Ephrem’s writings reflect the culturally and religiously pluralistic world of a land between empires. His early writings were from Nisibis where his teaching at the famous School of Nisibis is identified as the founding of the School. Caught in the political events of his time, some of Ephrem’s writings come out of the period when Nisibis was under siege by the Persian Emperor, Shapur II. Nisibis had been under the influence of Constantine’s Roman Empire, but by 337, the year of Constantine’s death, Shapur began to extend his borders to the west. At the same time, the persecution of Christians increased, including the requirement of paying a double tax. Bishops and priests were killed, Nisibis was under siege three times. Ephrem, in his *Carmina Nisibena*, reflects on this history with theological adroitness. History, theology, poetry, and biblical symbolism coalesce in these writings.

Eventually Nisibis fell to the Persian Emperor, but unlike earlier victories for Shapur, in this case he allowed the Christians to flee to the “Christian” west. Previously, he had executed most of the citizens and allowed others to be displaced deep into the Persian Empire. Ephrem’s last ten years were devoted to writing hymns and theology against the heresies of Manichaeism, the mixed theological teachings of Bardaisan, and against local deities (of which there were many). Cosmopolitan Edessa was given theological leadership under Ephrem. To battle many of the heresies, Ephrem gathered female choirs and wrote for the choirs to sing of the divinity of Jesus, the joys of chastity, and the truth of the Trinity. Consistent with his theology and life, Saint Ephrem died caring for the sick during a period of plague in 373.

Christianity was less ordered and more diverse in Asia outside of the Roman Empire. Christological controversies in the West were settled within the context of a Christian

empire that provided the structure (if not pressure) for the church to find its own unity regarding wording (theology) and bishoprics (order). The Asian Church did not have this pressure, but it did have another type of pressure and that was the growing and changing persecution from non-sympathetic rulers. Asian Christianity collected the rejected theologies and theologians from the West and (after the rise of the Sasanians) it also struggled for its very existence under Sasanian and later Arab rulers. The early controversies in the West (including Arianism) were of no consequence in the East, but when Nestorius and his theology were condemned by the Council of Ephesus (431), many of his followers fled to the East, eventually becoming a mainstream of East Syrian orthodoxy, centered in the capital city of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (later Baghdad). After the Miaphysite (Monophysite) controversy led to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, those who held on to the belief in the single nature in Christ (mono-physis) were exiled and their views underlay the West Syrian theological tradition. It was the West Syrian tradition that found expression in Egypt and Ethiopia. The East Syrian, Diophysite theology, became the theology of Asia that spread to the East. They held their own councils beginning with the Synod of Isaac in 410. Most of these early Asian councils were called to reorganize the church after persecution; little theological discussion ensued. The second synod in 420 also was called to bring about greater order and prevent schism, but the third synod in 424 is more memorable because it made a clear break with the church in the West. This Synod of Dadyeshu (424) claimed that the Patriarch in Seleucia-Ctesiphon was equal to any Patriarch in the West, giving the Asian Church a *de jure* independence it had exhibited *de facto* for most of its life. From this point on, bishops in central Asia, India and even China would be commissioned from the Persian Capital.

## Religious Pressures and Persecutions: Zoroastrian and Muslim

The advent of the Sasanian Dynasty in Persia around 225 brought with it a revival of the sixth century BCE religion of Zoroastrianism. A dualistic faith with two creator gods – Ahura-Mazda who creates what is good, and Ahriman who creates a parallel evil world – Zoroastrian life and world-view was closer to Judaism and Christianity than any of the local fertility or astrological faiths of Persia. The first ruler of the Sasanian Dynasty, Ardashir I (r. 225–240) appointed a religious adviser or *mobed* (magi) named Tansar who revived the practice of regional sacred fires and purity laws. Purity, or separation from what is profane or polluted (created by Ahriman) is integral to the Zoroastrian faith. This is where major cultural conflicts occurred. Asian Christianity tended to be ascetic, but Zoroastrianism viewed “bounty” (many children, crops, and cattle) as a sign of sacredness. Ahura-Mazda was understood to be blessing a land that produced bounty. When Christians refused to marry or to have children, or when Christians buried their dead in the ground (polluting the land) they were taking the side of the evil god, Ahriman. Later *mobeds* counseled the shahs to give stronger adherence to Zoroastrian teaching and this inevitably brought greater persecution upon the Christians.

Beginning 339, soon after the death of Constantine, persecution of Christians became extreme. Christians were to pay a double tax, and were not allowed to build churches or to repair their existing ones. They were not allowed to evangelize or marry

outside of their community, effectively establishing Christians as a *melet*, or isolated ghetto community. The vitality of Christianity, its missionary outreach, was cut off. Many bishops and patriarchs, up to the time of the Arab invasions, were killed. For example, in 344 Bishop Simon (Bar-Sabba'e) of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, who refused to collect the double tax and then refused a bribe from the Shah, was killed, but only after watching five other of his bishops and one hundred priests beheaded. This was his last sight before he himself was beheaded.

This persecution was precipitated because of the close cooperation between Shah and *mobed*, but other persecution was more internal to the church. We mentioned above divisions in the church caused by Western controversies. Deep in Persia, another theological movement began as a mixture of Jewish and Christian teachings along with Zoroastrian, and some elements of Hindu and Buddhist teachings. Founded by the prophet Mani, Manichaeism was a dualistic religion. What Manichaeism inherited most from Christianity was its missionary and global vision. It was first established in India and then spread back to Mani's homeland of Persia and eventually with missionary zeal spread within the ranks of the Roman army and to the east along the Silk Road to the Pacific. Manichaean writings are often hard to distinguish from Christian writings because of the allegorical images of light and dark and their missionary themes. Mani claimed to be a disciple of Jesus and of Paul, but his religion was much more dualistic, denigrating the physical world and seeking through ascetic discipline to subdue the flesh, so that the inner divine light could break free. Many Christians were entrapped in Manichaean-believing communities, not knowing the difference between this and the faith of Jesus.

The last religious encounter of Asian Christians was the one that prevented a possible revival of Christianity during a period when the Sasanian Empire was in decline in the seventh century. Arab Muslim invasions swept through a weak Persian Empire and by 637 had conquered Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The fall of the enemy of the Christians was seen to be a Christian victory, and for a season this was the case. The Arab Caliphs needed help in ruling this new Persian Empire and they found the Christians the best educated and most trusted citizens. Persian Christians served as accountants, managers, and jailors, and, for their part, they were pleased to help fellow monotheists who had crushed their persecutors. Under the second caliph, 'Umar I (r. 634–644) other religious minorities were protected, but at the same time this protection had its price. Non-Muslims were consigned to a *dhimmi*, which was patterned after the *melet* communities of the Persians. In the seventh century *dhimmi* existence had little limitations for the Christian communities. However, by the first decades of the eighth century, Christians were socially ostracized by their dress, mode of transportation (riding side-saddle on horses), paying increased land and personal taxes, and by restrictions placed on church repairs. Most of the persecution under Arab rule up to the end of the first millennium was social, financial, and psychological. There were no massive killings as under the Zoroastrian rulers. However, Persian Christianity slowly decayed from within. Patriarchs were chosen or approved by Caliphs and often bribery secured ecclesiastical positions. With contact outside of the Christian *dhimmi* so tightly controlled, the Christian community atrophied; it decayed from within more than being crushed from without. The Asian Church under Islamic rulers only survived in ancient forms, worshipping in

an ancient language. One of the great tragedies of the decline of Persian Christianity was that it also meant the loss of a base for ongoing missionary work to the east.

## Earliest Chinese Christianity

Persian monks who arrived in the Chinese capital of Xian (Chang-an) in 635 explained to Emperor Tai Zong that they had come to propagate the “Luminous Religion” or the religion of light. In these early years of the Tang Dynasty, emperors were open to new knowledge and to trade with the non-Chinese world. Tai Zong encouraged all knowledge from afar: Buddhist, Manichean, and Christian. In 635 he issued an edict allowing the propagation of Christianity and he also gave room for monks to translate their texts on the grounds of the royal palace. A church was soon built in Xian and monks were dispersed throughout the expanding empire. Both the pull factor of the emperor’s thirst for knowledge and the push factor of the missionary zeal of Persian monks were involved in the rapid spread of Christianity along the Silk Road and throughout China.

Much has been made of the imprecise theology of earliest Chinese Christianity. These monks were East Syrian and thus diophysite, and not orthodox by European standards. They did not translate the whole Bible, in fact we don’t have even one complete book of the Bible translated into Chinese from this early period (in contrast to Syria, Armenia, and Georgia). Finally, this earliest Chinese Christianity has been criticized for building monasteries and not churches. And so, the reasoning goes, what spread in China in the early period was not a healthy form of Christianity (Irvin and Sunquist 2001: 321ff.).

However, this earliest movement of Christianity in China is far more complex and rich than has often been appreciated. Monastic religion is very appropriate in Asia, especially China, and this may have been reason for the early acceptance rather than cause of its decline. Although we do not have record of books of the Bible being translated, it is clear that much was written about Jesus (“Jesus the Messiah Sutra,” ca. 638), almost in the pattern of Buddhist Jataka stories. Most of the writings in Chinese were apologetic in nature. We continue to find more Christian sutras into the twenty-first century. One of the strongest criticisms of early Chinese Christianity – that it was a syncretism with Daoism or Buddhism – can be seen as positive trait. Rather than bringing Persian forms of Christianity, Chinese forms were developing from the very beginning.

As in all newly encountered cultures, it took centuries for local theological lines to develop. In China, the church did not have the luxury of developing, for persecution began with the rise of Empress Wu Zetian (Wu Hao or Wu Zhou, 625–705) in the last decade of the seventh century. The Empress selected the other foreign religion, Buddhism, as the national faith for China and thus persecution of Christians began in earnest in 691. Persecution lasted over two decades. Churches were then rebuilt and there is evidence of much more translation, dialogue with other religions and the spread of monasteries. Once again, peace did not last for the church. By the middle of the ninth century, persecution returned and this time it did not abate. The persecution was expressed, beginning in the 840s, as a nationalistic revival of Chinese religious belief against all followers of foreign religions: Manicheans, Christians, Zoroastrians, and then Buddhists. Although some small Christian communities survived, and some forms

of royal Christianity developed among the Mongol tribes (Moffett 1992: 422–470), it is generally agreed that the extensive rejection of Christianity by Chinese rulers silenced Chinese Christianity. When envoys of Franciscans and Dominicans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries arrived in China, they confirmed this assumption.

In 1623, workers near to present day Xian unearthed a nine-foot stone monument with writing in both Chinese and Syriac describing the first arrival of Christian missionaries to China in 635. This came as news to Christians in the West as further proof not only of the eradication of the first wave of Chinese Christianity, but even the loss of the memory of this important chapter in Christian history. The monument, commonly called the Nestorian Monument, is a public, even political, statement, which tells the story of the monks led by Alopen the Persian. Erected in 781, the monument relates the history of the coming of the first missionaries from the West, explains a little about the theology of this new religion, and then describes a history that shows the value of this “luminous religion” for the Chinese Empire. At points clearly orthodox Christian, and at other points sounding strangely Chinese (“Twenty-seven sacred books (the number in the New Testament) have been left, which disseminate intelligence by unfolding the original transforming principles”) much ink has been spilt over the meaning and purpose of the stele. What it does indicate is that Christianity had a public standing at the end of the eighth century in China and Christians saw it as important to make a public statement in the pattern of Chinese cultural norms. In the history of Asian Christianity it is one of the most important reminders of the constantly changing fortunes of Christianity in Asia: one moment publicly proclaimed by royalty, the next crushed by that same class.

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## CHAPTER 5

# Christianity and the European Conversions

Tomás O'Sullivan

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin were often referred to by medieval Europeans as “the three sacred languages,” since it was these three tongues which had identified Jesus of Nazareth as the King of the Jews when he died upon the cross. They also provide a snapshot of the cultural world in which Christianity was born. It arose among and from Jewish speakers of Aramaic; but, from the very beginning, it also expressed itself within the culture of the Empire of Rome. The presence of the native language of the Eternal City (Latin), and the international language of the Empire as a whole (Greek), alongside the local vernacular (Hebrew/Aramaic), the three together nailed to the cross, provides one small testimony to these cultural horizons.

Although the followers of Christ soon spread their faith north, south, and east, beyond the borders of the Empire, in the west the development of Christianity was intimately bound to the story, and thereafter the idea, of Rome. The echoes of this connection ring clear down to the present day: within living memory, a large segment of Western Christians still gave liturgical expression to their prayers in the language of Latin, although the vast majority had no direct ethnic or linguistic connection to the city of Rome. And yet they invoked – and, indeed, in their own vernaculars, continue to invoke – the saints and martyrs of the Roman Church, liturgically inhabiting a Roman identity alongside their own. This process of “becoming Roman” plays a significant role in the story of the European conversions. Motivations, it should be noted, may not always have been pious, or even spiritual: the allure of “becoming a Roman” was somewhat analogous to the allure of “becoming an American” in the world of today. But, by the fifth century, “Roman” and “Christian” had become synonymous: in the rhetoric of the Empire’s newly established religious elite; in the Emperor’s law; and, to a large extent, in the eyes of the non-Romans living beyond the bounds of the empire. Yet, unlike the sacrament of baptism, acquiring or creating a new identity does not wipe the slate clean, and thus the

conversion of Europe is grounded in interactions, re-creations, and fusions of the non-Roman and the Roman, resulting in a new (in many ways, radically different) expression of Christianity in the Western Middle Ages.

This paper presents a short overview of that centuries-long process through which non-Roman peoples sought, negotiated, and acquired a new identity, by accepting what was, at the beginning of the period, not their faith, but the faith of Rome. All these Christians, however, both old and new, Roman and barbarian, also proclaimed that theirs was a catholic faith; and these conversions were never simply processes of assimilation. Rather, in almost every case, these non-Roman peoples maintained and advanced a significant portion of their inherited cultural identities and traditions, even while they adopted the new Christian faith. In so doing, they also profoundly transformed the Early Christianity of the Roman Empire, so that previous expression of this faith gave way to something distinctly new: medieval Christianity, now the faith of Europe as a whole.

The starting-point of the European conversions (in general, see Hen 2009; Fletcher 1998; Cusack 1998; Carver 2003; also the useful collection of translated primary texts in Hillgarth 1986) may perhaps be identified with Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for his help, and the subsequent establishment of a Christian community at Philippi (Acts 16:9–12); even before this, the author of Acts suggested that inhabitants of Rome and of Crete had heard Peter's preaching on the very day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10–11). The long, slow, and often murky process by which Christianity rose to become, by the end of the fourth century, the dominant faith in the Roman Empire (Nock 1933; MacMullen 1984; Stark 1996) need not concern us here.

The first records of attempts to spread the gospel beyond the European boundaries of the Empire derive from the self-confident church which emerged in the wake of Constantine's rise to the imperial purple. They are, however, also marred by the bitter doctrinal divisions which rent that same church in the fourth century. In the midst of these disputes, a bishop named Ulphilas took up the task of evangelizing and serving the Gothic peoples living beyond the Danube frontier. He was himself of Gothic extraction, but was raised in the east of the Roman Empire, and was capable (according to his disciple, Auxentius) of preaching "in the Greek and the Latin and the Gothic tongue" (Gryson 1980, 242, §53). His lasting fame, in many ways, is as a linguist: he is said to have devised the Gothic alphabet, and translated the Scriptures into the Gothic language; large portions of this translation still survive, most notably in Uppsala's *Codex Argenteus* (Streitberg 1965). However, two other elements of Ulphilas' mission were to prove more prescient of the first wave of non-Roman conversions. First, he was an Arian Christian, who (again according to Auxentius, writing in the heat of polemic) "trampled and despised the odious and detestable, deformed and perverse profession of the Homoousians as a diabolical invention and the doctrine of demons" (Gryson 1980: 238, §45). Second, Ulphilas and his Gothic Christians only remained beyond the Danube for a mere seven years; thereafter, following persecution from a certain Gothic tyrant, they relocated (as Auxentius puts it) *in solo Romaniae* – to the soil of the Roman Empire – where the bishop continued to minister to his flock for a further three decades.

This community of Gothic believers thus became the first in a long line of Germanic peoples who converted to Arian Christianity and thereafter carried their unorthodox faith across the boundaries of the Roman Empire as they moved to settle *in solo*

*Romaniae*. These migrations, both a response and a contribution to the political instability of the fifth century, played a part in the decline and eventual collapse of the western Roman Empire; it was replaced by a variety of successor states under the leadership of Germanic Arian kings. Thus the Visigoths, initially settled in Ulphilas' mission field around the lower Danube, made their way through Greece and the Balkans to southern France (famously sacking Rome, in the year 410, along the way), before eventually establishing their kingdom in what is now Spain. The Vandals crossed the Rhine, the Pyrenees, and the Straits of Gibraltar to settle in Roman North Africa, laying siege to Augustine's Hippo in 430 (as the bishop lay dying), and sacking the Eternal City on a second occasion in 455. In the late fifth century (following the deposition of the last Western Emperor), the Ostrogoths established a powerful kingdom in Italy ruled by their king Theodoric, nominally the viceroy of the Roman Emperor still reigning in Constantinople. During the mid-sixth century, both Ostrogoths and Vandals were ousted from power during the Emperor Justinian's destructive reconquest of North Africa and Italy. This was, however, a short-lived victory: within a few years of Justinian's death, Italy was conquered anew by the Arian Lombards, although a few small areas, including Rome and Ravenna, remained (at least in theory) under the Emperor's control.

The upheavals resulting from such migrations, invasions, and instability had a traumatic effect on the church already established across western Europe – not least because of the decay or collapse of the social, political, and economic institutions the Empire had supported. In many cases, perhaps most notably in Rome itself, it was left to the local bishop to take up management of municipal affairs, the church being one of the few pre-existing institutions which survived the ordeals relatively intact. Nonetheless, the extent of the decline varied considerably by geographic location. In certain places, such as southern Gaul, Roman institutions – and social elites – proved remarkably resilient. Well into the sixth century, the established church was still capable of producing exceptional bishops such as the reformer, pastor, and preacher Caesarius of Arles (Klingshirn 1994), or the poet and hymnist Venantius Fortunatus (George 1992; Roberts 2009).

The advent of the new Germanic kingdoms also resulted in what may be termed a period of schismatic cohabitation throughout large areas of the former western Empire, as the existing Orthodox Church now found itself confronted with an alternative Arian institution enjoying the support of their new Germanic overlords. Although tolerance rather than conflict was generally the norm (most notably in Ostrogothic Italy), these doctrinal differences between indigenous populations and newly arrived elites did prove a barrier to effective integration. In Visigothic Spain and Lombard Italy (the two Arian kingdoms which were not overthrown by conquest), the conversion of the Germanic elites to catholic orthodoxy eventually brought an end to such tensions. In both cases, this conversion occurred about a century after the initial establishment of their kingdoms. Nonetheless, this co-existence of Arian and Catholic Christianities over the course of generations reveals the tenacity with which the Germanic migrants clung to their own cultural and religious traditions, as well as the resilience of the established Roman Church.

From the fifth century onwards, the center of power and development in western Europe was shifting towards the north: away from the Mediterranean lands to the

Rhine and the North Sea. In this latter area, a Germanic coalition of peoples known as the Franks had been variously harassing and cooperating with the Roman authorities since at least the third century. In the late fifth and early sixth century, under their powerful king, Clovis, they arose to dominate the former Roman province of Gaul (Wood 1994; Hen 1995). They thereby laid the foundations for what would eventually evolve into the modern state that still bears their name: France.

The Franks' conversion to Christianity marks a distinct paradigm shift, as the process is different in many ways from the earlier experiences of the Arian Germanic peoples, while also including features which recur throughout subsequent European conversions. Unlike the other Germanic migrants, the Franks were still pagan when they settled the lands of the former Empire; and, when they converted, they embraced the orthodox, and not the Arian, version of the faith. Furthermore, their king, Clovis, was central to the conversion process, a feature which henceforth was repeated with regularity. An important ancillary to this is the prominent role played by the queen, Clotilde, in introducing her husband to the possibility of conversion (not the last time we shall encounter a royal woman as an agent of evangelization).

The exact details, and even the date, of Clovis' conversion remain hazy. It is clear that his marriage to Clotilde was instrumental in the process; she was a member of the Burgundian royal family and, crucially, already a Christian. Saint Remigius, the bishop of Reims, also played a significant role. In his *History of the Franks* (Dalton 1927; Thorpe 1974), Gregory of Tours presents the king as initially hesitant, even becoming hostile after his infant son Ingomer died shortly after being baptized. Nonetheless, Gregory reports, in a critical battle against the Alemanni, Clovis cried out to Christ in an appeal for aid; and he emerged victorious (the evocation of Constantine is undoubtedly deliberate). Thereafter, at some date close to the year 500, he was baptized by Remigius, and became a Christian king. And thus was achieved the conversion of the Franks.

At least in theory. In marked contrast to the long, slow growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire, from the bottom up, medieval European conversions were decidedly top-down affairs: *cuius regio, eius religio*. As a result, entire kingdoms could, on occasion, revert to paganism upon the accession of a new king; the Venerable Bede recorded more than one such reversion during the evangelization of the English. This does raise the question of the sincerity or depth of the conversion of the people as a whole (a difficulty which, notably, seems to have been of little concern to the medievals themselves when they narrated their stories of the kings' conversions). Indeed, it has been argued by some that it was not until the twelfth century that the true conversion of the vast majority of Europe's ordinary people began (Dickson 2000); only at this stage do we see, to use Nock's definition, "the reorientation of the soul of [each] individual" who was not a member of the elite (1933: 7). Others have claimed that the early European conversions constituted less of a Christianization of the Germans than a Germanization of Christianity (Russell 1994; see also Kitchen 2002).

The frequent condemnations issued by ecclesiastical leaders regarding popular superstition and even ongoing pagan practices are often taken as evidence for a shallow veneer of evangelization (see Harmening 1979). However, scholars have recently noted that the specifics of these condemnations are remarkably repetitive, with ecclesiastics often re-using the very same terms and descriptions applied by churchmen

in far-flung parts of Europe sometimes centuries before (Hen 1995: 167–172; Palmer 2007; Palmer 2009: 113–144). This raises the question of whether such condemnations are in fact rooted more in rote than in reality, or whether they constitute a ritualized, perhaps fossilized, means of giving expression to contemporary concerns. It has even been argued that the church's interactions with such extra-Christian elements of culture as superstition and magic should be read as a careful and considered process, embracing both compromise and confrontation (Flint 1991). Furthermore, some manuals of basic catechesis for *rustici* – perhaps “rednecks” might best capture the connotations of the term – were produced; examples include the sixth-century *De correctione rusticorum* by Martin of Braga (Barlow 1969: 71–85) and the eighth-century *Scarapsus* by Pirmin, abbot of Reichenau (Hauswald 2010). These demonstrate that at least some churchmen were dedicated to the instruction of all members of the faithful, even before the intensive pastoral programs of the Carolingians in the eighth and ninth centuries (McKitterick 1977). In the end, however, the surviving evidence from the early Middle Ages prevents us from making any definitive statement regarding the conversion of these ordinary *rustici*: we know little enough about their day-to-day lives, let alone the quality and commitment of their religious faith.

Even before the conversion of the Franks, Christianity had already found its way beyond the westernmost borders of the Roman Empire, across the cold Atlantic waves, “as far as the outermost regions . . . which had never been reached by others who might baptize or ordain clerics or bring the people to completion” (Bieler 1993: 86, §51). The conversion of the British Isles began with the Roman province of *Britannia* itself, which gradually adopted the faith along with the rest of the Empire. In the fifth century, however, the Roman province collapsed, under the strain of attacks from the west, the north, and – most notably – the east, with the pagan Germanic peoples known as the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (the ancestors of the English nation) migrating across the North Sea to settle this Christian, Roman land. The culture of the indigenous inhabitants was gradually confined to the western extremities of the island, but survived to give rise to the peoples known today as the Welsh, the Cornish, and (carrying their name with them in their own migration across the English Channel) the Bretons.

The conversions of the pagan peoples of the Isles – the Irish and the English – bear remarkable similarities: both begin with an intervention from the Pope in Rome, followed by an intensive period of evangelization led by one of the neighboring peoples of the archipelago. The conversion of the Picts (the inhabitants of what is now Scotland) is almost entirely murky; it appears to result from missionary activity by both the Irish and English, subsequent to their own evangelization. The establishment of church institutions in Ireland began in 431, when Pope Celestine I dispatched Palladius to be the first bishop of the Irish already believing in Christ. At some point in the fifth century (probably after the arrival of Palladius), a British bishop named Patrick continued and probably intensified the evangelization of the people. We possess very little detailed information about this evangelization: even the traditional date of Patrick's arrival, 432, is a later fabrication, entirely derivative of the appointment of Palladius (Binchy 1962). We do, however, have two remarkable documents from Patrick's own hand, his *Confession* and *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, our only sources for the history of Ireland's conversion (O'Loughlin 2005; available in numerous languages

with extensive resources at Royal Irish Academy 2013). Notably, they reveal the active engagement of the British Church in the evangelization process; and it is extremely likely that Patrick was not the only British missionary active in Ireland. Indeed, his *Confession* was written in direct response to certain British elders who questioned Patrick's methods and his fitness to fulfil the role of bishop, thereby revealing the distinct interest of the British Church in overseeing missionary activity in Ireland.

Notable also are Patrick's own expressions of the transformations in identity and community which evangelization inevitably entails. In the shorter of his two surviving works, the *Letter*, Patrick addresses members of a Romano-British war-band which had captured and enslaved some of the bishop's newly baptized converts, writing "to the soldiers of Coroticus; I do not say to my fellow-citizens, or to fellow-citizens of the holy Romans, but to fellow-citizens of the demons, on account of their evil deeds" (Bieler 1993: 92, §2). And while Patrick opens the *Letter* by declaring "I dwell as a foreigner among non-Roman peoples" (Bieler 1993: 91, §1), he has, before its conclusion, come to identify completely with his non-Roman flock. Combining references to Psalm 69:8, Ephesians 4:5, and John 8:41, he proclaims, in a significant use of the first person plural: "We have become like outsiders. Perhaps they do not believe we have procured one baptism or we have one Father, God. It is shameful to them that we are Irish" (Bieler 1993: 99, §16).

The evangelization of the Irish was completed by the end of the sixth century, and it was at this same point that the conversion of the pagan English peoples began (Colgrave and Mynors 1969; Mayr-Harting 1991; Lambert 2010). Here, too, the initial step was one of direct papal intervention. In 597, Pope Gregory the Great sent out from Rome a small group of missionaries, tasked with the evangelization of the Anglo-Saxons. The Pope maintained a lively interest in their work, dispatching many letters to the missionaries, and even boasting of their success to the Patriarch of Alexandria. Led by the Roman monk Augustine, they arrived on the Isle of Thanet, then off the coast of Kent, and began negotiations with the powerful King Æthelberht, who enjoyed a position of dominance in southern England. They soon settled in Æthelberht's chief city of Canterbury, and before long had persuaded the king to embrace the Christian faith. The baptism of thousands of his followers reportedly followed, as did the expansion of the new religion to the lands of his political tributaries. In 604, Mellitus, one of the Roman missionaries, was consecrated as Bishop of London, and Æthelberht built the original St. Paul's Cathedral to be his see.

The missionaries' initial focus on King Æthelberht and his relatively quick conversion were no accidents. Like Clovis before him, this pagan king was husband to a Christian wife: Bertha, daughter of Charibert, the Frankish King of Paris. One of the conditions of their marriage was that Bertha be allowed to practise her faith unhindered, and she was accompanied by a Frankish bishop, Liudhard, to serve as her chaplain. Thus the Christian faith (and even the Christian liturgy) was already familiar to Æthelberht and his people before the arrival of the Roman mission. In fact, Bertha was only the first of numerous royal women who functioned to provide the entry-point for Christianity into various kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons. Her own daughter Æthelburh did the same when she brought the Roman missionary Paulinus to be her chaplain in the city of York, following her marriage to Edwin, the pagan king of Northumbria. And later Peada, King

of the Middle Angles, converted to Christianity in order to marry the Northumbrian royal princess Alhflaed. Such evangelization-by-marriage was explicitly encouraged by Pope Boniface V, who wrote directly to Queen Æthelburh (Bertha's daughter): he urged her, "having been imbued with the aid of divine inspiration, out of season and in season you should not delay laboring" for the king's conversion; and quoted 1 Corinthians 7:14, "the unbelieving husband shall be saved through the believing wife" (Colgrave and Mynors, ed., 1969, 172, §II.11). It is clear throughout the letter that Boniface himself conceives of such marriages as vocations to evangelization, to the extent that when he writes of Æthelburh's husband being "joined to the number of Christians," he explicitly uses the verb *copulo*, frequently used with reference to committed sexual unions.

Boniface was not the only Pope who wrote unsqueamishly about the marriage-beds of England. Earlier, in his *Libellus Responsionum* (Colgrave and Mynors 1969: 78–103, §I.27) – a detailed series of responses to queries from the missionary Augustine – Pope Gregory the Great had dismissed the notion that women, after childbirth or during menstruation, should refrain from entering churches or receiving communion, insisting that the Pentateuch's laws of ritual purity were no longer prescriptive, and that natural biological processes provide no indication of one's spiritual state. He also declared that Augustine should not simply import current Roman liturgical practices, but should instead bring together the best elements of all the liturgies he had encountered in the new prayers of the English Church. Regarding the punishment of those who rob churches (a revealing reminder that the foreign missionaries had no inherent or established status within pagan society), Gregory urged the churchmen to take cognisance of whether the thieves may have acted out of poverty or necessity. And, elsewhere, Gregory instructed the missionaries not to destroy the pagan places of worship but to consecrate them for Christian use, and to establish the martyrs' feast-days as alternative opportunities for popular feasting and celebration (Colgrave and Mynors 1969: 106–109, §I.30). In all his instructions, Gregory displays the keen pastoral sensitivity evident throughout his other writings, while also embracing toleration to an extent which may surprise those who imagine this era as the cusp of a "dark age."

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, however, was not the work of the Roman mission alone; in fact, the latter suffered a dangerous, almost fatal, collapse, after the deaths of its initial patrons, King Æthelberht and King Edwin. But just as the British took up an active role in the conversion of Ireland, the now-Christian Irish became deeply engaged in the evangelization of England. In 634, Oswald, the new king of Northumbria, secured his throne through victory at Heavenfield, a battle depicted in miraculous and Constantinian terms in both English and Irish sources. He was already Christian, having converted during his long period in exile amongst the Irish, and he soon sent to the Irish monastery of Iona (located in the Inner Hebrides, off the western coast of Scotland) for a missionary bishop to continue the evangelization of his people. Thus the Irishman Aidan arrived to become the first bishop of Lindisfarne, and the conversion of Northumbria, initiated under Edwin and his queen Æthelburh, began anew.

From this point forward, the influence of the Irish Church would dominate Northumbria for the next thirty years, and these Irishmen, and their English disciples, would advance the spread of Christianity southwards into the great central kingdom of Mercia, and beyond. There are records of Irishmen founding monasteries in East Anglia,



and even on the far southern coast, near Chichester Harbour. At the same time the Roman mission in the south remained, and continued to expand from its base in Canterbury. The first five archbishops were all foreign-born members of the missionary party, but in 655 the first native-born archbishop, Deusdedit (a West Saxon), was consecrated. Although there were setbacks as well as advances – some of the East Saxons reverted to paganism following the great plague which swept the British Isles in the 660s – conversion from paganism was completed in England by the end of the seventh century.

The energy and enthusiasm generated by evangelization in England could not be confined solely to the British Isles, and its influence soon spread to the continent. It is a mark of the intertwinement of the English and Irish Churches that a major impetus for this transition was a religious community based in Ireland, under English leadership (Ó Cróinín 1984). Thus began a mission to the pagan Frisians (in what is now the Netherlands), under the English Saint Willibrord. He sought, and received, papal approval for this initiative (he also received the new, Roman name of Clement), and became the first bishop of Utrecht following his consecration in 695. He was soon followed by the West Saxon Winfrid. He too traveled from England to Rome and was appointed as something of a bishop at large for the churches of East Francia (more or less identical with modern Germany); and he too received a new, Roman name – Boniface. Saint Boniface labored for almost forty years as a reformer, missionary, and pastor, improving existing institutional structures, and establishing or advancing the pastoral provisions of the church (Emerton 2000; Padberg 2003; Reuter 1980; Raaijmakers 2012). Eventually appointed the first archbishop of Mainz, he ended his life as a missionary in Frisia, where he was martyred in 754.

An important element of both Willibrord's and Boniface's work was the support they received from the Carolingians, the dominant Frankish political dynasty, which assumed the kingship of the Franks (with papal blessing) in 751. Advancing the Christianization of neighboring peoples over whom they claimed some form of suzerainty (such as the Frisians) as well as of the more peripheral areas of their own kingdom (as in East Francia) aligned well with the Carolingians' political aims. Stronger church institutions provided more advanced mechanisms for effective governance, and – in theory, at least – Christianity could provide a common bond which would enhance loyalty to the ruling dynasty. This policy of reform and Christianization continued through the generations, reaching its apogee under the greatest of all the Carolingians, Emperor Charlemagne – crowned King of the Franks in 768 and proclaimed Emperor of the Romans by the Pope on Christmas Day, 800 – and under his son, Emperor Louis the Pious, during the opening decades of the ninth century (McKitterick 1977).

Such state-sponsored evangelization could also have a dark side, as became evident during Charlemagne's long series of wars to subdue the pagan Saxons in northern Germany. At some point in the earlier part of this decades-long campaign, Charlemagne issued his *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* (Boretius 1883), a series of legal ordinances aimed at nothing less than the enforced Christianization of this pagan people. These laws mandated infant baptism and required the Saxons to attend church on Sundays, to pay ecclesiastical tithes, and to bury their dead in church cemeteries rather than traditional tumuli. They also condemned practices associated with paganism, such as belief in vampires or witches, the sacrifice of human beings, or cremation of the dead.

The death penalty was imposed for killing bishops, priests, or deacons – a recognition that Christian churchman could appear, in Saxon eyes, as active agents of the enemy – but also for the crime of eating meat during Lent. Indeed, it is remarkable how easily the *Capitulatio* moves between declarations of punishments for disloyalty to Charlemagne – “If anyone shall have appeared unfaithful the Lord King: he shall be punished with the death penalty” (§11) – and punishments for refusal (outwardly) to convert to the Christian faith – “If anyone, hereafter, of the Saxon people, lying hidden amongst them unbaptized, shall have wished to conceal himself, and shall have scorned to come to baptism and have wished to remain a pagan: let him perish by death” (§8).

The long, slow process of the conversion of Europe – or, perhaps better, the conversions of the Europeans – was a complex, sometimes contradictory, process which advanced over the course of many centuries; indeed, only half the story has been told thus far, as fully half the continent – Scandinavia and the Slavic lands of eastern Europe – awaited its conversion over the course of a further four centuries or more. Nonetheless, some of the basic contours of the entire process may perhaps be sketched at this point, highlighting the elements of initiative, encounter, and prestige in the European conversions.

The story of evangelization often seems to begin with the initiative of some unique individual, who may go on to be recognized, in later narratives, as the great “national apostle” or hero of the conversion. It is noteworthy that, at the earliest stages of the process, these individuals are almost always churchmen, presumably motivated by their own faith when launching out into the deep. Such was the case, for example, with Ulfilas, Patrick, and Boniface, and later with Ansgar, the ninth-century missionary to Scandinavia (Knibbs 2011). Sometimes such individual initiative could come with strong institutional support, as when Pope Gregory the Great intervened in England, or his ninth-century successor, Nicholas I, took a lively interest in eastern European missions in Moravia and Bulgaria. The long continued interested in the evangelization of the north at Ansgar’s see of Hamburg-Bremen provides another institutional example (Tschan 2002). Later, it becomes the kings of the pagan peoples themselves who take the initiative, as when Oswald sent to the Irish for a missionary bishop. In the ninth century, Ratislav of Moravia would similarly appeal to the Byzantine emperor, who despatched the remarkable brothers Cyril and Methodius (Tachiaos 2001). About the same time Khan Boris of Bulgaria requested missionaries from Rome and Germany. (It is noteworthy that both leaders were also being politically astute, by appealing to those Christian centers which were *not* their immediate neighbors; perhaps a similar motivation underlay Oswald’s appeal to Iona rather than Canterbury.) Again, in the late tenth century, the king of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, purportedly took an active (and often violent) role in the evangelization of his kingdom. Finally, it is remarkable that the great powers of the Christian world – the Carolingian/German Empire in the West and the Byzantine Empire in the East – ultimately took so little initiative in spreading the Christian faith. Although there were exceptions (Charlemagne’s forced conversion of the Saxons, or the Byzantines’ careful nurturing of the faith among the Kievan Rus’), in general the empires seemed content to offer support and to monitor developments, and it was the peoples themselves, beyond their borders, who actively sought and negotiated their way into the Christian faith.

Both behind and beyond the initiatives of individuals and institutions lies the encounter with Christianity itself. The pagan peoples of Europe began to convert once they met and interacted with people who were already Christian. The vast majority of the initial encounters are lost to history, but we should not underestimate the role which trade and commerce played in the religion's spread across the continent. We have, nonetheless, already seen glimpses of such encounters, both at the largest and most intimate of levels. Interactions with neighboring peoples who were already Christian clearly play an important role: the Romans and the Goths; the British and the Irish; the Irish and the English; and later, the Germans and the peoples to their east (the bishoprics of Salzburg and Passau played an important role in introducing Christianity to the Slavs) and to their north (Hamburg-Bremen's interest in Scandinavia has already been mentioned). Similarly, the intense interactions (and occasional unification) of the English and Danish kingdoms in the eleventh century had a significant impact on the Christianization of Denmark. Migration could also play a part, when pagan peoples settled in already-Christian lands. This was the case with the Frankish settlement of Gaul, and it recurred in the later Viking settlements in England, Ireland, and Normandy.

There were also the personal encounters, with Christian travelers in pagan lands, or between pagans in exile in Christian kingdoms and their new hosts and patrons. The English king Oswald converted while in exile among the Christian Irish, as did Gorazd and Hotimir, of the Slavic Carantanians, in Christian Bavaria during the 740s. An early ninth-century boyar of the Bulgars departed to dwell in Constantinople, and received the name of Theodore upon his conversion. More intimate still is the remarkable role of women, and their evangelization of individuals – and entire kingdoms – by means of marriage. We have already seen Clotilde, and a number of women in Anglo-Saxon England, and heard Pope Boniface's explicit encouragement of this vocation. Another example is provided by Pribina, the ruler of Nitra (now in Slovakia), who took a Christian Bavarian wife in the ninth century. The significant roles played by both the matriarch Olga (known as *Isapóstolos*: Equal to the Apostles) and the Byzantine princess Anna (daughter of the Emperor himself) in the tenth-century conversion of the Kievan Rus' should also not be overlooked. All of these examples point towards the importance of the person-to-person encounter in the process of conversion. The idea (or even the prestige) of Christianity was not, in itself, enough. It is, in this regard, surely significant that Patrick – when recounting the narrative of his own vocation, his "vision of the night" when he was called to return to Ireland as a missionary – describes the Voice of the (pagan) Irish appealing, not that he come to baptize, or to ordain, or to evangelize, but simply "that you might come and still walk among us" (Bieler 1993: 70–71, §23).

Finally, there is the question of motivation, and why so many European peoples gravitated – it can almost seem inexorably – towards the Christian religion. It would be wise not to dismiss out of hand the possibility of genuine conversion to what was perceived as a better form of faith; but it would also be foolhardy to dismiss the very real political and cultural prestige associated with the religion. At the beginning of our period, Christianity was intimately associated with the major superpower on the continent; and its Germanic neighbors wanted in. For the Irish and English, Christianity offered an institutional and cultural (and linguistic) connection with the major powers on the continent, and the same holds true for the Frisians, Vikings, and Slavs in their negotiations with the

Carolingians, or for the Bulgars and the earliest Russians in their dealings with the Byzantine Empire. Christianity offered an opportunity to in some way “become a Roman” – even if that only meant a new relationship with the Frankish “Emperor of the Romans” with his seat above the Rhine.

However, the very fact that a Frankish king in Aachen could conceive of himself as “Roman” reveals just how much the idea of *Romanitas* had been changed since the days of Cicero and Augustus (and even Augustine). These medieval converts did not simply abandon their heritage to ape the culture of Christian Rome; rather they created a fusion of the two, often in conscious and creative ways. This is evident across the continent: from the Franks Casket and the Gosforth Cross, which combine Christian imagery with scenes from Germanic mythology; to the *Heliand* (a gospel-harmony written in the Old Saxon language) which transforms the cultural setting of the narrative into one far more familiar to ninth-century Saxons. The familiar shepherds of the Nativity become Saxon horse-grooms; the disciples on the road to Emmaus are earls traveling towards a stone fortification; and the apostle Thomas (in the *Heliand*'s rendering of John 11:16) issues a proclamation like a warrior-hero in a vernacular poem (Murphy 1992: 130–131, § 48):

we should continue on, stay with Him, and suffer with our Commander. That is what a thane chooses: to stand fast together with his lord, to die with him at the moment of doom . . . Then our decision and doom will live on after us, a good word among men!

The European conversions are therefore best understood as a two-way process, in which the non-Roman peoples of Europe adopted the Christian religion of Rome, and through which both were transformed. The new believers who appropriated the faith of Rome made it their own; a process neatly encapsulated in an Old Irish quatrain preserved in the margins of a medieval manuscript containing the Latin and Greek texts of the Epistles of Saint Paul. Immediately below the words of 1 Corinthians 3:2, a scribe has written (Stokes and Strachan 1987: vol. 2, 296): *Téicht doróim/mór saido becc torbaí/ INrí chondaigi hifoss/manimbera latt nífobái*. This may be translated (a little loosely) as: “Great trouble, little gain, to journey unto Rome: the King you seek there, you’ll not find, unless he’s found at home.”

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## CHAPTER 6

# Byzantium and Islam in the Mediterranean World

James C. Skedros

Byzantine (Roman) and Arab societies were in contact for centuries prior to the birth of Islam. Caravan trade routes connecting the borderland of the Syrian desert with southern Yemen and passing through the Ḥijāz were an invaluable part of Mediterranean commerce. The city of Najrān located in Southwest Arabia along the caravan route became an important Christian enclave in the sixth century with ties to African Axum and the Byzantine military. As early as the fourth century, Arab tribes served as *foederati* (client states) of the Byzantines along the border between Syria and Arabia. The most significant of these were the Ghassānids, a monophysite Christian Arab tribe with deep roots in the Syrian desert who become prominent in the sixth century. As patrons of Arabic poetry and Christian, the Ghassānids were the main lens through which Christianity was known in the Arabian peninsula outside of the Yemen. Nevertheless, on the eve of Islam, Byzantium's knowledge of Arabia was limited. The reverse is true to some extent as well. Arabic sources are well aware of the imperial powers to the north, both the Byzantines and the Persians. The Qur'ān even names one of its sūras "The Byzantines" (al-Rūm) and mentions the defeat of the Byzantine army at the hands of the Persians in 613–14 CE (Q 30:1). Knowledge of Christianity among Bedouin Arabs in the Ḥijāz is well attested by the time of Muḥammad though the trajectories of such knowledge are poorly understood. The Qur'ān attests to knowledge of Christianity as well. The encounter of Byzantium and Islam begins in earnest with the armed expansion of Islam outside of the Arabian peninsula following the death of Muḥammad in 632. This encounter would continue for the next eight centuries, coming to a political conclusion with the fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

## Early Contacts, 632–842

Muslim expansion into Palestine, Syria and Egypt was rapid. Jerusalem's fall to the Muslim Arabs in 634 prompted the then patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios, to blame the current situation on the sins of Christians and their deviation from the true faith (in Sophronios' eyes this aberration was the current Byzantine imperial policy of Monothelism – the theological position which held that Jesus had only one will). The precipitous expansion of Islam further west into North Africa was interpreted by the Byzantines in apocalyptic terms. Such responses will become commonplace throughout the entire Byzantine period as it grappled with the political and religious threat of Islam. One of the earliest Byzantine references to Islam comes from the monk Maximos the Confessor. A contemporary of Muḥammad, Maximos began his career in Constantinople as an *asekretis* (imperial secretary) in the bureaucracy of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641). At the time of Muḥammad's death, Maximos was living in a monastery outside of Carthage in North Africa. In a letter to a certain Peter Illustrios, written sometime shortly after 638, Maximos acknowledges the horrors brought to the citizens of the empire through the expansion of Islam noting that such terrors have occurred through the actions of “a desert and barbarous nation . . . wild and untamable” who merely have the appearance of humanity, and are “devouring the civilized government (*politeia*) . . . through whom is the coming of the Antichrist.”

Islamic expansion struck at the heart of the Byzantine Empire during the first century of Islam. Twice, Umayyad forces besieged Constantinople, first in the seventh century (674–678) and again from 716 to 717. On both occasions, Byzantine naval superiority and wall defenses proved decisive. However, the attacks made clear the political will of Islam. These events, and many others, were recorded by the Byzantine chroniclers such as Theophanes the Confessor whose chronicle includes numerous Christian–Muslim contacts during the years 629 through 812. Theophanes published his chronicle sometime after 812. The plight of Christians in the face of Islam is a recurring theme in the text: killing of prisoners, destruction of churches, the transfer of clergy from their captured city, forced conversions, imposition of new taxes, and the punishment and torture of clergy and laity. Theophanes' treatment of the expansion of Islam will be copied by later Byzantine Chroniclers thus providing a continuous negative narrative of the treatment of Christians at the hands of Muslims. As a defender of orthodoxy in relation to Byzantine iconoclasm of the period, Theophanes, like most Byzantines saw adherence to orthodoxy as the key criterion in assessing historical events. Byzantine losses to Arab Muslim expansion were due to the corruption of orthodoxy by the Byzantines and their own weaknesses, and not to anything positive or superior coming from Muslim society and culture.

Byzantine texts during this period continue to depict Muslim treatment of Christians in a negative light. The actual social and economic conditions of Christians under Umayyad and early Abbasid rule were, on the whole, less destructive than the Byzantine sources admit. There is evidence to suggest that non-Chalcedonian (i.e., Monophysite) Christians in Egypt and Syria (who constituted the great majority of Christians at the time of Muḥammad) saw their early Muslim overlords as a reprieve from harsh Byzantine



Chalcedonian rule. The late eighth – century so – called Pact of ‘Umar, an alleged agreement made between the Christians of Damascus and their Muslim conquerors, details the legal status of Christians under Islam. The text will eventually receive canonical status among Muslims in their understanding of how non-Muslims are to be treated under Islam. Less lenient than earlier local agreements with Christian populations, the Pact continued the payment by Christians of the *jizya* (poll tax) and imposed more restrictive measures such as prohibiting both public religious processions and the displaying of the cross on churches, the obligation to wear the *zunnār* (girdle), refusal of Christians to be buried next to Muslims or to use saddles. Even with these increased prohibitions, during the first two centuries of Islam Christians served in the bureaucratic administration of Damascus and Baghdad as well as in other locales.

The apocalyptic interpretation of Islamic expansion continued into the eighth century in the work of the Damascus-born monk, John (d. ca. 743). Writing from the Byzantine monastery of Mār Saba just north of Jerusalem, John of Damascus identifies Islam as the forerunner of the Antichrist. Although writing from Umayyad territory, John’s treatment of Islam, written in Greek, received extensive circulation in Byzantium and became a standard of Byzantine polemic and interpretation of Islam. His comments on Islam are found in the final chapter (100) of his treatise *On Heresies* written sometime shortly after AD 743. By including Islam in his treatment of heresies, it seems certain that John understood Islam as a Christian heresy. He refers to Muslims as Ishmaelites and Hagarites since they are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and his slave Hagar. He also refers to them as Saracens whose etymology John explains as deriving from Sarah, Abraham’s wife, since Sarah went away from Abraham “empty” *Sara kene*, that is, childless. All three terms, along with the word *Arabes*, were used by the Byzantines to describe followers of Islam. John accuses the Ishmaelites of idolatry claiming that they worship the morning star and Aphrodite as well as venerating a black stone (*Habathan*). He acknowledges the existence of a scripture which they believe was sent from heaven. John has knowledge of some of the contents of the Qur’ān and references at least three *sūras*. John’s discussion is polemical, not apologetic. He denies the prophetic mission of Muḥammad because it was not predicted by others before him and because Muḥammad is said implausibly to have received revelations while asleep.

Unlike Christians living within the borders of Byzantium, Muslims had a much more direct experience with their religious counterparts. Daily encounters between Christians and Muslims are embedded in a variety of literary texts, from well-known Muslim historians, *sharī’a*, *ḥadīth*, and the Qur’ān. One of the more interesting and significant descriptions of Christianity is found in the books of the *Sira* (life and career) of the prophet Muḥammad in which several encounters between the prophet and Christianity are recorded. Dating to the second half of the eighth century (and into the ninth), the *Sira* contain encounters between the Prophet and Christians which, though most likely not historical, offer stories that will form part of the larger context of Byzantium and Islam. Two are of particular note. On a trading expedition with his uncle Abū Ṭālib, Moḥammad encounters a Christian monk named Baḥīrā outside of the city of Busra just south of Damascus. The monk notices a tree bending down in order to give shade to the young Moḥammad (in other versions, a cloud followed the prophet as he was

walking). Baḥīrā examines Muḥammad and identifies him as a prophet, informing Abū Ṭālib to take the young prophet back to Mecca and protect him from the Jews. The importance of this story lies in the Christian recognition of Muḥammad as a prophet, something that Byzantine polemics against Islam will strongly deny. John of Damascus seems to know this story when he identifies Islam as a Christian heresy and that Muḥammad learned religion from an Arian monk.

The rise of the house of Abbas, known as the 'Abbāsids, and their overthrow of the Umayyads (750 CE) did little, initially, to stall Islamic attempts at further expansion into Byzantine territory. 'Abbāsīd caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (789–809) conducted successful raids into Anatolia even as far as Ephesus and was able to extract annual tribute from the Byzantines during much of his caliphate. The total destruction of the fortified city of Amorion, located in central Anatolia, in 838, was the last great assault on Byzantine land by the 'Abbāsids. The siege and destruction of the city was remembered in Byzantium through the story of the Forty-two Martyrs of Amorion, high-ranking notables and officials captured during the siege. Taken into captivity and having undergone several attempts at conversion, they were eventually martyred in 845 on the bank of the Euphrates. Their martyrdom was commemorated on the Byzantine Church calendar on March 6 and several versions of the story survive. The account contains debates between Muslim religious scholars and the captured Byzantines in which the arguments against Islam are similar to those found in the work of Nice-tas of Byzantium (see below). The account continued to provide Byzantine audiences with a negative view of Islam and was the most celebrated martyrdom of Byzantine Christians at the hands of the Muslims commemorated in the liturgical calendar of the Church of Constantinople.

## Byzantine Response, 842–1025

Beginning in the second half of the ninth century, internal political and religious stability coupled with successful imperial leadership, provided the Byzantines with the opportunity to expand and secure their borders eastward eventually resulting in the re-conquest of Syria and Crete. The 'Abbāsīd dynasty weakened as Turkish mercenaries occupied important positions and, from the second half of the ninth to the mid-eleventh century, Byzantine society faced few direct military threats from Muslim expansion. During this period, cultural and political exchanges between Constantinople and the two Islamic centers of power in the east, Baghdad and Cairo, expanded. A celebrated example is the embassy to Baghdad of the future patriarch of Constantinople, Photios (858–867, 877–886) which may have been both a political and cultural exchange between the two capitals. The caliph Ma'mūn (813–833) unsuccessfully tried to entice the renowned Constantinopolitan scholar Leo the Mathematician to relocate to Baghdad to offer instruction in the sciences and philosophy.

During this period of Byzantine expansion and political stability, relations between the two societies took on a new dimension. Perhaps realizing that their Muslim neighbors were here to stay, the first translation of the Qur'ān into Greek appears as does a service of conversion from Islam to Christianity. Niketas Byzantios produced the first lengthy

refutation of Islam sometime in the second half of the ninth century. Nicetas' refutation focuses exclusively on the Qur'ān and testifies to the existence in ninth-century Byzantium of a Greek translation of the Qur'ān, though Nicetas himself did not know Arabic. Unlike their Muslim antagonists who viewed the scriptures of the Jews and Christians in a favorable light, Byzantine polemicists saw the Qur'ān not as a divinely revealed book, but written by the man, Muḥammad. Niketas quotes about two hundred verses from the Qur'ān verbatim and deals most extensively with the first eighteen sūras. Although only one manuscript survives of the refutation, it was known through an epitome in circulation by the end of the ninth century whose contents were quoted by almost all later Byzantine polemicists, most notably Euthymios Zygabenos, Nicetas Choniates, and Bartholemew of Edessa. For Nicetas, the inspiration for the Qur'ān came from the Antichrist, the devil or Muḥammad himself. He refers to the Qur'ān as "barbarous" and simply calls it a "diminutive book." Faulty translations found in Nicetas' refutation will be repeated in Byzantine polemics, such as Q96.2 where the word *'alaq* (usually translated a "a blood clot") is translated with the Greek word for "leech." Thus, Byzantines will repeat the polemic that Muslims believed that God created humanity from a leech.

Niketas Byzantinos' refutation of the Qur'ān reflects a growing knowledge of Islam in Byzantium, even if it is merely textual and anecdotal. Byzantine military successes in Asia Minor and Syria led to an increase of Muslims living under Byzantine suzerainty as well Muslim captives. The Byzantines were in need of a formalized religious service which would be part of a process of bringing Muslim converts to Christianity as well as returning Christians who had joined Islam back to Christianity. In the 960s, for example, the monk and later saint Nikon spent several years on Crete preaching to the inhabitants, many of whose families had been Christian in the past but had now become Muslim. The island had only recently returned to Byzantine control. A ritual of abjuration, created during the 880s as part of a larger project in Byzantium in which non-Christians (Manicheans, Paulicians, Athinganoi, Jews, and others) were brought into the church through a series of anathemas, became part of the process of conversion and re-conversion. In general, these liturgical rituals consisted of catechetical material along with rubrics for one's eventual conversion to Christianity including a series of anathemas directed against the original faith of the initiate which were to be read aloud in public by the initiate followed by a profession of faith.

The Byzantine ritual of abjuration for converts from Islam contains some twenty-two anathemas directed towards Islam and the prophet Muḥammad. The anathemas begin with a general repudiation of Muḥammad and the caliphs that succeed him along with the prophet's wives. The Qur'ān and its teachings are broadly rejected; more specifically the Quranic teachings on angels, paradise, and the prophetic office of Jesus. The rituals surrounding the Ka'ba in Mecca are denounced as are Muslim marriage customs, divorce and prayer. In quoting the Qur'an, the text uses the same Greek version as that found in Nicetas Byzantinos. The ritual of abjuration was well known in Byzantium as attested by its inclusion in the *Euchologion*, the prayer book for all the liturgical services of the Byzantine Church, as well as its circulation in independent manuscripts. It may have provided Byzantine society with its most easily accessible knowledge of Islam offered in a polemical context.

## Seljuk and Ottoman Turks, 1071–1453

Byzantium's relation with Islam took a decisive turn in the second half of the eleventh century with the arrival of Seljuk Turks into Asia Minor. Having converted to Islam in the mid-tenth century in the region of the Aral Sea, and now under the leadership of sultan Alp Arslan, the Seljuks won a decisive military battle against the Byzantines at the military outpost of Manzikert in 1071, located some twenty-five miles north of Lake Van in eastern Turkey. Along with the defeat, Byzantine prestige was damaged with the capture of the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes. The military defeat resulted in further Seljuk successes and the establishment of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum with its capital at Nicaea in the northwest corner of Asia Minor. The defeat at Manzikert marks the beginning of the gradual Turkification of Anatolia and eventual political collapse of the Byzantine Empire. Muslim Turkish presence in Asia Minor created a new reality for Islamic and Byzantine interaction.

Byzantine military and cultural responses to the Seljuk presence in Anatolia began in earnest under the leadership of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118). The Crusader movement, although initiated by the emperor Alexios' calls for Western aid, remained a Western spectacle drawing Byzantine involvement tangentially. Alexios was more adept at diplomacy and was known for his religious piety. Around 1110 CE, Alexios invited the monk Euthymios Zygabenos to write a treatise renouncing heresy. Zygabenos produced the *Panoplia Dogmatike*, in which he refutes heresies from ancient Greek philosophical movements to Iconoclasm. He devotes one chapter to Islam which contains very little that had not already been written by earlier Byzantine authors. The section on Islam is based almost entirely on the writings of John of Damascus and others. Written in simple Greek, Zygabenos' work was widely known throughout the later Byzantine period.

As Turkish presence in Asia Minor intensified, conversions from Christianity to Islam and vice-versa appear more frequently in Byzantine sources reflecting a slow and gradual assimilation of Christians to Muslim Turkish society. At the end of the reign of Manuel II Komnenos (1147–1180), a controversy between the patriarch of Constantinople and the emperor erupted over the language used in the ritual of abjuration. As noted above, Muslim converts to Christianity were required to abjure their faith in a ritual that included the public recitation of twenty-two anathemas. The twenty-second anathema read: "And furthermore, I anathematize the God of Muḥammad, of whom he says: 'He is the one God, *holosphyros*, who neither begat nor was begotten, and no one has been made like him.'" It was this final anathema that caused the controversy. Apparently, Manuel II, either out of pressure from some of his Muslim subjects who desired to become Christian, or as an astute political move attempting to be more open to the possibility of a closer theological affinity between the two monotheistic faiths, requested the patriarch of Constantinople, Theodosios, to alter this anathema. At issue was the requirement that Muslim converts to Christianity publicly condemn their God as understood in the Greek version of Sūra 112 of the Qur'ān. The sūra was a response to the Christian doctrine of the trinity. At issue was the translation of the Arabic *al-Samad* which is usually translated as "everlasting," but was translated by the Greek word *holosphyros* ("made of solid beaten metal") suggesting a materialist understanding of God. Further, Byzantine polemicists such as Nicetas Byzantinos made use

of the word arguing that Muslims did not worship a real God but some sort of material creation. For Muslims this understanding was offensive; the translation into Greek goes back to Niketas Byzantinos' refutation of the Qur'ān. The controversy is recorded by Niketas Choniates in his *Historia* which covers events between 1118–1207. According to Choniates' account, the emperor was initially successful in getting the anathema changed, but in the end, the patriarchal synod refused to follow through. A short while later, Manuel II died. The controversy acknowledges that for some Byzantines, a better approach towards Islam was to recognize certain affinities between Christianity and Islam without denying fundamental differences. Manuel's decision to make some changes in a liturgical text may reflect that at the very least, some Byzantines were willing to acknowledge that Christians and Muslims worshipped the same God. In the end, the dispute was resolved by abolishing Anathema 22 and replacing it with a new anathema against Muḥammad and his teachings. The import of the dispute is open to interpretation. It may simply reflect a particular individual's attempt along with his advisers to find a more amicable approach to Islam. The opposition to Manuel's proposal by prominent clergy and others (Niketas Choniates, for example) suggest that for many, Islam was not to be considered a true religion, let alone belonging to the realm of monotheism.

Cultural contacts as a result of migration, war, and forced settlements would continue between Byzantines and Muslim Turks in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. The Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire of Constantinople would occupy the military and political attention of both Byzantines and Turks during the first half of the thirteenth century. The travesty of the Fourth Crusade with its capture of Constantinople (1204 CE) and the resultant political fragmentation of the Byzantine Empire introduced yet another cultural, political, and religious threat to Byzantine society and identity. Though Western political hegemony would prove ephemeral, the Crusader movement provided an additional cultural and religious challenge to the Byzantines. Further east, Mongol expansion forced new Turkish tribes to migrate to Asia Minor. Led by their own tribal beys, these Turks increased the Turkish presence; local Orthodox clergy are recorded as welcoming Turks as immigrants into their locales reflecting Byzantium's inability to stem the cultural migration and military expansion that was taking place. Among the several Turkish tribes, it was the Ottomans who emerged at the beginning of the fourteenth century as the successors to Seljuk control of Turkish Asia Minor and who would eventually defeat the Byzantine Empire. During the second half of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans would expand into the Balkans as well.

Turkish rule over the traditional lands of Byzantium followed the legal precepts of Islamic law in dealing with Christian populations. Christians who did not convert to Islam or were not sold into slavery, were required to pay the *jizya* tax as part of their *dhimmi* status, a legal status within Islamic law that allowed Christians to maintain and practice their Christian faith (within limits). As second-class citizens, *dhimmi* status required the state (or local Islamic authorities) to provide Christians with protection from local and external threats. Beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans instituted the practice known as the *devshirme*, a levy of Christian boys gathered from among the *dhimmi* who were trained to serve in the elite Ottoman guard, the Janissaries.

It was during the final century of Byzantium's political existence, as Islamic cultural and political domination struck at the heart of the intellectual and religious center of Orthodox Christianity, that the most articulate and creative theological and intellectual responses to Islam were produced. Though reiterating many of the older arguments against Islam, authors such as the archbishop of Thessalonike, Gregory Palamas, the onetime emperor and later monk, John VI Kantakouzenos (d. 1383), and the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425), each produced treatises on Islam. In the case of Palamas, his personal odyssey of over a year in captivity (1354 CE) as a hostage of a Turkish emir provided him direct contact with Muslim religious leaders. In a letter to his flock in Thessalonike, the captive Palamas understands his confinement as providential. Not only is he receiving due payment for his many personal sins, but God has also provided him the opportunity to bring Jesus Christ to an "impious, god-hated and all-abominable race." During his captivity, Palamas notes that the Turks frequently inquired of him why God had abandoned the Christians as demonstrated by the military success of the Ottomans. This was a constant question the Byzantines asked themselves during this period yet Palamas' response is atypical. Instead of continuing a common refrain that the political woes of Byzantium are due to its ill-advised theological and moral ways, Palamas observes that history is replete with examples of evil men with power. God's favor, rather, is found with those who are oppressed. Palamas' argument is a reversal from conventional Byzantine political theory which, drawing on Old Testament examples, understood political success or failure as a direct corollary with favor or disfavor of God.

Byzantium's political decline vis-à-vis Ottoman expansion led Palamas and others to reinterpret Christianity's role in empire building. After his abdication from the imperial throne, John VI Kantakouzenos became a monk and produced four lengthy apologies directed more towards strengthening Byzantine Christians and less antagonistic towards Islam. In 1391, the young emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, while fulfilling his obligation to serve with Byzantine troops under the sultan, spent some twenty days at the home of a Persian Muslim scholar in Ankara. During his stay, he engaged in a series of discussions with his host, following which he produced 26 dialogues of the highest intellectual quality. The dialogues were meant to convey to their Byzantine audiences the spiritual and intellectual superiority of Christianity over Islam as a means of countering the obvious military and political inferiority of the Byzantines in the face of Turkish Islamic hegemony.

## Political Contacts

Byzantium's political relations with Islam had a variety of expressions. As a political entity, Byzantium, the continuation of the Roman Empire in the east, interacted with a variety of Islamic political states, from the Umayyads, 'Abbāsids, Fāṭimids, Seljuks, and Ottomans. The Sira of Muḥammad contains the tradition that the prophet Muḥammad sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius inviting him to join Islam: "Convert to Islam and God shall give you your reward doubled. But if you turn away, let the sins of the wicked ploughmen (*al-akkārūn*) be upon you" (*Al-Ṭabarī, Ta' rīkh*, ii, p. 130/*The*

*History of al-Ṭabarī*, viii, p. 104). Political contacts between Islamic nations and Byzantium formed a large part of Byzantine–Muslim relations and were diverse in nature: official letters, embassies, treaties, and negotiations (both open and behind-the-scenes). Many of these exchanges dealt with the treatment of Muslim and Christian captives and their release. In many instances, original documents do not survive but are mentioned or “transcribed” in historical chronicles and other sources. One such exchange is the celebrated contact between the Byzantine Emperor Leo III and Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar II, between 717 and 720. ‘Umar initiated the exchange inviting the Byzantine emperor to join Islam. Leo’s lengthy response is essentially an apology for Christianity in the face of Muslim polemic as well as refutations of Islamic practice and belief, most especially the Qur’ān and the prophethood of Muḥammad. Whether the letters ever existed (their authenticity is debated), the exchange reflects an early approach to diplomatic exchanges: they were cordial, respectful, yet forceful.

The patriarch of Constantinople, Nicholas Mystikos, while serving as regent of the Byzantine empire for a short period of time (913–914), sent official correspondence to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph and the emir of Crete, in order to facilitate an exchange of prisoners and improve the conditions of Christians on Cyprus. In the early tenth century, Demetrianos, bishop of Chytri on Cyprus, participated in a successful embassy to Baghdad where he was able to secure the release of Cypriot Christians who had been taken captive.

Peace treaties, or more accurately, temporary truces were part of the political arsenal of the various Islamic states and the Byzantines. Where possible, diplomacy was the preferred response to Arab aggression. In his treatise on imperial administration written for his son and successor, Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (945–959) records several instances where Byzantine diplomacy proved successful in Byzantine–Arab relations. Constantine’s treatment of Arabs lacks the more commonplace hostile references. Rather, Muslims are seen in the context of other non-Roman peoples: Turks, Bulgarians, Khazars, etc. Though not holding back on his invective towards Muḥammad, who is described as “blasphemous,” “obscene,” “crazy,” and the prophet’s religion as fraudulent and heretical, Constantine acknowledges Muslim military prowess and the impact their view of rewards has on their ability to wage war. A similar theme is found in the writings of Constantine’s father, Leo VI. In his *Taktika*, written around 900 CE, Leo sees in his Arab enemies an example for the Byzantines to emulate. The Arabs have been successful, according to Leo, on two accounts: first, the fact that those who cannot fight nonetheless contribute to war efforts by offering material support, and second, because Arabs fight not because they are compelled to, but do so in the hope of spiritual rewards.

Whether or not lasting peace between the two worlds of Byzantium and Islam was possible from the Muslim side (which may or may not be contrary to sharia law and Muslim notions of holy war), periods of truce or the payment of tribute occurred frequently. Several embassies are attested between Constantinople and Baghdad and peace treaties were negotiated on several occasions during the eleventh century with the Fāṭimids of Egypt. In one such treaty, the Byzantines were able to secure permission to rebuild the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been destroyed by the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm in 1009.

Constant warfare and the instability of political borders resulted in both Muslims and Christians living under the rule of their religious rivals. There were many more Byzantine Christians who lived under Islamic rule than vice versa. As for Muslims living in Byzantine territory, there were very few free Muslims, the majority were either slaves or captives, along with the temporary merchant or diplomat. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, treaties between the Byzantines and the Fāṭimids guaranteed protection for a mosque in Constantinople. There was a mosque in Constantinople during the final century of Byzantine control. The well-known mosque in the Monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai dates to as early as the eleventh century.

## Polemics

Byzantine and Islamic polemics directed towards one another proliferated in a variety of contexts in both societies. Muslim and Byzantine histories and world chronicles contain a plethora of polemical interpretations and depictions of the other along with historical evidence of cultural contact and exchange. The main topics of discourse focused both on points of convergence and divergence. The prophetic office of Muḥammad occupied a central position. Byzantine arguments ranged from personal disparaging of his character and life (expansion of religion by the sword; multiple wives; a deceiver) to the absence of prophetic witnesses concerning his arrival and that he did not perform any miracles. Muslim response was to argue that Christians had excised references to Muḥammad in the New Testament, and that the Paraclete mentioned in the Gospel of John (14:14–17, 25–26) is a reference to Muḥammad. One of the earliest and most often repeated descriptions of Muḥammad comes from the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (945–959) who calls the prophet “deluded” and “blasphemous.” Muḥammad is an epileptic who married Khadija to take advantage of her worldly wealth and through his trade contacts learned of Judaism and Christianity. The claim by John of Damascus that Muḥammad had learned of Christianity from an Arian monk, was embellished by identifying the Christian monk Bahīrā as a Nestorian heretic. Other frequent Byzantine diatribes included the Muslim conception of paradise and its related material pleasures including sexual intercourse (performed in the presence of God as mentioned by Niketas Byzantinos), that Muslims worship a black rock that fell from heaven, and the Qur’ān is not Scripture, but a book written by Muḥammad (or dictated to him by the devil) for his own advantage and power.

Muslim polemics directed towards Christianity focused more on doctrine rather than practice. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity was a frequent target for Muslim apologists and later Byzantine authors (e.g. Joseph Bryennios, John VI Kantakouzenos) spent much effort in defending Christian dogma. For Islam, Jesus and his mother Mary, were secured a permanent and revered position since they both appear in a positive light in the Qur’ān. Christian interpretations of their roles, the virgin birth, Jesus’ crucifixion, etc. were misinterpretations at best, and textual corruptions at worst. Muslim apologists responded early to Christian criticism that Muḥammad’s prophetic mission had not been foretold by earlier scripture by producing a genre known as *dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ‘proofs of prophethood’ with proof texts taken from the Old and New Testaments which Muslims believed pointed to Muḥammad.



## Conclusions

The final destruction of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 did not eliminate the Byzantine Christian presence in the Mediterranean. In Asia Minor, several centers of Christianity flourished up until the exchange of the Muslim and Christian populations of Greece and Turkey in 1923 that has resulted in the near total elimination of Byzantine Orthodox Christians from modern-day Turkey. Christians in the southern Balkans fared much better while the traditional Christian areas of Syria, Palestine and Egypt continued their long odyssey with Islam that began during the first half of the seventh century. In the eastern Mediterranean world of the medieval period, Muslim and Christian relations were dependent upon political and socio-economic considerations coupled with religious implications and theological positioning. Conversions (forced, voluntary or pragmatic) were primarily from Christianity to Islam, but the occasional Muslim convert to Christianity (often a reconversion: a Christian who converted to Islam and then returned to Christianity) did occur and Christians were keen to record them.

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## CHAPTER 7

# The Medieval Synthesis

## Religion, Society, and Culture

Joseph P. Huffmann

### Carolingian Christendom: The First Medieval Synthesis

Carolingian Europe was not centered on the urban, commercial life of the Mediterranean but rather on the agricultural fields of today's northern France and Germany. Yet it did inherit from the old Roman Empire a religious and intellectual core of Christianity complete with a priesthood, which had retained not only the orthodox faith tradition but also the powerful legacy of *Romanitas* (Romanness) as expressed in the corpus of classical Roman culture and its forms of governance – all embedded in the sacred language of Latin. This religious and cultural capital would serve to sustain the fragile, developing Carolingian world while a certain consolidation and order was established in the new western empire (Wallace-Hadrill 1983). Given these intellectual and material resources, Gallo-Roman and then Frankish bishops and abbots collaborated with Carolingian monarchs by staffing their rudimentary bureaucracy, contributing to royal initiatives from church resources, functioning as a counterweight to the often restive Frankish lay aristocracy, and advancing Latin-based education among the court's ruling elite. Eventually they also helped advance Carolingian control and stability over newly conquered territories through missionary as well as administrative work. Yet ultimately both the clergy as well as the laity in their pastoral care were dependent on the cultivated piety and goodwill of the Carolingian monarchs, who personified in their very selves the unity and integration of the new Latin Christian empire as the anointed sacral kings in the image of King David.

As patrons of faith and learning, the Carolingian dynasty endeavored among other things to bring order to the multiplicity of regional church traditions and canons, since the church had never been centralized in western Europe. While reformers at court sought to enforce Roman canon law practices the inevitable pushback

by independent-minded Frankish bishops resulted in modest gains. Monastic life was regularized as well through observance of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, though again with mixed results in the short term. Finally, proper order required appropriate liturgical worship using the Roman Rite, though once again the Gallican rites proved enduring enough in the end to be integrated into the Roman formulary. Carolingian culture's finest religious expressions were directed toward liturgical worship, with generations of poets, musicians, architects, and artisans fashioning sacred music and spaces for worship that would set the standard for the liturgical life of the Western church.

Though the majority of reforming zeal focused on the deficiencies and muddled practices of both secular and regular clergy, the needs of the laity were not wholly overlooked. Widespread illiteracy among the lay population was of course the major hurdle to including them in the literate reforms of the clergy. Therefore no direct contact with the scriptures, canon law, the Church Fathers, or liturgical texts was available to the vast majority of the population, whose conversion cannot be said to have been as thorough as that of the Frankish ruling elite.

Under such conditions then, clergymen placed more emphasis on the laity's religious and moral obligations than on religious knowledge. The creation of the parish system by the late ninth century served as the compulsory community of church membership, where the laity was to find regular spiritual sustenance and structure for their communal life around the liturgical calendar of feasts, fasts, tithing, and charitable acts appropriate for their order in Christian society.

In a society where poverty of material resources, literacy, and communication were widespread, a clear vision of proper Christian living was taught first among the elites and then made its way into the remaining lay population even if slowly and unevenly. The desire for order, a respect for hierarchy, an emerging reverence for the unique authority of the papacy, a Benedictine version of monastic life as the ideal path of Christian discipleship, and a separation of the church into clergy and laity in which the latter would experience the Church within a local parish setting were all foundational building blocks for the future of Western Christendom. In this Carolingian synthesis, the empire itself was Christendom with Charlemagne and his successors ruling over it alone; the church was only one institution – albeit a critical one – within Christendom and one to be employed as the emperor saw fit. Charlemagne's interventions on the issue of icons and the *filioque* clause are only the most obvious examples, while the subordinate papacy merely had to accept the *fait accompli*.

Anglo-Saxon Christians made their own contributions to the vitality and spread of Christianity in Europe at this time. After the adoption of Roman Latin Christianity at the Synod of Whitby (664), Canterbury, and Northumbria became centers of rich monastic spirituality and scholarship. Theodore of Tarsus (appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 668 by Pope Vitalian) and his assistant Hadrian (an African monk) were instrumental not only in organizing the English Church into dioceses but also in stocking its monastic libraries with an abundance of imported manuscripts and sacred texts from Rome (Thacker 2005). The resulting monastic schools proved to be the best in western Europe, and from them came the likes of Benedict Biscop, Aldhelm, the Venerable Bede, and Alcuin of York, who with Hiberno-Scottish scholars like Marianus Scotus and Johannes Scotus Eriugena fueled the expansion of learning biblical, patristic, and

classical liberal arts texts characterizing both the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon Golden Age and the ninth-century Carolingian Renaissance. English and Hiberno-Scottish monks also provided the Carolingian continent with an abundance of missionaries like St. Columbanus, St. Fridolin, St. Boniface, St. Willibrord, and the often overlooked abbess St. Walpurga. These missionaries led a clerical reform movement within the Carolingian dominions as well as a missionary expansion of Christianity into the regions hitherto untouched by Gallo-Roman Christianity (Frisia, Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria, Carinthia). The Carolingian era therefore consolidated Western Christianity and provided a new era of aristocratic and missionary saints considered as worthy successors of the Roman martyrs and confessors (Brown 1981; Howard-Johnston and Hayward 2000).

### **Ninth–Early Tenth Centuries: Disintegration of the First Europe**

By the end of the eighth century Latin Christianity had become more normative, but later Carolingian rulers proved unable to further consolidate the movement toward complete uniformity of faith and practice, or to further advance the conversion of the remainder of Europe to this emerging form of Western Christianity. Perhaps Charlemagne's brutal use of forced conversion as a means of consolidating his eastern imperial expansions, as in the notorious case of Saxony, militated against such a continued consolidation (Karras 1986). To be sure both the regional fissures in such a vast empire as well as the internal tensions within the Frankish ruling family produced instability after the death of Charlemagne, who had often held them together by sheer force of personality. An Old Testament-inspired tribal spirituality with its capacity to honor sacral kingship supported by a subservient priesthood, rich liturgical forms of worship, clerical efforts to convert pagan lay practices through cooptation and indigenization of the gospel, and moral regulation of both clergy and laity alike remained the overriding features of the late Carolingian spirituality. Yet this Carolingian synthesis frayed and ultimately came undone by the fragmentation of the empire itself amid the twin pressures of the ruling elite's inner turmoil coupled with the renewal of external invasions.

Such a spectacular collapse produced apocalyptic anxiety to rival anything found among late antique Gallo-Roman Christians. Western Europe was truly under siege and for a long time during the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Exasperated monastic chroniclers soon lost words to describe the chaos. Too many royal heirs and too little wealth to share among the aristocracy in a contracting empire revived the regional divisions that were papered over during the heyday of the empire. And as the Carolingian dynasty weakened with each generation, the forces of incursion grew stronger such that local power replaced imperial authority. By 830 remnants of Carolingian defenses in Spain had given way to Arab expansion, whose growing naval power in the western Mediterranean also led to the conquest of Sicily and regular raids on southern and western Italy reaching beyond Rome even to the Alps. This chapter would remain fresh in Italian memory when the crusades were invented. Concomitantly from eastern Europe the Magyars began to migrate and settle at the expense of eastern Frankish landholders. The initial success of their lightning cavalry raids into the Carolingian empire emboldened them to migrate even into Italy and west-central Europe until

a great Saxon victory on the Lech River (955) pushed by the boundaries of Magyar expansion back to the Hungary of today.

While Muslim and Magyar raids accelerated the political disintegration of the Carolingian Empire, Viking raids completed the process. Northmen assaulted every river and inlet (and thus every major town, city, and monastery) from the British Isles to Kiev and the south of France. Scandinavian incursions placed Frankish defense squarely on the shoulders of the local nobility, as fragmented imperial authority was incapable of protecting such vast borders against Viking assaults throughout the ninth century. By the end of the century marauding Viking bands had chosen to winter and then eventually settle down in lands as dispersed as the Danelaw in England, Normandy in France, and the former Byzantine lands of southern Italy where Normans defeated the Muslims. Thus the Scandinavian marauders would ultimately choose to assimilate and contribute to rebuilding the shattered world of Carolingian Europe, even accepting Christianity as their new faith: once again the invaders had become members of Western Christendom. But their violent arrival coupled with the incursions of Magyars in eastern and Muslims in southern Europe produced an understandable revival of apocalyptic spirituality, as evidenced by monastic authors like Raoul Glaber and Adhemar of Chabannes who understood the disintegration of Western Christendom as the end of the world. And yet it was not the end, but rather a painful recalibration of western European life that would profoundly affect the future trajectory of Christianity. The Age of Assault came to a grateful end by the early tenth century, and once again an effort toward a new synthesis of religion, society and culture was enjoined. But this new Europe would construct a synthesis of religion, society, and culture which was fundamentally different from the Carolingian "First Europe."

## Late Tenth–Eleventh Centuries: From Apocalypse to a New Synthesis

As civic and political life decayed during the era of invasions, so too had the local churches, which became the private property of local warlords. And as private property, ecclesiastical lands and their attendant offices were bought, sold, and given to allies and family members. Clergy at every level were often worldly aristocrats in priests' clothing, with Pope John XII (956–963) as the ultimate but by no means exclusive *exemplum* for a clergy gone bad – he was among a series of Roman pontiffs who were poisoned, smothered, strangled, stabbed to death, and even exhumed and tried for heresy while propped up in the defendant's chair. Clearly the offices and property of the church had suffered grievously at the hands of predatory aristocratic families. Yet out of this violent context a reform movement emerged. It was initiated on the local level and ultimately transformed the role of the institutional Church in Christian society and also unleashed new forms of spirituality that would live in tension with the clerical forms of the institutional Church. Calls for change came from two sources: a popular lay peace movement joined by reform-minded bishops, and a monastic renewal movement.

The first sign of a turning tide against the localized violence that was part and parcel of the emerging feudal society of the tenth century was a popular, even evangelical

movement of active resistance known as the Peace of God movement (Landes and Head 1992). The only power available to those, both lay and clergy, who sought an end to the plundering of churches was spiritual condemnation. Hence individual abbey bishops joined their humble lay populations and began to issue threatening anathemas against predatory barons. Soon local and regional Church councils were formed at which lay nobles were directly called out and threatened with the full spiritual arsenal of heaven. Held in the open air with the local populace present, they served as a non-violent means of shaming the baronage into conformity with Christian behavioral expectations for those in society who claimed to be noble. In villages heads of peasant households took oaths to preserve the peace and protect the Church as a space of immunity from violence, and mass peace marches arrived at the dwellings of the local barons who were asked to join in the oath-taking.

Those especially and perpetually under the immunity known as the Peace of God were non-combatant male peasants, women, children, and clergy – what once was the king's peace was now tendered as a divine ban within the jurisdiction and before the court of the divine king of heaven. The Peace of God movement not surprisingly emerged from Aquitaine, Burgundy, and Languedoc where centralized royal authority was non-existent at the time. Soon added was the Truce of God, in which a fasting from violence was decreed during Sundays and holy days (which included the whole of Lent and even every Friday in some areas). This movement was only partially successful and the clergy made better long-term headway through its liturgical interventions into the feudal oaths and rituals as a more private and interpersonal means of extracting promises of peacekeeping and orderly settlement of disputes. Nevertheless this movement unleashed several new dynamics: an activist clergy which found creative and relatively effective use of the spiritual weapon of excommunication as a means of reforming the ways of a violent nobility, the establishment of a physical space of immunity from lay violence, and a mass lay participation in which its passion to see the world changed for the better was encouraged and valued. These dynamics, when coupled with the clear memory of invasions by pagan and Muslim invaders, explains much of the spiritual energy and both its positive and negative expressions during the central Middle Ages.

The second great crisis for the ecclesiastical hierarchy was the reassertion of its authority within aristocratic society and the return of appropriated bishoprics, abbasies (lay abbots abounded at this time), and properties from lay control. The *libertas ecclesie* (freedom of the church) became a fundamental dimension of the Peace of God, and monasteries took the lead in this effort since they had been especially singled out for plundering or outright take-over by local warlords. The first monastery to succeed in being granted immunity from lay aristocratic control was the newly founded abbey of Cluny in Burgundy ca. 910. Duke William I “the Pious” of Aquitaine renounced all control over the abbey's lands, possessions, tenants, incomes, and even the selection of its abbot. Such radical independence achieved by the reform-minded monks of Cluny led other religious houses to seek the same liberties from their feudal lords, and as a means of securing them permanently these houses submitted themselves to the authority of the abbot of Cluny. As a result of this successful reform movement, by the early eleventh century the abbot of Cluny presided over several dozen monasteries

(both male and female) as head of the Cluniac order and thereby was the most powerful churchman in the Latin Christendom. Insightful barons soon came to see the benefits of following Duke William's example, as such acts of reform-minded piety toward monasteries and bishoprics not only served to draw popular support for reform in their direction, but also to legitimate their often recently obtained noble status in the region. Hence a reformation of the relationship between feudal lords and the institutional Church was making headway, yet it still depended on the goodwill or political savvy of each feudal lord at every level of the hierarchy, since centralized royal power was a thing of the future.

The peace and Cluniac movements were the first fruits of the emerging reform movement, which eventually reached the seat of *Romanitas*, Rome itself. The papacy at this time remained the epitome of corrupting influences of aristocratic lay control, and on a regional level the same problem existed among the bishoprics and archbishoprics throughout western Europe. The two great sins identified by reformers, who now turned their eyes to the moral reform of the episcopate and its pinnacle the papacy, were simony (the sale of the sacramental priestly authority, equated with Simon Magus and his attempt to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit from St. Peter, see Acts 8:9–24) and nepotism (the granting of high church offices to family members). Therefore, initial reform efforts focused on expelling any bishop, archbishop, or abbot who had purchased his office or obtained it as a family possession. Directly from this vision of a venial priesthood came the antidote of virtues demanded now of all consecrated priests and bishops. Drawing from the reform movement's monastic ethos, leaders fashioned an ideal for a holy priesthood that inserted monastic vows and thereby solved the "family business" aspect of a feudalized Church: all priests of any kind, but most especially of the episcopate, must take and maintain a vow of perpetual celibacy. Though this would subject clergymen to centuries of sexual suffering, its original intent was to address the feudal world of proprietary churches, since a clergy that did not sexually reproduce would be freed from (1) the monastic anxiety about worldly lust associated with sexual activity and (2) the worldly ability to pass on church property and offices as a private family possession. Therefore, one of the revolutions of the eleventh-century reform movement to secure the *libertas ecclesiae* was the application of monastic requirements on secular clergy, designed to further extend the space of clerical immunity from lay authority and life. Priests of all kinds were now to be set apart, to be the sacral leaders of Christendom.

Given their substantial material resources, regional governance responsibilities, and deep familial ties to the aristocracy, the greatest battles over implementing this reform ideal revolved around the highest offices of the ecclesiastical hierarchy: bishops, archbishops, and the papacy. And the Church's responses in the many conflicts that ensued were not consistent: while archbishops desired to regulate the bishops' offices yet remain themselves independent of the papacy (as had been the case in late antiquity), bishops desired to remain independent not only of lay but also of archiepiscopal control. So the latter rifled through their archives for copies of the *Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals* used so skillfully by ninth-century Frankish bishops. Indeed, a critical dimension to the debate about the episcopacy was the effort to recover a faded memory of ancient canon law precedents, which were often selectively and imaginatively reconstructed during this

debate. This selective recovery of lost institutional memory played itself out most profoundly in the papal reform movement.

The papacy was the last ecclesiastical institution to feel the heat of reform, since rapacious Roman aristocrats rightly considered the office the fount of the papal states' regional economic wealth. And this chapter of the reform movement was different, as it came from the top down rather than as a popular movement, coming as it did rather surprisingly from imperial intervention into Roman politics on behalf of Christendom. Who could judge the legitimacy of individual popes? A revived German monarchy carried within it the memory of Carolingian imperial precedent and ideals of sacral kingship, and hence King Henry III in 1046 gathered his imperial army and marched southward across the Alps to be crowned emperor. Since he needed assurance of a valid papal coronation and yet found the papacy in political chaos, Henry by his own royal authority convened a church synod at Sutri (just north of Rome) at which two claimants to the papacy were deposed and a third candidate was chosen: Henry's own personal confessor (Bishop Suidger of Bamberg) who took the name Clement II and proceeded to crown Henry as the new Roman emperor. And after the pontificates of Clement II and his successor Damasus II had lasted only a handful of months each, the frustrated new emperor personally appointed a third successive German pope: his own cousin, Bishop Bruno of Toul who took the papal name of Leo IX (1049–1054).

Pope Leo IX was the first reformed pope, and as such he avoided the mire of Roman politics as much as possible and instead took the mantle of highest clerical patron of reform by traveling to numerous reform councils throughout western Europe. Now a pope was seen in person beyond the Alps, and he impressed with his highly developed ritual entrances and enormous public masses. As such he was quickly embraced as the primary advocate of reform, quickly overshadowing even the German emperor as the foremost patron of the Church's health and well-being. He issued decrees of the Peace and Truce of God, deposed recalcitrant bishops and responded to public penances by simoniac bishops with an admonition, absolution, and restoration that advanced an extension of papal authority over the episcopacy. The papacy of Leo IX was truly revolutionary: in one short pontificate the office that was deeply mired in moral and political scandal had suddenly become the fount of clerical legitimacy and immunity from lay aristocratic control. Leo was even powerful enough to summarily depose the archbishop of Reims for his simony. The reform movement had now transformed from an initial effort to radically improve the moral fiber of both the clergy and the lay aristocracy into a wholesale realignment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy's relationship with the laity by the mid-eleventh century. The reform movement had a clear leader whose claim to *Romanitas* and continuity with the apostolic age was hard to beat. The foremost centralizing force in the central Middle Ages, therefore, would not be the successor kingdoms of early feudal Europe but rather the reformed papacy in Rome.

This expanding effort to craft a reformed and rightly ordered Christendom finally had to address the inevitable question: was the emperor (and by extension any king within his kingdom) rightly to be the patron of the reformed episcopacy or had he actually reached beyond his rightful authority within Christendom? Reformers at the papal court looked to its voluminous archives for guidance and found passages in late antique letters and decrees that, when read out of their original historical contexts, could be



understood as claiming a pastoral superiority of popes over temporal rulers like emperors (these were often actually over-heated rhetorical flourishes by popes who themselves were securely under the Byzantine emperors' control, e.g. Pope Gelasius I during the Acacian Schism). A great divergence of conviction therefore quickly emerged between German emperors on the one hand (who understood themselves to be both anointed sacral rulers over Christendom as successors of Charlemagne as well as lords of Rome and defenders of the Roman Church as successors of Constantine) and reformed popes on the other (who understood themselves to possess both the Roman mantle of leadership in northern Italy as successors of Constantine as well as the pastoral mantle of Christendom as the apostolic successor of St. Peter). And after all, it was the popes who crowned the German monarchs in order for them to be legitimate emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, and hence popes could exercise a pastoral *de facto* veto over the candidates for imperial office if they wished to find them morally deficient. What a radical and ironic reversal of Emperor Henry III's interventions in papal politics: the original patron of reform had now been told to keep his hands off the reformed papacy and by extension the entire reformed Church.

The great ensuing debate, known as the Investiture Controversy, put this disputed question on a continent-wide trial from 1075–1122. During the childhood of the German king Henry IV, Pope Nicholas II led a 1059 council that excluded both the German emperor and the Roman patricians from controlling the election of the popes, which was instead placed in the clerical hands of a College of Cardinals. And in 1075 Pope Gregory VII issued a canon law decree *Dictatus Papae* that stated radically and unequivocally the papacy's moral and constitutional superiority over emperors, kings, and bishops as the supreme pastor of Christendom and sole possessor of *Romanitas*. As a result, the emperor, all other kings, and princes were to be considered laymen under the pastoral authority of the Roman pontiff and as such were denied traditional authority to select and invest the bishops in their respective realms with their new church offices and properties. When Henry IV continued to select and invest his bishops in defiance of the papal expectations, Gregory VII excommunicated the German king and even claimed the authority to depose him as unfit for office. In the short run this radical assertion of papal fullness of power unleashed a bloody civil war in the German empire that permanently weakened royal authority vis-à-vis the episcopacy and aristocracy. In England, where the other vital post-Carolingian monarchy was functioning in western Europe, King Henry I engaged in a short-lived but intense conflict with Archbishop Anselm in which the English episcopacy sided in this instance with the king. The Concordat of London (1107) and the Concordat of Worms (1122) finally resolved this painful chapter in Western Christendom through compromise: a distinction was made between the bishop's secular governing duties on behalf of the king and his spiritual duties on behalf of the diocese, and therefore monarchs would henceforth only invest bishops with secular administrative authority, not sacral spiritual authority (which was the preserve of the papacy as signified by the conferral of the papal palium) and episcopal elections were to be held by the canons of cathedral chapter though with royal input.

Secularization of political power is not a modern invention, but was actually realized as a result of the medieval Investiture Controversy (Tellenbach 1993). The early medieval equilibrium, in which the Church was only one institution in a Christendom

governed by a sacral monarch, had now been turned on its head through a successful redefinition of Christendom by reform-minded clergy: now the Church itself was Christendom, with both the priesthood and laity governed by a sacral, pastoral monarch in the person of the pope. This revolutionary new synthesis of Christian religion, society, and culture was always imperfectly realized and often depended on the personal capacity of individual popes to assert its validity. Yet Western Christianity in the central Middle Ages would be quite different than that of late antiquity and the Carolingian early Middle Ages. Ever-expanding claims to papal sovereignty over Christendom (which monarchs, nobles, bishops, and abbots often roundly resisted) meant that a new centralized authority had the opportunity to focus and patronize the spiritual energies of the age in lieu of multiple monarchs and princes. Yet successful Church reform also raised the moral expectations of the clerical order, and whereas monarchs were found wanting in their claims to sacral status it remained to be seen if popes and priesthood could measure up against rising lay expectations of their sacred reformed clergy. The tension between priestly authority and royal power would continue to reverberate in Western Christendom throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages, with the pontificate of Gregory VII as a cautionary tale about the potential spiritual power inherent in the papal office as well as the dangers of overreaching with pastoral authority into the social and political fabric of power in European territories and kingdoms (Morris 1989).

Perhaps the greatest and most longstanding challenge the reformed clergy and papacy faced was that of maintaining this new order and uniformity in Christian religion, society, and culture in an age of emerging diversity of ways of life and thus ultimately of forms both clerical and lay spirituality. The success of the Cluniac reform movement led to additional expressions of reformed monasticism as convictions began to vary about which interpretation of the Rule of St. Benedict was purest. A victim of its own success, the Cluniac order found its abbots drawn into the reform movement's secular engagements while abundant lay bequests of landed wealth and oblate children threatened to make its precincts a private club of worldly aristocratic families. Two new monastic movements arose to counter this trend, the Carthusian (1084) and Cistercian (1098). Both reasserted the ascetic desert tradition of denial, austerity, and withdrawal for private contemplation, and whereas reverence for Carthusian rigor never resulted in an equally high membership the Cistercians' embrace of peasant lay brothers (*conversi*) and the popularity of the charismatic and controversial St. Bernard of Clairvaux thrust the order to the forefront of Christendom. Hence a divergence of conviction about the true monastic path became a standard feature to be managed in Western Christendom by the twelfth century, though monasticism remained securely in the male domain.

As Europe's prosperity began to expand rapidly by the late eleventh century the zealous lay spirituality unleashed by the reform movement sought deeper expression, which was channeled primarily into pilgrimages to saints' relics (Webb 1999) and pious bequests for endowments to sustain either monastic family members or memorial masses for the benefactors (all of which moved monks more completely toward taking priestly orders in order to perform pilgrimage and memorial masses). This penitential patronage and pilgrimage traffic fueled a new wave of church building, which

combined the spiritual concerns of the reform era with creative architectural innovations that we have come to call Romanesque. Vast vaulted stone churches in the late antique basilica style arose throughout western Europe during the eleventh century designed specifically to enhance the sacramental powers of the priest and the liturgical experience of lay pilgrims.

French and Norman aristocratic males at least also found the opportunity to synthesize their penchant for pilgrimage and penitence (often the result of their equal inclination for warfare and pillaging) with service to the Church as the *Reconquista* of the Spanish peninsula gained traction in the 1030s, which was then followed by the Norman reconquest of southern Italy and Sicily from the Muslims in the 1060s. While the tide in the balance of Muslim–Christian power in the western Mediterranean was changing to the latter’s advantage, the arrival of the Seljuk Turks in the eastern end was destabilizing both Arab and Byzantine power structures. Mounting Western anxieties about Muslim abuses of both Palestinian Christians and Latin pilgrims coincided with the Byzantine emperor Alexius IV’s appeal to Pope Urban II in 1095 for assistance. With hopes of extending papal authority over the Eastern Church in the wake of the brutal Great Schism of 1054, Urban transformed what was a narrow Byzantine call for temporary mercenary assistance from the West into an epoch-making fusion of lay spirituality and reformed papal authority: he began recruiting for the expedition in his homeland of France, which he defined as an armed, penitential pilgrimage of holy war to recover the sacred sites of the Church with Jerusalem’s Holy Sepulcher as the ultimate destination. This launched a crusading movement that would draw thousands of aristocratic warriors to “take the cross” and risk everything to save the Holy Land in exchange for plenary forgiveness of their sins through papal indulgences.

Although this is not the place to chronicle the crusading movement, which lasted in diminishing intensity until end of the thirteenth century, it is important to point out that the crusading movement measures both the arc of papal authority and influence in Western Christendom (Schimmelpfennig 1992) as well as that of the lay aristocracy’s ideal of spiritual service to the Church based on a theology of just war and redemptive violence (Riley-Smith 2005). Never sustainable nor successful and filled with many more failures of moral and tactical wisdom than successes, the crusades represent a minor chapter in world history. Yet back home in Europe the towering shadow of the successful First Crusade had an often overlooked yet profound impact (Tyerman 2001). As successive crusades, often articulated with Old-Testament-laced language of a chosen people driving out the latter-day Canaanites from the Promised Land proved to be disasters, so Old-Testament-laced language of divine judgment was employed to explain these failures to secure God’s blessing. This then led to ever more urgent calls for a collective repentance and purity among Western Christians, with the laity now expected to embody the same moral rectitude expected of its clergy. For only then would God’s blessing return to their crusading efforts. The tragic timing of this growing concern for internal purity and obedience cannot be understated, coming as it did during the period of the greatest economic and demographic expansion, encounter with new peoples and ideas, and diversification of ways of life in the entire medieval era. Room for dissent or engagement with non-orthodox peoples and ideas would be

perceived as a direct threat to the Christendom project's success (Russell 1965; Waugh and Diehl 1995).

A final sign of religious expansionism and vitality in this period is the extension of European Christendom into Scandinavia, Poland, and Hungary, though ironically here success came through the active patronage of kings who saw the advantage of dioceses, parishes, and monasteries as an infrastructure for centralizing their kingdoms. This explains why the Scandinavian nobility often violently resisted conversion, whereas supportive kings were canonized. Harold Bluetooth (Denmark), Olaf Trygvesson (Norway), St. Olaf Haraldsson (Norway), and King Olaf (Sweden) all promoted Christianity. Conversely, Slavic rulers in Poland (Prince Mieszko) and Hungary (King Stephen) sought direct papal grants of bishoprics independent from control of the Ottonian German archbishops in order to avoid imperial political encroachments on their territories. By the early eleventh century therefore Latin Christendom had moved eastward in Europe as well as in the Mediterranean.

## Twelfth–Thirteenth Centuries: The Third Medieval Synthesis

The twelfth century saw the velocity of change increase exactly at the time when efforts were being made to consolidate and normalize the new reformed order of Christendom. Building, papal travel, crusading, pilgrimages, missionary work, monastic and clerical reform movements and a continent-wide debate about priestly authority and secular power in Christendom are all testimony to the rapid development of European life – yet this still essentially rural society would be transformed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as urban life brought new contexts for living the Christian life and new conflicts of interest and conviction. The reform movement of the tenth and eleventh centuries had accomplished much, but it had not taken place in the context of urban society, therefore the new order would be challenged even before it had fully taken shape (Constable 1996: 88–124).

Clerical morals and mission continued to be informed by the new monasticism during the twelfth century, though in contexts quite different than those of Cluny, Citeaux, and the Grand Chartreuse. Many secular priests began to form religious communities in which to live into their ministries as reformed clergy, and there they ordered themselves according to a common rule, like the Augustinian and Premonstratensian Canons. The ministry of parish clergy was certainly improved wherever Regular Canons were active, yet in return they became more withdrawn from communal lay life as semi-cloistered priests. Nevertheless, raised expectations for a priesthood characterized by moral purity and an apostolic way of life assured continued scrutiny and criticism from the laity, and all the more so as the sacramental powers asserted by the clergy increased the distance between the two communities in the Church. Lay alliances of rich patrons and poor urban dwellers, such as the Patarines in Milan, would continue to raise concerns about the priestly effectiveness and corporate wealth of both secular and regular priests.

Rapid demographic growth, urban and commercial development, and a growing need for literacy produced intellectual turbulence in the twelfth century as traditional monastic schools grudgingly gave way to urban schools taught by enterprising textual

scholars using grammatical, rhetorical, and logical analysis as their stock in trade. The growing popularity of dialectic as the method for resolving intellectual inconsistencies in traditional theological authorities in particular proved both exciting for the likes of the new school teachers like William of Champeaux and Peter Abelard, and yet also dangerous to monastic scholars like Otloh of St. Emmeram and Bernard of Clairvaux – most especially when new authorities like Aristotle or Arabic learning were employed. Wandering scholars with a popular following could prove as vexing to the ecclesiastical hierarchy as popular wandering preachers when it came to critiquing clerical authority, under which education still remained. Since urban schools simply taught more students than monastic schools they soon began to predominate, and so the best solution was to license and regulate scholars through cathedral schools like Reims, Chartres, Laon, and Paris. The new rhetorical, logical, biblical, and theological scholarship was soon by joined legal studies, and the rediscovery of Roman law invigorated the study of both secular (constitutional and administrative) and canon (church) law (Berman 1983). Within a few generations therefore, higher education was born and nurtured in a new institution which came to be known as the university. Here aspiring students could move through liberal arts learning to the emerging learned professions of law, theology, teaching, and medicine. Students therefore migrated from all over Europe to the best faculties and networked with each other to form a transcontinental community of professionals that both enhanced and challenged traditional clerical authority, and what is more they enabled far more others to do the same than ever before (Cobban 1988).

All this social, cultural, and religious ferment culminated in a drive to formally and finally normalize aspects of the reformed Church in terms of practice and canon law. Under papal leadership and showing the growing influence of the new theological and legal studies, a series of six major church councils were convened (1123, 1139, 1148, 1163, 1179) which culminated in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. Here Pope Innocent III, at the pinnacle moment of medieval papal authority, promulgated a series of foundational orthodox norms: all Christians were to be taught the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary; the sacraments were articulated as sevenfold (finally excluding royal anointment but now including marriage) in which all Christians were expected to participate regularly as means of receiving divine grace; devotion of the eucharist was defined (using Aristotelian distinctions) by establishing transubstantiation of the bread and wine; papal primacy over the universal Church was once again affirmed; new religious orders were forbidden in order to blunt the growing diversity of religious expression "lest too great a diversity bring confusion into the Church;" and most infamously Jews and Muslims in Christian society were ordered in canon 68 to wear special dress to distinguish them from Christians and in canon 69 Jews were denied any public office, "since this offers them the pretext to vent their wrath against Christians" (Chazan 2006; Nirenberg 1996)

These contours of the definition and demarcation of orthodox Christendom represent a watershed moment in the medieval synthesis of religion, society, and culture (Ozment 1980). And they were each in their several ways responses to percolating dissent and heterodoxy amid the growing anxiety about spiritual purity in an age of failing crusades. As the dress code and limited public functions of Jews and Muslims

suggest, it was becoming increasingly difficult to discern who was “within Christendom” based solely upon external appearances in this age of growing mobility, prosperity, and communication in which new ideas and peoples were encountered like never before (Iogna-Prat 2005).

In the thirteenth century religious life was more vital than ever, both in its reach across Europe as well as in its personal depth. Soaring, massive gothic cathedrals were built as multi-generational statements of faith in God and in the future, and pilgrimages to these shrines remained extremely popular. Even the image of God was changing from the austere and unapproachable cosmic Christ of previous generations to a loving savior. The fascination with the humanity of Jesus – reflected in sermons, songs, and religious art marks an evangelical movement across the populace in which the Old Testament based tribal religion was giving way to a New Testament focus on the gospel and individual Christian life as an *imitatio Christi* and a *vita apostolica*. The cult of the Virgin Mary reached new heights in popular devotion, precisely because she literally embodied Jesus’ humanity as the Christ Child. Legion were the depictions of Madonna and child with Mary understood as the central human figure in the mystery of the Incarnation. Some scholars have even asserted that this amounted to a second conversion of Europe, where an emotional and evangelical religion of the heart called Christians beyond mere behavioral expectations (Dickson 2000). Indeed as a sign of the times a spirituality of engagement and action – whether crusading, going on pilgrimage, debating theology, preaching the gospel, building cathedrals, or engaging the sacraments – had begun to compete with the traditional spirituality of withdrawal and contemplation (Vauchez 1993aa). Even the twelfth-century monastic speculative theologies of St. Anselm (*Cur Deus Homo*) and Abelard (*Sic et Non*) gave way to the huge integrative edifices of scholastic theologians like St. Albertus Magnus’ *Summa Theologiae*, his student St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, and St. Bonaventure’s *De septem itineribus aeternitatis* (Baldwin 1971). The second medieval synthesis of religion, society, and culture, born of the twin forces of a reformed clergy and a deeply engaged lay spirituality, was reaching its critical mass moment.

But of course this completing the circle of Christendom inevitably left some out of the community. The resulting gap between clergy and laity meant that the sacred had become the preserve of priests and monks who alone had the luxury of devoting themselves to the religious life of regular periods of prayer, reading and reciting the scriptures and spiritual treatises, and offering liturgical praise to God in lieu of the laboring lay population. Not having access to this predominant ideal of Christian spiritual life, the vast majority of the laity experienced only a few religious practices in an otherwise unreligious life – and practices they had to express their spiritual yearnings were uniformly abstemious in nature (abstinence from marital relations at given times, fasting during Lent, payment of tithes, attendance at Sunday Mass where they only periodically received the sacred eucharist). So when ecclesiastical fare did not satisfy their own spiritual hunger they were openly critical and sometimes even looked elsewhere for sustenance (Moore 1977). This evangelical age of preaching could cut both ways when wandering preachers might alternatively call the laity to service in a crusade (e.g. Peter the Hermit) or to resistance against corrupt clergy (e.g. Arnold of Brescia).

Two overriding themes defined this evangelical movement, which thereby ironically called the reformed Church to task for its failures: (1) the need for penitence as a prerequisite for divine blessing, and (2) the importance of apostolic poverty in an age of urban commercial markets where *avaritia* had replaced *superbia* as the quintessential vice (Little 1971).

Criticism directed at the corporate wealth and worldly pursuits of both secular and regular clergy (Mann 1980), which was often encoded into the call to repentance and apostolic living, reached worrisome heights by the early thirteenth century when critics began to form alternative church communities such as the Waldensians and Cathars in southern France (a region known for its lack of centralized royal governance amid growing commercial wealth). Papal leadership in addressing this growing challenge proved to be a mixture of insightful discernment and a troubling expansion of the notion of crusading against the enemies of Christ. The Fourth Lateran Council's delimiting new religious orders fortunately did not apply to the followers of St. Dominic and St. Francis, who would receive official sanction for their respective preaching and poverty movements. Generations of idealistic young laymen from urban bourgeois families were thereby enlisted to serve as the Church's models of penitential and apostolic urban living as orthodox voices in competition with the Cathars and Waldensians.

Ironically it would be Franciscan and Dominican friars at university who would craft a workable theology of profit and ethical commerce, and they all knew instinctively how to reach urban audiences with their open air preaching and acts of identification with the urban poor. Choosing to be poor and repenting from avarice reflect the virtues and vices of the new commercial elites and their urban social milieu, filled as it was with a plethora of newly formed lay confraternities and parishes that served as a means of the charitable redistribution of commercial profits for the alleviation of urban poverty and suffering. So in the context of urban labor and commercial profit a distinctive theology of lay holy living was forged (Little 1978). Henry of Susa, cardinal of Ostia, could even pen these words by 1253: "In a broad sense, those persons are called religious who live in a saintly and religious manner in their homes, not because they submit to a specific rule, but on account of their life, which is harder and simpler than that of other lay people who live in a purely worldly fashion." The papal curia of Innocent III was prescient in engaging this evolving urban lay spirituality on its own terms (Swanson 1995).

Innocent's zeal to finally produce a second successful crusade, however, unleashed huge violence and suffering in the name of orthodox Christianity. His Fourth Crusade in Constantinople was an epic debacle from which papal prestige would never recover, and his Albigensian Crusade sacrificed the lives of thousands on all sides to exterminate the Cathar heresy (Powell 1994; Costen 1997). That the highest officials of the Church would sanction both crusading violence *within Christendom* as well as an increasing public quarantining of Jews and Muslims as fellow heretical enemies of Christendom says much about where reformed efforts at the purification of Christendom and the marshalling of lay spirituality to defend it through redemptive violence had taken Europe by the late thirteenth century. Brilliant and inspiring expressions of Christian faith, thought, and deeds stood

alongside an increasing intolerance of dissent and heterodoxy in the name of forging a perfected and holy Christendom worthy of God's blessing. Communal purity demanded single-minded obedience to the now standardized norms, and Christian attitudes toward Jews (stereotyped with the sin of avarice), Muslims (stereotype for the sin of impure belief as *infideles*), and other non-conformists became increasingly hardened and eliminationist.

## Fourteenth–Fifteenth Centuries: The Return of the Apocalypse and Later Medieval Spirituality

The pressures of success seemed to catch up with every reform movement, which in time found itself as the new face of outmoded thought in the undertow of yet another reform movement. This was certainly true of the Cluniacs and Cistercians, and it would be true of the Franciscans as well as the papacy. Innocent III's pontificate is justifiably recognized as the pinnacle of the medieval papacy and the second medieval synthesis, but this only makes obvious a subsequent decline was to follow. Many of his own policies and assertions of papal authority contributed to the decline in papal influence and independence. And though the papacy had been well advanced beyond monarchies in the formation of administrative and institutional structures of governance, its own success led to growing charges of bloated bureaucracy and financial corruption in Rome, even as European Christians sent their varied appeals to Rome in record numbers. Finally, what Innocent III did not fully appreciate in the midst of his numerous contentious interventions into the lives and politics of Europe's kings and emperors was that in varying degrees they too were developing administrative monarchies that would soon be ready to challenge papal claims to super-territorial jurisdiction as Christendom's senior pastor (Oakley 1979).

Growing proto-national kingdoms with their intensifying resistance to papal interventions, and the inevitable spiritual inflation that occurred with every papal use of excommunication and interdict, ultimately proved to undermine papal authority over a supposedly uniform and unified Christendom. And this decline set in at the absolutely worst time possible, when pastoral leadership was needed more than ever. The Age of Trauma dawned in the fourteenth century, when climate change and the global transportation system combined to produce a series of debilitating famines followed by the unimaginable horrors of the Black Plague by mid-century. The last two horse-men of the Apocalypse also arrived in the form of wars (e.g. Hundred Years War) and the death they produced on a record scale as royal armies swelled in size, destructive capacity, and duration in the field. Kings were finally recovering their sovereignty after the feudal age of aristocratic and clerical dominance, and they were determined to consolidate their kingdoms into territorial states. And one of the key elements in this strategy was to return the Church once again to a sub-set of Christendom under the sovereign king.

Clerical inability to solve any of these traumatic crises produced a new criticism of their impotence and even irrelevance, while traditional critiques of the Church's corporate wealth (often a product of centuries of the laity's pious bequests) continued apace.



Lay anticlericalism had much to complain about as one failure of ecclesiastical leadership after another piled up without any meaningful reform movement engendered in this era of crisis. The Papacy's exile in Avignon (1305–1377) followed by the Great Schism (1378–1417) nearly eclipsed the papal office again, with a serious yet narrowly unsuccessful ecclesial reform to an episcopal synod model of leadership as advocated by the Conciliar Movement. The papacy narrowly preserved its monarchical status in Rome through mortgaging its prerogatives over the Church to regional monarchs and princes, and the popes themselves then turned to functioning as territorial Italian Renaissance princes themselves.

Lay spirituality throughout this troubled era, however, remained remarkably vibrant and engaged, with a major outpouring of support for memorial chantries, charitable bequests, religious feasts, and communal rituals (Duffy 2005). Yet some communities began to contemplate direct access to God without the need for clerical mediation (Arnold 2005). Later medieval lay devotion was centered on two distinct themes: (1) the changing image of Christ from an incarnate savior to a suffering martyr-God, and (2) prophetic mysticism, both of which seem quite appropriate for an age of enormous human suffering and a clergy both in conflict with itself and highly politicized (Vauchez 1993bb; 1993c). Mystics abounded in this period, in which we finally hear female voices that were counted sacred: thousands of people from every ethnicity, class, age, gender, and educational attainment were claiming to have had direct, personal encounters with Christ, saints, or angels and were often given prophetic words for the moral renewal of the Church. In this egalitarian age of prophets and prophetesses eclipsing priests, the likes of Margery Kempe, Meister Eckhart, St. Catherine of Siena, Marie d'Oignies, Handwijch of Flanders, Julian of Norwich, St. Bridget of Sweden, the Solitary of Durham, Walter Hilton, Joan of Arc, and many more gave to the Church memorable visions of Christ's suffering alongside his pilgrim flock as well as deeply intimate divine offers of union – even a “mystical bridal-union” – amid the “stench of corruption” emanating from the papacy as St. Catherine of Siena saw it.

Intolerance of dissent and heterodoxy was therefore sustained in this free-wheeling prophetic environment, and both clergy and monarchy proved hypersensitive to them as threats to their legitimacy. Hence, when individuals like John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Joan of Arc, and their followers (who would have deeply disagreed with each other) proved either to reject the ecclesiastical or political order of the day or encouraged others to flout them and set up on their own with a Bible as the only authority, they were dispatched in short order as heretics (though for Wycliffe there was a posthumous degradation of his body). It was as though the flames that engulfed these new heretics were a measure of the fever that had taken hold of Christendom in yet another age of anxiety, and claims to membership in the heavenly Church Triumphant did little to save one from the reactionary Church Militant on earth. Even for those who remained in the orthodox fold there was coercion to obey, as when female members of lay confraternities, beguinages, and various spiritual communities were commanded by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298 to be immediately and permanently cloistered as nuns in order to better manage the mystical visions of these independent laywomen (Bynum 1988). Such was the defensiveness of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in a world that had changed

much since its medieval apex of authority and influence. Another expression of this was the expulsion of Jews from Spain, France, and England by the end of the fifteenth century, which also richly benefitted the emerging state monarchies in these kingdoms (Nirenberg 2005).

Though it may appear at this juncture that the medieval synthesis of religion, society, and culture had come completely unraveled such was not the case. One cannot imagine either the Renaissance, the Age of Discovery, or the Protestant and Catholic Reformations without medieval Europe. And yet the Christendom project, so centered on clerical leadership infused with the unifying legacy of *Romanitas* ceased to provide universal spiritual and intellectual energy. The community that once been so critical to the preservation and spread of Latin Christianity and classical culture and that had been so creative and effective in reforming post-Carolingian Christendom now proved unable to find the spiritual capacity to effect a synthesis of religion, society, and culture yet again. Rather, lay spirituality proved more vital than ever in literacy, wealth, self-confidence, and emerging national identities. The crusading era was finally over, and henceforth Western Christians would establish new forms of identity in the vernacular (Leff 1976).

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## CHAPTER 8

# Early Modern Missions and Maritime Expansion

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

In the early modern period – roughly from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries – Christianity, Islam, and, to a lesser extent, Buddhism exhibited extraordinary dynamism, penetrating regions they had never reached before, winning millions of new adherents, and coming to merit the name of “world religions.” The church could not compete with Islam in the interior of Africa or with Buddhism in inner Asia. As a rival to those religions, however, Christianity had one big advantage: its adherents carried it by sea. They could outflank Islam in Africa and dodge the forests, reaching directly deep into the tropics via the coasts. They could scatter missions and footholds around the Indian Ocean and maritime Asia, whereas Buddhists and Muslims could not respond by sending expeditions to Europe, or communicate directly with the vast new mission fields Christian evangelists were working in the New World.

### Africa

From the 1430s, Portuguese adventurers justified slave-raids and trading ventures on the coast of the African Atlantic as part of a campaign to spread Christianity. The ambitious Prince, Dom Henrique, whom historians call “the Navigator” (rather misleadingly, as he only ever made two short sea trips), sponsored the voyages until his death in 1460, with support from successive popes, and sent expeditions as far as what is now Sierra Leone, but he never honored his promises to send missionaries to the region. Spanish friars strove to fill the gap, but they made little or no progress, partly because the Portuguese detested them as foreign agents. The merchants and private entrepreneurs who ran the Portuguese effort from 1469 to 1475 had no reason to waste hard-nosed investment on spiritual objectives.

In 1475, however, the crown took over the enterprise, perhaps in order to confront Spanish interlopers. West African navigation became the responsibility of the senior prince of the royal house, the Infante Dom João. Henceforth, Portugal had an heir, and, from his accession in 1481, a king committed to the further exploration and exploitation of Africa. He seems to have conceived of the African Atlantic as a sort of “Portuguese Main,” fortified by coastal trading establishments. Numerous informal and unfortified Portuguese outposts already dotted the Senegambia region. Freelance expatriates set most of them up, “going native” as they did so.

Dom João, however, had a militant and organizing mentality, forged in the war he waged against Spanish interlopers on the Guinea coast between 1475 and 1481. When he sent 100 masons and carpenters to build the fort of São Jorge, therefore, he was doing something new: inaugurating a policy of permanent footholds, disciplined trading, and royal initiatives. The natives could see and fear the transformation for themselves. A local chief said that he had preferred the “ragged and ill dressed men who had traded there before.” Another prong of the new policy was the cultivation of friendly relations with powerful coastal chieftains – the Wolof chiefs of Senegambia, the rulers, or “obas” as they were called – of the lively port city of Benin, and ultimately – much further south – the kings of Congo. Conversion to Christianity was not essential for good relations – but it helped. In Europe, it served to legitimize Portugal’s privileged presence in a region where other powers coveted the chance to trade. In Africa, it could create a bond between the Portuguese and their hosts.

Dom João therefore presided over an extraordinary turnover in baptisms and rebaptisms of rapidly apostasizing black chiefs. In one extraordinary political pantomime in 1488, he entertained an exiled Wolof potentate to a full regal reception, for which the visitor was decked out with European clothes and his table laden with silver plate. Further east along the coast, Portuguese missionary effort was still feeble, but the fort of São Jorge was Christianity’s shop window in the region, contriving an attractive display. Its wealth and dimensions were modest, but mapmakers depicted it as a splendid place, with high fortifications, penanted turrets, and gleaming spires – a sort of black Camelot. It had no explicit missionary role, but it did have resident chaplains, who became foci of inquiries from local leaders and their rivals, who realized that they could get help in the form of Portuguese technicians and weapons if they expressed an interest in Christianity. The obas of Benin played the game with some skill, never actually committing to the Church but garnering aid like supermarket customers targeting “special offers.” Not much came of any of the contacts, in terms of real Christianization, and in competition in the region neither Christianity nor Islam was very effective at first. But West Africa had become what it has remained ever since: an arena of spiritual enterprise in which Islam and Christianity contended for religious allegiance.

Farther south, where Portuguese ships reached but Muslim merchants and missionaries were unknown, was the kingdom of Congo, where people responded to Christianity with an enthusiasm wholly disproportionate to Portugal’s lackluster attempts at conversion. The kingdom dominated the Congo River’s navigable lower reaches, probably from the mid-fourteenth century. The ambitions of its rulers became evident when Portuguese explorers established contact in the 1480s. In 1482, battling against the Benguela current Diogo Cão reached the shores of the kingdom. Follow-up voyages

brought emissaries from Congo to Portugal and bore Portuguese missionaries, craftsmen, and mercenaries in the reverse direction.

In Congo, the rulers sensed at once that the Portuguese could be useful to them. They greeted them with a grand parade, noisy with horns and drums. The king, brandishing his horse-tail whisk and wearing his ceremonial cap of woven palm-fiber, sat on an ivory throne smothered with the gleaming pelts of lions. He graciously commanded the Portuguese to build a church and when protesters murmured at the act of sacrilege to the old gods, he offered to put them to death on the spot. The Portuguese piously demurred.

On May 3, 1491, King Nzinga Nkuwu and his son, Nzinga Mbemba, were baptized. Their conversion may have started as a bid for help in internal political conflicts. The laws of succession were ill defined and Nzinga Mbemba, or Afonso I, as he called himself, had to fight for the succession. He attributed his victory to battlefield apparitions of the Virgin Mary and St. James of Compostela – the same celestial warriors as had often appeared on Iberian battlefields in conflicts against the Moors, and would appear again on the side of Spain and Portugal in many wars of conquest in the Americas. Congo enthusiastically adopted the technology of the visitors and embraced them as partners in slave-raiding in the interior and warfare against neighboring realms. Christianity became part of a package of aid from these seemingly gifted foreigners. The royal residence was rebuilt in Portuguese style. The kings issued documents in Portuguese, and members of the royal family went to Portugal for their education. One prince became an archbishop, and the kings continued to have Portuguese baptismal names for centuries thereafter.

The Portuguese connection made Congo the best-documented kingdom in West Africa in the sixteenth century. However Afonso I came to Christianity in the first place, he was sincere in espousing it and zealous in promoting it. Missionary reports extolled the “angelic” ruler for knowing:

the prophets and the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and all the lives of the saints and everything about our sacred mother the church better than we ourselves know them . . . It seems to me that the Holy Spirit always speaks through him, for he does nothing but study, and many times he falls asleep over his books, and many times he forgets to eat and drink for talking of Our Lord . . . and even when he is going to hold an audience and listen to the people, he speaks of nothing but God and His saints.

Thanks in part to Afonso’s patronage, Christianity spread beyond the court. “Throughout the kingdom,” the same writer informed the Portuguese monarch, Afonso “sent many men, natives of the country, Christians, who have schools and teach our saintly faith to the people.” Not all Afonso’s efforts to convert his people were entirely benign. The missionaries also commended him for “burning idolaters along with their idols.” How much the combination of preaching, promotion, education, and repression achieved is hard to gauge. Portugal stinted the resources needed to Christianize Congo effectively. And the rapacity of Portuguese slavers hampered missionary efforts. Afonso complained to the King of Portugal about white slavers who infringed the royal monopoly of European trade goods and seized slaves indiscriminately.

Despite the limitations of the evangelization of Congo, the dynamism of Christianity south of the Sahara set a pattern for the future. The region was full of cultures that adapted to new religions with surprising ease. Profound or lasting evangelization was hard to achieve. In the seventeenth century, for instance, Queen Njinga of Ndongo showed characteristic expediency in slipping in and out of nominal Christianity as and when she needed or discarded Portuguese allies. Still, although Christianization was patchy and superficial, at least until the intensive missionary efforts of the nineteenth century, Christians never lost their advantage over Muslims in competing for sub-Saharan souls.

To some extent, the adhesion of the Congolese elite made up for the isolation and stagnation of Christian East Africa in the same period. Christianity had been the religion of Ethiopia's rulers since the mid-fourth century, when King Ezana began to substitute invocations of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" for praise of his war-god in the inscriptions that celebrated his campaigns of conquest and enslavement. The empire had a checkered history, but in the late fourteenth century, the highland realm again began to reach beyond its mountains to dominate surrounding regions. Monasteries became schools of missionaries whose task was to consolidate Ethiopian power in the conquered pagan lands of Shoa and Gojam. Rulers, meanwhile, concentrated on reopening their ancient outlet to the Red Sea and thereby the Indian Ocean. By 1403, when King Davit recaptured the Red Sea port of Massaweh, Ethiopian rule stretched into the Great Rift valley. Trade northward along the valley was in slaves, ivory, gold, and civet, and Ethiopia largely controlled it.

Yet by the death of King Zara Yakub, towards the end of the 1460s, expansion was straining resources and conquests stopped. A major source for Ethiopian history in this period, saints' lives, tells instead of internal consolidation, as monks converted wasteland to farmland. In 1481, the Ethiopian church resumed contact with Rome, where the pope provided a church to house visiting Ethiopian monks. European visitors were already familiar in Ethiopia, as Ethiopia's Massaweh road became a standard route to reach the Indian Ocean. Italian merchants anxious to grab some of the wealth of the Indian Ocean for themselves would head up the Nile as far as Keneh, where they joined camel caravans across the eastern Nubian desert for the thirty-five day journey to the Red Sea. When Portuguese diplomatic missions began to arrive in Ethiopia – the first, in the person of Pedro de Covilhã, in about 1488, a second in 1520 – they found "men and gold and provisions like the sands of the sea and the stars in the sky," while "countless tents" borne by fifty thousand mules transported the court around the kingdom. Crowds of two thousand at a time would line up for royal audiences, marshalled by guards on plumed horses, caparisoned in fine brocade. To the ruler of Ethiopia, Negus Eskendar, Covilhã was immediately recognizable as a precious asset, whom he retained at his court with lavish rewards.

Ethiopia, however, had already overreached its potential as a conquest state. Pagan migrants permeated the southern frontier. Muslim invaders pressed from the east, building up the pressure until, within a couple of generations they threatened to conquer the highlands. Ethiopia survived, with the help of a Portuguese task force in the 1540s. But in this region, the frontier of Christendom began to shrink. In the seventeenth century, Jesuit quibbles with Ethiopia's Coptic tradition interrupted the missionary effort.

Farther south, the east coast of Africa was accessible to Muslim influence, but cut off from that of Christians until the sixteenth century, when the opening of a route around the Cape of Good Hope brought Portuguese merchants, exiles, and garrisons to the region. Here, however, Christianity never had the manpower or appeal to compete with Islam, while the inland states remained largely beyond the reach of missionaries of either faith.

Southward from Ethiopia, at the far end of the Rift valley, for instance, lay the gold-rich Zambezi valley and the productive plateau beyond, which stretched to the south as far as the Limpopo River, and was rich in salt, gold, and elephants. Like Ethiopia, these areas looked toward the Indian Ocean for long-range trade with the economies of maritime Asia. Unlike Ethiopia, communities in the Zambezi valley had ready access to the ocean, but they faced a potentially more difficult problem. Their outlets to the sea lay below the reach of the monsoon system and, therefore, beyond the reach of the normal routes of trade. Still, adventurous merchants – most of them, probably, from southern Arabia – risked the voyage to bring manufactured goods from Asia in trade for gold and ivory. Some of the most vivid evidence comes from the mosque in Kilwa, in modern Tanzania, where fifteenth-century Chinese porcelain bowls line the inside of the dome.

In the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the center of power shifted northward to the Zambezi valley, with the expansion of a new regional power. Mwene Mutapa, as it was called, arose during the northward migration of bands of warriors from what are now parts of Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal. When one of their leaders conquered the middle Zambezi valley – a land rich in cloth, salt, and elephants – he took the title Mwene Mutapa, or “lord of the tribute payers,” a name that became extended to the state. From about the mid-fifteenth century, the pattern of trade routes altered as Mwene Mutapa’s conquests spread eastward toward the coast. But Mwene Mutapa never reached the ocean. Native merchants, who traded at inland fairs, had no interest in a direct outlet to the sea. They did well enough using middlemen on the coast and had no incentive for or experience of ocean trade. The colonists were drawn, not driven, northward, though a decline in the navigability of the Sabi River may have stimulated the move. Jesuits reached the court of Mwene Mutapa in the mid-sixteenth century, but effected few enduring conversions. The rulers repelled a Portuguese invasion in 1575.

## Asia

In other directions, exploration and imperialism beyond the Atlantic disclosed worlds that were magnets for missionaries. In Asia, the contrast between the Philippines, where Spanish rule built up what is by far the biggest Christian community in Asia, and the many mission fields that proved barren or only briefly productive illustrates this. In 1564–1565, Andrés de Urdaneta, the Augustinian pilot who pioneered transpacific navigation, made it a condition of his work as an explorer that the crown promise to undertake the evangelization of the Philippines, but even in the Philippines, Christian success in direct competition with Islam was limited. In the Sulu Islands, where Muslim missionaries were active within reach of protection from a strong Islamic state in Brunei, the Muslim threat could be met by force of arms but not eradicated by Christian



preaching. In the Philippine island of Mindanao, Muslim intruders arrived from the small but immeasurably spice-rich sultanate of Ternate in the 1580s. The Christian mission on Mindanao had barely begun and could not be sustained. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it was all Spanish garrisons could do to keep at bay Muslim hotheads who launched holy wars against the Spaniards' main base in Luzon. Yet, responding to his advisers' view that the mission was not worth the cost and effort, King Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–1598) insisted that he would rather spend all the gold in his treasury than sacrifice one church where the name of Christ was praised.

For a while, Franciscans and Jesuits in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Japan encountered amazing success by targeting lords whose conversions were catalysts for the conversions of their followers. Once the missionaries had a place to say mass and a conspicuous aristocratic patron to make Christianity respectable, they could attract potential converts by displays of devotion, such as the magnificent requiem mass sung for the local ruler's wife, Lady Gracia, at Kokura that attracted thousands of mourners in 1600. By the 1630s, more than 100,000 Japanese had been baptized. Successive central governments in Japan had treated the new religion with suspicion, as a source of subversive political ideas, foreign influence, and encouragement to local lords to usurp central authority. Sporadic persecution from the 1590s, however, had failed to halt the progress of Christianity. So from 1639, it was banned outright, and Christians who refused to renounce their faith were forced into exile or put to death.

China could not be converted by means similar to those the Jesuits followed in Japan. It was a relatively centralized state with no intermediate lords to serve as local flashpoints of Christian illumination. So, although, as recent work has shown, the Jesuits invested heavily in recruiting converts at all social levels, they concentrated their meager manpower on the scholar officials, or mandarins, who enjoyed huge social influence. Some of their converts were impressively committed: using Christian baptismal names, passing Christianity on to their friends and families, and proclaiming their faith in public. Yang T'ing-yün recalled a vivid conversion-experience in the presence of one of the Jesuits' pictures of Jesus, which inspired him "with feelings of the presence of a great lord." Debates with Jesuits followed: why could reverence for Buddha not be accommodated alongside acknowledgment of Jesus? How could the Lord of Heaven be subject to disgrace and suffering by being crucified? How could bread and wine be turned into the body and blood of Jesus? (Answer: "My Lord's love for the world is boundless.") After much agonizing, Yang repudiated his mistress – a more impressive test, perhaps, of Christian commitment than baptism – and went on to build a church, finance the printing of Christian works, and write books explaining Christianity. His fellow Christian, Hsü Kuang-ch'i, explained as an act of God his failure to pass the exam to enter the civil service that first brought him into contact with the missionaries and attributed to divine revelation, by way of a dream, his insight into the doctrine of the trinity.

Despite such promising instances, the Jesuits failed to convert China for three reasons. First, most Chinese were more interested in the Jesuits' scientific learning and technical skills as mapmakers, astronomers, artists, clock makers, and designers than in their religious teaching. Second, the strategy the Jesuits adopted to convert China was a long-term one, and the revolutions of Chinese politics tended to interrupt it. No sooner had the Jesuits converted an empress than the Manchus overthrew the Ming

dynasty in 1644. Finally, the church lost confidence in the Jesuits' methods. This was the outcome of a conflict that began with the founder of the mission, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). He rapidly developed a healthy respect for Chinese wisdom. Indeed, the Jesuits became mediators not only of Western culture to China but also of Chinese learning in the West. He decided that the best way to proceed with Chinese converts was to permit them to continue rites of reverence for their ancestors, on the ground that it was similar to Western veneration for saints. As we have seen, this was just the sort of practice that, in the West, the clerical elite was attacking. The missionaries split over the issue, and the effectiveness of the mission suffered when Pope Clement XI ruled against the veneration of ancestors early in the eighteenth century.

In parts of South and Southeast Asia, missionary strategists targeted potential converts at various social levels. In the Molucca and Sulawesi Islands, in the seventeenth century, in what is today Indonesia Protestant and Catholic missions alike approached sultans, local notables, and village heads, with results that usually came to embrace many ordinary people but that never seem to have lasted for long. In Manado in northern Sulawesi, Franciscans launched an intensive mission in 1619. They began by obtaining permission from an assembly of village heads at the ruler's court, but these notables disclaimed power over their fellow villagers' religious allegiance. The friars preached from village to village, encountering universal hostility. The audience would shriek to drown out the preaching, urge their unwelcome guests to leave, and profess fidelity to their gods. They withheld food and shelter. The friars therefore withdrew in 1622. Their Jesuit successors made some progress by concentrating on the ruler and his family. When Franciscans returned to the villages in the 1640s, they enjoyed a much more positive reception. By the 1680s, under Dutch sponsorship, a Protestant mission in Manado made further headway by employing converted native schoolmasters to work among the children of the elite, wherever a local ruler would permit it. In Sri Lanka, Portuguese missionaries were more generally successful, but the Dutch who took over the island in 1656 were as keen to undermine Catholics as to convert Buddhists to Protestantism, and the long-term impact of Christianity proved slight.

## The Americas

In the New World, the bottom-up strategy of conversion was more usual. After initial contact, which, of course, often brought missionaries into touch with local leaders, ambitious programs of mass baptism and mass preaching rapidly followed. In the 1520s and 1530s, Franciscans baptized literally millions of Native Americans in the first fifteen years or so of the Franciscan mission in Mexico, in an experiment typical of the time: an effort to recreate the actions and atmosphere of the early church, when a single example of holiness could bring thousands to baptism and altar as if by a miracle. Clearly most conversions in these circumstances cannot have been profound, life-changing experiences of the kind specified in traditional definitions of conversion. The doctrinal awareness the friars succeeded in communicating was limited. The first catechism the Franciscans used in Mexico does not even refer to the divinity of Jesus,

which is a central doctrine of Christian belief. Dominican friars denounced the superficiality of Franciscan teaching, but the same problems of deficient manpower, daunting terrain, and linguistic and cultural differences hampered their own efforts. The fear of backsliding and apostasy by new converts haunted the missions. As early as 1539, clergy in Mexico worried about the multiplication of small chapels "just like those the Indians once had for their particular gods." In central Mexico, in the mid-sixteenth century, fears that new cults disguised pagan practices convulsed the church. Doubts arose even concerning the purity of the veneration of Our Lady of Guadalupe herself – the appearance of the Virgin Mary, supposedly to an Indian shepherd boy on the site of a pre-Christian shrine, which had demonstrated the sanctity and grace of Mexican soil in the 1530s. In 1562, one of the worst recorded cases of missionary violence erupted in Yucatán, when the head of the Franciscan mission became convinced that some of his flock were harboring pagan idols. The reports that alerted him came from native informants, motivated, probably, by traditional hatred and rivalry among Indian communities, rather than by any zeal for the facts. In the subsequent persecution, 4,500 Indians were tortured, and 150 died.

In a similar case in central Peru in 1609, a parish priest was condemned for using excessive violence toward backsliders among his flock. The papers he collected include the story of a revealing trauma. Don Cristóbal Choque Casa, the son of a local Indian notable and community leader, reported that, some thirty or forty years after a vigorous Jesuit mission had nominally converted his people, he was on his way to meet his mistress at the abandoned shrine of a tribal god, when the devil in the form of a bat attacked him. He drove out the demon by reciting the Lord's Prayer in Latin, and the following morning summoned his fellow natives to warn them not to frequent the shrine on pain of being reported to the parish priest. But that same night, he dreamed that he was irresistibly drawn to the accursed spot himself and compelled to make a silver offering to the god. The story evokes a vivid picture of the consequences of "spiritual conquest": old shrines, so neglected that they are fit only for bats and fornicators; abiding powers, so menacing that they can still haunt the dreams, even of a sinner sufficiently indoctrinated to be able to pray in Latin.

For the rest of the colonial period, the eradication of pre-Christian devotions in Peru became the work of professional "extirpators." In most of the rest of the Spanish American world, every new generation of clergy repeated the frustrations and disillusionment of their predecessors. The Indians seemed unable to forget their old rites for appeasing nature. In the early eighteenth century, in Guatemala and Peru, priests were still making the same complaints as their predecessors a century and a half before. Indians were attached to "idols" and to their own healers and seers. They turned the saints into pagan deities. They accused each other of "superstition" and working with demons. Only with extreme caution could they be trusted to revere sacred images of Jesus and the saints without idolatry.

Outside the areas of responsibility of the Spanish crown, both efforts and results were disappointing. In the Great Lakes region, French Redemptorists and Jesuits plunged into the divided politics of the Iroquoian-speaking world; but the Huron, who embraced the French as allies and their religion as useful, largely died out under the impact of war and disease, while the Iroquoian confederacy resisted the religion of the French along

with their imperial pretensions. Dutch propaganda made much of the opportunities for finding friends and converts among the natives of the New World, but in practice the opportunities were largely neglected. “Come over and help us,” said the Indian on the official seal of the trading company responsible, under the English crown, for colonizing Massachusetts in the early seventeenth century. On the whole, however, missionizing was a rare vocation in Protestant Europe. There were a few exceptions. The conviction that the Algonquin Indians were a lost tribe of ancient Israel inspired John Eliot, who created “praying towns” in late seventeenth-century New England where native pastors led congregations in prayers, readings from the Bible, and sermons. Normally, however, only Roman Catholic religious orders had enough manpower and zeal to undertake the missions on a large scale, and outside areas of Spanish rule, their efforts were patchy.

The forms of Catholic Christianity that became characteristic of Spanish America were, in their way, every bit as different from the Catholic mainstream as was the Protestantism of most of the English colonies. In part, this was because of the imperfections of the “Spiritual Conquest” of Spanish America by Catholic missionaries. Missionaries were few. Cultural and linguistic obstacles impeded communication. Pre-Christian religion was probably too deeply rooted to be destroyed. In partial consequence, Latin American Catholicism is rippled, to this day, with Native American features.

Secular scholars, and Protestant critics of Catholic missionary activities, sometimes call these Native American influences “syncretic” features or “pagan survivals” because Christianity and paganism seemed to fuse in a new religion that was not quite either but was a blend of both. Yet the proper comparison for colonial religion is not – or not solely – with the religion of the Native American past but with that of Europe of the same era, where clerical bafflement at the stubborn survival of “popular” religion was every bit as great. The Christianity of the American countryside was deficient in similar ways to that of the European countryside. Anxiety about how to survive in this world interfered with people’s concern about their salvation in the next. Rites to induce rain, suppress pests, elude plague, and fend off famine drove Scripture and sacraments into neglected corners of ordinary lives. As the programs of reform unfolded in Europe, clergy and educated laity acquired ever-higher standards of doctrinal awareness, ever-deeper experiences of Christian self-consciousness. Their expectations of their flocks increased accordingly – which accounts for the continual renewal of their dissatisfaction. The more Christianized the elite became, the more Christian the clergy expected ordinary people to behave. Meanwhile, the Christianity of Indians in Spanish America had as much variety as in that of Europeans in Anglo-America.

The arrival of slaves from Africa created, in the long run, a new mission field; most owners, however, were slow to see the merits of introducing their slaves to doctrines as potentially subversive as those of the tradition of Moses and the religion of Onesimus. In Surinam, missionaries were forbidden to evangelize slaves until 1856 (though the Moravians were allowed access to the free maroon communities from 1762 onwards). Brazil is the best-documented area and has a characteristic profile. Here, in colonial times, black artistic vocations and religious devotion were centered on cult images that charitable associations of black Catholic lay people often supported financially. These confraternities, as they are called, were vital institutions for colonial society generally, melding the culturally up-rooted into a coherent community, renewing their sense of

identity and belonging. They were even more important for black people, who were compulsory colonists, traumatically transferred as slaves from Africa to an alienating environment on another continent. Confraternities cushioned and comforted them in a white man's world: unstable organizations, "created and dissolved with extraordinary rapidity," as one of their most distinguished historians has said. Encouraged by the church, and especially by the Jesuits and Franciscans, the black brotherhoods were hot beds of disorder.

For the guardians of the colonial power structure, the confraternities' choice of patron saints, whose statues they paraded through the streets and elevated in shrines, was often self-assertive, sometimes defiant. St. Elesbaan, for instance, was a warrior-avenger, a black crusading Emperor of Ethiopia, who led an expedition to avenge the massacre of Christians by a Jewish ruler in Yemen in 525. He was easy to re-interpret as a symbol of resistance to the many plantation owners of Portuguese-Jewish ancestry. St. Benedict of Palermo, perhaps the favorite patron of black confraternities, was born the son of Nubian slaves in Sicily in 1526. He became a hermit in his youth, to escape taunts about his blackness. Then, as a Franciscan lay brother, he rose to become guardian of his friary and work miracles after his death in 1583. The cult of St. Iphigenia, a legendary black virgin, who resisted the spells of her suitor's magicians with the help of 200 fellow virgins, embodied the triumph of faith over magic. But it had its subversive aspect, too, sanctifying virginity in a slave society where women wished sterility on themselves in order not to produce children who would become slaves. Veneration of the Mother of God was closer in spirit to the fertility religions supposedly traditional among migrants from Africa and more consistent with the interests of slave-owners, who wanted their human livestock to breed. Black Catholicism was an excitant, not an opiate. Rather than playing the role commonly assigned to religion – keeping believers in their place – it inspired hopes of betterment in this world. A commonly depicted scene was of white Judas, tortured in hell by black tormentors.

Colonial black Catholicism really was different from that of white people. Masters excluded slaves from mass, ostensibly "on account of the smell," but really to keep them away from dangerously radical clergy. White confraternities reviled blacks "with their guitars and drums, with their mestizo [mixed white and Indian] prostitutes," and with their revolutionary pretensions, "just as though they were no different from honest white people." Fugitive blacks who set up their own backwoods communities and independent kingdoms were formally excommunicated. The Church hierarchy usually refused their requests for chaplains. Missionary activity in Brazil began in the early sixteenth century before the Counter-Reformation, when the clergy were still content with superficial levels of Christian teaching. It continued in an era of growing Catholic sensitivity to the native heritage of potential converts, who were not always called on to renounce all their culture to become Christians. The mulatto priest António da Vieira (1608–1697), who became a royal chaplain in 1641, imported "masks and rattles to show the heathen that the Christian religion was not sad." In partial consequence, Brazilian Catholicism is an umbrella-term for a bewildering range of styles of devotion. Outside the Spanish and Portuguese colonies – and especially in those of the British and Dutch, where plantations were inaccessible to Catholic religious orders – the lack of missionary activity was even more marked. In consequence, African religions persisted,

and syncretism happened because the slaves often learned Christianity by themselves and blended it with African religious beliefs.

Still, ordinary people's accessibility to the ministry of missionaries made the New World an extraordinarily rich and rewarding mission field. Aided by the tendency – exceptionally common in the New World – of some cultures to welcome and defer to strangers, missionaries could penetrate areas otherwise untouched by any European presence, establish an honored place in their host societies, learn the languages, and guide congregations, by intimate, personal contact, into redefining themselves as Christians.

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## CHAPTER 9

# Bibles, Printing, Books, Churches

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**T**his essay will describe the many ways the Christian Bible was adapted to the needs of a variety of readers in Western Christendom from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, charting its long and symbiotic relationship with people, the printing press, the idea of the book in general, and with the churches of Western Christendom. It traces this epic path through specific versions of the Bible, documenting the impact this complex book has made on society and culture and the ways it became increasingly accessible in both form and content to readers from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. While it will touch on the subject of biblical translation in Europe, it will place particular emphasis on the printed Scripture's impact on the religious and literary culture of early modern England – a country with, arguably, the most dramatic, dynamic, and contentious relationship to popular print, literacy, and religious reformation in Western Christendom.

For in all of medieval Europe, only England made statutes outlawing vernacular Bible translation. Reversing these in its early reformation, the Church of England tied its own future to a series of “authorized” vernacular Scriptures, creating a distinction between public worship and private conscience by legislative necessity. England's carefully drawn distinction between private Bible reading and publicly legislated and established reading, its untoward retention of its pre-Reformation institutional church structures, its remarkably rapid advance in vernacular literacy, and its primary and enduring linguistic influence on the most vibrant and diverse Bible market in the modern and postmodern world, the United States, all make Reformation and post-Reformation England a treasure trove of case studies illuminating the relationship between books and Bibles, Bibles and Churches, Churches and printing, and print and laypeople.

### Before the Reformation

In 1400, the Bible was available only in individual, hand-copied manuscripts. The medieval Catholic Church's disapproval of its translation into the vernacular, coupled with

Europe's mass illiteracy, meant it was the exclusive property of clerics and a small cadre of Latin-educated elites, nearly all of them male. Manuscript Bibles could be breathtakingly beautiful, but they could also be inaccurately transcribed and unevenly formatted, their constituent books in different sequences, their chapters and verses unmarked. We necessarily begin this story of access and knowledge in the post-Reformation era, then, with matters as they stood in the latter part of the Middle Ages: conditions of mass illiteracy, a poorly transmitted and formatted text, the official disapproval of the church to biblical translation in the vernacular, and uneven and limited means of Bible production and distribution.

As active participants in a scripture-saturated culture, most medieval people were familiar with the Bible; however, they knew it neither as a text to read nor as a book to own. This was to change, however, and markedly. Between the fifteenth century and the eighteenth – a tumultuous era that witnessed the authority of the Roman Church challenged in all parts of Western Christendom, the swift development of national churches and the invention of movable type – the Bible was fashioned and refashioned to meet the needs of an increasingly literate and religiously politicized populace. It moved beyond the public world of church and university to play a powerful role in everyday, private life. It is important to remember, however, that the Bible had *never* been the exclusive property of either of these powerful institutions even before the age of print, literacy, and reformation.

People did not have to read to know the Bible. In the Middle Ages, vernacular religious plays called “Mysteries” helped to teach a mostly illiterate laity about scripture. These plays were wildly popular in England and well known on the European continent long before the age of print. They were based upon biblical themes, but for dramatic and comic effect they often and inevitably strayed from the scriptural text. Performed in sequences (“cycles”) that traced the biblical narrative from the Creation to the Final Judgment, the mysteries were played outdoors, over a single day – most often the early summer Feast of Corpus Christi.

Biblical dramatics were not only educational but also immensely entertaining, and so brought scores of feast-day tourists to market and cathedral towns to see the scriptures come, marvelously, to life. The manuscript texts of the four great English mystery cycles are extant today, each identified by the city in which they were performed: York, Coventry, Wakefield, and Chester. By the mid-fifteenth century, members of trade guilds produced and enacted these popular biblical pageants. Seeking civic honor as well as the rewards of religious piety, companies vied to stage those stories best suited to their vocations. In the town of Chester in Northwest England, for example, the Waterleaders and Drawers of the River Dee acted out the story of Noah, a lively tale that allowed them to demonstrate their particular expertise in water management while following the basic plot of Genesis 1 (while making some pointedly hilarious observations about marital relations along the way). Still flourishing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Mysteries died out by that century's end. They were suppressed in some places by protestant local governments that considered them blasphemous and their audiences disorderly, but they also fell out of favor as popular tastes changed toward more secular entertainments.



Nor is it true that vernacular translations of scripture were non-existent before the Reformation (although it may *well* be the case that few of them were particularly well executed). In the early medieval expansion of Christianity beyond the old boundaries of the western Roman Empire, we can find any number of official references to vernacular translations of the Vulgate, including a specific, approving call for Bible translation at the Council of Tours (813). Increasingly from the twelfth century, however, the Church began associating vernacular scriptures with heretical and schismatic behavior by continental sects such as the Waldenisans and Albigenisans. It thus moved with increasing vigilance to deny and suppress translation. Rome's interest in consolidating and maintaining a singular, uniform authority over Western Christendom (something the high and late medieval Church would consider "reformation," which before the sixteenth century simply meant the work of Church Councils in establishing unity in Christian worship and doctrine), often meant its concerns centered on issues of oversight and control; it was not so much any particular translation, but the way an ignorant or unauthorized preacher might wield it, that worried popes, regional bishops, and church councils.

But the Catholic Church's interest in preserving the Vulgate Bible's official and exclusive status did not dissuade medieval priests and monks, who counted the work of translation as spiritual activity, from pursuing this form of devotion in private. Richard Rolle (ca. 1290–1349), a hermit and mystic much revered in his day, was a prolific writer of spiritual works. He also translated the Psalms verse by verse, first in his own Latin version (which differed from Jerome's), then in English translation. His own rendering of Psalm 1 (*Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum*, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly"), was the painfully literal "Blissful man the which away went not in counsel of wicked." Less a translation than a "crib" for those whose Latin was even shakier than Rolles's, this version, inelegant as it seems, was eagerly taken up by the followers of John Wycliffe, who advocated lay access to the Bible in English and eventually produced the first readable translation of the Vulgate Bible into English.

Although John Wycliffe (ca. 1330–1384) probably did not translate the Bible himself, his name has become associated with various versions of the earliest translation of the entire Bible into English. An English priest, Wycliffe taught theology and philosophy at Oxford University, where his devoted followers and students did the actual work of translation, thereby associating Wycliffe with Reform and Reform with Translation. During Wycliffe's lifetime the Roman and English authorities turned a blind eye to these activities, but statutes enacted in the early fifteenth century made the translated English Bible illegal to make or own. (As for Wycliffe, the Council of Constance declared him heretic in 1415 and his moldering body was duly exhumed for posthumous and exemplary execution that same year.)

The English statutes against translated Bibles called indicted a new criminal class: people called "Lollards." Not all Lollards were translators, but all Lollards were inspired by the teachings of John Wycliffe. The Church considered their demand for an English Bible to be as heretical as the man who inspired it. The name, coined by their opponents, was in fact an onomatopoeic parody: mocking by reproducing the foolish, mumbling

sound supposedly made by a group of uneducated laypeople reading out the scriptures in the ugly English tongue. The Archbishop of Canterbury banned Wycliffite Bibles in a series of statutes in 1407–1409, making anyone who produced or owned an English translation of the Bible liable to state prosecution for heresy, and thus liable to execution by burning. These laws against Bible translation distinguished England from other European countries, and made sixteenth-century England, along with Germany, a prime laboratory for the violently repressive and wildly labile politics of the early reformation.

Accessibility, however, is not only a matter of translation but also of production, and here we also detect a marked cultural shift affecting the cultural status of scripture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Books predated the advent of print, of course; manuscript codices, copied and recopied, enjoyed a fairly impressive circulation in the pre-modern period. Individually produced by hand, every medieval manuscript was – and remains – unique, but by the thirteenth-century manuscripts were being efficiently generated in assembly-line fashion. The work of copying and illustrating was no longer performed exclusively in monasteries, but also in secular workshops run for profit. The style of manuscript Bibles became increasingly regularized as a result. “Paris Bibles” (so called because the first and best known of these workshops were located in that university city) dating from the pre-print era are subtly different, but overall they almost appear mass-produced. Small, portable and thus “user-friendly,” they could fit in a pouch or even a capacious pocket. These features remind us that Bibles of the later Middle Ages could also be physically as well as linguistically designed for private use. Their owners would have been minor clergy or students – lay ownership of Bibles at this time was still very rare, but the rapid growth of European cities meant the rapid growth of universities and of itinerant religious like the Franciscans or the Dominicans. In this restless, peripatetic age, the Christian Bible became for some a textbook and for others a traveling companion, and more people were acquainted with it in its material form than ever before.

Before the invention of movable type, then, the Christian Bible was a book already better known, better understood, better produced, and better distributed than is generally credited – even before it became the agent and product of two remarkable and revolutionary events: the advent of the printing press and the Protestant Reformation. And so, ironically, as is often the case at times of great technological and cultural change, the initial work of print and reform first *reduced* the late medieval gains made both in mass manuscript Bible production and in the lay understanding of biblical content. As printers painfully learned their craft by trial and (much) error; as kings and emperors first encouraged – and then as abruptly, imposed restrictions on – both religious print and religious change; as religious leaders, protestant and catholic alike, cracked down on the “blasphemous” behavior of volatile laypeople under their spiritual control, much of the vibrancy of the late medieval Bible culture was lost, some of it forever.

## Print and Protestantism

The rise of Protestantism, with its doctrine of the “priesthood of all believers” and its demand for lay access to the scriptures, provided the impetus for both radical transformation and conservative backlash. As European monarchs struggled either to

contain or control the new religion, the Reformation permanently shattered the unity of Western Christendom. In England, the work of reforming a national church under the new supreme headship of the monarch meant that the first vernacular Bibles were only translated and printed with monarchical consent. In addition, the battles over Bible translating and accessibility – themselves broadcast from the press in cheap pamphlets, learned sermons, and lurid broadsides – made for increasing lay awareness that momentous social change was underway. The printing press stoked demand at the same time it served it.

The invention of printing thus marked the most important event in the history of the Bible. Still a laborious process – it took years to produce the 170 copies of Johannes Gutenberg's Bible – printing eventually made possible a much more rapid and accurate reproduction of the text than individual hand-copying could ever have achieved. Even Gutenberg's contemporaries recognized the importance of his achievement: one powerful admirer, the future Pope Pius II, wrote to Cardinal Cajetan in 1455: "All that has been written to me about that marvelous man ... is true. I have not seen complete Bibles but only a number of quires of various books of the Bible. The script was very neat and legible, not at all difficult to follow – your grace would be able to read it without effort, and indeed without glasses."

Gutenberg's first customers would have been powerful (if short-sighted) bishops and clerics like Piccolomini and Cajetan. Indeed the revolutionary significance of the Gutenberg Bible is not to be found in its intended audience: while its production by means of movable type and 42-line formatting were revolutionary in themselves, very little else about this Bible distinguished it from the great presentation manuscript Bibles of an earlier age. Printed on folio sheets (some copies used vellum rather than paper) with spaces left for the hand-coloring of capitals, using a typeface deliberately made to look like the finest hand-transcription, the Gutenberg Bible was opulent and magnificent – and designed for the private libraries of kings and cardinals, or for lecterns in churches or monasteries. (Seventy-five percent of all Bibles printed before 1501, in fact, came out in this large format.)

This was not a Bible for personal use. It was also not printed in Herr Gutenberg's native language: it was a Latin Vulgate Bible, made for a Catholic Church that claimed a universal mandate over European souls. A few decades later, its spiritual authority, along with its secular and linguistic jurisdiction, was challenged and eventually altered for good. Reformers called for the Bible to be translated from Latin, the language of a pan-European, university-educated ecclesiastical class, into national languages. In the West, this meant it had to be translated from Latin, the language of the ecclesiastical class, into vernacular languages like German and English. Citing the difficulty such a sophisticated and complex text would pose to the untrained layperson (an observation that would prove prescient), the Roman Catholic Church opposed vernacular Bibles. kings, emperors, and electors working in their name often carried out the church's wishes in violent fashion. But later, even reformed monarchs tried to restrict the Bible's distribution to "authorized" versions, putting their royal stamp on the Bible by fixing their royal images on its title page. (After all, the protestant authorities could be as disturbed as their Catholic counterparts when subjects' radical or over-exuberant biblical interpretations threatened the political and social order.)

Translating the Bible soon became not only a spiritual discipline but also a political act, as church councils, national monarchs, and political and religious ministers struggled to control the new religion and, with it, the Bible itself. Vernacular Bibles were being produced in France and Spain by the thirteenth century; even Italy, situated close to the heart of papal power, had a translated Bible by the second half of the fifteenth century. But, like the Wycliffites' Bibles, these were translations of the Vulgate and thus not entirely problematic: what the church feared most were the challenges, posed by Humanist scholars like Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, to the Vulgate Bible's claim to exclusively orthodox status. University scholars had begun to question not only the accuracy of Jerome's Latin (and its degradation over time through many hand-transcriptions). But with the discovery of other Greek and Hebrew versions of the scriptures, they could now also dismiss the claim that Jerome's base texts were the purest available versions of the scriptures. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was one of the first, and certainly one of the most famous to use Erasmus's celebrated New Testament (2nd edition, 1519) (1466–1536), which was freshly translated out of late Byzantine manuscript scriptures (although it should be noted that Erasmus consulted the Vulgate in places where his Greek texts were deficient). Luther translated most of the New Testament into German while hiding in Wartburg Castle. It was published in 1522. *Biblia, das ist die gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch* went into print in 1534. Several other scholars and reformers, including Philip Melancthon, collaborated with Luther in this massive effort but then, as now, the book was called *The Luther Bible*.

Another scholarly heir to Erasmus was William Tyndale, whose career as a reforming priest and biblical translator took a characteristically strange and fatal turn in the first years of England's Reformation. As humanist and evangelical ideas flourished on the continent, finding increasingly enthusiastic receptions in his insular realm, Henry VIII of England (ruled 1509–1547) boasted a title – *Defensor Fidei*, “Defender of the Faith” – granted in 1521 by the pope for writing a tract (which was, in all likelihood, mostly penned by the king's chancellor Thomas More) against Martin Luther. For a while it seemed Henry, with his stout distrust of popular reformation and most protestant ideas (the pope's power to grant divorces not among these), would continue to deserve his papal accolade. But in a proclamation of June 22, 1530, in which the king commanded his subjects to surrender their personal copies of the Bible in English to their local bishops, the king rang a subtle and telling change on the absolutist tune, condemning not translation *in itself* but only the act of translating *without royal approval*.

The distinction is an essential one. The books that worried Henry might have been Wycliffite (or “Lollard”) Bibles produced in England, but it is more likely he and his ministers had William Tyndale's early translations of the New Testament (which drew on both Erasmus's Greek and Martin Luther's German), recently printed on the continent, squarely in their sights. The printing of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament was begun in Cologne in 1525, but authorities stepped in and halted the work at Matthew 22; undaunted, Tyndale completed a complete New Testament a year later. Tyndale Bibles were printed in small format, making them both user-friendly and easier to smuggle into England, where their possession as well as creation had been judged heretical and thus illegal. For his work of translating and publishing religious texts

without authority, Tyndale was found guilty of heresy. He was apprehended and executed in Belgium, where he had been suffering in exile, in 1536. A woodcut from John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (commonly called "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," and a wildly popular book of the later sixteenth century), depicted the grisly event and reported his last words. They were "Lord, open the king of England's eyes."

By that time Henry VIII had seen the light with the help of Miles Coverdale (1488–1568). Coverdale was editorial assistant to William Tyndale, but managed to avoid Tyndale's unhappy fate. Coverdale's relative safety was ensured by Henry VIII's second marriage in 1533 to a committed Protestant, Anne Boleyn. Drawing on the Latin Vulgate as well as the vernacular Bibles of William Tyndale (in English) and Martin Luther (in German), Coverdale completed the first complete English Bible under the new queen's rather short-lived patronage. His first edition was printed abroad, but politic additions to the text ultimately ensured its safe passage to England: it opened with a flattering dedication to the king suggesting that, by reading the Bible in their own language, Henry's subjects would learn to be obedient to both God and their divinely protected monarch. By 1537, Coverdale's Bible was being printed in London with tacit monarchical approval if not explicit royal authorization.

In 1538, Henry VIII finally issued a proclamation requiring every church in England to purchase a copy of the Bible in English. *The Byble in Englyshe* of 1539 (also known as The "Great Bible") was the first Bible to announce its publication by the king's authority, a validating claim that, like the anti-vernacular legislation that preceded it (and thus had to be reversed), set the English experience of scriptural reform apart from the European. It also added a scriptural cornerstone to Henry's claim to be the head of the church in his realm: the publication of Henry VIII's Great Bible effectively marked the beginning of the long association of state Church and state Bible in Britain, and remains the only truly "authorized" English Bible in anglophone history.

All we need to know about Henry's determination to control the pace of reform in his church and realm, however, can be summed up in the complex, busy, iconic image of the Great Bible's 1539 title page. In this masterwork of visual propaganda, Henry VIII dominates the page's central space, handing copies of the Bible to churchmen kneeling at left and right. The bottom left of the title page shows a cleric preaching to a cross-section of the people of England – young and old, male and female, free and imprisoned – who receive the words of the Bible with upturned hands and grateful cries of *vivat Rex* ("long live the King"). Nearly all the speech bubbles are in Latin – an indication that this large, expensive Bible may have been in English, but was produced to be read in church by priests – whose opposition to Henry's claim to be the Supreme Head of the Church in his realm had been ruthlessly crushed by an unlikely combination of proto-protestant fervor and the usual politics, familiar since the Middle Ages, of the jurisdictional and political claims of European nation states against the spiritual and political claims of Rome.

Henry's half-hearted reforms (he soon repented of providing a vernacular Bible for the Church of England and immediately issued a proclamation forbidding Bible reading by poor laymen and all women) did not create a protestant nation, much less a nation of Protestants. The Bible was far too radical a document simply to be handed over to some priesthood made up of *all* believers, and English priests were neither well-educated nor

all that thrilled with the prospect of trading in a life of saying mass for one of teaching new doctrine and preaching on scriptural themes. The daunting work of inculcating reformation fell to Henry's three childless heirs, and only one tackled the task with unalloyed enthusiasm.

In 1547, England entered a period of swift, intense protestant evangelization in the reign of Henry's son Edward VI. Acting through his adult representatives, or "Protectors," the boy king, called "England's Josiah" by his protestant clerics, ordered all parish churches of England to buy, in addition to his father's Great Bible, a copy of the biblical paraphrases of Desiderius Erasmus. These were to be set up "in some convenient place" so that parishioners could "resort unto the same and read the same." These "paraphrases" were actually expansions of the scriptural text, incorporating explanations and commentaries. This attention to more painstaking biblical instruction and Bible printing briefly ceased during the short reign of Edward's Catholic sister Mary (reigned 1552–1558), whose attempts to return England to the early faith of her father ended with her premature death. Upon the succession of Mary's younger sister Elizabeth to the English throne (the Tudors were as changeable in religion as they were seemingly incapable of producing viable heirs), Roman Catholicism was outlawed in 1559, the same year the papacy at the Council of Trent prohibited the translation of the Roman Catholic Bible into vernacular languages.

## The Authorized Bible and Its Rivals

After a short hiatus, the Bible printing industry was revived alongside the protestant identity of the Church of England. *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* was first printed by Rouland Hall in Geneva in 1560, but soon issued from English presses. The earliest English Bible printed in roman type and with numbered verses, the Geneva Bible also featured extensive notes, engraved maps, and various tables and indexes. These helpful additions, along with its compact size, made it the first Bible designed to assist the common English reader, which made it remarkably popular.

Another factor in the Geneva's popularity – or infamy – was undoubtedly its plentiful, printed marginal notes, which took a controversial, and sometimes politically radical, protestant position when explaining the scriptural text. The best-known example of scriptural paratext in the Reformation era, the Geneva's notes were designed to provide running commentary for readers (although the introduction by the translators made it quite clear that this Bible was designed and intended for educated clergymen, not untutored laypeople), as well as assistance to the protestant preachers who now based their sermons on scriptural exegesis as well as doctrinal teaching. The Geneva Bible's margins bristle with unsolicited advice to rulers, Calvinist glosses on scripture, and admonitions against the ungodly, but they also contain words of instruction, comfort, and ultimate hope. Translated and annotated on the continent by Protestants who had fled the stringently Catholic government of Mary I of England, the Geneva Bible is a representative product of exilic culture: that strange mix of freedom and fear that characterized the life of forced expatriation in the early modern era.

This overall tone, of persistent faith in the face of persecution (a theme easily prompted by the biblical text itself), perhaps explains, at least in part, the Geneva's remarkable popularity in the sixteenth century – especially in England, where religious confession and patterns of religious repression changed with the accession of every Tudor monarch. Eventually the Geneva Bible was printed there, occasionally by the new Queen Elizabeth's own printer, but perhaps unsurprisingly, it was never sanctioned by royal authority nor ordered for use in the Church of England. Nonetheless it soon became a very popular version of scripture indeed, both for private as well as public use: many celebratedly conservative, anti-Calvinist English preachers (Lancelot Andrewes comes to mind here) kept a personal study copy of the Geneva close to hand due to its excellent scholarly notes. English churches often used the unauthorized Geneva in the absence of an updated edition of Henry's Bible; there is much evidence of its private, lay ownership; and copies of the Geneva crossed the Atlantic with the *Mayflower* pilgrims in 1620.

Elizabeth I and her churchmen wanted a Bible issued under her own authority, however, and the Tudor queen promptly became the second English monarch to proclaim her guardianship of the Church of England by placing her name and picture on the title page of a new version of the English Bible. *The Holie Bible. conteynyng the olde Testament and the Newe*, produced by the royal printer in 1568, was a revision, undertaken hastily by the Queen Elizabeth's bishops, of the Great Bible. It was designed to replace an outmoded Bible and deal with the powerful competition of a "private" Bible like the Geneva. Following the market, it ended up resembling its rival. Like the Geneva Bible, this "Bishop's Bible" (so called because it was the brainchild of Matthew Parker, Elizabeth I's Archbishop of Canterbury) features marginal commentary, textual guidance, and handy maps, but it also boasted many more illustrations than the more "puritan" Geneva. Despite its visual beauty, and its placement by ecclesiastical order in every cathedral and most of the parish churches of England, the so-called "Bishops' Bible" drew few willing buyers – the Church of England was ordered to provide one for its parish churches, but true to their job descriptions, churchwardens were generally adept at dodging costly expenditure in uncertain ecclesiastical times – and was widely criticized for its inaccuracies.

Around the same time, persistent English Catholics, whose hide-in-plain-sight ardor could not be entirely dampened by English governmental prosecution, sponsored an English Bible of their own. Translating from the Vulgate (rather than from older Hebrew and Greek texts, making their product rather more like the copies produced by the Wycliffites a century and a half earlier than like the humanist inspired translations made by Humanists and Protestants), members of the exiled English Catholic College at Douai, France completed the New Testament in Rheims after the college moved to that French city in 1578. The Douai Old Testament did not appear until 1610. *The New Testament of Jesus Christ, translated faithfully into English, out of the authentical Latin* (1582) was never intended to replace the Latin Vulgate, despite the fact that its initial publication ran to five thousand copies, an impressive print run. It was reluctantly promoted by a now-illegal Catholic establishment wary of running foul of authorities—papal and English—but worried about the power a politically triumphant Protestantism could exercise over their dwindling flock. The Rheims-Douai Bible was probably designed to assist

an underground network of recusant priests to argue their case in English, against Bible-quoting Protestants, without having to quibble over translation.

*The Holy Bible, conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: newly translated out of the originall tongues: & with the former translations diligently compared and reuised, by his Maiesties speciall commandment* of 1611 was a revision of the Bishops' Bible, a masterpiece of prose, and the best-known book in the English language. Its translators were influenced by previous official English Bibles and even the Vulgate Bible, but the so-called "King James Version" (KJV), with its straightforward, even earthy (Tyndale's influence still hovers over much of this version) language and stately cadence, achieved its own distinctive style. James I ordered this translation in order to counteract the doctrinal and political influence of the still popular, and unofficial, Geneva Bible. The margins of the King James Version are nearly free of commentary, the few marginal notes dealing with matters of disputed translation rather than theology. Though this is often called the "Authorized Version," James I never officially authorized its use, and did not finance its production.

## The Afterlife of the KJV

King James's Version has remained in continual use in Anglo-American churches to the present day. But this Bible has always held second place in British hearts to their national church's book of common prayer, especially after 1660. In fact, the King James Version only truly came into its own when it moved, in a second and third wave of immigration, to the New World, where it became a book for private reading, for the founding of what eventually would become churches of a myriad denominations and sects, and for missionaries to translate into the languages of native peoples in America and other worlds even newer to them.

The missionary impulse came first, arriving with English immigrants to America like the Reverend John Eliot, a man soon to be proclaimed in oil portraits and title pages as the "propagator of the gospel to the Indians." Eliot, an English puritan, emigrated from England in 1631, becoming the minister of the church in the Massachusetts colony of Roxbury a year later. In this age of foreign exploration, colonial expansion, and religious conversion, he stood out as a missionary and educator of remarkable energy. Protestant doctrine stressed access to the scriptures through reading. For Eliot, literacy was a necessary tool for the Christianization of the new world. Between 1647 and 1689 he translated and printed, with considerable help from Native Americans, the "Indian Library." This collection of more than twenty devotionals, catechisms, and primers in the Massachusetts language included Eliot's famous "Indian Bible."

*Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God Naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament* (1633) was thus the first complete Bible (Eliot had earlier had printed a book of metrical Psalms for the use of English congregations) printed in the Western hemisphere, and the West's first missionary Bible. John Eliot translated the Old and New Testaments into the now-extinct language of the Massachusetts Indians who lived in the eastern part of the state now named for them. One scholar has called it "the most important unreadable book in the world," and, reading over the title page, we might



sympathize with the Native American who wrote in one copy, "I am forever a pitiful person in the world. I am not able clearly to read this, this book." By 1674 nearly 30% of converted Indians could read their own language and as many as 2000 copies of this Bible had emerged from Eliot's press, although much of the edition was destroyed in "King Philip's War" of 1675–1676.

Until the eighteenth century, then, the only Bibles native to America were produced for Native Americans; American colonists read editions of the King James Bible, the authorized Bible of Great Britain. No complete Bible in English was printed in America before 1782. Until then, the American colonists imported copies from England because only the Royal Printer, along with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge Universities held the right to print Bibles – a right that the colonists obediently observed until a revolution changed their outlook and freed them not only from British taxation and rule but from fealty to the established Church of England. One task facing the newly independent nation, therefore, was to produce its own Bibles. The first continental Congress debated but eventually rejected a scheme for government-sponsored Bible publication. It was left to individual publishers to take on the financial risk of printing an edition, or to raise startup money by subscription of private individuals.

Served by presses set up in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, a myriad churches sprung up and flourished in the eighteenth century; the American publishing industry soon was tasked with providing a variety of Bibles for domestic reading and many different kinds of churches, rather than for a national church. Robert Aitken undertook the job of producing the first American Bible. He had published several very popular New Testaments before this first complete edition, which turned out to be a money-losing venture. (Bible publishing would not begin to turn a profit until the industry standards changed in the nineteenth century.) The first Bible in a European language to be published in early America was *Biblia, das ist: die Heilige Schrift Altes und Neues Testaments* – a version of the "Luther Bible" – by one Christoph Saur in 1743. Saur was a medical doctor in Germantown, Pennsylvania, a borough founded sixty years earlier by German Pietists seeking the religious freedoms promised by William Penn. After acquiring a printing press, Saur collected subscriptions to underwrite the production of a Bible in the primary language spoken in his community.

Another early American Bible finally proved that the Bible was not only the property of Protestants. The first Catholic Bible printed in the United States was *The Holy Bible*, a Douai version printed and sold by Carey, Stewart, and Co., a Philadelphia publisher, in 1790. The printer, Matthew Carey, was worried about the cost of such a risky endeavor and reportedly said he would print it only if he could persuade 400 subscribers to underwrite the expense. He collected 491 signatures. Carey published several Catholic Bibles in the early nineteenth century, but his press also produced over sixty editions of the King James Version during the same period in order to remain financially viable.

## Conclusion

The Bible has always been central to Christian habits of thought, whether medieval or modern. It did not, however, become the private possession of individual Christians

until it migrated to America in the seventeenth century. The advent of Protestant ideas had by this time permanently shattered the unity of Western Christendom, sparking fierce, often violent controversy between and within every one of its nation-states. Protestantism was a Christianity propagated not only from church pulpits but from printed pages: truly a religion “of the book” in the confession’s self-fashioning as well as in the reality of an industry – one that first flourished in an Old World determined to provide translated scripture to its established national churches, and then was diversified and transformed in a new and modern world of disestablishment and mission.

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## CHAPTER 10

# The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation

Jeffrey Klaiber

Within the space of a few years, from 1517, when, according to the well-known account, Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, and 1546 when he died, Catholic Europe splintered into a number of competing Christian confessions: Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists. The Protestant reformation put an end to medieval Christendom when the vast majority of Europeans were Catholics. The term “reformation” is somewhat ambiguous because the Protestant “reformers” did not really reform the Catholic Church; rather, they broke away and founded new churches. On the Catholic side the term “Counter-Reformation,” which is often used to describe the Catholic reaction, is also ambiguous because the main thrust of the Catholic reformers was to reform their own church, not attack Protestants. Of course, there was a “Counter-Reformation” in the sense that Catholic princes warred against Protestant princes, and the Protestant princes mounted their own counter-offensive.

The two movements, often viewed as opposing hostile forces, in reality shared a common origin and were shaped by the same intellectual and social influences. In the late Middle Ages the majority of Christians practiced a type of popular religiosity with its many local devotions, pious beliefs, and superstitions. But a new critical mentality, nourished by the Renaissance and the humanist movement, challenged many of these popular beliefs. On a spiritual level many educated Europeans yearned for a more authentic Christianity based on scripture and inspired by the example of the first Christians. In fact, long before the Reformation there had appeared a number of reform movements which enjoyed widespread appeal. In the thirteenth century the Franciscans summoned Christians to return to the radical poverty of Jesus and his disciples. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Brethren of the Common Life flourished in Germany and the Netherlands. Their most famous member, Thomas á Kempis, author of *The Imitation of Christ*, extolled the virtues of the inner life divorced from the world.

These and other movements held up the monastic and religious way of life as the model for Christians.

But the early modern age also ushered in a new appreciation of the world itself, as opposed to the monastery. This new esteem found its most important expression in the *Devotio Moderna* which called for living Christianity to the full in the world. Luther himself began as a monk and ended up as a spiritual counselor for Christians living in the world. On the Catholic side, Thomas More and Erasmus both experienced life in a monastery at one moment in their lives. They both left the monastery behind and became model laymen. At the same time they both criticized the excesses and pomp of the official church. In his work *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* (1503), Erasmus extolls the virtues of moderation and austerity. Erasmus in particular studied scripture in the hope of persuading Europeans to return to a simpler Christianity.

But the Reformation cannot be understood only as a religious movement. Power politics and nationalism spurred Protestant princes to break from Rome while Catholic princes sought to reimpose a Catholic order on Europe. Nationalism often influenced papal elections. During the so-called “Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy” (1309–1376), seven different popes, all French, lived in Avignon in southern France under the influence of the French king. But that crisis had barely ended when the church was torn between two claimants to the papacy, a French cardinal and an Italian cardinal. This schism ended at the Council of Constance (1414–1418). Two earlier reformers, John Wycliffe in England, and John Huss in Bohemia, preached doctrines very similar to those of Luther, but both suffered quite different fates. Wycliffe denied the necessity for a pope, called for a simpler church, and translated parts of the Bible to English. He was condemned by church authorities, but was protected by powerful nobles and was spared being tried as a heretic. But Huss in Bohemia was summoned to the Council of Constance where he was tried and burned at the stake (1415). Luther himself was saved a similar fate by his prince, Frederick the Elector of Saxony. Finally, hoping to arrive at some kind of peace, Lutheran and Catholic princes laid down the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose realm, his religion”) at Augsburg in 1555. By that agreement Lutherans and Catholics divided up their parts of Europe along political and geographical lines. Geopolitics, not theology, determined what religion most Europeans were to practice.

The Reformation emerged and spread out from three principal focal points: Luther in Germany (Saxony); Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland; and Henry VIII in England. A fourth group, the Anabaptists, splintered off from Zwingli and other reformers and founded small communities in Switzerland, southern Germany, Moravia, and the Netherlands. Luther took the first steps. In 1517 he challenged the Dominican John Tetzel to a debate over the indulgences which the former was preaching to collect funds to build the basilica of Saint Peter in Rome. That debate never happened. At the moment Luther was a monk and a Catholic. But copies of the ninety-five theses, which were mailed out to the rest of Europe, arrested the attention of many. Two years later, in 1519, Luther finally held a public debate, in Leipzig, with another Dominican, John Eck. By this time Luther argued that the church did not need a pope because it had no other head than Christ himself. By denying the papacy he faced certain excommunication. In 1520 the Catholic Church formally declared Luther a heretic. In Wittenberg where he taught and

preached Luther was protected by Frederick of Saxony, the first of the German princes to accept Luther's doctrines.

At nearly the same time Huldryck Zwingli, in the German speaking region of Switzerland, made his own break from Rome, independently of Luther. Later, in 1536, John Calvin, having been expelled from his native France, arrived in Geneva and began preaching doctrines similar to those of Zwingli. In fact, within time Zwingli's followers joined forces with Calvin. Together, Zwingli and Calvin represented the "reformed churches," a reference to the fact that they "reformed" Lutheranism by removing elements that were considered still too Catholic. Finally, the Anabaptists, by breaking off from both Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, constituted the "radical" reformation.

The Continental reformers (the Anglicans followed a somewhat different path) all held that scripture alone should be the basis for Christian faith. They also sustained that belief in Christ and his grace were essential for salvation. From their point of view the Catholic Church had accumulated many traditions which were non-biblical. Most of all they rejected the idea of a hierarchical church which subordinates the ordinary faithful to a priestly caste, which mediates between them and God.

Yet, there were also important differences. Luther retained some Catholic devotions (especially to the Virgin Mary) and allowed for the use of sacred images. He also held onto two sacraments: baptism and the eucharist, whereas Zwingli and Calvin believed that the eucharist was not a sacrament but a symbolic memorial of the Last Supper. Also, the two reformers in Switzerland rejected totally the use of images. Furthermore, for them the doctrine of predestination became a central tenet. For Luther faith in Christ was central. But Calvin believed that faith alone was not sufficient: one must also be chosen, or predestined. Finally, in Calvin's Geneva faith and civic life were more tightly woven together than they were for Luther. The city council, acting under Calvin's guidance, laid down ordinances which regulated the daily lives of all citizens. In effect, all of Geneva became the visible church, not merely the church-goers.

For their part the Anabaptists believed that Luther and Calvin had not gone far enough. They held that a second or adult baptism was necessary for salvation. For them infant baptisms were non-biblical. The Anabaptists also allowed for ongoing post-apostolic revelations. In this sense they were close to the Catholic mystical tradition according to which God continues to speak in a special way to select individuals. The Anabaptists were also forerunners of modern Pentecostalism because the second or adult baptism was in reality a baptism by the Holy Spirit. Finally, unlike Luther or Calvin, the Anabaptists renounced the use of violence to spread their message nor did they seek the support of the state which in any case they did not recognize as legitimately constituted by God. As a result of these more radical stances they were persecuted by both Protestant and Catholic states.

Unlike the continental reformers Henry VIII broke from Rome, not for theological reasons but for purely political considerations. The pope would not grant Henry an annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon so that he could bear a son. In 1534 parliament decreed the Act of Supremacy by which the king was recognized as supreme head of the Church of England. Of course, Henry, like the Lutheran princes, also acted for reasons of state and national interest: his sovereignty versus papal authority. Originally the Anglican Church retained many of the forms of Catholicism. Over time, especially during the reign of Elizabeth I, certain elements of Protestantism were

incorporated into the Anglican faith, and greater reliance was placed on the Bible. In the end, Anglicanism sought to establish a middle term between Catholic traditions and Protestantism. For example, traditionally the Church of England recognized only two sacraments, baptism and the eucharist, but retained the other five (confirmation, confession, holy orders, matrimony, and extreme unction) on a lesser level as sacramentals.

## The Catholic Reformation

Although there had been many calls for reform in the Catholic Church before Luther, little had been done. The church exhibited many symptoms of a large bureaucracy which wields a monopoly and has no significant rivals. The Council of Constance put an end to the schism of the West and mandated the pope to carry out reforms. Instead, the popes of the Renaissance reinforced the exterior signs of secular power. Machiavelli paints an unflattering picture of Alexander VI (1492–1503), the Borgia pope, who is depicted as a master of intrigue and power politics. Popes and bishops practiced nepotism. Alexander had his son, Cesare Borgia, named a cardinal at age 18. Many bishops were absentee landlords: they were in charge of two or three dioceses but lived in only one.

On the local level the overall panorama was mixed. Some parish priests, usually in urban areas, were well trained and preached good sermons. But others, especially in the countryside, had little theological training. Their level of education was barely above that of their parishioners. In addition there were thousands of priests, whom church historian Joseph Lortz termed an “ecclesiastical proletariat,” who belonged to no parish and had no fixed salary (Lortz 1963: vol. 1, 102). Some acted as chaplains to confraternities or wealthy families. But the majority simply wandered from place to place looking for opportunities to celebrate mass or perform the sacraments. They were so poorly trained that they contributed little to the formation of the laity. Convents and monasteries were filled with religious who had no vocation. Of course, some of the religious orders had reformed themselves, such as the Augustinians, of whom Luther was a member. In Spain Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, archbishop of Toledo from 1495 to 1517 and confessor to Queen Isabel, carried out a thorough reform of the monasteries.

One recurrent complaint involved money: burdensome church taxes and excessive stipends for masses and other sacraments. Priests also expected fees to perform the many rituals and sacramentals – the blessings of crops, invocations for rain, prayers for the dead – that ordinary Christians requested on a daily basis. In itself the concept of indulgences was innocent (do a good work or say prayers for the remission of sins), but the way they were preached, lurid appeals to the imagination mixed in with theological distortions, trivialized Christian doctrine.

The Catholic reform was carried out on several different levels: the Council of Trent; the clergy and the religious; new religious orders, especially those dedicated to education like the Jesuits; popular piety; art and music.

The Council of Trent was long delayed, in part due to political rivalries between Catholic princes and in part because the popes themselves during this period were reluctant to submit their authority to yet another council. The council was finally convened in 1545 by Pope Paul III (1534–1549) in the northern Italian city of Trent. It met for

25 sessions over three distinct periods and ended in 1563. Three different popes (Paul III, Julius III, and Paul IV) presided over the sessions. In addition to the pope, there were 3 cardinals, 4 archbishops, and 22 bishops, as well as 5 generals of major religious orders. Some 50 theologians advised the bishops, but only the latter could vote. The council had three major objectives: to refute Protestant doctrines and clarify Catholic teaching; impose discipline, and reform the clergy. Among other teachings and practices, the council reaffirmed the traditional seven sacraments as necessary means of salvation; the real presence of Christ in the eucharist; the veneration of saints, and the use of sacred images. Trent also rejected Luther's concept of justification (faith alone) and reaffirmed the possibility of salvation through the exercise of free will with the help of God's grace. The council also upheld tradition along with scripture as a foundation for faith. By "tradition" the Catholic Church understood practices and customs which are not explicitly mentioned in scripture but which Christians believed were rooted in the early church or represented God's ongoing revelation. Also, tradition included the church's teaching magisterium by which a council or the pope in communion with the bishops may define a dogma. In this case a dogma is not considered a new belief but, rather, one that had always been held by Christians.

To summarize all these clarifications the council authorized the publication of the Roman Catechism (1566) which became the standard text for all other catechisms. Also, a standard missal was published to impose uniformity on the liturgy. Finally, Pope Paul III instituted the Roman Inquisition (1542), as distinguished from the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitions, to enforce uniformity and orthodoxy.

At the same time the council promulgated certain disciplinary decrees. Among others, bishops were required to reside in their diocese and make regular pastoral visits. By far the most important innovation was the call to establish seminaries in each diocese. This signified a new standardization for the training of the clergy. Although this reform did not have an immediate impact, by the seventeenth century the level of education of the clergy was noticeably higher, especially among the French clergy.

The most important achievement of Trent, which does not appear in any particular decree, was to give rise to a militant and observant Catholicism. Ordinary Catholics now had a clearer idea of what they should believe and practice. Yet, Trent must also be analyzed for what it did not do. It reformed the clergy but said little about the laity. Although scripture was reaffirmed as a fundamental pillar of faith, the Bible was not promoted as a common book for Catholics, partially as a response to the *sola scriptura* of the Protestants. Finally, the new militancy fostered a sectarian anti-Protestant mentality as, of course, a similar anti-Catholic mentality emerged on the other side of the divide.

But reform also came from below. Certain bishops like Charles Borromeo, the cardinal archbishop of Milan, stood out for their reforming zeal. New religious orders sprang up and promoted reform. In Spain the two mystics, Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) and John of the Cross (1542–1591) founded the Discalced Carmelites for men and women.

No order was more important than the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, founded by Ignatius of Loyola. The Spiritual Exercises, which grew out of Ignatius's conversion experience, represented a new spirituality for Christians in the world. When the order

was approved by Pope Pius III in 1540, it was commissioned to serve the church in whatever tasks the pope deemed most urgent. Combating Protestantism did not explicitly appear on the agenda, nor did education, outside of teaching catechism to children. However, very soon the Jesuits discovered the importance of education. Within a short period the Jesuits founded colleges – pre-university schools – all over Catholic Europe. By 1556 when Ignatius died the Society of Jesus had founded 35 colleges. By 1600 the Jesuits ran 236 colleges in Europe and the New World. They also taught in and held important positions in many of the leading universities in both worlds.

The Jesuits aimed to raise the quality of education for Catholic men. Because their schools were endowed by wealthy benefactors or the state, their schools were free of charge and open to both rich and poor. The schools emphasized the classical humanities, but pious practices such as going to confession or attending mass were also encouraged. The schools were not intended to combat Protestantism, at least not directly, but rather to form civic-minded citizens who would in turn bring about moral reform in society. Although the Jesuits had no room for Protestant doctrines in their schools, they did admit Lutheran students in Germany and Hussites in Prague. The Jesuits also founded seminaries, notably the *Collegio Romano* (1551), for the training of their own Jesuit students, but seminarians of the secular clergy were also admitted. Beyond institutions certain individual Jesuits made their mark. The Dutch Jesuit Peter Canisius (1521–1597) stood out as a theologian, preacher, and writer. He wrote a catechism for university students and played an important role as a theologian at Trent. The Jesuit cardinal Robert Bellarmine also wrote catechisms for young people.

On a more popular level the Spanish priest Joseph Calsanz founded a primary school for poor boys in Italy (1597), which subsequently blossomed into an entire system of primary schools in Hungary, Poland, and Spain. His educational theories influenced Jean Baptist de La Salle (1651–1719) who founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools which catered especially to the poor. His congregation also founded normal schools for teachers and provided courses on Sunday for working men.

The Ursulines, founded by Angela de Merici in 1535, were the first feminine order devoted to the education of young women. They established schools and monasteries in Italy, Germany, Ireland, and France. In France alone they had founded 350 monasteries by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Other new orders or congregations specialized in preaching and pastoral work, particularly the Oratorians, the Theatines, the Capuchins, and the Vincentians. The Oratorians, founded by Philip Neri (1515–1595), and the Theatines are secular priests who raised the level of preaching. The Capuchins, founded by Matteo Bascio and approved in 1528, aimed to return to the simple poverty of St. Francis. Their preaching appealed especially to the poor. St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) founded the Congregation of the Mission (also called Lazarists or Vincentians) and cofounded the Daughters of Charity. The Vincentians preached retreats for seminarians and founded many seminaries. The Jesuits, too, founded numerous retreat houses which specialized in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The Jesuits, the Capuchins, and the Vincentians also preached popular missions in the rural areas.



## Contrasts and Similarities

Strategies of evangelization or re-evangelization on one side mirrored similar approaches on the other. Protestants, too, saw education of the youth as an important instrument. They especially looked to the state to found schools to increase knowledge of the Bible. Philipp Melanchthon influenced educational reform in Germany by emphasizing humanism and biblical learning. In Strasbourg Jean Sturm founded a gymnasium (secondary school) along the same lines. The Moravian cleric John Amos Comenius promoted universal education for boys and girls. A school for girls opened in Wittenberg in 1530. Many churches provided free education on Sundays for workers and peasants.

Devotions and religious services felt the impact of the two reform movements. In general, the level of preaching improved on both sides. Protestant services were more austere, although singing was encouraged. The Bible became the standard book for Protestants, although catechisms were also used. By way of contrast, the catechism became the standard book for Catholics, whereas the Bible was relegated to seminaries and parish rectories. The printing press greatly served the Protestant cause by making the Bible, hymnals, and prayer books available for the ordinary Christian. In sharp contrast, Baroque architecture, painting, and music flourished in Catholic lands. The baroque style, which found its best expression in Jesuit churches, aimed to awaken the senses and raise hearts and minds to God. Of course, for Calvin, images were a distraction in the search for the divine.

For Protestants the new model of Christianity was the Christian in the world contributing to society and to the church. The pastor and his wife were expected to be a model of decorum for the believing community. In the Catholic world the contemplative and religious way of life continued to be held up as a superior model, although the new teaching and hospital orders and congregations were esteemed for their contribution to society. Jesuit spirituality in particular was geared toward laypeople as well as vowed religious working in the world.

The reformers on both sides set out to re-evangelize the countryside, with limited success. There, popular religiosity, a mixture of Christian beliefs and centuries old folklore, reigned. Whereas Protestants aimed to blot out popular religiosity and re-evangelize the peasants, Catholics sought to correct abuses and exaggerations, while maintaining many traditional practices. At the same time Rome imposed higher standards for canonization: after Trent undocumented claims of miracles were no longer accepted. Emphasis was placed on heroic virtues and works of charity. All the founders of the major teaching orders or congregations were canonized.

The two reforms gave rise to confessional states: precise creedal statements defined what citizen or subjects were to hold and profess in any given region. Both reforms expected the state to enforce religious obligations.

No other religious beliefs were tolerated. Anti-semitism was prevalent in both Catholic and Protestant states. Toleration finally came about as a pragmatic necessity to put an end to the interminable religious wars which wracked Europe from the first war in the Swiss cantons in 1531 to the end of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648).

Politically, although both sides aimed to raise the level of moral conduct, neither encouraged major social change and certainly not apocalyptic or messianic movements. Luther condemned Thomas Müntzer and the peasant uprising (1524–1525) in southern Germany in no uncertain terms. Social change was promoted in the seventeenth and eighteenth century largely by dissident groups like the Methodists and the Quakers, both of whom pushed for prison reform and the abolition of slavery. Both Protestantism and Catholicism were closely aligned to nation-states which legitimized themselves through reference to the particular confession which they supported. Lutheranism became the official religion in most of the northern German states and in Scandinavia; Calvinism in Switzerland and Scotland; Anglicanism in England. National Catholicism became the established religion in Catholic Europe and Latin America. But the papacy, which was reaffirmed in Trent, retained its universal character and challenged the attempts of the Catholic monarchies to subordinate church to state. As a result there was greater tension between the papacy and the Catholic monarchies, especially in the Bourbon absolutist states of France, Spain, and Portugal, than between the Protestant churches and their respective national governments. Because of the close ties between church and state liberals and Freemasons in Catholic Europe and Latin America were for the most part anticlerical.

The tendency on both sides to shore up their arguments with references to the Bible and authority cast a spell on reason and critical thinking. This became especially manifest in the Galileo affair (1633). Heliocentrism, first proposed by Copernicus, was condemned by the Roman Inquisition because it was perceived to be an assault on scripture. In both Protestant and Catholic lands scholars and scientists had to present new findings with caution so as not to offend religious authorities. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment skepticism was a reaction in large part to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious dogmatism.

The reforms had limited impact beyond Europe. English Protestants, Puritans and Anglicans, founded communities in North America, but made few attempts to Christianize the Indians. By way of contrast, Catholic Europe sent waves of missionaries to evangelize the New World and Asia. France, Spain, and Portugal made it their official policy to evangelize the native peoples of the New World. The call to evangelize sparked initial enthusiasm because it was perceived that the new souls being gained in America compensated for souls lost to Protestantism in Europe. But Trent cast a shadow on the process. In Europe the new orthodoxy emanating from Trent placed the catholicity of lower class Europeans and especially peasants under scrutiny. By the same token, doubt was cast on whether the New World Indians and black slaves were authentically Christians, or still followers of the older pagan ways.

There are no specific dates to signal the end of these two reforms. The Thirty Years War put an end to the religious wars, but not the underlying divisions which separated both sides. For Protestants the founding of the World Council of Churches (1948) was a major step toward Christian unity. For the Catholic Church the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) put an official end to the tridentine period. In particular, the council emphasized two themes lacking in the tridentine church: lay participation and the importance of studying scripture for ordinary Christians. Since that period ecumenical encounters and inter-faith services have become the norm in many parts of the Christian world.

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## **B. Issues in the Modern Period (1750–2000 CE)**



## CHAPTER 11

# The Legacy of Christendom

Philip Jenkins

Christendom is in the literal sense a continent. We come to feel that it contains everything, even the things in revolt against itself.

G. K. Chesterton

Even using the word “Christendom” in contemporary discourse poses serious difficulties for many. Historians use the term uncontroversially to refer to the political/religious order that prevailed in western Europe from roughly the ninth century through the sixteenth. For modern Christian thinkers, however, Christendom represents a bygone nightmare that has left a heavy burden on the subsequent history of the faith. In this view, Christendom implies the intimate alliance between church and state, the use of secular mechanisms to implement church policies, and the institutionalization of religious intolerance (Iogna-Prat 2002; Chazan 2006; Burman 2007; Pegg 2008). To characterize part of the world as Christendom of necessity implies a stark contrast with some other regions or cultures that espouse different faiths. In the medieval context, Christendom stood in a tense relationship with *dar al-Islam*, an image that bears uncomfortable parallels to strictly contemporary circumstances. In a modern context, also, the term Christendom suggests a picture of Christianity as the religion of one part of the world – white, wealthy, and technologically advanced – spreading its faith as part of the package of imperial exploitation. Surely, Christendom must be a theocratic historical nightmare that no sensitive modern would care to see re-enacted?

Yet the concept of Christendom is both more complex and perhaps more relevant than these caveats might suggest. Above all, we have to define the term carefully, and to trace its changes of meaning over the centuries. This work allows us to see just how potent are the surviving legacies of the Christendom concept in the values and structures of many Western nations, even some of the avowedly most secular. And while some versions of Christendom are indeed linked with militarism and intolerance, others are more attractive in their universalism, their rejection of the nation-state as an

absolute good. As nation-states lose their relevance in a globalized world order, it is natural for Christians to explore alternative approaches to political identity.

## The Rise of Christendom

The English word Christendom is archaic, and of its nature refers to a bygone era in which the Christian religion represented the central justification and organizing force of society. (This distinction exists in some major languages, but not all: in French, *christianisme* indicates the faith, while *chrétienté* suggests the social order of Christendom; in German however, *Christentum* signifies just “Christianity”). Augustine’s *City of God* is the best-known source for the idea that the Christian world should also be a political order, which in the context of the early Middle Ages implied some version of the Christianized Roman Empire (a vastly over-simplified version of Augustine’s original thesis). In Eastern Christianity, the alliance between church and state was consecrated in what became known as the Byzantine Empire. In the West, Roman-based clerics developed theories of an imperial-papal alliance that influenced the empire formed by Charlemagne and his successors after 800. Though the notion of a new Western Empire enjoyed mixed fortunes, the idea of a Christian state permeated the new kingdoms that rose from the tenth century onwards. Successive popes fought to establish their overlordship over a unified Christendom, a *Respublica Christiana*, and from the 1070s they often succeeded in forcing secular rulers to establish their claims. After 1300, though, states like France and England had become strong enough to defeat and humiliate the popes, placing severe limits upon their ambitions (Herrin 1987; P. Brown 2003).

Despite the papal failure, we can legitimately use the term Christendom for the Latin European order, which sometimes found expression in common military effort, especially during the Crusades. About 1380, Chaucer’s knight had fought hard in “his Lord’s war,” riding far “as wel in cristendom as hethenese.” Modern historians discuss these crusading efforts in terms of *fighting for Christendom* or *extending the frontiers of Christendom*, while the battle of Lepanto in 1571 still represented the confrontation of *Christendom versus Islam*. The Templars and other knightly societies were the *military orders of Christendom* (Walsh 2003; Tyerman 2004; Wheatcroft 2004; France 2005; Hopkins 2006; Phillips 2007). Consecrating this use of “Christendom” in English popular usage was Richard Johnson’s popular *Famous Historie of the Seaven Champions of Christendom* (1596), which recounted the legends of the patron saints of the leading nations of West Europeans, stressing throughout their struggles against pagan and Muslim enemies. Reading such uses, it is difficult to avoid thinking of the Muslim division of the world into the House of Islam and the House of War. Beyond Christendom lay borderlands that needed to be defended or, ideally, extended (Beckingham 1983; Johnson 2004).

Yet this aggressive usage was by no means the only sense of “Christendom,” as the term also implied a common cultural and spiritual heritage that was far above anything that could be offered by transient nations and states. Latin Christian lands shared so much in terms of religious and cultural values, and Catholic clergy represented the primary scholars and transmitters of culture. In addition, canon law represented a unifying force, over and above the variegated legal systems of individual societies. In this sense,

Christendom reflected a critically important theological notion, that of the membership of the church as the *Corpus Christianum*, the Christian body, the consensus of the faithful. To draw another close Muslim analogy, the Christian community closely resembled the Muslim *Ummah*. This body was united under one (Catholic) church and sharing a common baptism and eucharist. In this sense, Christendom need not have a geographical limit at all, nor need it coincide with any political entity. After all, before the tenth century, probably as many Christians lived outside the control of Christian states, under Muslim rule in Asia or the Middle East, as lived within Christian nations like Bavaria or England. In later centuries, this distinction became moot, as the populations of Latin Europe swelled, and it became ever harder to sustain Christian identity within Muslim-dominated regions. By the thirteenth century, Christendom largely coincided with those areas of direct Christian political rule. After the fall of Constantinople, neither Western Catholics nor Protestants showed much awareness of the sizable Christian populations living within the Ottoman Empire (Berend 2001).

Yet loyalty to political entities – still less to military causes – remained only a part of the ideology of Christendom. All rational people knew that states and kingdoms might rise and fall, and thus deserved no more than passing homage – who in the high Middle Ages remembered the bygone kingdoms of the Lombards, Ostrogoths, or West Saxons? Yet the church survived. While the laws of individual nations lasted only as long as the nations themselves, Christendom offered a higher set of standards and mores, which alone could claim to be universal. Though it rarely possessed any potential for any common political action that might be truly effective, Christendom was a primary form of cultural reference (Bainton 1969). The church endured, and so did the Christian lands, as the term Christendom became synonymous with those portions of Europe that remained beyond Muslim control. Early seventeenth-century sovereigns dreamed of healing the Protestant–Catholic split that so desperately weakened that Christendom in the face of its Ottoman Turkish enemies. At least into the mid-seventeenth century, long after the end of the crusading era, this vision of Christendom as an overarching culture and political order retained its power (Reynolds and Witte 2007).

By the end of that century, however, appeals to “Christendom” sounded increasingly dated and irrelevant, partly because European military victories largely removed the Muslim threat that had so long permeated political consciousness. Christendom had far less need to define itself against an outside foe. Within Europe itself, the end of the Thirty Years War created a new state system, and religious ideologies were progressively excluded from political debate. By 1700, ideologies of Enlightenment and science were gaining influence, undermining so many of the principles of an older Christendom. Progressive and modernizing thinkers challenged assumptions about the influence of religious codes and beliefs over what they felt should be secular systems of law and government. Some modern writers trace this spread of secularization in terms of a “decline of Christendom” (McLeod 2000; McLeod and Ustorf 2003).

## The Nightmare of Christendom

Rationalist thinkers now succeeded in making the term “Christendom” synonymous with obscurantism and intolerance, part of the lexicon of ignorance that also included



“Gothic” and “the Dark Ages.” Gibbon in 1776 was already using the term “Christendom” as a historical concept, describing the Latin Christian world of the Middle Ages, something that obviously could have no relevance to his own enlightened day. Nineteenth-century approaches developed this critique still further, using Christendom to describe the stage in which science bravely challenged the ignorance of theology and superstition (e.g., Andrew Dixon White’s *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* [1896]). Atheist Robert Ingersoll described “the inspired Bible” as “the greatest curse of Christendom.” Christendom, it seems, had to disappear in order for the modern world to be born (White 1978).

From a very different approach, some Christian thinkers have used the term Christendom to describe a tragic stage in the history of the faith, a curse marked particularly by the church–state alliance, with all the compromises that demanded. In the 1840s and 1850s, Søren Kierkegaard targeted “Christendom” as one of the greatest problems and contradictions challenging authentic faith. “Christendom,” he declared, “has done away with Christianity without being quite aware of it” (Kierkegaard 2004: 31; Elrod 1981; Conway 2002). Kierkegaard’s ideas powerfully influenced twentieth-century believers, as they struggled to understand the moral and political calamities of their time, the wars and massacres so often undertaken in the name of Christian states or societies. However attractive in other ways, had the idea of a harmonious Christian society contributed to xenophobia and racism against outsiders, above all to Europe’s Jews? Henceforward, it was morally suspect to speak of interfaith relations or Christian missions except in the context of a post-Christendom. The image of Christendom, and the word’s connotations, deteriorated sharply (Bader-Saye 1999; Maier; 2002; Smith 2003).

In both North America and western Europe, suspicion about the claims of Christendom grew as intellectual confidence in the claims of “the West” fell. The second half of the twentieth century was marked by an outpouring of books by authors often basing themselves in an Anabaptist tradition, exploring what it meant to live in a post-Christendom culture, or even a post-Christian society, in the sense of a nation in which one could no longer assume even minimal adherence to Christian norms or values. Often, these authors posited a radical conflict between the noble rhetoric of Western societies and the observed behavior, which conflicted so sharply with Christian values of justice and self-sacrifice. In *After Christendom?* Stanley Hauerwas asked “how the church is to behave if freedom, justice, and a Christian nation are bad ideas” (Hauerwas 1991; Curry 2001; Murray 2004).

In modern American political parlance, the notion of Christendom seemed to have become radioactive, untouchable by any responsible thinkers. Yet since the nineteenth century, critics of the dominant Western order have often turned to the idea of Christendom in search of a higher ideal, untainted by the horrors of industrialism and mass society. As early as 1802, Chateaubriand made a powerful contribution to rehabilitating the bygone centuries of the Christian faith in *La Génie du Christianisme* (“The Genius of Christianity”). Like sympathies and interests motivated the scholars and antiquaries who excavated the records of a lost medieval civilization to recapture what had been worthwhile and valid in the former Christendom, and as far as possible to revive those practices in the modern churches (Schaff 1993).

The rhetoric of Christendom has also exercised a political appeal. Right up to the present day, visions of a lost organic Christian community have surfaced repeatedly in the form of medieval and Gothic romanticism, which often appealed to radical social critics of modernity. If Christendom justified religious warfare, then it was also – according to this vision – the ideology of a community in which the wealthy and powerful acknowledged their social obligations, in which the poor could always turn for succor to the abundant social provision of the monasteries, and in which all acknowledged the supreme and pervasive law of God. Church and state acted together inextricably. In terms of learning and scholarship, also, moderns who struggled with the seemingly irreconcilable claims of religion and science looked back nostalgically to a time when faith was the essential underpinning to intellectual endeavor.

As industrialization and modernization progressed, this idealized picture exercised a potent appeal, as an image that could be not just venerated, but actually implemented once more. In the English-speaking world, such radical revivalism characterized the work of Catholic authors like G. K. Chesterton and Christopher Dawson, but also that of Anglican and evangelical writers in the circle of C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams. In many cases, the idealistic vision of a bygone Christendom served to draw modern Protestants to the Roman Catholic Church (Belloc 1973; Alexander 2007).

## Europe as Christendom

It is especially in the international realm that Christendom has exercised a lasting and powerful influence, which has been analyzed at length in the splendidly wide-ranging study of Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom And European Identity: The Legacy Of A Grand Narrative Since 1789* (Perkins 2004). Christendom appealed by its supranational vision. The post-Enlightenment state had offered no focus of loyalty higher than the nation, and consequently no form of restraint on the actions of that state. What, then, were the political implications for Christians? Should they strive only to ensure that individual states acted in accordance with Christian principles or morality, or could they invoke wider standards and allegiances? From the end of the eighteenth century, activists of many ideological shades thought in terms of a Europe mobilized around common principles derived from religious faith, which some explicitly discussed in terms of a new or revived Christendom. This idea naturally excited Catholic thinkers, who appealed to universal and transnational values in their struggles against the policies of individual secular states. In 1920, for instance, Anglo-French author Hilaire Belloc not only proclaimed that “Europe is the Faith,” but made his boast specifically Catholic: “The Church is Europe; and Europe is The Church.”

Recollections of a bygone Europe united and constrained by a common faith had a special appeal for the generation that suffered the horrors that afflicted that continent during the 1930s and 1940s. European Christian thinkers like Jacques Maritain recoiled from the evils wrought by societies that rejected God, or that exalted the race or nation-state to the level of the divine. In place of totalitarian doctrines, Maritain advocated an “Integral Humanism” that was fully aware of both secular and spiritual dimensions, and which naturally had political implications: Maritain himself contemplated a New

Christendom in Europe. His ideas profoundly influenced political leaders such as Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi, who sought to create a new Europe that rejected statist excesses, and that sought instead to implement fundamental Christian social values. In national politics, this impulse resulted in the Christian Democratic parties that would play so central a role in the politics of Germany and Italy (Burleigh 2006).

At a transnational level, these Catholic thinkers were at the heart of the movement towards European unification during the 1950s, one of the most important global events of the post-1945 era. Curiously, this religious dimension is often neglected by historians of the unification process, which makes little sense except in terms of the Catholic revival of that era. During the papacy of Pius XII (1939–1958), the Catholic Church enjoyed immense prestige and popularity as the vital force opposing Communist expansion, a position that reached its apogee in 1950 with the celebration of Holy Year in Rome, and the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. As the struggle with Communism intensified, Catholic politics intimately linked Marian and apocalyptic doctrines, and such themes underlay the early stages towards European union. Not coincidentally, the European flag, with its twelve yellow stars on a blue background, strongly recalls the traditional images of the Virgin Mary, although omitting the central figure so as not to offend Protestant sensibilities. The flag was commissioned in 1950, that year of high Marian enthusiasm, and its designer Arsène Heitz freely acknowledged borrowing the passage in the book of Revelation that is commonly taken as referring to Mary, “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” Europe would be a new Christendom, defining itself not against Islam, as in the Middle Ages, but rather against Godless Communism, and in the new era as the old, its patron would be the Virgin (Coupland 2006).

## Christendom Endures

Obviously, that is not how matters turned out, and united Europe has very often come into conflict with religious authorities, particularly the Catholic Church. There are many reasons for this, including the powerful French tradition of *laïcité*, the absolute separation of religion from politics, but also the swift secularization that most West European nations have experienced since the 1970s. The most acute tensions between the churches and the secular order arose from the radical transformation of values in matters of gender and sexuality, and the dominance of individualism, libertarianism and personal autonomy. On matters such as abortion and contraception, gay rights and same-sex marriage, genetic engineering and stem-cell research, the Catholic Church repeatedly found itself fighting a rearguard battle against the advance of what were increasingly portrayed as core European values (C. Brown 2001; McLeod 2006).

By the end of the twentieth century, the European political entity that still flew a disguised Marian flag became ever further removed from any open – or even residual – display of Christian values, at least among political elites. During the debates over a proposed European constitution at the start of the 2010s, framers sought an exalted protocol that would describe the roots of European values and civilization. Though many wished to include at least a passing nod to the Christian heritage, others strenuously

resisted even such an acknowledgment, strenuously rejecting any connection to Christendom. Instead, its preamble declared,

Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, which, nourished first by the civilizations of Greece and Rome, characterized by spiritual impulse [sic] always present in its heritage and later by the philosophical currents of the Enlightenment, has embedded within the life of society its perception of the central role of the human person and his inviolable and inalienable rights, and of respect for law. (Zenit 2003)

The 70,000 words of this prolix document thus fail to include a single specific reference to Christianity. This omission pleased those who believed, in the words of former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, that "Europeans live in a purely secular political system, where religion does not play an important role" (Episcopal News Service 2003). In the same years, a number of conflicts at both national and European level suggest the extreme difficulty faced by office holders who adhere to traditional or orthodox Christian views on matters of gender and sexuality.

In such matters, European political realities appear to define themselves against those of Christendom, and arguably against Christianity as such. Recognizing the power of European secularism, important voices in the Vatican have spoken less of a revived Christendom than of a new evangelization, in which Christians see their role as that of a "creative minority," the small body of leaven in a larger lump that is presumed to have little knowledge of the faith (Ratzinger and Pera 2006).

Yet for all the pessimism, the ideology and experience of Christendom have left a powerful inheritance for the modern world. Even in apparently secular Europe, memories of an older Christendom remain much in evidence, and conceivably such residual traces might provide the foundation for a contemporary revival. Sociologist Grace Davie argues that, despite the public coolness to Christianity, the Christian presence still remains potent through social memory. This is all the more potent in cities and small towns that still retain the Christian imprint on every street, every Heiligegeiststrasse (Holy Spirit Street) and Paternoster Row, and in which the whole urban plan is still shaped by parish boundaries. Neither God nor the church is easy to miss. Europe's cultural Christians are "content to let both churches and church-goers enact a memory on their behalf," secure in the knowledge that Christianity is there if and when they need it (Davie 2002: 19). The churches represent accumulated capital that can be drawn on as needed. In this comfortable and non-demanding sense, most do still define themselves, however vestigially, as Christians. Even in the most apparently secular countries of Northern Europe and Scandinavia, Christian customs are surprisingly evident through the popularity of Christian rites of passage. In most of Europe too, Christianity also still dominates the round of the year. Catholic countries are famous for their proliferation of saints' days and religious-based public holidays, when work shuts down entirely. Many European countries still retain quite stringent laws prohibiting blasphemy, phrased explicitly to protect Christian sensibilities. Surprisingly perhaps, the practice of Christian pilgrimage is currently enjoying a new golden age in Europe, particularly to Marian shrines both old and new.

While it would be easy to dismiss these habits as hollow survivals or vestiges, a remarkable concern about Europe's religious identity has resurfaced in recent years with the emergence of strong and visible non-Christian communities, particularly Muslim immigrants, whose leaders demand respect for their beliefs and values. Since 2001, for instance, Europe has experienced repeated controversies over fictional and artistic works deemed insulting or disrespectful to Islam, provoking a Muslim response that has been passionate, and sometimes violent. At its most acute, Muslim insurgency has resulted in mass terrorist attacks in Britain, France, Spain, and elsewhere. Observing such actions, some commentators have raised the question of the place of Christianity within Europe, and whether the radical secularism that prevails among political elites accurately reflects popular sentiment. As in earlier centuries, it is especially the presence of a hostile and threatening rival faith that urgently drives rethinking of Europe's religious roots, and of the theme of Christendom.

The consequences have been varied and striking, as religious conflict has raised harsh questions about the state's obligation to treat all cultures and faiths as equally valid and legitimate, and worthy of protection, granting no special privilege to Christianity. Yet the ideology of multi-culturalism has faced severe strains when facing extremist forms of faith with values that at so many points violate common European assumptions about free speech and equality before the law. In response, many commentators both Christian and otherwise have re-explored the contribution of Christendom in shaping modern Europe. In the words of Anglican Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, "Almost everything you touch in British culture, whether it's art, literature or the language itself has been shaped by the Judæo-Christian tradition, by the Bible, by the churches' worship and belief." Even some writers who would once have been unabashedly secular or leftist have reasserted the Christian roots of Europe's fundamental values of individualism and legality. In many West European countries, Christians have reasserted the need for the symbols of the traditional church-state alliance, for example the crucifixes that commonly hang in schools and hospitals in Catholic nations (Jenkins 2007).

This renewed concern over Christian identity has had a significant political impact in mobilizing opposition to Turkish membership of the European Union. Turkey, of course, is overwhelmingly Muslim, and supporters of its membership condemn any suggestion that Europe should be a "Christian club." Yet in popular politics, there remains a potent sense that Europe should retain a predominantly Christian character, acknowledging the lively inheritance of Christendom in shaping the continent's beliefs and values.

## A Next Christendom?

Debates about "Christendom" have also emerged powerfully in the global South, those regions of the world in which Christianity has spread rapidly in recent decades, especially in Africa and Asia. In Latin America, meanwhile, an old-established Catholic culture has increasingly been challenged by new charismatic and Protestant forms of faith. The beliefs of many rising churches give them a strong predisposition to favoring close ties between church and state. Most Protestant and charismatic churches have a potent

respect for the Old Testament, and for the political values described in those texts. From such a biblical perspective, Christians have an obligation to infuse their values into politics, to create godly states, and evil consequences might well befall those nations that violate divine law. Reinforcing such political/religious ideas is the inheritance of several colonial nations, especially Britain, in which a particular church enjoyed a privileged legal status. In most Latin American nations, only in recent times have most nations challenged the special legal role accorded to the Roman Catholic Church, a status that dates back to the era of Spanish and Portuguese imperial rule (Jenkins 2006a).

To date, only one African nation has explicitly proclaimed itself a "Christian nation." Zambia took this course in 1991, when that nation's vice president urged citizens to "have a Christian orientation in all fields, at all levels." Although that experiment has had little practical impact, calls for a similar self-definition have been heard in other black African countries. However, as in earlier periods of European history, Christian policies are often shaped by the experience of neighboring or competing non-Christian societies, especially among Muslims. Many African Christians live in nations with substantial Muslim populations, or live adjacent to Muslim-dominated societies, and they observe the growing Muslim tendency to enforce religious standards through law, and to proclaim Islamic Sharia as the law of the land. As Muslim-Christian tensions and conflicts grow, sometimes to the point of armed struggle, Christians feel heavy pressure not to show themselves any less dedicated to the public implementation of their faith than Muslims, and are thus encouraged to seek the establishment of their religious principles. For Christians too, as for Muslims, religious law is all the more attractive when it holds out an absolute standard by which to judge the pretensions of dictators who seem to know no other constraints.

In other ways too, present-day conditions in some emerging Christian churches echo those of older Europe. The growth of Christianity has occurred against a background of economic globalization and political weakness, which challenges the very idea of the nation-state. To use Benedict Anderson's famous phrase, nation-states are imagined communities of relatively recent date, rather than eternal or inevitable realities, and many of these communities have begun to reimagine themselves substantially, even to unimagine themselves out of existence. Even in Europe, loyalties to the nation as such are being replaced by newer forms of adherence, whether to larger entities (Europe itself) or to smaller (regions or ethnic groups). If even such once-unquestioned constructs as Great Britain are under threat, it is not surprising that people are questioning the existence of newer and still more artificial entities in Africa or Asia, with their flimsy national frontiers dreamed up so recently by imperial bureaucrats. As Paul Gifford notes, many Africans live in mere quasi-states: "Though they are recognized legal entities, they are not, in a functional sense, states" (Gifford 1998: 9). Partly, the changes reflected new technologies. According to a report by the US intelligence community, in the coming decades "governments will have less and less control over flows of information, technology, diseases, migrants, arms, and financial transactions, whether legal or illegal, across their borders . . . The very concept of 'belonging' to a particular state will probably erode." As in the Middle Ages, the transience of national identity encourages people to seek for more permanent kinds of loyalty, while the presence of rival faiths leads some to frame that loyalty in religious terms.

Since the 1970s, social scientists have noted parallels between the fragmented political realities of the global South and the cosmopolitan world of the Middle Ages. Some have even postulated the future emergence of some movement or ideology that could in a sense create something like a new Christendom. This would be what political scientist Hedley Bull called “a modern and secular equivalent of the kind of universal political organization that existed in Western Christendom in the Middle Ages.” If we speculate on what such ideologies might look like, then they are likely to be religious, in that while universal and supra-national ideas are flourishing, they are not usually secular. The centers of gravest state weakness are often the regions in which political loyalties are secondary to religious beliefs, either Muslim or Christian, and these are the terms in which people define their identities. As the present author has suggested in a book entitled *The Next Christendom*, the new Christian worlds of the global South could find unity in common religious beliefs (Bull 1977: 254; Jenkins 2006b).

As global religious conflicts have expanded since 2001, the concept of Christendom has acquired even more alarming connotations, with its implications of a new cold war between militant and conceivably well-armed global blocs, adhering to irreconcilable ideologies of jihad and crusade. When we add the apocalyptic themes that extremists on both sides cultivate, we appear to have a recipe for potential global destruction. Yet of course, the language of Christendom or Christian politics might have vastly different connotations, and usually does so. Most attractive, perhaps, in the contemporary world are the supranational and even anti-national implications of “Christendom,” and the sense that even national governments must always be subject to higher law. The states of Europe’s Old Christendom have had to relearn that lesson, painfully, on more than one occasion, and the message is all the more powerful for newer nations where Christianity is a more recent and still vibrant growth. But whatever its actual experience, whatever the ideological shades, long experience now makes it clear that the urge to create a distinctive political order is deeply engrained into Christian thinking, and that the idea of Christendom will never be wholly absent.

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## CHAPTER 12

# Slavery, Antislavery, and Christianity

## Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean

Christopher Schmidt-Nowara

Looking back on his active membership in the Spanish Abolitionist Society, the economist Joaquín María Sanromá reserved sarcastic words for his conservative opponents. Between the mid-1860s and the mid-1880s, Spaniards, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans had struggled to abolish and to defend slavery in Spain's last American colonies. In Madrid, the conflict was especially sharp during Spain's September Revolution (1868–1874), when a progressive constitution enabled broad freedoms of association and expression and a democratic franchise that brought normally marginalized parties into the center of power. The Spanish left and right both mobilized around the fate of colonial slavery, publishing newspapers, pamphlets, and broadsheets, giving parliamentary speeches, and organizing huge public meetings and marches in cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville.

The members of the Abolitionist Society, founded in 1865 in the aftermath of the US Civil War, generally had a secular outlook on the world. A few came from the infinitesimal Protestant minority in Spain but the great majority were professionals, especially lawyers and engineers, well versed in political economy, liberalism, republicanism, and the natural sciences. Many were anti-clerical (Corwin 1967: 167–171). Sanromá was especially biting in his comments on the role of Spanish Catholics in the struggle over Antillean slavery. Most were resigned to the status quo, arguing that there was no need for militant abolitionism because “*Christianity had already abolished [slavery]*” and that “*slavery . . . is incompatible with the essence of Christianity. All men are equal before God*” (Sanromá 1894: 347, emphasis in the original). The implication was that Christian apologists were hypocrites who were happy to go along with the status quo.

While Sanromá was undoubtedly correct in calling attention to the complacency, or complicity, of many Spanish Catholics in their attitude toward colonial slavery in his day, his condemnation was too sweeping because the historical record was quite mixed. If we look at other moments in the European colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America and slave trafficking from Africa, we find that Christianity not only provided justification for slavery but also sometimes the critical edge to opponents of slavery and the slave trade. Though their attacks on slavery were never unambiguous, clerics, theologians, and laypeople in sixteenth-century Spain, seventeenth-century Brazil, eighteenth-century Britain, and across Europe in the late nineteenth century found Christianity incompatible with slavery and slave trading. Moreover, enslaved peoples themselves, forcibly transported from Africa to Caribbean and American settlements, often found support in the beliefs and institutions of Christianity, helping them to ameliorate and sometimes openly defy their enslavement. Yet these moments of criticism and defiance must be set against the broader history of Christian defenses of, or indifference toward, the Atlantic slave complex.

The Iberian expansion into the eastern Atlantic and along the west coast of Africa, then into the Caribbean and Brazil, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries occasioned the first debates over the relationship between Christianity and Atlantic-world slavery. Because the Portuguese had most successfully staked out claims to trading forts along the African coast, the Spanish colonizers of the Caribbean relied on them for the transport of enslaved Africans to settlements like Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Hispaniola. Spanish settlers turned to the transatlantic traffic because of resistance to the enslavement of the native peoples from around the Caribbean from a variety of sources, including Spanish clerics like the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas. Though Las Casas recommended the traffic in Africans as a substitute for indigenous labor, he later turned vehemently against that trade as well when he learned more about Portuguese machinations in Africa. He, along with other Dominican critics such as Tomás de Mercado, were convinced that the Portuguese were violating the tenets of just war and were perhaps even enslaving African Christians (Davis 1966: 165–196; Russell-Wood 1978; Clayton 2011). Given these violations of the justification for enslavement and trafficking, they urged the Spanish crown to distance itself from the Portuguese trade, though their suggestions to end the introduction of African slaves into the American were too radical for the vested interests in the emerging colonial system. The compromise reached in the Spanish Empire, which would last until the late eighteenth century, was one of slavery without slave-trading, realized by farming out the traffic to foreign traders like the Portuguese.

The Portuguese conquest and colonization of Brazil, and later in the sixteenth century of Angola, led to quite different arrangements. As in the Spanish orbit, there were Portuguese clerics who objected to the slave trade and the condition of enslaved Africans in Brazilian plantation society. For example, concern over whether planters were allowing the enslaved to receive the sacraments led some Jesuit missionaries to condemn the slave trade and colonial slavery. However, the ebb and flow of colonization and evangelization in West Central Africa led to a significant change of attitude among the Jesuits, the principal missionaries in the Portuguese Empire. Because of their failures in Africa, many came to argue that true conversion to Christianity could be carried out only by forcibly removing Africans from their native lands and transplanting

them as slaves in Brazil, which would become the privileged site of evangelization in the Portuguese world. Moreover, the slave trade would have the added benefit of supporting the colony economically, so that the Jesuits could pursue their missionary labor not only among the enslaved Africans but also among the Brazilian Indians, whose enslavement they opposed. As Luiz Felipe de Alencastro has argued, by the mid-seventeenth century, the Jesuits had become staunch advocates of African slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as a way of joining Angola and Brazil as a unified field for their missions: “Evangelization in this one colony, Brazil, explains the apparently contradictory but in fact complementary character of Jesuit policy regarding the bondage of natives on either side of the South Atlantic. This framework defined a second complementary system, which brought together slave production zones in Brazil with slave reproduction zones in Africa” (Alencastro 2013: 67).

Yet even as they forged a robust justification for the slave trade and colonial slavery, the Jesuits were fiercely critical of the reality of slavery in the plantation societies of Brazil. Priests such as Antonio Vieira and André João Antonil likened Brazil to the Egypt of the Old Testament because of the cruelty with which planters treated their slaves. Vieira, preaching in Brazil in the mid-seventeenth century after the temporary loss of precious Brazilian territories to the Dutch West Indies Company, sought to assuage the enslaved by promising them that their earthly suffering was a sign of their liberation after death. He also warned the planters that the loss of northeastern Brazil to the Dutch was a sign of divine punishment for their cruelty. Several decades later Antonil also augured disaster and retribution: “[The slaves] will cry so loud to God that He will hear them, and do to the planter what He did to the Egyptians when they oppressed the Hebrews beyond endurance, by inflicting terrible plagues upon their estates and children, as may be read in the Holy Scriptures” (pp. 42–43). Such warnings were not abolitionist but rather forms of amelioration meant to improve the lot of the enslaved: “As Saint Paul says, Christians who neglect their slaves are behaving worse than unbelievers who do so” (p. 41).

Antonil inscribed these exhortations in a lengthy treatise on the sugar and tobacco economies of colonial Brazil published in 1711. He was concerned not only with the spiritual well-being of the enslaved but also with the stability of colonial society and the productivity of the plantations (the Jesuit order itself was a major property and slave holder in the colony): “The owner rightfully ought to give whoever serves him sufficient food, medicines when sick, and the wherewithal to dress himself decently, as befits the servile state, and not let him appear naked in the streets. The owner should also regulate the work in such a way that is not more than his laborers can perform, if he wishes them to last” (p. 41). As Rafael Marquese has argued, the Jesuits’ proslavery justifications involved not only scriptural claims but also contemporary scientific beliefs about how to govern laboring bodies. Cruel treatment of enslaved Africans was un-Christian. It was also bad management because it would excite the wrong passions in Africans, leading them to rebel. Good treatment would in turn produce good workers whose passions and humors were in balance (Marquese 2004: 82).

While Jesuit theologians elaborated sophisticated and ambiguous justifications for the slave trade and colonial slavery in seventeenth-century Brazil, other members of colonial society were able to mount serious challenges to both through a Christian idiom. The historian Robert Gray has recounted an especially compelling example,

the efforts in the 1680s of the free Afro-Brazilian Lourenço da Silva, an official of a black brotherhood in Madrid, to carry a demand for the suppression of the slave trade to the papacy. His argument, and later those of his clerical supporters, echoed aspects of charges made by Spanish theologians in the previous century: that the Portuguese and Brazilian slavers were manipulating the idea of just war for their own ends, they were actively enslaving African Christians, sometimes in perpetuity, and inflicting violent punishments upon them. He urged the Pope to “liberate all these Christians” from their torment so that Christianity could truly spread among Africans on both sides of the Atlantic, an antislavery rationale that would later prove powerful in the British colonial world, though from the vantage of evangelical Protestantism (quoted in Gray 1990: 17).

Da Silva received support in his denunciation from the heart of the papacy, the cardinals of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. Their embrace and extension of his petition derived as well from the report of two Capuchin friars who had worked in the Caribbean and gathered information about slaving in Central Africa from their brethren. The Spaniard Francisco de Jaca and the Frenchman Epiphane de Moirans had been excommunicated for their preaching in Havana, where they had urged that “the owners of Negro slaves should liberate them and their children and pay them for their labours” (quoted in Gray 1990: 21). Yet while the Propaganda Fide endorsed the views of these radical critics of American slavery and African slaving it proved powerless to effect any change in the Hispanic world because of the opposition or indifference of vested interests, including the Iberian monarchs. Even high churchmen were skeptical of the criticisms and dismissed the possibility of enacting them (Gray 1990: 24–27).

This episode from the 1680s reveals the uneven role of Christianity in the making of the Atlantic slave complex. On the one hand, it shows that Christian theology and institutions could provide critical tools for attacking slavery and the slave trade. Lourenço da Silva was a free man of color from Brazil who had risen to some level of prominence and leadership through the black brotherhoods implanted in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies and metropolises in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Our Lady of the Rosary being the most widespread in the Lusophone world (Meznar 2005). At the time of his journey to Rome, Lourenço da Silva was the procurator of the Confraternity of Our Lady Star of the Negroes in Madrid (Gray 1990: 14–15). These brotherhoods served an important role, especially in the colonial world as they offered institutions through which the enslaved and the freed might form autonomous communities and press for their collective spiritual and material interests, as da Silva’s undertaking demonstrates. On the other hand, the anticlimactic outcome of his petition, in spite of the Propaganda Fide’s support of it, shows that explicit denunciations of slavery and the slave trade were rare and, more importantly, politically and institutionally isolated. More typical was the perspective voiced by the Jesuit Antonil in Brazil several years (1711) after the decision reached by the Propaganda Fide: that slavery, if governed by Christian values, was not only beneficial to the salvation of the enslaved but also necessary for the economic support of the missions in Africa and the Americas.

However, in the second half of the eighteenth century, a large number of pious Christians decided to take action to reform and to abolish the slave trade and slavery itself. This sea change in attitude did not take place among Iberian Catholics but among

Anglo-American Quakers and evangelical Protestants who elaborated sustained attacks on the Atlantic slave complex, first in their own colonial orbit and later throughout Africa and the Americas.

Britain and its overseas colonies would at first glance appear to be unlikely sites for the growth of mass antislavery movements inspired by Christian faith. What characterized British construction of slave societies like Barbados, Jamaica, and South Carolina was an apparent indifference toward the missionary spirit that motivated the Iberian Crowns and their established Church. British religious pluralism, not only at home but also in the overseas colonies, mitigated the influence of the Church of England in the colonial enterprise. Later, however, this pluralism would prove a signal advantage in fostering and mobilizing antislavery support (Drescher 1980).

The Quakers were the first religious group in the British world to question colonial slavery. For example, settlers in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the late seventeenth century opined that slavery “was not a question of fate,” as apologists of various stripes would have it: “The Africans had been criminally seized and shipped off to America without their consent. To purchase them was to purchase stolen goods” (Davis 1966: 308–309). Their objection had little resonance at the time even though similar views surfaced periodically in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a period when the British transatlantic slave trade was assuming truly enormous proportions. Quakers on both sides of the Atlantic took part in various aspects of the slave complex and owned slaves themselves. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, radical critics of slavery, like Benjamin Lay, who had spent time in the plantation society of Barbados before settling in Pennsylvania, began to denounce their brethren for their compromise with slavery. Lay saw slaveholding as a “black poison” that had corrupted the Quakers’ faith and which would provoke divine retribution: “The Lord was whetting his glittering sword, and his vengeance was certain, unless the new Children of Israel separated themselves from the filthiness of the Heathen, and came away from Babylon. In America, where the millennium had seemed so imminent and where Satan had committed his forces, God would show no mercy to the betrayers of righteousness” (Davis 1966: 326).

The themes of the loss of righteousness and divine punishment would animate Quakers and evangelicals alike in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These religious anxieties about slavery and the slave trade took on particular political force when they reached influential figures within the Church of England who were able to exert more effective pressure than were marginal religious groups like the Quakers. Especially influential was the Anglican clergyman John Ramsay, whose experience as a missionary in the British West Indies convinced him that action must be taken to force British planters to allow missionaries to evangelize among the enslaved and to treat their slaves in a more Christian manner. This experience in colonial society – his witnessing of the violence of the plantation, the indifference toward religion, the isolation of the enslaved – was not unique to Ramsay. Early Quaker critics had seen and attacked the same in the British colonies, while in the Iberian world, as we have seen, such criticisms were frequent among clerics, even as they justified slavery.

What was especially important about Ramsay’s experience and his reflections on it when he returned to the metropole was that it coincided with the religious crisis

brought on by the American Revolution and the independence of the North American colonies. As Christopher Leslie Brown has explained, Ramsay and the evangelicals gathered around him in England viewed the loss of the colonies as evidence of divine wrath inspired by the godlessness promoted on the plantations in the Americas. The only way to regain divine favor was to act against the slavers and planters and to bring the Christian mission to the enslaved. This religious crisis and the remedy for it led to the formation of the first mass antislavery movement in the Atlantic world. Led by powerful political figures like William Wilberforce and gifted publicists like Thomas Clarkson, the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade was able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of supporters around the British Isles and to place abolition at the center of political debate, where it would remain even after the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire (1807) and of slavery in the British colonies (1834), as British evangelicals, missionaries, and the Foreign Office sought the complete disappearance of the transatlantic slave trade.

Why did religious doubts about slavery lead to a mass movement in Britain but not in the other colonial metropolises, like Spain, Portugal, and France? After all, Ramsay's attack on the planters for incurring divine wrath was not so different from the warnings of the Jesuits Vieira and Antonil who likened Brazil to the biblical Egypt because of the suffering of the enslaved. Seymour Drescher and Christopher Leslie Brown have offered compelling answers to the question of why Britain. Drescher's work (1980) has focused on the institutional and social aspects of British religious life. Because Britain was a religiously plural society, in spite of having an established church, there was a tradition of dissent outside the state. Moreover, the sociability of British religious life allowed for broad organization and effective publicity across British society. In France (or Spain and Portugal), in contrast, religious uniformity cut down on the spaces of dissent, debate, and propaganda. Brown has called attention to the interpenetration of religious conviction and geopolitics. The early abolitionists sought to redeem the nation and the empire by suppressing the slave trade. The British state eventually embraced abolition of the trade not only to its own colonies but to those of foreign colonies as well. Over the course of the nineteenth century Britain aggressively pursued slavers in Africa, the Caribbean, and Brazil and signed bilateral treaties with foreign sovereigns. Brown argues that official antislavery, inspired by the evangelical abolitionists, endowed Britain with a "moral capital" that allowed it to justify and to expand its intervention around the world in the nineteenth century.

In acting against the slave trade, Britain pursued policies that would promote Christianity and commerce. British abolitionists believed that the two necessarily went hand-in-hand. Indeed, even before the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, they had sought to demonstrate the economic efficacy of abolition by settling and developing Sierra Leone on the west coast of Africa. Their conviction was that if British and European slavers stopped disrupting local societies then Africans would develop free economies worked by free laborers, who would produce valuable exports and in turn create markets for British imports. The Afro-British abolitionist Olaudah Equiano summed up this ambition in his autobiography: "Cotton and indigo grow spontaneously in most parts of Africa; a consideration of no small consequence to the manufacturing towns of Great Britain. It opens a most immense, glorious, and happy prospect – the clothing &c. of a continent ten thousand miles in circumference, and immensely rich in productions of

every denomination in return for manufactures" (quoted in Schmidt-Nowara 2011: 99–100). Thus, the British Empire would not only be redeemed but also enriched.

Sierra Leone developed quite differently. In the late eighteenth century it became a refuge for black loyalists who had to flee North America after the American Revolution. In the nineteenth century, the British navy settled Africans captured in illegal slaving voyages. A recent study of Sierra Leone has argued that while the abolitionists' evangelicalism moved them to attack the slave trade and colonial slavery, it made them less inclined to intervene in the poverty and suffering that characterized the colony. The settlers received very little training or subsidy and found it impossible to create the small agricultural hamlets envisioned by the colony's designers. Many lived in such a precarious situation that they became vulnerable once again to enslavement by raiders from beyond the colony's boundaries. Yet reports about this misery by officials and missionaries had little impact on the abolitionists. As Maeve Ryan explains: "The humanitarians' lack of empathy or concern for the destitute recaptive was a logical extension of their fundamental conception of the abolitionist cause as a reform not of a primarily social evil but of vice and sin – a breach of divine law that forced the possessor of one soul to be held as the property of another . . . To this view it was not the business of Britain to elevate the liberated African from poverty" (2013: 43).

Sierra Leone was not the only example of colonial reality clashing with evangelical and abolitionist ideals. In 1823, slaves in Demerara rose against the master class. What motivated them was the preaching and labor of missionaries sent to the colonies by the London Missionary Society (Viotti da Costa 1994). Though not meant to defy the planters, the missionaries' work was deeply disruptive of the social control heretofore expected by the master class and the colonial government. Observing the Sabbath, assuming positions of authority in the mission, and gathering together in worship led many slaves to question their bondage in a new way and to expect greater freedoms from their owners. Though evangelicals were often politically conservative or quietist, the message of spiritual liberation and equality, delivered in a colony already buffeted by various antislavery currents (the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the abolition of slavery in Haiti and the neighboring Spanish American colonies), was profoundly inspiring and subversive.

Did Catholicism play a similar role in the age of revolutions and the nineteenth century? Far from it, at least as regards Latin America and the Caribbean. Antislavery sentiment was at times robust in France, Spain, Portugal and their colonies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And some prominent antislavery advocates hailed from the church, most notably the Abbé Gregoire, who sought the abolition of slavery in the French Empire and looked to other clerics, like the Spaniard Bartolomé de las Casas, as sources of inspiration (Schmidt-Nowara 2013). But in general, what one finds is an almost complete absence of Catholics and Catholic theology from the antislavery struggles of the era. For example, in Spanish South America during the wars of independence in the 1810s and 1820s, leaders such as Simón Bolívar in Venezuela banned the slave trade and passed gradual abolition laws. What inspired him was not religious faith and a quest for redemption but liberalism and republicanism, as well as a good dose of pragmatism (so many slaves fought in the wars that Bolívar and other military leaders, like José de San Martín, had to appease them [Schmidt-Nowara 2011: 90–119]).

Concerning Africa, the situation was somewhat different. Brazil (1850) and Spain (1867) were the last countries to ban the transatlantic slave trade. If Christianity played a role, it was in Britain, where abolitionists continued to pressure the government to act against the traffic. However, in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery in the Americas (again, Spain and Brazil were the laggards, Spain abolished slavery in Cuba in 1886, Brazil abolished slavery in 1888) European Catholics across the continent did sign on enthusiastically to the abolitionist crusade launched by the French missionary and cardinal Lavigerie in the 1880s. In Spain, the involvement of conservative Catholics in Lavigerie's movement provoked the ire of the abolitionist Sanromá, who asked where they had been during the struggle over slavery in Spain's own colonies:

The same ones who, in another time, battled abolitionism, today declare themselves to be tenacious abolitionists of . . . Muslim slavery. They form societies, gather funds, hold meetings, and follow exactly in the footsteps of those *crazy ones* of yesteryear. It is a movement initiated in recent years by the illustrious cardinal Lavigerie: it is a noble and generous movement that deserves our applause and with which we associate with all our heart.

I only wish that they would answer the following questions. Why does the propaganda that yesterday seemed so out of place when it was in favor of *some* slaves, now seems so very appropriate when it favors *other* slaves? Why does that which seemed so natural when we had it *at home*, now seem so horrible when it continues *outside the home*? (Sanromá 1894: 346-347, emphasis in the original).

Father Lavigerie was a French missionary, whose order the White Fathers, was active around Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. To further his mission, he urgently wanted to halt slave raiding in the region and across the African continent (Miers 1975: 201–206). To that end, he toured Britain, France, and Belgium in the late 1880s, speaking to enthusiastic crowds and powerful political and religious dignitaries, Protestant and Catholic alike. As Sanromá's biting questions indicate, Lavigerie was able to mobilize groups that had either remained on the sidelines during the struggles over Latin American and Caribbean slavery or, as in the case of conservative Catholics in Barcelona, had actively sought to check the abolitionist movement (though in Britain there was continuity between the two eras of abolitionism). What now inspired them to embrace abolitionism in Africa?

European governments were interested in expanding their control on the continent; the 1890 Brussels Conference, at which Lavigerie's demands for suppression of the slave trade were discussed and acted upon, came hard on the heels of the Berlin Congress of 1884–1885, which formalized the partitioning of Africa. The British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain was explicit: "sooner or later we shall have to fight some of the slave dealing tribes and we cannot have a better *casus belli* . . . public opinion here requires that we shall justify imperial control of these savage countries by some serious effort to put down slave dealing" (quoted in Miers 1975: 294). Here was the use of "moral capital" with a vengeance. However, it is important to note that this spirit of intervention against slavery in Africa was quite new. Though the British government had committed formidable resources to suppressing the transatlantic slave trade in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, it refused to tackle the problem of slavery and



slave-trading within Africa even though, with the Atlantic slave trade reduced and then abolished, the number of slaves in Africa was peaking in the second half of the century (Drescher 2009: 374–376). The British and French governments and their agents in Africa refused to get involved; partly in response to their earlier experiences in their Caribbean colonies – many felt that forced labor turned out to be more productive than free labor – and partly because they believed that slavery was too deeply embedded in these societies to take radical actions like the suppression of slavery in the West Indies (Drescher 2009: 380–386).

The Scramble for Africa and the renewed popular pressure spearheaded by European Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, would change this situation in the 1880s and 1890s.

Religious groups across western Europe responded to Lavigerie's campaign for related yet distinct motives. For example, in Germany, membership in anti-slave-trade committees and public meetings was a way for Catholics to show their allegiance to the German colonial enterprise and their loyalty in general in the aftermath of the *Kulturkampf* (Mulligan 2013: 158). More generally, the drive against slaving in Africa was aggressively anti-Muslim and staked out a claim to a universal humanity that was fundamentally Christian and European. This universal vision that cut across Christian divisions dovetailed with the imperial interests of European governments because it legitimized "violent humanitarianism" (Mulligan 2013: 155). After the 1890 Brussels Conference, imperial expansion in Africa went hand-in-hand with the efforts, uneven and incomplete, to suppress slave raiding and slavery. In many cases, freedom from slavery led to other kinds of forced labor regimes in the expanding European colonies, imposed with incredible violence, most notoriously in the Congo Free State of King Leopold. The brutality in Congo continued to provoke outrage among British non-conformist Christian sects, who organized an active campaign in the early twentieth century, eventually forcing King Leopold to abandon his private control of the colony: "it was the last hurrah of the old popular antislavery base" (Drescher 2009: 401) of evangelicals, the most potent Christian force in the struggle against slavery in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean in the modern era.

For most of the history of the Atlantic slave complex, Christianity offered justification for African slavery and – especially in the Portuguese colonial empire, by far the largest slave trading power over the centuries – for the slave trade, as we have seen in the case of the Jesuits' complex arguments and arrangements. On a simpler level, biblical tales like the story of Ham and the enslavement of his children, the so called Canaanites, offered rich material for explaining an increasingly racialized form of slavery across the Americas: black Africans were the children of Ham, their skin color marking the divine curse (Sandoval 2008: 20). Yet certain qualms and themes continued to arise over the centuries and across the imperial and confessional divides; in particular, the idea of divine wrath for the way in which the enslaved were made to suffer or for the ignorance of Christianity in which their owners left them. Portuguese Jesuits in Brazil and British evangelicals at home in England were racked by the same anxieties triggered by imperial debacles. For the Portuguese clerics, losses to the Dutch in Brazil and Angola in the 1630s and 1640s, reversed in subsequent decades, were evidence of divine disfavor. In the late eighteenth century the loss of the North

American colonies similarly affected British clerics and their followers. Christianity thus might lead to demands for amelioration across the European overseas empires but only in the evangelical and non-conformist world of the British Empire did it lead to mass mobilization for the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Christianity, slavery, antislavery, and colonial crisis again formed a potent nexus, as missionaries (Catholic and Protestant) combined with aggressive states to expand European control in Africa in the cause of abolitionism. Finally, even though the dominant religion was generally a tool of social control in colonial slave societies, it also became a source of autonomy and open defiance for enslaved and freed people, as Lourenço da Silva's petition to the papacy shows, though this particular episode was exceptional. The 1823 uprising in Demerara is more revealing because it demonstrates how the intersection of Christian missions and beliefs with the daily struggles of slavery might lead the enslaved to demand freedom and justice.

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## CHAPTER 13

# Medicine, Agriculture, and Technology in the Missionary Enterprise

Christoffer H. Grundmann

### General Considerations

Mission – understood as the organized effort to spread the gospel among people unfamiliar with it – has always relied upon means of communication (print media such as flyers, tracts, and books, Bibles, or portions of it in particular), as it has upon the means of transport to reach those who were not yet Christianized (carts, boats, planes) necessitating also the extensive use of respective networks (mail services, radio, internet), and the appropriate logistics to stay in contact with the sending bodies and to receive supplies. Moreover, missionaries were for most of the time dependent on making a living far away from home by farming and trading which also meant that they had to be concerned about the proper legalization of their activities by the authorities of the host countries in order not to render their enterprises illegal. This is to say that every missionary effort irrespective of how “spiritual” the task might appear, is unavoidably intertwined with “worldly matters” such as economics, politics, and technical matters.

When talking about medicine, agriculture, and technology in the missionary enterprise the focus is on the deliberate use and conscious application of these means for the sake of the missionary goal. This presents an array of different issues and poses a new set of questions; since medicine, agriculture, and technology as independent, discrete disciplines of scientifically operating skills emerged only as late as the nineteenth century and only in the northern hemisphere – as did the modern missionary enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

The emancipation of the inquisitive mind from traditional intellectual and social authorities and religious patronization emerged on a broad scale in the age of the

European Enlightenment era (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries). Heeding the ancient motto “*sapere aude!*,” dare to think for yourself it opened the door to a radical, unimpeded investigation of the world and of life.<sup>2</sup> The radicalism of such an emancipated approach was clearly articulated by Francis Bacon (1561–1626) who in his *Novum Organum* of 1620 advocated the principle that we should “torture nature,” for otherwise nature will not reveal her secrets. Conducting research in a completely unrestricted way by consciously disrespecting historical, social, and religious authorities except evidence-based rationality proved to be most successful in mastering challenges posed by diseases, crop failure and by many other difficulties which previously had to be accepted as either the “will of God” or simply as unavoidable “fate.” The success and practical impact of medicine, agriculture, and technology during this scientific revolution could simply not be denied. And, since the scientific method proved far superior to anything before, many scientists charged tradition and especially religion with hampering genuine progress, a progress whose fruits are more or less enjoyed by everyone today the world over in one way or other. But the autonomous dominion over nature by scientists did more than just improve the living conditions of many. It also alienated people from their religious and cultural roots, which became obvious in the demise of appreciation for established religion, a process also known as secularization.

It is not surprising then, that employing medicine, agriculture, and technology as tools for furthering the cause of the gospel is not without its problems, at least to those pursuing explicitly religious goals. That is why many mission boards simply did not – or do not – make use of any of these, not even occasionally. They wanted to keep the “spiritual” message as pure, straight, and undiluted as possible. Yet, while such intention is well understood it remains to be seen if it can be sustained if it wants to remain truly Christian. As the following sketch of the history of medicine, agriculture, and technology in the missionary enterprise will show, bearing witness to God incarnate in Jesus Christ cannot be done at the expense of the corporeality of life.

## Historical aspects

### *Medicine*

It is surprising to note that medicine was not a topic of concern for Christian missions until the advent of medical missions in the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that Jesus mandated his disciples to preach *and* to heal (Mt. 10:8; Lk. 9:2, 10:9) and despite the fact that healing was one of the dominant features of spreading the Good News during the first centuries of the church’s existence (Mk. 16:20), the employment of medicine as a means to bring about healing was not on the agenda of the church.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this is twofold. First, the disciples were explicitly charged not to make their living by healing (Mt. 10:8), and, second, medicine had not become a truly powerful science then. Medicine, rather, was suffused with magic. What could be done without compromising the faith was *caring for the sick*, including those beyond one’s own kin and thereby witnessing to God’s unconditional love for all humankind, something impressively epitomized in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25–34).

Since medicine made practically no real progress from ancient times to the Middle Ages the fourth Lateran Council (1215) ruled that no cleric should practice medicine, especially surgery for fear of committing unintentional homicide. Later – for fear of the incursion of magic into the treatment – even the study of medicine by clerics and those in Catholic religious orders was prohibited. However, in cases of necessity and in the absence of medical help clergy and religious moved by pity did whatever they could under the constraints of the limited means and skills at their disposal. This happened especially in the missions overseas and is known to have occurred among Franciscan, Capuchin, and Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Japan, China, India, Georgia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Philippines. In the age of patronage missions (1492–1622) institutionalized efforts were made by the missions' patronizing powers of Spain and Portugal. In areas under Spanish rule, notably in Mexico, Uruguay, the Philippines, and Japan "hospitals" were built. These were comparatively small houses for up to twelve or at most eighteen needy and neglected people like orphans, widows, destitute, and the poor sick, while in the territories under Portuguese patronage charitable organizations, called *Misericórdia* (mercy societies) were organized by wealthy citizens, whose members cared for the needy as is known from Angola, Mozambique, India, Malaysia, Macao, and Brazil. Later, in the eighteenth century the early Protestant mission societies such as the Danish-Halle Mission (1705–1859) and that of the Moravian Church (which started in 1732) sent out physicians to attend to the healthcare needs of the missionary staff who suffered heavily from tropical diseases, especially malaria. If time and strength permitted, these physicians were also to treat indigenous people. Still, the impact of these initiatives was severely hampered by the kind of medical help which actually could be rendered, for such help was hardly any different from or superior to the established ways of healing already in place overseas.<sup>4</sup>

This situation changed rather dramatically during the nineteenth century when medicine turned away from its nearly exclusive focus on the teachings of classical authorities like Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna to the uncompromising study of the nature of the human body and its physiology.<sup>5</sup> Begun some time long before it reached its climax in the nineteenth century thanks only to three major developments: (1) the discovery of anesthesia (1846) and antiseptics (1847/1867), which led to the previously unimaginable rise of surgery; (2) the detection of the importance of (public) hygiene and sanitation – safe childbirthing, provision of safe drinking water and proper disposal of sewage – for the prevention of dying in childbirth and epidemics (1854/1859); (3) the laboratory-based cellular pathology, initiating a paradigm shift in understanding and searching for the causes of diseases. This launched the age of bacteriology which in rapid succession led to the discovery of most of the disease-causing pathogens of epidemics then known – including those common in tropical countries – and consequently to the development of effective treatments and appropriate measures of prevention.<sup>6</sup>

Once medicine had taken the scientific turn enabling physicians to truly *heal* diseases considered fatal until then, pious physicians felt urged to share such life-preserving skill with those in need as ministers of healing imitating Christ. So the concept of medical missions emerged as an epiphenomenon of the development of scientific medicine and the modern medical profession, the Medical Missionary Society in China (founded 1838, at Canton [Guangzhou]) being the first in a series of similar initiatives. As a

philanthropic agency the purpose of this society was to provide financial support for hospital-based free medical care for the Chinese by missionary physicians. It was hoped that such a benevolent institution would mollify the xenophobic Chinese, help establish a genuinely amicable relationship, and open doors not only for publicly preaching the gospel, but also for political and economic deals.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the enterprise, which proved a great success, was intended as a philanthropic means to various ends, rendering it highly dubious in the eyes of people solely interested in straightforwardly religious and denominational goals. Moreover, it allowed others to join, people who normally would never engage in anything linked to missions and gospel work. Wherever a mission hospital or dispensary was opened in the following years, people who once had shunned Christian missionaries before now thronged to the place in hope of relief from ailments which their indigenous healers and medicines failed to bring about. Thus, medical missions become “the heavy artillery of the missionary army.”<sup>8</sup>

In the wake of the evangelical revival inspired by Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) an ever increasing number of pious physicians yearning for “the evangelization of the world in this generation” offered their services as medical missionaries, being convinced that no mission can “be considered fully equipped that has not its medical branch.”<sup>9</sup> Yet this development was not universally recognized and only a fraction of Protestant mission societies (26%) in existence then were engaged in medical missions. Medical missionaries – male and female, foreign and indigenous – represented barely 5% of the overall missionary personnel, figures which have kept dwindling ever since they reached their zenith in 1923. Most of these worked in China until its closure for missions in 1949/1950, and in India, and from 1950 onwards in various countries of Africa.<sup>10</sup> What can reasonably be said is that by the turn of the twentieth century, medicine had become a topic of real concern for Protestant missions, albeit a controversial one. However, with the exception of a remarkable initiative by Cardinal Lavigerie on the island of Malta during 1881–1896, Roman Catholicism, bound by canon law, was very hesitant to embrace it at all. This changed gradually with the formation of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries (Medical Mission Sisters, SCMM) in 1925 in Washington, DC, and when the Roman Curia in 1936, recognizing modern medicine’s capabilities, lifted the former restrictions regarding the study and practice of medicine.<sup>11</sup> Numerous medical mission projects have been initiated since, mainly in India, the Philippines, and in various Latin American and African countries.<sup>12</sup>

The latter half of the twentieth century saw significant transformations of the medical mission concept. This was largely caused by further advancements in medical science, the sophistication of expensive high-tech medical gear and the inclusion of intensive care medicine which necessitated the provision of ever more effective facilities and quickly depleted the resources available. Other causes for rethinking the established concept were political developments at a national and international level such as the foundation of the World Health Organization (WHO 1948), the formation of national departments for healthcare worldwide, and the emergence of autonomous indigenous churches struggling to manage the legacies left by the missions. This prompted the formation of the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) in 1968 at the World Council of Churches (WCC) which, after having stayed an independent unit until 1992, has now become the “Health

and Healing” desk in the WCC Program Area “Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation.”<sup>13</sup>

In the emergent competition with government and private hospitals, priorities had to be set for investing the scarce resources at hand, and these were to be critically informed by the gospel. These were identified as bringing about life in abundance (John 10:10) and justice (*shalom*) by focusing on the commonly neglected diseases of the poor, i.e. on preventable diseases not needing hospitalization, such as tuberculosis, dysentery, and malaria. This meant practically: providing sanitation and safe drinking water, caring for pregnant women, training traditional midwives in safe methods of delivery, securing supply of sufficient, nutritious foods and generic drugs for common diseases, and basic health education, the latter being most important for successfully coping with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In concentrating on primary healthcare (PHC) as this approach is called, with a focus on enabling the healthcare potential of local communities, medical missions turned away from the hospital-centered focus of earlier times and got engaged in a program so effective and promising, that the World Health Organization (WHO), too, adopted it as official policy in 1978.<sup>14</sup>

A recent, though somewhat controversial, development in the field, is short-term medical mission trips by committed medical specialists, physicians, dentists, nurses, lab technicians, and students running well prepared medical camps for brief periods of time and providing emergency relief wherever needed.<sup>15</sup>

### *Agriculture*

While it is out of question that ancient cultures of the East (China, India, Sumer), the South (Nile Valley, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia), and the West (Mexico, Guatemala) had a highly developed agriculture and possessed impressive knowledge of farming and irrigation it is equally obvious that such their skills got lost over time. These were generally handed down orally within certain clans and families and, unlike medicine, did not make it into the books – or if they did as documented for instance for the Roman Empire by the writings of Varro (first century BCE), Columelle (first century CE), and Palladius (fourth century CE) – were little known except among learned persons who did not farm themselves.<sup>16</sup> Since farming meant growing staple food and vegetables, tending fruit trees, raising fowl and cattle for predominantly private use and consumption, practical, not academic, skills were required, and these were acquired by simply doing it the same way as everyone else. Thus, the spread of agricultural knowledge was for most of the time not a systematic process reflecting the accumulated wisdom of centuries. Agricultural knowledge, rather, was so basically ingrained in local culture and religion that people were hardly ever willing to adopt new insights as long as they held to their established social, cultural, and religious principles.

It was only in the nineteenth century that agriculture became that independent, scientifically grounded discipline we know today. This occurred because of three major developments: (1) the formal education of farmers in agricultural colleges in which they were taught improved practices of land cultivation (the first opened as



early as 1796 in Hungary; the Morrill Act of 1862 that ruled that each US state had to establish such a college); (2) the application of the scientific method in field experiments with plants (e.g. 1834 Rothamsted, England), soil and organic chemistry leading to the invention of synthetic fertilizers (e.g. Justus von Liebig, 1803–1873) which boosted the yields of crops while at the same time reducing dependence on manure and with it the need to keep huge numbers of cattle; (3) mechanization of the animal-drawn plow cultivation, automation of sowing and harvesting (1831/1851 first reaper, McCormick), and motorization of transport vehicles extending the areas of agricultural cultivation far beyond the limits set by manual labor and horse drawn wagons which had restricted farm production until then.<sup>17</sup> All of this led to a rapid increase in food production (and overproduction). It also had an impact on cattle rearing and husbandry (e.g. artificial insemination since 1950; genetic engineering since 1986).

To use agriculture as a means of further proclaiming the gospel became a topic for Christian missions only as recently as 1928 when it was addressed at the meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that Christian missions previously ignored issues of land cultivation and farming. Beginning in the mid-sixth century, the monasteries that served as centers of Christian outreach throughout Europe needed to be self-contained in their supplies of food and building materials, and to avoid contact with the outside world to the extent possible.<sup>19</sup> While this policy was primarily born out of pastoral concern for the monks, it made monasteries – especially those of the Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan, and later the Jesuit orders – thriving hubs of agriculture and gardening in their respective regions, not only in Europe but in their overseas missions in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.<sup>20</sup>

The practice of the Moravian Church to send groups of brothers and sisters as one Christian colony into the missions (West Indies, India) assumed that these people would care for themselves by farming and manual work, something which later was also practiced by Hermannsburg missionaries in South Africa in 1854, at least for some time. Yet, this all had to do with self-sustainability, not with agricultural missions *per se*. Individual missionaries such as Robert Moffat (1795–1883) in South Africa, William B. Carey (1761–1834) and Samuel B. Fairbank (1824–1897) in India, and William N. Brewster in China (died 1916) – among others – did actually introduce new agricultural practices (e.g. fertilization, irrigation), tools (plows), fruits and vegetables. Moreover, the Basel Mission (founded in 1815) in appointing professional “agricultural officers” (since 1857) systematically engaged in agricultural research and cocoa-plantation work in Ghana.<sup>21</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century in at least 39 so called “industrial schools” run by mission societies agricultural subjects were taught, and some fifty agriculturally trained missionaries were working overseas.<sup>22</sup> These activities, however, sometimes met with opposition from those who held that the task of mission was “to save souls not to till the soil.”

Caring for the soil and improving farming, husbandry, and gardening were carried out in order to secure a reliable food supply and to fight starvation, especially in rural areas. As such, it was a means to help people survive and have life at the basic level, a concern which gained full momentum once the impact of urbanization and indus-

trialization became noticeable in the early twentieth century, turning rural areas increasingly into backward dwelling places of old, mainly poor, uneducated and neglected people. Once this became apparent the topic was considered by the IMC in 1928. Agricultural Missions Incorporated (AMI) in New York was established in 1930/1933, one of several missionary institutions founded by John R. Mott (1865–1955) which was theologically justified in proclaiming “the Gospel for all of life.” In 1979, in response to the ever increasing impoverishment of the rural periphery due to deprivation and exploitation by urban centers, AMI – now working via the ecumenical network of churches, (since 1973/1978 WCC Urban Rural Mission) – became an advocate for rural peoples’ movements and for providing critical feedback to churches. It thereby shifted its focus from merely agricultural concerns to seeking justice and supporting and defending the rights of rural people.<sup>23</sup>

As with medical missions, in agricultural missions, too, most recent developments have a tendency toward short-term stints of specially trained agricultural missionaries who in cooperation with local farmers tried to develop comprehensive, sustainable, and ecologically friendly methods of land cultivation, thereby advocating responsible stewardship of the earth in the name of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

### *Technology*

Technology as applied science has only very recently become the subject matter of missiological concern, namely in reflections on its appropriateness and suitability for majority world countries and the use of mass media, computers, and digital information.<sup>25</sup> In its less sophisticated varieties – hand printing presses, tools for carpentry and house construction, farming and sewing – technology was used long before as were the various means of communication, travel, and transportation.

The first who purposely employed natural sciences and state-of-the-art technology (e.g., astronomical devices, clocks, etc.) in the service of Christian mission were the Jesuit missionaries to China notably Johann Schreck (Terrentius, 1576–1638), Johann A. Schall von Bell (1592–1666), and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688).<sup>26</sup> Later Roman Catholic as well as Protestant missions were compelled to provide vocational training for converts once they realized that neophytes were often shunned and ostracized by their own families and communities. This meant providing an independent means of livelihood for new converts and led to mission societies building “industrial schools” run by specially trained instructors and engineers. In these institutions European-style manual skills and crafts were taught and trading companies were organized for the national and intercontinental marketing of the products they manufactured.<sup>27</sup> Technology transfer also took place in running mission hospitals (involving lab-technicians, x-ray machines, electrical power supply) and farms (well drilling, food processing) initially without being regarded as posing a missiological problem.<sup>28</sup> This changed markedly during the latter half of the twentieth century when the vicious circle of ever increasing technical sophistication, the rising costs of purchasing and maintaining equipment, growing dependency on cash capital and foreign technical support, and the negligible impact such efforts made in actually changing the living conditions of

the mass of people for the better began to be properly understood. To break the circle the unilateral top-down expert approach had to be reversed. Listening to the local people and assisting them in developing appliances appropriate to their needs and regions with local craftsmanship and with as much locally available materials as possible became necessary. This changed the technology transfer in the missionary enterprise from supplying material to a knowledge-based committed cooperative of creative people with technical skills who could help local communities invent and build appropriate low-tech devices such as solar cookers, energy efficient, smokeless stoves, and waterless latrines.<sup>29</sup> This not only enhanced the lives of many people, but was economically sound and ecologically responsible, and so was a prudent use of limited resources.

Mass communication technologies – including radio and television – have also played a role in the missionary enterprise. Radio (since 1920) and TV (since 1950) have been used for spreading the Good News to as broad an audience as possible, one, however, which stays and remains more or less anonymous as does the internet community. While these means have specific advantages in spreading the gospel to a highly individualized clientele it remains disputable whether they are indeed appropriate in furthering the cause of missions. To facilitate, coordinate, and evaluate initiatives by churches and Christian action groups, the ecumenical World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) was founded in 1968. With a constituency in some one hundred twenty nations nowadays, it also and increasingly addresses such issues as computer-based digital information access and manipulation.<sup>30</sup>

## Missiological Issues

Numerous missiological issues emerged in surveying the history of the use of medicine, agriculture, and technology in the missionary enterprise of which only a few can be dealt with here.

As has become obvious major adjustments to previously observed principles had to be made over time in all three disciplines. This was most notable in the latter half of the twentieth century when medical missions adopted the primary healthcare approach. Agricultural missions espoused a justice-seeking agenda in the support and defense of rights for rural people, and “appropriate technology” became the watchword for the assistance rendered respectively by Christian engineers and technicians. But this change in focus, which implied also consciously taking sides with the poor and disadvantaged, raising their consciousness and helping them to find justice and a dignified life through genuine participation, was criticized by church authorities and fundamentalist mission activists for being Marxist, communist, or socialist in origin and therefore compromising missions. Instead of siding with the poor and advocating their cause, it was held that professional experts should only assist in providing openings for proclaiming the gospel proper. Such *preparatio evangelii* – that is, the preparation for the reception of the message by people otherwise not listening – would be the only acceptable way in which medicine, agriculture, and technology could serve the missionary goal.

Arguments like these dominated the sometimes very passionate discussion for years. The different stances taken on the relationship between evangelism and social responsibilities resulted in the lamentable divide between the “evangelical” and “ecumenical” camps (1974 Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, LCWE). It was lamentable because by attaching labels the missiological struggle was stopped short and became substantially distorted.

The historical survey above showed that it was not ideology which made missionaries employ medicine, agriculture, and technology. Instead, it was the urge to do something for those to whom they were sent to proclaim the gospel. Having come to know that child mortality can be prevented, that the yield of crops can be raised, and safe drinking water provided, at least some missionaries sensed that they would contradict their message if they failed to share such vital knowledge with those unaware of it and in greatest need of it. Yet, their initial euphoric embrace of science as a means to spread the gospel in a tangible, demonstrative manner gradually gave way to a more sober appraisal in later years as the cultural and civilizing optimism waned and the limits and dilemmas of applied sciences and their economic impact became apparent. This called for a critical reassessment in light of the gospel and resulted in a refocus on “proclaiming good news to the poor . . . release to the captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind” and advocacy to “let the oppressed go free” (Lk. 4:18). This permitted missionaries to become involved sometimes in the political struggles of the grassroots communities they were working with. Simultaneously the refocusing also gave rise to a principal critique of the delusion that to solve the world’s problems ever more technology would be necessary. Missionaries, instead, called attention to the fact that any progress at the expense of life – human, biological, ecological – contradicts the gospel (see Mt. 12:20).

The above shows how missiological issues became more complex as the history of modern Christian missions unfolded. Utilizing medicine, agriculture, and technology is no longer simply a question of employing particular means for the good of people and for furthering the cause of mission. Having become aware of the ambiguities inherent in any science – applied or not – and having seen that every means can easily turn into an agency of exploitation when left to its own devices it becomes imperative for Christian missionaries to be mindful and articulate in order to guard against confusion or naive identification of these means with the gospel which, rather, has to critically inform the use of *any* means.

It is a fallacy to assume that to refrain from getting involved in “worldly” matters would protect the “spiritual” missionary goal of “saving souls” because this argument ignores the cultural and historical conditioning of *any* proclamation of the gospel, even if atrophied to a solitary act of speech. Such proclamation will always be delivered in a distinct language by people in particular circumstances and often to people in yet another situation. What is even more troubling is that language can also become a tool of manipulation and suppression, thus contradicting the message. Christian mission as a witness to God incarnate in Jesus Christ who proclaimed “the Kingdom of Heaven has come near” (Mt. 3:2) by not only talking about it but by actually healing the sick, feeding the hungry (Mk. 8:10) and advocating the cause of the neglected and marginalized, therefore, cannot ignore

the corporeality of salvation. Being cautioned that finally they have to give definite account for what they have or have not *done* “to one of the least of these” (Mt. 25:31–46) Christian missionaries have to abandon the idolatrous claim that their task is to care for disembodied “souls.” Instead, called to witness to God who has shown loving compassion for humans so that these have genuine life in abundance, missionaries are to proclaim the gospel by living among and sharing it with all people deprived of it. This will make them vulnerable. Yet only in this way is the Christian message authenticated.

## Notes

- 1 Latourette (1937–1943); Jongeneel (1995; 1997).
- 2 The original quote from the Roman poet Horace (first century BCE) was used by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his seminal essay on “What Is Enlightenment?” in *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 178, 516.
- 3 See Amundsen and Ferngren (1986: 40–64).
- 4 See Grundmann (2005: 22–37).
- 5 See the anatomical drawings of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the “Seven Books on the Structure of the Human Body” by Vesalius (1514–1564), and the discovery of the circulation of the blood in 1628 by William Harvey (1578–1657).
- 6 Just to mention Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), Robert Koch (1843–1910), and Sir Ronald Ross (1857–1932); see Ackerknecht (1982: 145–157; 2000).
- 7 Grundmann (2005: 65–71).
- 8 This phrase was used by Herbert Lankester when addressing participants at the International Student Missionary Conference in London, in January 1900; quoted from Walls (1982: 290).
- 9 American Tract Society (1900: vol. 2, 199).
- 10 For the actual figures see: Dennis (1902); Beach and Fahs (1925); Grundmann (2005: 150, 159). For an account of the variety of medical missions’ initiatives see Grundman (2005: 170–199). For initiatives in Asia and Africa see Hardiman (2006; 2008). For a particular kind of medical mission in Africa – a steamer hospital and dispensary – see Good (2004). For the aspect of medical training of indigenous personnel see Grundmann (1991: 731–733); Minden (1994); Grypma (2008).
- 11 Dengel (1945: 8–29); Grundmann (2005: 121–124).
- 12 For a general and most comprehensive survey see *Ecclesiae Instituta Valetudini Fovendae Toto Orbe Terrarum Index*, Rome: Pontificia Commissio de Apostolatu pro Valetudinis Administris 1986.
- 13 For the history of this important initiative see the report by its first director McGilvray (1981: 42–69; 1998); Gillian Paterson, “The CMC Story,” *Contact* 3–57, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/health-and-healing/contact-magazine>, accessed November 3, 2015. The acronym “CMC” stands for “Christian Medical Commission.”
- 14 Declaration of Alma Ata; see McGilvray (1981: 70–80); Litsios (2004: 1892).
- 15 See Kuhn *et al.* (2007).
- 16 For books on farming in England from the sixteenth to the twentieth century see Fussell (1978).
- 17 Mazoyer, Roudart, and Membrez (2006).

- 18 International Missionary Council (1939).
- 19 Rule of Benedict, Chapter 66 (Of the Porter of the Monastery), second part: "If it can be done, the monastery should be so situated that all the necessaries, such as water, the mill, the garden, are enclosed, and the various arts may be plied inside of the monastery, so that there may be no need for the monks to go about outside, because it is not good for their souls.." <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/rbeaad3.html#66>, accessed October 19, 2015
- 20 Knowledge (1979: esp. 64–77) (for Cistercians); Cushner (1982); Prieto (2011).
- 21 For more details see Dennis (1906: 510–515); Hill (1997: 161–176).
- 22 Dennis (1902: 107–112).
- 23 For further details see Rhoades (1975: 346–353) and <http://www.agriculturalmissions.org>, accessed October 19, 2015.
- 24 Price, Sherman, and Yarger (2006).
- 25 Lochhead (1997); Conway (1999); Roxborough (1999: 117–122); Clifford (2005: 71–82).
- 26 Brockey (2007).
- 27 For details on the entire topic see Dennis (1906: 95–127).
- 28 For case studies of how this looked in the Pacific region see Sivasundaram (2005). For how things were approached on the African continent, especially with regard to the social and physical sciences see Harries and Maxwell (2012).
- 29 Valuable sources are Darrow and Saxenian (2007); Shumacher (1999).
- 30 Arthur (1993; 1998); Bazin and Cottin (2004). The periodical of WACC *Media Development* has been published since 1980, replacing the earlier *Action Newsletter* begun in 1969.

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## CHAPTER 14

# Schools and Education in the Missionary Enterprise

Norman Etherington

The opening scene of the film version of C. S. Forester's *African Queen* (1951) encapsulates one popular perception of missionary education. An ineffectual Anglican missionary and his spinster sister struggle vainly to impose musical harmony on a chaotic chapel filled with unruly children. Another common image is captured in the Bollywood film, *Main Hoon Na* (2004), set at an exclusive school, whose original religious purpose is all but invisible amid the antics of privileged Indian youth. Yet another is the Australian film, *The Devil's Playground* (1976), which dwells on the sadomasochistic discipline imposed on the hapless boys preparing for the priesthood at a Catholic seminary. Beneath the exaggerated caricatures, each embodies a kernel of truth about mission-based education in the modern era. Much mission schooling in undeveloped countries began in informal settings, in a forest clearing, the missionary's house, or a simple chapel. Single women were a large and vital force in mission education. With the passage of time, large educational institutions emerged, some of which attracted students by their elite status rather than their programs of religious instruction. Punahou School in Hawaii, where the future United States president Barack Obama Barack Obama spent his high school years, had its equivalent in many other countries. Finally, it is important to realize that modern missions comprise much more than the evangelism of peoples previously unreached by the gospel. From the foundation of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1701, an important part of missionary society activity was providing for the religious needs of Europeans whose settlements were expanding into the Americas, Africa, and Australasia. Roman Catholic missions struggled simply to provide priests and schools for the huge Irish diaspora kicked off by the great famine of the 1840s. Educational work in Protestant denominations was driven by the emphasis on individual reading of the Bible spawned by the Reformation, which implied a literate laity guided by a well-educated clergy.

From the early nineteenth-century Catholics recognized that the position of the papacy and church hierarchy depended on the expansion of a trained and obedient clergy. Holding the line against Protestantism demanded a system of primary and secondary education that could compete with non-Catholic schools. Single women recruited to religious orders devoted to teaching proved as vital and necessary an ingredient in mission expansion as in the Protestant denominations.

Educational work associated with what were long called “missions to the heathen” proved the greatest challenge and underwent the most dramatic changes over time. When missionaries ventured among peoples beyond the reach of European colonial authority, education posed special challenges. Developing competence in local languages was a matter of first importance for all primary evangelists. Where the raising up of Bible-reading congregations was the aim, the question arose, in what language ought the Bibles to be written? Expediency indicated it would be easier to train local converts to preach and read in their own languages than to train whole populations to learn a foreign tongue. Translating the Bible into local languages meant that at least some missionaries must become skilled linguists. Societies that required their agents to have university degrees and a command of ancient languages had reasonable expectations that satisfactory translations would be prepared. However, many early missions recruited men from the pious laity for whom enthusiasm was the only qualification. William Carey, the first Baptist missionary to India, had been an apprentice cobbler. Soon after his arrival in Serampore he plunged into the work of translating the Bible into Bengali, at the same time as he strove to teach himself Greek and Hebrew. Inevitably mistakes occurred, both in the rendering of individual words and in theology, which embarrassed the mission and underscored the need for educated local collaborators (Landau 2005: 203). In the rare circumstances that mass conversions followed soon after the arrival of European missionaries – as in Polynesia – appropriate assistance sprang up almost immediately, enabling the printer-evangelist, William Ellis, speedily to turn out thousands of grammars and catechisms in the Tahitian language. In less fortunately situated fields, missionaries regarded the establishment of schools as the most efficient method of training up local translators and evangelists. The schools needed books written in indigenous languages. Thus the newly established American Zulu Mission in South Africa wrote home in 1837, “*A Printer here we do need most imperiously . . . The gospels of Matthew and Mark have been translated and need a thorough revision only to be ready. These we need very much as text books in preaching to the people and reading books in the schools*” (Champion 1837).

Establishing schools did not guarantee the attendance of pupils. Even in developed countries such as the United States and Britain the institution of compulsory schooling had to be accompanied by truancy inspectors. In regions where formal schooling had been previously unknown, the initial novelty of mission education soon wore off, and missionaries found themselves begging for students. Rarely did they succeed in enrolling adult men or women, who had other demands on their time. Inevitably attention focused on children, but even they required inducements. A concomitant problem was that mission schools generally combined secular with religious and moral instruction. Across much of southern Africa, marriages were cemented by exchanges of cattle or other valuable gifts presented to the father of the bride. Until well into the twentieth

century most missions condemned these exchanges as purchases of women; they were equally opposed to polygamous marriage, an even more widespread African practice. As the hostile attitudes of the missions became known, fathers withdrew their daughters from schools. Ironically, many missionaries who condemned the practice of exchanging gifts on the occasion of marriage used bribes of clothing and other material goods to acquire pupils for their schools.

Missionary work was always difficult among populations whose livelihood depended on ranging over large tracts of land to follow seasonal variations in vegetation and the distribution of game. In the long run their Christianization would come about through the informal preaching of individual converts who shared their mobile lives. Schools aimed at training up such evangelists, but no one ever devised a mobile school to cater for children on the move. The controversial practice devised by missions to Native Americans, Inuit, and the Aboriginal people of Australia was to remove children from their parents to residential schools on mission land or to distant boarding schools.

In British India, where educational institutions had existed for millennia, mission schools encountered quite different but equally troublesome obstacles. The imperial power's need to fill the poorly paid lower levels of the colonial service with indigenous employees created a huge demand for schooling, especially in the English language. However the mission schools' insistence that all students learn the basic precepts of Christianity raised the hackles of Muslim and Hindu parents. So did their general contempt for caste distinctions.

Although mission schooling arose in the first instance as a practical response to the problem of training children up to be agents of conversion and ministers to their own people, it soon became embroiled in an arid nineteenth-century controversy over whether civilization must precede Christianization. Pointing to the very slow progress of conversion in many mission fields, critics argued that the ground must be prepared by introducing savage and barbarous peoples to industrial arts, commerce and law (Porter 2004: 91–115). To a considerable extent the controversy reflected recent developments in European thinking about colonialism and race. No disinterested historian of Christianity would have argued that the conversion of ancient Ireland, the Scottish Highlands, Scandinavia or Ethiopia required the prior introduction of civilization as it had been known on the Mediterranean littoral. The real issue was that missionaries were proving to be a thorn in the side for settlers and administrators as colonialism advanced into new regions. In the eighteenth century converts made by Jesuit missionaries in Paraguay and adjacent territories had put up a spirited resistance to the aggression of slave traders and colonists, leading eventually to the destruction of the mission and the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Americas in 1767. Similar conflicts cropped up in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands in the 1820s when whalers, seamen, and traders complained that missionaries had interfered with their access to Polynesian women. In the United States Christianization of Native Americans was viewed as an obstacle to the expansion of white farming by politicians intent on the wholesale removal of all Indians to wastelands beyond the Mississippi River. By the mid-1830s controversy over mission operations had spread to New Zealand, where the promoters of the New Zealand Company argued that missionaries had actually retarded the progress of the Maori people through a misguided policy of opposing white settlement. In South Africa, settlers charged

missions with having done little or nothing to Christianize Africans, while their lobbying activities in Britain had endangered colonists' lives and property (Lester 2001). Everywhere, the advocates of white settlement and colonization pushed the argument that indigenous people should be introduced to steady habits of labor and industry before being taught the allegedly difficult and sacred truths of the Christian religion.

Most sincere and historically informed churchmen scoffed at the idea that Christianity was too difficult to be communicated to uneducated people. On the other hand, they were at a loss to explain the snail's-pace progress of conversion in so many mission fields. Not until well into the twentieth century would it be understood that, in the absence of coercion or close association with traditional leaders, the spread of Christianity depended not on missionary strategies but on the enthusiasm of indigenous evangelists – official or unofficial. Under pressure from the advocates of “civilization first,” mission schools began experimenting with practical training. There were some precedents in Moravian missions established in the late eighteenth century, even though their object in training mission residents in practical arts had been self-support rather than education for its own sake. An educational village developed by a Presbyterian for Cherokees in 1804 provided another model. Other noteworthy experiments were conducted by Anglican missionaries: William Duncan at Metlakatla, British Columbia, and Matthew Hale at Poonindie, South Australia. These were, in the first instance, not simply the result of ideology. Indigenous people who found the advantages of European technology easier to grasp than the benefits of abstract learning often welcomed institutions that promised improvements in agricultural productivity, blacksmithing, and wagon making.

However, such institutions required expensive expertise and equipment without delivering any visible improvement in rates of religious conversion. Moreover, most missionary societies in the mid-Victorian era remained committed to training indigenous clergy capable of delivering sound theological instruction to their people. From this point of view, a model farm or manual arts school was no substitute for a seminary. Protestant denominations hoped as well to train wives suitable as helpmeets for the emerging local clergy. Thus the schooling of girls proceeded side by side with boys in a pattern quite different from that which had characterized the development of education in Europe. The ideal was exemplified by the aspirations of the first advanced schools founded by the American Board mission in Natal, South Africa. Soon after the establishment of Amanzimtoti theological seminary for men, the mission successfully argued for an equivalent institution for women, modeled on Mount Holyoke College for Women in Massachusetts, noted for the number of its graduates who became missionary wives. Although the number and quality of men enrolling for theological training remained disappointingly small, there was a steady increase in the number of students enrolling for advanced instruction in secular subjects. By the 1870s Methodist missionaries were complaining that members of their congregations chose to send their children to the American boarding schools rather than the Methodist schools which offered little beyond primary education. As a result of demand from parents and interdenominational competition, the number of advanced schools proliferated. Over the ensuing century Adams College and Inanda Seminary – as the American boarding schools became known – became important training grounds for a South African elite which played an important role in challenging white supremacy. Similar processes of development saw

the emergence of comparable institutions elsewhere in South Africa, most notably at Lutheran Mapumulo, Presbyterian Lovedale and the Anglican Zonnenbloem College. Comparable developments can be observed in widely separated parts of the world. Dartmouth College in America originated as a institution devoted to the training of Native Americans though that aspect of its education work shrank drastically over time. Calabar College, founded by abolitionist Baptists in Jamaica, originated as a theological training institute. The list could be greatly expanded; it testifies both to the agency of local people in shaping the educational institutions they wanted, and to the worldwide efficacy of missions in the development of secondary and higher education.

Not everyone welcomed the production of highly educated indigenous elites. An influential new school of missiological thinking that arose in the 1860s advocated the establishment of “faith missions” (Porter 2005: 54–56). Many of the enthusiasts for this model embraced pre-millennial expectations of the Second Coming of Christ. Elaborate schemes of education would count for nothing in the face of this awesome event. The most pressing issue was the biblical injunction that the gospel should be preached to all the peoples of the earth in advance of Christ’s return. Faith missions emphasized simplicity and economy. Itinerant preaching by teams of clergy, lay preachers and indigenous evangelists was seen as the key to success. New enterprises, like J. Hudson’s China Inland Mission, sought out fields remote from European colonies and other missions. The aim was Christianity without civilization – a dramatic turnabout.

Although influential in their time, faith missions made little lasting impact on educational practice. Informal networks of self-motivated indigenous evangelists proved much more effective in Christianization. Far more damaging were the secular critics of missionary education who argued that industrial schools provided more appropriate training for primitive peoples than education in the liberal arts and sciences. The argument was put in a crudely racist form by the English essayist, W. Winwood Reade, in *Savage Africa* (1863), which recounted his experiences during five months of travel in West Africa. Reade’s thesis was that Africans could not be converted to Christianity because they lacked the ability to understand its fundamental concepts. He expanded on his arguments in a highly charged address to the Anthropological Society of London in 1865, which sparked off a long-running controversy. From his observations of the African Christians who had accompanied him as servants, Reade concluded that “every Christian negress was a prostitute, and that every Christian negro was a thief.” In that same year Governor Edward Eyre’s brutal suppression of an uprising in Jamaica demonstrated that a large and influential body of opinion shared Reade’s racist opinions. Intellectuals of the stature of Thomas Carlyle and Charles Kingsley rushed to Eyre’s defense, arguing that the abolition of slavery had been a failed experiment based on a false belief in human equality. Thirty years later, Kingsley’s niece, Mary Kingsley, extended Reade’s critique of West African mission education. Her widely praised *Travels in West Africa* (1897) argued that the more mission education Africans received, the worse they functioned as laborers. The “Kruman” with little education was “as fine a ship-and-beachman as you could reasonably wish for, but no good for plantation work.” The “Accra” trained by Basel missionaries was “a very fair artisan, cook, or clerk, but also no good for plantation work, except as an overseer.” And the Christian Sierra Leonean was “a poor artisan, an excellent clerk, or subordinate official, but so unreliable in the matter

of honesty as to be nearly reliable to swindle any employer” (Kingsley 1897: 645, 657). As Kingsley saw it, the mission educator’s fundamental mistake was a failure “to recognize the difference between the African and themselves as being a difference not of degree but of kind . . . the mental difference between the two races is very similar to that between men and women among ourselves.”

Such arguments provided a cloak of intellectual respectability for more blatantly self-interested critics of mission schools. These grew more numerous as European nations engaged in an unprecedented orgy of empire building. The American and Russian continental empires expanded their borders from sea to sea, swallowing up the territories previously held by herding and hunting peoples. France emerged from defeat in the Napoleonic Wars to become a renewed player in global politics. Its invasion of Algeria in 1830 was followed by the acquisition of island groups in the Southwest Pacific and Indochina. Advances in the production and transportation of crops opened new territories to settlement by immigrant white farmers in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Great Plains of North America. Finally, in the 1880s and 1890s most of Africa was parceled out among rival European powers in the notorious Scramble for Africa. These dramatic events impacted on mission education in a variety of ways, depending on the circumstances of individual missions. Independent chiefs and kings lost most of their power to dictate the terms on which schools would be operated. Where white settlers and resource companies wielded influence, mission schools faced great pressure to train the kinds of compliant workers and servants employers wanted. French, Belgian and Portuguese colonial expansion, combined with the emigration of millions of Irish and Italian peasants to the Americas and Australasia gave a powerful impetus to the expansion of Roman Catholic missions and educational institutions. Seminaries were needed to train priests. Nuns and lay brothers supplied the foot soldiers to staff Catholic schools, often recruited from Europe’s landless peasantries and possessing minimal teaching credentials. The educational effort seemed especially urgent in countries with large Protestant populations, where Catholics feared that their children might be lost to godless public school systems or rival denominational schools. The numerous former seminaries, monasteries, and schools that can still be seen in the newly settled countries attest to the stupendous efforts made by the Roman Catholic Church during the colonial era.

Dealing with the colonial state posed the greatest challenges for mission education. The colonial powers showed little interest in promoting evangelization for its own sake, but looked to missions as a cheap means of providing the schooling required for economic development. Without church schools, there would have been very little education at all in many colonies. Lord Hailey estimated in 1838 that something like 90% of all formal education was in the hands of missionary bodies. In territories with few European settlers, colonial administrations relied on the church to train the poorly paid lower ranks of the civil service. They wanted clerks capable of keeping account books and who could read and write the language of the ruling power. Similar educated public servants were wanted in India, and mission schools supplied a great many of them. Where settlers were numerous, however, it was precisely that kind of educational product that was scorned. South African mining magnate Cecil Rhodes lamented that mission schools “seemed destined to produce a nation of preachers and editors” (Hailey

1957: 1143). Rhodes' complaint combined a number of criticisms. Preachers and editors had proved to be potent forces for political change in European history; they had the potential to play the same subversive role in new colonies. Second, Rhodes was one of the key figures who had shaped the cheap labor system that supplied the locked compounds for workers on South Africa's mining fields. Keeping migrant workers divided by language and ignorant of means to defend their rights were crucial instruments in the mine owners' strategy of holding down real wages. Third, Rhodes functioned as an elected politician as well as a capitalist. His power base was composed of white male voters who feared competition from African workers. They opposed any kind of education that would create African rivals in the job market.

Most missionary societies would have preferred independence for their schools. However, in many parts of the newly colonized world financial need and coercive legislation bound mission education more and more tightly to the state. South Africa provides a revealing illustration of the dynamics of the system as it developed over the course of a century. State aid to religious institutions was an established feature of the British system of education. In the 1840s the colonial government of Natal had made generous grants of land to mission societies of several different denominations. In the following decade the societies responded positively to offers of help from a new governor, Sir George Grey, whose experience in New Zealand led him to believe that the best way to make Africans into loyal, productive colonial subjects, was to transform them into independent farmers settled on small allotments. As part of his scheme, in 1857, he offered grants to mission schools that agreed to teach the skills needed by small farmers. The vision chimed in nicely with the missions' objectives as well as the opinions expressed by African Christian communities. The mission societies' aim of raising up self-supporting congregations seemed likely to be advanced by Grey's scheme of agricultural development. African converts had frequently expressed the wish that their children should be taught English, arithmetic, and other practical skills that would enable them to flourish economically. A little taste of government assistance soon turned into an addiction. Some mission operations came to depend on the grants for the support of their agents. They could hardly refuse to comply with the requirements imposed by government inspectors. A new chapter in the story opened with the advent of self-government for white settlers in British South Africa. Restrictions on voting rights concentrated political power in the hands of white males, who quickly moved to legislate for the kind of African educational system they wanted: schools that taught simple manual skills. Grants would not be extended to support other kinds of education. Missionaries and African Christians saw George Grey's vision of educated peasant proprietors vanish, as laws were passed to prevent Africans from buying, renting, or holding land as individuals. Religious institutions that wished to continue advanced education for Africans would have to do so at their own expense. To their credit, many societies continued to operate elite schools in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, with the advent of *apartheid* the state acted to take over mission schooling under the provisions of the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

Although the pattern of progress from state assistance to state control is seen in extreme form in South Africa, similar developments occurred wherever white people controlled the education of subordinated communities. Churches and missionary societies were by no means immune to the appeal of the racial ideologies that provided

intellectual credibility for these systems. The southern states of America proved to be a particularly fertile source of educational ideas for the colonized world. In the aftermath of the Civil War advocates of white supremacy gradually reasserted control of the politics. They imposed segregation on the public schools, which the US Supreme Court held to be lawful in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896. Some black Christian educators, such as Booker T. Washington, accepted the new situation, while advocating raising black standards of living through vocational training. White and black Christians in many other parts of the world applauded Washington's Tuskegee Institute as a solution to the problem of providing education suitable for a racially divided political order. The Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education of the 1920s promoted vocational curricula for Africans everywhere, commending the Church of Scotland schools in Kenya for its philosophy that "only through working with the hands could the vices of idleness and ignorance be overcome" (Githii 1993: 1–2, 106). In contrast, Lord Hailey, author of an influential survey of African affairs in the 1930s recorded his amusement that "a large school in the Gold Coast could in 1938 appeal for assistance in England on the ground that it performed a Greek play every year and 'rendered the odes in the original Greek'" (Hailey 1957: 1244–1245). One way of accommodating the new trend in educational philosophy was for missions to turn to anthropology, devising curricula adapted to the supposed special cultural requirements of Africans, without conceding that they possessed racially inferior capacities. Influential missiological theorists such as Henri-Alexandre Junod, Placide Tempels, Edwin Smith, and Charles F. Andrews sought to understand indigenous societies on their own terms and to provide education that acknowledged traditional values.

Everywhere the colonial state favored vocationally oriented education when providing assistance to church schools. However, in the absence of white settlers and companies seeking help in the labor market, it was easier to sustain programs of secondary and higher education. Indian schools did receive encouragement from the British government to undertake vocational training, but without any directive to abandon other kinds of education (Kumar 1996: 82–84). The presence of large numbers of parents willing to pay substantial fees for their children's education also assisted church schools in keeping up standards, as was the case in East, South, and Southeast Asia. An additional factor at work in British India was the competition missionaries provoked among rival faiths. Muslims and Hindus launched their own schools as way of curbing the appeal of Christianity. However, their resistance to the education of women meant that elite education for girls remained largely the preserve of the Christian schools. As early as 1820 girls constituted a third of all pupils in church schools in the city of Madras (Chennai); by 1838 they made up almost half (Grafe 1990: 203–205). In the southern states of India, where Christianity was well entrenched, they achieved remarkable success, with female literacy rates of 31% being recorded by 1971.

There were some important distinctions among colonial regimes in their treatment of Christian education. From the early decades of the nineteenth-century British colonial governments showed no favoritism toward particular denominations. Anglicans, Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews were treated equally in the dispensation of state assistance. The only important exception was in northern Nigeria and the northern Sudan, where the British barred Christian missionaries for fear of antagonizing their Muslim subjects.



The French state favored Catholics under the July Monarchy and the Second Empire. As a result the London Missionary Society, which had made significant progress in Tahiti and on the Island of Madagascar, found its operations restricted after French annexation. French policy shifted again after the institution of the Third Republic in 1870. Anti-clericalism led to a push for the creation of state-run schools in much of the French colonial empire. An important shift occurred after Belgium assumed administration of the Congo in 1907; while Protestant schools were tolerated, the state clearly favored Catholic missions. A similar policy was pursued by the revived twentieth-century Portuguese Empire. In the United States and its territories, the constitutional separation of church and state precluded direct assistance to specific denominations (though significant tax exemptions were granted). This spurred the Catholic school system to extraordinary efforts, and, in the wake of the Supreme Court's quashing of segregated schooling in 1954, led to significant growth in religious schools.

By the 1960s, colonial regimes were in retreat across the globe. Even though many of the successor regimes nurtured a suspicion of missionaries, the new regimes could hardly dispense with religious schools. Without them the state would have had to lavish large amounts of scarce resources on education. Besides, a great many of the power elite in postcolonial regimes were themselves products of religious schools, including, among others: Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Kenya, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Thus missionary education survived the transition to independence and in many places flourishes as never before. In certain places specific denomination have experienced persecution, most notably Jehovah's Witnesses in parts of central Africa and Christians of all stripes in Indonesia and China. Generally speaking, however, church schools have benefited from the ending of colonial rule. They are no longer tainted by association with the ruling regimes and in many places have undergone internal processes of indigenization. In South Africa the transition from apartheid to democratic rule in South Africa destroyed the iniquitous system of Bantu Education and opened the way for the renewal of church-sponsored education, foreign mission personnel and foreign aid. Right across the globe the Roman Catholic Church faces challenges in supplying parishes with clergy and parochial schools with teachers. The supply of single men and women to religious orders collapsed in Europe due to processes of urbanization and a decline in birth rates.

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# Conversion, Converts, and National Identity

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

The expression “conversion,” when used in religious contexts, normally relates to human experiences and decisions leading to change and transformation with respect to ontological allegiance. Such changes in religious commitment and allegiance have implications for individual and communal identities and the nature of eschatological hope. The hope of blissful existence after this life whether in heaven, ancestral worlds or in anticipation of favorable karma is usually part of the reasons for embracing new religious ideas and lifestyles. Religious conversion thus centers on awareness of and response to a reality that transcends human beings and their world, whether the direction of transcendence is beyond, within or both (Hick 1989: 3). The Latin *convertere* from which the expression is derived implies revolving or turning around in order to take a different course or direction, say in life or a career. Conversion therefore relates to changes in religious identity, allegiance, mood, emotion, and behavior. Thus converts are those who through religious change share in particular experiences and sometimes congregate as communities of faith. Their religious identities may be grounded in a process involving regret (*metamelomai*) and confession of sin that issue in change of mind through repentance (*metanoia*) in a quest for soteriological fulfillment. These processes are not standard in all religious traditions but minimally religious conversions usually involve the adoption of new forms of piety and allegiance towards supernatural entities.

The soteriological fulfillment accompanying conversion may be said to have taken place when converts find meaning or are fully connected to the proper human and transcendent sources of their being. With that understanding, conversion could refer either to an external act of religious change such as joining a new religious community, or the adoption new belief systems (Walls 2007: 1–12). The reference to community is important because it is through conversion that people acquire new identities as converts. A

religious community is brought together because of shared religious experiences and beliefs. Religious affiliation can also result from biological descent or ancestry as we find in the history of biblical Israel and countries that have been declared Islamic republics. In fifteenth-century Africa some tribal chiefs resisted missionary Christianity because the adoption of the new faith was seen as a distortion of African religio-cultural values and identities. In its modern democratic systems, there have been attempts to declare nations as “Christian” such as under Frederick Chiluba in Zambia but these attempts have been largely unsuccessful although the countries concerned remain Christian in terms of numbers actively professing the faith. This entry focuses on the most basic or elemental explanations of religious conversion as understood within Christianity, especially of the conservative evangelical kind and here we include Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity for convenience. We consider what conservative evangelical conversion means for world Christianity, especially within the context of the shift of the demographic center of the faith from its former heartlands in the north to its new centers of influence in the global South and East – Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

## Conversion, Converts, and Community

Ardent exponents of religious conversion within the last century have included William James and Lewis R. Rambo with several others in between the two (James 1902; Rambo 1993). According to William James conversion meant that religious ideas previously peripheral in a person’s consciousness took central stage and religion became the habitual center of the person’s energy (James 1902: 196). He took a decidedly Christian approach to his psychology of conversion. Thus conversion for James involved a process of being “twice born,” which meant, “to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance”; for through that sudden or gradual process, he noted, “a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities” (James 1902: 189). In religious conversion, he averred: “the personality is changed” and the “man is born anew” and “an altogether new level of spiritual vitality is attained” with the converted demonstrating “new energies and endurances” (James 1902: 241). James disagreed with mind–body dichotomies that deny that religious experience could involve physical sensations (James 1902: 485).

In spite of his contribution to our understanding of Christian conversion from the perspective of psychology, James was criticized for limiting conversion to individual experiences. Thus those who have observed the fruits of religious experience in contemporary religious movements criticize him for his blindness to the powerful ways in which communal worship can mediate religious experience. We will see this as an important element, especially in Pentecostal/charismatic worship in which the graces of the Spirit are expected to manifest in ways that make worship a communal and participatory affair. In Pentecostal worship, the convert’s new identity includes experiences of the Spirit and the expression of his manifestations such as the ability to pray in tongues or prophesy. At worship, charisma is democratized, and person functions in his or her grace to make the church charismatically functional. In this vein Paul wrote to the Colossians: “Let the

word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). The point is that conversion to faith in charismatic Christianity is a spiritual reality that takes place within communities of interpretation. The importance of community to the process of conversion is present in the work of Lewis R. Rambo who refers to the phenomenon as a progressive, interactive process that has consequences in the community. That means conversion need not always be seen as a single event, “but an evolving process in which the totality of life is transformed” (Rambo 1993: 4).

In the Christian context generally, which is the focus of our discussion, conversion and converts stem out of what Kenneth Latourette referred to as the spread of the influence of Jesus Christ. This is a view that Andrew Walls develops in an essay on the expansion of Christianity. This influence of Jesus, the source of Christian expansion according to Latourette, can be measured first through the spread of the faith to particular areas; second, through the emergence of new Christian religious communities; and third, through the effect of Christianity on humanity (Walls 2002: 9). On the influence of Christ Andrew Walls points out elsewhere that conversion represents the specifically Christian understanding of the response to God’s saving activity in Christ (Walls 2007: 2). This saving activity has implications for ethics and morality among those Christian converts on whose lives God in Christ exercises his influence. For as Walls notes, the initial sign of the expansion of the influence of Christ is “the presence of a community of people who willingly bear his name, an ‘Israel’ that maintains his worship” (Walls 2002: 10). Biblically, those who believe in Christ are described in the First Epistle of Peter as having been “called out of darkness into the wonderful light of God.” Subsequently they join a new community of believers as “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,” and acquire a new *national* identity as “people belonging to God” (1 Pet. 2:9). They constitute a new nation not necessarily in terms of a physical country under a single human government but a new Israel in terms of the covenant initiated through Abraham and brought to fruition in Christ.

## Conversion in History

For centuries in the Latin West, conversion implied responding to God through the adoption of a monastic life which essentially meant turning one’s back to the world with its materialistic orientation. Following the Reformation, conversion was personalized as an experiential matter. Thus an important word that captured conversion in post-Reformation Protestant thought was *regeneration*. Regeneration took place through justification by faith in Christ and set the believer on the road to a holy life or a process of sanctification. Its ultimate end was salvation with eschatological connotations of life with Jesus Christ in his glory after death. In the Book of Revelation those who appear in the presence of God are “saints,” implying a people made holy and whose holiness was acquired because they had “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14). Christian converts became members of the Church Militant, and together they have a new *national* identity as citizens of heaven. When life came to an end were sure to join the saints above, the Church Triumphant.

These biblical thoughts were upheld in the history of world evangelization that began with the sixteenth-century European Renaissance and came full circle with the Reformation. The sources of evangelical conversion were simultaneously rooted in the various versions of European Pietism and other traditions of English and North American Puritanism. We speak here about movements that emphasized the evangelical gospel of justification by grace through faith that opened the door to a life of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Thus David Bebbington in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* identified four special marks of evangelical religion. First, "conversionism," the belief that lives needed to be changed; second, "activism," the expression of the gospel in effort; third, "Biblicism," emphasis on the authority of the Bible and its sufficiency in the governance of Christian life; and fourth, "crucicentrism," the emphasis on the cross of Christ as the center of salvation (Bebbington 1989: 3–4). The process of conversion itself and the transformation of people into saints was a theological process executed by the Holy Spirit. The idea of Spirit-baptism subsequent to conversion became a doctrinal issue only at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Pentecostal movement started coming to attention as a third force in world Christianity following Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestantism.

The missionary societies that evangelized the global South were mostly products of the Reformation. Since the sixteenth century the missionary movement has contributed to the expansion of Christianity into the Americas, Asia, and Africa and since then the faith has gone beyond Western Christendom to gain roots in other cultures (Shenk 2007: 37). Conversion or the influence of Christ in these other cultures, as we note later, meant in principle a turning away from traditional gods and ancestral religious practices to serve the living God who had revealed himself in Jesus Christ. In most of these non-Western contexts Christianity spread through formal Western education because mainline Protestantism was a very intellectual movement. It is precisely because of the inseparable relationship between Christianity and formal education that many Muslim communities failed to take their children to school. They feared that they were going to enter school as Muslims but to complete it as Christian converts. In West, East and Central Africa Christianity gained far more converts because of its colonial connections than it had prior to colonization (Boahen 1987: 104). The Reformation made people aware of themselves as sinners. The evangelical message as preached through the Methodists, Moravians, Calvinists, Dissenters and others, had slightly different understandings of conversion but the bottom line was the call to new life in Christ. Moravian and later Methodist conversions for example, were characterized by charismatic enthusiasm and an insistence on personal and communal sanctification. Thus the characteristic feature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelicalism in the North Atlantic regions were claims to experiences of new birth as the beginning of a new life in Christ.

## Conversion and Evangelicalism

Human quests for meaning, feelings and situations of alienation are critical to the understanding of conversion as an evangelical Christian phenomenon. The nature of

conversion may be dependent on a variety of factors including the socio-cultural and religious contexts in which it occurs. Whereas in Islam conversion requires the confession of the *Shahadah*, “there is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet,” in conservative evangelicalism as propagated through missionary work, it required the acceptance of a person, Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior. Thus regeneration for example meant both a transition from nominal Christianity, which came to characterize main-line Protestantism, to a new life of commitment and exuberance in Christ or a complete turnaround to receive him as Lord and Savior for the first time. The expression ‘born again,’ which occurs in the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3, became for most conservative evangelical Christians the defining expression for regeneration and John Wesley used it in his sermon on the circumcision of the heart. In the eighteenth century, Wesley himself had adopted certain experiential and radical principles of faith in response to what he perceived as the institutionalized and routine forms of Christianity in the Church of England. Although as an evangelical movement Methodism was formed only after Wesley’s death, his early eighteenth-century conversion experience suggests a radical break with the past and the adoption of a new life in Christ.

The emphasis on the born-again experience became an indictment on the Church of England’s routine processes of Christian incorporation through infant baptism and adult confirmation. Evangelical Christians understood Jesus’ use of the wind metaphor (Jn. 3:8) to mean that one cannot be a Christian without the born-again experience, even if one goes to church regularly. The argument is that Nicodemus was an important Jewish religious leader who was perhaps adept at the Mosaic Law and yet Jesus required him to go through the experience of new birth when he came under the cover of darkness in search of deeper and experiential religious truth. In our day conversion could simultaneously imply transformation and movement from one form of the same faith to another, such as from Catholicism to Protestantism. The most modern ardent proponents of conversion as regeneration or new birth, especially in the twentieth century, have been Western conservative evangelicals like world-crusading Evangelist Billy Graham of the USA and the Church of England clergyman and scholar, John Stott. They have both influenced world Christianity in more ways than one. Graham did so through his evangelistic crusades and Stott through his writings and work through the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization founded in 1974.

## **Biblical Conversion**

In the Christian context generally, conversion is historically rooted in a certain reading of Scripture that theologically defines Christian mission. God declared his intention that through Abraham and his descendants, all nations on earth were to be blessed. The Old Testament encounter between Abram and Yahweh led Abram to abandon or turn away from his ancestral gods and adopt Yahwistic practices with significant shifts in his life including circumcision and change of name to Abraham. Although this covenantal process is not described as conversion, Christopher Wright

rightly points out that some of its key elements – forsaking, trusting, obeying, and following – are already signaled in the narrative. An important running theme of conversion as understood from the perspective of the Old Testament is what Wright refers to as the “radical displacement of all other gods.” The nations that meet Yahweh in Zion no longer walk in the name of their own gods (Mic. 4:1–5) and act with clear ethical intent because the Lord teaches them his ways and they ‘walk’ in his paths” (Isa. 2:3).

St. Paul picks up the theme of conversion as turning from other gods when he describes the Christians of Thessalonica as those who have “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:9–10). In the New Testament therefore conversion is understood to involve the recognition of Jesus Christ as God’s ultimate revelation to the world. “The word is near you,” Paul writes. “It is in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of God we are proclaiming; that if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:8–10). Ultimately for conservative evangelical Christians there is a compelling call to obey what has been termed the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18–20). Here Jesus, having risen from the grave, was revealed to his disciples and commissioned them to disciple the nations and to baptize those who believe the message in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In non-Western contexts, becoming a disciple meant abandoning one’s ancestral religion in favor of allegiance to Christ. In the process, the old gods were often demonized.

An important New Testament justification for the sort of conversion advocated through conservative evangelical Christianity is the Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11–32. It offers a classic model of conversion that occurs through crisis leading to transformation and return. In the parable a father had two sons and the younger took a misguided decision by allowing his personal will to override that of his father and traditional customary practice. Customary practice here refers to human codes of behavior that bind people to communities. The boy suffered for his decision to disengage with his heritage. The proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back for him was being denied food meant for pigs during his wandering away from his community. The home that he gave up symbolized security, warmth, restraint, control, and guidance. Having received his share of the family estate prematurely, the boy “went into a distant country” and there “squandered” his resources in “dissolute living” as the parable captures it. Leaving home separated him from parental covering, moderation, guidance, and community support, so that his resources were squandered. When he had spent everything, we are told, a severe famine took place throughout that country and he began to be in need (Lk. 15:13–14).

The intention to convert appears at a turning point in the narrative:

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. (vss. 14–16)



Given that eating pork was tabooed in Jewish society, being denied even food fed to pigs meant descent into subhuman realms. The young man's predicament was total because not only was he disconnected from the father's love but also his very national identity as a Jew had been compromised. The situation called for a radical change of mind and heart and yet also offered hope. So there was the turning point where he first made a decision to repent, return, and confess. In other words, he took personal responsibility. The son did not stop there at the point of decision and regret, for he translated intention into action by actually returning. This was a process that culminated in full restoration. The crisis in a far country away from home is what led the youth to "come to his senses" (vss. 17) and make the decision to return (vs. 18–20). The reward of the self-awareness, return, and confession was a process of cleansing, restoration, and reconciliation that involved the community symbolized in the story by the celebration in which the household participated (Lk. 15:22–24).

The story itself was instigated by the attitude of traditional religious authorities who found the warm and welcoming approach of Jesus to sinners repulsive (Lk. 15:1–3). The elder brother represented that sort of attitude. When he had to explain his actions to his elder son the father compared the process of conversion to "loss and recovery" and "death and resurrection." The parable thus contains the elements of human behavior that defines conversion in the conservative evangelical heritage. It is usually triggered by the crisis of sin resulting from misapplication of the human will and of resources, potential and opportunity. The result is suffering, and disconnection from one's ontological source of being, leading to the quest for fulfillment and restoration.

## Conversion and Pentecostal/Charismatic Identity

Pentecostalism has now been "denominationalized" and this because of its emphases on the born-again and Spirit baptism experiences as inseparable in the making of a genuine Christian. The transition from orthodoxy to Pentecostalism almost always invariably involved a conflict between a religiosity centered on the objectivity of dogma, in which faith consists of formal, conscious, and rational acceptance of determined beliefs or doctrines, and a religiosity which gives primacy to the subjective experience of God, in which faith is a response to a kind of possession of one's being by the divine (Sepúlveda 1992: 95). Such radical religious experience leads to commitment and effective participation. Effective participation in pneumatic movements involves just such an act that sets the believer apart in some way from the larger social context, cuts him off from past associations, identifies him with other participants in the movement, and provides high motivation for changed behavior (Gerlach and Hine 1968: 32). Personal conversion and Spirit baptism therefore constitutes "bridge-burning" and power-generating" acts that constitute for Pentecostals highly motivating religious experiences that both generate and sustain religious commitment (Gerlach and Hine 1968: 32).

Ordinary members of Pentecostal/charismatic movements narrate testimonies of conversion that resulted from dreams, visions and other such media of communication from the supernatural realm of existence. What is happening in Pentecostalism is only the practical outworking of something that is not unfamiliar in phenomenol-

ogy of religion. Joachim Wach explained that religious experience – whether personal or communal – does not preclude the possibility that there may be divine revelation, which is incorporated into the experience (Wach 1958: 28). Religious experience has a quality and this manifests in a “strong urge not only to share but invite others to see and hear as one has seen and heard” (Wach 1958: 60). The electronic media have become important sources of religious activity and helped to reshape the nature of world Christianity. The print and electronic media therefore play important roles in the formation of religious identity and their resources are used to proclaim the truth, mobilize the masses, protect the faithful and lay down the gauntlet to non-believers (Pradip 2005: 4). In our high-tech world, television and radio programs address anonymous viewers and listeners, asking them to participate in televised and radioed events. Modern media democratizes access to the sacred, the quest for religious fulfillment and salvation or whatever rewards are expected from encounters with the power of the word and Spirit.

## Conversion, Christendom, and National Identity

If we trace the origin of the Christian Church from the Acts of the Apostles then the community we encounter there was one whose composition and culture were Jewish. Judaism was part of the national identity of the Jews and with the inception of Christianity, this remained so. In other words there was a close connection between the early church and the national identity of the Jews. Their priorities and concerns were thoroughly Jewish, as Walls explains. The two disciples who encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus explained their disillusionment that the one whom they had hoped would be Israel’s deliverer had been crucified (Walls 2007: 3). The disciples both prior to and after Pentecost also understood God’s salvation work in Christ in Jewish terms. Salvation for them was “unintelligible without the salvation of the nation.” Thus prior to Pentecost their question to Jesus was this: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). What had been overlooked in the expression of these concerns was the fact that right from the time of John the Baptist, the new era had decoupled salvation from national identity. The forerunner to the Christ had stated emphatically that entry into the kingdom was no longer going to depend on Abrahamic ancestry. Rather it was going to depend on personal repentance and the bearing of fruits signifying such change in the lives of people both Jew and Gentile.

At Pentecost the decoupling of salvation from Jewish identity was confirmed when people came from across the globe to benefit from the blessing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). In response to the query of the crowd regarding how they were expected to respond to the events of Pentecost, Peter was clear that people were expected to repent, be baptized, and receive forgiveness of sins. For according to Peter the promise was for the Jews and those who were afar off (Acts 2:38–39). The relationship between what happened at Pentecost and the Great Commission is not hard to see as they both had something to do with God’s expansion of the covenant originally made with Jews to include Gentiles or other nations. The inclusive membership of the kingdom of God was considered so important that Peter had to be prepared through a vision to come to terms

with the fact that Gentiles could also now be beneficiaries of God's salvation (Acts 10). This is the vision that took Peter to the house of Cornelius, where he came to see that Gentiles too were equally welcome into God's new people: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34–35).

In early church history, the decisions made by Emperor Constantine from ad 313 led to the recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. In 321 Constantine decreed Sundays as public holidays and Christian symbols appeared on Roman coins and Christianity became the religion of the empire (McGrath 1998: 21). This transition eventually occurred under Emperor Theodosius I in 380. From the fifth century AD, Christianity took on the position of an official state religion and converts to the faith were no longer under persecution or marginalized in socio-economic and political affairs. In other words, Christianity became the religion of the imperial establishment. As the official religion of the empire, Christianity "lost its sense of missionary purpose in relation to the world" (Shenk 2007: 40). Christianity became "aristocratized" with worship taking place in basilicas instead of in homes and the converted now interpreting the Bible and doing theology from the center rather than the margins (Kreider 2008: 22). Alan Kreider shows how within this period Christianity gained some leverage in the state with the disincentives to conversion from the pre-Christendom era replaced by the imposition of incentives (Kreider 2008: 22). In the past people became Christian in the midst of persecution but in the age of Christendom people joined the movement because it was an imperial faith that gave access to professional advancement and upward mobility. The results were corruption and the weakening of the church's evangelical edge. In other words, Christian converts had reasons for embracing the faith other than a genuine turning towards God (Kreider 2008: 23).

## Modern Evangelicalism

The modern evangelical movement embarked on another rescue mission in terms of returning to the principles of conversion as personal salvation in Christ. We have noted that the prevailing metaphor for conservative evangelical conversion is new birth or regeneration. Conservative evangelicals therefore challenge the routine processes of incorporation into the church through infant baptism and confirmation, which it is claimed, makes people "church-goers" rather than Christians. "Christianity is not churchianity" became a viral phrase on evangelistic crusade platforms. Billy Graham was one of the outstanding evangelical leaders of the last century, known for his worldwide crusades and born-again campaigns. Throughout his career Graham preached a simple two-fold sin-and-redemption formula. He first presented human sin in vivid, accusatory, and lurid language and second, summoned hearers with passion to open themselves up to the rescuing, saving power of Jesus Christ (Long 2008: 5). Following such a turnaround, there was to be a close walk with God, devotional Bible reading, church attendance, and a good moral life: "The believer changes his attitude toward God, and God responds by changing the divine attitude toward the believer, which in

turn allows the believer to change his inner values and attitude toward the whole of life" (Long 2008: 9).

The Pentecostal/charismatic movements and churches that have emerged as the new faces of world Christianity, particular in the global South, have generally maintained the earlier, conservative evangelical understanding of mission. To the born-again experience Pentecostals add Baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. In these contexts, conversion still means turning away from other gods and lords in order that faith and loyalty may be turned towards God through the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Chilean Pentecostal Juan Sepúlveda explains new birth as signifying change which connotes a "radical difference" for the person concerned which cannot be put in the same category as "nationality" or "culture" by which people identify with those belonging to the society in which their biological birth takes place. Being Christian "produces something completely new in a person, something that includes and reorders all other forms of identification, just as it also transforms relationships with oneself and with others" (Sepúlveda 1996: 107). James Dunn notes that the experience of spiritual renewal is bound to raise questions regarding ecclesiastical, liturgical and theological traditions which have failed to deliver that experience for many seekers after God (Dunn 1996: 110). Conservative Evangelicals including Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians would usually insist that genuine Christianity only begins with this conscious acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When done publicly, it occurs through responding to the altar call – physically walking forward and being led through what is called the sinner's prayer. The prayer basically consists of three items: first, acknowledging that one is a sinner; second, repentance through renunciation of one's past life; and, third, receiving Christ as Savior and Lord over one's life.

## Conversion, Identity, and Primal Cultures

The Great Commission formed the basic motivation for Christian missions, leading to the formation of missionary organizations in Geneva, Basel, Bremen, and London and the evangelization of the non-Western world. The former empires of Christendom have given way to new heartlands of Christianity in Seoul, Rio de Janeiro, Accra, Lagos, Harare, and Nairobi. The churches of the global South have generally maintained an evangelical ethos. The most popular sin which non-Western evangelicals still call on their people to turn from is idolatry, which is the allegiance to ancestral gods and other resources of supernatural power. In other words religious pluralism remains a central issue for conversion in spite of the phenomenal growth in Christianity in the global South. Thus conversion in both biblical and historical perspective is best understood with the context of religious pluralism.

Kwame Bediako argues that the intense struggles against Baalism in the prophetic witness of the Old Testament presuppose the reality of other faiths. Similarly in the New Testament, it would be difficult to conceive of the coming into existence of large portions, especially of Pauline material "without the deep religious and intellectual engagements between the Gospel proclamation and the various mystery religions and

other alternatives, quite apart from Judaism itself, in the Greco-Roman world of the time” (Bediako 2000: 34). From the outset, to be a Christian convert was to turn away from paganism with its many gods and lords (1 Cor. 8:5). Within the context of religious pluralism in which Christian converts have had to function, Bediako points out that there would be no real grounds for affirming the uniqueness of Christ where there are no alternatives to be taken seriously (Bediako 2000: 38). Most non-Western contexts were associated with primal religions until the arrival of such missionary religions as Christianity and Islam. Conversion within primal contexts often meant breaking with the past of traditional religions with its recognition of gods, nature deities, and such supernatural beings as the ancestors.

Missionary Christianity demonized primal religions as backward and belonging to the realm of Satan and many thought that formal education was the way to eradicate belief in traditional gods. Among the Pogoro people of Southern Tanzania, for example, conversion to Christianity was not the result of the aggregate choices of individuals attracted by the message of Christianity, but a direct consequence of colonial education policy (Green 1995). Similarly, it is reported that for the majority of first generation Cameroonian Dii converts to Christianity, the personal motivation for conversion to Christianity was closely linked to school attendance where they were daily in contact with the Christian message (Drønen 2007: 164). Yet formal education and mass literacy as the principal means of evangelization turned Christianity into a cerebral religion lacking the capacity to deal with the fears and insecurities of African societies with their incurable beliefs in mystical causality. Western mission Christianity was largely an intellectual faith that dismissed witchcraft as a psychological delusion and a figment of people’s imagination.

In a study among the Ewe of Southern Ghana, Birgit Meyer discovered that people who left the historic mission churches mostly explained their conversion as a transition from nominal church membership to born-again Christianity. The older churches failed to deal with demons satisfactorily and their leaders did not have the Holy Spirit (Meyer 1999: xviii). This inability of historic Western mission Christianity to respond to existential concerns through the power of the Spirit meant that some within the local population wanting the best of both worlds adopted a religious philosophy called “a little bit of Jesus, a little bit of magic in which religious allegiance was directed simultaneously at different ontological realities (Meyer 1999: 105–106). People converted to Christianity by going through baptisms and confirmations but still relied on the power of traditional shrines to take care of their fears and insecurities in this life. The approach to religion that denied the power of the enchanted universe of African societies has its roots in missionary strategies. In the middle of the twentieth century E. A. Asamoah, a Presbyterian churchman had denounced the missionary attitude that dismissed African belief in supernatural evil as nonsensical. He pointed out that anybody who knew African Christians would acknowledge that it was impossible to expel belief in supernatural powers from their minds. When these beliefs were denounced in evangelization it placed the African converts in a state of conflict. They became hypocrites holding on to Christianity as some sort of public religion while in their private lives they resorted to practices that resulted from witchcraft beliefs (Asamoah 1955: 297).

The Western missionaries expected that once people had accepted their view that traditional religions were satanic, they would abandon it in favor of Christianity (Meyer 1999: 101). Robin Horton is the most familiar voice in this understanding of conversion. He propounded the view that with the adoption of the High God as the focus of faith, African gods and deities would gradually become insignificant and with time pass into oblivion (1971: 86–108). That did not happen. A study among the Anufo, a tribal people in northern Ghana, concluded that among those people, one could convert to Christianity without having to change anything about one's traditional approach toward problem solving. Christianity, the study notes, simply offered a whole new range of options in addition to the former, not in place of them (Kirby 1994: 64). Thus in many cases, people did not abandon primal religions entirely, even subsequent to conversion. The reason is simple. Primal religions generally conceive of religion as a system of power and living religiously as being in touch with the source and channels of power in the universe. The Western Christian theology mediated by historic mission Christianity seems on the whole to understand the Christian gospel as a system of ideas (Bediako 1995: 106). A crucial function of religion in the African mind is to provide the power by which people are enabled to cope with life successfully (Lartey 2013: 25).

## Conversion, Rewards, and Contemporary Pentecostalism

In the context of people functioning within a multiplicity of religious worlds, African-initiated Christianity has proven successful in converting people away from historic mission churches because of its powerful message enabling people to be set free from the dangers and troubles of life. Charismatic churches are geared toward experiencing the Holy Spirit in demonstrable and tangible ways. Contemporary Pentecostals add another dimension to conversion that has not yet been considered that every born-again Christian is expected, in addition to a new life in Christ and in the Spirit, be a living embodiment of material blessing. This is what has come to be known as the gospel of prosperity. It does not preclude spiritual prosperity but there is disproportionate emphasis in contemporary Pentecostal preaching on material things as prime indicators or rewards for faithful conversion and the fulfillment of religious obligations in tithes and offerings. There is some connection between this new prosperity worldview and religious ends as understood in the traditional context in which ritual activity has to knowingly and symbolically reverse evils done, spoken, or performed. Primal religious rituals are therefore expected to result in transformations on the spiritual plain that will be manifest in the material realm (Lartey 2013: 43).

In light of the prosperity emphasis, personal testimonies no longer focus on the crisis that led to faith in Christ but highlight one's post-conversion material blessings. A number of biblical texts are used to support the relationship between conversion and material well-being, including Hebrews 11:6, which states that "anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Earlier in Hebrews 8:6, the high priestly office of Jesus, we are told, surpasses those of existing high priests because "the ministry Jesus has received is superior to

theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and is founded on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). Rewards and better promises have been reinvented in contemporary Pentecostal discourse as health and wealth for those who convert.

## Conclusion

Although much of the non-Western Christian understanding of conversion comes from particular readings of the Bible, the understanding of the phenomenon in the context of religious pluralism also derives from missionary methods. European missionary Christianity progressed by separation and distinguished itself from non-Western cultures by labeling them as evil, unenlightened, and demonic (Lartey 2013: xii). Thus conversion has come to mean not just receiving redemption from one's fallen nature but also turning away from ancestral gods to faith in Christ. Non-western Christianity is now dominated by evangelical and Pentecostal/charismatic movements that understand conversion as a radical turn from an old life to a new one, bringing both spiritual and material blessings from God.

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## CHAPTER 16

# Church and State Relations in the Colonial Period

Brian Stanley

The relations between churches, missionary orders or societies, and political authorities in the non-Western world between the mid-eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries conformed to no single model. The growth of Christianity outside Europe was effected by individual Christian evangelists and a variety of agencies whose degree of connection with church and state authorities in Europe was sometimes non-existent and frequently quite tenuous. In South India, Ethiopia, and (on a smaller scale) in Egypt there were also surviving ancient churches whose adherents frequently viewed the newly arrived European Christians (known in India as *Farangīs*) and their dubious morals with incomprehension or even contempt. Responsibility for the direction of Catholic missionary work after 1622 rested officially with the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*), but in reality the older model of delegated control and ecclesiastical patronage exercised by the Spanish or Portuguese crowns (known respectively as the *patronato* and *padroado*) remained virtually unchallenged in Latin America and extremely influential in those parts of Asia and Africa touched by Spanish or Portuguese expansion. The greatest of the Catholic missionary orders, the Society of Jesus, prided itself on its independence from *patronato* or *padroado* and its direct subservience to papal authority, yet by the mid-eighteenth century the Jesuits' relationship with the papacy had been fractured by various arguments, notably over the acceptability for Christians of ancestral veneration rites in China.

In Protestantism an even broader spectrum of relationships between mission agencies and church and crown in Europe can be discerned. The first Protestant missionaries in Asia were German Pietists operating in Tranquebar from 1706 under the direct patronage of the Danish crown, though without the initial support of the Danish East India Company's governor. The evangelical missionary societies established in Britain from the 1790s, and later in continental Europe and the United States, were voluntary

organizations which rarely had close connections with established authorities in church or state. William Carey, the English Baptist pioneer in North India, had to situate his Bengal mission headquarters in the Danish enclave of Serampore owing to the known hostility of the East India Company to religious dissenters of low birth who were suspected of republican leanings. Not until 1813 were evangelical missionaries able to work in company territories, and only after 1833 could they do so without first applying for a licence. Even those societies which professed firm allegiance to a national church, such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS) founded in England in 1799, could struggle to obtain both ecclesiastical approval and recruits from their own church. The CMS failed to attract much support from the episcopal bench until 1841, when it modified its constitution to give the bishops of the Church of England the right to adjudicate on any question of church order and discipline in dispute between the society and a colonial bishop. Nearly half of the society's missionaries in its first forty years were not British; the others were mostly German, many of them ordained Lutherans trained in the Berlin or Basel mission seminaries. In the same period the originally non-denominational London Missionary Society (LMS) displayed an even broader internationalism in its missionary force: its early recruits hailed not simply from England and Scotland, but also from the Netherlands, Germany, the Austrian empire, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, and France (Sibree 1923). The Protestant missionary movement in the first half of the nineteenth century sat loosely to national boundaries and allegiances, and hence was not easily amenable to manipulation by the state.

In the second half of the nineteenth century this ecumenical Protestant internationalism weakened, as hardening national loyalties and imperial visions strengthened their hold on Christian thinking, and denominational lines of church order became more firmly drawn (it is surely no accident that the CMS ceased to employ Lutheran missionaries during the 1850s in the wake of the Oxford Movement). Nevertheless, the essentially international character of the Protestant missionary movement remained intact until World War I, supplying the motive power for the infant ecumenical movement which broke surface at the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. Something of this evangelical internationalism was transmitted to indigenous converts and church leaders. Carl Christian Reindorf (1834–1917), the first African to publish a history of an African people, ended his *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (1889) with a panegyric poem in lavish praise of Britannia, inviting her to rule her newly acquired colony on the Gold Coast in fidelity to her known tradition of encouraging justice and the spread of the gospel. Kwame Bediako describes Reindorf as “a Gold Coast Bede” whose national history carried a theological message: sentiments which strike the modern-day observer as an excruciating example of Christian nationalism should rather be interpreted as exemplifying a providentialist view of history which allotted nations their significance in the divine purpose of world evangelization only in so far as they remained faithful to their destiny (Bediako 1995: 39–47). The more important point to note, however, is that Reindorf was a convert, not of the British Methodist mission, but, as his adopted name suggests, of the Basel Mission whose personnel hailed mainly from Württemberg; he owed his education, not to British missionaries, but to German ones. For Reindorf, as also for many white missionaries in the heyday of empire, gospel loyalties were paramount, and national ones, though not negligible, were merely derivative.

It is not simply the case that the “church” half of the church–state relationship in the colonial period in reality embraced a great range of Christian bodies, whose perspectives frequently transcended national allegiances: there was equally great variation in the nature of the indigenous and colonial polities under which missionaries operated and indigenous Christians lived. In China Catholic missions had to carve out a secure niche for themselves in a vast and sophisticated empire, headed by the Qing (Manchu) dynasty from 1644 to 1911, and administered by a civil service staffed by literati who were steeped in the Confucian tradition: in such a context, the Jesuit strategy of clothing Christianity in Confucian dress was almost the only option. Other mission contexts in Asia gave ample witness to the damage that a hostile state could inflict on the Catholic Church. In Japan the severe persecutions of the seventeenth century had driven the faith underground, and it was not until the 1860s, following the conclusion of a treaty of friendship between France and Japan, that the “hidden Christians” were able to emerge into the daylight, a process completed by the Meiji restoration of 1868, which set Japan on a pro-Western modernizing path and opened the door to American Protestant missions. In 1785, within a few years of the introduction of Christianity to Korea by a Korean who had encountered Jesuit missionaries in Beijing, the Korean government issued an edict suppressing the new religion on the grounds that the refusal of Catholic converts to participate in ancestral rites constituted a threat to the social fabric. In 1791 two cousins, Kwŏn Sangyŏn and Yun Chich’ung, became the first Korean Christian martyrs when they were executed for having burnt their ancestral tablets. Vietnam had a far more sizeable Catholic community, served by missionary priests from the *Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*, and experienced persecution on a much larger scale. The kings of the Nguyen dynasty responded variously to Christianity, in tandem with their fluctuating stance towards French imperial designs, but two kings in particular persecuted Catholics with relish: Minh Mang (1820–1840) and Tu Duc (1847–1883): it is estimated that in the latter’s reign some 30,000 lay Catholics and 300 Vietnamese priests lost their lives. Within a year of Tu Duc’s death, Vietnam lost its independence, and French colonial rule began (Phan 2006: 521).

In the Indian sub-continent the new Protestant missions had the dubious benefit of working in indigenous societies that were being increasingly penetrated by European commercial and military power, though in fact what success the Protestants enjoyed tended to be either in princely states such as Thanjāvur or, later, in the northeastern tribal areas which were remote from the influence of Hinduism and less susceptible to British imperial control. East India Company policy was regularly attacked by the missionary lobby as being too soft on “Hindu idolatry,” and even after the coming of direct Crown rule in 1858, India remained a deeply ambiguous example of a new Eastern Christendom, not least because the logic of British administration worked to define and consolidate the status of “Hinduism” as the majority religion in India. Although the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment provided generous support out of public revenues for Anglican bishops and clergy from 1813 to 1930, British Indian policy held back from direct support of the missionary societies and favored the idea of a religiously neutral state, a concept taken over by Nehru on Indian independence in 1947.

Colonial Latin America, by contrast, was a self-conscious extension or replica of Iberian Christendom, in which the Catholic Church enjoyed the full support of the colonial

state and of the landowning elite. The onset of colonial rebellion in Latin America after 1820 weakened but did not destroy the nexus between church and state. Indeed in Brazil national independence did nothing to alter the pre-colonial subservience of church to state; the Brazilian monarchy continued to nominate bishops, collect tithes and pay the clergy in much the same fashion as had the Portuguese crown under the *padroado* (Lynch 2006: 399). Elsewhere on the continent, the new national regimes were liberal and anti-clerical in character, and some were therefore inclined to look on Protestants with some degree of favor. Colombia in 1853 was the first Latin American nation to witness the constitutional separation of church and state, but the constitution of 1887–1888 reinstated Catholicism as the official religion of the nation. In most of the continent, although the church could no longer enjoy state subsidies, the Catholic faith retained privileged status as the official religion. Latin America's identity as an unambiguously Catholic continent remained intact until it came under threat from the growth of popular Pentecostalism in the second half of the twentieth century.

Latin America in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries had appeared to be a New World which European trade and exploration had laid bare to the astonished gaze of the European Christian public. In a similar way, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a second New World in the south Pacific was revealed before the eyes of Europe, and in this case to Protestants as well as Catholics. In contrast to the Aztec and Inca empires which the conquistadors had encountered, the polities which the first missionaries to the Pacific islands found were small-scale units headed by chiefs who were often in fierce competition for paramountcy with their neighbors. The first missionaries to the Pacific were English Nonconformists, either Congregationalists in the employ of the LMS or Wesleyan Methodists, the first of whom had a particularly firm commitment to the separation of church and state. Nevertheless, in the Pacific island context, where each Protestant society initially enjoyed a monopoly of religious influence within each island or group of islands, Nonconformist missionaries became king-makers and law-makers, and the churches they planted acquired virtually the same established status as that which so irked Nonconformists at home. In Tahiti, the first field of the LMS, missionaries soon insisted after their arrival in 1797 on describing Pomare, a high-ranking chief from the north of Tahiti, as "King" of Tahiti and adopted him as patron of the mission. Pomare's son and successor, denominated "Pomare II" by the missionaries, professed himself a Christian in 1811, and by 1815 had established his authority over the entire island, which became Christian. In 1819 a new code of laws, largely devised by the missionaries, was promulgated, and in 1824 they solemnly crowned Pomare II's son, Pomare III, as Christian King of Tahiti, using regalia imported from Britain. Protestant Nonconformists in Britain, scarcely less than their Hispanic Catholic counterparts in the Americas three centuries earlier, had erected a duplicate Christendom in the New World which Europeans had "discovered" (Murray 2002).

Africa had its own historic examples of Christian states, in the ancient empire of Ethiopia and the Kongo kingdom, but by the late eighteenth century these were both in sad decline: in the former the authority of both emperor and *abuna* (patriarch) was but a shadow of its former self; in the latter, the flow of Italian Capuchin priests had dried up, and what little Christian observance survived was kept alive by a dwindling band of *maestri* (interpreters who had evolved into catechists). When the first Protestant

missionaries from the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) arrived in the ancient Kongo capital of Mbanza Kongo (São Salvador) in 1887, they found a cathedral in ruins, crucifixes and images of Saint Anthony (the Portuguese patron saint of the Kongo kingdom), being widely used as fetishes, but no worshipping Christian community (Graham 1931: 22–23, facing p. 40).

The new nineteenth-century missions to Africa supplied a few incomplete parallels to the Pacific experience, but the extent of approximation to European models of Christendom was markedly smaller, with occasional exceptions. The most striking of these was the Sierra Leone colony for freed slaves, which between 1815 and 1824 was supplied by its British governor, Sir Charles MacCarthy, with many of the outward trappings of an English union of church and state: parish churches sporting towers and weathercocks located at the center of each village, government funding for churches, schools, parsonages, and crucially also for the stipends of CMS clergymen (Sanneh 1983: 133). Sierra Leone, however, was not so much the product of missionary work (CMS evangelism in the hinterland proved singularly unfruitful) as the source of African missionary initiatives by converted recaptives resettled in Sierra Leone who took the gospel to much of West Africa. The other colony for freed slaves on the West Africa coast – in Liberia, established by American blacks in the 1820s – adopted a republican constitution in 1847 which depended more on American constitutional precedents, with a president, two houses of congress and a supreme court. Nevertheless, it came closer to both African and European than to American models of religion and politics in that the president and other senior state officials also held leadership positions in the churches (Sanneh 1983: 104–105). Between them, Sierra Leone and Liberia provided much of the Christian political elite of West Africa in the nineteenth century. In the Sierra Leonean case it was recaptives or their children, such as Samuel Crowther, James Afrikanus Horton, or James Johnson, who achieved such eminence in church or state. In Liberia, recaptives were less prominent, and political leadership tended to be exercised by the African American colonists or their offspring – men such as the Episcopal missionary, the Rev. Alexander Crummell, or the Presbyterian minister, Dr. Edward Blyden – both of them important pioneers of West African nationalism.

The Christian colonies of Sierra Leone and Liberia were atypical of the continent as a whole. Also unusual in the extent of its approximation to a European model of church establishment was the kingdom of Buganda in the early twentieth century. Here during the 1880s and early 1890s British CMS missionaries and French White Fathers had competed against each other (and with Muslims) for the allegiance of the Kabaka and his court. Captain F. D. Lugard's Maxim guns played their brutal part in tipping the balance of power in favor of the Protestants, whose dominance was eventually formalized in the declaration of a British protectorate in 1894 and the Uganda Agreement of 1900. But the contest had been played out along the lines of traditional Bagandan politics, in which rival groups of chiefs and followers jostled for royal favor: missionaries had to play the same game, and Anglican Christianity neatly slotted into the existing role of the national religion (*lubaale*) buttressed by the monarchy. The Agreement had more to do with confirming the supremacy of the Baganda over their neighbors than it did with religious divisions. Moreover, the unfortunate juxtaposition between English Protestant and French Catholic missions was softened from 1895, when English

Catholic priests from the Mill Hill Fathers joined their French co-religionists. The Christian oligarchy that had come to power in the 1890s lost its ascendancy after 1926 (Rowe 2002: 52–65; Hansen 2002: 157–175; Low 1971: xvii).

In contrast to Buganda, Christian missions in pre-colonial Africa usually struggled to gain a foothold, especially in polities where a powerful paramount chief was in process of establishing his authority over neighboring tribes. Such difficulties help to explain the general welcome with which missionaries of various nationalities greeted the advance of colonial rule from the 1880s. This was notably the case for Norwegian Lutheran missions in the Zulu kingdom in the 1860s, where one missionary lamented that “the report has grown on them that it is not possible to become a Christian without also becoming a subject of the missionary” – and hence a threat to royal authority (Jørgensen 2002: 91). During the reign of Cetshwayo, king from 1873, frustration at the paucity of Zulu conversions led the Norwegians (and also the Germans of the Hermannsburg mission) to press for British annexation to crack the nut of Zulu resistance to the gospel – another example of Christians backing imperialism for reasons that had little or nothing to do with nationalism. The Anglican bishop of Natal, J. W. Colenso, was in a minority among missionaries in his principled opposition to the Anglo-Zulu War of 1878–1879, which brought the independence of the Zulu kingdom to an end. A similar story of missionary agitation for imperial control born out of evangelistic frustration can be told in relation to the Ndebele. Missionaries from both the LMS and the Universities’ Mission for Central Africa backed the imperial ambitions of Cecil Rhodes’s British South Africa Company in the early 1890s. This was primarily because they could see no other way of breaking down the despotism of the militaristic Ndebele state, though the fact that Rhodes had land in his gift was also a factor (by 1900 the different missions had acquired over one third of a million acres in Zimbabwe) (Sundkler and Steed 2000: 450). It took the Ndebele rebellion of 1896 to convince them that company rule in Zambesia was “exactly the type of colonialism that humanitarians, notably LMS missionaries, had fought all over South Africa almost since the beginning of the century” (Holmberg 1966: 223). In Ndebeleland, as in Zululand, and indeed in much of sub-Saharan Africa, conversion to Christianity became widespread only after incorporation within the British Empire, a fact which led many observers of the end of empire in the 1960s to predict inaccurately that Christianity, except possibly in the form of the African Independent Churches, would not long survive the era of decolonization.

Both in Africa and more generally in the tropical world from the mid-1880s, relations between Christian missions and colonial governments appeared to be more harmonious than they had been previously, though there were notable exceptions, such as the perennially tense relationship between Protestant missions and Catholic state authorities in the Portuguese or Belgian Congo. Colonial governments were generally more prepared than hitherto to cloak their *Realpolitik* in the humanitarian language of trusteeship and civilization. The Berlin Act of 1885 committed the European powers in their African possessions to protect not simply religious freedom in general, but missionary freedom in particular, and endorsed the work of missionaries in “instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization” (Hansen 2002: 158). The missions for their part regarded the necessity of colonial rule as the guarantor of law, good order, and religious freedom as increasingly axiomatic. The experience of Christian converts

living under non-Western regimes, such as the Chinese empire, seemed to confirm the principle. Most mission agencies were prepared to resort to the powers extorted from China by the “unequal treaties” to defend their converts, and after the Boxer rising of 1899–1900 most were willing to accept indemnity payments imposed on the Chinese in compensation for losses to property and missionary lives inflicted by the rising. The largest of the Protestant missions, the China Inland Mission, stood virtually alone in refusing such compensation as an object lesson in “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (Broomhall 1915: 257).

The convergence between Christian and colonial objectives was most evident after World War I in relation to education. In Africa the two reports of the Phelps-Stokes Commission published in 1922 and 1925 introduced an era of remarkably close educational co-operation between missions and colonial governments (particularly in British territories) (Jones 1922; Jones 1925; Oliver 1965: 263–284). At the start of this era, the missions supplied between 90% and 100% of all schools in British colonies in Africa (Student Christian Movement 1924: 4, 87). The proportion had doubtless dropped somewhat by independence, but the significant points remained the general lack of competition faced by the mission schools and the extent of the subsidy they received from the colonial state. In 1949 both Protestant and Catholic missions in East Africa received substantially more in government grants than they did from domestic supporters and local contributions combined (Oliver 1965: 277). In the Pacific, the missions exercised a similar virtual monopoly of education until the end of World War II. In Asia, on the other hand, missions rarely wielded such unrivalled power, though their influence was greatest at the highest levels of education. Government grants-in-aid had been a feature of British India since 1854, but even where the missions dominated the private sector of education, as in the Madras presidency, their control of education was never total: in 1912 the missions controlled all of the girls’ high schools in the presidency, but only 179 out of 311 of the boys’ secondary schools, and half of the primary schools (Basu 1974: 126–127). After the Government of India Act of 1919 placed education under the control of the newly elected provincial governments, the influence of the missions declined further, as the provincial governments introduced compulsory primary education in government schools, and mission schools often had to accept a conscience clause as the price of continuing grant aid (Nurullah and Naik 1951: 661–664; *Village Education in India: The Report of a Commission on Inquiry* 1920: 171–175). In China, mission schools were responsible for an even smaller proportion of total educational provision: Protestant schools accounted for just 214,000 and Catholic schools 145,000 of a total of 5.7 million pupils in Chinese schools in 1922 (Student Christian Movement 1924: 40, citing Chinese Educational Commission 1922).

Mission education symbolized the marriage of convenience between Christianity and colonialism during this period. Yet it also quietly and consistently subverted the under-girding rationale of colonial rule. Christian teaching enjoined the equality of all human beings and held out unlimited potential for a humanity renewed by conversion to Christ. Colonial textbooks proclaimed the virtues of the idea of the nation, and enabled traditional ethnic identities to solidify and transmute into modern “national” forms. Graduates of mission schools and colleges employed their skills of literacy and rhetoric to question both missionary interpretations of the faith and the rationale for

colonial rule itself. Many ended up not, as the missions intended, in the ordained ministry, but in better remunerated posts in school teaching, the law, and government service, where the new nationalist politics began to take shape. In the long run Christianity did more to bring the colonial era to an end than it did to prop up colonialism in its heyday.

Mission education was probably the most poignant example of the ambiguities which were intrinsic to the workings of empire, at least in its British form. What was known as "indirect rule" suffered from inescapable contradictions. The instruments of indirect rule were customary authorities, yet their allotted task was frequently to modernize traditional societies to enable them to yield the economic or strategic objectives set by London. Mission education offered the most obvious route to modernization. Yet missionaries wished to challenge, reform, or even overthrow traditional custom, which often appeared to them as "pagan" and immoral. Indirect rule was supposed to be a money-saving strategy, but if the balance were tipped too far in the direction of modernization, resistance or even rebellion could ensue, with disastrously costly consequences (Kastfelt 2002: 136–146). These issues were raised most sharply in relation to the vast swathes of Islamic territory which fell under British suzerainty from the 1880s. British rule proved extremely supportive of Muslim authorities in Egypt, the Sudan, and northern Nigeria, as also in Sarawak or North India, to the chagrin of missions working in those areas. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 (on the whole a sedately pro-imperial gathering) sounded its most critical note in relation to Western colonial governments whenever it turned its attention to the Islamic parts of British African territory: at the very time when Christianity and Islam were engaged in a desperate race for the heart of Africa, a supposedly Christian government appeared to be constraining the freedom of the missions to operate in Islamic areas and hence to be backing the wrong horse (*Report of Commission VII*, 1910: 51–69).

The inter-war period was marked by the most blatant examples of the permeation of missions by imperial attitudes and ideology. The coronation of George VI in May 1937 was celebrated at one BMS station in Orissa with a splendid procession led by three elephants; the mahout of the middle elephant held aloft a framed portrait of the royal couple, and the missionaries proudly wore rosettes of red, white, and blue. But such outward manifestations told only half of the story. Eight years later, one of those missionaries, Gordon Wilkins, on his way home for furlough, was greeted on the platform of Khargpur station by cries of "Quit India! Down with the British!" from a crowd awaiting the arrival of a prominent Indian National Congress politician (Wilkins 1987: 66, 162). Missions in India, as in most of Africa (Kenya during the Mau-Mau crisis was the most notable exception), contrived for another decade or more to avoid the full force of the nationalist backlash, but in China there was no escape from the force of the Communist accusation that Christianity had functioned as the ideological tool of the Western imperialists. Between 1949 and 1953 almost all missionaries were expelled from Communist China, and the missionary movement entered into a period of profound heart-searching which in retrospect can be seen to mark the beginning of the reconceptualization of the mission of the church which has taken place since the late 1960s. Some radical voices such as the CMS missionary, David M. Paton, wrote in highly controversial terms about the "débâcle" of Christian missions in China, fatally compromised by their century-long association with the Western powers (Paton 1951; Paton 1953). In less strident



terms, mission strategists such as the Anglicans Max Warren and Stephen Neill turned their attention to questions of church–state relations in mission history, and called for Western Christians to discern the hand of God behind the rising tide of nationalism. In the Catholic Church, the French missiologist, Pierre de Menasce, addressed similar issues, writing a perceptive article in 1947 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* on “Nationalism in missionary countries” (de Measce 1947). Curricula of missionary training now rediscovered the prophetic writings of Roland Allen, missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in North China at the time of the Boxer rising, and a penetrating critic of the static institutionalism that characterized missions in his day (Hood 1991: 204–212.). But perhaps more important than all of these surface reactions to the marriage of Christianity and empire were powerful movements of conversion and spiritual renewal among indigenous Christians in East Africa and China, South India and Indonesia, movements that were redrawing the face of non-Western Christianity and ensuring that in the markedly different landscape of the post-colonial era, the Christian gospel would look less and less like a product of Western culture.

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## CHAPTER 17

# Ideologies, the Quest for a Just Society, and Christian Responses

Govert Buijs

### Introduction

Humans have always longed for justice, for peace, for a good society in which to live their lives. However, apart from incidental protests and uprisings, which have occurred every now and then throughout history in different cultures, most of the time the existing order was, or had to be, accepted as unchangeable by the vast majority of the (common) people. One can hope for a better life in store in the hereafter, but living on earth means moving through a valley of tears and shadows of death.

This changed drastically in the progress of what is often called “modernization,” a process that started in Europe, but by now has affected the entire globe. In the course of this process fully fledged pictures emerged of a “better” world already on this earth, in the here and now, often including a kind of roadmap indicating how this better world should be brought about (often by some kind of political revolution). When these “pictures of a better future plus roadmaps” start to be formulated, we enter what with hindsight can be called the “age of ideologies,” which more or less continues until the present day. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and the twentieth century, ideologies have been a very important factor in the dynamics of the modern world. World War II, perhaps the first truly global war, was unleashed by a purely ideologically driven nation, Nazi Germany. Moreover, around 1975, one-third of the world’s population was living under regimes that based their legitimacy on a communist ideology (and another one third living in nations that were in the sphere of influence of communist powers), which is still formally the case in China (one-sixth of the world’s population) and of course in North Korea.

The French Revolution of 1789 can perhaps be seen as the first great “ideological” revolution. During the two-plus centuries since, ideologies have been immensely influ-

ential and to a great extent they have shaped the political face of the globe – and deeply affected Christianity. Ideologies can be briefly described as sets of ideas for reconstructing society through political means as well as through new beliefs. Depending on the particular definition, a list of ideologies that have emerged during the last centuries usually consists of a substantial number of the following, randomly itemized (cf. Heywood 2012):

- liberalism
- capitalism
- Marxism (communism)
- socialism
- national socialism (Nazism)
- racism
- tribalism
- fascism
- positivism
- authoritarianism
- conservatism
- feminism
- nationalism
- imperialism
- environmentalism/ecologism
- secularism
- political Islam

Some of these ideologies have, in various ways, been able to play a dominant political role in many of the countries where Christians and Christian churches are present and therefore they have influenced, and sometimes even determined, the context in which Christians had to express their beliefs, to confess their faith, to celebrate their worship services, to pray their prayers. The encounter between Christianity and ideologies first took place in Europe, especially during the nineteenth century (Burleigh 2005). But as Christianity increasingly became a world religion and the ideologies, overwhelmingly originating in Europe, became as well a global phenomenon, the encounter continued on the world stage, until the present day. Christians, Christian churches and Christian theologians and philosophers and their books (in short: the “Christian movement”) had and have to deal with ideologies in very different contexts: in China with Marxism (which seems to be in a process of re-invigoration initiated by the rise of Xi Jinping to power), in North Korea similarly, in India with the emergence on and off of Indian nationalism (“Hindutva”), in many European countries with secularism, in the United States with capitalism or what is often called “neo-liberalism,” in quite a few African contexts with tribalism, while in a lot of historically Islamic countries Christians are faced with perhaps the youngest branch of the tree of ideologies, emerging basically from the 1970s onward (although preludes to it date back to much earlier times), political Islam, which manifests itself sometimes as state power, sometimes as a social threat.

These encounters often have been a deadly serious matter: they may have involved or still involve persecution of Christians or Christian churches, banning of Christian books (i.c. especially the Bible itself), curtailing the freedom of religion. But it may as well have involved much more friendly relations or even mutual learning processes.

In this chapter we cannot possibly deal with all these ideologies in detail, but can only attempt to highlight some common characteristics of the encounters between Christianity and ideologies. First we make an historically informed inventory of conflicts between the Christian movement and ideologies. We then proceed to a deeper understanding of the nature of ideologies, partly by tracing their historical emergence. After this we explore various Christian responses to ideologies, that can be given in various different contexts. In closing, we briefly explore the future of ideologies and what this may imply for Christians worldwide. Examples both from past and present encounters (confrontations) between Christianity and ideologies will be given throughout.

## Conflicts between Christianity and Ideology: A General Typology

It is obvious that ideologies have been and to a certain extent still form a major challenge for the Christian Church and for its social and political practice as well as for Christian theological and philosophical reflection. Ideologies are in a sense a “rival peer”: a rival because they often claim a full religious allegiance of their followers, and when they are politically dominant, of all citizens, including Christians, not allowing them to serve other “gods.” And they are a “peer” because Christianity, in practically all its branches, is not a world-rejecting religion but also has “this-worldly” implications, thus unavoidably entering the domain of politics and the social order, where ideologies present themselves as formative ideas (see Eisenstadt 1999).

The encounter between Christianity and ideology may be either conflictual or “friendly.” When it is conflictual, it can be either directly conflictual or indirectly conflictual.

Directly conflictual encounters between the Christian movement on the one hand and an ideology on the other occur when the content of the ideology is deemed incompatible with elements that are characteristic of the Christian movement. This may concern the mere existence of Christian communities, or it may concern specific Christian doctrines (for example that all human beings are created in the image of God). These direct conflicts can be rendered in four categories (that are not mutually exclusive, but may reinforce each other), all starting with a “p”: ideologically driven persecution, ideological poisoning, ideological partitioning or ideological perversion. I give historical or contemporary examples of all of these.

### *Persecution*

The most eye-catching – and tragic – phenomenon in the encounter between ideologies and Christianity has been widespread and often vehement persecution of

Christians and their churches/congregations, especially in those parts of the world that followed one of the varieties of a communist ideology. In the Soviet Union, especially under the Stalin regime, the church was virtually wiped out in the name of the atheist ideology. Tens of thousands (some estimates even go up to 200,000) priests, monks, and nuns were killed, or sent to the camps to die there (Dickinson 2000). Church buildings were destroyed or secularized. From almost 30,000 churches around 1930 only a mere 500 were left in 1941 (when Stalin, threatened by the Nazi attacks, suddenly somewhat relaxed his anti-religious policies) (Miner 2002). At that time millions of people had been killed in the concentration camps, many of them for no other reason than having attended a religious meeting. In the post-World War II period, religious persecution in the Soviet Union and other eastern European countries was periodically reinvigorated. Ideologically motivated persecution has taken place on and off in other countries as well, during the twentieth century, such as China and North Korea. In the latter case, heavy persecution has continued into the twenty-first century, the present day. In all these cases, Christianity and ideology are in open conflict.

In recent decades Islam in certain areas and among some of its adherents has developed what can best be called a political ideology (Kepel 2006; Burleigh 2006). This “political Islam” or “radical Islam,” both in Shi’ite (e.g. Iran) and Sunni (e.g. Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood) varieties, may give rise to tensions with both moderate Muslims and with Christians living in predominantly Muslim countries, sometimes erupting in violence or “religious cleansing,” as seems to have happened in Iraq.

In India Christians have to face an ideology called “Hindutva,” a mix of Indian nationalism and radical Hinduism, denying Christians (as well as Muslims) their full rights of citizenship and sometimes leading to persecution. Although the Indian constitution grants full rights to all citizens, regardless of their religion, in local contexts Christians (and especially Christian converts) may suffer discrimination or attacks on churches and/or Christian schools.

### *Poisoning*

In Nazi Germany since 1933 another relationship developed between the official ideology and the Christian churches. The direct victims of the regime here were of course the Jews and some other “deviant” groups, like homosexuals and gypsies. But large numbers of Christians of all confessions were not victims, but sympathized with Hitler. Given its international organizational structure, the Catholic Church as an institution was doctrinally less susceptible to nazification, but still the attitude of the Catholic Church during the German Nazi- and Italian Fascist era has been a matter of heated controversy among historians. Nazification happened more openly in the case of the Protestant Church. Here, the large majority of the leadership, calling themselves *Deutsche Christen* (“German Christians”) openly supported Hitler and the Protestant Church was therefore “nazified” more or less voluntarily. Only a few theologians and church leaders, who joined forces in the so called *Bekennende Kirche* (“confessing church”), were able to resist the siren song of Nazism, and they were persecuted or fled the country (Niemöller, Barth, Bonhoeffer).

In such cases a particular ideology poisoned the Christian community from the inside. Such poisoning occurs when Christians themselves are bending or reinterpreting key elements of their own tradition to make it congruent with the (reigning) ideology. To detect poisoning is harder than to detect persecution. So the possibility of poisoning is a constant challenge for the Christian movement throughout the globe.

### *Partition*

The presence of ideologies may cause the Christian movement to become divided on whether to support or to resist political programs that are based on ideologies. In South Africa for example, the churches were deeply divided on the policy of “apartheid,” that was backed up by a certain racist ideology. Many black and colored Christians suffered from it and struggled against it, like Alan Busak and most famously Desmond Tutu. The white Christians mostly supported “apartheid” and even defended it on theological grounds, whilst only a minority of the whites, represented for example by Beyers-Naudé, rejected it. As a whole, this weakened the role of the Christian movement as Christian. Here the situation can be characterized as an ideology dividing up Christianity into two very strong pro and contra camps.

### *Perversion*

A different situation altogether emerges when a religion starts to develop into an ideology itself and redefines itself as a political-hegemonistic program. The technical term to be used here is “theocracy,” and it can be diagnosed as a political-ideological perversion. As mentioned above this has recently happened in certain branches of Islam. In mainstream Christianity this was officially prohibited by the doctrine of the Two Cities or Two Kingdoms (of which St. Augustine was the most influential advocate), that separated the church and the biblical notion of the Kingdom of God on the one hand from the political order on the other hand (although of course both orders meet each other all the time). Nevertheless, there have been tendencies in Christianity as well to blur this distinction and strive for a full political embodiment of Christianity, excluding people with other faith commitments from the public sphere. One could argue that the phenomenon of “Christendom” (Perkins 2004; cf. the contribution of Jenkins in this volume) is an early example of this, as a kind of ideology *avant la lettre*. The most (in) famous example of a theocracy with totalitarian characteristics was the shortlived rule of Anabaptists in the year 1534 in Münster, Germany. A very different example of a theocratic tendency in Christianity was the role of the Catholic Church in Colombia especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, where Catholicism became the official religion and one could speak of a church–state integration that permeated many areas of life, including education and marriage law (Betances 2007). Within Christianity, this theocratic tendency has become rare, though one may find traces of it everywhere there is a longing for a “Christian nation” combined with a rejection of

religious freedom and plurality. In almost all countries where there is a large Christian majority, be it Catholic or Protestant, Christians have been or have become supportive of a formal separation of church and state, in the context of a constitutional framework that safeguards religious freedom and human rights.

In Orthodox countries, most notably the Russian Federation, the issue may not have been settled as clearly as elsewhere. The orthodox hierarchy generally does not accept Western notions of religious freedom and it assigns a privileged role to Orthodoxy, although the historically novel document *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* (2000) contains some, still ambivalent, indications of a more appreciative evaluation (Stoeckl 2014). However, the close relations between church and state in Orthodox contexts may be an instance of a Christian Church involving itself quite deeply with nationalism. It usually didn't turn into a Christianly inspired political-ideological program, as Orthodox spirituality tends to be more "world-averse" than its non-orthodox counterparts in other parts of the world.

### *Indirect conflicts*

In other cases an ideology and the way it embodies itself in the political and social order may not specifically affect Christians-as-Christians, but may affect Christians as citizens alongside other citizens. When new economic ideas were implemented during the nineteenth century, that later came to be known as "liberalism" or "market liberalism," the social situation in the newly industrialized and industrializing countries (such as the United Kingdom, France, and somewhat later The Netherlands) was deteriorating dramatically. It was in this century that the working class, largely raised in the Christian tradition (or even having participated in Christian awakening-movements), suffered deeply from the most dire of circumstances. The life expectancy especially in the cities even dropped to below 30. And these 30 years would mainly have been spent enduring poor health, insufficient housing, under-nourishment, and long work shifts of often 16 hours a day. The churches' general unresponsiveness to this situation drove many members of the working class out of the churches and into the hands of Marxism. In quite a few European countries during the nineteenth century, churches lost the labor class. Here we see Christianity, not specifically targeted as a religious community, but confronted with a new ideology of unchecked free-market liberalism, that affected its membership and therefore demanded a response, especially because there were other world-views or ideologies around (e.g. Marxism) that did seem to provide such an answer. In these kind of contexts, the Christian movement has had to make up its mind and decide whether it will remain silent (and thus support the status quo or the powers that be) or whether it will speak out or take any other actions. Only at the end of the nineteenth century did the Catholic Church, for example, start to develop its "social teachings" as a direct response to these challenges. Similar conditions emerged throughout Latin America after World War II, to which quite a few theologians responded with the development of what came to be called "liberation theology," a response that consciously followed the adventurous path of using an ideology, i.e. Marxism, as an instrument for social analysis.



An entirely different example of an ideological conflict in which Christians may find themselves without being specifically targeted as Christians are cases of tribal tensions, from which especially some African countries are suffering. Here the hidden, often unarticulated ideology can be called “tribalism,” which sees tribes as the key identity markers of human beings, and often places one tribe in a position of superiority over other tribes. The most extreme case of this was of course the Rwanda massacres. But less violent forms may constitute problems as well, e.g. patrimonialism and ethnic tension, where the Christian churches need to seek answers (Gifford 2001).

Potentially, this type of indirect conflict between Christianity and ideologies may arise wherever there is a situation of injustice, in which human beings are not treated according to the worth that is due them as beings created in the image of God (Wolterstorff 2008; 2011) and the Christian community decides not to remain silent. In these cases this community may not be under pressure itself as a Christian community per se but may identify itself, “incarnationally” with the suffering of others – with an ideological conflict as a result.

## Deepening Our Understanding of Ideologies: The (Often Ill-Conceived) Quest for a Better World

What are “ideologies” at heart? The very term “ideology” has a particular history that reveals a lot about the nature of ideologies (Ritter and Gründer ; Vincent 2010). It was coined by the French philosopher and educational reformer Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), who around 1800 tried to develop a scientific field of research exploring how people develop ideas based on sense perceptions, hence a science (Gr. *logos*) of ideas (Gr. *eidos*). The basic thrust of this endeavor, culminating in a 5-volume work published between 1801 and 1815 as *Éléments d'idéologie*, was an attempt to get beyond religion, metaphysics or psychology, where supernatural beings and causes may play a role, toward a purely natural, materialist explanation of the formation of the human ideas. This “ideology” could then serve as a basis for (post-religious) education, in school curricula which hitherto largely had been the domain of the church. The new education was not going to refer to history, nor to the experience and wisdom of humankind, and neither was it going to tap into already existing knowledge. The key was to start afresh from scratch (inspired by John Locke’s account of consciousness as a “clean slate,” without innate ideas). This program fed into a political agenda according to which France should be led by an enlightened elite. Part of this agenda was as well a defence of a free-trade economy. With this agenda, De Tracy, together with other adherents of this program came to be called “*idéologues*.” The later emperor Napoleon Bonaparte initially was among them, but then turned critical and even hostile. In his wake, the term “*idéologues*” started to acquire a pejorative meaning as referring to impractical dreamers about an enlightened liberal utopia.

The net result of this early history was that “ideology” came to refer to a more or less comprehensive socio-political doctrine, aiming at a full reconstruction of society, by

two methods: political action (often a revolution) and, perhaps even more important, by changing people's basic beliefs about the world.

As already indicated, the French Revolution of 1789 may well be categorized as the first "ideological" revolution. In the course of its development it shifted from a social protest movement into an attempt to do away with the past and all existing structures in order to create a new society, a new world, a *novus ordo saeculorum* (Arendt 1963). That finally implied as well the introduction of an entirely new religion to replace Christianity, the *Cult d'Être Suprême*, with a new calendar – as well as the beheading of thousands who would not comply or were reported as dissenters. Although Destutt de Tracy's "ideology" was written just over a decade later, the idea of starting from scratch and "reprogramming" the minds of people was manifested already in this phase of the revolution.

So ideologies are not neutral theories (as scientific theories mostly intend to be), but they seek to influence, even to reshape the world. As Karl Marx once famously phrased it (in the 11th of his *Theses on Feuerbach*): "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." Hence ideologies are intricately related to the quest for a better, a more just, or even a perfect society. They do not simply mirror the existing world but they say something about the world that is not (i.e. not at all, not yet, not fully) the case. They evoke an image of another, a better world. It is also characteristic for an ideology that on this basis it is potentially able to attract wide support and to mobilize a substantial number of adherents in the public realm (Heywood 2012; Vincent 2010). They are somehow able to spark hope for a better or even a perfect society.

However, in the case of ideologies, this "better world" may well turn out to be a fantasy, and ideologies may well lure people into a denial of reality. As soon as an ideology starts to get implemented because its adherents have been able to grab power, there is a tendency to wipe out everything which and everybody who does not wish to conform to the fantasy. Hence its often very violent character. Just think as an example of the immense restructuring program launched by the Khmer Rouge, once they had gained power in Cambodia (between 1975 and 1979), deporting millions of people from cities to the countryside, and killing many of them in the wake of this operation. The strength and attractiveness of ideologies, as well as their fatal flaws, derive from this quest for perfection. Ideologies are part of a quest for a better, a more just, more social, more free world, but they often fail bitterly and create a hell on earth instead. Ideologies tend to become monolithic and oppressive, fueling a desire to wipe out opposing forces. Christians know this from past experience.

In contemporary parlance the term "ideology" is sometimes also used as a rather neutral term to indicate *any* set of political ideas. In this sense, ideology is more or less a synonymous term for "political view," or for any particular "political philosophy" or "public philosophy," similar to even broader terms like "worldview" or even "culture." For this neutral use it seems wise to follow the advice of Schumaker (2008) to abandon ideology and use "*public philosophies*" instead. Moreover, some ideologies are really concentrated around one issue, although around this issue an entire worldview might be formulated. Consider feminism or ecologism. It is hard to think of these ideologies as fully fledged political views, providing a roadmap for entire societies. Let us call these kinds of sets of ideas "*single-issue public philosophies*" (or in some cases "single issue ideologies" – see below).

These terminological clarifications allow us to reserve the term “*ideology*” – as I have already done above – for referring to the foundational ideas of specific regimes or political movements that aspire to a unified political order, in which other, “deviant” views will be suppressed. In this sense, ideologies are a specific subset of all possible “public philosophies,” namely those public philosophies that follow a hegemonic strategy by denying the public legitimacy or the presence of other, “deviant” views. So while “public philosophies” acknowledge pluralism, ideologies in this sense deny it. The most radical ideologies really want to reconstruct the hearts and minds of the people. They want to create new humans, who are entirely devoted to the new ideas. In his well-known novel 1984 George Orwell spoke about ideological political systems that will not rest until each citizen truly, out of their heart of hearts, “loves Big Brother.” (In this vein, very radical “single issue public philosophies” that deny pluralism, may therefore sometimes better be called “single issue ideologies.”)

The most outspoken cases of this variety of ideologies are the specifically totalitarian regimes, that always refer to an ideological basis, a comprehensive worldview (national socialism; fascism; communism). In this case one often speaks of “totalitarian ideologies.” Although in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century it has become almost a truism that totalitarianism is bad and that hence a totalitarian ideology is a pejorative term, this is not so much a matter of course as it may seem. Among e.g. French intellectuals during the 1950s and 1960s the term “totalitarian” carried a positive reference (Bosshardt 1992).

The totalitarian cases are the extreme instances of a longing, present in many societies, both among those in power and among the populace at large, to see the nation they live in as a “deep community,” in which there is a kind of spiritual unity among all citizens (cf. Rousseau’s concept of a “civil religion”). Very often this unity is symbolically concentrated in the “cult of the great leader.” This longing for spiritual unity in the political order always creates tensions with those groups that form a different kind of spiritual community, among which very often are found Christians.

Given the background of ideologies in modernity and given also the unifying/totalistic or even totalitarian tendencies in at least the most salient ideologies, it is terminologically unwise to apply the term to phenomena in earlier phases of history, as is today done for example in literary and biblical studies. Here the term is used to denote the alleged “social constructions” that are hidden in the text. What the texts present as objectively true the modern interpreter views as an imaginary reality. A title like *History and Ideology in the Old Testament* (Barr 2000) is catchy, but against the background of the history and meaning of the term ideology, as sketched above, historically anachronistic.

## Christian Responses to the Challenge of Ideologies

Until now the focus has been on political and social tensions between Christianity and ideologies. In this section the focus will shift to the theological and philosophical relations between them. Ideologies have had a very complicated relation with the Christian faith. Ideologies originated in Europe, where since around the year 1000, Christianity

has been very influential. The type of Christianity that developed in the West combined four characteristics that have deeply influenced the course of the West and shaped the processes of modernization that took off in the West. The first insight that Christianity introduced is a daring emphasis on all human beings as created equal in the image of God (*imago Dei*) and as responsible stewards, both to preserve and to develop God's creation. A second element was the idea of time as having a linear as against a cyclical direction (Löwith 1949). So humans find themselves in a present state of misery, but the future will bring a new heaven and a new earth. Humankind lives "between the times." A third element that has received a growing emphasis since medieval times in Europe can be called the affirmation of ordinary life (Taylor 1989). This movement from *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) to the *vita activa* (active life) imbued life in this world with transcendent relevance (Arendt 1958). Improving this material world, can therefore be a divine calling. A fourth element was the development of science, at first as a means to understand God's orderly created world, but soon also as a means to further develop this world and/or to remedy its ills (Stark 2005).

This mix of motifs, though still set firmly within Christian spirituality, needed only one spark to make possible the rise of ideologies: that was the belief that creating a better, or even perfect, world, was an exclusively human task, or perhaps the ultimate human task – and a real possibility too, for example through the application of scientific methods. Closely connected was the belief that sin and evil can be overcome within and through history, within and through time. For ideologies to emerge, what needed to be removed was the still remaining transcendent orientation of Christianity and the Christian view of human nature and of the world as fallen (Goudzwaard 1985). Once the dominance of this view was gone, ideologies could arise. In that sense a short formula seems apt: after Christendom, ideologies.

So Christianity prepared the ground for the emergence of ideologies, but at the same time one has to say that ideologies signify a clear break away from Christianity and could only emerge after Christianity lost its intellectual and spiritual hegemony. In the vacuum created by this loss, ideologies function as a kind of substitute, mirroring some basic Christian themes and longings. The heavenly Kingdom of God becomes for example the earthly perfect Communist society, where all people will live in peace forever. In this vein the ideologies really become, in the words of the Austrian-American political philosopher Eric Voegelin (1901–1985), "substitute religions" or "political religions," without God, but with "prophets," a new "church," new "Messiahs," etc. (Voegelin 1938; 1952; 1968; 1987; Buijs 1998). In a comprehensive theological study of ideologies, the Dutch theologian Van Gennep (1989) described ideologies as "prodigal sons and daughters" of Christianity.

This complicated background has often put the Christian movement in an ambivalent and uncertain situation vis-à-vis ideologies. Sometimes ideologies are outright anti-Christian movements, which need to be resisted and unmasked. Sometimes ideologies may articulate some implications of basic Christian beliefs that hitherto had remained unrecognized by Christians themselves. One could employ a word from Jesus in the Gospel in Luke 16:8 (KJV) as a hermeneutical tool: "for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of the light."

Therefore, Christian responses to ideologies can differ widely, depending on the nature of a certain ideology, the context and also the different interpretations of the Christian faith

itself. This makes it very hard to identify general patterns in the Christian responses to ideologies. Yet, it is possible to sketch some options that Christians have taken, when confronted with ideologies. Depending on the context, they may be right, they may be wrong – that often is a matter of fierce debate. Moreover, in the course of time the judgment on these responses may as well change drastically. It requires discernment and wisdom to determine which response is both anchored in the Christian faith and geared to the context.

### *Christian responses (1): ideologies as incarnations*

One type of response sees ideologies as legitimate substitutes, or “second best” options, or even as better options that now promise to realize what Christianity wasn’t able to pull off. In this vein, the ideology comes to be seen as the carrier of the fulfilment of Christian promises. The central theme here is often the interpretation of the notion of the Kingdom of God: can this, and should this be realized, instantiated in this world?

The most well-known example on the political “right” is the support of the so called *Deutsche Christen* (“German Christians”) for the Nazi regime, hinted at already above. Their support was preceded by a century in which, heavily inspired by the work of the philosopher George Friedrich Hegel, the existing German culture and its political institutions increasingly came to be regarded as an earthly instantiation of the Kingdom of God. This so called *Kulturprotestantismus* (“cultural Protestantism”) felt itself threatened by modernization processes in general (think of urbanization, industrialization and the ensuing social upheaval for peasant and local businesses) and by the rise of communism/socialism in particular. However, National Socialism was able to evoke in the mind of the *Deutsche Christen* the impression that it was going to restore the Christian foundation of the German nation and hence reverse the ugly consequences of modernization.

Similar views have been developed in the context of various other ideologies, both from the right and from the left. Radical versions of Christian socialism saw socialism as the new gospel, fulfilling the earlier gospel message.

When we looked above at how ideologies might affect Christianity, this type of response was categorized under the heading of “poisoning.” A closer look at the context in which this may occur, shows that oppositions between ideologies are involved as well. In the battle of ideologies, especially those from the left versus those from the right, Christians have often felt trapped, and have given in to the temptation to choose for the one, just to prevent the rise of the other, siding with left over against right or vice versa. In many Latin-American countries, during the Cold War era, the Catholic Church supported, sometimes quite openly, the right-wing authoritarian regimes, mainly out of fear of communism. Whether in this atmosphere the danger of inner “poisoning” was acknowledged, or whether this was a legitimate choice, is for historians to judge.

### *Christian responses (2): ideologies as heuristic signposts (liberation theology)*

A second response to ideologies focuses on what can be learned from them. This may result in what can be called a critical alliance, but an alliance nevertheless, between an ideology and Christianity.

Perhaps the most prominent example of this response has been so called “liberation theology.” Here the general inspiration for social engagement is drawn from Christianity and Christian spirituality, but the actual social and economic analysis draws on Marxism, identifying Marx’s concern for economic oppression as a true challenge for the church. The theological inspiration for the movement came from German philosophers and theologians like Ernst Bloch, Jürgen Moltmann, and Johann Baptist Metz, but it found its most prominent voice in the work and life of the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez (b. 1928) and his *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), criticizing the “Christendom mentality” and calling for a church that would “imitate faithfully the poor Christ.” In order to achieve this, a new type of theology was needed, that could be characterized as “critical reflection on praxis,” praxis being the concrete action of the church to better the world. There was no “orthodoxy” without “orthopraxis.” As one of their sources of inspiration for this new type of theology, liberation thinkers drew on the work of Karl Marx and sought to force theology to reflect “on the meaning of the transformation of this world and the action of man in history.” So Marxism had a heuristic function to make the church aware of its social and political role. Liberation theology has led to a movement of so-called base communities” where believers meet outside the institutional church structures for mutual empowerment. Other representatives of liberation theology aligned themselves more (Ernesto Cardenal in Nicaragua) or less (Dom Helder Camara in Brasil) with Marxism.

In spite of the subtlety of liberation theology’s alliance with Marxism, it aroused substantial controversy which came to a head in the Catholic Church during the early years. This pope, who as former Polish cardinal had ample personal experience with concretely existing Marxism, rejected liberation theology, while at the same time took over its main concern, the “option for the poor,” but in a different theological framework.

As further examples of this type of response to ideologies, one might think of the heuristic role that ideologies such as ecologism and feminism (which I earlier identified more properly as “single issue public philosophies”) may start to play, or are playing already within large sections of global Christianity, perhaps making them aware of forgotten or suppressed viewpoints within their own tradition. A very interesting instance of this is the role that the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, has played in the environmental movement. Triggered by the rise of ecologism and even more by the careless neglect of nature in modern societies, he has developed an ecological theology in which the sacramental character of God’s creation is highlighted and our obligation to care for creation is forcefully derived from that. In this line one can also point to Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* (Praise Be To You) (2015). Another example is afforded by the evangelical thinker Elaine Storkey, who poses the question: “What’s right with feminism?” (Storkey 1986).

### *Christian responses (3): critical–loyal support*

As stated previously, Christians worldwide now tend to support constitutional frameworks that safeguard religious freedom and human rights for all. In some contexts the

political order that provides for such a constellation, has developed at the same time some form of mild nationalism. Nationalism is at heart “ideological” as it is an attempt to deeply influence the hearts and minds of people. Yet, if nationalism is connected with freedom and observance of human rights, it seems wise and legitimate for the Christian movement to critically participate in it and be loyal citizens. However, at the same time it seems crucial to be aware of the risks involved, when one starts to see one’s nation as an incarnation of God’s will. So loyal support at the same time has to be critical.

One case of this is of course the United States. Here nationalism has some barely hidden religious overtones. Sociologist Robert Bellah re-introduced the older term “civil religion” to analyse this phenomenon (Bellah 1975). Many American presidents for example portray the United States as a country with a divine mission to bring freedom to the entire globe. Many American Christians adhere to the same view. There is of course room for thankfulness for the shelter one’s own nation provides for Christianity. But given the longstanding tradition of the doctrine of the two kingdoms or two cities (see above), this thankfulness should never develop into an uncritical endorsement of the view epitomized in the expression ‘my country, right or wrong.’

An entirely different case is Indonesia (Intan 2006). This country with an overwhelming Muslim majority, nevertheless has decided not to become exclusively Muslim but to be a plural nation, based on a nationalist public philosophy, called *Pancasila*, containing “five principles”: belief in one divine being, a just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by wisdom arising from deliberations among people’s representatives and social justice for all the people of Indonesia. A remarkable detail is that in the first principle the name “Allah” was deliberately avoided and the more general term “divine being” (*Tuhan*) was chosen to make room for citizens of very different faith traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. So here we see a typical example of mild nationalism designed to create a safe umbrella for all citizens (although atheists do not seem to have a place here), and which is pluralist in nature. It seems wise for Christians to support this kind of nationalism and actively to engage themselves in the public sphere in order to protect it.

#### *Christian responses (4): ideologies as idolatry*

A radically different Christian response to ideologies has been the revival of the concept of idolatry (making use of the near-homonymy of idols and ideology, see Koyzis 2003). In this type of response ideologies are interpreted as full-blown rivals of Christianity. Hence no compromise or mixed version is possible.

The first official anti-ideological theological confession in this vein has been the *Barmen Declaration* formulated in Germany in 1934, in the context of the rise of the totalitarian Nazi ideology by the confessing church (Ger., *bekennende Kirche*), mentioned above. In this brief document, it is emphatically stated (thesis 1) that for the Christian Church there is no other revelation of God than Jesus Christ. God’s revelation is not to be found for example in alleged “laws of nature” or “state laws.” The state, says thesis 5, is not allowed to claim for itself the place of the one and only, or totalitarian order of human life. The church in particular should not become an organ of the state.

Exegetically, the line of the *Barmen Declaration* has been deepened by attempts to link the New Testament references to “principalities and powers,” or to the “gods of the age,” to modern ideologies. The Dutch theologian Hendrikus Berkhof and especially the American theologian Walter Wink in an extensive trilogy (summarized in Wink 1998) have made analyses of ideologies in this vein. Along this same line the Dutch economist Bob Goudzwaard has given an analysis of ideologies as “idols” (Goudzwaard 2007). He distinguishes four legitimate human goals that have the potential to develop into ideologies: (1) resistance to all oppressive forces that obstruct the arrival of a better society, (2) the survival of one’s group, culture or religion and the identity that is thus formed, (3) the pursuit of material wealth and continuous material progress, and (4) and guaranteed security against outside attacks. When these goals become all-pervasive and an entire society is organized in such a way as to achieve them, a modern idol is easily born. An idol is recognizable by a three-step process. First, something is singled out to function as representative of the divine and is robed with salvific expectations. Then people are increasingly willing to make sacrifices for it, sacrifices that normally they would never think of. More and more, all means are justified as long as they serve the idol. Finally people increasingly start to internalize the idol and become transformed into its likeness. The analysis can be applied for example to Mammon (idol of money), to Baal (idol of growth and fertility), to Moloch (idol of military power and dominion), as well as to their modern counterparts, for example to ideologies of economic growth or of imperialism. In the long run idols/ideologies cannot survive. In his Christian critique of ideologies, Goudzwaard opposed an ideological ethics in which the goal justifies the means to an ethic-of-the-way, that pays careful attention to the justifiability of the means, of the steps that have to be taken toward a future of justice and shalom. In his analysis, it is imperative for Christians to abandon an ideological emphasis on absolute goals and to make space for incremental changes.

In an entirely different context, Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama has developed a rather similar position in the relation between Japanese Christianity and the Japanese state (Koyama 1984). For him, a theologian writing in the post-World War II context, the destruction of Japan had to do with its earlier choice to follow idols, in the form of ideologies. The Cross of Christ is for Koyama essentially a critique of idols, as it denounces all totalitarian claims and exerts its influence on human history through the affirmation of brokenness (p. 258).

About the same time as Koyama’s book was published, in South Africa the *Kairos Document* was issued. It is a theological declaration against the apartheid regime, analyzing ideology in terms of a “state theology” that channels obedience toward idols rather than the biblical God.

### *Christian responses (5): developing alternative views and practices on a just society*

The responses just examined do not exhaust the available options. Having heard the cry for justice and social order expressed in the ideologies, Christianity may develop an independent vision of a good and just society, avoiding some of the salient and ‘idolatrous’ shortcomings of the ideologies.



The most influential example of this option is certainly the development of social teachings in the Catholic Church. The first document that actually embodied this approach was the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII. Since then a long line of encyclicals and pastoral documents have appeared, that expand, deepen, and further contextualize this line of thinking, from *Quadragesimo Anno* (1934), via a number of documents from the period around the Second Vatican Council, and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) by John Paul II until recent documents of Benedict XVI (*Deus est Caritas*, 2006; *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009) and the already mentioned encyclical of Francis (*Laudato Si'*, 2015). A continuing motivation in the church's social teaching has been to address the concerns that Marxism highlighted while at the same time rejecting Marxism. On the other hand, unchecked liberalism/capitalism is criticized for its exploitative implications. Key elements of the documents are such notions as "human dignity," the "common good" (*bonum commune*), "justice," "solidarity," "love" and the principle of "subsidiarity" (delegating decision-making to local contexts, thus preventing a centralized and all-encompassing state).

On the Protestant side something similar has developed in the work of the Dutch theologian, journalist, politician, and eventual Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) who developed his theological Calvinism into a worldview in which political and social questions could be addressed, criticized unchecked capitalism without giving in to socialism, and advocated a plural, free society, in which a free market and a limited state would work for the good, not for the exploitation of the poorest classes (Kuyper 2013). A key principle, meant to ward off economic, political as well as social imbalances, was the so-called sphere sovereignty, acknowledging a great number of different, mutually independent societal spheres which all have their own calling.

These responses to ideologies attempted to avoid the totalizing and perfectionist tendencies of ideological recipes for a just society, acknowledging the lasting presence of evil and suffering, and yet attempting to give concrete guidelines in steps toward a more just society.

This may even go as far as developing Christianly inspired alternative practices in society. Christians have, throughout their history and also during the "age of ideologies," shown a remarkable creativity in civil society initiatives, ranging from education to emergency relief, from healthcare to housing, etc. These practices have had and may well have in the future important anti-ideological side-effects, showing that the Christian faith has a more promising and fruitful response to suffering and the search for justice than ideologies have.

## The Future of Ideology

In intellectual circles in recent decades the phrase "end of ideology" became somewhat in vogue, at first in the title of a book by the American sociologist Daniel Bell (1960). In the new 1988 edition, Bell identified the French philosopher Albert Camus as the actual father of the phrase, who in 1946 had called upon the French socialists to abandon Marxism as an absolute philosophy, and thus to recognize a new context that "marks

the end of ideologies, that is of absolute Utopias, which destroy themselves, in History, by the price they ultimately exact" (Bell 1988, 411, quoting Camus).

Although a new upsurge of ideological thinking, now of neo-Marxist variety, was yet to come, during the student uprisings in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States and Europe, at the end of the 1970s a Camus-like expression became highly influential, coined by the French postmodern philosopher François Lyotard (1979), the "end of grand narratives" or "metanarratives" (*grands récits*). This phrase signified the advent of what is often referred to as "postmodernism." The phrase was an expression of the observation, or perhaps the hope, that the days of the great comprehensive ideologies, with their oppressive potential, were numbered, or even over. Perhaps the time has already run its course for full-scale doctrines of societal, political, and economic renovation or revolution.

However, this may be a premature judgment, as the rise of political Islam may attest. And in China, communism still is the reigning ideology, which under Xi Jinping even seems to have become more important rather than less. Moreover, the way in which the world in recent decades has shown itself to be susceptible to the belief that an unchecked free market would be the sure way toward an ever happier and wealthier future, is remarkable and has many characteristics of a full blown ideology at work (often rather vaguely called "neo-liberalism").

So the "end-talk" surrounding ideologies should not lure global Christianity into the all too comfortable idea that there are no available mental frameworks that promise a shortcut to an earthly paradise, if only we . . . (and then follows the miraculous, but often not very ethical recipe). For a great part of the global church, already now or in the future, it may not be grinding poverty but the seduction of consumerism that may be the hole through which new ideologies enter: ideologies of material happiness, that may close off some parts of global Christianity from the suffering of other parts. Hunger as a source of misery in the world is increasingly replaced by the threat of obesity.

It may also be that in many parts of the world, ideologies may lose their collective character, but may return in the guise of techniques of personal happiness, of private success, of individual wealth, promising a personal, individual paradise. And it may well be that they immunize people in the same way from seeing the consequences of their actions for others, as ideologies did on a collective level.

To incessantly ponder the mystery of incarnation as both an affirmation of the human tragedy as well as a signpost of hope and renewal, may well be the permanent task of global Christianity in the encounter with ideologies, maintaining a critical distance from all ideologies, while at the same time learning from them as expressions of a cry for justice and recognition.

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## CHAPTER 18

# The Ecumenical Movement

## Why Violence, Why Not Peace?

Jan van Butselaar

The World Council of Churches (WCC), one of the best known expressions of the ecumenical spirit that became powerful in the late nineteenth and for all of the twentieth century, entered the twenty-first century with the announcement of a new program: *Decade to Overcome Violence (Why Violence? 2002)*. The program itself does not belong in this chapter, since it was realized in the new century. It is quoted here for another reason: the motto seems to describe rather well the powerful inspiration that made the ecumenical movement so momentous in the history of the church. Never before were churches and Christians so united in their mission to work for peace in the broadest sense of the word and against division and oppression (Rouse and Neill 1967; Fey 1970; Briggs, Oduyoye and Tsetsis 2004).

Generally, the “ecumenical movement” is understood as the search of churches worldwide to overcome their own divisions and to proclaim their message, the gospel of Jesus Christ, with one voice. The movement also identified with the downtrodden and excluded peoples of this world, as an instrument for social and sometimes political action. But in fact, the ecumenical movement was aiming at higher goals than just organizing church unity or international advocacy – no matter how important these two issues may be. At the end of the twentieth century, its focus became the reconciliation of all humanity (Raiser 1991). Its aim was to work for an all-embracing peace, for *shalom*. That became the guiding principle for the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century. How did this ecumenical spirit come about?

### Missionary Roots

Its beginnings can be found in the missionary movement of the nineteenth century. Mission itself was nothing new then to the Christian Church; the apostles Paul and Thomas

and others went all over the *oikoumene* (inhabited world) of their days to proclaim the gospel. They were followed by many others through the ages, sometimes with little lasting success, such as the Jesuits in China (Gernet 1990: 394–399, 450–454), sometimes creating a remarkable following, as shown in the work of the Russian Orthodox missionaries in eastern Siberia (Neill 1964: 213–216). In the course of the nineteenth century, missionary activities received a strong impulse when new possibilities for effective work became available as a result of modern scientific research. Steamboats meant more safe and secure travel and new drugs against tropical diseases made it possible for missionaries to stay alive longer in what then was called the “mission field” (Latourette 1969: 9–10). Growing educational insight and larger financial means did the rest. Missionaries could intensify their action world-wide, sometimes helped by the European colonial enterprise, often in spite of it. One of the unexpected results of this intensified missionary action was that missionaries from different churches, belonging to different Christian confessions, started to meet each other frequently on the so-called mission field. Often, that meant a discovery: they found out that there was more that united them in faith than separated them. That conclusion had its consequences; cooperation and mutual consultation became a reality. Division, even opposition between Christians in mission was more and more seen as shameful and counter-productive. This cooperation on the mission field also had its effects on the relationship between churches and missionary organizations in the missionaries’ home countries. There, in the “Old World,” the need to study and work together was also felt. It was the start of the international ecumenical movement.

In due time, international meetings were convened, first between Protestant mission societies. International mission conferences were organized in New York and London as early as 1854, followed by several others (Liverpool 1860; London 1878, 1888; New York 1900). There, not only was information exchanged on developments in Christian mission in general, but difficult ethical issues such as how to deal with polygamy were discussed. At these conferences, a spirit of comity was growing, recognizing the value of each one’s call to mission. In the local missionary context agreements were concluded between Protestants allocating to each mission the area in which it could settle down without endangering the missionary work of others (Beaver 1962). Later on, such agreements were also made between Protestant and Catholic missions, sometimes under pressure from the colonial authorities, as was the case in the Dutch East Indies (today Indonesia).

These first conferences and agreements still had a limited scope, both in regional and confessional representation. The real breakthrough of the ecumenical spirit came when under the guidance of John R. Mott and J. H. Oldham (Clements 1999) the first international World Missionary Conference was organized in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910 (Stanley 2009). Although most participants at that meeting came from the Western world, it was remarkable that delegates from as far as South Africa, Japan, China, and India were also present. The confessional representation in Edinburgh was rather broad and comprised almost every Protestant brand, except the Pentecostals. Their missionary work still had to be developed (Anderson 2007). Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians were also absent and that ecumenism that arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century was not yet in view.

The Edinburgh conference itself was an impressive achievement. Bringing together churches and Christians of so many backgrounds, was unheard of. The results of the conference were also worthwhile; nine volumes were needed to publish all debates, reports, and decisions. An important step forward for the future of the ecumenical movement was the decision taken in Edinburgh to set up a continuation committee, that later became the International Missionary Council (IMC 1921). It was soon followed by the creation of national missionary councils in Western countries and of conferences of missionaries in the so called mission fields. In this way, the ecumenical movement acquired its first organizational structure, that set the pattern for the much later founded World Council of Churches and for the many national Councils of Churches.

## Social Concerns

At the Edinburgh conference, questions concerning Christian faith and social responsibility came to the fore but they went beyond the scope of the meeting. Christians, though on the whole opposing Marxism, were eager to address social injustices in industrialized societies. In several European countries and in the United States of America this had led to Christian social action, such as that by the Innere Mission in Germany, the Association protestante pour l'étude pratique des questions sociales in France or the "Social Gospel" movement in the United States. In 1910, a Fédération Internationale des Chrétiens Sociaux was created at a conference in Besançon, France, that brought these movements together.

In the same period, another urgent question presented itself: that of world peace. Nobody at the beginning of the twentieth century could suspect that this era would be tainted by the horrors of two world wars. On the contrary, the creation of an International Court of Justice and the construction of a Peace Palace in the Hague, The Netherlands (1913), were seen as a guarantee that states would no longer solve their differences by way of armed conflict. That proved to be wishful thinking. Some church leaders, such as bishop Nathan Söderblom from Sweden, understood that already at a very early stage. His call for peace and understanding to the world powers (1914) was clearly heard, but could not stop the war machine; the same year, World War I broke out. Efforts by concerned Christians to bring people together, to search for peace rather than to use violence, did, however, continue; several international meetings were organized, not always successfully, but at least in those war years upholding the conviction that building peace for this world was an integral part of Christian stewardship.

That message was echoed by many, certainly when the world realized how great was the number of young men cruelly killed during World War I. Söderblom then decided to bring together those concerned with questions of social justice and international peace at a great conference in Uppsala, Sweden (the town of his see) in 1920. Americans and Europeans convened there (no representative of other parts of the world was present) and decided that this ecumenical work needed a structural basis: the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, shortly "Life and Work," came into being. Several meetings of this conference were held in the years between the two world wars. At the

last one in Oxford, 1937, the cold winds of Nazism and new war preparations in Europe were felt. Two years later, war broke out on an unprecedented scale. The action of "Life and Work" had not been able to change the minds of people and their rulers to such an extent that war had become an impossible possibility on the international agenda. But "Life and Work" had made clear that the Christian message was about peace and justice – not about oppression and violence.

## Christian Unity

All these movements – missionary, social, peace building, and others – brought Christians of different backgrounds together, not (yet) so much from culturally different areas (except to some extent in the missionary movement), but coming from different confessions and nations of the world. In those early days of the ecumenical movement they were mostly Protestant; Roman Catholics and Orthodox were not forgotten or excluded, but often, invitations for ecumenical gatherings to these churches were not very well received or even overtly rejected.

Those who did meet in the ecumenical conferences discovered how deeply divided they were by their different traditions, their liturgies and their confessions. Already at the mission conference in Edinburgh this had become clear, but once more there had been no time or place to discuss questions of Christian confession and Christian unity. Another forum had to be created to find common ground on these issues and to build the unity of the Christian Church. It was the American Bishop Charles Henry Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church who, in the aftermath of the missionary encounter in Edinburgh, gave the final "push" to create a special Conference to study questions touching Faith and Order in an ecumenical spirit. American churches were all in favor of such an initiative; churches in the United Kingdom and on the European continent were also won over to the idea. Even efforts to involve Roman Catholics and Orthodox in the search for doctrinal unity did seem promising. Although in the end cooperation with the Roman Catholics did not materialize (that was realized much later in the century), at least the Faith and Order movement was from the beginning shown as an initiative that did not seek to exclude, but to include, all Christians and churches.

The first international conference of "Faith and Order" took place in the Swiss city of Lausanne (1927). A second one was organized in Edinburgh (1937). The movement then showed its strength: in Lausanne 108 churches were represented (including Orthodox ones) with almost 400 delegates; in Edinburgh the number had grown to 123 churches and an even greater number of delegates. It was clear that the quest for unity, rooted in a common understanding of the Christian faith, had become a major concern for churches all over the world.

## New Beginnings: The World Council of Churches

More and more the conviction grew that isolated organizations, no matter how international and inspiring they might be, could not bring about a united Christian witness in



the world, and that a stronger instrument was needed. This was a council of churches that would represent the Christian Church worldwide and that could call churches to common action. At a meeting in Utrecht in 1938, representatives of Life and Work and Faith and Order came together to ascertain the way ahead. Important steps were taken then to create the new ecumenical body. But the realization of these plans had to wait until after the end of World War II.

Finally, in 1948, the moment had come. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was constituted in Amsterdam, comprising 147 churches from 44 different countries. Solemnly they proclaimed

Christ has made us His own, and He is not divided. In seeking Him we find one another. Here at Amsterdam we have committed ourselves afresh to Him, and have covenanted with one another in constituting this World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together. (Visser 't Hooft 1949: 9)

That was the language of peace and unity that was heard in Amsterdam – a much needed message, after the horrors of war. The theme of this first assembly of the WCC was well chosen: “Man’s disorder and God’s design,” meaning that in spite of all the disorder in the world, the churches were searching for unity against all chaos and wishing to serve in the plan of God for peace, for *shalom*, in this world. Renewed Bible study played an important role in discovering that design (De Dietrich 1945).

With this intention, the WCC started its work, with its first general secretary Willem Visser 't Hooft (Visser 't Hooft 1949). The agenda of the WCC in these first years was mostly set by Faith and Order and Life and Work, the founding organizations of the new body. The plight of the many refugees in Europe was given considerable attention, as was the reconciliation between Christians and churches in Europe, deeply divided after the horrors of the war. Moreover, evangelistic interests were included in the program of the WCC, in spite of the fact that in 1948 the International Missionary Council stayed outside the new organization.

On a regular seven-to-eight-year basis, the WCC organized general assemblies of its members. These were significant meeting points for the worldwide Christian community, an important opportunity to take stock of ecumenical achievements. In Evanston, United States (1954), the role of the laity in the church was accentuated and the economic and social problems of the world, such as racism and lack of religious freedom, were given high priority. New Delhi (1961), hosted an assembly where the influence of the multi-religious Asian context was clearly felt. The question was asked: in what way is or is not Christ present in other religions? The year 1968 was a time of revolution in the Old World; students and others in East and West went to the street to break up and renew the structures of society. Within the Marxist regimes in eastern Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, the quest for greater freedom became powerful. It was also the year of the Uppsala (Sweden) assembly of the WCC. There, this call for freedom and renewal was echoed by the participants; they decided to give high priority to the fight against oppression of all sorts. That did not mean taking leave from the struggle for peace, but rather recognizing that in order to gain peace, clear actions were sometimes needed.

The next assembly of the WCC was convened in Nairobi, Kenya (1975). That city was in fact second choice, since it was initially planned to take place in Jakarta, Indonesia. At the last moment, the government of that majority Muslim country did not dare to receive such a large Christian gathering. Nairobi as a venue put a definite stamp on the conference: meeting in the center of the developing world, the cause of the poor and the downtrodden was strongly emphasized. In Vancouver, Canada (1983), this accent on the poor and the consequences of such a choice were strengthened by a more inward looking movement: spirituality, a new word in the ecumenical vocabulary, became a powerful instrument to generate the energy needed for the long search for unity and peace.

In 1991, the WCC met in Canberra, Australia (1991). This assembly became the theater for another ecumenical challenge: the relationship with people of other faiths. There, the aboriginal community confronted the ecumenical world with traditional culture, traditional religion and its complex relation to Australian society as a whole. Furthermore, assembly participants were exposed to the spirit world of old Asian religions (Chung 1990). These experiences proved to be at the same time an enrichment and as well as a divisive factor for the ecumenical movement.

The last assembly of the twentieth century was held in Harare, Zimbabwe (1998). It was marked by internal tensions in the ecumenical movement, especially between the Orthodox member churches and others. The Western-style way of decision-making by majority vote was not the manner in which the Orthodox participants understood the functioning of the Church and of the ecumenical movement. So Harare decided to develop a more consultative process to govern the WCC, a process that was later put into action (Dokman 2013: 91–134).

These assemblies were large gatherings; they were meant to check the past activities of the WCC and to lay out policies for the future of the organization. That task could only partially be fulfilled in these large meetings. But they functioned as a living image of the *oikoumene*: so many opinions, so many cultures, so many confessions, but still a celebration of unity in Christ. As such, they held a promise for the unity of the Christian Church worldwide and in fact, for the peace of all humanity.

## A Growing Movement

The WCC continued to grow through all these years. The number of member churches increased from 147 to a community of more than 340 churches in 110 different countries. That diversity made a great impact, especially since so many churches from the South joined the organization; new theological approaches and new cultures demanded the attention of the ecumenical movement. Theologians from the so-called third world gained considerable influence; the more “evangelical” spirituality of many churches from the South required other forms of celebration. That was also the case when many Orthodox churches joined the WCC at the general assembly of New Delhi (1961). Their entry also meant an exposure to other forms of liturgy and theology.

It was not only new member churches that marked the growth of the WCC, but also the merger with other ecumenical organizations. Of great importance was the decision

of the International Missionary Council under the guidance of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin to integrate its work in the WCC (Newbigin 1985). That merger was also realized during the New Delhi assembly. Not only was “mission” from now on firmly integrated in the agenda of the WCC, but there was also another effect. Churches that before had refused for doctrinal reasons to become members of the WCC but were engaged in the IMC, now became linked to the ecumenical movement through their mission departments (Warren 1978). Other organizations also joined hand and spirit with the WCC, as was the case with the World Conference for Christian Education (1971).

The member churches of the WCC in the global South were originally mostly called mission churches, that is, churches that had come into being through the missionary work of Western churches. But an important group of churches in those regions had their origins outside the mission history, in the charismatic work of local preachers and prophets. Often, they had maintained a close link to traditional culture. These independent churches or African Instituted Churches (AICs) also found their way to “Geneva,” to the headquarters of the WCC and asked for admittance into the ecumenical fold. One of them was the largest independent church from Congo, the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu; it became a member of the WCC in 1969 (Martin 1981; Kuntima 1984). Other churches of this type followed in due course. More problematic was the relation with Pentecostal Churches, a fast growing confessional group in Christianity. Some Pentecostal Churches in Latin America had become members of the WCC, but the great majority of those churches stayed outside the movement. There was a certain mistrust, but more important was the totally different style of organization between the WCC and the Pentecostals; the one group seemed to get together to discuss reports and policies, the other to pray and to praise. But through the years, progress was made and relations improved. That became clear in a series of meetings the WCC organized with representatives of the Pentecostal movement (Van Beek 1996).

## Mission

It is not possible to describe in a short overview all the “results” of ecumenical cooperation in the WCC and elsewhere. To highlight a few of the most important ones, the focus is here on the “founding fathers”: Mission, Faith and Order and Life and Work.

After its merger with the WCC, the International Missionary Council (IMC) became the WCC Mission Department, soon to be renamed Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). It continued the tradition of the IMC to organize on a regular basis world mission conferences in different parts of the globe. These conferences coined new insights in mission that would influence much of the ecumenical work, also outside the direct field of mission. Mexico City (1963), where the first world mission conference was held after the merger, will be remembered for the term “mission in six continents.” There, it was recognized that the missionary calling of the Church had to be directed as much toward the northern hemisphere, to the old Christian lands, as to the rest of the world. The conference in Bangkok (1973) met under the shadow of the Vietnam War. The participants stated that there is no division between personal and social salvation:

the two belong together. Also, in Bangkok the relationship between “sending” churches and “receiving” churches in mission was reviewed. The question was whether “foreign mission” still was needed and useful. It was the start of a moratorium debate discussing the need to refrain from sending and receiving such foreign missionaries. The debate continued through the 1970s, but without much visible result. In Melbourne (1980) “Gods priority for the poor” became a leading motto for missionary work and for ecumenical action worldwide. That was in line with what Roman Catholic bishops in Latin America had already stated in their meeting in Medellin (1968); the shameful discovery was made that the poor of this world are the “sinned against,” as Raymond Fung, who later became evangelism secretary of CWME, formulated it in Melbourne. The San Antonio, Texas, conference (1989) found itself in the midst of the debate on the relation with people of other faiths. The question was whether Christians meeting people of other living faiths (and ideologies) should adopt an attitude of open dialogue, unconditional and non-dogmatic, or whether in that dialogue a concern for the saving of souls, for conversion should be clear and present. The WCC Working Group on Dialogue, under the leadership of Asians as Stanley Samartha and Wesley Ariarajah and North Americans such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Diana Eck, had come forward with severe critiques on missionary action in the past and present. In San Antonio a formula was found by the South African missiologist David Bosch that brought the two points of view together and set the pace for new reflection:

We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God. (Wilson 1990: 32; Van Butselaar 2004: 66–76)

But the most important achievement of CWME was probably the formulation of a mission statement that was not only accepted by the Central Committee of the WCC and well received in its member churches, but was also picked up in Christian and missionary circles outside that organization. *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (Stromberg 1983) was written under the guidance of the then director of CWME and later general secretary of the WCC, Emilio Castro. The document was translated and published in more languages than any other WCC statement had been before. New insights in the missionary calling of the Church as the priority for the poor, the dialogue approach, were harmoniously presented together with fundamental convictions as the obligation to proclaim the gospel to all people and the call to conversion. The document furthered Christian unity since it opened for many “evangelical” churches and missionary organizations not linked to the WCC the way to new ecumenical cooperation. So was the relationship between the evangelical missionary forum, the Lausanne Movement, named after its first meeting in Switzerland in 1974 (Douglas 1975), and CWME strongly intensified. That became visible by the mutual representation at their respective mission conferences in Manila, the Philippines (Douglas 1990), and San Antonio, Texas, that both took place in 1989. The last mission conference of the century was held in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (1996). There, the focus was on the relation between gospel and culture in conclusion of a study process that in the preceding years was organized by CWME (Duraisingh 1998).

## Faith and Order

Within the WCC, the search for Christian unity in theological and liturgical sense was the task of the department of Faith and Order. In their meetings, theologians from all over the world came together to discuss their differences. In the beginning, the voice of theologians from the South was not much heard. They met in another forum, the Ecumenical Association for Third World Theologians (EATWOT). Where Faith and Order was concentrating on questions of theology and liturgy of the main line churches, EATWOT was dealing with the oppression of the poor and the cultural context of the gospel. Later on, more theologians from the developing world became active in the work of the Faith and Order Commission.

In its work for Christian unity, Faith and Order achieved an important step forward when the commission agreed on a document entitled *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (*Baptism . . .* 1981). There it was made clear how broad the common vision of the churches is on these fundamental elements of the Christian faith – and how limited the differences. The BEM document was followed by the publication of an ecumenical liturgy based on this agreement, the so called *Lima Liturgy* (Best and Heller 1998). Both documents were prepared in cooperation with Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians. Churches worldwide were asked to react to the document. They did so and their reactions were later published in six volumes by the WCC; this provided material for new research and studies (Thurian 1986–1988).

## Life and Work

No matter how important the work of CWME and Faith and Order may have been, for the public eye it was another part of the WCC that got most credit – or debit, as some may say. The subjects Life and Work was charged with in the ecumenical movement got international attention, since they often seemed to imply political choices.

The relief work of the Council in times of disaster in the world was one of those. Another one was the work of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA). This commission was able to mediate in several political conflicts, sometimes of a violent character. Well known is their successful work for peace in Sudan. In other parts of the world, the interventions of this commission were also highly valued. The character of these interventions was strongly influenced by the division in the world into two camps, a "communist" East and a "capitalist" West. It put a mortgage on all social and political questions in the second half of the twentieth century. The WCC in general and its CCIA in particular tried to build bridges over that divide, but could not always escape the suspicion that it leaned ideologically and practically toward "Eastern" points of view. It seemed that more protests were launched against Western governments than Eastern ones, more conciliatory language was used towards "communist" than towards "capitalist" powers. The fact that within the WCC, representatives of churches living under communist regimes sometimes seemed to be functioning also as agents of their governments, did not help the reputation of the ecumenical movement

in some Western circles. The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe in the 1990s brought this discussion to a halt.

A remarkable action of the WCC in the field of Life and Work was the creation of the Program to Combat Racism (PCR). At the general assembly in Uppsala (1968), the African-American author James Baldwin had convincingly urged the ecumenical movement to take steps against racism, especially against the apartheid system perpetuated by a “Christian” government in South Africa. That recommendation was put into action in 1969 when the PCR program was constituted and a sizable amount of money was made available in a special fund. That fund provided subsidies to liberation movements in the world for educational work. It also allocated grants to liberation movements such as the South African ANC, the Mozambican Frelimo, the Namibian Swapo that did not exclude violence in realizing their aims. This caused a lot of debate inside and outside the ecumenical movement, and inside and outside the churches too. The accusation that the WCC was a bandwagon for communist powers was heard all over again; a new claim was that a religion of love and peace was now supporting violence and war. The program acquired greater trust when donations came in from sources that could not be considered furthering the cause of violence, such as that, for example, from the Dutch Queen, Juliana. But the question remained: can churches accept that violence is used in their name? A serious study followed, that brought some clarity (*Violence . . .* 1973). In that document, the Christian rejection of violence and an obligation to work for peace were confirmed; they were only limited in cases of excessive oppression (Van Butselaar 2005: 142–145). In the long run the liberation movements gained international recognition and became ruling powers in their own countries. PCR was then seen as an effective instrument to oppose oppression and side with the poor.

The WCC also took a clear stance in questions concerning economic justice. Already in 1966, a large conference was held in Geneva on “Church and Society.” Long before ecological problems pushed the world to reconsider its use of natural sources, there was a call to work for a sustainable society. Economic iniquities in the world order got a high place on the agenda of the conference. That concern would continue throughout the life of the WCC. At the general assembly in Vancouver (1983) a program for “Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation” was launched that inspired churches and Christians all over the world to take part in a study and action process. In 1992 a report was published that showed a way forward for the economic world order after the fall of the Berlin wall, after the end of the communist experiment in Eastern Europe (*Christian Faith and World Economy Today* 1992). The free market that seemed to have won the battle for the world economy was in that document not condemned, but its limits and its pitfalls were clearly indicated.

## Church Unity

Amidst all these challenges, the WCC did not forget its primary concern for Christian unity. As shown above, much of the work of Faith and Order was geared toward that end. But also in local situations the ecumenical spirit that was so strong after World War II

brought churches together. A first fruit of this was the creation of the Church of South India (1947) out of several “mission Churches” (Sundkler 1954). Later, other churches were (re)uniting as was the case in Australia and Canada, to name but a couple of instances. Confessional and practical agreements were concluded everywhere. But remarkably, in most cases the ecumenical vision for Christian unity was not expressed first through new bureaucratic structures, but through united ecumenical action:

*to announce* the Good News in Jesus Christ, forgiveness, hope, a new heaven and a new earth; *to denounce* powers and principalities, sin and injustice; *to console* the widows and orphans, healing, restoring the broken-hearted; and *to celebrate* life in the midst of death. (Stromberg 1983: 28–29)

Ecumenism did not lose itself in time consuming and painful deliberations on structures; peace, *shalom*, was the fundamental ecumenical dream for which churches wanted to live. That was their missionary calling.

## Ecumenical Movement without Borders

Attention has been paid above to the ecumenical movement as it found its expression in the World Council of Churches. But that organization was not the only expression of that ecumenical spirit. Many national councils of churches came into being, many regional councils of churches were formed. In Asia, the Christian Conference of Asia, CCA, was founded (1957), in Europe the Conference of European Churches, CEC (1959), in Africa the All Africa Conference of Churches, AACC (1963), in Latin America the Latin American Council of Churches, CLAI (1978). Also the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Oceania established their own ecumenical bodies. Confessional families such as the Reformed (World Alliance of Reformed Churches, WARC), the Lutherans (Lutheran World Federation, LWF), and others continued their ecumenical work. So too did the student movement (e.g. the World Student Christian Federation, WSCF) and youth organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA. About each of them, an uplifting story could be told. They all brought churches and Christians together, working for peace and rejecting violence to solve problems. They also communicated to their membership the studies and reports of the WCC. The ecumenical movement became a worldwide web in the pre-digital era.

The Roman Catholic Church, representing half of Christianity, was an ecumenical movement on its own. For a long time, it was hoped that this church would also become a member of the WCC. As discussed, in 1948 the attitude of the Vatican vis-à-vis the birth of the WCC was hesitant and Roman Catholics stayed away. The formation of a Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Catholic Church (1965) raised again high hopes for future membership. It was not to be. Relations between the two bodies were intensified in many ways (several commissions of the WCC got Roman Catholic participation), but a clear distance remained between these two parts of the ecumenical movement. Even the visits of Pope Paul VI (1969) and Pope John Paul II (1984) to the Ecumenical Center in Geneva could not change that situation.

Other groups that did not join the WCC in its ecumenical adventure were the more conservative forces in Christianity. Already at the time of creation of the WCC in Amsterdam, 1948, a counter-organization was set up in the same city in the same year: the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), under the guidance of the American Presbyterian pastor Carl McIntire. Some smaller Reformed Churches continued to meet within the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES, later: Council, REC). Evangelical groups and churches, united in the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) or, for missionary concerns, in the Lausanne Movement, and were rather keen not to be seen as fellow travelers of the WCC. But on the whole, relations between WCC and these bodies improved over the years.

This growing mutual recognition between the different parts of the ecumenical movement became visible in the creation of a World Christian Forum, Geneva, 1998 (Howell 2007; Höschle 2008). Churches and Christians of almost all convictions and almost all parts of the world met each other in this gathering on a consultative basis. It meant one step forward on the road to Christian unity. It was the broadest form of ecumenism, that carried forward into the twenty-first century the message that division and violence in this world should be overcome by unity and peace for all humankind.

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## CHAPTER 19

# Vatican II

## Renewal, Accommodation, Inculturation

Peter C. Phan

Of the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council only one, and by no means the most significant, contains the terms “renewal” and “accommodation” in its title, namely, *Decretum de Accommodata Renovazione Vitae Religiosae*, rendered in English as *Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life*, and commonly referred to by its first two words *Perfectae Caritatis* (PC) (Flannery 1996). It would be a serious mistake however to conclude from this paucity of terminological usage and the minor importance of PC, in which the term *renovatio* occurs, that “renewal” (*renovatio*) and “accommodation” (*accommodatio*), or “up-to-date renewal” (*accommodata renovatio*) are peripheral to Vatican II. On the contrary, *ressourcement* (going-back-to-the-sources) and *aggiornamento* (updating), by which “renewal” and “accommodation” are achieved, can justly be said to constitute the very twin goals of the council. Indeed, *aggiornamento* is arguably the primary and the more important of the two, since it is for its sake that *ressourcement* is undertaken, that is, to provide *aggiornamento* with a firm grounding in the Bible and the Tradition.

Discoursing, then, on “renewal” and “accommodation” in Vatican II is tantamount to expounding the entire council, a wide-ranging task that is impossible to carry out adequately, even within ample space. Fortunately, the third term in the title of the essay, “inculturation,” will narrow down the scope of my discussion and will lend a precise focus to our otherwise sweeping reflections. The term “inculturation” itself was not used by the council, though it had already been in circulation among Catholic missiologists in the 1950s, itself a theological appropriation of the older concept of *acculturation*, much in vogue since the end of the nineteenth century among North American anthropologists, to designate the process of the individual’s encounter and interaction with different cultures.

This essay examines the ways in which Vatican II attempted to bring the church into dialogue with the modern culture and in the process instituted the requisite reforms of various aspects of church life to achieve this goal. It focuses, in current Catholic parlance, on the council's project of inculturation and its impact on global culture since the 1960s. "Inculturation," as its etymology implies, refers to the attempt to "localize" or "indigenize" the gospel into cultures (to play on the *in* of "inculturation"), or more generally, to formulate a theology of the dynamics of the interaction between church and culture/world. Given the limited space, the history of Vatican II will not be presented here, even though the council cannot be fully understood simply by interpreting its sixteen documents but must be viewed as an "event," that is, as a happening situated in the context of historical factors preceding, during, and following the council (Alberigo 1995–2006; Alberigo 2006; O'Malley 2008).<sup>1</sup> Nor is it possible to discuss all the doctrinal teachings and pastoral and canonical policies promulgated by the council except where such teachings and policies have had an impact on the forms of Christianity that Roman Catholicism has taken upon itself since the council (Vorgrimmler 1967–1969; Latourelle 1988–1989; Hünermann and Hilderath 2004–2006). I first briefly examine the various terms used by Vatican II to describe the process of inculturation and their underlying theologies. Next I survey some of the key areas of renewal in the form of inculturation of the gospel in cultures has taken place since the 1960s. Finally I describe the "reception" of Vatican II's inculturation project, that is, the extent to which the council's renewal program has been implemented – or, as the case may be, failed to be so – during the same post-conciliar period.

## Terms and Theology

That Pope John XXIII intended the main objective of the council he convoked to be church renewal as part of the project of accommodation and inculturation in response to the challenges of modernity is clear from his opening speech on October 11, 1962:

The *punctum saliens* of this Council is not, therefore, a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church . . . For this a Council is not necessary. But from a renewed, serene and tranquil adherence to the whole teaching of the church in its entirety and precision as it still shines forth in the conciliar acts from Trent to Vatican I, the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of the conscience in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration, with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character. (Abbot 1966: 715).<sup>2</sup>

*The "pastoral" nature of Vatican II and terminological usage*

What John XXIII means by "pastoral" in the phrase "a magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character" must not be contrasted with "dogmatic," the former dealing with contingent practical policies, the latter with unchangeable matters of faith and morals. This is the line of argument espoused by those who oppose the council's doctrinal teachings and its reform programs. Notable among these are Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the founder of the Society of St. Pius X, and his followers, who argue that because Vatican II was intended to be a "pastoral" and not a "dogmatic" council, it does not have a binding force, especially its liturgical reforms, its teachings on collegiality, its directives on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and its attitude toward the modern world, endeavors that can be categorized under the rubric of "inculturation."

This interpretation is of course a perversion of John XXIII's use of the term "pastoral" and his intention for the council he convoked. What the pope intends by describing Vatican II as "pastoral" is that he would have the council, on the basis of a deeper understanding of the Christian faith, concentrate on the renewal of the church, to "let in fresh air," as John XXIII is alleged to have said, opening a window of his apartment, in response to the question about his intention for the council. Letting fresh air blow through the church is part of the project of *renovatio* and *accommodatio*, the council's two by far most commonly used words to describe the process of church renewal. In addition to these two, other terms are also used, notably *instauratio* (reform), *recognoscere* (revise), *fovere* (promote), *aptatio* (making suitable or appropriate), and *progressus* (advancement).

*Renovatio*, customarily translated as "renewal," is taken to be equivalent to *instauratio* (reform), though several theologians have argued strongly that there is a radical difference between "reform" and "renewal" and that, more importantly, Vatican II aims at achieving the latter and not the former.<sup>3</sup> *Accommodatio* is usually rendered as "adaptation," and more literally, "accommodation." What the council intends by *accommodatio* and what it proposes as the undergirding theological principles and the modes of realization of this renewal process cannot be ascertained simply by means of an etymological analysis of the term *accommodatio* and by contrasting it with other terms such as acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, inculturation, contextualization, indigenization, localization, and so on. Rather they must be discerned by means of a close examination of conciliar texts on the tasks and methods of church renewal.

*Theology of renewal and inculturation in official church documents*

Mention has been made above of the fact that of Vatican II's sixteen documents only the decree *Perfectae Caritatis* has the expression *accommodata renovatio* in its title. Terminological usage aside, to understand the council's theology of renewal, we must turn to its first, and from the perspective of intra-ecclesial renewal, the most influential text, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*). The constitution is first, not simply because chronologically it is the first document to be

approved by the council, but more importantly, because it lays out renewal as the goal of the council:

The sacred council has set out to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian lives of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions that are subject to change; to encourage whatever can promote the union of all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever serves to call all of humanity into the church's fold. (No. 1)

As is clear from the above text, in its effort "to adapt to the needs of our age those institutions that are subject to change," the council intends to undertake an inward as well as outward renewal. *Ad intra*, it aims at updating and strengthening all aspects of Christian life; *ad extra*, it seeks to restore Christian unity and to make its mission to the world more effective. Indeed, these two renewals go hand in hand with each other and mutually condition their achievements: the more the church is renewed internally, the more it will be better equipped to be reunited with other Christian communities and carry out its mission to the world, and vice versa.

Such a renewal program must not be understood simply as a strategy undertaken on purely pragmatic grounds. On the contrary, Vatican II roots the necessity of church renewal in the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Thus, the council prefaces its liturgical reforms with an exposition of the "general principles for the restoration and progress of the sacred liturgy," principles that are deeply theological in nature. At the heart of liturgical inculturation, according to Vatican II, lies God's plan of salvation for all humanity that has been achieved in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit (*SC*, nos. 5–6), and liturgical renewal is aimed at enabling all the faithful to take a "full, conscious, and active part" in the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (*SC*, no. 14). This same doctrinal justification for renewal and inculturation is repeated, at times almost verbatim, in the council's later documents. In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (*LG*), Vatican II lays the foundation for church renewal in the plan of salvation of the Triune God (nos. 2–4). In the council's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes* (*AG*), the renewal of the church's missionary activity is also rooted in the "'fountain-like' love, the love of God the Father," from whom as "the principle without principle . . . the Son is generated and from whom the holy Spirit proceeds through the Son" (*AG*, no. 2). In the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (*UR*), the restoration of unity among all the followers of Christ is built on the fact that "the only-begotten Son of God has been sent by the Father into the world so that, becoming human, he might by his redemption of the entire human race give new life to it and unify it" (*UR*, no. 2). The council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate* (*NA*), grounds the necessity of interreligious dialogue in the fact that "humanity forms but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth and also because all share a common destiny, namely God" (*NA*, no. 1).

Nowhere perhaps is the urgency of renewal and inculturation more eloquently explained than in Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World,

*Gaudium et Spes* (GS). Its rich text on the duty of all Christians to listen to the cultures deserves our full attention:

The church is not unaware how much it has profited from the history and development of humankind. It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of science, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on human culture and new avenues to truth are opened up. The church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and languages of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all and the requirements of the learned, insofar as this could be done. Indeed, this kind of adaptation and preaching of the revealed word must ever be the law of all evangelization. In this way it is possible to create in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in suitable terms and to foster vital contact and exchange between the church and different cultures . . . With the help of the holy Spirit, it is the task of the whole people of God, particularly of its pastors and theologians, to listen and distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light of God's word in order that the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented. (GS, no. 44)

Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have both written at great length about inculturation. Among Paul VI's writings, to be noted are his 1969 address to the African bishops in the cathedral of Kampala archdiocese and his 1975 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelization in the Modern World, Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN). In his Kampala address, Paul VI affirms the need for cultural pluralism and inculturation: "An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic, and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example. And in this sense you may, and you must, have an African Christianity" (Hickey 1982: 204). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is rightly regarded as the magna carta of the inculturation of the Gospel. It insists on the evangelization not only of individuals but also of cultures. On the one hand it affirms the distinction between the Gospel and culture, and on the other hand, it says that "when she [the church] puts down her roots in a variety of cultural, social and human terrains, she takes on different external expression and appearances in each part of the world" (EN, no. 62). This process, which EN calls "transposition," must be done "with the discernment, seriousness, respect and competence which the matter calls for in the field of liturgical expression, and in the area of catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures, and ministries" (EN, no. 63).

In his prolific writings John Paul II greatly expands his predecessor's teaching on inculturation. Notable among them is first of all the 1977 Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesis in Our Time, Catechesi Tradendae* (CT). Interestingly, here, in a papal document the word "inculturation" appears for the first time: "The term *acculturation* or *inculturation* may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation. We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their

essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches" (CT, no. 53). In his numerous worldwide travels, John Paul II shows a keen interest in the local cultures and strongly urges their use to inculturate the Gospel. In his 1980 address to the bishops of Zaire, the pope refers to the "Africanization of the Church" and states that, just as Catholicism has shaped Poland, "it should be possible for Christianity to unite with what is deepest in the Zairean soul for an original culture, at this time African and Christian" (John Paul II 1980: 224). In addition, the pope vigorously defends those indigenous cultures that are threatened or marginalized, such as those of First Peoples in the United States and Canada and the Australian aborigines, during his visits to these countries in 1984 and 1986 respectively, and urges their preservation and promotion in the process of evangelization.

John Paul II's deep and abiding interest in culture and inculturation is demonstrated in his founding in 1982 of the Pontifical Council for Culture. In his letter to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, to whom he entrusted the organization of the new council, the pope wrote: "Since the beginning of my pontificate, I have considered the Church's dialogue with the cultures of our time to be a vital area, onr [one] in which the destiny of the world at the end of the twentieth century is at stake . . . For this reason, I have decided to found and institute a Council for Culture, capable of giving the whole Church a common impulse in the continuously renewed encounter between the salvific message of the Gospel and the multiplicity of cultures, in the diversity of cultures to which she must carry her fruits of grace" (John Paul II 1982: 1–8). Three years later, on the eleventh centenary of the two missionary brothers, Saints Cyril and Methodius, John Paul issues the encyclical, *The Apostles of the Slaves, Slavorum Apostoli (SA)*, in which he writes: "The work of evangelization which they carried out – as pioneers in territory inhabited by Slav peoples – contains both a model of what today is called 'inculturation' – the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures – and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church. By incarnating the Gospel in the native culture of the peoples they were evangelizing, Saints Cyril and Methodius were especially meritorious for the formation and development of that same culture, or rather of many cultures" (SA, no. 21; Shorter 1988: 206–238; Peelman 2007: 22–28; John Paul II 1990: nos. 52–54).

Pope Benedict XVI has not treated inculturation explicitly in his two encyclicals, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) and *Spe Salvi* (2007). However, while still a cardinal, he made an important proposal that instead of inculturation we should speak of "interculturality" (Claver 2008: 120–123). His point is that the Gospel is already clothed in certain cultures, such as Jewish, Greek, and Latin, before it is brought into contact with other cultures, and therefore, evangelization implies an intercultural encounter between the already inculturated Gospel and these cultures. In his 2006 lecture at the University of Regensburg, Benedict describes inculturation as the third phase of the de-Hellenization process and states: "True, there are elements in the evolution of the early Church which do not have to be integrated into all cultures. Nonetheless, the fundamental decisions made about the relationship between faith and the use of human reason are part of the faith itself; they are developments consonant with the nature of faith itself" (Pope Benedict XVI: 2006).

## Key Areas of Renewal and Inculturation in the Post-Vatican II Era

As mentioned above, Vatican II's main goal was the reform and renewal of the church in responding to the challenges of our age. Indeed, the history of the Catholic Church since the 1960s can be characterized as a long and sustained effort at achieving this goal of global inculturation. Post-Vatican II reforms can be divided into two broad types: *ad intra* and *ad extra*. I will briefly review some significant reforms in both of these two types.

### *Ad intra reforms*

Among Vatican II's intra-ecclesial reforms, the most visible, and as it turned out, the favorite target of strident opposition by right-wing Catholics, is without any doubt the changes in liturgy and worship. Vatican II urges that "all the faithful should be led to take full, conscious and active part in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" (SC, no. 14). A commission for the implementation of liturgical reforms, known as *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia*, was instituted in 1964, and later incorporated into the newly formed Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Under the direction of Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, the *consilium* revised existing liturgical books to conform them with the council's directives and, more importantly, composed new sacramental and liturgical books in Latin (*editio typica*), to be translated into vernacular languages for use throughout the world. Most notable among these is the Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI in 1969, now in its third revised *editio typica*, replacing Pope Paul V's 1570 "Tridentine" and subsequently much revised missal. These liturgical reforms have been opposed by various groups of conservative Catholics (for example, the above-mentioned Society of Saint Pius X) who reject not only the plethora of new liturgical books but also all forms of inculturation that imply the abandonment of Latin in favor of the vernaculars and the enlargement of the role of the laity in worship (Faggioli 2012a).

Other significant intra-ecclesial reforms concern the structures and organization of the church. These reforms are codified in the 1983 *Codex Iuris Canonici* for the Latin Church and in the 1990 *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* for the Eastern Catholic Churches. Notable among organizational innovations are Paul VI's 1967 and his successors' frequent reforms and restructuring of the Roman Curia and its dicasteries (often with the changing of the names of several congregations and the addition of a host of new pontifical councils and commissions); the institution of the Synod of Bishops as a way to implement episcopal collegiality, and the creation of national episcopal conferences and transnational federation of episcopal conferences (the most important among them being the *Consejo episcopal latinoamericano*, created in 1955, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, created in 1968; and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, created in 1972). Though they do not possess canonical authority, both the national episcopal conferences and the transnational federation of episcopal conferences have functioned as effective organizational instruments for the inculturation of the Gospel not only in their own countries but in the Catholic Church throughout the globe.



At the theological level, post-Vatican II's inculturation efforts give rise to what is known as "contextual theology," in which the various contexts form not only the locale in which theology is developed but also its source (Bevans 2002). One of the most influential and lasting type of contemporary contextual theology is liberation theology. Rooted in the option for the poor, Latin American liberation theology was focused at first on economic justice. Later, it also became part of the inculturation project of the gospel (liberation from anthropological impoverishment), especially in countries where indigenous cultures have been suppressed, especially by colonial powers and dominant cultures, such as Africa and Asia. Liberation theology has also addressed other forms of oppression such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ecology, in the effort to meet the challenges of contemporary cultures and societies (Irrarázaval 2000; Magesa 2004; Kenneday 2006; Claver 2008).

In connection with the option for the poor and liberation theology, a new form of spirituality has emerged in the post-Vatican era with a strong emphasis on social justice and ecological integrity. This spirituality is much strengthened by Pope John Paul II's encyclicals on social issues such as *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) (Himes 2004).

In addition to promoting various forms of liberation and inculturation, liberation theology has also inspired another structural innovation with enormous implications for the inculturation of the Gospel, namely, the Basic Ecclesial Communities (or Basic Christian Communities, or Small Christian Communities). These grassroots communities, originating in Brazil and the Philippines and now spreading to all continents, are effective ways to live out the idea of church as the People of God and *communio* and have been hailed by the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops as "a true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion evangelization" (Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (1985): II, C, 6; John Paul II 1990: no. 51).

### **Ad extra reforms**

There are two areas of *ad extra* reforms in which there have been significant achievements during the post-Vatican II era, namely, church reforms to achieve ecumenical unity and dialogue with non-Christian religions. As mentioned above, one of Pope John XXIII's intentions for the council is the restoration of ecumenical unity. Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism states that "the restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council" (*UR*, no. 1). The decree spells out the Catholic principles on ecumenism (nos. 2–4), outlines the practice of ecumenism (nos. 5–12), and describes the different relationships between the Catholic Church on the one hand and the churches of the East (nos. 13–18), and the churches and ecclesial communions originated from the Protestant Reformation.

Toward the end of the council, on December 7, 1965 Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I officially withdrew the mutual excommunications that broke the communion between the two Churches of East and West in 1054. In their joint declaration the pope and the patriarch declare their hope that "the whole Christian world, especially the entire Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church

will appreciate this gesture as an expression of a sincere desire shared in common for reconciliation, and as an invitation to follow out in a spirit of trust, esteem and mutual charity the dialogue which, with God's help, will lead to living together again, for the greater good of souls and the coming of the kingdom of God, in that full communion of faith, fraternal accord and sacramental life which existed among them during the first thousand years of the life of the Church."

To bolster support for Christian unity, in 1989 Pope John Paul II changed the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity that had been established by John XXIII into the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). Since then the PCPCU has been engaged in an international theological dialogue with each of the following churches and World Communions: the Orthodox Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Malankara Churches, the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Methodist Council, the Baptist World Alliance, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and some Pentecostal and Evangelical groups. In 1995 John Paul published his important encyclical on ecumenism *Ut Unum Sint* in which he stated forthrightly:

When I say that for me, as Bishop of Rome, the ecumenical task is 'one of the pastoral priorities' of my Pontificate I think of the grave obstacle which the lack of unity represents for the proclamation of the Gospel. A Christian Community which believes in Christ and desires, with Gospel fervor, the salvation of mankind can hardly be closed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who leads all Christians towards full and visible unity. Here an imperative of charity is in question, an imperative which admits of no exception. Ecumenism is not only an internal question of the Christian Communities. It is a matter of the love which God has in Jesus Christ for all humanity; to stand in the way of this love is an offence against him and against his plan to gather all people in Christ (no. 99).

As a result of ecumenical dialogue at both the international and national levels, significant bilateral joint declarations and statements have been published detailing areas of doctrinal agreements and remaining differences, clearing the way for reunion, such as the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999) by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church and the many statements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.

The second area of extra-ecclesial inculturation is interreligious dialogue. Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate* (NA), represents the church's volte-face in its attitude toward non-Christian religions. Despite its brevity and beyond expectation, NA turns out to be one of Vatican II's documents with the most far-reaching consequences. It makes interreligious dialogue into one of the most challenging and controversial tasks for the post-conciliar church, one in which no Christian belief has not been subjected to extensive revision (*Dialogue and Proclamation* 1991). In 1964 Pope Paul VI instituted the Secretariat for Non-Christians, which John Paul upgraded and renamed as Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1988. More than any other pope, John Paul tirelessly promoted interreligious dialogue. In 1986 he gathered the leaders of various religions in Assisi for the World Day of Prayer for Peace. In his numerous travels throughout the world, he made a point

to meet with the leaders of other religions, in particular Judaism and Islam. The dialogue between the Catholic Church and Judaism is no doubt the best organized and the most extensive, under the umbrella of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews. Recent political events have prompted the Catholic Church to devote more attention to the dialogue with Islam (Gioia 2006).

## Vatican II's Renewal and Inculturation: An Unfinished Project

The year 2012, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, has sparked an avalanche of publications evaluating the impact of the council on the church.<sup>4</sup> The overwhelming consensus of current historical and theological scholarship is that Vatican II has made an enormous impact on the church, especially through its programs of *accommodata renovatio*. That there have been deep and wide changes in the church and its relation to non-Christian religions and to the world is beyond dispute, especially for Catholics growing up before the 1950s. Whether the reforms and renewals mandated by the council have been too little or too much, too slow or too fast, beneficial or destructive, the assessment depends on the theological outlook from which the judgment is made, the evaluator's agenda and interests, the geographical areas under consideration, and on the types of *ad intra* and *ad extra* innovations outlined above (Alberigo, Jossua, and Lomonchak 1987). It is impossible, and perhaps too early, to formulate an adequate evaluation of such a complex event as Vatican II and its aftermaths. That there have been a "clash of narratives" and a "battle for meaning," to use two apt expressions of Massimo Faggioli's, in interpreting what the Vatican says and has represented since the 1960s, has been amply documented (Faggioli 2012b). Ultimately, the issue comes down to how to interpret the council itself and not just of this or that text – the hermeneutics of the council as an event and not just the body of its sixteen officially promulgated texts (Rush 2004; Orsy 2009; Heft and O'Malley 2012).

One thing, however, has garnered the consensus among contemporary church historians and observers of the Catholic Church, and that is, there has been a concerted and pervasive attempt on the part of the Roman Curia since the 1960s to correct what it perceives to be false understandings of Vatican II and to roll back what it regards as a wrong-headed implementation of the council's reform programs. Efforts have been made to carry out a "reform of the reform," an circumlocution for Roman authorities' attempts to reverse many of the council's reform agenda.

At the theological level, there have been during John Paul II's long pontificate numerous condemnation of innovative theological movements such as liberation theology, feminist theology, and theology of religions. Under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), literally hundreds of theologians in all parts of the world were silenced for their allegedly erroneous and confusing writings, especially in the fields of moral theology and religious pluralism. The Declaration of the CDF *Dominus Iesus* in 2000 takes a negative stand toward the ecclesial nature of the Reformation Churches and the salvific value of non-Christian religions.

On December 22, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI gave a speech to the Roman Curia on the correct interpretation of Vatican II in which he contrasts two opposite hermeneutics of

Vatican II, which he terms “the hermeneutic of discontinuity” and the “hermeneutic of reform.” The former, he says, urges following the “spirit” rather than the texts of the council; it leads to confusion and must be opposed. The latter, which affirms the continuity of Vatican II with the past and which denies that there is a rupture between the “pre” and the “post”-conciliar Church, “silently, but more and more visibly, bore and is bearing fruit” (Pope Benedict XVI: 2005).

In liturgy, in line with his hermeneutics of reform, to appease the traditionalist Catholics, Benedict XVI permitted a wider use of the John XXII-approved 1962 Roman Missal (the so-called tridentine or Latin mass) instead of the Paul VI-approved 1970 Roman Missal, and the administration of most of the sacraments according to the rituals in force prior to Vatican II’s liturgical reform (Pope Benedict XVI: 2007). Also, in an attempt to bring the schismatic Society of Saint Pius X back to the church, in 2009 Benedict lifted the excommunication of the four bishops of that society who had been illicitly ordained by Marcel Lefebvre (one of whom, Richard Williamson, is a Holocaust-denier). Furthermore, a revised English translation of the Roman Missal was undertaken in conformity with the directives of the reactionary Fifth Instruction “For the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council,” *On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy, Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001). The norms imposed by *Liturgiam Authenticam* for translating the Latin *editiones typicae* into the vernacular languages, especially those that do not belong to the family of Indo-European languages, go against all that has been achieved in liturgical inculturation.

In ecumenism, in 2009 Benedict XVI approved the provision that allows the Anglicans who wish to enter into the Catholic Church to form ordinariates of their own within the Catholic Church. Despite vigorous protestations to the contrary on the part of Rome, such a decision seriously hampers the dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church. In 2006 Benedict XVI decided to strike out “Patriarch of the West” from his many official titles (while keeping the titles of “Vicar of Jesus Christ” and “Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church”) caused deep concern among the Orthodox Churches who saw in that act a surreptitious claim of universal jurisdiction over the whole of Christianity.

In interreligious dialogue, there have also been backward – perhaps unintended – steps. Mention has been made of the CDF’s *Dominus Iesus*, with its negative assessment of non-Christian religions, and of Benedict XVI’s speech at the University of Regensburg, in which he cites an offensive remark about the Prophet Muhammad, causing a violent reaction against Catholics among some Muslim communities. (Fortunately, it also provides the occasion for a stronger dialogue between Muslims and Christians, with the publication of the letter *A Common Word Between Us and You* on October 13, 2007.)

The post-Vatican II Catholic Church was buffeted not only by these zigzagging, restorationist movements in church reform that have caused disappointment and even anger among the liberal members of the rank and file. Tragically, the clergy sex abuse and its cover-up, which were reported by the media in the 2000s, first in the United States and then in other countries, have also destroyed the moral credibility of church authorities. The Vatican itself was riled by the Vatileaks scandal in 2012 which reveals serious internal problems of a sexual and financial nature and turf wars within the Roman Curia itself.

Perhaps overwhelmed by these church problems and because of old age, Benedict XVI took the dramatic step of resigning from the papacy effective February 11, 2013. With the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis, who brings to the papacy a set of pastoral experiences and an agenda quite different from those of his predecessor and a starkly contrasting papal lifestyle, there is a widespread hope that Vatican II's renewal (and not just reform) will be taken up again.

Thus, so far, Vatican II's project of *accommodatio renovatio* and inculturation still remain an unfinished business, even though a fair and objective assessment must recognize that significant progress has been achieved. What still needs to be done in terms of church renewal and inculturation depends on location and the resources of the local church. There is however a wide agreement on the key outstanding issues. Filipino Bishop Francisco E. Claver, in his honest and hard-hitting reflections on his thirty-five years of "episcopating," mentions some of these issues such as the practice of genuine collegiality at all levels of church life, corresponsibility and participation of all members of the local church in all the decisions and activities affecting their lives, the collegiality of the laity, and a spirituality of which the option for the poor and solidarity are central components (Claver 2008: 149–159; Arbuckle 2010). Only when all of these (or at least these) proposals are fully carried out in all the churches can it be said that Vatican II's *accommodata renovatio* is a finished business.

## Notes

- 1 It is to be noted that an emphasis on Vatican II as an "event" does not imply a fallacious contrast between the "letter" of the council and its "spirit" but only argues for a hermeneutical approach to the council that does not privilege its officially approved texts.
- 2 Translation amended to reflect the original more accurately.
- 3 For instance, Aloysius Pieris, a Sri Lankan Jesuit theologian, distinguishes sharply between "reform" and "renewal": "The uniqueness of Vatican II is that, in its origin and its development as well as in its conclusion, the whole church was moved by an enthusiasm for a radical renewal than a mere institutional reform. Renewal moves from the periphery to the centre (or from the base to the summit), whereas reform flows from the centre to the periphery (or from the summit to the base). Reform is smooth and renewal is stormy" (Pieris 2010: 91).
- 4 Recently a series of informative articles on the reception of Vatican II is published by the premier English-language journal of theology *Theological Studies*, nos. 74–75 (2012–2013).

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## CHAPTER 20

# Christian Revival and Renewal Movements

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As scholars of World Christianity will be aware, the twentieth century witnessed a remarkable worldwide expansion of Christianity. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most dramatic case, with only about 4 million Christians in 1900, and some 400 million in 2000. Since the 1949 Communist Revolution in China, the Chinese church has burgeoned amid opposition and persecution, and today there may be as many as 118 million Christians. Global Christianity is at present only 40% European and North American, as opposed to 80% in 1900. Today's representative global Anglican would be neither white nor male, but a black African mother.

What is less well-known today is that in almost all cases of rapid expansion, the growth of Christianity was connected with "religious revivals" or "awakenings," or, perhaps better, "charismatic people movements" (Shaw 2010). Such movements stir up eschatological vision and what Shaw calls "optimistic fatalism," that is, a confidence that no problem – personal, familial, or political – is too big or difficult to resolve. Revivals established new forms of community as well as practical, activist expressions of faith. Revivals refashioned social and ecclesial structures by transferring power from center to periphery. People not previously given a voice, or a chance to lead, have been thrust into the limelight. Women, people of color, the young, and the less educated have all played major roles in modern Christian revivals.

The social scientist Anthony Wallace demonstrated that "revitalization movements" can generally be understood in terms of three phases – a problem stage, paradigm stage, and power stage (Wallace 2003; Shaw 2010). In the problem stage, people feel that their maps of reality no longer work. The old roads have led to dead ends. Societies show stress in the form of alcohol and drug abuse and family breakdown. In the paradigm stage, a leader or group of leaders emerges who are neither reactionary (clinging to the past) nor radical (rejecting the past). Such moderate revivalists develop a new paradigm

that is not completely new but a reworking of earlier patterns. Leaders rediscover the New Testament and the early sources of their own tradition. In the power phase, the new paradigm starts to become a mass movement. Yet external resistance increases. If the new movement can overcome opposition from both conservatives and radicals then it may have transformative influence on social, political, and economic affairs. Cultural renewal begins and new institutions emerge. The movement might have trans-local and even global impacts (Shaw 2010).

The English word “revival,” together with its foreign equivalents (Ger. *Erweckung*, Fr. *réveil*, Sp. *avivamiento*, Chin. *fen xing*, Kor. *bu hung*), in general usage denotes a period of time in which a Christian community undergoes revitalization. It has been defined as “a period of religious awakening: renewed interest in religion,” with “meetings often characterized by emotional excitement” (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*). To call a religious gathering a “revival” is to suggest that an *intensification of experience* has occurred. A gathered multitude does not constitute a revival as such. What distinguishes a revival is a deepening of religious feeling and expression. “Revivals” are thus *corporate, experiential events*. In the social contexts of “revival” there is often a spiritual contagion – an infectious influence transmitted by proximity – causing one person’s spiritual experiences to spill over to others. The term “renewal” is not as clearly defined as revival, and yet it suggests a return of zeal or vitality to a group of Christian believers who have declined in their devotion.

At least since the mid-1700s, reports of Christian revivals from differing geographic regions and cultural groups have shown common themes. Participants in revivals speak of their vivid sense of spiritual things, great joy and faith, deep sorrow over sin, passionate desire to evangelize others, and heightened feelings of love for God and fellow humanity. In times of revival, people often crowd into available buildings for religious services, filling them beyond capacity. Services may last from morning until midnight. News of a revival usually travels rapidly, and sometimes the reports of revival – in person, print, or broadcast media – touch off new revivals in distant localities. During a revival, clergy and other Christian workers may receive many requests for their services. Sometimes people openly confess their sins in public settings. Another mark of revivals is generosity – individuals willing to give their time, money, or resources to support the work of the revival. Revivals are often controversial, with opponents and proponents who vehemently criticize one another. Anti-revivalism typically arises in the wake of revivals. Often there are unusual bodily manifestations in revivals, such as falling down, rolling on the ground, involuntary muscle movements, laughing, shouting, and spiritual dancing. Another common feature in revivals is the occurrence of so-called signs and wonders, such as the healing of the sick, prophecies, visions or dreams revealing secret knowledge, deliverance or exorcism from the power of Satan and the demonic, and speaking in tongues.

Christian revivals have often provoked theological debates. Themes discussed in the wake of Christian revivals include the nature of sin, the meaning of faith and repentance, the place of prayer in triggering revival, the signs or marks of true conversion, the significance of bodily manifestations in revivals, spiritual discernment and the distinction between genuine and counterfeit spirituality, the activity and effects of Satan and the demonic, the dangers of religious fanaticism, the role of laypersons and especially



the issue of lay preaching or exhorting, the role of women in the church, the limits of ministerial authority, the resolution of conflicts between ministers and laypeople, the possible grounds for ministers or laypersons to separate from congregations or denominations that oppose revivals, the need for new associations and collaborations among proponents of revival, and the call for social reform and social justice.

The idea and phenomenon of revival has special pertinence for Protestants beginning in the 1730s–1740s. Though some renewal movements in early and medieval Christendom, as well as in modern Roman Catholicism, have affinities with Protestant revivals, the discussion here will primarily focus on Protestant Christianity, together with Protestantism's daughter traditions such as Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Renewal, and the nondenominational and para-church movements. Eighteenth-century Christian revivals have roots in the European Pietist tradition, and in seventeenth-century Puritanism in the British Isles and New England. For brevity's sake, this essay will pick up the story during the 1700s, and the interested reader is directed to references at the end for the seventeenth-century background (McClymond 2008; McClymond and McDermott 2012; Ackva 1995; Benrath and Sallman 2000; Van Den Berg and Brecht 1993).

## The Evangelical Awakening in Britain and the Great Awakening in America

The transatlantic religious revolution that became known as the Evangelical Awakening in Britain and the Great Awakening in America burst forth in the mid-1730s and early 1740s. Yet a number of recent scholars have seen revivals in English-speaking regions as rooted in earlier European – and especially German – developments. One of the striking precursors was the so-called “Children’s Revival” just after 1700 among the persecuted, German-speaking Protestants of Silesia. Deprived of their homes and church buildings, and so forced to worship out-of-doors, this movement was led at first by younger people. The exile of the Protestant Salzburgers of present-day Austria – suffering much like the Silesian Protestants at the hands of Catholic authorities – brought a sense of crisis in the larger international Protestant world during the late 1730s. This time of crisis seems to have been a prelude to the heightened spiritual intensity of the 1740s (Ward 1980; 1992). Moreover, the refugee Moravians who settled on Count Zinzendorf’s estate at Bertelsdorf in Saxony experienced what they considered to be a communal renewal or “Pentecost” in 1727. Many of their internal rifts and disputes were set aside, and a new spirit of love began to prevail among them. Soon these Moravians were sending out missionaries to the West Indies (1732), to Greenland (1733), to the Indians of Surinam, to the Hottentots of South Africa (1737), and to Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon (1737) (Watts, 1978). In their commitment to global missions, the Moravians were far ahead of other Protestants, who first founded their mission societies beginning in the 1790s. John Wesley had had several encounters with the Moravians that were instrumental to his spiritual awakening at Aldersgate in London in 1738. Even though Wesley soon had a theological falling out with the Moravian Christians, the fact remains that the Moravian influence was a decisive factor in John Wesley’s personal life and in the early phases of

the Methodist movement (Podmore 2000). This German and Continental background has often been ignored in British and American accounts of the Evangelical Awakening in England and the Great Awakening in America. Some scholars have stressed the trans-Atlantic dimension, highlighting American influences in England and Scotland during the 1740s (Watts 1978; Crawford 1991).

Among the leading personalities in evangelical revival in the English-speaking world were George Whitefield (1714–1770), Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), and the brothers John (1703–1791) and Charles (1707–1788) Wesley. Each had distinctive gifts—Whitefield the itinerant and incomparable orator; Edwards the pastor, author, and theologian of revival; Charles Wesley the hymn writer; and John Wesley the itinerant and organizer of Methodism. By most measures, Edwards has been the most influential of authors on the topic of Christian revival. He is the observer, analyst, theoretician, and theologian with whom all later authors on revival have had to grapple (McClymond and McDermott 2012).

Beginning in the late 1730s, George Whitefield's preaching had an extraordinary effect on both sides of the Atlantic in catalyzing and solidifying what was perceived to be a single revival movement, or "work of God," in far-flung locations. Whitefield's fervent and often extemporaneous sermons turned biblical narratives into a kind of actor's script, so that he became, in Harry Stout's phrase, "the divine dramatist." In London he preached to as many as 20,000 at one time, and in Boston and Philadelphia during 1740–1741 to 15,000 persons. Hundreds of lesser known and unknown local pastors and lay exhorters were inspired by Whitefield to preach revival sermons in local parishes and other locations. In this way the Great Awakening came not only to the venues where Whitefield preached but to hundreds of towns and hamlets throughout Britain and the American colonies.

An early sign of the emerging eighteenth-century revival tradition was the Northampton (Massachusetts) Awakening of 1734–1735, led by the town pastor, Jonathan Edwards, and resulting in the conversion of several hundred. In 1733–1734 the young people of Northampton began to show "flexibleness" in yielding to the pastor's spiritual advice. Soon there were signs of spiritual interest throughout the town and arising independently at various localities that had not been in communication with one another. By the spring of 1735 the town, as Edwards wrote, "seemed to be full of the presence of God," and nearly everyone was preoccupied with thoughts of God and salvation. Just as important as the 1734–1735 revival was Edwards's description of it: *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737). Edwards's account combines acute psychological observation with brilliant theological analysis. Nothing quite like it had been written before. Edwards's observation demonstrated to him that the process of conversion showed a "vast variety." The older Puritan theology, specifying definite stages of conversion that everyone had to undergo, did not match up with converts' lived experience. Edwards made note of the extraordinary experiences that some people had undergone in the Northampton revival, including visions of God, of Christ on the cross, and of the fires of hell. With customary caution, Edwards neither accepted these experiences as revelatory nor rejected them as delusory. Instead, he generally held them as due to the activity of the imagination while someone was in a state of spiritual and emotional arousal.

In his full-length treatise *Some Thoughts on the Revival* (1742), Edwards responded to critics of the Great Awakening. Edwards believed that critics of the revival had gone

astray, first, by judging the revival a priori (i.e., based on their initial presuppositions); second, by not using the Bible as a whole as their rule for judging; and, third, by not distinguishing good from bad. Negative aspects did not nullify the benefits of a revival. The fire and fervor of revival was bound to bring some imbalances. *Some Thoughts* exhibited openness and caution toward revivals in about equal measure.

Edwards's *Religious Affections* (1747) taught that assurance of salvation was not based on experiences of terror and comfort following a given sequence. Instead, Edwards highlighted the centrality of the "affections" in spiritual life and found the signs of truly gracious affections to lie in their objective, God-centered character and their tendency to engender "holy practice." In *Humble Attempt* (1748) Edwards promoted the transatlantic "concert of prayer" in which congregations in far-flung locations united to pray for revival on the same day of the month. This work had widespread historical influence throughout the 1800s, and again, since the 1980s, as it reemerged as a seminal work in the international Christian prayer movement. Edwards's *Life of Brainerd* (1749), though not specifically addressed to the topic of revival, helped to instill the idea that spiritual awakening might be rooted in the self-sacrificial life of a dedicated individual – in this case a missionary to Native Americans.

While Jonathan Edwards judged the Great Awakening to be, on the whole, "a glorious work of God," Boston Congregationalist pastor Charles Chauncy (1705–1787) held an opposing view. "Religion, of late," he wrote, "has been more a commotion in the passions, than a change in the temper of the mind." In *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (1743), Chauncy argued that revival participants mistook their own passions for supernatural guidance. These "enthusiasts" were caught up in a false spirituality characterized by bodily convulsions, freakish conduct, imagined favor with God, and irrationalism. The "enthusiasts" also showed spiritual pride and excessive criticism of everyone not in their group. Strengthening Chauncy's case against the revival was the outlandish behavior of James Davenport (1716–1757), known for singing in the streets, preaching for as long as twenty-four hours at a time, and, in one notorious episode, lighting a bonfire for his followers to burn their luxury goods and so purify themselves of worldliness. Chauncy's prioritization of reason over emotion (or affections) was a decisive difference from Edwards, who had insisted on the indispensable role of both.

John Wesley was the father of the Methodist movement and Methodist Church, a grandfather (through his teaching on sanctification) of the nineteenth-century Holiness movement, and so a great-grandfather of the Pentecostal movement that emerged in large part from the Holiness movement. Wesley had a brief and troubled stint as a minister in the American colony of Georgia, returned to England, and then underwent conversion or spiritual renewal (scholars have debated which category to use) at Aldersgate in London in 1738. Though Wesley was not Edwards's peer as a theological author, his sermons and treatises contain an implicit theology of revival. Wesley stressed the believer's assurance of salvation through "the witness of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:16), free will, "entire sanctification," and the positive role of bodily and charismatic manifestations.

Wesley was crucial in the development of a non-Calvinist or "Arminian" theology of revival. For Wesley, no less than Edwards, humans were mired in sin. Yet if humans freely chose to disobey God's will, they must also freely choose to accept the salvation

offered to them. When Arminians spoke of divine predestination, they described it as conditional rather than unconditional. God's choice was contingent on human choices, rather than vice versa.

Wesley is known for his teaching on holiness, contained in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777), which argued that a Christian believer in the present life can become free from all sin, or at least free from all conscious and deliberate sinning. Wesley referred to this state as "entire sanctification" or "perfect love." Though he never claimed that he himself had attained this state, Wesley was willing to accept the claims of others to have done so. Non-Methodist theologians attacked Wesley's teaching on holiness as unbiblical, delusory, and dangerous. Methodists themselves began to deemphasize entire sanctification by the early 1800s, and outside of stricter Wesleyan circles, this doctrine largely dropped out of circulation by the twentieth century. Nonetheless, altered forms of the original Wesleyan teaching endured in nineteenth-century Holiness teaching and twentieth-century Pentecostalism.

In effect, Wesley replaced a two-stage Puritan and Pietist pattern for spiritual life (from unconverted to converted) with a three-stage pattern (from unconverted to converted, and from converted to sanctified). This idea of a "second blessing" (i.e., post-conversion) reappears in Phoebe Palmer's "altar theology," the Holiness movement's idea of sanctification through faith, Asa Mahan's "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and the Keswick Conference's imperative of surrender and consecration to God. During the 1890s, radical Holiness teachers sought a clear, biblical sign of the "second blessing." The theology of revival changed forever when early Pentecostals identified speaking in tongues as the necessary outward sign (or "initial evidence") of attaining this higher spiritual level.

Also significant for subsequent developments in revivalism, and especially Pentecostalism, was Wesley's relatively open attitude toward the bodily, emotional, and charismatic manifestations that occurred in revivals. With regard to emotional expression in worship, the ethos of Wesleyan revival services differed from the constrained, dignified atmosphere characteristic of Calvinist revivals. The "shouting Methodists" of the early 1800s, and the later Holiness or Pentecostal "holy rollers" in both Caucasian and African-American congregations, insisted that a genuine experience of God's glorious presence called for exuberant, bodily response. George W. Henry's *Shouting: Genuine and Spurious* (1859) defended shouting in the Methodist camp-meetings and was reprinted in 1903 by Holiness shouters in Chicago to defend their boisterous gatherings.

## The Second Great Awakening in North America, 1790s–1840s

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, revivals again revitalized the American churches. They came first in the camp meetings in frontier regions of Kentucky and Tennessee, campus meetings at Hampton-Sydney College in Virginia and Yale College in Connecticut, and urban gatherings in emerging factory towns of upstate New York. So powerful were the New York State revivals that some later referred to the area as the "burned-over district." Theologically, these revivals shifted away from the Calvinism of most eighteenth-century revivals. By the time this Second Great Awakening

(1795–1835) ebbed, most evangelical Protestants based their summons to conversion on Arminian notions of free will and individual choice.

The best-known preacher of the Second Great Awakening in America was Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), who adapted frontier camp-meeting techniques for his urban revivals and forever altered the ethos of the American revivals by placing at their center the personality and the influence of the revivalist himself. Finney was a flamboyant and controversial figure. From the pulpit he prayed by name for sinners to respond to the gospel and urged those who were uncertain about their spiritual state to come forward to the “anxious bench” and there to wrestle spiritually until they came to assurance of their own salvation. In Finney’s day, there was intense debate – known as the “new measures” controversy – over the use of the “anxious bench” and the allegedly crude and impudent language that Finney and his followers used in prayer and in preaching. Asahel Nettleton (1783–1844) charged that Finney’s young and inexperienced disciples showed contempt for pastors who were their seniors even as they invaded congregations and sowed confusion. Also controversial was Finney’s practice of allowing women to pray aloud in mixed gatherings of men and women.

From the 1840s onward, Finneyite revivalism became closely associated with a number of social reform movements and social crusades in America, including abolitionism and antislavery, temperance, anti-Masonry, and women’s rights (Smith 1957). His revival theology tended toward melioristic optimism, which was a function of his belief in each person’s inherent power to repudiate sin and choose righteousness. Theological critics – with some justification – accused Finney of reviving the ancient Pelagian heresy that humans could obey God apart from special grace. With Asa Mahan (1799–1889), his colleague at Oberlin College, Finney developed a distinctive “Oberlin Theology” that adapted the Wesleyan notion of entire sanctification. To some extent, these American-style or Finneyite revivals were imported to Britain during the early nineteenth century (Carwardine 1978) – prior to the time of the Holiness Movement (see below).

Religious revivals of the nineteenth century raised a number of theological issues. One concerns whether humans themselves can generate a genuine revival. If revivals are the work of God, it would seem that God must determine when and where they occur. But if spiritual revitalization may be stimulated by the proper use of means given by God, then revivals may occur as humans choose to employ those means. Finney defended the latter position, arguing in his influential and controversial *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835) that revivals occur through human initiative when the God-given means to promote them are properly used. He provocatively asserted that a revival is “not a miracle.” Finney’s Calvinist critics took issue with such claims.

Another question regarding revivals was the relationship between spiritual nurture (esp. during childhood) and the conversion experiences that occur in the midst of revivals. The Connecticut Congregationalist pastor Horace Bushnell (1802–1876) penned a classic critique of revivalism entitled *Christian Nurture* (1847; rev. edn. 1860). Bothered by his inability to stimulate revivals in his congregation, Bushnell came to believe that if Christian parents and the church nurtured young children in the faith, they would grow up never thinking of themselves as anything other than Christians. A dramatic conversion experience was not necessary, and perhaps not helpful. Twentieth-century liberal Protestantism opted for “nurture” rather than “revival.”

Still another debate centered on *involuntary bodily phenomena* among those experiencing revival. The Cane Ridge Revival of 1801 became notorious because of the unusual and even grotesque bodily manifestations it provoked – including “jerking,” “dancing,” and “barking” – all of which were regularly reported as happening involuntarily. Frederick Davenport’s *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals* (1905) developed a naturalistic explanation. Davenport maintained that revivals typically affected “the nervously unstable, the suggestible, [and] the inexperienced” rather than “the dignified and intelligent people of judgment and standing.” He asserted the superior rationality of white male adults as compared with children, women, and nonwhites. Davenport sought to explain revivals in terms of environmental factors (e.g., the dangers of frontier life) and the dynamics of crowd psychology or “hypnotic suggestion.”

Many have viewed American revivals as essentially Protestant in their theologies and practices. To be sure, revivalist preachers often downplayed the role and efficacy of the sacraments (e.g., baptism and eucharist) and promoted spiritual individualism. Yet Jay Dolan demonstrated that nineteenth-century Catholic parish missions shared many characteristics with Protestant revivals during the same period – including fervent preaching and calls for repentance. Instead of holding an altar call, the parish mission preacher summoned lapsed Catholics to the sacrament of penance (i.e., reconciliation) and so encouraged the sort of spiritual rededication that also occurred in Protestant revivals (Dolan 1978). Parish missions have continued among Catholics to the present day, though with less stress on sin and repentance than formerly.

## The Transatlantic Holiness Movement of the Nineteenth Century

As early as the 1820s, stricter Methodists in America sensed that, as their church gained numbers and influence, it was losing its distinctive teaching and emphasis on sanctification. The Holiness Movement (Ger. *Heiligungsbewegung*) sought to restore the centrality of sanctification to Methodism. In time it brought the sanctification message to non-Methodist Protestants as well.

One pioneer of the Holiness movement was the American Methodist laywoman Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807–1874), who in 1835 began to hold “Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness” with her sister Sarah Lankford in their New York City home. By 1839 the meetings were frequented by non-Methodists and included men as well as women. From 1859 to 1863 Palmer and her husband preached in England. By 1867 Palmer’s leadership had given way to an association of Methodist pastors who – with growing numbers of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists – adapted the traditional format of the camp meeting for new purposes and expanded the movement.

Theologically, Palmer’s revival services were based on a “shorter way” to sanctification, or “altar theology.” Since God commands holiness of heart and life for all believers, Palmer reasoned that God will inwardly cleanse all seekers after sanctification at the moment that they consecrate themselves at the “altar” and accept by faith the fact of their sanctification. Having met God’s conditions by coming to the “altar” and believing, the sanctified believer was to testify publicly to the reality of his or her sanctification, even without any distinct experience confirming a change of state. This was

a sanctification teaching that did not involve emotionalism, and it appealed to a more upscale audience than the earlier Wesleyan teaching.

Hannah Worrell Smith (1832–1911) and her husband, Robert Pearsall Smith (1827–1898), second-generation Holiness teachers, carried the Holiness message into Britain and the European Continent. Born into wealthy Quaker families in Philadelphia, the Smiths entered Holiness ministry following their attendance at a Methodist camp meeting in 1867 in which both professed to have received the “second blessing” of sanctification. By the 1870s, Hannah Smith was active in the summer Holiness meetings sponsored by Lord and Lady Mount Temple at their Broadlands estate in Hampshire, England. Intended for Oxford and Cambridge students, these retreats attracted an eclectic and well-heeled group. Amanda Berry Smith (1837–1915) was another prominent Holiness teacher in North America, England, India, and Africa, and the first African-American woman with an international ministry.

Robert Smith’s whirlwind 1875 tour through Europe’s established and free churches culminated in the Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness in Brighton, England, with thousands of delegates from churches on both sides of the Atlantic and the English Channel. This gathering marked an apogee for the Smiths. Hannah Smith’s *Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875) became the best-selling Christian devotional volume of the century. By the 1880s and 1890s the Holiness movement found expression in the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* (“Fellowship Movement”) among German Pietists.

Theologically speaking, the Smiths’ teaching combined several elements. One was the Wesleyan idea of salvation as a present experience, epitomized in Robert Smith’s declaration while in Germany: *Jesus erretet mir jetzt!* (“Jesus saves me now”). Another was faith as the means of sanctification. On the question of “indwelling sin” or a “sin nature” within the believer, mainstream Holiness teaching tended toward “counteractionism.” According to this view, the sin nature was counteracted – but not destroyed – by the believer’s new nature in Christ. Some Holiness teachers, however, tended toward the “eradicationist” idea that the sanctification experience wholly removed a person’s underlying tendencies to sin.

The most incisive opponent of Holiness teaching was Princeton Seminary professor Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield (1851–1921), author of the two-volume critique, *Perfectionism* (1931–1932). He advocated a Calvinistic, activist notion of the Christian life and faulted Hannah Smith for what he took to be a quietist and passive viewpoint, attributable to her Quaker upbringing. “Perfectionism,” for Warfield, was the notion that “those who have been justified by faith may attain sanctification also with equal immediacy by an equally simple exercise of faith” (Warfield 1931–1932: 2.513). Instead he argued that the idea of “sanctification by faith” is untrue to biblical teaching and to everyday experience, which both show that genuine holiness is attained only through struggle and suffering. Warfield noted, with satisfaction, that the leading German exponent of Holiness teaching, Theodor Jellinghaus (1841–1913), had revised his own views in successive editions of *Das völlige, gegenwärtige Heil durch Christum* (*Complete, Present Salvation Through Christ*, 1880) and later had published a retraction of his earlier views in *Erklärungen über meine Lehrirrunge*n (*Explanations Regarding My False Teachings*, 1912).

## Revivals in the Pacific Islands, Wales, and Korea, 1800–1910

In the 1800s and early 1900s Christian revivals swept across the Pacific Islands, with the result that more than 90% of the indigenous population became at least nominally Christian. The means by which many came to profess the faith has been called “group conversion” or “people movement.” Modern Western thinkers tend to see the individual person, or nuclear family, as the fundamental social unit. It is often forgotten that the Christianization of ancient Germanic and Slavic peoples often hinged on a ruler’s conversion – like that of the Russian (or Kievan) Prince Vladimir, baptized in 988 CE. When a leader converted, so did his tribe or extended family. Moreover, a people’s entry into the new faith involved competition between the old gods and the new God, the traditional priests and the new Christian emissaries.

In Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa the public destruction of fetish objects was a turning point. King Pomare II (d. 1821) of Tahiti broke a taboo when he devoured the sacred turtle. He also degraded the temple post by setting it as a pillar in his kitchen. Most people movements in the Pacific Islands were *neither* top-down decisions by a ruler *nor* choices made by isolated individuals. Rulers typically did not act alone but consulted the ruling elders and sometimes others as well (Tippitt 1971). The destruction of fetish objects was accomplished in a public ceremony in which the people played a role. The Pacific revivals thus challenge the notion that faith decisions must be solitary or that revivals take place through an aggregation of individual choices.

In 1900 Wales was one of the most religiously devout regions in Europe, with its church-going population divided almost equally between the Anglican Church of Wales, Congregationalists, Calvinistic Methodists, and Baptists. A strong Welsh revival tradition harkened back to the mid-1700s awakenings, a national revival in 1859, and local revivals in the late 1800s. Church services centered on the preacher, who was expected to meet exacting standards of oratory and, if possible, to go into *hwyl* – an inspired manner of preaching that congregations encouraged with their verbal affirmations during the sermon (Jones 2004).

Beginning in diverse locations, and then expanding widely, a powerful revival took hold of Wales in 1904–1905, resulting in an estimated 100,000 conversions. This Welsh revival had a strong lay orientation, featuring impromptu worship services with impassioned singing, public testimonies, fervent prayer, and intense emotionalism. No one seemed to be orchestrating the services, which lasted for up to twelve or more hours at a stretch, day after day. By early 1905 the Welsh newspaper reports focused on a young theology student and former coal miner, Evan Roberts (1878–1951), who came to symbolize the revival as a whole, though evidence indicates that the revival was already in progress before Roberts had begun his preaching expeditions. For a decade before 1904, the reclusive Roberts had stayed up nights reading about past revivals and praying for revival to come again. By his account, just months prior to the outbreak of revival, he had awakened in the early hours each night to experience hours of unspeakable bliss in the presence of God before going back to sleep. Roberts became convinced that revival was coming soon to Wales, and viewed the events of 1904–1905 as an answer to his own prayers.



In a book co-authored with Jessie Penn-Lewis, *War on the Saints* (1912), Roberts offered a retrospective judgment. Without denying the revival's benefits, Roberts argued that the genuine revival had been accompanied by false and even demonic manifestations. Streams of words or ideas appearing in people's mind were often produced by evil spirits: "The teachings of the deceiving spirits in this form are so natural in appearance that they seem to come from the man himself, as the fruit of his own mind." Evil spirits might give counterfeit guidance through sudden impulses or audible voices, and this experience could lead believers into foolish, unyielding obstinacy, and religious fanaticism.

Reports on the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 spread rapidly throughout the world, raising the spiritual expectations of Protestant Christians in many nations and helping to trigger revivals in Pune, India (at a Christian girls' school, under Pandita Ramabai and Minnie Abrams) in 1905, and in the United States – in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania (where many ethnic Welsh resided) in 1905, in Los Angeles, California (among African-American Holiness Christians) in 1906–1909, in Pyongyang, Korea (among Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries and Korean converts) in 1907, and in Valparaiso, Chile (under Methodist missionary Willis Hoover) in 1909.

An incipient revival in Korea had begun in Wonsan in 1903 among a gathering of Methodist missionaries and Korean converts, and yet it reached a new level of intensity after the report of the Welsh Revival came to Korea and the Koreans offered fervent prayers for a full-blown revival there. Centering on the city of Pyongyang, the so-called Great Revival of 1907 affected the whole of Korean Protestantism and laid the foundation for the later exponential expansion of Christianity in Korea. A hallmark of this revival was the public confession of sins – itself a countercultural act in Korean culture – followed by the reconciliation of enemies, restitution of stolen goods, and repudiation of such culturally tolerated practices as concubinage and opium smoking (Lee 2003).

During the 1907 revival and subsequently, Korean Protestants have been known for their intensive Bible study and distinctive prayer practices, including unison prayer (wherein all pray aloud at once), daybreak prayer (involving a large proportion of each church's membership), all-night prayer, and fasting prayer. Beginning in the 1930s and 1940s, the custom of the "prayer mountain" took shape in Korea. Believers retreated into small cells in a mountain to pray and fast, sometimes for as long as forty days at a time (Kim 2003; Lee 2010).

## North America: Early Pentecostalism, 1901–1940

Many Christian revivals of the twentieth century have occurred within Pentecostalism (since 1901) and its daughter traditions – the Charismatic Renewal (since the 1960s) and the neo-Pentecostal, neo-Charismatic, or so-called Third Wave movement (since the 1980s). These related traditions share a basically Arminian (or non-Calvinist) theology of the divine–human relationship (God is ready to confer blessings but requires us to ask in faith), an emphasis on visible manifestations of God's supernatural presence (e.g., divine healing, prophecy, visions, casting out demons, and speaking in tongues), and a

teaching regarding a “baptism of [in] the Holy Spirit” (a post-conversion transition to a higher spiritual life). Early Pentecostalism also displayed a heightened expectation of Christ’s speedy return.

The Wesleyan and Holiness movements, as noted above, were grounded on notions of “entire sanctification,” “perfect love,” “perfection,” or “second blessing” that came after conversion. The early Methodist theologian John Fletcher (d. 1785) began to use the phrase “baptism of [in] the Spirit” to describe the experience of sanctification. By the late 1800s there was a transition *from purity to power*, that is, a focus on God’s power as necessary for Christian living. William Arthur, in *The Tongue of Fire* (1856), argued that the Christian Church needed a fresh, “Pentecostal” manifestation of the Spirit’s power to complete the task of world evangelization. In the 1880s and 1890s there was a profusion of books on the Holy Spirit and a surge of interest in divine healing and other spiritual phenomena. By 1900 many Holiness ministers were preaching a twofold message of “salvation for the soul” and “healing for the body.”

The early Pentecostal movement took shape during the first decade of the 1900s against this backdrop of an intensified supernaturalism and a quest for definitive marks of the Spirit’s power. In December 1900, the white Holiness preacher Charles Parham (1873–1929) asked the students in his small Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, to search the Bible to find a spiritual phenomenon that might serve as a clear sign of the Spirit’s presence. When Parham’s students identified speaking in tongues as the sign in question, and when Agnes Ozman (1870–1937) and others in the school began to speak in tongues on January 1, 1901, Parham began to teach publicly that tongues speaking is the “Bible evidence” of baptism in the Spirit. He further claimed that he and his pupils were witnessing an “end times” restoration of God’s supernatural power, rivaling the manifestation of the Spirit during the apostolic era.

Parham’s African-American disciple William Seymour (1870–1922) embraced Parham’s view of Spirit baptism and initiated early Pentecostalism’s most important revival at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles (1906–1909). Seymour provoked Parham’s opposition, however, when he brought whites, blacks, and Latinos into a single spiritual community in violation of the racial protocols of the Jim Crow era. For Seymour, speaking in tongues was an outward act that could be counterfeited by those who lacked the Holy Spirit. A clearer sign of the Spirit’s presence was the remarkable breaking down of social barriers at Azusa Street, so that, in the words of Frank Bartleman, “the color line was washed away in the blood [of Jesus].”

From the outset, Pentecostals showed an openness to divine healing, visions, prophecies, and other signs of God’s immediate presence, and they later used the term “full gospel” to refer to churches in which these varied manifestations were welcomed and encouraged. Controversies over Pentecostalism often related to this “full gospel” notion, which seemed to disparage non-Pentecostal ministers and ministries. Oral Roberts (b. 1918) as a “healing-evangelist” coupled his evangelical calls to faith and conversion with the laying on of hands for healing the sick. Other notable healing-evangelists included Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844–1924), Francisco Olazábal (1886–1937), and Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944). The prominence of women among them – in a day when almost no traditional churches ordained women to ministry – is striking.

## North America: The Latter Rain Revival, 1940s, and Charismatic Renewal, 1960s–1970s

The so-called Latter Rain revival that began in 1948–1949 in Saskatchewan, Canada, represented a return to the fervor of early Pentecostalism, and yet it created controversy when its leaders taught that the New Testament gifts of apostleship and prophethood were being given again to the church, thus challenging the prevailing authorities in the existing Pentecostal denominations. The Latter Rain revival featured extended fasting and praying, lasting for days or even weeks at a time. Its teaching regarding contemporary apostleship as a restoration of the “fivefold ministry” (involving apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; see Eph. 4:11) became a staple idea among neo-Pentecostals in the 1990s and especially in the so-called Apostolic Movement, as led by C. Peter Wagner (b. 1930).

Before about 1960, Pentecostal phenomena in the Christian world were almost entirely confined to Pentecostal denominations that came into existence when “tongues-speakers” were thrown out of the existing churches. Yet during the 1960s and 1970s, the Charismatic Renewal brought tongues-speaking and a teaching on Spirit baptism to growing numbers of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and, beginning in 1967, Roman Catholics. By the 1990s even the Southern Baptists, who had long been vocal critics of Pentecostalism, had growing numbers of ministers and missionaries who at least covertly spoke in tongues and accepted charismatic teachings.

The charismatic movement differed theologically from the old-line Pentecostalism, inasmuch as most charismatics held that the Holy Spirit was at work outside, as well as inside, the “Spirit-filled” community. Some refused to say that they had “received” the Spirit in their experience of Spirit baptism, preferring to speak of the “release” of the Spirit, who had already been conferred in the experience of conversion (the evangelical Protestant model) or else in the sacrament of baptism (the Roman Catholic, or High Church, model). In this way the boundaries distinguishing charismatics from non-charismatics became more blurry.

## North America: The “Third Wave” of the Holy Spirit, 1980s–1990s

During the 1980s and 1990s the boundaries of the “Spirit-filled” movement became yet more indistinct as growing numbers of Christians – some associated with John Wimber (1934–1997) and his Vineyard Church – experienced charismatic manifestations such as speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophetic ministry and yet rejected the “initial evidence” doctrine and did not think of themselves as Pentecostals or charismatics. Wimber popularized the idea of “power evangelism,” according to which the verbal proclamation of Christ needs to be accompanied by tangible signs and wonders of God’s presence, such as divine healing. Inasmuch as Wimber’s 1980s movement differed from the earlier Pentecostal and charismatic movements, missionary theorist C. Peter Wagner dubbed it the “Third Wave” of the Holy Spirit. Yet the new movement brought controversy. The “Kansas City Prophets” of the mid-1980s and a mid-1990s Toronto revival involving prolonged laughter (and even animal sounds) provoked

Wimber's opposition, though both developments originated in congregations of the Vineyard Church.

One of the most influential theorists of revival in recent decades has been C. Peter Wagner, who during his long career has been successively associated with the church-growth school at Fuller Seminary (1960s and 1970s), the so-called Third Wave movement (1980s), the resurgent interest in "spiritual warfare" (1990s), and the Apostolic (or New Apostolic) movement (since the late 1990s). Beginning from the assumption that quantitative and qualitative growth is normative for churches, Wagner investigated congregations around the globe and found that the strongest growth occurred in regions where ministry included miraculous "signs and wonders." This insight, embodied in Third Wave congregations, led to worship services that regularly included prayer for physical and emotional healing. During the 1990s Wagner's teaching on "spiritual warfare" reflected the influence of the Argentine ministers Carlos Annacondia, Omar Cabrera, and Claudio Freidzon, whose ministries included mass exorcistic ceremonies and fervent prayer for victory over evil spirits. Wagner's books offered prayer-based strategies for identifying "territorial spirits," whose malign presence hindered the church's ministry and whose removal could trigger spiritual awakening (Wagner 1991; Wagner 1992). George Otis Jr. produced the documentary video *Transformations* (2002) to show that unified prayer among Christians could bring revival and social reform even to such an unlikely location as Cali, Colombia – once Latin America's major center for illegal drug trafficking.

## Twentieth-Century Revivals in Africa

As noted above, the Christian population of sub-Saharan Africa expanded tremendously during the last century. This expansion included thousands of African Indigenous Churches (AICs) that sprang up alongside of Western-led missionary congregations or split off from them. Generally African cultures presume that "salvation" does not pertain merely to a spiritual dimension of human life but rather includes bodily health, family relations, social harmony, financial prosperity, and general human wellness. The failure of Western missionaries to appreciate and respond to this aspect of African cultures was a major reason for the emergence of the AICs. Another common feature of African cultures involves belief in the presence of malign, unholy forces associated with witchcraft or sorcery. A major function of African traditional religions, from time immemorial, has been to protect against evil spirits. If one begins with these two assumptions – that salvation means personal and family wellness, and that evil forces stand against the experience of this wellness – then revival, healing, and social restoration may be expected as the outcome when evil forces are removed (Oosthuizen 1992).

Revivals, in African contexts, may thus be concerned with the removal of evil spirits, curses, and sorcery. Nigeria has prayer villages, where individuals or entire families can undergo spiritual diagnosis to discern demons that are then neutralized through prayer. In the AICs of South Africa the healing process may involve spiritual preparation by the

healer and the use of physical media. The healer must be pure before healing others, and the process often begins with prayer and fasting. The colors of clothing may be related to certain activities. White is for visions, while blue or red is for healing. Water or bathing is very important and is a part of the process of purification. Traditional medicines are compounded of ash, sugar, salt, seawater, and other ingredients; some are given to induce vomiting as a way to expel evil. Information on patients comes through dreams or visions, and candles are lit to clarify the visions. Praying can occur during dancing, and singing may be a way of invoking the Holy Spirit. Cords, flags, and staves are all symbols of protection (Oosthuizen 1992).

One major movement in Africa, known as the East African Revival, may be regarded as an extension of the British Holiness Movement associated with the Keswick conferences (Ward and Wild-Wood 2012). By the 1920s, some East Africans were only nominally Christian and had professed the faith for the sake of social advancement. Yet a 1929 meeting in Kampala, Uganda between a Cambridge-educated missionary doctor, Joe Church, stationed in Rwanda, and a young African, Simeoni Nsibambi, resulted in spiritual revitalization for both men. The resulting revival called Africans and missionaries alike to rededicate themselves to God. After the revival spread quietly in the early 1930s, ecstatic manifestations such as trances, weeping, and shaking commenced in Rwanda in 1936, and within a year the movement spread to Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya. By 1939 the revival reached Tanzania, southern Sudan, and eastern Zaire (today the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Through the 1940s and 1950s, revival teams and conventions spread the message. Public confessions of sins, and public declarations of spiritual victory in Christ, were common features. Tension resulted when Africans, now calling themselves *balokole* (“saved ones”), suggested that the missionaries themselves needed to be revived. Within the Anglican Church, the danger of schism loomed large during 1941–1944 and yet no major division ensued. As a result, the various denominations of East African Christianity felt the influence of warm, evangelical Keswick piety from the 1940s through the 1970s and beyond. Brian Stanley has called this an “African initiative within a European tradition,” that is, a genuinely African movement that drew from British Holiness teaching (Stanley 1978).

## Twentieth-Century Revivals in China and Korea

China experienced a revival in Manchuria during 1908 through the mediation of missionary Jonathan Goforth (1859–1936), who had been involved in the Korean Revival of 1907 and who wished to see it spread to China. Beginning in 1927, Shantung Province witnessed a revival that involved sudden conversions, powerful emotions, and bodily manifestations. As in Korea, the Chinese revivals involved public confession of sins. Yet in early twentieth-century China, there was polarization between a conservative-revivalist and a liberal-ecumenical school of thought (Lee 1988). The conservatives promoted revival with a consistent biblical message of deliverance from sin through Christ. They viewed revival as a work of the Holy Spirit. Despite the anti-Christian movements of the 1920s, revival regained momentum in China during the 1930s. Conservatives such as John Sung (1901–1944), Wang Ming-dao (1900–1991), and Watchman Nee (1903–

1972) interpreted revival in terms of what Lee calls “a theology of spiritual pursuit.” This involved a commitment not to social change but rather to a solitary pursuit of faith and holiness. By contrast, the liberal-ecumenical school promoted social involvement by participating in movements of social change and social reconstruction, both before and after 1949.

Since the Communist revolution, the unregistered house churches (with as many as 118 million Christians as of 2015) have carried the fervor of revival into every region of China. During the anti-Christian persecutions of 1966–1976, there were reports of signs and wonders among believers, including the healing of sickness and extraordinary escapes from prison and persecution in response to prayer. Beginning in the 1980s, Dennis Balcombe, a Bible smuggler and charismatic preacher, introduced tongues-speaking into the Chinese churches, and today it is estimated that about half of all the unregistered congregations could be classified as charismatic. Yet the “Statement of Faith of Chinese House Churches” (1998) takes a middling position that tongues-speaking is neither required nor forbidden. Some revivalistic practices in the house churches are controversial, such as the noisy worship of the “Shouters” and the tears of repentance during the gatherings of those known as “Weepers” (Aikman 2003).

Following the powerful 1907 revival in Korea, centered in the city of Pyongyang (now the capital of Communist North Korea), Korean Christianity grew rapidly. In fact, the number of Korean Christians roughly doubled in every decade during the twentieth century, so that now about 35–40% of the Korean population is Christian. Pentecostalism entered Korea in 1928, and its remarkable growth in the later twentieth century is associated especially with the pastor David (or Paul) Yonggi Cho (b. 1936) and his mother-in-law and prayer supporter, Ja-Sil Choe (1915–1989) (Kim 2003). Cho’s Yoido Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul has around one million active members (as of 2013) and is presently the world’s largest Christian congregation. Cho’s personal theology has been influenced by the prosperity theology of such American teachers as Kenneth Hagin Sr., Kenneth Copeland, and Oral Roberts. Cho’s book *Triple Salvation* (1977) is based on the idea that God intends to give believers prosperity in their soul, healing in their body, and blessing in their varied life activities.

## Twentieth-Century Revivals in Indonesia

In Indonesia a Christian revival occurred following the failed Communist coup of 1965 (Cooley 1973). The revival in its origins was associated with the Indonesia Evangelists’ Institute at Batu Malang, East Java, and it was especially strong in Timor from 1965 to 1969, with as many as 200,000 conversions reported there. This revival had a strong lay orientation, and rather than centering on a professional evangelist, it involved groups of Christians coming together to witness to, and to experience, what was described as God’s power. Teams of believers went out to the villages under the leadership of a person who claimed to have been led by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit revealed the names or faces of those who were to be included in the team as the leader’s assistants. Teams ranged in size from three or four, up to twenty or so. They included young

people and schoolteachers and were often led by simple, uneducated folk, in many cases women, though they also included church elders, deacons, and pastors as members. Where they went and what they did was wholly dependent on what was taken to be the direct guidance of the Spirit, usually revealed through prayer. The teams spent hours each day in prayer for guidance and for power. Many healings of the sick and sudden conversions were reported. The 1960s revival in Indonesia thus centered on the equality of all believers under God and the need for moment-by-moment guidance from the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

The preceding overview demonstrates the diversity of style and ethos in Christian revivals since the 1700s in the differing global regions (Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania) and in differing theological traditions (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Holiness, Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Neo-Pentecostal). Some have interpreted revival as a quiet, inner, individual experience of God's presence, while others associate it with the crusading zeal of social reformers, with the bond of fellowship that abolishes racial and social barriers, or with supernatural signs and wonders such as speaking in tongues and deliverance from evil spirits.

Twentieth-century global history was an era of immense changes and conflicts. One of the well-founded generalizations regarding World Christianity is that it generally thrives in the midst of change and conflict. Andrew Walls speaks of it as "blossoming at the edges, withering at the center." Through its two-millennia-long history Christianity has continually renewed itself through crossing new cultural boundaries and expanding into new territories. Many of these new developments would not have been predictable from one's knowledge of earlier history. From a first-century Christian perspective, the barbarians of Northern Europe probably did not seem like good candidates for conversion. In 1900, sub-Saharan Africa was overwhelmingly non-Christian, just as today it is predominantly Christian. In 1949, the million or so Christians in communist China were expected to vanish, as did the North African Christians under Islam. Yet, in 2015, there are estimates of 118 million Chinese Christians. On the other hand, some trend lines have pointed downward. The vibrant churches of western North Africa during the first centuries gave no hint of their later extinction under Islam. Likewise, the disappearance of the Persian or Nestorian Church in Central Asia during the Middle Ages is another instance of a decisive reversal. Unforeseen decline – though less common than unexpected growth – is also a part of the global Christian narrative (Jenkins 2008).

In his foundational text *Faithful Narrative* (1737), Jonathan Edwards referred to revivals as a "surprising work of God." Surprising things have indeed occurred – and during the twentieth century no less than the eighteenth and nineteenth. History suggests that twenty-first-century observers should expect the unexpected. It also suggests that the human experience of God is multifarious. From this it follows that no account or interpretation of revivals can presume to be definitive or unrevisable. A theory or history of revivals will thus always be a work-in-progress.

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## II. Thematic Section



## CHAPTER 21

# Bible Translation, Culture, and Religion

Lamin Sanneh

From the mid-1700s onward, the Bible was the major force in Protestant missions abroad where two factors shaped its transmission and appropriation: the first was the development of the vernacular, and the second was the vernacular Bible's impact on colonized and protected populations. The process of vernacular translation led to the first systematic documentation of non-Western languages, and in that the role of missionaries was crucial, while the Bible's impact in the hands of local converts sparked the rise of new religious movements that are striking for their variety and for their commitment to indigenization. Thanks to missionary agency, the study of non-Western languages could be launched on solid field foundations, while, at the same time, the indigenous ferment created new challenges and pressures for Christian unity. The reception of the Bible in the vernacular, however, sidestepped the controversies that accompanied the circulation of the Bible in early modern Europe; however unwittingly, it produced, instead, the movements of indigenization and cultural liberation.

### Missionary Awakening

The invention of printing by William Caxton in 1474 produced in due course a multiplying effect on the production and distribution of Scripture in the Latin West, which spurred the work and importance of Bible translation generally. A few months after Martin Luther published his theses, a German Bible printed by Sylman Ottmar appeared in 1518. Its pedigree goes back to about 1350 when a German translation was made, though it was published only in 1466 by Johann Mentelin at Strasburg. In the next fifty years or so thirteen further editions followed, but with the limitation that they were translations made from the Vulgate of Jerome, rather than from the original texts.

The translations were a reminder that whatever the language in question, the Christian Scriptures are invested in tongues that existed for purposes other than and before Christianity. The alternative of the religion shut up in the language in which Jesus preached, taught, and worshipped, had never been available, or even been mandated by Jesus or by the apostles, so that Christianity is encountered only and always in a translated, and, therefore, in a comprehensible form, with interpretation its handmaid. Typically, the languages of translation, worship, and prayer had been the languages of pagans, Greek and Latin included. Christians could not forget or resist the language and Gentile bias of the gospel. Luther's objections to the translations of his day were that they were not based on original texts, and, equally crucially, did not adopt a form of German that was readily comprehensible to all; with that Luther challenged the Church to return to its Pentecostal, Gentile roots.

In the early stages, printing the editions of the Bible had only limited scope; Gutenberg and Schöfler, for example, could not have made more than about 200 impressions from each single setting. The prices of such imprints were too high to dispense with the need for copying the printed pattern by hand – for example, Zwingli copied by hand the Greek NT of Erasmus' edition at the *Stadtbibliothek* ("city library") of Zürich. Surprisingly, in the first two centuries of the Reformation the circulation of printed copies of the Bible remained relatively small. In the heady period between 1500 and 1520, for example, there were only 56 Latin printings, 17 in German, 10 in Italian, and 4 in French. Although the Reformation is accepted as an important impetus in vernacular Bible translation, it also drew on the growing confidence in the vernacular cause that was well established by the early sixteenth century.

In time the vernacular impetus spread to the New World where John Eliot, the Cambridge-educated English Puritan, produced in 1663 a historic translation of the Bible into Massachusett, the language of the Native American tribe of New England. He followed it in 1666 with the publication of a comprehensive grammar of the language. Before King Philip's war of 1675–1676 that almost decimated the Native American population, Eliot's Bible stimulated the spread of literacy, leading to the production of the Psalter in 1709. It was the last effort at supporting indigenous literacy before the Native people were absorbed into the colonial population.

By the early eighteenth century, however, improvements in technology began to have a telling effect and, accordingly, the Bible acquired mass and range. For the first time in this period and coinciding with the ascendancy of the West, the Bible in the vernacular began to be produced in societies beyond the West. Thus could Baron Freiherr von Canstein (d. 1719) boast that at Halle between 1710 and 1719 he produced 100,000 copies of the NT in 28 editions, and 40,000 Bibles in 16 editions. It was no accident that Halle in Germany was the center of the Pietist awakening and its related missionary outreach to British India, among other places.

The earliest of the German missionaries to the Indian sub-continent were pioneers of Bible translation in the South Indian languages. Bartholomew Ziegenbalg was the first German Lutheran missionary to arrive in India, publishing a Tamil New Testament in 1714. He was followed by others, including Benjamin Schultz (1689–1760), Johann Philip Fabricius (1711–1791), and Christoph Samuel John (1747–1813). Arriving in Tranquebar in September, 1719, Schultz undertook Scripture translations into Telegu

and Tamil, and for the purpose produced in 1723 the first Telegu dictionary and a hymn book and in 1728 a Telegu grammar in Latin. He completed a translation of the whole Bible in 1735. At his new station in Madras, now Chennai, where he transferred his missionary work in 1726, Schultz established the missionary work of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in India (Satyanarayana 2006). For his part, Fabricius embarked on a project to unite different competing interests in the production of the Tamil Bible, drawing on the work of Schultz for that purpose. The work of revision of Schultz's Tamil Bible was finally completed in 1796, five years after the death of Fabricius. Among other notable missionary linguists were Henry Martyn, who arrived in Serampore in 1806 and worked in Persian and Urdu. His translation of the New Testament in Urdu was published in India. Adoniram Judson of the United States undertook translation work in Burma, and his work was incorporated in the final version of the Bible published in 1834. It may be observed that Catholic missionary translation work preceded Protestant work in Tranquebar. In consequence, the SPCK reprinted the New Testament in Portuguese, translated in 1651 by Fr. Joao Ferreira d'Almeida in Batavia, which was spoken in Tranquebar. A version of the Old Testament translated into Portuguese by Jacobus op den Akker was printed in two volumes in Batavia in the period 1748–1753. However, it was not until well into the twentieth century that Catholic translation work in Indonesia picked up pace, in this instance in collaboration with Protestants.

The linguistic work of Christian Friedrich Schwartz (d. 1798) belongs to the distinguished line of Bible translators in South India. Ordained in 1749 in Copenhagen, Schwartz traveled to London to establish contact with German Lutheran pastors serving in the city, all of them with connections to Halle. Schwartz arrived in Tranquebar in June, 1750 to open a brilliant career of linguistic and educational work. In the schools he founded he established a curriculum in which Biblical and other Christian texts were expounded with the help of the principles and sciences of the Western Enlightenment, showing how Bible translation was a channel for cultural transmission as well. One of Schwartz's most distinguished disciples was Vedanayakam (Pillai) Sastriar (1773–1864) who made lasting contributions to Tamil language and literature, including hymnody. In a work of his, the *Bethlehem Kurvanchee*, the Gospel story is presented in the bejeweled medium of Tamil verse, utilizing Tamil modes of tunes, tones, and tempos. It is an example of the transposition of the Gospel story into the forms of Tamil imagination, piety, and spirituality (Frykenberg 2006). His literary gifts were recognized by his being made court poet-laureate by the Maharajah of Tanjavur.

In China the first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society, embarked on Bible translation work after his arrival in 1807. He finished a translation of the New Testament in 1813 and of the whole Bible in 1819, which was published only in 1823 in Malacca. From their base in Serampore, Joshua Marshman and Johannes Lassar also worked on a translation of the Bible into Chinese, which was published in 1822; however, this translation was seldom used.

It was Baron von Canstein, it happened, who lent his support to the SPCK, the first such Protestant organization, which was founded in London in 1698. The SPCK had as its stated purpose “to promote religion and learning in the Plantations abroad and to propagate Christian knowledge at home.” It decided, however, to allow as a spin-off

activity the formation of a missionary arm called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) with the goal of sending out missionaries and maintaining them abroad. A royal charter in 1701 established the SPG as a missionary foundation.

In their capacity as Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray (1658–1730), many SPG agents were commissioned for missionary service in the American colonies. Bray himself went up to Oxford in 1674 where he was a student at All Soul's, graduating in 1678. As a philanthropist he was an ardent promoter of missions, and the founding spirit of the SPCK and the SPG. He wrote what he called his "General Plan" "for the Propagation of the true Religion in the Plantations."

Although appointed in 1695 as a commissary in Maryland by Bishop Henry Compton of London, Bray did not leave immediately but rather went on to make wide-ranging contacts in the Netherlands among the Huguenot refugees there, spreading his ideas of doing missionary work among New World Africans, slave and free. He then set sail for North America, arriving in Maryland in March 1700. He returned to England in May but remained active in directing the work in North America from afar. Eventually Bray's missionary plan was separated from the SPCK and the SPG and reconstituted as the Associates of Dr. Bray in 1723. Its goal was to do missionary work among Indians and Africans in North America (Van Horne 1985: 2).

Significantly, these missionary initiatives were in part a response to the presence of Africans in the New World, though the missions were tied to colonial and New World interests. In effect, African Americans loosened missions from their colonial association. Among other Protestants, however, the work remained largely ad hoc and sporadic, and often derivative from the efforts of others. Nevertheless, the SPCK's educational and publishing work had an impact at home and on work others were doing in the mission field. In particular, by 1720 there was an extensive program of Bible translation. The SPCK produced 10,000 Arabic New Testaments, 6,000 Psalters, and 5,000 Catechetical Instructions. It was the Oriental scholar, Heinrich Rudolf, who came to London as Secretary to Prince George of Denmark, who led the Society in its Arabic translation work. The targets were communities in the Ottoman dominions, and in Russia, Persia, and India. The SPCK began a mission to the Scilly Isles in 1765 that lasted until 1841.

## Indigenizing Theology

The stimulus of indigenous theology was often a corollary and consequence of the creation of the vernacular Bible, with the work of field inquiry opening the door to indigenous inquiry and reflection. Bible translation evoked and reinforced the religious substratum of traditional society, with biblical stories opening the way for the recovery of the local narrative tradition. This indigenous predisposition goes a long way toward explaining why, with relatively little preparation, missions found a ready welcome in traditional societies. By confirming the expectations of converts, Bible translation in the vernacular spurred movement in indigenous ideas and attitudes. The old vocabulary of religious thought and activity, including prayer, invocation, blessing, thanksgiving, healing, and prophecy, was given Scriptural range and authority for the first time.

The historic shift in the reception of Christianity involved paying close attention to local materials and ideas if mission was to achieve its goal of conversion. In 1737 George Schmidt, a Moravian missionary, arrived among the Khoi-Khoi tribe of South Africa, eager, he announced, to bring the Savior to the people who, in his view, lived in darkness. The small matter, however, of his ignorance of their language stood in the way, and to overcome it he needed their expertise and resources. When he told the people why he came among them, a stranger from across the seas, they replied:

“That is good, *baas* [master].”

I asked them, Schmidt says, if they knew that there was a great Baas who had given them their cattle and all they possessed.

“Yes,” replied [the tribesmen].

“What do you call him?”

“We call him Tui-qua,” was the reply. (du Plessis 1911: 2).

Schmidt plunged into the world of the Khoi-Khoi with the newly acquired name of their Supreme Being on his lips, and in the process stumbled on his own cultural limitation. His turning to the people for help and guidance was a *de facto* forfeiture of the European advantages of mission. Constrained to observe the customs of the people in order to understand what place “Tui-qua” occupied in their lives, he entered their world unavoidably, if also defensively.

Schmidt’s decision to adopt the Khoi-Khoi/Hottentot word for God facilitated his inquiry into the cultural milieu of the idea of God, an inquiry that drew him closer to the customs and traditions of the people. As a first step, Schmidt inquired from the people what name he should call God, and that irony of having recourse to the people’s idiom was not lost on the Africans, for Schmidt stepped back to announce that he came to tell them all about “Tui-qua,” as if the people had not heard about him. Sometimes this maladroit exercise took a complicated turn when missionaries retreated into their enclaves wishing to avoid contact with local customs. Against the forces of vernacularization, however, retreat was futile. The missionary study and adoption of non-Western languages invested cultural awakening with its own literacy. Bible translation breached the walls of missionary seclusion: if God could dispense with European languages, so could converts dispense with missionary hegemony. Nothing has done more to differentiate Christianity from Western civilization as a prerequisite of faith than the vernacular Bible translation projects.

The dilemma of the missionary is easy to depict. For all their standard reputation for hospitality and deference, Africans could not avoid taking a leading part in the drama of encounter with the West. Some examples now will suggest how Africans became conscious of the advantage of vernacular empowerment vis-à-vis the missionary.

Ground rules shaped the assimilation of Christianity, and although missionaries had not intended to occupy a secondary position, their commitment to translation made that inescapable in the long term. The preexisting vernacular exerted a preemptive power over the uncontested authority of mission over the Gospel, and when missionaries assumed that mission must occur by Scriptural translation, they privileged the



vernacular without intending that to redound on them by downgrading their role as foreign agents. Some of them came upon this discovery in disconcerting fashion.

Ultimately, mother tongue speakers in their natural habitat possessed the trump card in the intercultural exchange with missionaries, however powerful these missionaries might be. Dr. Henry Callaway, the nineteenth Anglican medical missionary who became a pioneer of Zulu language and religion, describes a tense situation at a particular point of the translation of the Bible into Zulu when the African members of the translation team held up the translation work because they were not satisfied with the result. It forced Callaway to submit to the vetting of his African colleagues. "I have a 'committee' of native experts sitting on the translation! Each of the three natives has a translation by someone else in his hand, and I read ours, verse by verse" (Doke 1961: 115).

The concept of "God" was a central and indispensable category of Bible translation, and, indeed, of Christianity. The enterprise would be doomed without it. That the concept existed prior to missionary work posed a major challenge to claims of Christian originality. In the event, it might happen that both the notion and the name of God were readily accessible, in which case simple adoption could proceed with all due facility. Where that was not the case, however, the translator was in an open quandary because virtually nothing was possible without that step being taken. For the Valiente Indians of Panama the name for God is a great mystery. When the missionary Efrain Alphonse attempted to discover the name, he was taken to see an old medicine woman in the tropical forest of Bocas del Toro. The woman subsequently engaged in a séance, and, in a trancelike state, pronounced the sacred name of God. "These men," she declared, "are talking about *Ngobo*, the God of heaven and earth. Listen to them!" (Nida 1952: 38; 1954). Falling from the lips of the old diviner, *Ngobo* was adopted as the hallowed name of the God of the Christian Scriptures, and a crucial intercultural step was taken to naturalize Christianity in its new environment.

Interest in the subject of God involved Alphonse in a piece of geographical adventure as well as cultural archeology. The towns and cities failed him in his search for the true name of God, but, with local help, he followed the fading trail into the forest to sit at the feet of a frail diviner who went into a trance to dredge up the name of the great mysterious force of the universe. That name Alphonse reclaimed and displayed in the open as the God of ancient Israel and as the "God and Father of Jesus." Consequently, a pivotal indigenous religious concept acquired a new lease of life by way of Christian adoption. Alphonse felt something of his missionary vocation was at stake in the recovery of the local name for God, his credentials as an outsider notwithstanding. It indicates the counter-message of Bible translation in the sense that in the field what mattered was not the missionary discovery of indigenous culture so much as the indigenous discovery of Christianity. The vernacular Bible gave mission a necessary local orientation.

## Indigenous Liberation

Missionaries used their linguistic investigations to delve deeper into indigenous styles and forms as a substitute for their European analogues. They set out with Western ideas of Christianity only to hit the roadblock – or, for the discerning, the promise – of

the vernacular in unforeseen ways. Bible translation became the catalyst for discussions about the new society it required. The American missionary Thomas Jefferson Bowen who wrote an impassioned defense of mission as “civilization,” illustrates this. He argued that it was not enough to bring Africans the knowledge of Christ; they must be instructed in the science and arts of modernity. In the process, however, Bowen acquired a high degree of proficiency in Yoruba and wrote admiringly of the beauty and richness of the language. He confessed a deep appreciation for the invocatory prayers of traditional Yoruba worship, including the cult of Ifa, the Yoruba divinatory system. He wrote a *Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruba Language* which was published, notably, if somewhat inaccessibly, in the *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, in 1862.

Commenting on the role of missionaries in the scientific development of the Yoruba language, the Nigerian Yoruba historian, J. F. A. Ajayi, says: “The orthography of Yoruba is today substantially that laid down by the missionaries. Their rules of grammar have been frequently criticized, but their translations are still recommended as works of high literary value” (Ajayi 1965: 128). So much for Dr. Johnson’s assertion that writers of dictionaries are those who are “exposed to censure, without hope of praise.”

The process of acquiring expertise in the indigenous languages brought missionaries up against religious customs. One representative Christian figure who reflected on this process was Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (ca. 1807–1891), the foremost African churchman of the nineteenth century (Walls 1992). He played a formative role in developing the missionary outreach to Nigeria, where he used his considerable linguistic gifts in the cause of Bible translation. Crowther recognized translation to be more than a mechanical drill because something of the genius of the people was involved in it. With the sound instincts of a field ethnographer, Crowther made a point of befriending ordinary people without regard to their religious affiliation, going on to pay close attention to the speech of the elders in order to get behind new inventions of the language and the colloquialisms that break the line of continuity with the original. He followed the ripple effects of the initial missionary contact, finding his way to the core of the vital material, which he reclaimed as a trophy of the collective cultural memory and as the subject of Christian adoption (Ajayi 1965).

Crowther’s superb field skills helped to direct his inquiries toward a deeper appreciation of custom and context, tracking incidents of use and practice against the rules and conventions of society. Precisely because Crowther envisaged long-term Christian engagement with these materials, he strove for accuracy, naturalness, and dynamism at the same time. Cultural and linguistic facts, he said, must be located in the values and ideals they embody. He wrote in 1844 that his linguistic investigation encouraged him to dig deeper into other aspects of traditional African life, suggesting how the coming of Christianity could be the second wind of threatened cultures. It is an important theme of vernacular Bible translation. Crowther was eager to allow what Livingstone called “the eloquence of the native assembly” to guide and shape Christian encounter. The sense of responsibility this created for preserving the authentic forms of indigenous life and custom remains a genuine achievement of mission, while at the same time challenging missionary paternalism with the demand for equality.

In many parts of West Africa local initiative was decisive in promoting Bible translation (Mojola 2007). In Ghana the local clergyman, A. W. Hanson, translated Matthew’s

Gospel into Gã in 1843, and collaborated in the translation of the New Testament and eventually of the complete Bible in 1866. In East Africa, modern translators in Ethiopia were able to build on the fifth-century translation of the Bible into Ge'ez. That was how an Amharic translation of the Bible by an elderly Ethiopian monk, Abu Rumi, was published in London in 1840, a demonstration of Ethiopian initiative and leadership.

## Encounter and Reciprocity

When we consider the wider horizon of Scriptural translation, we are challenged to notice something that has easily escaped attention, namely, the peaceful and orderly context in which all this linguistic enterprise took place. This is not to say that there were no wars or strife at the time – for there were – but the inquiry launched to amass information and linguistic material encouraged habits of patience, methodical observation, consistency, and critical reflection, all of which surmounted intertribal strife. In this atmosphere translators attempted to establish etymologies and the history of developments in the languages and people concerned. Through a staggering wealth of detail, missionary translators and their local counterparts investigated and documented the various aspects of the language in grammars, dictionaries, vocabularies, primers, commentaries, collections of proverbs, idioms, myths, and folklore. For the first time there was available a meticulous inventory of local cultures produced by the most exacting standards of systematic inquiry. In many cases, the results have stood the test of time.

Yet the enterprise was not always prosecuted with detached brilliance and mastery, for there were awful specimens of incompetence, so that innumerable “howlers,” “widows,” and “orphans” in translation abound. In such cases the effects on the ground were far from salutary, with persisting evidence of confusion, disagreement, and partisan haggling. Missionaries were not above fault, one of their most common being to see Bible translation as foolproof guarantee of desired results. In our day, such results include the prevention of HIV/AIDS, the advancement of women, the suppression of superstition, the promotion of Christian unity, support for national integration, respect for international harmony, and the dawning of the long-awaited universal reign of peace – as if Bible translation is the missing link of paradise on earth. That the idea of the Bible as a cure-all should persist in our day shows how little understood still is the nature of Bible translation and its accompanying local orientation. The Bible is not the blueprint of Western progress, or the panacea for all ills.

It is important to stress that whatever brilliance there is in Bible translation, it is there largely because of missionary agency. The attitude we have learned to deplore in missionaries when they showed a lack of appropriate respect for indigenous customs contrasts in a positive way with their attitude toward local languages: studying the vernacular and stripping it down to its constituent parts in order to increase appreciation for its integrated vitality. Finally, with a vernacular liturgy, the process was consummated. The religious motive for embarking on translation does not really affect the point at issue, but merely strengthens the case for bringing the best resources of mind and spirit to bear on translation in order to make the result worthy of consecrated vocation. Even conflicting and rival interpretations sparked critical indigenous interest. Local cultures were enhanced in the process.

In tracking down correspondences, similarities, “false cousins,” and other combinations and permutations in the language, missionaries helped to establish important links among members of the wider African language families, and thus contributed to the reducing of ancient antagonisms and suspicions. Admittedly, denominational rivalries did introduce suspicion and misunderstanding in many communities. Yet the deleterious consequences of these rivalries were often more than mitigated by the cumulative impact of the vernacular Scriptures. Undeterred by theological differences, all the major Protestant denominations worked together to pool resources to make the Bible available in authentic inclusive translations. Bible translation in modern mission history was far removed from the religious upheavals of its earlier European counterpart. As Tom Beetham observed, “The process of translation helped to heal the divisions of the Church . . . What has brought Protestant missions together more than anything else has been the fellowship in the work of translation of the Bible” (Beetham 1967: 55). Evidence of this was the increasing cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. “Protestant versions in a number of languages have been used through the years by Catholic missions” (Beetham 1967: 56). A new and active sense of ecumenical solidarity grew between Catholics and Protestants in translation projects, with joint work in 170 areas (Hogg 1985: 13). Robert Moffat, the Scottish missionary linguist, said he took pains in his widely acclaimed translation of the Bible to avoid “giving the slightest tinge to any rendering in favour of any creed” (Doke 1961: 111). And what helped to overcome denominational resistance also worked to promote mother tongue advancement. Anyone surveying the scene today will be impressed by the extent of interethnic encounter in church and society alike.

A brief example must suffice on this point. The Church of Christ in Africa (CCA), founded in Kenya by a Luo, Matthew Ajuoga, illustrates this point well. Ajuoga traced his call to conflict with the Anglican Mission, yet in his case, too, the vernacular and ethnic issue was of considerable importance. In 1953 the Luo Old Testament was published, and Ajuoga was struck by the word the missionaries translated as *hera*, namely, the Greek *Philadelphia* and the English “love.” He claimed that *hera*, “brotherly love,” was absent in missionary treatment of African converts, and concluded that such treatment represented a scandalous failure of love. After several years of protest and discussion aimed at major reforms in the church, Ajuoga and his followers separated themselves and established the CCA in 1957, when it was a purely Luo church. In time the church’s reach extended across ethnic boundaries and appealed to several ethnic groups at once. “By 1965 the CCA claimed members among fifty-six of the tribes and sub-tribes of Kenya, Uganda and northern Tanzania; by 1967 eight dioceses had been formed in the three nations. Among its seventy clergy then there were two Teita, two Kikuyu, six Luyia (including one archdeacon) and one Gusii – all from Bantu tribes traditionally somewhat hostile to the Luo” (Barrett 1968: 260–261). Yet another example, from West Africa, is the Church of the Lord (*Aladura*), founded by Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu of Nigeria. The Church of the Lord (*Aladura*) established branches in different parts of Nigeria, and founded an active missionary movement in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and farther afield (Turner 1967).

All this is evidence of a widespread desire in much of black Africa for social harmony and mutual tolerance; that urge burst into the open with these Independent Churches

and the entire phenomenon of the charismatic revival, called *Aladura* in West Africa and “Zionism” in southern Africa. Many of these new religious movements spread beyond so-called tribal communities and embraced an impressive mosaic of peoples, languages, and cultures. The movements took mutual aid and encounter far beyond the confines of formal denominations under the ever watchful eye of the missionary. And thanks to vernacular literacy, much of the religious heritage of the old Africa was made available in parallel and other translations. These translations were the foundation stones of the worldwide awakening.

The vernacular Scriptures made a dramatic impression on Africans. When a local Christian held a translated Gospel in his hands for the first time, he declared: “Here is a document which proves that we also are human beings – the first and only book in our language” (Smith 1929: 195). Equally exultantly, a Christian in Angola celebrated holding the Gospels in his hands for the first time, affirming, “Now we see that our friends in the foreign country regard us as people worth while” (Smith 1929: 195–196). At an assembly of local Christians when a Wesleyan missionary produced the complete Bible, an elder declared, “I know that in my body I am a very little man, but to-day as I see the whole Bible in my language I feel as big as a mountain.” Another echoed him: “I wish that I were as big as an ox, or had the voice of an ox, so that I might shout the great joy which I feel” (Smith 1929: 196).

The translation process concentrated attention on the mother tongue, and it led missionaries to a critical comparative perspective on the West while bringing target cultures and languages into the world of literacy and the wider opportunities that represented. Missionaries, for example, dreamed of realizing in Africa the perfect replica of the primitive church as the answer, as they saw it, to the declining fortunes of the Western church, while Africans, on the other hand, saw mother tongue literacy as the door to increased opportunities in society and in the world.

## Function of Translation

In general Protestant missionaries undertook Bible translation without reckoning with the fact that translation would challenge Enlightenment assumptions and motives. The adoption of local languages changed the course of the Christian movement. Resistance to, or encouragement of, translation had a differential result in terms of the marked effects it produced on local views. Encouragement served the goal of authentic discipleship while resistance inhibited local talent, including the talent for religion.

The classical missionary doctrine that commerce, civilization, and Christianity belonged together assumed that cultural diffusion was the appropriate way to establish the church, that converts were primarily cultural adherents, and believers were so only by inference. Certain desirable cultural traits defined a gentleman – and a lady – as much as they did a Christian. Mission could, therefore, impose a cultural template on local populations in the interests of “normative Christianity” and its highbrow scruples. All that left converts falling well short of the Christian qualification, somewhat in the manner of the god-fearing Gentiles of the Jewish Diaspora. Bible translation struck at that root of classical doctrine by adopting the non-Western frame as a necessary and

sufficient basis of the transmission of the Gospel. Non-European peoples were thereby given a charter of full membership, a situation reminiscent of its New Testament counterpart. As Peter assured his incredulous and browbeaten Gentile audience: "Once you were no people but now you are God's people" (1 Pet. 2:20). Contrary to custom and to millennia of hallowed tradition, Gentiles, too, Peter challenged, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, thanks to the God who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light. The fact is that uniformity of belief and culture was not what the Gentile breakthrough was about. Christianity as a dynamic translation movement looked to open frontiers, and this idea received greater recognition in the period covered by this chapter than at any other time in the church's history.

In vernacular translation and literacy missionary methods were to a large extent effective, but with unintended consequences to match. With the help of vernacular Scriptures at their disposal, for example, Zulu Christians found sanction for their custom of dressing in skins (Gen. 3:21), and criticized missionaries for not being properly dressed according to the Scriptures. They voiced a similar criticism with respect to church services, with converts insisting that missionary churches were unfaithful to the Scriptures, which call for dancing and music in worship and singing (Judg. 11:35; 1 Sam. 18:6; 2 Sam. 6:14; Ps. 149:3; 1 Chron. 15:16; Lk. 7:32, 15:25; Mt. 11:17). As for the custom of singing, converts found in the Scriptures a stream in full spate. In the face of such overwhelming evidence missionary resistance seemed like tinkering with superficial things without affecting the momentum of the appropriation and adaptation induced by mother tongue translation.

This does not deny that Christianity brings real change; it is to say that it facilitates change by helping to resolve moral dilemmas and by dealing with inbred fears and anxieties. As E. Bolaji-Idowu, one of Africa's leading theologians, put it, Christianity enlarged the people's vision, freed their minds from the shackles of superstition and the irrational, and liberated their spirits from besetting fears (Bolaji-Idowu 1962: 209). Drawing upon the Bible available in the mother tongue, the new Christian leaders set out to banish fear by prescribing Scriptural texts as protection. That was how the leader of one of the new churches prescribed Psalm 127 as sure-fire remedy for the scourge of witchcraft. Scripture provided support for witchcraft to be recognized as a real problem rather than to be dismissed as an illusion. Thus empowered, Africans could make the choice that Christianity demanded. The key remained the vernacular and its cultural magnetic field. Mother tongue Scripture was the standard bearer of God's message, and the local believers' trump card against foreign devaluation. It enshrined and sanctioned local understanding in the people's own natural idiom, and often it spawned a people's movement in church and society – choice is empty without change.

The logic of mission as translation leading to the establishment of indigenous churches may be reinforced by developments in the intellectual climate of the culture of the missionary. This intellectual climate has to be distinguished from the changes ushered in by vernacular projects of translation. William R. Hutchison, the American religious historian, for example, has explored this ideological background of Western missions, and even from his own perspective confirms the shift toward the primacy of indigenization: "Historicism and cultural relativism about one's religious forms suggested some degree of syncretism in dealing with religious forms evolved by non-Christian peoples;

and they further implied a determination that Christian churches, once established abroad, might be left to themselves" (Hutchinson 1974: 119). What tended to happen, however, was the renewal of Christianity in the local idiom, with indigenous appropriation overtaking the rules of Western apprenticeship.

## Renewal and the Cultural Impetus

A casual glance at a religious map of Africa suggests that the areas of greatest Christian influence overlap nearly exactly with those of primal religions and cultures. This overlap amounts to more than mere coincidence. The overlap between the Christian revival and the revitalization of indigenous culture remains one of the most undervalued themes in the study of the history of Christianity, although in many societies beyond the West it stares us in the face at almost every turn. As early as 1954 Absalom Vilakazi, himself a Zulu, wrote an MA thesis at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, entitled "The Church of the Nazarites." In it Vilakazi propounded the view that the charismatic revival was the agent for "the regeneration of Zulu society." He proved this by calling attention to certain Zulu notions of illness, medicine, and healing, suggesting in addition how the idea of "covenant" became the inspiration for the creation of new forms of community among the Nazarites.

In this analysis, Vilakazi suggests that we stand the established theological and historical methodology on its head by viewing new forms of Christian religious life as some of the best examples of older, authentic forms of local custom. Typically we assume that Christian contact is tantamount to a taint, an assumption that has hardened with colonial domination. Perhaps Vilakazi's point needs more general recognition. If his tacit contention is correct, our defense of "ethnographic purity" would require us to repair to the new churches as prototypes of village life. The new churches should be viewed as repositories of traditional beliefs and customs. Indeed, not to put too fine a point on it, it may be that these new churches provide us with a unique opportunity to observe how Africans, facing new challenges, work out a resolution in time-tested channels, a process of change and assimilation that sheds new light on the question of origins in history, society, and ideas.

In his seminal work on Christian renewal in Africa, David Barrett identifies this vernacular factor with great consistency. He writes:

Vernacular scriptures have far greater power to communicate and create religious dynamic than versions in *linguae francae* such as Swahili, Hausa, Arabic, French or English, which have been in circulation in many areas long before the onset of independency without fomenting disaffection. The vernacular translation enables the ethnic group concerned to grasp the inner meanings of . . . profound and intricate biblical doctrines . . . Further, it is clear that these vernacular translations – with all the attendant expenditure of effort on orthography, grammars, dictionaries, and studies of tribal cultures – have contributed markedly to the recovery by Africans of the cultural identity of their tribe, later expressed in such bodies as tribal political parties, welfare societies, and particularly in tribal independent churches. (Barrett 1968: 133)

In the history of the church the resurgence of Christianity in contemporary Africa is without parallel. A few examples make this clear. In late 1893 there began in Buganda country (now part of Uganda) a mass movement in Christianity, “one of the most remarkable and spontaneous movements for literacy and new knowledge which the world has ever seen” (Oliver 1970: 184). This followed the efforts of Scripture translation led by the lay missionary George Pilkington. Then African evangelists, both men and women, came forward to carry the vernacular Scriptures into the chief districts of the country.

In 1896 there were 200 of these evangelists in regular employment, with 500 others in auxiliary positions. In 1902 the numbers increased to 2,000 men and 400 women operating as far as the periphery of the forests of the Congo. Pilkington’s translated Bible sold 1,100 copies in the year of publication, with an additional 4,000 New Testaments, 13,500 single Gospels, and 40,000 Bible-story readers. After visiting Uganda in 1910, Theodore Roosevelt witnessed for himself the staggering results of this work, which he characterized as nothing short of “astounding” (North 1938: 14). Similarly, the Roman Catholic missionaries, inclined to skepticism, admitted that “in truth a violent wind of Pentecost has stirred over these people” (*En vérité le vent violent de la Pentecôte a soufflé sur ce peuple*) (Oliver 1970: 187). When a census was taken in 1911, of 660,000 Bagandans, 282,000 claimed to be Christian, the figure being nearly evenly divided between 155,000 Catholics and 127,000 Anglicans (Oliver 1970: 193–194).

As Beetham observed, in spite of conventional wisdom, Roman Catholic missions were active in the translation enterprise. In North Africa, for example, nearly fifty dictionaries and grammars of mother tongues were printed between 1892 and 1914 on the basis of work carried out by the White Fathers. In 1906, Bishop Bazin’s dictionary of the Bambara (‘Bamana’) language of Mali was published in Paris by the French government. In Uganda, the Runyoro prayer book was printed in 1907 at the printing press set up by Julien Gorju (d. 1942), the “Vicar Apostolic of Urundi.” It was impossible to control the plain import of such vernacular linguistic activity and to restrict it to the confines of the mission station. The effects were irrepressible. As William Sharp (under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod) noted with respect to the old Gaelic race, the last tragedy for broken nations was not the loss of power and distinction, or even of country. “The last tragedy, and the saddest, is when the treasured language dies slowly out, when winter falls upon the legendary remembrance of a people” (Macleod 1904: 223). Bible translation intervened to prevent indigenous cultural collapse, and thus averted “the last and saddest tragedy” of defeat and loss.<sup>1</sup>

Translation did not always avoid cross-cultural pitfalls, with subtle consequences that escape missionary translators. In one case unsuspecting missionaries tumbled to the realization that medicine played a complex role in African societies. In the Luganda version of the Bible, for example, the word “charmer” or “wizard” was rendered as *basawo*, as in Deut. 18:10–11: “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.” When later medical missionaries arrived in Uganda, they were also called *basawo*. With the Bible in their hand, the local people claimed that



Scripture prohibited the practice of medicine. Thanks to this confusion in translation, a movement was launched to shun doctors as enchanters (Smith 1929: 193), suggesting that the roots of healing bristled with sharp social sensitivity.

## Assessment

Let us now consider this African theme within the broader picture of vernacular Bible translation. In the early church the work of Bible translation proceeded in spurts. Yet by the beginning in the eighteenth century and rising to a vigorous stream by the twentieth century we had a cascade of translations as demonstrated in a report of December 1984 which said that translations of the Scriptures were available in 1,808 of the world's 2,800 languages, with Africa alone claiming nearly one-third of these, with 522 vernacular translations (United Bible Societies 1984: 7). In the updated figures for 2006, modified in March/April, 2007, the world population is put at 6.5 billion and more than 6,900 spoken languages. Of these languages about 2,426 have some or all of the Bible translated into them, while 1,144 have the New Testament. Wycliffe personnel are reported to be working in 1,379 languages spread over 97 countries, which is 71 percent of all translation projects worldwide. In the 70-plus years of its history Wycliffe translators have been involved in the combined translation of 710 New Testaments and complete Bibles representing over 78 million people. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001) estimates the annual output of books on Christianity at 340,000 in 164 languages, and that 58 billion copies of the Bible have been produced in 367 languages. These figures show the accelerated pace of change within the last generation. At one stage in the 1980s, for example, continuing efforts were being made to provide translations into an additional 238 African languages, so great was the demand (Dalby 1976; Winder 1985).

This pattern of the correlation between indigenous cultural revitalization and Christian mission is a consistent one in new Christian communities, with evocative traces in the Gentile revolution in the primitive church. As they pored over the vernacular Bible, Africans saw something of the cultural potential of their own history and experience. The message of the Bible in the vernacular ended the isolation of tribe and language, reversed or slowed the process of neglect and indifference, and allowed translators to pull in remote and obscure languages in order to produce a simple and documented system of communication. Just as the English of King Alfred was more complicated than modern English, so were vernacular languages before Bible translation. And the simplicity of translation triggered intellectual currents that inspired comparative inquiry.

In a critical study of the life of Robert Moffat, the outstanding missionary linguist of southern Africa, the observation was made that the vernacular Bible bridged the old and new. It was a living book in the sense of its resonant testimony coming to life in home-bred tones and accents. It was impossible to ignore. Lifting a vernacular New Testament in his hand, an African convert testified that he and his people once imagined the Bible to be a charm of the white people designed to keep off sickness and to be a trap to catch the people. He knew differently now. "We have never heard of such a thing . . . but now we not only hear with our ears, we see with our eyes, we read it, our children read it . . . We

thought it was a thing to be spoken to, but now we know it has a tongue. It speaks and will speak to the whole world” (Smith 1929: 190). Moffat himself testified that, Setswana, the language he was working with, “possesses an ample source of suitable words to convey with wonderful clearness, the language and meaning of the Scriptures” (Doke 1961: 111). When faced with the translated Bible as the work of his hand, he parried the compliments by observing deferentially, “I felt it to be an awful thing to translate the Book of God” (Doke 1961: 111). Through Bible translation non-Western languages, by playing a necessary and indispensable role as carriers of the Christian Scriptures, became vehicles of change and renewal of their societies. For new converts, these languages provided the indispensable channel – and evidence – of God’s salvific activity, as well as being vehicles of cultural advancement. God *communicated* with the peoples of the world, and translation channels the divine discourse and the response it elicits.

The rapid, unprecedented expansion of Christianity from the second half of the twentieth century has thrown into high relief the impact of Bible translation on societies beyond the West and has revealed an important theological lesson. Standard theological models of Christianity have presented the religion as a closed circuit phenomenon whose main pathways of communication have been laid in the trusted channels of the Western canon. Criticism of Bible translations includes the view that it spawns syncretism, sects, heresy, and apostasy, which are to Christianity what aberration, mutation, infection, and suicide are to an immutable organism. Yet the pace and scale of Bible translation in Christianity’s post-Western phase are witness to a far different reality. Translation is evidence that Christianity’s neurological center is in flux, that its vocabulary is growing and changing, that historical experience has perspective-altering power, that foreign idioms have lodged in the system like oxygen in the blood-stream, and that Christianity’s “localizationism” in the frontal lobe of heartland Christianity has shifted to the central cortex of frontier Christianity where new, expanded tasks have stimulated tolerance and diversity in the religion.

The translated Scripture as the birthmark of Christianity has persisted with growing appeal into the vernacular phase of the missionary movement, and in the process has become the benchmark of awakening and renewal. In a speech on the occasion of the bicentenary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2004 Archbishop Rowan Williams summed up the implications of Bible translation for the church. “If scripture can be ‘re-created’ in different languages, the humanity of the Saviour who speaks in scripture must be an extraordinary humanity, a unique humanity . . . Every language and culture [have in them] a sort of ‘homing instinct’ for God – deeply buried by the sin and corruption that affects all cultures, yet still there, a sleeping beauty [waiting] to be revived by the word of Christ” in the relevant vernacular idiom (Williams 2004).

## Appendix: Statistical Summary

A summary, by geographical area and type of publication, of the number of different languages and dialects in which publication of at least one book of the Bible had been registered as of December 31, 2001:<sup>2</sup>

Continent or region	Portions	Testaments	Bibles	Bibles, DC <sup>a</sup>	Total
Africa	213	279	149	(25)	641
Asia	223	228	119	(25)	570
Australia/New Zealand/Pacific Islands	168	204	33	(5)	405
Europe	110	31	62	(46)	203
North America	40	26	7	(0)	73
Caribbean Islands/Central America/Mexico/South America	127	244	21	(8)	392
Constructed languages	2	0	1	(0)	3
Total	883	1,012	392	(109)	2,287

<sup>a</sup> This column is a sub-section of the Bibles column: for example, there is a translation of the Deuterocanon (DC) for 46 of the 62 languages of Europe in which the Bible has been translated.

## Notes

- 1 A theological review in 1978 seemed still tone deaf to the significance of translation in Christianity, for it stated that while French is suitable for Cartesian analysis, and English for pragmatic thought, "Arabic can strike the heart and mind by its affirmative and incantatory power. Participants in dialogue would do well to remember that not all languages have the same kerygmatic force, nor the same inclination to serenity" (Borrmans 1978: 45).
- 2 This 2001 Scripture Language Report provides a statistical summary of Scripture publication in languages of the world as of December 31, 2001. It includes all items registered for the first time by the United Bible Societies during 2001. Languages are registered when copies of printed Scriptures consisting of at least one complete book of the Bible are received in the library of either the American Bible Society or the British and Foreign Bible Society. A few corrections were made to the language databases and are reflected in this statistical summary.

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## CHAPTER 22

# Christianity and Interreligious Encounters

Martin Ganeri

### Introduction

From the very beginning Christianity has been engaged in different interreligious encounters, not only with the cultic beliefs and practices of other religious cultures, but also with the wider traditions of reflective thought, ethical systems and artistic achievement found within them. One important outcome of such encounter has been the development of what we should call Christian *theologies of other religions*, namely, reflection on the meaning and value of other religions, especially the salvific status of non-Christians and their religious traditions. Such theologies have tended to emphasize one or both of two fundamental doctrinal axioms, which might seem to be in some tension with each other: that salvation is through Christ alone, through faith in Christ, baptism and through membership of the church (Mk. 16:16, John 14:6; Acts 4:12); and that God desires the salvation of all humanity (1 Tim. 2:4). Likewise, different understandings of the relationship between nature and grace has played a major role in shaping such theologies: whether human beings, especially after the Fall, have a natural capacity to reach genuine knowledge of God and live morally good lives or whether fallen nature is too corrupt: and whether other religious cultures are manifestations the exercise of natural reason and aspiration or whether divine grace can also be said to be present and active in them.

Yet a further and very remarkable dimension of the encounter is the way in which the *theological expression* of Christian faith itself has been affected, challenged, and enriched as a result. Indeed it would be impossible to separate the historical expressions of Christian faith from such encounters. The church emerged in the context of the Greco-Roman world, with the writers of the New Testament, as well as Church Fathers engaging with the language and concepts of classical culture. The medieval church was in constant contact with Jews and Muslims and engaged in a sustained

engagement with Jewish and Islamic thought, one fruit of which is Western scholastic theology, which has played such an important role in the Catholic tradition. From the late fifteenth century the expansion of European colonialism and missionary activity likewise brought both Catholic and Protestant Christians into new forms of contact with non-Christian peoples and their cultures, including the great religions of the East, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, which encouraged further reflection both on the status of these religions themselves and on how Christian faith might be expressed through their concepts or otherwise enriched through the encounter with them. To what extent has the exercise of natural reason, or the presence of divine grace, in other religious cultures produced elements of truth, value and holiness, such that Christian theology can confirm, dialogue with, adopt or transform them?

Contemporary secondary literature evidences a wealth of surveys of the developing history of Christian theology of other religions as well as more constructive proposals about what an adequate theology of religions might be (e.g. Richards 1989; Sullivan 1992; Dupuis 1997; 2002; Kärkkäinen 2003). Less attention has been given to the sharpening of theological expression over the centuries and what significance this has for appraising the nature and value of inter-religious encounter, though the literature from the emergent discipline of comparative theology represents an explicit endeavor on the part of both Catholic and Protestant scholars to explore a creative contemporary theological engagement with the thought of other religions, one which also looks back to earlier phases of the encounter as models for the present (e.g. Clooney 2010; Ward 1994).

This chapter will pick out some of the important moments in the history of Christian encounter with other religions. The first part considers the New Testament and the Church Fathers, while the second moves on to later developments in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. For more comprehensive surveys and detailed constructive accounts of Christian theologies of religions and theological expression the reader is referred to the works cited along the way. In this chapter the focus is necessarily more selective, picking out some representative figures, considering what theologies they developed and in what ways they felt the expression of Christian theology might be affected by other religious cultures.

## The New Testament and the Church Fathers

### *The New Testament: Paul and the Gentiles*

The gospels record a number of encounters between Jesus and non-Jews, as the recipients of his healing and teaching and as exemplars of faith in him (e.g. the Roman centurion, Mt. 8:5–11; the Syro-phoenician woman, Mk. 7: 24–30; the Samaritan woman, John 4:5–42). As the early church's mission and presence expanded beyond the confines of Palestine into the Greco-Roman world and as non-Jewish converts began to enter the church in numbers, we find the beginnings both of theological reflection about non-Christians and of theological engagement with Greco-Roman culture in order to communicate the Christian message. Increasingly, contemporary scholarship has come to explore and identify the ways in which the writings of the New Testament as a whole

do engage and use this Greco-Roman culture (e.g. Aune and Brenk 2012; Stambaugh and Balch 1986; Malherbe 1989; 2000). Not surprisingly it is in the life and writings of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles and the first theologian of the church, that we find such theological reflection and engagement present most fully present.

The New Testament portrayal of Paul's attitude towards non-Christians is complex, since there is some difference in the tone and emphasis of the approach found in his letters and that given in Acts (O'Collins 2008: 121–161), though the teaching found within these different texts is not necessarily incompatible (Fitzmyer 1998: 611). In Romans Paul depicts non-Christians as capable of coming to knowledge of God through the contemplation of the natural world by the exercise of their natural reason and through doing what is right by the exercise of their conscience:

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen though the things he has made. (Rom. 1:19–20 NSRV).

When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written in their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness. (Rom. 2:14–15a NSRV).

However, for Paul, human history is in reality one of failure to do this and he sees non-Christian cultures and their religions as the sinful manifestation of this failure, characterized by idolatry and immorality (Rom. 1:22–32). Because of the sinful state all humanity, both Jew and Gentile, all are liable to the just condemnation of God, from which they can only be saved through the redemptive grace of Christ and by the corresponding manifestation of faith by men and women in him (Rom. 5:1–18).

In his meeting with the Athenians at the Areopagus in Acts, Paul's approach is more irenic as he seeks to communicate the Christian message to the Athenians in a form comprehensible and acceptable to them. Paul emphasizes the ways in which the Greeks are genuinely aware of and ordered to God and the reality of the divine forbearance (Acts 17:16–34). Many elements of Paul's speech before the Greeks at the Areopagus echo a range of Greek philosophical ideas, especially Stoic, while others echo the Old Testament and Jewish traditions, as well as ideas found in Paul's letters (Fitzmyer 1998: 592–613). Here, then, we find a positive and constructive encounter with Greek thought and culture in order to communicate the Christian message as well as the affirmation of the fundamental orientation of all people to God (O'Collins 2008: 154–160). For the later Christian tradition, Paul's approach to non-Christian thought and culture was summed up in his words to the Corinthians: "We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4b–5 NRSV).

When it comes to Paul's other letters there is also plausible evidence to show that Paul himself uses Greek philosophical and rhetorical elements in them. Thus Abraham Malherbe (1987; 1989; 2000) has argued for the presence of Greek moral philosophical forms in Paul's letters, especially in the first letter to the Thessalonians, where Paul

seems to be addressing a newly converted Greek congregation. Malherbe argues that a comparison with Greek moral philosophy, especially that of the Cynic tradition, suggests that Paul is using the concepts and images of these traditions of exhortation and consolation, such as in the interplay of boldness and gentleness in the preacher. Malherbe points to striking parallels between the terms in which the Cynic Dio Chrysostom (AD 40–ca. 120) portrays the ideal Cynic preacher in contrast to charlatans and Paul's self-description in 1 Thessalonians 2, with the suggestion that we find here Paul deliberately adopting this persona to bolster his own credentials with the Thessalonian converts (1989: 35–48; 2000: 133–164). At the same time, Malherbe draws attention to the ways that Paul transforms the reasons and motivation given for moral exhortation and consolation, integrating them into a distinctive Christian framework in 1 Thessalonians 4–5 (1989: 49–66; 2000: 81–86, 216–346).

Read in this way the letter to the Thessalonians manifests a striking early instance of how Christianity has engaged constructively with non-Christian culture. Malherbe's arguments for such direct and substantial use of Greek culture remain subject to considerable debate, not least over the extent to which Paul was directly familiar with and used Greek philosophy rather than received its concepts and images via earlier Jewish engagement with Greek culture. However, to the extent that and by whatever means such an encounter with Greco-Roman culture is present we do see both the use and transformation of non-Christian culture by Paul, as well as the process whereby the expression of Christian teaching itself ends up being shaped by this culture.

### *The Fathers of the Church: Augustine and Greek thought*

The early Fathers of the church likewise developed theologies of the religions of the Greco-Roman world, as well as forms of theological expression influenced by its thought and wider culture. Whereas the Fathers all condemned non-Christian cultic traditions, they showed different responses to non-Christian philosophy. The more oppositional line associated with Tertullian's declaration, "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens? What the Academy with the Church?" (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, VII, 9) was balanced by a measured openness on the part of Fathers such as Justin Martyr (c. AD 100–165). For his part Justin engages with the Greek philosophical concept of the Word or Logos, as the principle of intelligibility or reason universally immanent as "seeds of the Word" (*logos spermatikos*). Non-Christians living before Christ have been able to share thereby in the Word made incarnate in Christ (John 1: 1–14) and to live according to the Word and thus be saved (Dupuis 1997: 53–83; Sullivan 1992: 14–27).

The most influential Latin Father is undoubtedly Augustine (AD 354–430). Augustine's theology of religions further articulates the negative stance found in Paul, as then found in the thought of other Fathers. Non-Christian religions are marked by polytheism, idolatry, superstitions and immorality, the products of humanity marred by original sin. The religious institutions and practices of non-Christian cultures are thus to be rejected (*De Doctrina Christiana* (1996) (D.D.C.) 2.18, 28; 19, 29–24, 37). In terms of whether non-Christians can be saved, Augustine, like the other Church Fathers, distinguishes between those living before the coming of Christ and those after: those living justly before, whether



Jews or Gentiles, could receive salvation through Christ and belong to the “church from Abel” (Dupuis 1997: 80–3; Sullivan 1992: 23–31), but afterwards it is required for salvation that they have explicit faith in Christ and enter the church through baptism (Dupuis 1997: 90–2; Sullivan 1992: 31–39). Augustine’s position thus manifests a common understanding of the influential doctrine of “no salvation outside the church” (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) (Dupuis 1997: 84–96; Sullivan 1992: 39–43). It would be further affirmed in uncompromising terms by his disciple Fulgentius of Ruspe (AD 468–533), whose teaching was to become part of the official teaching of the church in the Council of Florence in 1442.

Moreover, a highly influential element of Augustine’s theology of religions is his doctrine of predestination. Only those to whom God gives the grace of Christ can be saved and God has predestined to give this grace to some and not to others. Thus, for Augustine God wishes the salvation of the many to whom he does offer saving grace and who respond to it. He has not given grace to those whom he foreknew would not respond well. All these are justly condemned by God because guilty either of their own personal sins or of the original sin which affects all of humanity and which makes humanity a *massa damnata*. While the assumption was that the Gospel had been proclaimed throughout the world and so people living after Christ could be justly condemned for the personal sin of disbelief, Augustine accepts that there may be tribes who have never heard the Gospel, but maintains that nonetheless they remain justly condemned because guilty of original sin (Dupuis 1997: 90–91; Sullivan 1992: 28–39).

In terms of the way non-Christian thought shapes the expression of his theology, however, Augustine is somewhat more open. That Augustine was very much influenced by Platonism is evident both in his biography and in his theological writings (e.g. Rist 1994), even if the degree to which he knew Plato and neo-Platonic thinkers directly or their thought through other classical authors, such as Cicero, or earlier Christian thinkers, is unclear, and the exact degree and manner in which Platonism affects his work remains a matter of debate and in need of further enquiry (Crouse 2002: 37–50). In his understanding of the situation of non-Christians in general with regard to knowledge of God Augustine’s attitude towards non-Christian philosophy is marked by considerable ambiguity and a certain pessimism: on the one hand, non-Christians are able to reach a true knowledge of God, on the other hand, this ability is hampered by original sin, which means in practice that the degree of success in coming to know the truth about God has been limited (Rist 1994: 28–31). Augustine thus affirms that Platonism has come nearest to Christianity in its concept of God (*De Civitate Dei* (2003) VII 9–11), but nonetheless still gave way to polytheism (D.C.D. VIII 12).

Nonetheless, Augustine explicitly promotes and explores the value of non-Christian thought in the understanding and teaching of Christian faith. In the *De Doctrina Christiana*, which van Fleteren characterizes as “the charter of the Christian intellectual” (van Fleteren 1995: 14), Augustine is concerned with the proper method of scriptural exegesis, the primary source and context for Patristic doctrinal reflection. Augustine becomes here the first in the Christian tradition to set out a systematic programme for how Christianity might use the non-Christian liberal arts, i.e. the natural sciences, humanist disciplines and philosophy (van Fleteren 1995: 14). Distinguishing between non-Christian religious and human institutes, he argues that the liberal arts found in the latter can play a positive role in the exegesis of the Bible (D.D.C. 19, 29; 2.25, 38–38, 56).

Augustine's model for this is a Biblical one common among the Fathers: the "ransack of Egypt":

If those, however, who are called philosophers happen to have said anything that is true, and agreeable to our faith, the Platonists above all, not only should we not be afraid of them, but we should even claim back for our own use what they have said, as from its unjust possessors. It is like the Egyptians, who not only had idols and heavy burdens, which the people of Israel abominated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and fine raiment, which they secretly appropriated not on their own initiative, but on God's instructions. (D.D.C. 2.40, 60).

Thus, the presence of incompatible religious traditions should not prevent an openness to non-Christian learning, since it also contains "liberal disciplines which are more suited to the service of the truth, as well as a number of most useful ethical principles, and some true things are to be found among them about worshipping only one God" (D.D.C. 40, 60). Christians should welcome truth found anywhere, since all truth "belongs to their Lord." (D.D.C. 2.8, 28).

Thus, in the *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine develops a positive, if qualified, account of how and why Christian theology should benefit from using non-Christian thought in order to understand and teach the meaning of the Bible better. Given both the negative character of his theology of religions and his emphasis on the effects of the Fall on the capacity of human nature and the human intellect this is all the more remarkable. Augustine's own use of Platonic thought involves a transformation of that thought as it comes to serve the expression of Christian faith. It is, as Rist puts it, "ancient thought baptized" (Rist 1994). Both Augustine's theology of religions and the model of Christian engagement with non-Christian thought he develops were of very considerable influence on later Western Christian theology, both Catholic and Protestant. Augustine's work itself provides an important example of the double transformation that characterizes such Christian engagement with the thought of other religions: in Augustine's account Christian faith does transform the non-Christian thought and culture it takes up, but at the same time the expression of Christian faith is itself transformed through this encounter.

## Later Catholic and Protestant Encounters: Catholic Encounters

### *The medieval period: Aquinas and non-Christian philosophy*

Medieval Europe was fringed by Muslim dominated territories, with Jewish communities also present within the countries of Western Christendom. Christian attitudes towards Judaism and Islam at that time were routinely very negative and condemnatory. Yet the encounter with non-Christian thought continued to enrich the expression of Christian theology. During this period the West became aware of new resources of Greek thought, especially the works of Aristotle. Western Christian scholastic theologians also knew and used Muslim and Jewish commentaries on and adaptations of the works of

Greek philosophy, as well as independently composed Jewish and Muslim philosophical and theological treatises. Christian scholastic theologians were able to regard Jewish and Muslim thinkers as having something intelligible and useful to say about the fundamental themes of God, creation and human nature.

The most influential of the Scholastic theologians was the Dominican friar, Thomas Aquinas (AD1224/5–1274). Aquinas' theology of other religions continues the fundamental perspective developed by the Fathers, though articulated in distinctive ways (Sullivan 1992: 44–62; Dupuis 1997: 114–117). On the authority of Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (NRSV),” Aquinas argues that when non-Christians have belief in God and in God's providence this constitutes an implicit faith in Christ and hence that this is sufficient for salvation (*Summa Theologiae* (S.T.) 2–2.1.7). As for the ancients, this means that non-Christians before Christ could thus be saved, as well as those at the beginning of Christianity who had not yet heard the Gospel (S.T. 2–2.2.7 ad 3; 2–2.10.4.3). Likewise, Aquinas affirms the necessity of baptism for salvation, yet also affirms the possibility of baptism by desire, even implicitly held, for those who were properly disposed with faith and charity (S.T. 3.68.2; 69.4). However, Aquinas, like the Fathers, argues that those coming after Christ must have explicit faith to be saved (S.T. 2–2.2.7). The Jews and Muslims of his time are deemed to be guilty of the sin of disbelief (S.T. 2–2.10). Aquinas acknowledges the possibility that there might be individual non-Christians to whom the Gospel cannot be said to have been preached (e.g. the child brought up in the wilderness or among brutes) and who are thus not culpably ignorant. For them all that is required is that they follow their natural reason and the dictates of their conscience. In such cases the need for explicit faith would be met either by the sending of a preacher or by divine revelation (*De Veritate* 14.11.1).

However, Aquinas' theological engagement with non-Christian thought also shows considerable openness not only to earlier Greek thought, but also to contemporary Muslim and Jewish writing. His work is remarkable for the extent to which he uses Jewish and Islamic philosophy and for the respect and courtesy he shows his sources. Aquinas engages with Muslim thinkers such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina, d. 1037) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd, d. 1198), Jewish thinkers such as Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), as well as the *Liber de Causes*, a Latin work of considerable importance in the Christian West based on an Arabic reworking of Proclus (*Kitab al Khair [The Book of Pure Goodness]*), on which Thomas wrote a commentary at the end of his life. Their philosophy exercises a considerable and positive influence on the development of his theology throughout the whole course of his work (for more detailed discussions of these engagements see Burrell 1986; 1993; 2004).

At various points in his works Aquinas justifies the use by theology of the philosophy found in Greek, Jewish and Islamic works. In Aquinas' most influential work, the *Summa Theologiae*, Christian theology is depicted as a *scientia*, a “science” in the sense of a systematic body of knowledge, developed by reasoning from a set of first principles to further conclusions (S.T. 1.1.8). Within this theological science, the first principles are the articles of faith taken from divine revelation, which are then explored and explained through the resources of philosophical works and the exercise of human reasoning.

Philosophical works are accepted as “authorities” which in different ways further the exploration of revelation. Aquinas argues that such authorities serve, “not indeed to prove faith . . . but to make manifest certain things which are handed down in revelation (*hac doctrina*)” (S.T. 1.1.8 ad 2). For Aquinas non-Christian philosophy thus has a legitimate and indeed very important role to play in the construction of Christian theology.

Like Augustine, Aquinas uses a number of scriptural images to characterize what happens when Christian theology engages with philosophy. In the *Summa Theologiae* he refers to the Pauline image of taking “every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5), also noting the use of Greek poetry in Paul’s speech in Athens (S.T. 1.8. ad 2). In another work, his commentary on Boethius’ *De Trinitate*, he uses the more Johannine image of changing water into wine. Rather than diluting Christian teaching, engagement with philosophy is something that appropriates and transforms the thought it encounters. Referring back to Augustine’s own use of Greek thought, Aquinas argues that non-Christian philosophy can provide “likenesses” (*similitudines*) for revealed Christian doctrines, which can then be used in Christian theology to aid and deepen our understanding of revelation. For Aquinas such encounter manifests his wider understanding of the relationship of nature and grace: just as in general grace perfects rather than does away with nature, so revelation and Christian theology perfects non-Christian philosophy, rather than simply opposes or rejects it (*De Trinitate* 1.2.3.). Again, the encounter with non-Christian philosophy brings about a kind of double transformation. The water of Aristotle or of Avicenna may well become the wine of Christian theology, but the water of their thought still remains the material out of which Aquinas’ theology is formed.

### *The Early Modern period: conquest, mission, and inculturation*

From the end of the fifteenth century European trade and colonial expansion brought increased and wider forms of contact between Christians and other religions, especially sustained encounter with those of the East. While the negative appraisals of the salvific status of non-Christians of earlier periods continued to be strongly held, there also developed attempts to develop more positive accounts of the salvific status of non-Christians (Sullivan 1992: 63–140). Moreover, although very often Christian mission took the form of the transplantation of a European Christianity into other lands, there were also attempts at engagement with the thought and cultural traditions of other religion in order to develop inculturated or indigenized expressions of Christianity.

The Council of Florence (1442), adopting the language of Augustine’s disciple, Fulgentius of Ruspe, insisted on the need for explicit faith in Christ, on baptism and on membership of the church in this life for salvation:

[The Holy Roman Church] . . . firmly believes, professes and preaches that “no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans,” but also Jews, heretics and schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life, but they will go to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and its angels, unless before the end of their life they are joined to it. (Denzinger-Schönmetzer 1351, trans. in Sullivan 1992: 66).

However, fifty years later the discovery of the Americas and the many millions of its inhabitants who could not be held to have heard the preaching of the Gospel challenged the implicit assumption underlying the degree of Florence that the peoples of the world had all heard the Gospel and had accepted or rejected it. In response, Dominican and then Jesuit scholars took up the account worked out by Thomas Aquinas about those who lived before the coming of Christ and re-applied it to cover those who had lived in later generations as well. Those who are inculpably ignorant of the Gospel and who live according to the natural reason and the dictates of their conscience should receive the grace necessary to bring them to that faith in God which is necessary for salvation (Heb. 11:6). Such can be deemed to have implicit faith in Christ and to have a desire (even if only implicit) for baptism and membership of the church. This is sufficient without the further expectation that by some means they come to explicit faith in Christ or membership of the church in this life. Some theologians such as the Jesuit scholar, Juan de Lugo (1583–1660), also extended this principle to heretics, Jews, and Muslims, who could not reasonably be said to have committed a personal act of sin of disbelief in the Gospel. Such adaptations were later to be fully accepted as part of the official teaching of the Catholic Church in the Second Vatican Council (Sullivan 1992: 44–102).

This period also witnessed encounters leading to new forms of theological expression. Aquinas again provided the framework for later engagement, with the Thomist account providing both the content of Christian doctrine and the methodological model for encounter with non-Christian thought or philosophy. Jesuit missionaries especially working in the East made pioneering attempts to engage with Eastern religious cultures, of which the work of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), first with Buddhism and then Confucianism in China, and Robert de Nobili (1577–1656), with Hinduism in India, are outstanding examples. Positive engagement with the thought of these religions was justified as just an extension of the way Aquinas engaged with Greek, Muslim and Jewish philosophy. Thus, in China Ricci pursued a policy of accommodation to Chinese religious culture, an important, if also very controversial, element of which was acceptance of ancestor rites as permissible for Christian converts (Cronin 1955; Spence 1984). Such efforts were to be curtailed, however, with both papal condemnation of ancestor rites and the banning of Christianity itself in China in the eighteenth century, though accommodation to Chinese culture continued on a more ad hoc basis in rural areas (Bays 2012: 17–40). Likewise, in India, Roberto de Nobili encouraged inculturation into Brahmanical Hindu social and religious traditions (Sauliere 1995). An important later proponent of the same approach in the early twentieth century was the Bengali Brahmin convert, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861–1907) (Lipner 1999) and shortly after Upadhyay's death there began a sustained intellectual encounter with Hinduism undertaken by the "Calcutta School" of Jesuits, including Pierre Johanns (1885–1955) (Doyle 2006) and Richard de Smet (1916–1998) (Malkovsky 2000), for a survey of the whole period see Halbfass 1988: 36–53). This encounter between Thomism and Hinduism is also evident in the work of Raimundo Panikkar (1918–2010). In his book, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964; 1981) Panikkar explicitly depicts his work as a constructive reading of Hindu texts in a way that parallels Thomas's use of his Greek sources (Panikkar 1964: 126–131).

*The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: magisterial and theological accounts*

The twentieth and then early twenty-first centuries has been a period of considerable development in terms of attitudes towards and engagement with other religions in the Catholic Church. On the level of official teaching, the Second Vatican Council (1963–1965) promoted a positive, if nuanced, approach to other religions which has served as the reference point for later official teaching within the church as well as for theological speculation. Thus, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, while affirming the necessity of the church for salvation, also affirms the universal principle of inculpable ignorance and states that non-Christians in any age and place may attain salvation and that they can be “ordered” (*ordinantur*) to the church (*Lumen Gentium* 16). Missionaries are encouraged to be open to the riches placed by God in other religious cultures, to recognize them as “seeds of the Word,” (*Ad Gentes* 11) and to see them as a “preparation for the Gospel” (*praeparatio evangelica*) (*Ad Gentes* 3). The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*: N.A.) promotes dialogue and collaboration with members of other religions, stating that the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men (N.A. 2) (for a sophisticated analysis of the documents and teaching of the Council on other religions see D’Costa 2014). Subsequent official teaching has further articulated the approach taken in the Second Vatican Council (Sullivan 1982: 182–98). Thus, for example, Pope John Paul II (1978–2004) re-iterated the Council’s teaching, further applying it in support of interreligious dialogue, not least the World Day of Prayer for Peace held at Assisi in 1986, where leaders from different religious traditions were gathered together to pray. A major theme in the teaching of Pope John Paul II has also been the universal presence and activity of the Spirit in all the religious cultures of the world and behind all authentic prayer (e.g. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 1990, 28–29).

The period has also witnessed a considerable number of Catholic theologians developing theologies of other religions in the time leading up to and since the Council. The Jesuit theologians, Jean Daniélou (1905–1974) and Karl Rahner (1904–1984) have, in particular, become representative of two trends in such theology (Dupuis 1997: 130–157)). For his part, Daniélou emphasizes the fundamental difference between other religions and Christianity as being that of nature and revelation, of preparation and reality. He sees in the covenant with Noah a “cosmic covenant” established in the order of nature, which differs from the revealed and supernatural covenant with Abraham and Christ. He distinguishes between the “cosmic” religions based on natural aspirations (though individual members of these religions may receive grace in addition) and the revealed religion, which contains these supernatural covenants (e.g. Daniélou 1964). Rahner, on the other hand, argues that all human beings are by nature always open to the transcendent and have the corresponding offer of supernatural grace at all times, which allows them to come to supernatural faith and charity. He argues further that the social and historical nature of human beings implies that the outworking of this grace should itself take a social and historical form in the religious traditions of

humanity, which then should be deemed as the lawful paths by which saving grace is mediated until the Gospel is promulgated effectively and which have a status similar to that of the religion of Israel before the coming of Christ. Rahner insists, however, that all grace is referred to Christ. Those who receive grace should, thus, be said to be “anonymous Christians” and their traditions “anonymous Christianity” (Rahner 1966; 1969; 1978). Thus, whereas Daniélou is representative of a theology in which the other religions are not said to be ways of salvation in themselves, Rahner’s theology is taken as the basis for theological accounts which give the other religions a positive salvific status.

Other Catholic theologians have continued to advance and further develop versions of these two approaches. Most controversial has been the issue of whether other religions can be said to be ways of salvation in themselves. Thus, the work of another Jesuit theologian, Jacques Dupuis (1923–2004), became subject to official censure when he sought to extend Rahner’s position and argue that other religions should be regarded as ways of salvation distinct from the saving economy found in Christ and the church, a position he has described as “inclusive pluralism” (Dupuis 1997). While the exact meaning of Dupuis’ position remains unclear, some other Catholic theologians, such as Raimundo Panikkar (1981) and Paul Knitter (1995; 1996) and many Asian theologians have advanced more radically pluralist accounts, where the different religions are affirmed as equal and separate paths to the divine mystery. In response the Catholic Church has felt obliged to make clear that such radical pluralist theologies go beyond the scope of official Catholic teaching (as in *Dominus Iesus*, issued in the year 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). As another major Catholic theologian of religions, Gavin D’Costa, has argued, official Catholic teaching is best represented as silent about the salvific status of other traditions in themselves, while open to the presence of divine grace within the lives and traditions of other religions (e.g. D’Costa 2000; 2014).

### *Comparative theology*

Contemporary Catholic theologians have also been leading figures in the development of the modern discipline of “comparative theology,” the term that has (not entirely happily) come to characterize sustained Christian theological engagement with the thought of other religions, especially as carried out in the Western academy. A leading figure in this, the American Jesuit Francis Clooney (1950–) (e.g. Clooney 1993; 2001; 2010), has described comparative theology as:

acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions. This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological insights that are indebted to the newly encountered tradition/s as well as the home tradition. (Clooney 2010: 10).

As Francis Clooney himself emphasizes, the exercise of comparative theology as such is not to be confused with theology of religions and does not presuppose any particular theological stance about the revealed or salvific status of other religions (Clooney 2010:

9–16). Clooney's own approach is characterized by close reading of particular religious texts from the different Hindu traditions and then reflection on what it means to read Christian texts alongside them.

## Later Catholic and Protestant Encounters: Protestant Encounters

The variety of traditions which might be grouped together within the general category of Protestant Christianity makes any account highly selective. In comparison to the Catholic tradition the relative lack of prominence given to official teaching authorities and the greater freedom for theological speculation and expression further complicates the picture. For a more comprehensive treatment the reader is referred to a number of surveys of Protestant approaches to other religions (e.g. Richards 1989; Kärkkäinen 2003). Here we can only identify certain important moments and figures within the evolution of Protestant encounter with other religions and the way these respond to each other over time. A pivotal point in modern developments in this was the Enlightenment and the rise of Liberal Protestantism (Kärkkäinen 2003: 90–102).

### *The Reformation leaders*

Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564) both affirmed the Augustinian position in its uncompromising form and hence in effect the position of the Council of Florence, albeit without the stricture on non-Catholic Christians and with a corresponding condemnation of Catholic Christians. Thus, Luther affirmed that explicit faith in Christ and membership in the church were necessary for someone to be saved:

For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call and gather the Christian Church, and outside it no one can come to the Lord Christ . . . But outside the Christian Church (that is, where the Gospel is not) there is no forgiveness, and hence no holiness. (Luther (1959) *Large Catechism* 2.45, 56).

He accepted that there could be natural knowledge of God and was willing to give a limited value to non-Christian philosophy, but drew a distinction between such knowledge and saving knowledge of God, which meant knowing the God revealed in the Cross and having explicit faith in Christ. Even the knowledge other religions could have of God has in fact been perverted by them into idolatry. At the same time, Luther was open to the possibility that Jews and non-righteous Christians before Christ might be saved, through the gift of God's grace.

For his part, Calvin fully affirmed both Augustine's more pessimistic account of the corruption of the human ability to know God and live morally good lives after the Fall and his doctrine of predestination. Because of sin other religions were useless and marred by idolatry and immorality and only served to justify the condemnation of non-Christians. All non-Christians both before and after Christ were therefore reprobate



sinner and justly condemned to hell. At the same time he, likewise, allowed that people of the religion of Israel could be saved through Christ. However, Calvin emphatically rejected his colleague Zwingli's suggestion that other non-Christians who lived before Christ might also be saved (Kärkkäinen 2003: 71–77).

### *Missions, translations, and indigenization*

The expansion of Protestant missionary and colonial activity from the eighteenth to the twentieth century brought its own increased contact and pioneering engagements with other religious cultures, with further attempts to develop indigenized forms of Christian teaching. Thus, in India, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719) at the beginning of the eighteenth century worked in the Danish missionary colony at Tranquebar in South India and undertook serious study of Hindu beliefs as a precondition for engaging in successful missionary work, translating the Bible into Tamil and engaging in debate with Malabarian Brahmins. Later, in the Baptist mission at Serampore founded in 1800, William Carey (1761–1834) became proficient in Bengali, translating the Bible and other Christian texts into that language (for these figures and their wider context see Frykenberg 2008: 142–168, 301–343). Likewise, Protestant missionaries made use of Sanskrit, developed both in pursuit of an Indian Christian liturgy and for the propagation of Christian treatises, imitating the genres of Hindu works, and which become a focus for debate between Brahmins and Christians over the claims of the two religions in the nineteenth century (for a full account of this see Young 1981).

In China, Protestant missionary scholars and then Chinese converts from the nineteenth century also sought to engage with Chinese culture. Thus, working for the London Missionary Society (LMS) Robert Morrison (1782–1834) learned Chinese and produced the first Protestant Bible in the language. A little later James Legge (1815–1897) began to translate the Chinese classics into English, carrying on this monumental work subsequently with the Chinese convert and scholar Way Tao (1828–1897) (Bays 2012: 41–65). Such efforts flourished more fully in the twentieth century and with the establishment of the Sino-Foreign Protestant Establishment (SEPE), whose members both promoted Christianity and carried out scholarly engagement with Chinese religious culture, such as in the work of scholar Wu Leichman (1870–1944), who sought to reconcile Confucianism and Christianity (Bays 2012: 92–120).

Sustained contact with other religions also contributed to a change towards a more positive attitude towards other religions themselves. By the beginning of the twentieth century a widespread account of other religions, known as “fulfilment theory,” acknowledged the presence of truth and value in other religious cultures, viewed as fulfilled or completed by, rather than in opposition to or abolished by, Christianity. In the case of Hinduism a major voice for this was the Scottish Presbyterian, J.N. Farquhar (1861–1929), in his book, *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913). In the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries this account of other religions was either rejected in favor of more straightforward restatement of traditional doctrine or further developed into accounts affirming the presence of the Trinity and of divine

revelation and grace in other religions, or even superseded by more radically pluralist accounts.

### *The Enlightenment and Liberal Protestantism*

The Enlightenment and its aftermath had an immense impact on Protestant approaches to other religions. The Enlightenment stressed the priority of reason unconstrained by religious authority and empirical observation in constructing religious accounts and appraising beliefs. In its wake, and in opposition to Enlightenment rationalism, Romanticism emphasized the role of human experience and imagination. A further product of Romanticism was an emphasis on the historically conditioned nature of human cultures. All these led to radical re-appraisals of what Christianity was and should be, what its relation to other religions was, and by extension what the nature and value of any religion might be (Richards 1989: 25–52; Kärkkäinen 2003: 90–102).

An important product of this was Liberal Protestantism, which embodied an openness to radical revision of Christian beliefs according to the principles of the Enlightenment and its aftermath. Thus, one of the founding fathers of Liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), developed the experiential category of “feeling” or “intuition” (*Gefühl*) and the “feeling of absolute dependence” or of “God-consciousness” as the central characteristics of religion in general. A continuity of the human and the divine is thus affirmed, in that the experience of the divine is as a reality immanent within each human subject. Christ represents the one who had this God-consciousness to the highest degree and hence Christianity can be said to be the absolute religion. Yet all religions can be regarded as valid expressions of this same feeling or consciousness.

Likewise, Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) played a leading role in the emergence of the “History of Religions School,” which dominated the study of approach to religion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This school located Christianity within the historical evolution of religions in general as determined by their social and political contexts. For Troeltsch all religions are the expression of the encounter or union between the human spirit and the Supreme Spirit, experienced as both immanent within the individual person, while also transcendent. Such an experience is open to everyone. Christianity is thus to be regarded as one expression of the experience of this relation within the particular historical context in which it developed, no different from any other religion in this regard, except in the extent of its spread. The religions just represent different historically conditioned manifestations of a common experience.

In seeking to respond to the challenges of the Enlightenment and its aftermath such Liberal Protestant accounts radically revised what counts as Christianity as they developed and endorsed more general accounts of authentic religion. Christianity and the other religions became members of a common genus that is religion. Such an approach naturally leads to a radically pluralist account of religions and the search for a common essence or set of characteristics and values that can be found in all religions. Much of later Protestant theology and theology of religions can be viewed as a reaction to or an adaption in different ways of the Liberal Protestant approach.

### *Neo-orthodoxy and the rejection of liberalism*

One response was the total rejection of the radical forms of Liberalism represented by Schleiermacher and Troeltsch by Karl Barth (1886–1968) and the other leading figures (Henrick Kraemer (1888–1965) and Emile Brunner (1889–1966)) of what came to be known as neo-orthodoxy or dialectical theology. Here we find a retrieval and re-application of one of the core doctrines of the Reformation leaders: the contrast of grace (and hence revelation and salvation) and fallen human nature (and hence its capacity for knowledge of God and moral rectitude).

Karl Barth is arguably the single most influential Protestant theologian of the twentieth century. In opposition to the accounts of religion developed by Schleiermacher and Troeltsch, Barth affirms revelation as the “abolition” (*Aufhebung*) of religion (Barth 1956 *Church Dogmatics* I.2: 280–361). Religion is labeled as “unbelief,” as the self-assertion of sinful man of a substitute for revelation. Revelation, on the other hand, is the Word of God, a transcendent reality and event entering into human history, contained in the person of Christ, the Bible and expressed through preaching of the Word. Revelation and saving grace are thus wholly transcendent gifts of God. Yet *Aufhebung* is also the “elevation” of religion in that revelation transforms religion from being the sinful self-assertion of man alone to being the vehicle through which God communicates the Word and saving grace. As uniquely transformed in this way Christianity is the “true religion,” the one religion for humanity, the means by which human beings can come to be “justified sinners” (I.2: 344–345).

Taken by itself, then, no religion can be salvific. Barth is consistent, therefore, in rejecting the salvific value of other religions, even though acknowledging often remarkable phenomenological similarities with Christianity. In his later writings Barth is more open to affirming the truths and values to be found in other religions, without giving up on the logic of his earlier position. At the same time, Barth in the eyes of at least some of his interpreters appeared to affirm the final salvation of all human beings because of the sovereignty of divine grace, whether they belong to Christianity or non-Christian religions (Barth 1961, *Church Dogmatics* IV. 3.1: 355–356).

Barth’s theology has remained very influential, though most Protestant theologians have sought to explore less oppositional relationships between revelation and human cultures. The Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions within Protestantism in general are the ones which continue to embody the kind of stance taken by Barth, though with various qualifications (for outlines of the leading figures of neo-orthodoxy and these wider traditions see Richards 1989: 14–24, Kärkkäinen 2003: 139–142, 144–150, 174–189, 261–281).

### *Mediating liberalism and tradition*

Most modern Protestant theologies of other religions would represent forms of mediation between traditional Protestant doctrine and the kind of openness to other religions fostered in classical Liberalism and developed as a result of missionary encounter with the religions themselves. The mainstream Protestant churches rooted in the traditions of

Luther and Calvin, as well as the Anglican or Episcopalian traditions, generally embody the type of mediation found in these theologies, in which the uniqueness of Christ continues to be affirmed along with an openness to the salvation of members of other traditions, the activity of the Trinity in other religions, and the presence of elements of truth, value and holiness within them (Kärkkäinen 2003: 123–134, 151–164, 224–260).

*Mainstream Protestantism: Wolfgang Pannenberg, rival truth claims, and the challenge to theology and its expression*

A sophisticated and influential theology which does explicitly mediate between traditional Protestant doctrine and Liberalism is that found in the highly regarded work of Wolfgang Pannenberg (1928–2014). A student of Barth, nonetheless Pannenberg sought to retrieve religion as a positive category and reality having a less oppositional relationship with revelation. A central feature of his account of religions is that they represent rival truth claims. Religions are the historical contexts where there arise different claims about the divine and it is within these contexts that such claims are further experienced and tested out (Pannenberg 1990: 119–188). Nonetheless, Pannenberg rejects the reduction of Christianity to just one form of historical experience as found in classical Liberal theology (and which he finds reflected in contemporary Christian pluralist theologies). Rather, in Christianity we find a unique revelation of God in Christ in which the universal saving revelation for all human kind is made present proleptically. The idea of the proleptic is central to Pannenberg's theology of revelation, whereby the future reality of the eschaton breaks into earlier reality. At the same time, Pannenberg, like very many other twentieth- and twenty-first-century theologians, affirms that the Spirit makes the revelation and saving grace found in Christ, and hence in Christianity, also present and active in other religions (Pannenberg 1990: 96–106).

Pannenberg argues that the meeting of religions has always been an important part of the process by which rival truth claims are encountered, subjected to rational inquiry, and thereby the truth itself more fully grasped. Christianity is by its nature syncretistic in character, accepting and adapting the elements of truth and value it finds in other religions as it seeks to understand and express revelation better. The inherent provisionality of any Christian grasp of revelation until fully revealed in the eschaton justifies this process and hence the value of further interreligious encounter. In Pannenberg's theology we find, then, a further example of, as well as a sophisticated theological argument for, the kind of positive engagement with other religions in the search for better theological expression which we have identified in earlier phases of Christian encounter. As Pannenberg puts it:

It is the encounter of conflicting truth claims that challenges each religious tradition to reaffirm itself in facing these challenges. But it can never mean to give up on the specific truth claims of one's own tradition . . . In order to engage in genuine interreligious dialogue, Christianity should deal with the situation of religious pluralism in a different way. It must be open and ready to accept whatever truth the Christian can accept and learn from other religious traditions in order to incorporate those elements of truth into our own understanding of God and his revelation. (Pannenberg 1990: 103).

*The Anglican Tradition: Keith Ward and a Systematic Comparative Theology*

The modern Anglican tradition has sought to engage both with traditional Christian doctrine and with the Enlightenment emphasis on reason and experience in a way that represents a measured and creative appropriation of the Liberal tradition. Modern Anglicanism has also sought to respond theologically and dialogically in positive ways to the concrete encounter with other religions in Britain and the world as whole. One of the most significant contemporary Anglican theologians to have done so is Keith Ward (1938–), a leading philosophical theologian, who has combined interest in the interaction of religion and science with an interest in the theological encounter of religions. The result is a major representative of the comparative theology exemplified in the Catholic tradition by Francis Clooney.

Ward takes major theological themes and considers them in the light of a number of different religious traditions, as well as more recent developments in Western scientific, philosophical and historical perspectives. His major and mature work is found in a four-volume series (Ward 1994; 1996; 1998; 2000) which he describes as a “systematic Christian theology, undertaken in a comparative context” (2000: 339). Ward argues that the comparative approach in theology is the proper theological response to the contemporary world. Theology is faced by an awareness of the diversity of religious traditions and hence of convergent and divergent accounts of the major themes with which theology is concerned. In this context theology should consider and engage with other religions just as in the past it has engaged with the ideas and cultures current at the time:

I think the time has come when it is positively misleading to consider religious traditions in isolation. Theologians have in fact always taken their interpretative clues from philosophical and cultural factors not confined to Christianity. Aquinas, for example, took Aristotelian philosophy, well seasoned with Platonism, and used it to rethink Christian doctrine in the thirteenth century. For a short time, his works were even banned from the University of Paris; but it was not long before they became definitive for the Roman Catholic Church. Does it make sense to treat the content of a religion as a self-contained corpus, as though it at least was immune from external influence, and as though light could not be thrown upon it by a consideration of claims made by other faiths? (Ward 1994: 37).

Ward argues that to meet the different contemporary challenges there is need for a modification of Aquinas' concept of theology as *sacra doctrina*. While accepting a definition of theology as the “rational elucidation of revelation” (1994:1) he argues that since contemporary theology is faced by a variety of claims for divine revelation, as well as by critical objections to any claim for revelation by developments in modern historical and scientific knowledge, theology cannot be content just to assume the self-evident truth of a given revelation, as Aquinas does, but has to go further back and consider the origins and status of revelation itself and only then to offer a reasoned account justifying a particular revelation (1994: 7, 36). In regards to other major themes, theology likewise should be open to rethinking beliefs in the contemporary context. For Ward, theology is,

thus, a “*self-critical* discipline, aware of the historical roots of its own beliefs, a *pluralistic discipline*, prepared to engage in conversation with a number of living traditions; and an *open-ended discipline*, being prepared to revise beliefs if and when it comes to seem necessary” (1994: 48).

### *Pluralist theologies of religion*

Radically pluralist theologies are more prominent in contemporary Protestant accounts of other religions than in the Catholic tradition and have considerable resonances with the classical Liberal theologies found in Schleiermacher and Troeltsch (e.g. John Hick 1973; 1989; Wilfred Cantwell Smith 1981; Alan Race 1982). The most prominent Western pluralist, John Hick (1922–2012) moved gradually from a theocentric (Hick 1973) to a Reality-centric account using Kantian epistemological categories (Hick 1989). All religions represent different experiences and conceptions of the Real, which remains in itself beyond any such experience and conception. The different religions are complementary insights into the Real and all the great religions have a common soteriological pattern concerned with the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness and with affirmation of the ethical Golden Rule (Hick: 1989). Pluralist accounts of this sort are common both in the Western academy and in Asian theologies, though not adopted officially by any Protestant tradition and subject in both contexts to much criticism both concerning their theological adequacy and conceptual coherence (see Richards 1989: 76–102; D’Costa 2000; Kärkkäinen 2003: 282–352).

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## CHAPTER 23

# Women in Church, State, and Society

Angelyn Dries

**T**he line attributed to Jesus in the synoptic gospels, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s,” appears to make a clear distinction between God’s realm and that of the state, in this case, the Jewish people under the rule of the Roman Empire. In fact, ecclesial (church), political (state), and social (society) boundaries were often overrun, with gender issues either enforcing or challenging rules and relationships in the other areas. Interaction between Christianity and local social, religious, and political cultures is a “moving frontier . . . flowing not only between people but within them and in both directions” (Hastings 1979: 273). Theories about the relationship of Church (communities of Christian believers organized in a public manner) and state (a self-governing political unity)<sup>1</sup> often gave little thought to women and, when theorists did so, assumed that women were objects of the theories and not necessarily active participants in decision-making.

But another set of arguments made a case against women’s circumscribed social and corresponding political and church roles. Women in less defined, frontier, or disintegrating social and political situations readily assumed polymorphous religious, social and political roles, with their activities crossing into what were deemed roles designated for men. This “in between” experience of ambiguity required skills of negotiation, flexibility, and entrepreneurship toward ends that were humane and healthy for themselves and society, whether appropriating conservative or liberal ideologies. Once situations became “regularized,” men assumed formal, public authority through the establishment of what they saw to be clear boundaries, whether in church, state, or society. Women, when barred from public or official authority, drew upon sources they saw in Christianity to create their niche within the paradigms, to challenge their status, or to develop strategies for Christian revitalization. While some feminists have raised the issue that values associated with the home led to women’s suppression and

non-involvement in the “state,” in actuality, domesticity proved ambiguous. With the lens of the “frontier” or liminality as a navigational locus, the chapter will focus on the appropriation of Christianity by women with publicly recognized titles of high rank, as well as *groups* of women, many nameless or “unofficial,” who impacted society, the state or the church, often *because* they worked collectively in relation to control over or access to resources related to the defining moments of initiation into a community (skills or values needed for survival/thriving within the group), and marriage/life choice.

## Early Christianity through Fourth Century

From Christianity’s inception, women were attracted to the message of Jesus. The gospels show him interacting with a variety of women both within and outside of Judaism: Mary Magdalene, the Syro-Phoenician woman, the sisters Martha and Mary, the unnamed woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, and the women disciples who looked on from a distance, as Jesus was dying on the cross are among those noted. The gospels place women as followers or disciples of Jesus and closely associated with the apostles. At the tomb of Jesus, a woman is the first “evangelist” of the resurrection message.

Jesus mother and first educator, present at the center of the church’s origin, gained veneration early in the Latin, Byzantine, and Coptic churches, as “blessed among women,” *Theotókos* (she who begot God), perfect apostle, and mother of the church. After the late 1400s, she would be named for local apparitions, often to those who were in lower socio-economic classes with a message directed toward socio-political circumstances of the time: Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico), the Virgin of Charity of Cobre (Cuba), Our Lady of Einsiedeln (with roots in ninth-century Switzerland), Our Lady of Lourdes (France), and more recent apparitions at Kibeho (Rwanda), and the Coptic-approved Warraq el-Haddai (Egypt), are just a few of these manifestations. Artistic renderings of Mary conveyed her “plasticity”; i.e., Mary was depicted in multiple cultural forms more readily than was Jesus.

Pentecost, the “birth” of the church, took place in an upper room, and initially Christianity was a house church movement, with women offering hospitality and leadership within the community. Peter, after his miraculous escape from prison, went to the home of Mary, mother of John Mark, where the community had gathered in prayer. Phoebe, Junia, and Lydia, all women of means, offered their homes, hospitality, and finances to the community. Though Paul had written that for Christians, there was “no male or female,” because all “were one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28), the sense of the spiritual/economic egalitarian church of Acts of the Apostles 2: 42–47 proved difficult to maintain. The presence of women acting with authority in local churches raised cultural presumptions about women. Several quotations from Paul’s letters were used through the centuries to put women in their assumed or expressed social/cultural place.

Much of what we know about women in the first thousand years of Christianity revolves around women of means and social standing. The legendary *Acts of Thecla* (ca. AD180) relates the life of the protomartyr, converted by the teachings of Paul and named “equal to the apostles.” She renounced marriage and began to preach, for which

she was ordered put to death on two occasions by the government, yet she miraculously escaped. The *Acts* imparted an ideal for later women to preach and provide public leadership in church circles. Women martyrs, such as Perpetua and her slave, Felicity, in Carthage, Blandina, a slave woman and her mistress in southern France, Martha in Persia, and Demiana and the forty women of her Coptic monastery in Egypt, provided an authority of witness and the recognition that Christian ideals could be embraced by both sexes and by different socio-economic classes.

Though their ecclesial responsibilities were loosely defined as “offices” at the start, women served as deaconesses, as members of the Order of Widows, and as ascetic virgins. Third-century deaconesses cared for married women in non-Christian homes, ministered to the poor and ill, and assisted in the anointing of the body and complete immersion of women in baptismal waters. A century later, when issues of church and state in the West were under one roof in the age of Constantine, women deacons were assigned menial work. In Eastern church literature, deaconesses are found into the twelfth century. The Byzantine, later Russian, and more recent Japan Orthodox churches continue the Order of Deaconesses. In 2004, the female diaconate was officially restored by the Greek Orthodox Synod, while the Syriac and Coptic Orthodox Churches have reinvigorated the women’s diaconate (Karras 2004).

In the mid-300s, Paula and Marcella, a young widow, offered their homes for other Roman noble women as sites for recitation of psalms, instruction in ascetic virtues, and lectures on scripture. A more permanent community group formed when Paula and Jerome began double monasteries (one for women, one for men) in Bethlehem. Double monasteries provided a regularity of liturgical life, common prayer, catechetical instruction, and scripture reading for women and were a locus for them to control their lives outside of marriage. With Thecla as her model, Macrina turned her mother’s household into a monastic community. Women leaders, often of noble birth in the churches of the East and the West, lived a contrast to predominant society values of indulgence and wealth as life goals and marriage as a way to contract profitable connections for families. By the end of the third century and a lengthy Christian initiation process for baptism was truncated in the West, monasticism reflected the earlier pattern of Christian initiation and provided stable areas of Christianity and civic life. However, monastic literature began a theme of male suspicion of women, who were a fascination and a temptation (Cameron 1993: 16–17).

After the Edict of Milan (313) women took on new roles in Christianity vis-à-vis the state, beginning with Constantine’s newly converted mother, Flavia Julia Helena, upon whom Constantine restored social and political prestige. Her trip to Jerusalem to locate the cross on which Jesus died appeared to be a religious act, but Licinius in the Eastern part of the Empire interpreted the act politically – an attempt by the West to usurp the power of the East. With Christians now able to celebrate the Eucharist without fear of reprisal, their gatherings moved from homes to public buildings (*basilea*), a move which, as noted above, led to a diminishment of women’s formal leadership in liturgical life (Baldovin 1987). In the Eastern Church, Nina (Nunia ca. 296–381), the “Enlightener,” taken from her home in Cappadocia to Georgia, was renowned for her healing powers, prayer, and preaching. She converted and baptized the Tsar of Georgia, his wife, and son during the time of Diocletian. The czar eventually instituted Christianity as the area’s religion.

## Fifth through Ninth Centuries

Christian wives of significant rulers in parts of Britain and Europe became instruments of their husband's conversion from "pagan" or Roman gods to Christianity: Clothilde and Clovis, Bertha and Æthelberht, Æthelburh and Edwin. Byzantine Princess Anna's marriage to Vladimir Sviatoslavich in 988 came with the proviso that he would become Christian. While noble women brought Christianity with them as a condition for marriage, their converted husbands often used Christianity as a way to unify an empire.

The early tradition of women gathering in communities for prayer, study, good works, and the intensification of Christian life continued with monastic leaders Hilda of Whitby (ca. 614–680, Burgundofara (d. 643, 645 or 647) at Faremoutier, south of Paris, Queen Etheldreda (d. 679) in Cambridgeshire, Frideswide (680–727) in Oxford, Walburga (710–799) in Heidenheim, Leoba (b. 700), described as a female Boniface, missionary to the Saxons, and Huneberc (eighth century) in Hildesheim. Their monasteries, some of which were financed by wealthy women, focused on the conversion of non-Christian groups in their respective regions and were centers of learning for clerics and others in government, agriculture, music and art. In some locations, the monasteries formed an alternative to clan leadership/government and became a stable socio-political force, when frequent wars broke out between clans.

The Church in the West adopted the imperial structures of Charlemagne's court, with territories ceded by Pepin III (756) and Pope Leo III's coronation of Charlemagne as King of the Holy Roman Empire in 800. By the end of the ninth century, more monks were ordained as clergy, bishops were addressing the diversity of marriage customs in the West, and marriage, heretofore a civil act, was formally considered a sacrament around 1000. Charlemagne, under whose authority marriage became legal once a clergyman had blessed the couple, also ordered all nuns to be cloistered.

The rich liturgical tradition of the Byzantine and Orthodox churches, somewhat inculturated from Serbia through Greece, was enhanced with young virgins' participation in special choirs, as early as the mid-300s. Ephrem (306–373) in Syria was probably the first to initiate the tradition. Born into an aristocratic family, Kassia (b. 805/810) founded a convent in Constantinople during the iconoclastic controversy, a movement which disputed the use of images of holy persons. Not surprisingly, the controversy involved intrigue between the church in Rome and Constantinople. Emperor Theophilos persecuted Kassia by having her scourged for venerating icons. Nevertheless, she wrote secular and spiritual poetry and composed music to accompany the hymns, the most famous of which is the *Hymn of Kassiani*, still sung during Holy Week in Orthodox churches. Women, married to clergy, could be ordained *presbytera*, a term of respect; however, in the absence of priests, *presbytera* could lead prayer but not conduct the Eucharist.

## Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries

The tenth century in Western Christianity was a time of great religious ferment, with many groups influenced by a *vita apostolica* that emphasized liberty and poverty in response to a corrupt, often uneducated clergy, and a wealthy church modeled on an

imperial system. Women's religious authority became severely limited in the West. The power of abbesses was curtailed, double monasteries were suppressed, emphasis was placed on clerical life, and married women were placed in a hierarchical rank just above that of prostitutes. Though women of lower socio-economic classes were part of the trade-regulating guilds and sometimes remained single, men made major decisions. Eligible suitors for noble women were limited because of the Western church's emphasis on unmarried clergy and the death of noblemen in local wars or the Crusades.

The *vita apostolica* appeared among laity in various forms. The Beguine movement, which originated in Belgium around 1170, eventually spread through much of Europe and became an alternative to marriage or cloistered life for single women.<sup>2</sup> Individual *conversae* (women penitents) sought evangelical simplicity and lived at home while performing acts of charity, attending the sick, or assisting the indigent. They lived either with or without an informal "rule of life" and eventually organized loosely in communities. By the thirteenth century the women formed associations and built or acquired infirmaries for the sick poor. Some larger Beguine communities (*beguinages*), a kind of city within the city, became parishes dedicated to charity. The Ghent Beguinage consisted of "two churches, eighteen convents, over a hundred houses, a brewery, and an infirmary" (McConnell 1954: 479).

Among the Beguines, thirteenth-century mystics Mechthild of Magdeburg and Hadewijch of Brabant described their religious experiences in poetic fashion with words like "love" and "freedom," words also sung by wandering troubadours. Though not Beguines, Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) an anchorite, poet, and musician, and Joan of Arc (1412–1431) a soldier, experienced mystical visions with messages for society and the church. Of the three windows in Julian's cell, one faced the tabernacle, one the church and one the people. Her prayer connected all social levels of daily life and challenged ecclesiastical theology, with her depiction of a merciful God and an image of God as mother/father.

A noblewoman, Clare Offreduccio (1194–1253), was influenced by the sermons and life of Francis of Assisi, who preached God's love and a life according to the gospel. Clare founded a convent of cloistered women and struggled with church authorities to have inserted into their rule of life the "privilege of poverty." An economic consequence of this "privilege" was that women gave up the right to their family inheritance. In Clare's case, a key road ran through her family land, allowing family control of access. Clare's gift of land to the poor allowed anyone to travel the route. Thus, a vow of poverty assured that women's "worth" lay outside of their potential socio-economic influence and a vow of chastity made the women not "valuable" simply for possible lucrative marriage connections for families.

The Franciscan movement attracted people from all social and economic classes, with women a key component in church renewal. Married people lived a simple lifestyle in their homes and occupations and emphasized the interconnection between persons, creation, and God. One lay Franciscan, Bridget of Sweden, having had a vision of Christ, who told her to found a new community with a rule of life he dictated, started the Order of the Most Holy Savior (Brigittines, 1370), a double monastery where, in a reversal of social order, lay brothers served the nuns.

In England between 1100 and 1350, Recluses were a popular religious movement that attracted more women than men, by ten to one (Malone 2001: 290). When women sought approval to begin this and similar groups, the Fourth Lateran Council's (1215) response to diverse spiritualities was to forbid new religious orders and declare that new groups were to follow an already existing rule. Nevertheless, women continued to inaugurate new religious communities and after the Reformation (post-1521), their numbers would multiply considerably.

While women's groups raised a new model of church with potential effects for state and society, large amounts of money were spent to wrestle back the Holy Land from the Moors. Eleanor (1122/4-1204), heiress to the great fiefdom of Aquitaine and wife of Louis VII, King of France, donned armor and carried a spear, as she and her armored ladies and servants rode to the Holy Land to tend the injured and sick. She disagreed with her husband on the strategic location for battle, and when Louis's plan to invade Jerusalem failed, the two of them returned home on separate ships. When favorite son Richard was fighting in the Crusades, she defended his land and interests back home and raised the ransom when he was imprisoned.

As the Black Death advanced over a large part of Europe, England, and Scandinavia in the 1300s, an estimated 30 to 40% of the population succumbed to the disease. During this time, the nuns at the Hotel Dieu, Paris, were one of the few groups who took care of the sick and dying. During this century when the Roman Catholic Church had two popes at one time (the Great Schism), public figures on different sides of the issue offered counsel to popes: Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) and Catherine of Sweden (1332-1381) backed Urban VI and Colette of Corbie (1381-1447) supported Clement VII.

In an era that emphasized the importance of the priest as the conduit to God, tension existed between authority derived from office, whether ecclesiastical or governmental, and authority derived from women's personal, mystical experience with implications for reform of church or society. Spiritual union with God/Christ held practical ramifications: feeding, healing, and providing for the poor, while simultaneously admonishing church leaders to a deeper spiritual life. Women's religious experience and spiritual writings provided an alternative to the deductive philosophical basis of scholastic theology born in this period.

## European Expansion and the Reformation

The Reformation in Europe and Western exploration of the African and American continents were two developments in the first decades of the fourteenth century with implications for women's lives. The Martin Luther and John Calvin reforms and Henry VIII's Anglicanism generally terminated one lifestyle option for women, that of the monastery. It would not be until the nineteenth century that Lutheran deaconesses filled somewhat the same role as did women religious and single Protestant women were seen as missionaries in their own right. Women were expected to have some elementary knowledge of medicine (herbal, midwife), agriculture, and sewing arts, and, depending on their

economic class, enough accounting skills to record transactions their tradesmen husbands undertook. But with monastery closures, women had less access to formal education and governments in Protestant areas realized they had to assume responsibility for the indigent, sick, and dying, formerly served by monasteries.

Women in Western Catholicism sought to expand the boundaries of cloistered religious life for purposes of the apostolate. Cloister was imposed partially as a way to protect women, presumably from being a temptation for men. But the growth and diversity of women's groups outside of the cloister challenges the assumption that written condemnation by church authorities simply suppressed the groups and points to women's ingenuity to relate religious faith, social order, and the "state." Mary Ward's (1585–1645) community taught English young women to be good wives and evangelizers where Catholics were aggressively persecuted. Ward's group was suppressed because they carried out work "not suited to the weakness of their sex," nor to "womanly modesty" – common phrases of the time – and because the women presumed to know scripture and the currents of public life, areas considered the realm of men. Nevertheless, women continued to inaugurate communities whose purpose was evangelization, education, and nursing. Angela Merici in northern Italy (1470–1540), Jeanne de Chantal (1567–1641) and Louise de Marillac (1591–1660) in France, founded women's communities – respectively, the Ursulines, who were the first female missionaries in North America, the Visitandines, and the Daughters of Charity. The groups educated women from various economic classes and served the poor, the sick, and others who were paid no heed by society or the state. The women's communities, an important element of the Catholic Reformation (faith *and* works), soon followed the men who colonized Africa and the Americas, and the women served colonists and indigenous people. Though she did not get her wish, a young Congo woman desired to become a nun, having heard of Teresa of Avila's (1515–1582) Carmelite reform.

Anabaptists, outlawed from the Holy Rome Empire, held to equal access to scriptural understanding, though without a need for literacy, and sought to restructure society along egalitarian values of radical community sharing with orphans and the poor. A tendency toward separation from "the state" and non-support of war brought them government persecution. Women comprised almost half of the Anabaptist martyrs in the Tirol. Agnes Zender of Aarau, Adelheit Schwarts, and Margaret Hohinger were among the Swiss Anabaptist martyrs. The home of Barbara Schleiffer, an Augsburg grocer, hosted sewing circles, worship, and was a refugee center. In these "underground churches," women's family and acquaintance circles were key to maintaining communication and support for the church as a persecuted minority (Snyder and Hecht 1996: 9).

The idea of a whole world to be explored and expanded for trade, colonization, and "Christianization" was underscored when Pope Alexander VI's demarcation meridian line provided Europeans with a new mindset of "globality." Responsibility for the pastoral care of the European settlers and conversion of conquered peoples initially rested with various groups of friars and Jesuits. Indigenous women became concubines or wives of the foreigners and were often rape victims of the conquering men. Christian women, some of them daughters of such unions and others of Spanish or Portuguese upper-class ancestry entered the convents in the Americas by the late 1500s. Ursuline missionary, Marie de l'Incarnation/Marie Guyart (1599–1672), who

wrote an Iroquois catechism and dictionary and Algonquin dictionary in Quebec, Sor Juana de la Cruz in Mexico (1648/51–1695), and Rebecca Protten (b. 1718), an Afro-Caribbean Moravian and freed slave on St. Thomas Island, were women who, in spite of constrictions of church role or racial prejudice, gave voice in public venues and evangelized their own class and those of lower socio-economic status. Sor Juana's plays, which contained a smattering of Nahuatl language, were performed in the city plaza to a diverse audience, including indigenous people. Marie l'Incarnation learned about indigenous diet through cooking local foods with Huron girls, and Rebecca's work among slaves placed "outside" women closer to the heart of indigenous people than did men's experience.

In the 1500s, Congo was one of two Christian kingdoms in Africa. Catholicism was accepted not as a foreign religion but as a "syncretic cult," aligned with Congo cosmology (Thornton 1997: 241). King Mvemba Nzinga (ca. 1461–1543) adopted Catholicism and took the name, Afonso, the heir to the Portuguese throne. Nzinga encouraged Christianity throughout the kingdom, but a constant struggle remained for him with his successor, the Portuguese traders, and leaders who desired a return to traditional African religion. A young convert, Kimpa Vita, introduced to Christianity by the Portuguese Capuchins and baptized Dona Beatrice (ca. 1682–1706), emerged as a Christian prophetess. She claimed to be the reincarnation of Saint Anthony and founded the Antonian movement in 1704, combining elements from Catholicism and experiences of ecstasy. She reinterpreted Congo symbols and Catholic beliefs to effect political change (Gray 2002) and was a predecessor of women foundresses of twentieth century African Initiated Churches. Though she was killed at the stake, King Pedro IV used her cult to unite his reign.

In Shanghai, Candida Xu (1607–1680), granddaughter of a well-known convert and widow at forty-six, gathered women into spiritual associations, took in abandoned children, and provided food for beggars. Though upper-class Chinese women remained secluded, she traveled through China with her imperial inspector son and used his connections along with funds she raised to help Jesuits build churches and chapels, handle some of their missionary expenses, and finance publication of Chinese Catholic literature. Xu's Jesuit biographer, Philippe Couplet, identified Xu as the "mother of the Chinese Church" and "apostle of China," holding her as an exemplar for European women to imitate her generous spirit and financial support of missionaries (Charbonnier 2007).

## **Eighteenth to Twenty-First Centuries: Women Align for Social Reform**

Women's groups were crucial in nineteenth-century reform movements, which aligned home/religious values with social and state causes in education, temperance, abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, missions (viewed not only as "bringing" Christianity but education, medical benefits, and "social uplift" for women), and a self-consciously identified women's movement that engaged public structures of exclusion. Skills women learned in the Christian community transferred to civil society: public speaking, organization of mass rallies, and publications. Siblings Sarah (1792–1873)



and Angelina (1805–1879) Grimké, who viewed reform issues as interconnected, spoke against slavery and for women’s rights. Angelina’s *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* (1836) urged them to join the abolitionists. Margaret Fuller’s, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) analyzed sexual inequality and argued that divine love (which men particularly needed to feel and live) was demonstrated in practical love for humanity, especially through social reforms. Both sexes needed to claim spiritual and intellectual talents. The Seneca Falls Convention (1848) aligned women’s suffrage, property, and women’s health rights with the abolition of slavery. Convention leader, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), later addressed scriptural issues that prohibited women from preaching and ordination in *The Woman’s Bible* (1895/1898), a revisionist cut-and-paste method to eliminate sexist scripture passages. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1873, soon spread across the United States, Canada, and other parts of the world. Under its longtime President, Frances Willard (1839–1898), and resting on an evangelical platform, the organization embraced other social causes including moral reform, women’s rights, missions, and education. After the passage of the “Prohibition” Amendment to the US Constitution, WCTU intended to “purify” government itself.

Women’s mission societies grew in numbers and finances. Protestant women could serve as missionaries provided they marry a missionary, but eventually single women served in their own right and became more numerous than men. Charlotte (“Lottie”) Moon (1840–1912), Southern Baptist evangelist among northern Chinese women for over forty years, wrote hundreds of articles and letters to influence board policy, to encourage women to finance missions (the annual Christmas offering was named for her), and to become missionaries. With the enormous success of women’s fundraising, denominational mission boards sought to disband women’s groups and to appropriate their funds. By the mid-1950s, most women’s mission boards were taken over by their male counterparts, who controlled the leadership and funds disbursement.

Education, especially literacy for women and the lower classes, remained a key priority for women and a key factor for social change. Emma Hart Willard (1787–1870), with financial aid from Troy, New York, taxes, built her Female Seminary for women’s advanced education, especially for teachers. Other women’s schools followed, including the “Seven Sisters Schools.” Elizabeth Lange (1784–1882) and Henriette deLille (1813–1862), both of whom experienced racial discrimination from society and the Catholic Church, founded religious congregations to teach and house black children in the United States. Women religious congregations sometimes used income from teaching upper class girls and music lessons to educate poor or immigrant children. Between 1872 and 1922, 167 new US congregations or provinces of women religious were formed, mainly targeted toward healthcare and education. In India, Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati (1858–1922), whose high-caste Brahmin father believed that girls should be educated, became renowned in Calcutta for her knowledge of Hindu scriptures, forbidden to women. She realized the texts offered no hope for *mukti* (freedom) for women, except through a husband. Having read a Bengali translation of the Gospel of Luke, she became a Christian and gathered upper-class women to challenge child marriage, oppression of high-caste widows, and denial of women’s literacy. *High Caste Hindu Women*, her speeches during a lengthy visit to the United States, made women there and

in England aware of women's plight in India, while at her Mukti Mission she taught and housed hundreds of child widows (Frykenberg 2008).

Education seen as literacy, skill development, or access to new venues for one's work was often linked with economic security. The Wheatley family of Boston provided an education for their Gambian-born slave, Phillis Wheatley (1173/4–1784), who obtained her freedom and acquired an income, due to the American and European popularity of her poems and elegies, the latter echoing her African roots. The education of young girls by missionary women in rural China raised their social standing and marital options for upward mobility. Women missionaries often began schools for girls, and the young ladies sometimes later founded their own schools. While attending a Christian high school in Hunan, Pao Swen Tsen (Zeng Baosun 1893–1978) converted to Christianity, established a girls' school, and was elected to China's National Assembly in 1948.

Where social boundaries between the sexes excluded healthcare for women, Christian women stepped in with dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals for women's wellness, especially in childbirth, tuberculosis, leprosy, and more recently for large numbers of women facing HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa. Some medical dispensaries for women in India turned into prominent teaching hospitals to educate indigenous women in medicine. Vida Scudder (1870–1960) in Vellore and Anna Dengel (1892–1980) in Rawalpindi (now Pakistan) formed a generation of local women health professionals.

## Negotiating Boundaries: Social Change and Domesticity

Women applied the skills they gained in itinerant evangelist groups to address other areas of life: the Legion of Mary, which soon found its way to China, Korea, and Africa, the Chinese Sister Catechists of Our Lady, evangelistic teams of immigrant Chinese women in Singapore responding to John Sung's revival, and Guandong Bible Women (Ling 2010) each evidenced group support, growth in self-esteem, a new identity, leadership among other women, and verbal witness, often in cultures where women were not seen or heard in public. In some cases, they used their new self-understanding to strengthen domestic values in threatened cultural and economic situations.

In Colombia, South America, as women became increasingly dependent on male wage earners and women's work was devalued, women successfully combined evangelical preachers' "prosperity ethic" and asceticism (no smoking, alcohol consumption, and sexual relations outside of marriage) to counter men's "domestic abdication." Evangelical women in their *barrios* challenged a pervasive *machismo* culture and reclaimed home values for personal, family, and economic well-being: monogamous marriage, mutual respect, economic security, and a peaceful environment to rear children (Brusco 1995: 10). Strict pietist moral demands were also a factor in the upward social mobility of Black Holiness Pentecostal churches in the United States.

In a fragmented South African society, the sanction of domesticity provided homemakers with a sense of dignity, prestige, and self-worth. In 1913 middle-class black married women, refusing to obtain a government pass to indicate they were hired by

whites, stood for the right to remain in their home and not enter the outside work force. South African women in the 1970s fought the construction of men's migrant barracks in a work system that broke up families and provided cheap labor for South African companies. Simultaneously, women's prayer groups and other women's associations provided personal support to prevent teenage pregnancy outside of marriage (Gaitskell 1983).

Credit unions enabled women to gain some control over family finances and to become less dependent on the agendas and resources of outsiders. Gabriella Mulherin (1900–1993) suggested that refugee women and widows displaced by the Korean War “bank” a small amount of money (a penny a month) into a common fund, from which women had some financial security and could purchase larger cost items through a common effort. The Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies grew from this and similar efforts with over a million members in the country by the late 1980s.

Siblings, Municipal Judge Lillian (1884–1968) and Clara (1886–1965) Westropp readily extended home skills into public life. They founded the Women's Federal Savings Bank, the only bank in Cleveland, Ohio, to survive the 1930s Great Depression. They reasoned that many women had some control of family finances, so it was a natural step for them to manage money on a larger scale, with consequent confidence and success in public financial matters. Similarly, the World Council of Churches Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church stated that women and homemakers and life-givers' enabled women to “turn [society] into a home for humanity” (Bliss 1952: 192).

Another challenge to domestic values was the presence of foreign celibate religious women in East Africa, where people did not have a mental category to place “Sisters” into traditional African frameworks and cultural norms of physical motherhood. Over time, Africans who observed the Sisters' educational, medical, and catechetical ministries, incorporated the Sisters into *African* perceptions of “motherhood”: “these Catholic Sisters are all Mamas” (Burke 2001).

Women “praise singers” from the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central African Presbyterian Church (Malawi) illustrate the ambiguity women experienced when strong role definitions began to collapse with the onset of modernization. The women, dressed in ethnic garb and renowned for their composition and modification of church songs and dances, used those same skills for political occasions. Men, dressed in Western clothing for these public events, were expected to move their country into a “modern” world. They oversaw the women's singing/dancing organizations and chose the symbols and content of political songs. Women, recognized for their church/public singing, but with less access to formal education, were given lower social status, though their performance (a type of liminal condition for the community that provided connection to ethnic origins) buffered the impact of the new world but afforded more prestige for men in the “modern” world (Henderson and Gilman 2004).

Today, Syrian Christian women in Kerala, women in house churches, and women religious in contemporary China experience the ambiguity of living in multiple, intersecting realities of home, church, and state. Chinese Sisters feel an additional “in betweenness,” in that the public recognition of Catholicism by the Chinese government hinges on the Chinese rather than Vatican appointment of bishops.

## Ordination/Pastorship as the Last Liturgical Frontier

Obstacles to women's public leadership in political life have been removed in many countries, but in some Christian communities the last area men reserve to themselves is pastorship/ordination, the public expression of religious authority within an institutionalized structure, even though women of every ethnic group comprise the majority and backbone of their churches and generally outnumber men. Since at least the nineteenth century in many Western countries, women have claimed public leadership rights in the churches: to speak in gatherings where men and women were present, to serve on church councils, to be delegates at regional/national church meetings, to be evangelists and ordained pastors. While women generally moved more freely in frontier situations where they assumed many spiritual roles, questions of authority or propriety arose when a church became "established." Churches in the East and West presented arguments from scripture and tradition to support or refute women as ordained pastors. Those who sought change in the practice of male-only ordination appealed to the Holy Spirit in women, argued that women were effective in their new roles and therefore their full ministry should be acknowledged, and contended that scriptural authority needed to be reinterpreted. Those who argued against women being in "official" church positions defended their view from biblical authority, cited general social or historical reasons (it had not happened before), the fact that Jesus was a male, and women's role as mothers with household responsibilities precluded pastoral duties.<sup>3</sup>

African American, Jarena Lee (b. 1783), whose autobiography traced her call to preach, as she did in thousands of miles of itinerant preaching, could not be ordained. But it was in the mid-nineteenth-century women's movement, that heated discussion arose with the 1853 ordination of Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921), the first clergywoman in the Congregational Church. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ordained Julia A. J. Foote a deacon in the New York Conference (1894) and an Elder (1900). Other denominations followed, with Anna Howard Shaw ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church (1924) as a local pastor, and by 1956 Presbyterians and Methodists ordained women. Between the Anglican Lambeth Conferences of 1968 and 1978, the time of the second-wave Women's Movement, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and the United States ordained women. Southern Baptists in the United States had previously ordained women but reversed that decision in 1984. Their declaration in 2000 stated: "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture (Southern Baptist Convention)."

Between 1879 and 1927, siblings Sue and Kate McBeth, niece, Mary Crawford, and Helen Clark, instructed a generation of Native Americans for ordination in the Presbyterian Church in Idaho. Physical distance from church authorities and the ambiguous social/religious space of the women allowed for pastoral formation in scripture and church polity for eighteen Pacific Northwest Native American men. "Despite struggles over limited power," the women, unable to be ordained but who achieved their goal of a Native clergy, and the Native pastors, who rose in authority in their church because of ordination, "used the ambiguous space of the socially and culturally marginalized people to forge relationships that benefitted both of them" (Lewis 2002: 45).

Charismatic, Pentecostal, or churches with a free church polity are generally more favorable to women's ordination and pastorship. Women founders, evangelists, healers, and bishops work in Pentecostal groups around the world and often assume public roles in secular venues. Though more hierarchically structured churches do not permit women's ordination, Anglicans have ordained women since the mid-1970s (approved in 1992 in England) and today twenty-eight of thirty-eight provinces worldwide ordain women, though the matter remains contentious and some Anglican groups have split over the issue.

Orthodox churches do not ordain women based on authority and on a theological tradition, which has not affirmed a female priesthood. Theologically, a Triune God models the relational ordering between God and people in liturgy. "It is in the *entire* person in relation to the *entire* Church that the ultimate criterion for ministry resides. Mary, *Theotokos*, is the most perfect expression of Christian life and the very image of the Church"; therefore, there is no need for women to be priests (Fitzgerald 2010: 43, 44). Roman Catholics are not even to discuss the idea, though Roman Catholic Bishops ordained seven Roman Catholic women on the Danube River (2002) with more ordinations since then.<sup>4</sup> Women from various denominations have transferred to join ordaining groups, or they have left their church altogether over the issue.

Women have founded African Initiated Churches, are healers, prophetesses, preachers, and bishops. Sophie Odunlami was key to the foundation of the Christ Apostolic Church, while the mother and wives of the founder of the Church of the Lord-Aladura held significant leadership positions and women's ordination was viewed as biblically sanctioned. But gender, especially related to women's bodies features strongly in Aladura churches, especially in the Celestial Church. Seating arrangements reflect seniority, the superiority of males, and a divine celestial order. Women are not ordained, may not approach the altar, and the group's reference to the Levitical tradition reinforces exclusion of women from ritual during times of menstruation and just after the birth of a child. The female body, seen by men "as a conduit of both divine power and procreative potential," is a source of "intensified discomfort . . . when the bearer of the female body approaches the highest echelon of the institutional hierarchy" (Cumbley 2008: 136). Even in the Church of the Lord-Aladura, where women are ordained, it is only after child bearing age that they perform communion, marriage, baptism, and burial rituals.

## Conclusion: Women, Patterns of Ambiguity, and New Options

Shifting state or social boundaries were often opportunities for Christianity's entrance into new environments. But persecution by a "state," formal sanction of Christianity, or disestablishment of religion did not guarantee religious commitment of individuals or of institutional Christianity, nor did any particular political configuration assure equal primacy of women's "place." Women were attracted to Christianity for the self-worth, healing power, and union with God they felt in its message and for the strength Christianity provided for the daily situations of difficulty, ambiguity, or

tensions arising from changing social/civic developments. In Christian communities they learned spiritual tools and leadership skills, which they adapted to various political and civil contexts, and employed group strength as a way to achieve support for family life and to effect change in spite of patriarchal societies. To do so required skills of negotiation, pragmatism, and flexibility. Christianity provided an internal authority and a religious cosmology women could assimilate for enhanced present and future well-being.

Women's experience of ambiguity in multiple church, state, and society frontiers provided imaginative and actual space for movement outside of defined roles and proved to be venues of intense creativity. Women from traditional and liberal perspectives expanded their role as innovators and were change agents to move domestic values into the public sphere through the foundation of religious and civic organizations, that addressed the spiritual, physical, and educational welfare of women and those displaced from "systems." Women were more likely than men to connect family and home values to larger economic and civic realms. The horns of the classic Lutheran theological dilemma, faith or works, figured less prominently for women. Both were important, because women were the first to feel the harmful effects of the split between the two in the religious, social and political spheres.

More often than not, ecclesiastical officials sought to define or regulate women's groups, sometimes with the excuse that women's views were heretical; i.e., considered outside the boundaries of correct beliefs or practice, teachings frequently related to the body or to knowledge acquired through mystical or Spirit ways, areas associated with women. In visions or the intensification of spiritual life, women could bypass "official" ministers to mediate their experience to others. Thus, it is not surprising that women are the majority in many "Spirit movements," beginning with Pentecost and continuing through new global Pentecostal movements.

Women readily ventured into "non-domestic" situations. "In the absence of" state heads attending to battles elsewhere, Queen Catherine was appointed Captain General of King Henry VIII's forces at home, and Catherine Parr, Henry's last wife, was appointed regent, though Christian women also ruled governments in their own names. "In the absence of" priests, sixteenth-century Syriac abbesses distributed communion to their nuns, *rezadoras* (elderly *Latinas*) provided counsel to their local communities in times of crisis, and young Catholic Chilean lay women organized rural and mining people for social action in the 1930s. "In the absence" of male workers at home during World War II, women took care of the home and worked in factories. Stepping into situations not considered women's work provided women with opportunities for skill development, new personal and group identities, and leadership options that moved across social, religious, and state boundaries. But once Christianity was tolerated or assumed a symbiotic relationship with the state, women were frequently designated as "auxiliary" in church and state.

Women have comprised the majority of Christians globally, at least for the last three centuries for which we have statistics. "World Christianity" could be considered "as a Woman's Movement" (Robert 2006), so it behooves scholars and practitioners to observe women's dynamics closely to ascertain significant patterns in the development of worldwide Christianity.

## Notes

- 1 Christian theorists charting the relationship between church and state include Augustine, especially in *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God and the City of Man*), and Thomas Aquinas, who in his *Summa Theologica*, outlined a hierarchy of laws, with Divine Law as the highest, the Natural Law (understood and interpreted only by the church, i.e., ordained clergy, bishops, and pope), and Human Law. Aquinas proposed that the State was subordinate to the church. Luther, in *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* and elsewhere, argued for a separation between church and politics, with the state being above the church in the world. John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* also separates church and state, acknowledges their particular spheres of influence, but places them both under the rule of God. The state was to promote values, such as justice and charity, while the church was political through rule by presbyters, elders, and deacons. Some radical reformers, such as the Anabaptists, viewed the Catholic Church and the reformers as evil and in the teaching on the Sword, distanced themselves from society and refused to bear arms or support civic life.
- 2 Women in lower socio-economic classes could have a trade and possibly remain single. "Beguine" originally was a pejorative term with heretical undertones.
- 3 For an overview of the arguments, see Zikmund (1982).
- 4 For Roman Catholic documents, see Sacred Congregation for the Faith, *Inter Insigniores* ("On the Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood") October 15, 1976. Pope John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* ("On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men") May 22, 1994, states, "the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful" (paragraph 4).

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## CHAPTER 24

# Worship, Liturgy, Sacraments

Geoffrey Wainwright

### Worship

Worship – the offering of praise and prayer – has been an almost universal practice throughout recorded human history. The content and direction of that praise and prayer reveal much about a people, a community, an individual: what are their fundamental values (the English word “worship” contains the notion of “worth”), their governing aspirations. According to St. Paul, the spiritual and moral predicament of fallen humankind results from having “exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:18–32). The redemptive work of Christ can be seen as redirecting humankind to the wisdom and will of God, who, in place of sin and death, offers life in communion with himself (Rom. 6), and thus is the proper recipient of praise and prayer as both Creator and Redeemer – worship that is graciously enabled by the gift of God’s own Spirit (Rom. 8:1–37; 11:3–12:2; 16:25–27).

The theological structure of Christian worship is classically set out by St. Basil of Caesarea in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, written in the fourth century while the church was bringing its doctrine of the Trinity to full development. Basil expounds two grammars of address used in Greek in reference to the triune God: the address may be made either “to the Father *through* (‘*dia*’) the Son *in* (‘*en*’) the Holy Spirit” or else “to the Father *with* (‘*meta*’) the Son *together with* (‘*sun*’) the Holy Spirit.” The former is appropriate for thanksgiving and petition, because it corresponds in the “upward” direction to the fact that “all the good gifts that come down from the Father of lights” (Jas. 1:17) are mediated by the Son (cf. 1 Cor. 8:4–6) and reach humankind in the Spirit. The other pattern of address is appropriate when God is being “contemplated in himself” and equal adoration offered to the three coinherent persons of the Trinity. Basil knows that “the entire [Latin] West – “almost from Illyricum to the boundaries of the Empire” – uses the “co-ordinated form” that would remain familiar in the doxology

“Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto,” while of course the Western church would continue also to address thanks and prayers to the Father *through* the Christ *in* the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 2:14–22).

Christians acknowledge the utter transcendence of God, “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16–17), and “to him” is ascribed “honor and eternal dominion” (ibid.). Yet this God has left his marks on creation, which he made out of sheer love. And “ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, his eternal power and deity” has been there for the perceiving in the things that he has made (cf. Rom. 1:19–20). People have refused to “see the light”. But the light of God has now entered the world in the very person of the Word through whom all things were made. The only Son, who is closest to the Father’s heart, has made the unseen God known: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth” (cf. John 1:1–18). This Jesus is “the light of the world” (John 8:12) and, as himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth to those who follow him (John 14:15–17). Human beings are invited to responsive participation in God’s plan for creation, which includes their own salvation in communion with the triune God.

This comprehensive vision embraces in principle the entire reality of creation, human history, and the expected consummation, all set in relation to the transcendent but outgoing God who reveals himself in ways appropriate to his loving nature and purpose. The faith finds concise statement in such confessions as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, which have the longest historical use and the widest geographical distribution. To take here only the former, as the shorter text:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 creator of heaven and earth.  
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 born of the Virgin Mary,  
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 was crucified, died, and was buried;  
 he descended to the dead.  
 On the third day he rose again;  
 he ascended into heaven,  
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic Church,  
 the communion of saints,  
 the forgiveness of sins,  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and the life everlasting.

Amen. (<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/daily2/lordsprayercreed.aspx> accessed October 19, 2015)

Those are the terms on which Christians gather for worship. There the Christian vision and vital commitments come to focal expression in symbolic form – being played out before God, from whom they take their origin and to whom they are being returned. There the Christian assembly performs its “liturgy.”

## Liturgy

As an appropriate technical term going back to biblical and patristic times, the word “liturgy” combines two Greek roots: *laos* (“the people”) and *ergon* (“work”). The Christian community at worship is performing a “public work” on behalf of humankind, and the offering of worship is a “corporate endeavor” in which every member of the Body of Christ has a part to play, according to a distribution of gifts and tasks.

Retrospectively, hints of such an assembly on the Lord’s Day can be detected in the New Testament: on the first Easter Day, the risen Christ expounded the Scriptures to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, where he then made himself known to them in “the breaking of the bread” (Lk. 24:13–35; cf. Acts 20:7–12, where, “on the first day of the week,” the Christians “gather together to break bread,” which includes a long speech from the apostle Paul). The earliest clear description of such a regular twofold event – “word” and “sacrament” – comes from Justin Martyr (*First Apology*, ch. 67), writing in Rome in the mid-second century:

And on the day called Sunday an assembly is held in one place of all who live in town or country, and the records of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as time allows. Then, when the reader has finished, the president in a discourse admonishes and exhorts us to imitate these good things. Then we all stand up together and send up prayers; and, as we have said before, when we have finished praying, bread and wine and water are brought up, and the president likewise sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people assent, saying the Amen; and the [elements] over which thanks have been given are distributed, and everyone partakes; and they are sent through the deacons to those who are not present.

The president’s prayers over the elements have been explained by Justin thus:

He sends up praise and glory to the Father of all in the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks at some length that we have been deemed worthy of these things from him . . .

And we call this food “thanksgiving”; and no one may partake of it unless he is convinced of the truth of our teaching, and has been cleansed with the washing for forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and lives as Christ handed down.

The food is not to be received as “common bread or common drink,” for it stands under the words of Jesus from the Last Supper: “This is my body; this is my blood.”

The reason for the assembly precisely on Sunday, says Justin, is that “it is the first day, on which God transformed darkness and matter, and made the world; and Jesus

Christ our Savior rose from the dead on that day . . . and appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught them these things which we have presented to you also for your consideration.”

In Justin’s embryonic account can already be seen what has remained – in the face of various embellishments and truncations – the basic structure of the principal Sunday liturgy over the centuries: readings from Old and New Testaments (“prophets” and “apostles”), the exposition of these canonical Scriptures and their application through preaching, the “prayers of the people” to the God who “desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1–7), the bringing of the bread and wine, the presidential prayer of praise and thanks, the consumption of the elements as Christ commanded. Moreover, “the wealthy who so desire give what they wish, as each chooses; and what is collected is deposited with the president. He helps orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in need, and those in prison, and strangers sojourning among us.”

The most drastic shifts in Sunday worship along the course of liturgical history occurred in connection with the observance of communion. The massive increase in church membership that came with “the conversion of the Empire” from the late fourth century onward was accompanied by a drastic decrease in the frequency with which laypeople received communion, until medieval legislation was needed to insist even on an annual reception. The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers found that “the mass” had become something other than “the Lord’s Supper,” which they sought to restore—but only as and when the faithful could be appropriately brought to full participation. For most of Protestant history, the “regular” Sunday service has consisted only of Scripture reading, preaching, prayers, and psalmody (including hymns). Treatment of sacrament(s) will be kept for later in the chapter. First comes “the service of the word” in its constancy and variety.

The principal instrument of communication in the liturgy is the spoken word – both from God (“Hear the Word of the Lord”) and to God (“Let us pray”), but also among the assembly as the members may address one another in mutual testimony, and indeed with an outside reference as Christians become equipped for spreading the gospel to people who have not yet received it. Language is necessary for the preservation of a rational semantic system, which by no means excludes poetic imagery. Gestures, actions, and material objects may be integrated into the symbolic repertoire. A basic consistency in verbal, gestural and material language is needed across time and space, both for the sake of fidelity to an original and authoritative revelation and for the sake of the stability of communal understanding and intelligent active participation. But modifications will (need to) occur on account of the worshipping community’s interaction with the ambient culture, which – both as a whole and in its several constituent parts – may stand at a variable distance from or proximity to God; the worshipping community both draws from and in turn affects the “natural language” of a people.

The reading of the Scriptures in the liturgical assembly is the main vehicle of linguistic constancy, followed by prayer texts hallowed through long usage. That was the case with the Vulgate Bible and the Latin mass in the Catholic Church of the West, strengthened by the eventual extension of the Roman rite into areas such as Gaul,

Spain and Ireland which had for some centuries maintained regional characteristics. Only in the twentieth century did the vernaculars gradually regain official entry into the “Latin” Church, being finally sanctioned by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (see especially paras 37–40). The Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century saw the need for a language “understood of the people” (as the twenty-fourth of the English Articles of Religion phrased it); and then the Anglican Prayer Book itself, together precisely with the “Authorized Version” of the Bible, continued (with relatively few revisions and variants) to provide the fundamental language of worship throughout Anglicanism and even into some other areas of English-speaking Protestantism. It took until the twentieth century before a proliferation of Bible translations began the disintegration of that common language on the grounds that more general linguistic and cultural changes were necessitating new versions for the sake – precisely – of contemporary “understanding.”

While the canonical Scriptures properly shape preaching, the sermon – together with occasions of teaching outside the liturgy – has provided opportunity for linguistic adaptation according to time and place for the purposes of exposition, interpretation, instruction, exhortation, and application.

As well as verbal speech there is the “body language” of posture and gesture, which may be universally human or locally particular: standing, kneeling, bowing or prostration as signs of respect and humility; “lifting holy hands in prayer” (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8); the “laying on of hands” in blessing; even simply “hands together and eyes closed” (as many children have been taught the Our Father at their mother’s knee). Here may belong also whole-body movements, such as processions which gather and direct attention to the reading of the gospel or the meal ritual at the altar-table. Dress, too, may figure in body-language, often in cultural variety, whether for the entire assembly (say, in “Sunday best”) or to mark particular roles in the performance of the liturgy.

All five physical senses may serve as channels of revelation and response. The prophets “saw the word of the Lord” (Amos 1:1; 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1; Jer. 1:11–14), and the disciples “beheld the glory” of the Word made flesh (John 1:14). The apostle calls Christ “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), in whose face the divine glory is seen by believers (2 Cor. 4:4–6). Theologically grounded in the Incarnate Son (as confirmed by the Second Council of Nicea in 787), icons figure in the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox churches as “representations” of Christ, who “stands in the midst” of the worshipping assembly (cf. Mt. 18:20) as both the recipient and the mediator of praise and prayer. Both earlier and later in Christian history, however, iconoclasm of various kinds has arisen from fear or suspicion that “images” may infringe the transcendence of God as understood to be protected by the Second Commandment and biblical injunctions against “idol worship.” “Pictures” of one kind or another have usually been allowed, and even valued, at least as “the Bible of the poor” (“In a picture, the illiterate are able to read,” wrote Gregory I of Rome; *Epistles* XI.13). Rood screens, stained-glass windows, and painted altarpieces adorn many churches of the medieval and later West; nor has Protestantism entirely renounced the visual dimension, since disposition of space remains significant, as does adornment or its avoidance (the degree and style of ornamentation is an area

into which aesthetic sensibility also enters). The twentieth century saw a remarkable flourishing of “Christian art,” especially perhaps in the “younger churches” of Asia and Africa (see, e.g., Masao Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia*, 1975; Takenaka and Ron O’Grady, *The Bible through Asian Eyes*, 1991).

The physical sense of taste is engaged with the bread and wine of Holy Communion, even if somewhat minimally in practice. The sense of smell comes into play in churches which use incense as an expression of the ascent of prayer to God or in order to honor the altar, the Gospel-book, the officiating ministers or the whole gathered people. Scent and touch are joined in anointing. Touch can be involved in the exchange of a greeting of “peace,” biblically derived from the “holy kiss” mentioned in the letters of Paul (the beginning of the gesture’s widespread restoration to Protestant rites appears to have occurred with the influential *Order for the Lord’s Supper* of the newly united Church of South India (1950), where it was borrowed from a culturally adapted form that had been preserved among the Thomas Christians).

Voice and hearing gain liturgical exercise too in chant and in various types of song. The practice is biblical, and scriptural examples have been directly adopted into the liturgy, such as the Song of Mary (“Magnificat,” Lk. 1:46–55) and the Song of Simeon (“Nunc Dimittis,” Lk. 2:29–32). The Psalms are a staple in the daily worship of gathered communities. From the earliest post-canonical times, newly composed hymns have enriched the liturgy, such as the surviving “Phôs hilon” from the third-century Greek East and the “Te Deum laudamus” attributed to St. Ambrose of Milan, as well as then the Byzantine compositions of the Studite monks and the Latin texts from the medieval West that found English translators such as John Mason Neale. Protestant hymnography dates back to Martin Luther (“Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott”), the metrical versions of the Psalms in the Reformed (Presbyterian) tradition and the inventive poetry of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, while the occupation continues uninterrupted to this day. Singing can engage not only the intellect but the emotions and the entire physique. Instrumental accompaniment has often proved a controversial matter, let alone the “wordless” offering of musical tribute, which nevertheless can claim biblical precedent (cf. Ps. 150), as can indeed “dancing before the Lord” (2 Sam. 6:14; Ps. 149:3). Technological developments in the electronics of both sight and sound have made for yet more complex questions in the area of instrumentalization insofar as they involve “performance” by persons not among the community present at worship and perhaps risk descending into “entertainment.”

Another factor making for constancy in liturgy is its setting – for all its particularity – in the cosmic framework of time and space. Morning and evening prayers mark the rhythm of day and night, light and dark. These and the yearly round of the seasons are “historicized” – as was the case already with the feasts of the Old Testament – by being referred to the events of salvation. Thus the calendar of the church is fundamentally christological and soteriological: “Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us,” and “we keep the feast” (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7) in a focal way on the weekly Sunday and the annual Easter – both of which are “the Lord’s Day.” Other features of Christ’s life and work – themselves the anticipation or consequence of that central “mystery” of his death and resurrection – are commemorated and celebrated in its light, whether it be his Nativity,

his Baptism, his Transfiguration, or other. A further calendrical feature that points also in an eschatological direction are the observances for saints and martyrs, whereby a cross-generational communion is maintained throughout the Body of Christ, whose full realization will be attained only in the final Kingdom of God and the worship and feasting that is envisioned in the Book of Revelation.

Several hints have already been dropped concerning the relations between liturgy and culture, and the interplay has indeed occurred throughout Christian history, but the issues may now be treated particularly in relation to “modern times” and the theological thematization of the phenomena and the questions especially in the twentieth century and beyond.

Modernity is usually held to have begun with the passing of “the Middle Ages.” Such periodization is basically Eurocentric. The advent of modernity – in, say, the sixteenth century AD – was marked by the rise of the natural sciences and by the extension, above all, of West European political and commercial power through the “colonization” of regions of Asia, Africa, South America, and North America (although what became the United States of America itself more quickly turned into a further center from which influence expanded to other parts of the world). From an ecclesiastical, and more particularly a liturgical point of view, the Christian message was carried abroad by missions from a thousand-year old “Christendom” – which itself, however, was undergoing political and confessional disruption, signaled by the rise of the “nation states” and “the Reformation” and would soon have to cope ideologically and technologically with the “secularization” that accompanied (whether inevitably or not) the onward march of the natural sciences into “the Enlightenment” and beyond. On the overseas front, then, Christianity was encountering other religions and cultures, with which both evangelization and liturgical life in the communities of the converted had immediately to reckon, even if the terms “indigenization” and “inculturation” took a while to emerge. On the home front, the churches were having to interpret and, under various aspects and to varying degrees, accept, resist, or seek to transform the intellectual and social shift into modernity. In the twentieth century, political decolonization and cultural “globalization” brought those thematic and practical fronts closer together as the demographic weight of Christianity shifted southwards and the dechristianization of Europe provoked calls for its re-evangelization, this time in competition not only with secularism but also with other religions, old and new.

For the purposes of this chapter, we need particularly to take note of two movements that marked the course of Christian history in the twentieth century: the ecumenical movement and the liturgical movement. After diverse beginnings, the two streams flowed in some places quite closely together, and certainly for much of the second half of the century their currents intermingled.

Against a broadly Protestant background in the Evangelical Alliance, the YMCAs and YWCAs, and student Christian organizations, the ecumenical movement is conventionally reckoned to date from the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. Thence it was recognized that fuller cooperation in mission and evangelism depended on closer agreement in doctrine and ecclesiastical polity, or Faith and Order, as the technical term quickly became. In 1928 Pope Pius XI by his encyclical

letter *Mortalium animos* forbade Catholic participation in the nascent ecumenical movement for fear of doctrinal and religious indifferentism. It took pioneering spiritual work by such as Paul Wattson and Paul Couturier in prayer for the “unity of Christians, as and when Christ wills,” and theological work by Yves Congar on the ecclesiological issues posed by disunity among Christians (*Chrétiens désunis*, 1937), before the Roman Catholic Church officially entered the ecumenical movement – which it did at the Second Vatican Council by the decree *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964), a commitment which Pope John Paul II declared “irrevocable” in his encyclical letter of 1995, *Ut unum sint*. We shall return to directly ecumenical questions when we arrive at a consideration of sacraments.

The liturgical movement, for its part, had its main beginnings in the Roman Catholic Church. To use anachronistically terms that became more widely familiar around the Second Vatican Council, the two chief concerns of the movement from the start were “ressourcement” (or return to the sources, above all the Scriptures and the early Christian centuries) and “aggiornamento” (or bringing up to date, which could have geographical as well as temporal reference); and while those two might at times find themselves in tension with one another, they were both felt to be essential to the “renewal” of the worshipping life of the church. The scriptural, traditional, and pastoral themes occupied notably the Benedictine community at Maria Laach in the Rhineland, the Augustinians at Klosterneuburg in Austria, and the Centre de Pastorale Liturgique in Paris. At a very early stage, Pope Pius X promoted more frequent communion at mass, and the Belgian Dom Lambert Beauduin, in his influential *La vraie prière de l'église* (1909) and *La piété de l'église* (1914) fostered the gathering for worship as the site for the formation of Christian faith and life and the shaping of the Christian community. The principal theological achievement of Maria Laach and elsewhere was the reassertion of the “paschal mystery” of Christ’s death and resurrection as the heart of the liturgy; and this theme was carried into dominance by the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar revisions of the various Roman rites.

The most prolific Catholic theorist of liturgical inculturation is the Filippino Benedictine Anscar Chupungco, and he defines it as “the process of inserting the texts and rites of the liturgy into the framework of the local culture as a result of which the texts and rites assimilate the people’s thought, language, values, ritual, symbolic, and artistic patterns.” The “dialogue” is to be mutually respectful and should be mutually enriching, for the culture also “is evangelized when it comes into contact the the gospel message that the church proclaims during worship.” Care must be taken that only those cultural elements should be “integrated” into the liturgy (and mere “juxtaposition” is inadequate) which “harmonize with the meaning and purpose of Christian worship,” without obscuring “the Church’s received tradition and actual *ordo*” (Wainwright and Westerfield Tucker 2006: 661–664).

Two contrasting moves towards liturgical inculturation can be found in India and in Africa. In 1974 the National Biblical Caechetical and Liturgical Centre in Bangalore produced some experimental *New Orders of Mass for India*, which included a reading from Indian Scriptures (as containing “seeds of the Word”) and a eucharistic prayer that praised God for his self-revelation in the religions of India. The “cosmic covenant with all men” was applied to the Indian context through successive mentions of the



animistic religions (with their worship of God as Power present in nature), of the Hindu religion (with its three paths to salvation: *karma*, *jnana*, *bhakti*), of Buddhism and Jainism together, and finally of Islam:

God of the nations, You are the desire and hope of all who search for you with a sincere heart. You are the power almighty adored as Presence hidden in nature. You reveal yourself to the seers in their quest for knowledge, to [the] devout who seek you through sacrifice and detachment, to every man approaching you by the path of love. You enlighten the hearts that long for release by conquest of desire and universal kindness. You show mercy to those who submit to your inscrutable decrees.

The Roman authorities prohibited the use of this rite. On the other hand, Rome in 1988 approved a new *Missal for the Dioceses of Zaïre* that had been prepared with careful consultation. The opening invocation of the saints includes “our ancestors, who have served God with a clear conscience.” During the singing of the *Gloria in excelsis* there is a dance around the altar; drums are used in the service. The eucharistic prayer addresses God as “the sun too bright for our gaze” and praises the Father through “your Son Jesus, our mediator . . . the word that gives life”:

Through him you created heaven and earth; through him you created our river, the Zaïre. Through him you created our forests, our rivers, our lakes. Through him you created the animals who live in our forests, the fish who live in our rivers . . . You sent him with the task of gathering all people together, of making all mankind one family. He obeyed you: he died on the cross. He conquered death, he rose from the dead. Death has no longer any power over him.

On the Protestant side, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians all engaged in revising their service books in the twentieth century, often in mutual awareness of ecumenical developments. Besides considerable convergence in the structuring of their rites, they also engaged to varying degrees in encouraging more frequent celebration of the sacraments with full participation by the congregation, as with “Parish Communion” among Anglicans, and “Word and Table” among Methodists. Of particular ecumenical importance, especially in the (formerly British) Commonwealth, was the example of the Church of South India (CSI), whose *Book of Common Worship* (1963) drew on the liturgical forms of all the traditions that had gone into the constitution of the organically united CSI in 1947: Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist; the CSI also made modest borrowings from the Syrian Orthodox traditions, long present in India. In Africa, it is perhaps the Anglicans who have done most among the Reformation traditions towards an inculturation which remains within their historic inheritance. A closing prayer from *Our Modern Services* of the Anglican Church in Kenya (2002) captures well the structure and the spirit: “Almighty God, eternal Father, we have sat at your feet, learnt from your word, and eaten from your table. We give you thanks and praise for accepting us into your family. Send us out with your blessing, to live and to witness for you in the power of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, the First Born from the dead.”

In sub-Saharan Africa, massive opportunities – and problems – arise for both ecclesiology and liturgy in connection with those churches, whether “African-initiated” or deriving still from “missionary” origins, that assume a “pentecostal” character and practice (see also Chapter 21).

On the older historical front, the “Eastern” Orthodox churches enjoyed a worldwide spread in the migratory circumstances of the twentieth century. Their own liturgies have remained with little change in structure or content for a millennium and more. Their ecumenical influence has been felt in the recently revised rituals of the “Western” churches particularly in a renewed emphasis on the pneumatological dimension of worship, epitomized in an “epiclesis” whereby the Holy Spirit is invoked to come upon the gathered assembly, its liturgical actions, and the material elements that figure in the sacraments. Orthodox ecumenists also contributed to a comprehensive understanding and practice of Christian worship under the heading of “the liturgy after the Liturgy,” whereby the whole life of the believing community, in its everyday mission and service, assumes the character of an offering to God by way of the world. An influential mid-twentieth century book by the Russian-American Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann can lead us from that point into our final theme, for it appeared at various times under two titles: *For the Life of the World*, and *Sacraments and Orthodoxy*.

## Sacraments

Sadly, questions of sacramentality have symptomized many of the controversies, and even divisions, within and between the sundry communities that have claimed the name of “church” along the course of Christian history: how is “sacrament” defined; how many rites meet that definition; what belongs to the meaning and efficacy of each and all of them. It is almost unanimously agreed that a sacrament must take its origin from Christ; but questions arise concerning the moment and manner of the institution, implying questions concerning the interpretation of the scriptural witness and the relation between scripture and tradition. There are Christological questions about the relation between the completed and the continuing work of Christ. Soteriological questions have to do with the relations between grace, faith, and works; that is to say, between the divine initiative in salvation and the human response as both grateful reception and active participation.

The larger questions – with “sacraments” as the neuralgic points of their occurrence – lay at the heart of the disruptions of Western Christianity in the sixteenth century, both in the broader split between the Reformers and the Roman Church and also then within Protestantism. Luther’s attack on the Roman system occupies his treatise “On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church” (1520), where only baptism, the Lord’s supper, and perhaps penance, are left more or less intact; and he would, in fact, have preferred to remain with Scripture in calling only Christ himself “the sacrament of our religion” (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16), and the others “sacramental signs” of him. Protestantism settled on baptism and the Lord’s supper as the two “dominical sacraments,” while the Council of Trent in 1547 maintained the Catholic number at seven, as it had been fixed since the Second Council of Lyons in 1274: baptism, confirmation, penance, eucharist, orders, marriage, and last unction.

Luther excised most of the “sacrificial” language from the liturgy, lest it be a threat to the sole sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary, and in this he was followed by other Reformers. On the Catholic side, the Council of Trent in 1562 refuted accusations that the mass in any way repeated or supplemented the death of Christ by declaring that the mass “represented” in “unbloody” mode one and the same sacrifice as Calvary, as its memorial, in order to convey its benefits until the end of time. Trent in 1551 had re-affirmed the medieval term “transubstantiation” as “most aptly” defining the “conversion” of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Among themselves, Protestant confessions differed in their accounts of the presence of Christ at or in the Lord’s supper.

Most of the Protestant confessions retained the ancient practice of baptizing not only professing believers but also infants, with varying emphases in the rationale. Calvinists drew an analogy with circumcision under the covenant with Israel, taking the baptism of infants as the act by which the children of believers are now entered under the New Covenant. Lutherans typically saw the baptism of infants as embodying the pure passivity properly characteristic of human reception of the gift of salvation that comes by grace alone. These and other Protestant churches have viewed some form of “confirmation” as the occasion for a later profession of faith on the part of persons baptized in infancy. In (ana)baptist communities, baptism upon personal profession of faith is seen as best matching apostolic practice; and the term sacrament is usually rejected in favor of “ordinance,” with baptism in particular being seen as a human act of obedience recognizing what God has already done for the believer by the free movement of the Holy Spirit.

In twentieth-century ecumenism, some convergences at least were attained on sacramental matters, and these were registered in the document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (“BEM”) that was completed by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches at Lima, Peru, in 1982 and was quite well received by the churches, though not without criticisms.

In BEM, baptism is said to be “both God’s gift and our human response to that gift. It looks towards a growth into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). The necessity of faith for the reception of the salvation embodied and set forth in baptism is acknowledged by all churches. Personal commitment is necessary for responsible membership in the body of Christ.”

The eucharist, in turn, is “essentially the sacrament of the gift which God makes to us in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian receives this gift of salvation through communion in the body and blood of Christ. In the eucharistic meal, in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine, Christ grants communion with himself. God himself acts, giving life to the body of Christ and renewing each member. In accordance with Christ’s promise, each baptized member of the body of Christ receives in the eucharist the assurance of the forgiveness of sins (Mt. 26:28) and the pledge of eternal life (John 6:51–58).” Said “always to include both word and sacrament,” the eucharist is then more fully expounded under five aspects: thanksgiving to the Father; memorial of Christ; invocation of the Spirit; communion of the faithful; meal of the Kingdom. A commentary has to leave to the churches the question of the relation between the bread and wine and the risen Christ, whose “real, living and active presence in the eucharist”

is “confessed.” Another commentary cautiously treats a question that is often discussed under inculturation: “Since New Testament days, the Church has attached the greatest importance to the continued use of the elements of bread and wine which Jesus used at the Last Supper. In certain parts of the world, where bread and wine are not customary or obtainable, it is now sometimes held that local food and drink serve better to anchor the eucharist in everyday life. Further study is required concerning the question of which features of the Lord’s Supper were unchangeably instituted by Jesus, and which features remain within the Church’s competence to decide.”

At that point, we have perhaps summarized the theme of the entire present chapter: what – through all the constancies and varieties of history, geography, and the human condition and cultures – are the ritual, liturgical, and symbolic forms under which the Father may be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth (cf. John 4:23–24).

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# Freedom, Persecution, and the Status of Christian Minorities

John Witte, Jr. and M. Christian Green

## Religious Human Rights in the Dickensian Era

Since the 1970s, the world has entered something of a “Dickensian era”<sup>1</sup> of human rights and democracy. We have seen some of the best of human rights protections inscribed on the books, but some of the worst of human rights violations inflicted on the ground. We have witnessed the creation of more than forty new democracies, but also the eruption of more than forty new civil wars. For every southern African spring of hope there has been a Yugoslavian winter of despair; for every Ukrainian season of light, a Sudanese season of darkness. These Dickensian paradoxes have been particularly evident when reviewing the rights of religious minorities, including, notably, Christian minorities in various parts of the world.<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, in regions newly committed to democracy and human rights, faiths once driven underground by autocratic oppressors have sprung forth with new vigor. In Russia and the former Soviet republics, for example, the Russian Orthodox Church is once again a visible force in social, political, and spiritual life – so much so that some now raise questions about religious establishment, nationalism, and their effects on minority faiths. In post-colonial and post-revolutionary Africa, mainline Christian churches exist alongside an array of new independent African Christian churches, as well as Muslims and indigenous religious groups. In Latin America, the human rights revolution has not only transformed longstanding Catholic and mainline Protestant communities, but also triggered the explosion of numerous new Evangelical, Pentecostal, and indigenous groups. Even in long-trammeled regimes like China and Burma (Myanmar), Christians have risen up to demand social and political reforms amenable to the protection of human rights. In each of these contexts, Christian groups have been beneficiaries of and advocates for the human rights revolution.

Christian groups around the world have been particularly effective advocates of religious freedom for all. They have helped to develop numerous new statutes and constitutional provisions on religious rights in the newly opened or democratized regions of the world, including generous protections of liberty of conscience and freedom of religious exercise, guarantees of religious pluralism, equality, and non-discrimination, and several other special protections and entitlements for religious individuals and religious groups. These national guarantees have been matched with a growing body of regional and international norms, building upon foundational international guarantees of religious freedom contained in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>3</sup> the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>4</sup> the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance and of Discrimination Based Upon Religion and Belief,<sup>5</sup> the 1989 Vienna Concluding Document,<sup>6</sup> and the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, this very same human rights revolution has helped to catalyze new forms of religious and ethnic conflict, oppression, and belligerence, of tragic proportions. In some communities, such as the former Yugoslavia and former Soviet republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia, local religious and ethnic rivals, previously kept at bay by a common oppressor, have converted their new liberties into licenses to renew ancient hostilities, with catastrophic results. In a number of nations across Africa, such as Rwanda, Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, ethnic nationalism and religious extremism have conspired to bring persecution, false imprisonment, dislocation, forced starvation, death, and other savage abuses to rival religious believers. In France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria, political secularism, laicization, and nationalism have combined to threaten civil denial and deprivation to a number of believers, particularly “sects” and “cults” of high religious temperature or of low cultural conformity, including a number of mainline Protestant and Eastern Orthodox groups. In the United States, political messianism and Evangelical fundamentalism have together embraced a “clash-of-civilizations” ethic that has encouraged bigotry against minorities at home and belligerence against the “axis of evil” abroad. In several communities from Asia to the Middle East, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim minorities have faced sharply increased restrictions, repression, and more than occasional martyrdom. And, in many parts of the world today, Islamicist terrorists have waged a destructive jihad against all manner of religious, cultural, and ethnic enemies, real and imagined.

At the same time, in parts of Russia, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this human rights revolution has brought on something of a new war for souls between indigenous and foreign religious groups. With the political transformations of these regions since the 1980s, foreign religious groups, notably Western Christians, were granted rights to enter these regions for the first time in decades to preach their faiths, to offer their services, to convert new souls. Initially, local religious groups welcomed these foreigners, particularly their foreign co-religionists with whom they had lost contact for many decades. In many cases, local religious groups have come to resent these foreign religions and have begun to conspire with their political leaders to adopt statutes and regulations restricting the constitutional rights of their foreign religious rivals. Beneath

shiny constitutional veneers of religious freedom for all and unqualified ratification of international human rights instruments, several countries of late have passed firm new anti-proselytism laws, registration requirements, tightened visa controls, and various discriminatory restrictions on minority religions. These developments have been challenges for international law and for religious minorities around the world.<sup>8</sup>

## Religious Freedom and International Law

The modern cultivation of human rights in the West began in the 1940s when both Christianity and the Enlightenment seemed incapable of delivering on their promises. It is worth noting that, despite the vigorous participation of Christian churches in the movement to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the UN and the strong Christian presence in international religious freedom movements today, the notion of human rights was contested and generated divergent responses by Christian churches to this notion in the aftermath of the Enlightenment.

In the Catholic tradition, the grand synthesis of Roman law and Christian theology in the canon law reformation undertaken in the Middle Ages produced a very strong natural law framework for human rights. These rights set out at medieval Catholic canon law were, in practice, often narrowly defined in scope and limited in application. Medieval Christendom was no liberal democracy – as the blood of too many martyrs can attest. But a great number of the basic public, private, penal, and procedural rights that are recognized by state and international political authorities today were prototypically formed in this medieval period. These basic rights formulations came to be seen as “natural rights” – rights inhering in a person’s human nature – regardless of that person’s status within church, state, or society. This rights revolution was part of a Papal Revolution, by which the church carved out a space of freedom in its relation to the state and the jurisdiction of the Church over the souls and salvation of Christians. These early formulations of religious group rights against secular authorities would become axiomatic for the later Western tradition – and now figure prominently in modern concepts of religious autonomy, corporate free exercise rights, and the rights of legal personality for religious groups.

But the human rights consensus of the medieval period gave way in subsequent centuries to contestation around the notion of human rights in general, and of religious human rights in particular. Much of this was reaction to the rise of a modernity in which principles of Enlightenment liberalism seemed to be winning the day in ways that threatened Church authority and autonomy and which seemed inadequate buffers against the rise of forces of communism, fascism, and revolution. As Catholic theologian Charles Curran has observed, the Church “staunchly opposed human rights in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and well into the twentieth century,” resisting both “modern liberties and the human rights associated with them.”<sup>9</sup> Pope Leo XIII, author of the papal social encyclicals that laid the groundwork for the tradition of Catholic social thought that subsequently led the articulation of all manner of rights and duties in the name of social justice and the common good, was also opposed to religious liberty and the freedom of worship as contraventions of “the chiefest and holiest human duty”<sup>10</sup> to

the one true God in the one true religion. It would be seventy-five years before Pope John XXIII would support the concept of human rights in the encyclical *Pacem in terris* and two more years before the Second Vatican Council in 1965, under the influence of the American Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray would embrace the right to religious freedom for all human beings. In recounting these developments, Curran argues that the more recent teachings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have returned in ways, to the earlier privileging of truth over freedom when it comes to religion and human rights.<sup>11</sup>

While “freedom of the church” was the manifesto of the twelfth-century Papal Revolution, “freedom of the Christian” would be the manifesto of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation.<sup>12</sup> The Protestant Reformers were drawn to the many New Testament aphorisms on freedom. These passages inspired Protestant leaders to unleash Reformation in the name of the medieval church and its hierarchies. Starting with this biblical logic, Protestant writers spun out endless elaborations of rights based on biblical duties. An important contribution to Western rights talk was the Protestant logic of revolution against tyrants who persistently and pervasively violated the people’s “fundamental rights.” As they faced growing persecution from secular authorities, who were killing them by the tens of thousands after 1550, Protestant jurists and theologians developed a theory of political revolution that was based effectively on a Christian government contract or covenant theory. Every political government, they argued, is formed by a tacit or explicit covenant or contract sworn between the rulers and their subjects before God. The issue that remained for early modern Protestant political theorists was how to determine which rights were so “fundamental,” so “inalienable,” that, if chronically and pervasively breached by a tyrant, they would trigger the foundational right to organized resistance and revolt against the tyrant. The first and most important rights, they reasoned, had to be the people’s religious rights. Christians, after all, are first and foremost the subjects of God and called to honor and worship God above all else. If the magistrate breaches these religious rights, then nothing can be sacred and secure any longer.

The Protestant Reformation permanently broke the unity of Western Christendom under central papal rule, and thereby laid the foundations for the modern constitutional system of confessional pluralism. Particularly prescient was the Anabaptist Reformation idea of building a “*Scheidingsmaurer*,” a “wall of separation” between the redeemed realm of religion and the fallen realm of the world. Also influential was the Calvinist model of governing the church as a democratically elected consistory of pastors, elders, and deacons. Later Calvinists in Europe and North America would use these democratic church polities as prototypes for democratic state polities with separation of powers, democratic election, term limits, and town hall meetings with the right of all members to petition the political authorities. Both Calvinists and Anabaptists were critical in the development of the logic of separation of religion and the state that dominates modern Western constitutionalism.

Being born of revolution and with its strong notions of biblically based rights and the utility of democratic structures to support them, Protestantism was in many ways more accommodated to the human rights culture and did not experience the post-Enlightenment struggles around modernity that vexed their Catholic brethren. Indeed, some contemporary critics of religious freedom as a human right describe religious



rights as a privatized and individualistic legacy of the Protestant Reformation – one that seeks hegemonically to impose itself on cultures as a triumphal export of the West, sometimes specifically the United States, to a rest of the world disinclined to receive it. This has become a prominent line of argument by some of today’s religious freedom skeptics.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Protestant tradition of religious rights not only survived the Enlightenment, but also continues to assert itself and generate ongoing debate about the nature and politics of religious freedom today.

Despite the bases for religious freedom in the Christian tradition, challenged but also substantially ratified by the Enlightenment, it was apparent by the middle of the twentieth century, there was no Second Coming of Christ promised by Christians, no heavenly city of reason promised by enlightened libertarians, no withering away of the state promised by enlightened socialists. Instead, there were world wars, Soviet gulags, and the Holocaust – instances of conflict, persecution, and violations of human dignity and human life on a massive scale to which Christianity and the Enlightenment seemed to have no cogent response or effective deterrent. The modern human rights movement was born out of desperation in the aftermath of World War II. It was an earnest attempt to find a world faith to fill a spiritual void. It was an attempt to harvest from the traditions of Christianity and the Enlightenment the rudimentary elements of a new faith and a new law that would unite a badly broken world order. Nowhere was this objective more apparent than in the proud claim of Article I of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “That all men are born free and equal in rights and dignity [and] are endowed with reason and conscience.”

In recent years, however, particularly since the end of the Cold War and the overthrow of the anti-religious Communist regimes, religious groups, and their particular religious rights have been assigned lower priority. Freedoms of speech and press, parity of race and gender, and the provision of economic, social, and cultural rights captured most of the attention and energy of the human rights community. Religious rights and liberties fell out of favor as religion no longer seemed “special” or “distinctive” in a way that merited special protection.<sup>14</sup> The protection of religious freedom and of religious minorities from persecution seemed to be adequately dealt with through the protection of other civil and political rights. Inquiries and interventions into religious rights and their abuses became increasingly intermittent and isolated. More and more, the rights revolution seemed to be passing religion by.

This has changed in the United States since the start of the twenty-first century – in no small part because of the growing evidence that Christians around the world were facing escalating persecution. In 1998, fifty years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States enacted the International Religious Freedom Act.<sup>15</sup> The purpose of the law was to express and elevate the promotion of religious freedom as a matter of foreign policy; to strengthen advocacy on the behalf of individuals in foreign countries who were being persecuted on account of their religion; and to authorize US action in response to violations of religious freedom abroad. Though its motivations and efficacy have been questioned at times, the act established an Office of International Religious Freedom<sup>16</sup> and Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom within the Department of State; a separate Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)<sup>17</sup> to advise the President, Congress, and the State Department; and a

Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom within the National Security Council. In 2013, President Barack Obama appointed a Special Adviser for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to advise the Secretary of State on matters related to religion and diplomacy. Both the State Department and USCIRF continue to issue annual reports on violations of religious freedom around the world. USCIRF, further, annually identifies “Countries of Particular Concern,” which become the basis for specific foreign policy attention and possible diplomatic intervention, as well as a secondary “Watch List” of countries where issues of religious freedom merit close scrutiny. These annual reports, along with the annual reports of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief<sup>18</sup> are valuable sources of information on violations of religious freedom and persecution for religious belief being experienced by Christian and other religious minority groups around the world. Before considering some of the specific persecutions of Christian minorities recounted in these reports – the situation on the ground – it is helpful to have a sense of the nature and scope of the religious rights in which religious freedom consists.

## What Are Religious Rights?

Religious rights entail, first of all, the basic religious freedoms familiar to Americans as expressed in the religion clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution – the Establishment Clause guarantee of freedom from government establishment of religion and the Free Exercise clause guarantee of freedom of religious expression, practice and worship.<sup>19</sup> The slogan of Forum 18, a leading worldwide religious freedom watchdog group based in Norway expresses it well as “The right to believe, to worship and to witness; The right to change one’s belief or religion; The right to join together and express one’s belief.”<sup>20</sup> These basic rights have been especially contested in recent years with the growing movement to reestablish state churches, particularly in the Orthodox Christian countries of Russia and its Slavic neighbors. They are also inextricably connected with concerns about proselytism, conversion, and apostasy, which have become key religious freedom issues not only between Russian Orthodox and all others in the former Soviet bloc, but also between Catholics and Protestants in Latin America, and between Christian and Muslim groups in Africa. Christians have experienced the heat of these debates in recent years, both in new restrictions on their proselytizing activities around the world and in charges that converts to the Christian faith, particularly from Islam, are charged with apostasy, a capital offense in some countries. Concerns about proselytism, conversion, and apostasy have been cited in restrictions and bans on minority, foreign, or nontraditional religions – often deemed cults or sects – in countries around the globe.

Guarantees of free exercise and disestablishment of religion serve the larger goal of protecting the individual’s liberty of conscience—a concept that is sometimes lost in international human rights mantras protecting “freedom of thought, conscience, and belief.”<sup>21</sup> Religion viewed in its broadest terms embraces all beliefs and actions that concern the ultimate origin, meaning, and purpose of life, of existence. It involves the responses of the human heart, soul, mind, intuition, reason, and conscience to revelation,

to transcendent values or what Rudolf Otto called the “idea of the holy.”<sup>22</sup> Liberty of conscience exempts a party from compliance with state proscriptions or prescriptions that run directly counter to core claims of conscience or cardinal commandments of the faith.<sup>23</sup> This includes the right of individuals and groups to conscientiously object to war and military service, to refuse to swear oaths, salute the flag, or participate in religious rituals and ceremonies sponsored by the state. While most rights may be qualified or limited within certain parameters in order to safeguard the rights and liberties of others or to secure public health, safety, morality, and other concerns,<sup>24</sup> liberty of conscience rights are absolute rights from which no derogation can be made.

A set of rights that might best be termed “ecclesial rights” pertaining to the corporate and institutional church as a community of faith have often served as threshold freedoms. These rights have also been described as rights of “church autonomy” or “self-determination.”<sup>25</sup> These include, in the words of the Vienna Concluding Document, the right of religious groups “to establish and maintain freely accessible places of worship or assembly; organize themselves according to their own hierarchical and institutional structure; select, appoint and replace their personnel in accordance with their respective requirements and standards as well as with any freely accepted arrangement between them and their State; solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions.”<sup>26</sup> In many countries, however, religious groups cannot attain these rights unless they incorporate themselves and register with the state in the same way that secular corporations must do. This is a condition for being recognized minimally as a legal entity, let alone gaining such benefits as tax exemption or tax appropriations, or the right to run schools, charities, cemeteries, and more. But state registration can be problematic. Not only do states often discriminate in allowing religious registration and granting group rights, but such procedures introduce an inevitable level of entanglement with the state and the potential for state interference with a church’s education, selection, and ordination of clergy, maintenance of discipline, or collaboration with their foreign co-religionists. Moreover, for those churches and other religious bodies that teach separation from the state, these registration procedures and attendant regulations are especially intrusive violations of ecclesial rights.

Freedom from discrimination – inherent in both the disestablishment and free exercise principles of the First Amendment – is a particular concern for religions around the world.<sup>27</sup> Religious discrimination occurs when a government official or private party singles out religious individuals or groups for particular burdens or restrictions that are not imposed upon others who are like-positioned. More recently, the term “societal discrimination” has become a term of art in the international law of religious freedom.<sup>28</sup> Originally, in the post-Holocaust era, it tended to refer to anti-semitism. In the conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, and elsewhere it came to apply other large-scale oppressions of religions, ethnicities, and cultures, sometimes escalating to ethnic cleansing and genocide – now crimes against humanity that are severely condemned by several international human rights instruments. Such societal discrimination may be effected through state-sponsored attacks on, or promotion of, religion through the media and official statements; deployment of nationalist ideologies against religious and ethnic minorities; and incitement, financing or other support of religious and ethnic hatred through words and actions. These sorts of concerns are not always at the forefront in

countries that are religiously homogeneous, on the one hand, or religious pluralistic, on the other. But they are of immense concern in places around the world in which strong religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups live side-by-side. The 1992 Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities is designed precisely to define and denounce all such forms of societal discrimination, and identify the minimal rights of religious and other forms of self-determination by each such group. More recently, religious freedom researchers at the Pew Research Center have distinguished religious freedom violations that come from “government restriction” and those that result from “social hostilities” toward religion or between religions. “Social hostilities” threats to religious freedom have been rising around the world, but they have become especially pronounced in a number of African countries, particularly Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, in recent years, as these are places where Christians tend to live side by side with Muslim, African traditional religion, and other religious groups.<sup>29</sup>

Religious rights in many parts of the world are not, however, limited to the usual establishment and free exercise concerns that have occupied American courts. Depending on how comprehensively or extensively a faith is held, how many areas of existence and endeavor religion is seen to penetrate, religious freedom may touch on many other sorts of rights, as well. Rights dealing with sexuality, marriage, and family have strong religious dimensions, and many religions deem these to be crucial arenas of personal moral conduct, community formation, and transmission of the faith to subsequent generations.<sup>30</sup> The tensions that the Anglican Communion has been facing in recent years among its African, American, and European branches over same-sex marriage are a key example of how these concerns play out in world Christianity. The embodied nature of the rights of sex, marriage, and family inevitably invokes and implicates many other rights related to health and medicine, including reproductive rights, treatment of HIV/AIDS, and rights to refuse medical treatment or to surrender one’s body for military conscription.

Closely related to rights of the body and its relationships are rights to home and property, particularly the rights to ownership and use of property, especially for nonresidential and religious purposes and as sites for rituals, rites, ceremonies, and worship, as well as for rights of privacy in the home and correspondence and communication from the home. One of the distinctive features of minority Christian communities around the world is the establishment, in imitation of the practices of the earliest Christian communities, of private house churches. These house churches are often a key target of oppressive states in places like China, Burma, and Vietnam. Education and media are additional areas in which the protection of rights is essential, particularly for communities that proselytize, as many Christian groups around the world tend to do in expression of their central mandate of the Great Commission: “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” (Mt. 28:19, NRSV). Christian groups, particularly from North America and western Europe, have often had the financial wherewithal to develop significant educational institutions and media presence in countries in which they are a religious minority. These educational and media institutions have often been vulnerable to attack by majority faiths and the state.<sup>31</sup>

Freedom of movement is another freedom that is taken for granted in some parts of the world, even as it is highly controlled and crucially connected to religious freedom

in others. Freedom of movement includes both freedom to reside in one place and freedom to travel to another. Regulation of freedom of movement often ranks just below registration requirements as a means of controlling religious groups. Foreign missionary workers need permission to reside and travel in-country in order to pursue their missionary and humanitarian work. Domestic religious workers also require travel rights, free from oppressive internal passport, identity, and movement restrictions. They may also need the right to travel out of their countries to collaborate with fellow believers at conferences and other events as well as emigration rights to pursue temporary education or more permanent positions abroad. Perhaps most crucially, they may need pilgrimage rights to visit holy sites at home and abroad. All of these rights to freedom of movement affect Christians and other religious groups around the world.

The idea of religious rights or religious freedom thus includes a wide penumbra of other rights related to religious identity, practice, and organization. Some critics of religious freedom, in the West and well beyond, now argue that the rights of religious individuals and groups are adequately protected by general civil and political rights set out notably in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. To single out religion for special rights protection, they argue, is to discriminate against those who claim no religious belief or motivation and to license religious parties to receive favors and to escape responsibilities that the rest of society must bear. Certainly, religious individuals and religious groups need freedoms of speech, press, association, assembly, and political citizenship, as well as due process rights to protect them from unlawful detention, torture, and punishment. But religious individuals and groups also have special needs and demands. Religion is a unique source of individual and personal identity, involving “duties we owe to our creator and the manner of discharging them” in the words of American founding father, James Madison.<sup>32</sup> Religion is also a unique form of public and social identity, involving a vast plurality of sanctuaries, schools, charities, missions, and other forms and forums of faith. Individual and corporate, private and public entities and exercises of religion – in all their self-defined varieties – properly deserve protection. We shall return to this point by way of conclusion.

## Freedom and Persecution of Christian Minorities: The Situation on the Ground

A review of the various annual reports on religious freedom produced by domestic and international monitoring groups since the early 2000s reveals a distinctive geography of religious persecution. In 2014, more than sixty years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a decade and a half since the United States International Religious Freedom Act, 18 nations were routinely cited by the United State Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as tier 1 “Countries of Particular Concern” when it comes to the religious freedom of Christians and other religious groups. The Asian nations include Burma, China, North Korea, and Vietnam. The Central Asian and Near Eastern nations include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The African nations include Egypt, Eritrea, Nigeria, and Sudan. USCIRF has also identified a list of tier 2 “Watch Countries” that

includes Azerbaijan, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Laos, and Russia. Additional countries monitored by USCIRF include Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Ethiopia, Turkey, Venezuela, and the countries of western Europe. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of Belarus, Cuba, and Venezuela, most of monitored countries are located in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> The seven countries described in this section are the ones in which minority Christian groups currently experience the most persecution.<sup>34</sup>

### *Afghanistan*

Despite the American-led war intended to liberate Afghanistan from the fundamentalist Muslim Taliban and to extirpate Islamic terrorist groups, the country remains inhospitable to religious freedom. Christians have been specific targets of persecution, even though they are estimated to number only 500 to 8,000 out of a total population of 31 million. Afghan law proclaims Islam to be the state religion, but it purports to allow non-Muslim citizens freedom of belief and worship. Religious freedom is subject to limitation in the name of public decency and peace, and no law can be contrary to the principles of Islam. In cases where the constitution and penal codes are silent – most notably cases of religious conversion and blasphemy – the courts defer to Shari'a. In recent years, Christians are said to have been the focus of campaigns against the "crime" of apostasy and have been subject to detention and jail time for their beliefs. There have been reports, since 2011, of the resurgent Taliban using social media to threaten Christians particularly around themes of possible conversion and baptism of Muslims. The civil code governing family law is based on the Sunni Hanafi school of Islam and may be applied to Muslims of all traditions, as well as to non-Muslims. Due to societal pressure, Christian groups remain largely underground and do not openly practice their religion or reveal their religious identity. The country's one known Christian Church is located in the foreign diplomatic quarter. Conversion and blasphemy have been particular concerns in Afghanistan, and several calls for the death penalty against Muslim converts to Christianity have drawn international attention. Foreign Christian groups have also been targeted for harassment and threats.

In 2006, Abdul Rahman was arrested, charged with apostasy, and sentenced to death for converting to Christianity. Pursuant to international pressure, Rahman was released for medical reasons related to an unspecified "mental disorder," at which point he fled the country for asylum in Italy. In 2007, a group of twenty-three South Korean missionaries were kidnapped by the Taliban and two were executed before the release of the others could be arranged with an agreement conditioned on South Korea's promise to remove its troops from Afghanistan by the year's end. In August 2010, ten members of a Christian medical relief group providing free eye care were massacred in a remote mountainous region of the country for their supposed plans to convert Muslims to Christianity. In October 2011, the Taliban posted a statement on a web site vowing to purge all Christians from Afghanistan and to target foreign relief organizations suspected of proselytizing activities. Two German development workers had been executed and their bodies found in the two months preceding this announcement. The foregoing list of incidents is highly selective and represents just a small sample of offenses against

Christians in Afghanistan in recent years – religious freedom monitoring groups have documented many, many more.

### *Burma*

Burma, or Myanmar according to its official name, was ruled by military regimes from 1962, until its turn to democracy in 2010 with its general election and release of the noted human rights leader Aung San Suu Kyi and with the dissolution of its governing military junta in 2011. Even with that democratic shift, USCIRF continues to label Burma a “Country of Particular Concern” on religious freedom, a designation that it has held since 1999. The Burmese constitution grants limited rights to religious freedom, but contains other provisions that restrict these rights. The Burmese Ministry of Religious Affairs maintains a separate department for the promotion and propagation of Buddhism. In this new post-authoritarian era, Theravada Buddhism is the de facto state religion and the 6% of the population who are Christian and 4% who are Muslim have been particularly singled out for oppression, which the government has been unable or unwilling to curtail. While Buddhist attacks on Burma’s minority Muslim Rohingya ethnic group have grabbed headlines, there have also been notable religio-ethnic attacks focused on Christian groups. Among the most persecuted have been the Karen people, whose strong resistance to the state through the insurgent group known as the Karen National Union, has made them particular targets of persecution. Christianity is also the largest religious tradition among the Kachin, Chin, and Naga ethnic groups. In October 2010, the military launched aerial strikes in predominantly Christian regions, and armed clashes between the military and Christian groups are ongoing in several states.

All religious groups are required to register with the state in order to engage in property and financial transactions and to get travel permits for their members. Religious affiliation is listed on all government-issued identification cards. The government officially discourages proselytization, and the de facto prohibition on proselytizing activities has affected Christians particularly. Christian groups have both experienced difficulties in obtaining permission to build and repair places of worship. They have experienced both crackdowns on private house churches and government discouragement of those who might lease them public places to worship. Christians have also experienced difficulties in importing and translating religious literature and are prohibited from importing Bibles in indigenous languages. An unusual measure in this regard has been the censorship authority’s prohibition of Christians from using in their religious publications and translations 100 words said to be indigenous and derived from Buddhist writings in the Pali language. Christians have also been restricted from public-sector jobs unless they convert to Buddhism. Most ominously, the military has reportedly engaged in actions to restrict religious worship and to promote Buddhism as a state religion in campaigns that are said to have targeted Christians for forced labor, rape, intimidation, and destruction of religious sites. In some cases, Christians have been even conscripted to build Buddhist pagodas.

## *China*

The Chinese constitution officially protects religious freedom for religious groups defined as “normal,” but religious freedom tends to be limited to the individual’s private profession of belief or unbelief and does not include public religious expression. Protestantism and Catholicism are 2 of the 5 recognized religions. Christians have been estimated to include 40 million of China’s 1.3 billion citizens, though these figures are higher than official state estimates. Catholics number 5.3 million and Protestants 20 million, according to their official organizations. Other Christian groups have been labeled “cults.” Interest in Christianity is thought to be growing, as evidenced in increasing demand for Bibles, which are permitted to be published, but are strictly controlled by the government, which maintains control of all texts. All religious groups must register themselves and their places of worship with both the State Administration for Religious Affairs and provincial and local Religious Affairs Bureaus. Protestant house churches, organized under the China House Church Alliance, have been particularly affected by the required registration of places of worship. Evangelical Protestant groups have been particularly reluctant to register with the officially recognized Three-Self Patriotic Movement/Chinese Christian Council (TSPM/CCC) because of theological differences with the group and fear of adverse consequences. House churches have been allowed to exist in some parts of the country, but they remain strictly forbidden and subject to disruptive raids by the authorities in others. House church leaders who have met with Christian visitors from abroad have been accused of “evil cult activities” as part of a “strike hard” campaign. This concern was particularly prevalent in preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games.

House church leaders have been interrogated, detained, and tortured in custody. Chinese citizens are forbidden to attend worship services conducted by foreigners, but foreigners may attend services of registered Chinese organizations. Foreign Christians have been regularly expelled for unauthorized religious activities. Unregistered Catholic bishops, priests, and laypersons have been harassed, monitored, and detained. China has no diplomatic relations with the Holy See and the state-controlled China Patriotic Association does not always recognize the Vatican’s authority to appoint bishops. Ninety percent of China’s Catholic bishops, however, regularized their relationship with the Vatican, pursuant to a June 2007 invitation by Pope Benedict XVI to do so. US President George W. Bush held private meetings with Chinese dissidents, including religious believers, before joining the US delegation to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, echoing and amplifying numerous calls during his presidency for religious freedom in China.

Overall, despite the government’s efforts to stifle religion in China, particularly religious dissident voices that are critical of the official Communist regime, the growth of Christianity in China is said to be a remarkable success story. By even the most conservative estimates, the number of Protestant traditions in China alone is said to have experienced a growth of over 4,300% since the 1960s, occurring notably since the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and after the expulsion of foreign missionaries, such that much of the expansion can be said to be home-grown.<sup>35</sup>



### *Egypt*

The Arab Spring revolution of 2011 carried the promise of political and social transformation in Egypt, but the ultimate outcome of that transformation is still unknown, particularly as it concerns matters of religious freedom and the treatment of Egypt's vocal Coptic Christian minority. The 2012 Egyptian constitution specifies that "freedom of belief is an inviolable right" but is said to provide less protection of religious freedom than the document that it replaced. Like previous constitutions, the new constitution proclaims Islam to be the state religion and Shar'ia to be the basis of legislation. Rights of free exercise and worship are protected only for adherents of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Christians and other minority groups report a variety of personal and collective forms of discrimination, exacerbated by the government's failure to prosecute crimes against them or other kinds of discrimination that single them out.

Christians are estimated to constitute approximately 10% of the Egyptian population, the majority belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Church. Applicants for government identity cards are required to self-identify as Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular, have been denied legal status and have been subject to persecution. Conversion and apostasy have been key religious freedom concerns. While there are no legal restrictions on converting non-Muslims to Islam, the conversion of Muslims to other religions is prohibited, and Christians have faced particular harassment for proselytizing and conversion activities. Administrative courts have ruled that the government is not obligated to recognize reconversion by Christian-born converts to Islam who wish to return to Christianity. Technically, Jews, Christian, and Muslims are governed by their own religions in matters of family law, and the government does not recognize marriages by people of other faiths.

Intermarriage of Christians and Muslims has been a particular problem. Coptic men are prevented from marrying Muslim women by civil and religious law. Marriages abroad of Christian men to Muslim women are not recognized in Egypt. Muslim women in these marriages can be charged with apostasy and their children placed with a Muslim male guardian. There continue to be unsubstantiated reports of forced conversion of Coptic women, particularly underage girls, upon marriage to Muslim men, sometimes to circumvent laws on underage marriage. Some Christian families have alleged these to be instances of kidnapping. Marriages between Muslim women and Coptic men have been the basis of riots and property vandalism against Christians in various locales. Christians are discriminated against in public sector employment and in admission to such elite, publicly funded institutions as Al-Azhar University, which has reportedly produced no Christian graduates since 2001.

### *Eritrea*

The laws and still unimplemented constitution recognize freedom of religion, but religious rights are still limited in practice. Only four religious groups are registered and allowed to meet legally. These include Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics, and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea, a confederation of Protestant

churches. Muslims comprise 50% of the population; Orthodox Christians 30%; Roman Catholics 15%; other Protestants 5%. While the fact that Christians constitute three of the four recognized groups would seem to suggest a hospitable climate for Christianity, but such is not the case. The four recognized religions have been required to produce lists of priests, seminarians, and religious workers to be conscripted into military service. The Catholic Church has been subjected to proclamations limiting the activities of religious institutions; some of its priests and nuns have been denied residence and work permits and ordered to leave the country; and there are reports of government confiscation of church property. A patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church was deposed and another substituted in his place under government pressure. The government has also confiscated weekly offerings made to the church by parishioners. Jehovah's Witnesses have been targeted for persecution because of their refusal to vote in independence referenda and their refusal to perform military service and alternative national service. They have been dismissed from civil service, evicted from government housing, denied passports and other travel and identity documents, and imprisoned without charge in military camps for refusing military service.

### *Uzbekistan*

The constitution and laws of Uzbekistan provide for freedom of religion and separation of church and state, but the government restricts religious activity in practice. Even Muslims, while enjoying considerable government support in order to maintain the country's Muslim heritage, are significantly controlled by the government, which has sought to promote what it regards a moderate version of Islam as a way of averting the development and propagation of terrorist groups. Muslim groups deemed extremist, separatist, or fundamentalist are dealt with particularly harshly. All religious groups are required to register with the government. The strict and burdensome registration criteria include a requirement that groups provide the government with lists of 100 national citizen members. Registration applications are routinely denied for minute technical and clerical errors. Christian churches often operate without registration, which means that their conduct of religious services is illegal. Police have broken up private house churches and have beaten and detained members of Christian evangelical organizations. Proselytization in Uzbekistan is a crime. Evangelical Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular, have been prosecuted for their proselytizing activities. Jehovah's Witnesses have had particular difficulties in getting registered and have generally been the subjects of heightened scrutiny. Christians, particularly Evangelicals and Pentecostals, who have tried to convert Muslims or who have had members of traditional Muslim ethnic groups in their congregations have faced official harassment, legal action, and other forms of persecution. The ethnic Muslim Uzbeks who convert are also subject to harassment and discrimination. Uzbek law limits religious instruction to officially sanctioned religious schools and prohibits private religious instruction or the teaching of religion to minors without parental consent. While institutions exist to train clergy in Uzbekistan, it is difficult for lay Christians to pursue religious education. The government controls the publication, importation, and distribution of religious

literature, and it discourages and occasionally blocks the importation of religious literature deemed objectionable. Overall, the country is said to be tolerant of religious diversity, but not of proselytization.

### *Vietnam*

The constitution and decrees of the Vietnamese government provide for religious freedom, including freedom of worship, but the government continues to place restrictions on the organized, political activities of religious groups. All religious groups must be registered and the leadership of individual congregations must be approved by local authorities. There have been delays in processing the registration applications of Protestant congregations, as well as difficulties in the establishment of Catholic seminaries and Protestant ministry training courses. The government has rejected the appointment of some Catholic bishops appointed by the Vatican, but the Jesuit order was permitted to open a theological training facility and some Catholic clergy have reported an easing of government control. Catholic priests and Protestant ministers have been detained for political activity. The Catholic Church has received some government support for activities to combat HIV/AIDS, but other permits for programs and activities have been suspended or withheld. Protestant families have reported discrimination against their children in state-run schools, but the government denies any limitation on access to education based on religious belief. Recent converts to Christianity have been pressured by local authorities to renounce their conversion and return to their traditional beliefs. Some have also been denounced as "enemies of the state" for believing in foreign, particularly American, confessions. Foreign missionaries may not operate openly as religious workers, but they do conduct humanitarian and development activities with government approval. The government retains control over all publishing, but it has allowed some publication of religious texts, including the Bible, sometimes in ethnic minority languages. Christians generally have amicable relations with other religious communities, and the Catholic Church has worked with the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha on charitable activities, especially those related to HIV/AIDS.

These seven examples are indicative of the terrain of religious freedom experienced by or denied to Christian minorities around the world. Christians are not the only persecuted groups in these locales. Particularly in authoritarian, post-authoritarian, or post-conflict states, religion itself is usually seen as a social problem and a threat to a fragile state. But the persecution of Christian minorities often has a distinctive flavor, determined by the relationship between church and state and the zeal with which many Christians pursue proselytization activities. The private house church is, perhaps, the best symbol of the power of religion to constitute as a source of authority and normativity outside of the state. Moreover, the message and practice of Christianity is both personal and communal in a way that attracts new believers. It is a religion with global appeal, not the least for its congruence with democracy and human rights.

## Religious Rights as Human Rights

The right to religion is “the mother of many other rights.”<sup>36</sup> For the religious individual, the right to believe leads ineluctably to the rights to assemble, speak, worship, proselytize, educate, parent, travel, or to abstain from the same on the basis of one’s beliefs. For the religious association, the right to exist invariably involves rights to corporate property, collective worship, organized charity, parochial education, freedom of press, and autonomy of governance. Religion is inextricably integrated into these rights and into many facets of life. Religious rights are an inherent part of rights of speech, press, assembly, and other individual rights as well as ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and similar associational rights. To ignore religious rights is to overlook the conceptual, if not historical, source of many other individual and associational rights. Religious rights are human rights.

Beyond the lists and categories of the violations, persecutions, and things that can be done *to religion*, particularly to religious minorities, there is the catalogue of what religion, free from persecution, can do *for human rights*. What is lost when religion – particularly minority religions that may pose some of the most challenging and necessary critiques to reigning orthodoxies of both church and state – is persecuted and crushed out of existence? Christians around the world have been some of the most faithful and effective advocates on behalf of women, children, the sick and disabled, and others who face social discrimination. Christian groups have been among the leaders in combating the trafficking in persons for sexual and labor exploitation and in instituting and presiding over committees for truth and reconciliation in post-conflict societies. Christian and other religious groups have provided crucial medical and humanitarian relief in parts of the world affected by natural disaster or afflicted with the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Without religion, the state is given an exaggerated role to play as the guarantor of human rights. In reality, the state is not, and cannot be, so omniscient. Numerous “mediating structures” stand between the state and the individual, religious institutions prominently among them. Religious institutions, among others, play a vital role in the cultivation and realization of rights. They can create the conditions (sometimes the prototypes) for the realization of first generation civil and political rights. They can provide a critical (sometimes the principal) means to meet second-generation rights of education, healthcare, childcare, labor organizations, employment, and artistic opportunities, among others. They can offer some of the deepest insights into norms of creation, stewardship, and servanthood necessary to achieve third-generation rights, including environmental sustainability, global health, the alleviation or end of poverty and hunger, and the reconciliation, transformation, and healing of war and conflict.

The modern human rights revolution was inspired and effectuated in no small measure by the work of religious individuals and religious organizations, including many Christian groups, working in such international organizations as the United Nations. The human rights movement has, in turn, helped to catalyze a great awakening of religion around the globe. Religion today has become the latest “transnational variable.”<sup>37</sup> Christianity and other world religions, whether majority or minority in

their particular locales, are well positioned, as transnational actors, to demand and secure religious freedom for themselves, for other religions, and for the vulnerable people of the world. Pursuit of religious freedom and human rights will continue to be a vital piece of the Christian mission worldwide.

## Notes

- 1 The phrase is from Cotler (1998: 165).
- 2 For an excellent survey of Christianity around the world, see Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2011a; 2011b).
- 3 G.A. Res. 217A, at 71, U.N. GAOR, 3d Sess, 1st plen. mtg., U.N. Doc A/810 (Dec. 12, 1948).
- 4 G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp (No. 16) at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316, 999 U.N.T.S. (Dec. 16, 1966).
- 5 G.A. Res. 55, 36 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 51), U.N. Doc. A/RES/36/55 (Nov. 25, 1981).
- 6 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986 of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Held on the Basis of the Provisions of the Final Act Relating to the Follow-Up to the Conference (Jan. 17, 1989) 28 I.L.M. 527 [hereinafter “Vienna Concluding Document”].
- 7 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 135 (Dec. 18, 1992).
- 8 For the most up-to-date information on the rising tide of religious restrictions around the world, see the following reports published by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life – recently renamed the Religion and Public Life Project – at the Pew Research Center in Washington, DC: Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life (2009; 2010; 2011a; 2011b; 2013; 2014). See also: Grim and Finke (2011); Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011); Witte and Green (2012).
- 9 Curran (2011: 73).
- 10 Curran (2011: 73), quoting Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (1888).
- 11 See Curran (2011: 78–81).
- 12 For this section, see Huber and Tödt (1977); Skinner (1978); Witte, Jr. (2002; 2008; Haller (1963); Klaassen (1981).
- 13 See the essays contained in Hurd and Sullivan (guest eds.) (2014). See, esp. Green (2014: 355–357).
- 14 For recent counterarguments to this view, see Grim and Finke (2011); Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011). See also Mickelthwait and Woolridge (2009). See also Van der Vyver and Witte, Jr. (eds.) (1996).
- 15 International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–292, as amended by Public Law 106–55, Public Law 106–113, Public Law 107–228, Public Law 108–332, and Public Law 108–458).
- 16 See <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>, accessed October 30, 2015.
- 17 See <http://www.uscirf.gov/>, accessed October 30, 2015.
- 18 See <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/12/17/global-restrictions-on-religion/>, accessed October 30, 2015.
- 19 For a survey of the historical and contemporary development of the American constitutional law of church and state, see Witte, Jr. and Nichols (2010).
- 20 <http://www.forum18.org/>, accessed October 30, 2015.

- 21 For an excellent survey of the various dimensions of freedom of religion and belief, see Lindholm, Durham, and Tahzib-Lie (eds.) (2004). See also Taylor (2012); Evans (2012); Lerner (2012) in Witte, Jr. and Green (eds.) (2012).
- 22 Otto (1958; [1917]).
- 23 For more on freedom of conscience, see Smith (2012).
- 24 On qualification and limitation of rights, see Gunn (2012).
- 25 For discussion of ecclesial rights along these lines, see Garnett (2011); Van der Vyver (2012).
- 26 Vienna Concluding Document, Art. 16(4).
- 27 For more on the rights to equality and nondiscrimination, see Ghanaea (2012).
- 28 The State Departments International Religious Freedom Reports continue to discuss both “government practices” and the “status of societal respect for religious freedom.”
- 29 See Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2014; 2010).
- 30 For discussion of recent disputes between Muslims and Christians over the implementation of Sharia family law around the world, see An-Na'im and Green (eds.) (2011).
- 31 On the other hand, the religious and secular media have also been used to foment religious intolerance in some cases. For analysis of this in the African context, see the recent and ongoing research of Hackett, e.g. (1998: 258–277). See also Hackett, “Managing or Manipulating Religious Conflict in the Nigerian Media,” <http://web.utk.edu/~rhackett/2edin.book.end.pdf>, accessed October 30, 2015; Hackett (2005).
- 32 Madison (1973: 299).
- 33 The prevalence of restrictions on religious freedom in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East/North Africa is confirmed by the recent reports of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2009; 2011a; 2011b).
- 34 The following are based largely on the country reports of the United State Commission on International Religious Freedom, the International Religious Freedom Reports of the United States State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom, as well as the short summaries on religion contained in the annual Human Rights Reports of the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. The Human Rights Bureau bases its summaries of religious freedom as a human right on the previous year’s reports by the Office of International Religious Freedom. The recent International Religious Freedom Reports, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf>, accessed October 30, 2015. The Human Rights Report, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt>, accessed October 30, 2015. For additional accounts of religious freedom and religious persecution, particularly of global Christian communities, see Allen, Jr. (2013); Hertzke (2012; 2006).
- 35 For additional statistics on the phenomenal growth of Christianity in China, see Allen, Jr. (2013).
- 36 Jellinek (1895).
- 37 Rudolph (1996).

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## CHAPTER 26

# Christianity and “Western Classical” Music (1700–2000)

David Martin

The term “classical music” dates from the mid-nineteenth century and is connected with the creation of a “canon” of “art music” parallel to the religious canon. It therefore illustrates a shift from music as a “handmaid” of religion to music as an autonomous practice itself attracting “religious” devotion. This essay focuses on the last three centuries from a period up to 1750 where Christianity and the role of music as “handmaid” could still be “taken for granted” by composers, to a revolutionary period from 1780 to 1830 when court and church gave way to concert hall and festival venue, and when music expressed its own autonomy and the autonomy of the individual, as well as romanticism and nationalism. There followed another revolutionary period from ca.1880 to 1930 associated with the technological bases of mass culture and the emergence of modernism. With modernism the gap between “serious music” and popular music increased. All these phases need to be kept in mind, but I select key instances and genealogies rather than offer comprehensive coverage.

Three centuries ago musicians mostly performed what was then contemporary music rather than “ancient” music lodged in an accepted canon. Now, with the unique availability of music through recording from any time and place, all past phases are present here and now. At the click of a button plainsong can jostle the severe polyphony of Palestrina representing the Catholic musical reforms of the sixteenth century, or Baroque church music from seventeenth-century Lima, or John Rutter. So we need to sketch in the phases before 1700 as well as after. Plainsong was formalized in the latter part of the first millennium. Then there was polyphony from 1200 to 1600 (very roughly coincident with summits of creative activity in Christian architecture and painting). The period of the Baroque followed from 1600 to 1750. This period saw the emergence of opera and oratorio, increasing attention to keyboard music and instrumental ensembles, melody and harmonic tension, stylized “affect” and gesture. By the mid-eighteenth century the

dominance of the church as patron and as venue for music was diminishing. By the late eighteenth century the aristocratic patron was giving way to a musical public enjoying music for its own sake and (especially in German-speaking countries) music as a yearning for the infinite, or as accompaniment to poem, narrative, and drama, including nationalist and revolutionary drama. This was the age of the piano in the drawing room and the virtuoso performer in the concert hall and grand evocative gestures on the themes of love, destiny, death, and Nature. Finally, round about 1880 tonality itself appeared to be breaking down and, with the second decade of the twentieth century Arnold Schönberg, Claude Debussy, and Igor Stravinsky broke the mould in very different ways. Arguably modernism included a "return of the sacred."

All that occurred "after the break" around 1800. We need to return to the Baroque, above all to Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel between 1700 and 1750, when music was still a craft and a handmaid to faith, not an exercise in genius with music as direct access to the sublime or the divine. I can say all I need about this final half century of musical Christendom by highlighting dramatic differences between Bach and Handel. Both were from Lutheran Northeast Germany, born very close in time and space, but one was a primarily an independent musical impresario, the other a church musician. Handel summed up Baroque opera as the peak between Claudio Monteverdi and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as well as the Italian Catholic idea of oratorio, and created the English oratorio. Bach summed up the developing keyboard traditions, especially the organ in church and the harpsichord, as well as the traditions of the cantata and passion. Both brought the *concerto grosso* to perfection, Handel in his op. 6 and Bach in the Brandenburg concertos. What matters here is the content of their compositions and the plausible genealogies we can trace from them.

Bach rejected the bright lights of city opera houses in places like Hamburg and instead took up the role of cantor in major cities, or of Kapellmeister in minor courts, following in the steps of Dietrich Buxtehude and Heinrich Schütz. Bach may not have been a Pietist but he lay within the ambit of a Pietist influence that would open up onto the German Enlightenment and a democratization of religious feeling later influential in North America. His organ preludes, motets, cantatas, masses and Passions were closely integrated in the liturgical year and above all "composed" suffering and celebrated salvation. The stark drama of Bach's *St. John Passion* (1724) is magnificent liturgical opera (Gardiner 2013). These works were organized around the chorales that Luther had promoted to give congregational voice to the Reformation and lie at the fountainhead of later North European Lutheran hymnody. It is worth remembering that Catholic liturgical practice outside the chancel was highly individualistic even up to the mid-twentieth century and that Lutheran and Anglican Protestantism broke the divide between people in the nave and priests in the chancel. The first Bach revival began in 1829 with Felix Mendelssohn's reworked version of the *St. Matthew Passion*, and thereafter Bach's influence permeated German music, especially Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms, and Bach was canonized as the great source of the German national tradition. Bach's summation of the North/Central German organ school also provided what would much later become the axis of organ music in the service of worship in the Western church (Thistlethwaite and Webber 1998).

Handel took a different course, first by going to the Hamburg opera and then to Catholic Italy as composer of operas and secular cantatas in the Italian “international” style. During the next few years he mixed with the ecclesiastical and landed aristocracy of Rome, setting music for the Roman liturgy, and summing up a tradition of Counter-Reformation sacred drama going back to Carissimi and to the oratory of St. Philip Neri in *La Resurrezione* (1708) and *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (1707). Attracted by London, newly emergent as a major cultural entrepot and musical capital, he brought Italian opera to the London stage, and also provided musical services for the court, sometimes in the Chapel Royal tradition, and for the aristocracy (Burrows 2005). However, he also turned to English texts and themes, in particular English oratorio, above all his setting in 1741 of *Messiah*, a theologically conservative and meditative text by the Rev. Charles Jennens (Luckett 1992). The rest of Handel’s English oratorios, apart from his penultimate masterpiece *Theodora*, fed into a strain of English nationalism that read its own story in the Old Testament, above all perhaps the peaceful and prosperous glories of “mighty Solomon.”

Over the course of the next hundred years, English oratorio, especially *Messiah*, became part of a tradition of massed democratic singing in England, Germany, and North America (the “Boston Handel and Haydn Society” was founded in 1815) that ran in parallel with another development: the congregational hymn. Up to 1700 the congregational psalm predominated; after 1700 the classical hymnody of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley gradually took over, above all with the growing influence of the Evangelical revival and a theology that moved from election and self-control to choice and emotional impulse. Evangelicalism and its music ran in parallel with German Pietism and its music, and both fed into the democratic foundations of America. Eventually they fertilized the tradition of the revivalist chorus and gospel.

Here we have a choice of genealogies: to move towards the great era of the music festival in the Victorian era together with the changing character of nationalism, or to move to Vienna and the revolutionary changes cantered round the year 1800. I take the former first. In Britain the music festival was for decades the site of religious and social tension between Nonconformity and Establishment, between London and the industrial midlands, Wales and the north, in spite of a doctrine that musical harmony fostered social harmony. But by the time of the Great Exhibition in 1851 amateur Protestant choral music had achieved some internal accommodations. Moreover, *Messiah* had been joined in popular affection by Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* (1846) and Joseph Haydn’s *The Creation* (ca. 1798). These three peaks coexisted with music serving the sentiments of Evangelicalism: anthems, cantatas, and oratorios, as well as the ubiquitous Victorian hymn as represented in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1865/75/79) (Temperley 1979). Works like Charles Gounod’s *Mors et Vita* (1885) and *The Redemption* were performed at the great Birmingham Festival and easier works like John Stainer’s *Crucifixion* (1887) became part of an annual cycle (Clarke 2012).

About 1870 everything changed, socially, politically, and musically, and we have to trace varied elements flowing into each other. One was the recovery of the older pre-Dickensian traditions of the carol in rough association with the recovery of pre-eighteenth-century folk song and dance that was pan-European and north Atlantic in scope and owed something to Johann Herder’s evocation of the spirit of the folk. With the

publication of the *Oxford Book of Carols* (1928) and the advent of wireless broadcasting the repertoire of King's College annual Christmas Eve service gained global traction until today it has an audience of forty million. Of course, it now mingles with secular offerings in the contemporary mega-store alongside the secular Christmas card as part of a minority Christian understanding of Christmas alongside a consumerist bonanza allied to something like a mid-winter pagan festival. The folk-song revival that stimulated the English national musical renaissance has also given way to (say) Andrew Lloyd-Webber's *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat* (1973) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971).

The English national musical renaissance included a Celtic (and micro-nationalist) renaissance as a parallel but distinct development. It repudiated the Victorian tradition centered on Handel and Mendelssohn as amateur, provincial and Evangelical, and revived the musical traditions of the Tudors and Stuarts from William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, and Orlando Gibbons to Henry Purcell and William Croft, with what might be described as a mixture of Catholic and high church motifs. English church music after Croft had few major figures apart from Samuel Wesley and Samuel Sebastian Wesley until Stanford and Parry in the 1880s. A big change was signalled by the controversial performance of Edward Elgar's setting of Newman's poem *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Birmingham Festival in 1900 (Young 1995). However, this was harmonically Wagnerian and signalled England's musical rapprochement with the continent, whereas slightly later composers like Ralph Vaughan Williams were mostly seeking Tudor roots. Though England was the first industrial country its musical renaissance was pre-industrial, apart from works like Gustav Holst's *Hammersmith*. Thus we have the paradox of an agnostic Vaughan Williams, writing hymns, editing the hugely influential *English Hymnal* (1906), evoking the countryside, composing a mass and setting the great classic of English Puritan devotion *The Pilgrim's Progress* as an opera. Herbert Howells was another devout agnostic associated with a profound vein of liturgical composition. There was also an anti-Christian strain of vitalism, for example Frederick Delius' *Mass of Life* (1905), and of Gnostic "spirituality," for example in Holst's *Hymn of Jesus* (1917). In the late twentieth century the music of John Tavener represented a "spirituality" looking East to Orthodoxy and beyond.

In the nineteenth century the musicians included itinerant fiddlers, virtuosi and songbirds but with industrial society, and mass communication and reproduction, music became a profession with colleges and conservatoires and historical self-consciousness. This bears on the themes of simultaneity, internationalization, and the widening gap between amateur music making and professional performance. The result was the oddly-named "early music" movement based on historically authentic performance and restoring the heritage of musical Christendom to a newly literate musical public. Six hundred years of music were recovered: Bach and Handel, Purcell, Bach's predecessors, Antonio Vivaldi, Alessandro, and Domenico Scarlatti, Renaissance composers like Josquin moving between Flanders and Italy or Vittoria moving between Spain and Italy, and Baroque composers associated with the French court and aristocracy, like François Couperin, Jean-Baptiste Lully, Gustave Charpentier, and Jean-Philippe Rameau. The movement was equally North American and western European, and within Europe spread south and west across the musical frontiers of the old confessional map. It often had links to the remaining ecclesiastical establishments with their elite choirs and to

the great universities: Cambridge, England and Cambridge, MA, London, Paris, Berkeley, Birmingham, and Göttingen.

Here we revert to our other genealogy, centered on Vienna. This too takes off from Handel since he was not only a pioneer of the musician as independent business man and philanthropist but also the first musician to be memorialized in his own life time. He became the founder member of the musical canon, something indicated by the mammoth celebrations in Westminster Abbey in 1784 and later, and illustrated by his key influence on Haydn, Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven, and the role his music played in the movement to revive "ancient music" both in London and Vienna. Moreover, his music opens onto the Enlightenment in *Il Moderato* where the "fumes of fancy" melt into "intellectual day," and onto the natural world, for example settings of German poems by Barthold Brockes, that code a transition from Pietism to a benign God of Nature. Haydn expressed these later eighteenth-century sentiments in *The Creation* and *The Seasons* and also carried forward revolutionary developments initiated by Carl Philip Emanuel Bach which abandoned binary alternations for the three-fold drive of sonata form (Ottenberg 1987). With Haydn music became ironic, stormy, and stressful, and the balance began to shift from choral music to liturgical and biblical words, towards the non-verbal in the aptly named "chamber music," and in the symphony as the form to which "genius" consigned its legacy as protagonist of the "avant-garde." Mozart introduced notes of introspective melancholy in his symphonies, concertos and chamber music, and represented the culmination of the operatic tradition dating back to 1600. He was *the* master of music for genuinely dramatic situations with politically subversive implications. Both Haydn and Mozart were sincere Catholics who wrote liturgical music and mass settings, but these were beginning to be too expansive for ordinary services. Mozart indicated a "heretical" future for music by writing for the Masons, who were deists, and being interested in non-Christian rituals of initiation as in *The Magic Flute*, premiered in 1791, the year of Mozart's death and his unfinished *Requiem*.

Beethoven was a Catholic, but his "faith" was informed by philosophical musings, especially Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and he was very ambivalent towards the church. His music announced a personal presence full of revolutionary idealism, notably in his *Eroica* symphony and in the choral symphony calling on the millions as they all stood together before God, as well as in the opera *Fidelio* (1805), celebrating release from political bondage. His last sonatas and quartets broke the bounds of form and of all previous harmonic language and set the agenda for succeeding generations. He now took center stage in an Austro-German canon and became literally iconic. His *Solemn Mass* (1824) is not a liturgical work but a personal commentary. It brought a phase of mass composition virtually to a close.

Franz Schubert was a Catholic of sorts who wrote settings of the mass, but he opened up the whole world of romanticism, in particular through the intimate "lied" practiced later by Schumann, Hugo Wolf, Brahms, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss. The thematic repertoire of German lieder provides an index of the role of religion in romanticism. That romantic world featured the lonely human figure contemplating the power and beauty of Nature, especially brooks and seascapes, and the mysterious appeal of sacred edifices set in a landscape as in the pictures of Caspar David Friedrich, along with the invocation of the Middle Ages, ballads and chivalry, moonlight and the rising

or declining sun, chiming towers, old pictures and the life of ancient cities like Venice, love gained and lost, early death and the grotesque. Religion was set in a *frame* as a nest of associations. In the latter part of the period religion creeps back: in Wolf's invocations of the Christian mysteries of incarnation and redemption, and in Mahler's mystical absorption in *Um Mitternacht* or *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*. Mahler, an assimilated Jew, focused in his intertwined songs and symphonies on death, destiny and Resurrection, and also invoked the Spirit and the cosmic. The range of themes has by now gone beyond Europe, like the Chinese modes of aesthetic contemplation in *Das Lied von Der Erde* (ca. 1909). In Mahler and in early Schönberg, for example the pantheistic *Gurrelieder* (ca. 1910), one watches a breakdown of the tonal system in a mood of elegiac richness still present as late as 1948 in Strauss's *Four Last Songs*.

If the corpus of German *lieder* offers indices of the romantic temper so does French *mélodie* from Hector Berlioz to Gabriel Fauré, and the history of the requiem as the most striking site of romantic religious drama. French song is suffused with images of cemeteries, tombs, specters, church bells, ecstasies, moods, dreams, perfumes, clouds, tresses, flutes, satyrs, fauns, and hints of oriental exoticism. France was the epicenter of revolution and therefore of revolutionary singing groups that in their political zeal contrasted with the more pious tone of British choral societies. Revolution went hand in hand with nationalism and the Franco-Pole Frédéric Chopin wrote stirring etudes and polonaises to call for revolutionary action on the part of oppressed nations. Religion is as entirely absent in Chopin as it is in the opera composer Georges Bizet.

Though the mid-nineteenth century was markedly pious, religion was moving musically beyond the boundaries of the church. Outside "sacred music," composers either deployed religious themes for dramatic purposes or evoked the expression of piety as part of drama. A great deal of church music sounded operatic, for example Giacomo Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* (1867), while opera deployed religious themes largely as integral to drama, for example Jules Massenet's *Hérodiade* (1881), Strauss's *Salome* (1905), and the *Ave Maria* in Giuseppe Verdi's *Otello* (1883), or else it used religious history to make a broader point, for example the plea for tolerance undergirding Jacques Halévy's *La Juive* (1835) and Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (1836).

The preference for setting requiems, especially the *Dies Irae*, suggests a primary interest in drama. Berlioz' colossal *Grande Messe des Morts* (1837) was composed for a great national occasion to commemorate soldiers who died in the revolution of 1830, by a composer who had entirely lost his earlier fervent faith (Cairns 1999). Verdi's *Requiem* was sacred drama by a composer whose loyalties were primarily to Italian national unity and the *Risorgimento*. His operas are replete with coded political messages (Conrad 2011). Brahms' *Requiem* magnificently replenished the musical resources of Protestantism, but Brahms was an agnostic who excised explicit Christian references, and in his *Four Serious Songs* (1896) wrote of the bitterness of death. Only the requiems by Fauré and Maurice Duruflé are usable in a liturgical context. One big exception here is Anton Bruckner, a founder of modern harmonic radicalism and a devout Catholic, who not only wrote a Requiem but numerous masses and motets. The "Abbé" Ferenc Liszt, likewise a harmonic and structural innovator, also wrote numerous works from the standpoint of faith.

Nationalism partly displaced religion, so that when a composer like Carl Nielsen in Denmark set religious texts he may well have treated them as expressions of the spirit of

the folk. Edvard Grieg evoked the Norwegian scene and landscape with barely any reference to Christianity. Richard Wagner sought the regeneration of the German national spirit through pagan myths in which humanity was its own redeemer through the charismatic powers of the individual creator. Maybe the Protestant hymns that were evoked by Charles Ives celebrated the independent spirit of the American people. The nationalist theme was most salient in those parts of central and eastern Europe where national sentiment developed late (Samson 2002). That means that even settings of Biblical or liturgical texts code national sentiment: Leos Janacek's *Glagolithic Mass* (1925) celebrates a folk occasion and witnesses to pan-Slavic aspirations and ethnic roots in an ancient liturgical language, while Zoltan Kodaly's *Psalmus Hungaricus* (1923) sets the plight of post-war Hungary against the tribulations of ancient Israel. Russia is the site of a continuing tension between Western influences and Eastern influences, for example the liturgical music of Dmitry Bortnyanskiy, as well as a continuing tradition of Byzantine chant revived in modern times as a complement to the revival of plainsong in the West associated with the monastery of Solesmes.

A "return of the sacred" with modernism seems counterintuitive (De La Fuente 2011). Even the nature and the name of modernism is disputed, but I date its advent from Debussy's *Préludes* (Book 1) of 1910, the set-piece shock-horror of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in 1913 and (*maybe*) serialism in its post-World War I and post-World War II variants when music vainly sought again to be to a science. It is surprising in a purportedly secularizing era to find the church still acting as sponsor (Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, along with Chagall and Freibusch), and serious engagement with religious texts and themes (at random, Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* signifying his return to Judaism, Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs*, Aaron Copland's setting of Emily Dickinson, Paul Hindemith's *Marienleben* (Rilke) and *Mathis der Maler*, Harrison Birtwhistle's *The Last Supper* . . .).

One can set up a "null hypothesis": that religion should have packed its bags; and we can supplement it with an alternative hypothesis that music moves in contrary motion. On the null hypothesis we are surprised to find important composers returning to explicit faith and music for the liturgy in the context of the two world wars and of Hitler and Stalin. Francis Poulenc and Stravinsky returned to the church and Olivier Messiaen never left it. Messiaen represented, with other pioneers like Charles Tournemire and Jehan Alain, a shift from Franco-Belgian organ schools as much interested in civic venues as in ecclesiastical ones, to para-liturgical religious works and an engagement with liturgy. From Poulenc post-1938 we have much liturgical music and the opera *Dialogues des Carmélites* (1956) about the persecution of faith. From Stravinsky we have the *Symphony of Psalms*, the *Requiem Canticles*, and a *Mass*.

What now of music as "contrary motion"? Religious America with its vast corpus of music for worship "should" have produced a major Protestant composer. The only remotely citeable instance is John Adams and his quasi-Handelian oratorio *El Niño*. Yet secularist France produced Messiaen, while under the atheist aegis of the Soviet empire one can cite musicians whose religious work and commitment transcends the obvious motives of resistance. Arvo Pärt worked in Estonia, the most secular environment anywhere, Krzysztof Penderecki wrote a *Polish Requiem* (ca. 1980) and a *St. Luke Passion* (ca. 1965) and Henryk Gorecki, from the mid-1970s on, created

a "holy minimalism" with international popular resonance. These religious orientations in Poland contrast with the "folk" orientation of the major early twentieth century Polish composer, Karol Szymanowski. In Russian music the great figure of Dmitry Shostakovich was enigmatic but it can be argued that post-1936 he moved from Socialist realism to a ritually inflected post-modernism. Sofia Gubaidalina represents a profoundly religious and Orthodox temper under persecution; and Schnittke reminds us of the crucial Jewish presence in "modern" music (György Ligeti, Darius Milhaud) as well as the place of an almost nihilistic religious sensibility: he converted to Catholicism in 1982.

I take two concluding examples from the epicenters of "the secular" in Northwest Europe, the Scottish composer James MacMillan, and the English composer Benjamin Britten. Scotland "should" have produced a post-Protestant nationalist composer. James MacMillan is Scottish without being a nationalist and devoutly Catholic. He inherited the reforming impulses in liturgy as they encountered a shift towards versions of Christian popular music, and he criticizes those trends in established Christianity that suppose "an option for the poor" mandates a musical populism behind the banner of anti-elitism. His music is centrally concerned with faith and the liturgy. Benjamin Britten was, like Poulenc, openly gay, and he illustrates a complex relation between being a Christian-influenced pacifist horrified above all by World War I, and a politically radical outsider passionately rejecting nationalism. Britten's music, including his operas and song cycles, was replete with the religious themes of corruption and redemption, and he enriched the musical patrimony both of Catholicism and the Anglican Church. Associated with Wystan Hugh Auden, a modernist poet who (like Thomas Stearns Eliot) embraced Christianity, Britten rejected the traditions of English musical nationalism, while also returning to Purcell. If one wanted to name two works which embody the ambivalent return of the sacred in modernity they might be Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* (1940), and the *War Requiem* with the words of the World War I poet Wilfred Owen interspersed with the text of the liturgy, first performed in Coventry Cathedral in 1962.

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## CHAPTER 27

# Music in the New Churches

Brian Schrag

### Music

Christianity since the 1800s has witnessed a broad shift from a majority population in Europe and North America to the global South (Jenkins 2006). This shift was sparked in large part by Euroamerican Christians who entered what were to them unfamiliar geographic and cultural landscapes, motivated by a desire to communicate their beliefs. Sanneh characterizes the resulting encounters as marked by the Christians' tireless, creative efforts to explain themselves, an expression of Christianity's intrinsic translatability.

Because of this drive to be understood, "the vernacular in translation was often invigorated rather than overthrown" (Sanneh 2008: 25). Missionaries and local communities partnered to translate Bibles and other Christian literature into other languages, and receptor communities recast Christian beliefs and practices into local thoughts and lifeways. This translatability, however, largely stopped short of embracing local artistic means of communication. During initial encounters with people in the global South, missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries usually translated songs from their home cultures into local languages, retaining their Euroamerican melodies, rhythms, and performance practices. This inattention to local music occurred because of associations with competing indigenous beliefs and rituals, a general ideology of European cultural superiority, a desire to promote a deeper sense of unity between European- and American-based churches and their far-flung progeny, and ethnocentric views about the uncivilized nature of non-Western cultures (see Turino 2000: 113). The communities who embraced Christianity often chose to perform these translated songs whose creative loci remained in Europe or North America, restricting the degree to which they could create.

## Creativity

In this essay, I characterize newer churches in Asia, Africa, and the Americas according to the geographical and conceptual loci of their musical creativity. Musical creativity consists of three components: the people who make and perform music, the conceptual systems and procedures guiding the making and performing, and the social contexts and structures in which the people make and perform.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, I ask of these newer Christian communities three interrelated sets of questions:

- *Creators.* Where are the creators, the individuals and groups who compose and perform each element of this community's music? This may refer to singers, instrument players, lyricists, composers, and others.
- *Conceptual systems and skills.* In what communities do the systems and skills underlying their musical production reside? This speaks to systems of melody, scale, rhythm, timbre, poetic devices, dramatic characterization, movement, and the like. Also included are competencies such as instrument building, and means of learning performance skills, such as formal and informal educational structures.
- *Social structures.* Where are the individuals and groups who influence musical production most in this context? This comprises knowledgeable audiences, reference performers, commercial, social, religious, and aesthetic gatekeepers, and others.

Each Christian community performs music that draws on a unique combination of these components of creativity. Each component, in turn, varies in its nearness to the community, measured geographically, conceptually, and in communal identity. According to this rubric, then, a church that identifies with an ethnolinguistic community may have composers and performers that draw on symbolic musical systems residing in local non-church traditions, in traditions from another ethnolinguistic group, in a regional or national musical style, or in the musical traditions of a distant culture.

With important exceptions, Christian churches emerging since the 1800s initially relied on the distant creative systems of Euroamerican missionaries for their musical expression, the situation shown in Table 27.1. Subsequent movements have drawn more on local and regional musical resources, and efforts to leapfrog directly to local creativity have multiplied.

In the discussions of Africa, Asia, and the Americas that follow, I chart one example of musical creativity according to these parameters, presenting several other cases in less detail.

**Table 27.1** Typical initial loci of musical creativity in ethnolinguistically centered churches since the 1800s

		Creativity components		
		Creators	Conceptual systems and skills	Social structures
Near	Ethnolinguistic community			
	Region or nation			
Distant	World	X	X	X

## Africa

When European and American missions began significant work in Africa in the early nineteenth century (Neill 1964: 252), they encountered musical and social contexts supporting enormous creative capacity. However, they generally translated their own musical repertoires into local languages, thereby initially retaining foreign sources of creativity. Protestant churches initiated in the northwestern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by the Scandinavian-rooted, American Evangelical Free and Evangelical Covenant denominations exemplify this pattern. These churches have sung from the hymn book *Nzembo na Nzambe (Songs of God)* since the late 1940s. This book consists of texts of American and European hymns translated into Lingala, a regional language that ties multiple ethnic groups together through business and government. As shown in Table 27.2, local performers of these songs drew on geographically and conceptually distant melodic and rhythmic systems, and slightly nearer systems of language.

Following this widespread form of initial contact, Christian musical traditions have developed whose loci of creativity vary widely. In many cases, local communities mastered elements of more distant musical systems and performance practices, modifying them to fit their local scales and rhythms, and integrating them into their own rites and purposes. Musicians in Protestant churches in northwestern DRC, for example, have learned to build *fabrication* guitars and play the licks on them contained in Congolese Popular Music (CPM), and can compose lyrics in its normal language of Lingala. However, CPM only speaks to certain social domains and emotional registers, leaving many contexts in which local music plays crucial roles – such as death ceremonies and rites of passage – only superficially addressed by a Christian worldview.

During this period, many African Initiated Churches (AICs) emerged with musical practices more tied to local traditions. In 1913, for example, the Methodist-trained Prophet William Wadé Harris entered Côte d'Ivoire from his native Liberia and sparked a thriving Christian movement among people who spoke the Dida language. Dida Christians composed thousands of new songs, directed explicitly by Harris to “refrain henceforth from using *dɔ̀g̀b̀l̀ɔ̀* [traditional songs in praise of great men] music for ‘profane’ purposes and to dedicate it instead to God” (Krabill 1995: 125). Harris laid the

**Table 27.2** Loci of creativity components of young Congolese ethnolinguistically centered churches

Location	Creativity components		
	Creators	Conceptual systems and skills	Social structures
Near	Ethnolinguistic community	Performers	Song choices in performance
	Region or nation		Language of lyrics Songbook publishers
Distant	World	Composers	Musical, rhythmic, conceptual systems

conceptual groundwork that allowed individuals in these congregations to compose, promote, and integrate thousands of songs using local languages and musical resources (Krabill 2008: 64; 1995).

Other ethnolinguistically centered churches show similar patterns. Senufo churches in Côte d'Ivoire have also drawn on musical traditions and instruments that flow directly from their non-church traditions (King 1989). Catholic congregations in central Cameroon use music composed by people from a neighboring ethnolinguistic group in the region, the Ewondo (Bodo 1992).

Urban churches not tenaciously dedicated to monocultural expression have absorbed myriad ethnolinguistic, regional, and distant musical traditions. In the early 1900s, for example, Kinshasa and Brazzaville became engines of musical production drawing on Afro-Cuban and Congolese musical traditions. Christian communities gained competency in creating and performing this music, composing songs that are used in churches throughout central Africa and beyond. Other examples of urban Christian communities explicitly choosing to access distant components of creativity include the following: Kenyans listening to and performing American black gospel music (Kidula 1998); West Africans learning *louange* songs composed in France; and Cameroonians learning Nigerian praise songs from VCDs.

## Asia

As in Africa, the introduction of Christianity in Asia through the work of European and American missionaries since the 1800s resulted in initial loci of musical creativity outside of Asia. Further development of Christian musical traditions has been enormously influenced by four conditions. First, there exists extreme religious and cultural pluralism in Asia, leading Christian communities to distinguish themselves musically from other religions. Christianity is the minority religion in every country except the Philippines, and perhaps South Korea.

Second, four of the five most highly developed philosophical musical traditions in the world are in Asia (Loh 1994). These traditions have complex, regimented processes of transmission and performance that make certain kinds of modifications difficult, outside of the norms; there is less 'casual' improvisation in these high art forms than, say, in sub-Saharan Africa. These high art forms are also often related to castes and other social hierarchies, which inhibit malleability. Third, many non-Christian segments of Asian cultures have thoroughly integrated Western classical and popular music into their own educational and performance traditions, so that "Western musical practice is no longer an external influence, but deeply embedded within most Asian cultures" (Lim 2006: 172). Fourth and finally, there are also huge language groups that develop highly insulated traditions.

In this context, many Christian communities have maintained their strong identification with the foreign musical traditions they learned at their inception. It is, thus, common to witness a worship service in which every instrument, song, and melody originates in a geographically, culturally, and historically distant community. Many Protestant churches in Japan, for example, trace their roots to the late nineteenth century, when Euroamerican music was entering the country and acquiring a high status level (Wade 2002). Missionaries translated hymns with four part harmonies

into Japanese (Wade 2005: 15), and many of these hymns retain a place of primacy in performance and in Japanese collections of Christian music (see, for example, *Sanbika* and *Sanbika Dai Ni Hen* 1989). In these cases, churches identifying with regional or national languages and states act as gatekeepers, choosing to perform music composed in a distant community, using instruments, melodic and rhythmic systems unrelated to those used by the ethnic and other religious communities around them.

Taiwanese ethnomusicologist and hymnologist, I-to Loh, has injected influential conceptual frameworks and musical materials into the life and discussion of Asian Christian musicality. Loh and his students recorded and transcribed Christian songs from twenty-two Asian countries, publishing them in the hymnal *Sound the Bamboo* (1990). This work represents, in part, Loh’s attempt to acknowledge and promote conceptual systems and performance practices unique to Asia. On the backdrop of initial Western hegemony in Christian musical practice, Loh proposed the following four stages of movement toward an Asian locus of musical conceptual creativity: (1) imitation of Western gospel song styles; (2) adaptation of native folk or traditional songs to use nineteenth-century Western harmony; (3) new compositions using native musical elements and a combination of Western and native harmonies; and (4) innovative Asian styles, combining native, Asian, pan-Asian and contemporary elements (Lim 2006: 187).<sup>2</sup>

Other groups and individuals have also intentionally drawn on symbolic systems outside Christian communities to spark musical creativity. The Thai Foundation for Faith and Fine Arts encourages the composition of hymns accompanied by local instruments, such as the *ching* (concussion bells) and *khaen* (mouth organ) (Hawn 2015). Other examples include the Christian Communications Institute of Payap University in Chiang Mai, which composes and performs *li-kes*, melodramatic musical dramas based on biblical stories. Table 27.3 shows that the elements of creativity in these Christian *li-kes* reside mostly within regional and national communities, with only some of the improvised dialogues in local languages.

Xiao Min, a Chinese composer, represents an example of the exceptional influence an individual can have on Christian musical practice. Xiao Min began composing Christian songs as a teenager with little education (Sun 2007). She has composed nearly 1,000 songs that are sung in Chinese house churches and three-self congregations throughout China, and have been translated into various Chinese languages. Xiao Min’s

**Table 27.3** Loci of creativity components of Christian *li-ke* musical dramas in Thailand

		Creativity components		
		Location	Creators	Conceptual systems and skills
Near	Ethnolinguistic Community		Languages of dialogue	
	Region or nation	Performers, composers	Languages of lyrics and dialogue; Musical, rhythmic, conceptual systems	Christian Communication Institute
Distant	World			

songs represent creations from someone with an ethnolinguistic and regional Christian identity, where the composer exists locally, drawing on ethnolinguistic and regional melodic, rhythmic, and performance systems. These have been adopted and adapted by Christian communities with other ethnolinguistic, regional, and national identities.

## The Americas

The pervasive influence of European musical practices in the Americas has resulted in ethnolinguistic traditions that have diminished – sometimes to the point of extinction – or hardened into geographically remote and protected enclaves. Many early communicators of Christian messages into such communities in North America retained control of most components of musical creativity, choosing and translating songs composed by Euroamericans into local languages for church use. A number of First Nations churches have adopted these practices and concomitant ideologies, resulting in European-based musical traditions. Baptist missionaries interacting with the Kiowas in southeastern United States in the mid-1990s were an exception to this pattern, encouraging the composition of new songs using local language, musical resources, and themes (Wenger 1990). This resulted in a corpus of hundreds of songs that other nations such as the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, and Comanche have integrated into their own worship.

These competing approaches to traditional culture by indigenous Native American churches have resulted in heated disagreements and the emergence of organizations explicitly advocating certain types of cultural production. Wiconi International, for example, describes part of its purpose as “honoring the cultural expressions of First Nations peoples” ([www.wiconi.com](http://www.wiconi.com), accessed October 19, 2015; and see Twiss 2000). It advocates the assimilation of traditional cultural elements like drums, dances, and regalia into Christian life.

Ethnomusicologist Tom Avery worked to spark local creativity in several remote ethnolinguistic groups in Brazil. He recorded traditional music, analyzed the melodic, harmonic, and performance systems, and composed new songs with the help of linguists translating the Bible into these languages (see Table 27.4). When he performed these new songs for people who spoke the Canela language, local singers and composers immediately learned, improved, and added to them (Popjes 2006).

**Table 27.4** Loci of creativity components of ethnolinguistically centered Canela churches in Brazil

		Creativity components		
		Creators	Conceptual systems and skills	Social structures
Near	Ethnolinguistic Community	Performers, composers	Languages of lyrics; Musical, rhythmic, conceptual systems	Church and community leaders
	Region or Nation			
Distant	World	Performers, composers		

## Summary of Factors Influencing Indigenous Creativity

This discussion of Christian musical creativity in Africa, Asia, and the Americas points to a number of common factors. First, interactions between characteristics of a Christian community's unique ethnic, national, and international context have great influence on the ways they express themselves musically. National policy encouraging or inhibiting ethnolinguistic cultural expression, for example, often restricts or expands the range of musical choices Christian communities make. In addition, churches' creativity is sometimes invigorated when they align themselves with political movements, as when the Harrists composed songs for a rising resistance leader in Ivory Coast's movement against colonial rule (Krabill 2008: 63)

Second, communication media allowing the exchange of musical materials and interactions between creators in distant locations increase the number and kind of musical conversations that are possible. Audio and video recordings with digital and physical transport mechanisms unleash both localizing and globalizing, centrifugal and centripetal forces. Widespread adoption in the global South of the repertoire, instrumentation, and performance practices of *Praise and Worship* music from English-speaking countries, for example, coexists with movements to revalorize ethnolinguistic musical creativity.

Published written collections of songs composed by Euroamericans and performed in mission-initiated churches regularly focused the singers on distant creativity. More recent compilers of hymn collections have intentionally chosen to highlight ethnic diversity, drawing on multiple creators and skills. These include hymnals created for meetings of the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite World Assemblies, as well as song collections created by the United Methodist Global Praise Project and I-to Loh's *Sound the Bamboo*.

Third, individuals often play exceptional roles in determining the loci of a community's musical creativity. Prolific, influential composers like Xiao Min in China, Simeu Monteiro and Jaci Maraschin in Brazil, and Patrick Matsikenyiri from Zimbabwe provide repertoire and models for the musical life of their Christian communities. In addition, scholar-musicians within ethnolinguistic communities have often advocated persuasively for local musical practice in church and mission structures with strong foreign personalities. Examples include Ephraim Amu and Kwabena Nketia in Ghana, Ekandayo Philips in Nigeria, Ashenafi Kebede in Ethiopia, I-to Loh in East Asia, and Pablo David Sosa in Argentina. Finally, scholar-musicians *outside* ethnolinguistic communities have provided conceptual frameworks, theological motivations, and practical methodologies to help local artists and Christian leaders invigorate local creativity. Examples include the following: David Dargie with Catholics in South Africa; Vida Chenoweth, Tom Avery, and Paul Neeley with Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Papua New Guinea, Brazil, and Ghana, respectively; John Kaemmer and Robert Kauffman in Zimbabwe with the American United Methodist Church; and Roberta King with the Conservative Baptists in Kenya and Ivory Coast.

Fourth, theological and social characteristics of a congregation's wider ecclesiastical community result in activities that spark different kinds of musical activity. The second Vatican Council's Constitution on Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 38), for example, resulted in musical experimentation, including the composition of indigenous



masses. As another example, *kwaya* competitions in Lutheran churches in Tanzania created motivation for the development of choral performance (Barz 2003). Finally, the lively, flexible performance styles accompanying the rapid growth of pentecostal churches around the world since the 1960s has led both to the adoption of Euroamerican songs and the introduction of local practices (Anderson 2004; Roig 1990).

## Conclusion

This brief survey reveals that Christians promulgating their faith across cultures have often translated their messages into new oral and written languages, but stopped short of engendering local musical and other artistic forms of communication. Other churches were initiated by advocates who understood the communicative value of local musical traditions, or through conversations in which the communicators did not have such marked cultural differences. All of these conversations sparked the maturation of widely varying Christian musical traditions, whose loci of creativity reside in various combinations of local ethnolinguistic, regional, and global traditions. Current movements toward and away from ethnolinguistic groundedness vie for control.

## Notes

- 1 Cf. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concepts of symbolic domain, field, and person (1996).
- 2 Warnock (1983), Krabill (2008), and Hawn (2015) have proposed other helpful categories to describe music resulting from the encounter between Euroamerican missionaries and Southern and Eastern communities.

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## CHAPTER 28

# Visual Arts in World Christianity

Volker Küster

A great deal of exploratory work remains to be done in relating the visual arts to World Christianity. The following article offers a brief interpretation of expressions of Christian themes through visual arts in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. A theoretical framework for interpretation requires that one pay attention to questions of periodization, terminology, iconography, the background of the artists and their publics, and the documentation of works of art. The first section of this essay addresses these foundational questions. Later sections will treat Christian art in Asian, African, and Latin American contexts.

### Towards a Theoretical Framework

After an initial an-iconic phase, in which it seemed inadequate or too dangerous to depict the divine *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Rudolf Otto), from the third century onward early Christian art began to develop. At first using symbols like the cross or the fish, Christian artists soon referred to Hellenistic models to develop their own iconographic language. Hermes, the messenger of the Greek gods, who was portrayed with a lamb on his shoulders, was turned into the Good Shepherd. Christianity also traveled eastward along an ancient commercial route – the Silk Road – into Asia. The so-called St-Thomas cross in India – a stone relief that shows a Syrian cross standing on a lotus flower or overflowing vessel – dates from the seventh to eighth centuries. A similar cross on the lotus is engraved on the top of the stele of Sianfu (781 CE), which is an early monument of Nestorian Christianity in China. There is debate as to whether stone crosses found on Buddhist temple sites in Korea and Japan can be attributed to Nestorian Christianity as well.

In Africa the oldest Christian church buildings in Egypt and Ethiopia were erected by Orthodox Christians. While Egypt is part of North Africa, Ethiopia lies on the border

with sub-Saharan Africa. Material evidence for visual art in the form of a variety of metal crosses and icons dates back to the fourteenth century.

With the colonial expansion of Europe the expression of Christian faith through the arts went into a second phase. The missionaries brought with them Western Christian art works which they gave as presents to local rulers or used as means of propagating the gospel. They also handed them on as model to local artists they commissioned. Slowly the models for artistic work were culturally accommodated. The Christian content acquired a local form. The artists depicted themes already given to them with local people in familiar dress and surroundings. Yet the closer one got to the holy the less accommodated it usually was. A few examples such as Chinese silk painting and Mughal miniatures have been preserved from this period.

In the aftermath of the new missionary awakening in the nineteenth century a third phase of Christian art production was initiated. Protestantism has generally a more dis-



**Figure 28.1** *Virgin and Child*, Mughal India, seventeenth century.

Source: © Trustees of the British Museum; used by permission.

tant relationship to visual art than Catholicism. Beyond that, many of the Protestant missionaries came from the lower echelon of society. For them, joining the mission was a chance for social upward mobility. They were not familiar with the refined culture of Western bourgeois art. Still, there have been some connoisseurs who became patrons of the visual arts too on the Protestant side. Yet it was mainly a Catholic renaissance. A central role in this was played by Celso Costantini (1876–1958), the Apostolic Delegate to China (1922–1935) and later secretary of the Propaganda Fide (1935–1953). In the 1930s a number of new art schools were established in the mission fields, which often taught a kind of neo-accommodation.

The fourth phase commenced after World War II and the decolonization of Africa and Asia. In the aftermath of secular emancipation movements the so-called younger churches also cut the umbilical cord with their mother churches or mission agencies. Along with and sometimes even ahead of the sprouting contextual theologies in the late 1960s and early 1970s a contextual Christian art as an alternative expression of local agency developed. More recently the growing awareness of globalization and its impact has also been mirrored in some Christian art works. We are standing at the threshold of a fifth phase, with Christian artists negotiating permanently between the global and the local. Eventually some of them might even find inroads into the contemporary art scene.

The question remains as to how to name the phenomenon described in this article, and especially in light of what German scholars call the “non-contemporariness of the contemporary” (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*). Early Christian and Western medieval art were Christian both in terms of content and function. Yet with the rise of the European gentry and later the bourgeoisie, there was growing demand for art forms that were representative and leisurely. Portrait, landscape, still-life and other genres developed to decorate reception rooms and private quarters. The new patrons supported Christian art as well but secularization continued. Eventually the artist was discovered as subject and art claimed its autonomy. As a consequence Christian themes receded to the background. This modern Western conception of art does not correspond to the visual art produced in Asian, African, and Latin American Christianities. As a form of Christian identity reconstruction these are much closer to Early Christian and medieval Western art. At the same time one has to be aware of the different conceptions of “art,” if this term exists at all in the local cultures in Asia and Africa.<sup>1</sup> The ideal in these cultures is to follow the master and learn to copy the artistic tradition that has been handed down for generations. Change happens only slowly. Yet it is possible to discern those who are talented artists in the local sense.

Over 90% of the visual art production in the third world consists in images of Jesus and Mary, including scenes from the life of Jesus and illustrations of parables such as the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan. Scenes from the Old Testament or church and mission history are rare. Only if there are local martyrs might one find images of these saints. Artists commissioned to produce Christian art were either trained to work for religious institutions such as temples, synagogues, and mosques, or else they worked for local rulers and gentry, decorating their palaces and houses. In China, Japan, and Korea art was a pastime for aristocrats and scholars. The prevalent genres are therefore derived from temple and court art or folk art.

In the encounter between Christian faith and local culture at least two iconographic traditions meet. Missiology has developed terminological tools to describe these processes of interaction. The *accommodation model* that was developed in Catholic circles, tries to keep form and content apart in order to control the process of intercultural exchange. Yet once the drop has fallen into the water there is no way of preventing it from mixing, or to put it theologically the Spirit blows where she likes. The Protestant *indigenization model* and the *translation model* developed in evangelical circles are all variations of this strategy.

The reform of the Catholic mass initiated by the Vatican II Council (1962–1965) led to a heightened appreciation of local cultures. The relationship between Christian faith and culture was seen as more dynamic and reciprocal. *Inculturation*, a neologism made of a contraction of the theological term “incarnation” and the anthropological “enculturation” became the new catchword beginning in the 1970s. In circles of the World Council of Churches and its Theological Education Fund the term *contextualization* was coined. Containing text and *context* it suits well to describe the relationship between Christian faith and the cultural-religious as well as socio-economic and political dimensions of a particular context. Liberation theologies and theologies of inculturation and dialogue both fit under this umbrella. With the rise of concepts like globalization and empire as well as postcolonial theory “glocalization” (Roland Robertson) – a contraction of “global” and “local” – seems to be a good term to describe the changes within a contextualization paradigm characterized as de-territorialization, hybridization, and multiple belonging.

Basically three groups of artists can be distinguished: (1) non-Christian artists who have been commissioned to produce Christian art works, some of whom later converted due to their involvement with the Christian subjects and their missionary patrons; (2) artists, whether Christian or not, who produced Christian art out of their own artistic interests; (3) Christian artists, who regard their engagement with Christian themes as a spiritual and/or missionary vocation. It should be evident that some artists might fall into more than one of these categories, so that these three categories of artists are not mutually exclusive.

Often one finds that works of Christian art have been commissioned or purchased by mission agencies or individual missionaries. Moreover, most collectors of Christian art today are from Western backgrounds. Nonetheless, critics of such an arrangement overlook the fact that art only flourishes when there is sponsorship. International support helps artists to earn a living and allows them to work for their local churches for free. The response of the churches differs. Some – like the Chinese and Indonesian Protestant churches – have discovered art as a means to communicate the Christian gospel. Others are very reluctant to sponsor new works of art, having internalized the negative attitudes toward the visual arts that typified many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European and American missionaries.

Up to the present time, Christian art from the third world has mostly consisted of ephemera – images printed on postcards, posters, calendars, leaflets, brochures, and coffee table books. Many of these art works are now untraceable. What is more, these images have not received attention and interpretation as works of art. Often neither the artistic medium, nor the year of creation, nor even the life dates or name of the artist have been preserved.

## Christian Art in Asia

China and India are at the moment the only two Asian countries that supply material evidence for all five phases of artistic development, as noted above. They represent the two major cultural-religious spheres of South and Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, respectively. Despite many local particularities, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese artistic works have much in common, based on a shared religious and cultural heritage of Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism. From India, Hinduism spread to Southeast Asia and Buddhism to all of Asia, while Buddhism later disappeared in its country of origin. Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism are still major sources of iconographic influence in South and Southeast Asia. Islam with its prohibition of religious images is another influence. At times it has hampered the production of Christian art and yet has also fostered interior and architectural ornamentation as well as the use of calligraphy. In Southeast Asia there are still vestiges of early rock paintings and later wall paintings and yet the major artistic tradition is bas-relief and sculpture in wood or stone. Northeast Asia has its own longstanding traditions of painting on rice paper or silk. Oil painting was introduced by Western artists and has only been practiced quite recently, with some artists using modern materials such as acrylics rather than oil paints.

East Asia's first contact with Nestorian Christianity has often been typified as heretical. Yet there is no doubt that Nestorian missionaries first brought the Christian faith to China. Roman Catholicism came later, in two distinct waves. The Franciscans under Giovanni da Monte Corvino, who traveled along the ancient trade routes around the middle of the twelfth century, brought embroidered images and miniatures as presents to give to the Chinese. Yet there were no attempts at an artistic accommodation to Chinese culture under their aegis. The few Christian tombstones that have been recovered from this era show no signs of "Sinization."<sup>2</sup>

The second wave was the Jesuit initiative under Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). The Jesuit fathers brought Western artworks as presents for the Emperor and for the local gentry as well. At the same time, the Jesuits not only commissioned local artists but were accompanied by their own European artists, among whom Giuseppe Castiglioni (1688–1766) became the most prominent. National rivalries between Spain and Portugal, conflicting approaches on the part of the Vatican (*Propaganda Fide*) and the European monarchs (*Padroado*), as well as competition between different orders (Jesuit, Franciscan, Dominican) gave rise to the conflict generally known as the Rites Controversy. The Dominicans and Franciscans called into question the accommodation strategy of the Jesuits. This long-running controversy ended with the Chinese emperor's expulsion of the Catholic missionaries from China (1721), and the Vatican's decision to dissolve the Jesuit order (1773). Catholic Christianity declined in China.

In Japan the fierce persecution of Catholic missionaries and Japanese Christian converts led to the emergence of those called "hidden Christians" (*Kakure Krishitan*). To avoid detection as Christians, these secret believers used Buddhist Kuanyin goddess figures and stone lanterns fashioned in Buddhist style that were secretly marked. Korea during this period was a Chinese protectorate. Reform-oriented Confucian scholars brought back Christian books (associated with the Jesuit mission to China) in connection with the



yearly Korean tribute mission to and from China. Whether this local initiative also introduced Christian images to Korea is unknown.

With the Protestant missionary awakening in the nineteenth century, the Catholics also returned to China. Celso Costantini discovered the talents of Lukas Ch'en (b. 1903) during an art exhibition in Beijing, and then hired him for the newly established art department of the Catholic Fu Jen University. This department was founded to teach and preserve traditional Chinese art. For a Christmas exhibition however, Lukas Chen, Wang Su-Ta (ca. 1911), Lu Hung-Nien (ca. 1914) and Hsü Chi-Hua (1912–1937) produced a couple of Christian paintings in neo-accommodation style that were easily sold. This was motivation enough for them to go further along this path. An outstanding work by Lukas Ch'en – the *14th Station of the Cross* – shows Jesus lying on a stone and iconographically recalling images of the Buddha while entering into nirvana (*parinirvana*). About five hundred paintings were produced by this Chinese artistic school (ca. 1935–ca. 1939), though most of them are no longer extant.

In Japan Luka Hasegawa (b. 1897) was a central figure in the Christian visual arts. His silk painting, *Annunciation*, portrays Mary in a flowery kimono under a cherry blossom tree. Franz Seikyo Okayama (b. 1904) is best known for a series of portraits of Japanese martyrs. He also created an image of Mary reminiscent of the Shinto goddess Amaterasu. The female artist, Kimi Koseiki, addressed the themes of persecution and encounters with other religions in her work. One silk painting depicts a mother with her daughter in traditional dress positioned in front of a *fume*, i.e., an image of Christ on which they are supposed to step in order to demonstrate that they have abandoned their Christian faith. Another picture shows a family praying in front of a stone carving of what seems at first sight to be the Buddhist goddess Kuanyin, but is the Virgin Mary instead. In Korea Kim Hak-Soo (b. 1919) and Kim Ki-Chang (1913–2001) followed the accommodation model. They portrayed Jesus and his followers in the traditional white garb and horsetail-hair hats of the Confucian scholars.

The turmoil that came in the wake of the Communist Revolution (1949) and the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) was a challenge to Christianity in China. Only in the 1980s did the government policy toward religion begin to shift. The Protestant Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) under Bishop Ting (1915–2012) – a proponent of contextualization – took a favorable stance towards the visual arts. Under his leadership, several Christian art exhibitions were held and an art center was opened. He Qi (b. 1950) and Fan Pu (b. 1948), who used the folk traditions of paper cutting, have probably become the best known Chinese Christian artists in the West. The genres employed by various Chinese artists have ranged from nineteenth-century Western religious kitsch, to socialist realism, to traditional court art (such as landscapes and animal paintings with Bible verses in calligraphy), to simple Christian calligraphy, and to neo-accommodation.

Interestingly, in Japan the development of Christian art took on a much less contextualized form. The embrace of modernity by artists such as Ryohei Koiso (1903–1988), Tadao Tanaka (1903–1995), Yasuro Ueno (1926–2005), or Soichi Watanabe (b. 1949) resulted in individual styles that at first sight show little Japanese influence. Sadao Watanabe (1913–1996) – who uses a paper stencil technique indigenous to Okinawa – is an exception to the rule.





**Figure 28.2** Josef Schmutzer and Iko, *Holy Trinity*, Indonesia ca. 1930

Source: © Museum of the SVD in Steyl, The Netherlands (Photo Hans Helf); used by permission.

A distinctive feature in Korea is the rise of *Minjung* art in the 1970s. Three of its major representatives – Hong Song-Dam (b. 1955), Lee Chul-Soo (b. 1954), and Kim Bong-Chun (b. 1954) – gave expression to an Asian *theologia crucis* (“theology of the cross”) that corresponds to the liberation theological expressionism found in Latin America and South Africa. Hong’s wood print *Kwangju* shows three bodies thrown on the back of a lorry bearing the marks of crucifixion. Jesus is present among the common people (*minjung*), who fight for democratization, social justice, and Korean reunification. As in Japan, in Korea too there are a number of artists negotiating between tradition and modernity, such as Lee Choon-Man (b. 1941) – the first acknowledged Korean woman sculptor. Her works are in the collection of the National Museum of Contemporary Art. She also designed Choltusan – the memorial site for Korea’s Catholic martyrs. Kim Jae-Im (b.

1937) has produced large-scale abstract paintings and designed figurative illustrations for the Sunday worship program in her church. In China artists like Ding Fang (Shanxi b. 1956) or Zhu Juyang (Shanxi b. 1969) are developing “glocal” art. One of Zhu Juyang’s performances features a living, lost sheep that hangs from the gallery ceiling, set above a herd driven into the exhibition space. Another involves the photographed shooting of a bound sheep, thus reenacting a painting by Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664). Neither performance is likely to garner approval from Western animal-rights activists.

In India the cosmic symbolism of the St. Thomas cross has blended with Hindu iconography. In Syrian Christianity the cross is less a symbol of suffering than of overcoming death and resurrection. It is the tree of life or the axis of the world. The idea that God suffered and died on the cross is not an easy concept to grasp in the context of Asian and African religions. Jesus’ suffering on the cross has generally been bypassed in favor of a theology of glory (*theologia gloriae*) and notions of a victorious Savior (*Christus victor*).

India’s second period of contact with Roman Catholicism introduced Portuguese colonial influence and this resulted in a modified baroque style of art and architecture. The



**Figure 28.3** Sadao Watanabe, *Jesus washes Peter’s Feet*, Japan 1970s.

Source: © Tatsuo Watanabe; used by permission.



**Figure 28.4** Hong Song-Dam, *Kwanju Crucifixion*, Korea 1980s.

*Source:* Used by permission of the artist.

remnants of this Portuguese colonial Christianity can still be seen in (Velha) Goa. Yet at the same time there were local initiatives from the Muslim Mughal rulers. They invited the Jesuits to their court for inter-religious conversations. Impressed by the paintings that the Jesuits brought to them as gifts, they passed these on to their own court artists to copy. This led to a rich production of not only Muslim, but also Hindu and Christian miniatures. Akbar (1542–1605) and his son Jahangir (1569–1627) had the walls of their palaces painted with Christian motifs.

The third phase in India under British colonial rule and the Anglican Church was slow to begin. Traditionally, the Anglican clergy ministered only to their own people and they abstained from direct involvement in missionary activities. This gave rise to a colonial Christian art that modeled itself on British churches and paintings. So-called



company art, produced as souvenirs for colonial personal, showed hardly any Christian motifs. From the Danish Halle Mission only the portrait of an Indian pastor is preserved. Yet a local initiative – the Bengal Renaissance – was a Hindu emancipation movement that sought to bring religious and cultural modernization. Two art schools were affiliated with this movement, namely Shantiniketan Ashram (founded by Rabindranath Tagore), and the British Government College of Art in Kolkata (Calcutta). Artists such as Nandalal Bose (1882–1966), Vinjak Shivram Masoji (1897–1978), and Arup Das (1924–2004) were touched by the suffering of Christ, which they regarded – together with the smile of Buddha and the dance of Shiva – as one of the three great achievements of religious iconography. These artists developed a particular wash technique that imitated the wall paintings of the Ajanta caves. Jamini Roy (1887–1972) was fascinated by Bengali folk art and so is reminiscent of the European expressionists, who likewise sought authenticity in forms of folk art

Christian art in independent India (after 1947) has also witnessed local initiatives, as by the Muslim Maqbool Fida Husain (1915–2011), or the Hindu Krishen Khanna (b. 1925). Many contextual Christian artists, such as Alfred D. Thomas (1907–1989), Angelo de Fonseca (1902–1967), Frank Wesley (1923–2002), Angela Trindade (1909–1980), Sister Geneviève (1919–1995), and Sister Claire (b. 1937), follow the Bengal style. The artist of Dalit background, Solomon Raj (b. 1921), turned to Buddhist iconography and Ethiopian icons and rejected Hindu imagery. His wood and linocuts portraying the Holy Family as refugees and outcasts are an expression of Dalit theology *avant la lettre*. Raj's colorful batiks are less harsh in expression, probably also because of their different technique. Raj's alter ego – Jyoti Sahi (b. 1944) – is much more receptive to Hindu iconography and yet without neglecting the social dimension or message. Recently, Christian themes have found their way into contemporary, glocal art. For example, Vivek Vilasini (b. 1964) is producing computer manipulated photos of classical Western paintings such as Michelangelo's creation scene from the Sistine Chapel and Caravaggio's post-Resurrection scene of Jesus having supper at Emmaus. Some figures in these European art works have been replaced by Indians in Karnataka dance masks and costumes.

Though historic sources refer to a first contact of people in Indonesia with Nestorian Christians, material evidence has not been found. The second contact with Catholic Christianity in the Moluccas and Flores is also poorly attested. On Flores there is a chapel that preserves a statue of Mary. The chapel is opened only once a year on Easter, when the statue is carried in procession. The accompanying songs and dances on this occasion are influenced by traditional music. Even from the third phase of contact – the Protestant missionary awakening and the Catholic renaissance – there is little art work to be found in Indonesia. Today Christian art is being produced in Bali, Java (particularly Yogyakarta), and Papua.

In Bali a kind of Christian “airport art” (art to be sold to tourists) has been reportedly produced in Ubud in the 1950s. There are also simple crosses carved with flower ornaments by one of the first converts. The two senior figures in contemporary Balinese Christian art are Nyoman Darsane (b. 1939) and Ketut Lasia (b. 1945). Both of them converted from Hinduism to Christianity. While Lasia follows the accommodation model

by painting Christian motives in Ubud style, Darsane stretches the inculturation model to its very limits. His *Rain of Blood* shows Christ dancing in front of a cross veiled in shadow. On both sides of the picture, fragmentary shadow puppets (*wayang*, i.e., *shadow play*) can be seen. Blood flows down in streams from the top of the picture. A number of young Christian artists have followed their footsteps, among whom are the sons of Darsane and Lasia, Yosef Darsane (b. 1968) and Wayhu Sukayasa (b. 1975), together with Gde Sukana (b. 1974) as well as Ayu Sri Wardani (b. 1966), a woman artist who actually founded the Bali Christian Art Association. Because there are so few clients who wish to purchase their art works, none of them can make a living as an artist.

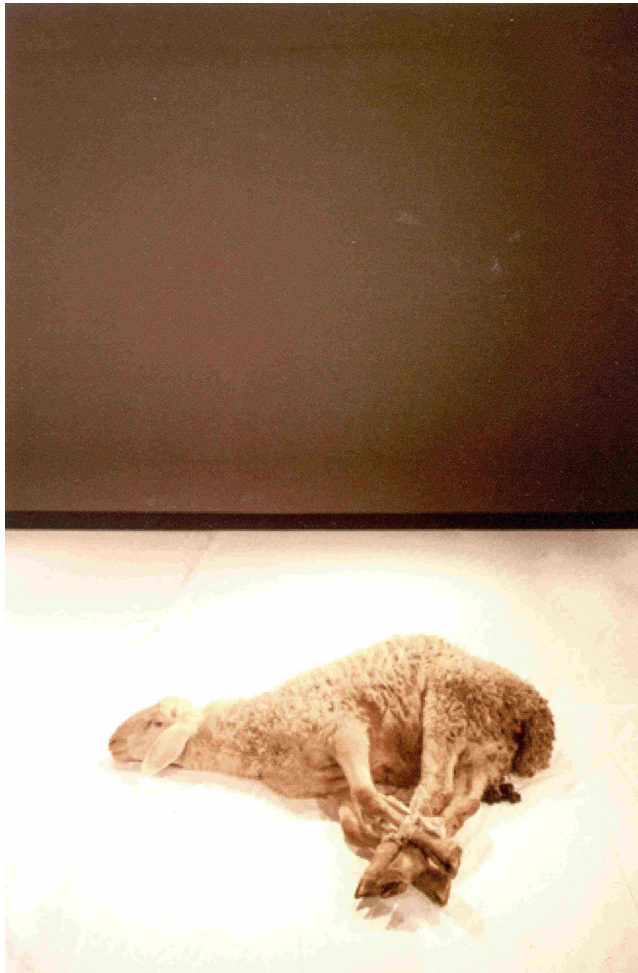
On Java the Dutch plantation owner Josef Schmutzer (1882–1946), a Catholic lay leader, committed to Catholic social teaching, was also concerned about the accommodation of Christian faith. He designed sculptures of Mary in the dress of the Buddhist goddess of wisdom, Prajnaparamita (*Putri Desi*), and of Jesus and even of the Holy Trinity in the style of the Hindu gods. Schmutzer commissioned the Muslim carver Iko to realize his plans. According to Schmutzer the Hindu–Buddhist iconography of Prambanan and Borobodur was better suited to give the Christian faith a local expression than the Islamic religion that had locally been dominant since the fifteenth century.

Bagong Kussurdiardja (1929–2004) was Darsane's alter ego in the contemporary Christian art scene in Yogyakarta. Dance and *wayang* inform his artistic compositions. Hendarto (b. 1951) regards his artwork as a personal journey to acquire a better understanding of the Christian faith. As a former Muslim he struggles with the Christological teaching that Jesus is God and Man in one. The Qur'an venerates Jesus as one of the foremost of the prophets and yet regards him as a human being. In *The Resurrected* Jesus meditates on his own marks from the cross, while drenched in the yellow light of the sun. *Baptism* shows a dove flying upwards towards the sky, as if suggesting that Jesus had to be elevated to attain his godlike status. Hari Santosa (b. 1952), a Catholic artist of Chinese descent, is committed to the accommodation model, painting Christian themes in the style of temple reliefs. Doyo Yeihan (b. 1964) – a great admirer of Salvador Dalí – has often portrayed Asian women who were victims of economic exploitation and sexual abuse. He interprets them as modern versions of Mary Magdalene. Wisnu Sasongko (b. 1975) has experimented with various styles. His *Laughing Jesus* is surrounded by icons of modern media technology. All Yogya artists besides Santosa come from a Muslim background. Yet the Islamic influence is only obvious in Hendarto's work. Bagong and Santosa harken back to their Hindu–Buddhist heritage, while Yeihan and Sasongko have left the classical inculturation model behind for a more glocal perception of themes.

Catholic missionaries from an early stage sought to accommodate and preserve Papuan culture. The Lutheran mission in eastern Papua adopted a comparable policy. Moreover, there are iconographic similarities between Catholic and Lutheran expressions in Papua. The pillars and beams of the Catholic Church of Sawa Erma are covered with carvings by the community blending Papuan and Christian stories. Recently there has been a trend to decorate churches with concrete reliefs and to give the pulpit and altar space a Papuan outlook. Donatus (b. 1947) designed paintings for the Catholic cathedral in Jajapura and other churches. He is probably the most advanced artist in his region and has become an example for many other lay

artists who often work in groups to decorate their churches. On the Protestant side one among them is Paulus (b. 1960), a self-taught painter who created a number of reliefs and wall-paintings in churches around Jajapura. His naïve style recalls the American evangelical pamphlets and calendars that functioned as models for his artworks.

There are Christian artists in every Asian country. This includes Christian Thangkass in Nepal, and Sawai Chinawong in Thailand, who experiments with folk art and semi-abstract neo-cubism in bright colors. The Philippines have a vibrant Christian art scene but are often classified alongside the Latin Americans, because of their common colonial and religious experience.



**Figure 28.5** Zhu Juyang, *Lost Sheep*, China 2010.

*Source:* Used by permission of the artist.

## Christian Art in Africa

J. F. Thiel, whose book on Christian art in Africa is still the single most comprehensive coverage of the subject, follows the common differentiation of the sub-Saharan territory into West, Central, East and Southern Africa. He regards the quality of modern-styled Christian art in West Africa as low, and that of traditional art production a high. In East Africa traditional as well as Christian art are the least developed of all regions on the continent. Central and southern Africa are therefore the centers of greatest interest. In contrast to what we have seen in Asia, at least according to Thiel, missionaries did not recruit traditional artists. This may have been due to the close relationship between traditional religion and culture. Missionaries to Africa trained artists at schools that they established and in the techniques that they chose to convey.

Sub-Saharan African Christianity traces its roots to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26–39). The historic evidence for sub-Saharan Christianity begins with the conversion of King Ezana (ca. 360 CE). As in Asia, Africa's first contact with Christianity did not come with the arrival of Western missionaries. Ethiopian Christianity developed its own traditions, which included distinctive forms of architecture and icon painting, and illustrations in books, wood, and magic scrolls. Since material evidence of artworks in Ethiopia dates back only to the fourteenth century its first beginnings are shrouded in uncertainty.

The second contact with Roman Catholic Christianity took place in Congo, where the Portuguese converted King Afonso I (r. 1509–1542) and many of his people during the sixteenth century. A number of metal crucifixes endure from this period, showing Christ as bisexual – i.e., both male and female. In some cases the artists seem not to have known the story behind the figure they portrayed. After the influence of Christianity had already faded in the Congo, these crucifixes may still have been used as ritual objects. In an African worldview, God as the perfect being would comprise both male and female. This was the basic idea expressed in these Congolese crucifixes. The third phase of contact with European Christianity gave rise to relief and sculpture, and eventually also to murals – the preferred media of traditional African Art. Western painting materials were far too expensive for most African artists.

With the beginning of the postcolonial era in Africa during the 1960s, a new contextual Christian art developed in most of the new nations. It followed mainly the inculturation model. An early example is a concrete cross from Zaire by François Goddard, which portrays Christ as a mask without a body. In African traditional religion, the ancestors or ghosts are thought to become present in the masks during rituals, so that they mediate between the people and God. This traditional notion has inspired an understanding of Jesus that is sometimes called an “ancestor Christology.” Engelbert Mveng (Cameroon, 1930–1995), a renowned Jesuit historian and theologian, organized festivals for traditional art and was an artist himself. The personages he depicted on paintings, prints and in murals in churches have mask-like faces.

According to some African intellectuals, African independence was only completed with the end of apartheid in South Africa. Thus they speak of the short century (1945–1994). In southern Africa, a liberationist expressionism developed as early as



**Figure 28.6** *Crucifix, Congo, sixteenth century.*

*Source:* © Haus Völker und Kulturen Sankt Augustin, Germany; used by permission.

the 1970s. Azariah Mbatha (b. 1941) created a woodcut that tells the story of apartheid. The people depicted are finally united in the presence of the risen Christ whose mask-like face is half black and half white. The woodcut thus points toward a dialogue of reconciliation. John Ndevasia Muafangejo (1943–1987) from Namibia created an image of paradise in the form of a round kraal of his own Ovambo tribe. Some have debated as to whether the face in the triangle – pointing toward the apple in the hands of Adam and Eve (who is shown as bigger than Adam, in accordance with the Ovambo's matrilineal traditions) – represents the devil. On closer inspection, on the tip of the triangle one can discover a little star. Once again, Christ appears in an African mask.





**Figure 28.7** John Muafangejo, *Adam and Eve*, Namibia 1968.

Source: © The Estate of John Muafangejo; used by permission.

## Christian Art in Latin America

Latin America did not have pre-colonial contact with Christianity.<sup>3</sup> At the same time the colonial project led to the near-extinction of the indigenous populations. Even though Bartolommeo de Las Casas (1484–1566) and the Jesuit reductions offer a



counternarrative, the early Catholic missions in Latin America were often executed with fire and sword. What remained was a Christian continent, with the advanced cultures of the Mayan and Incan peoples destroyed. Their indigenous heritage has only recently begun to resurface. As in Goa in India, or Macau in China, the Portuguese colonizers were not deliberately aiming at accommodation. Nonetheless, an Andean Baroque artistic and architectural style developed that shows some influences from local textile designs in its ornaments-, as we see in the case of San Francisco, Lima, Peru (seventeenth century). The Church of Santo Domingo in Cuzco, Peru (seventeenth century) was built on an ancient Inca temple site. Mexican feather mosaics (sixteenth century) took up local religious ideas that ascribed magical power to feathers. Glyphic catechisms also showed affinity to local traditions.



**Figure 28.8** Severino Blanco, *Simon blessing the Christ Child*, Bolivia 1980s.

Source: Used by permission of the Jesuit Mission Office in Nürnberg.

Yet mainstream Christian art production in Latin America went another way. Some European immigrant artists were seeking their fortune in the New World, like Bernardo Bitti (1548–1610), Angelino Medoro (ca. 1567–1631), or Sebastián López de Artega (1610–1652). They also founded workshops. The Schools of Quito and Cuzco trained local artists such as Diego Quispe Tito (1611–1681), who in turn produced an accommodated Western art depicting personages with local features in familiar scenes.

Unlike Asia and Africa, Latin America by the late eighteenth century had already developed a local art comparable to that of Europe. Latin American artists found sponsors among the local gentry and their artwork became secularized. The wars of independence and the Enlightenment inspired a revolutionary art by José Gil de Castros (1785–1841), Felix Parra (1845–1919), and José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949) that expressed a critical attitude toward the entanglement of Christianity with colonialism. Their artwork may be interpreted as a secular liberationist expressionism. Because of Catholic dominance throughout the cultural realm, modern art in Latin America often deals with religious themes, as one sees in works by Gonzalo Ceja (Mexico) or Jorge Alexandre Rodriguez (Brazil).

With the rise of liberation theology during the 1970s, there emerged a contextual Christian art that paralleled that of Asia and Africa. Edilberto Merida and Guido Rocha portrayed Jesus as tortured on the cross of the military dictatorships, and as suffering through oppression and poverty. Their work is a liberationist indigenism recalling earlier motifs. The artistic quality differs from very simple *art brut* or child-like pictures by the farmers of Solentiname to more sophisticated paintings by lay artists like Josué Sanchez Cerron (Peru), Severino Blanco (Bolivia), or Pablo Sanaguano Sanchez (Ecuador), and those who have a formal artistic training, such as Maximo Cerezo Barredo (Spain, b. 1932).

The artists and their works introduced here have been categorized according to place and time of origin, medium, and theme, as well as genre and contextual approach. In spite of the thirty years' labor of the Asian Christian Art Association, even in Asia there is still much to be done in terms of documentation, preservation, and interpretation. In comparison with Asia, Africa, and Latin America have even further to go. The task is urgent, because the precious legacy of past artists may soon be lost. The longer we wait the less there will be to retrieve.

## Notes

- 1 Latin America in this respect is more a part of Western art history.
- 2 There has however been a debate, whether two works ascribed to T'ang Yin (1470–1524) date from this period.
- 3 There is no material evidence that the Vikings, who landed on the shores of North America, brought any Christian art work with them.

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## CHAPTER 29

# Church Architecture Worldwide since 1800

David R. Bains

Church architecture encompasses Christian worship spaces of all descriptions from colossal cathedrals to simple shelters to living rooms in which house churches meet. In creating church architecture, Christians seek to create three things, signs of their presence, symbols of their faith, and environments for worship. How they think these things should be created varies widely. As signs, symbols, and environments, church buildings aim to shape the relationships among Christians, between Christians and their societies, and between Christians and God. Thus the erection of each space for worship involves a judgment about the goals of worship, the nature of God, and the place of the Christian community in its world.

For these reasons, church architecture has varied dramatically around the world over the past two centuries. As the Christian faith has taken root in new environments, Christians have wrestled with contextualization, that is whether and how church buildings should appropriate local architectural forms, particularly those associated with other religions. As various movements have changed worship practices, they have challenged customary spatial arrangements. As modern building technologies and architectural styles evolved, Christians in all regions have been forced to revisit the question of contextualization, asking themselves again what is the proper appearance of a church. To explore these issues, this essay first considers fundamental approaches to understanding church architecture, second it reviews major movements that have reshaped Christian worship, and lastly it surveys how church buildings have responded to these developments and to the varied contexts in which Christians live.

## Temple and Meetinghouse

Christians commonly appeal to two biblical models in thinking about the space for worship. The first is the house of God or the temple. The Jerusalem Temple described in the Bible is a model for holy places designed and set apart to awaken in worshippers a sense of awe, wonder, and reverence. They, like the biblical temple, are often understood to be a place in which God is uniquely present, whether in the Blessed Sacrament, the praise of the community, or the architecture itself. To reflect this idea in the Eastern Orthodox tradition “temple,” rather than “church,” is a preferred term for a house of worship. According to the New Testament, early Christian meetings, however, often took place in everyday places, most commonly homes. These houses simply served as convenient spaces for the gathering of the community. Therefore a “house for the people of God,” or a “meetinghouse” is another common model. Such spaces are erected and arranged pragmatically as best suits the activities of the community. Sometimes proponents of the meetinghouse explicitly reject the idea that there is anything special about the space. God cannot be localized, he is found equally everywhere.

As part of its Restorationist faith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) erects both temples and meetinghouses. LDS meetinghouses are places of weekly worship that are numerous and usually of only modest architectural distinction. Non-church members may freely attend them. LDS temples, however, are dedicated holy places, restricted to church members in good standing for engaging in special rites by which they commune with God. They are always more richly decorated than meetinghouses and make a greater claim on the landscape, often dramatically so as with the six spires of the Washington, DC (1974), and Johannesburg, South Africa (1985), temples.

In approaching most other traditions, however, the concepts of temple and meetinghouse are useful not as hard distinctions, but as ideal types. For most Christians churches are in part places for Christians to meet together for instruction, prayer, and praise, and places which they find to some degree to be “special” or even “holy.” The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have traditionally embraced the idea that the church and its furnishings function as holy signs of God. Many Protestants on the other hand, have often explicitly rejected such ideas even as they have taken care to see that the worship space is a beautiful one, that will both attract worshippers and show respect for God.

In contrast, many Christian groups own no property used only for worship. They worship in provisional spaces, including rented theaters and halls, restaurants, homes, fields, forests, and workplaces. Often this is out of necessity because of limited financial resources or due to governmental or social restriction as with some house churches in China. Other times, it is because of a self-conscious choice to follow the example of New Testament churches in order to maintain close communal bonds, authenticity, and mission mindedness. Whatever the motivation, in such cases the degree of informality and intimacy among worshippers is often greater than in purpose-built churches. Circular arrangements of worshippers in homes often encourage this sense of community. Yet, more hierarchical or oriented arrangements also occur in these settings.

Provisional or simple worship spaces play a pivotal role in Christianity (see Figure 29.1). One such place is *Pondok Kemuliaan*, the “Glory Hut” in Hawaii, and Papua, on the island of New Guinea in Indonesia. The form of this house of worship is





**Figure 29.1** A simple wooden church erected with local building techniques in Sesfontein, Namibia.

Source: © piccaya/iStockphoto.

similar to the indigenous huts of the surrounding region, only larger. The floor is dirt, the walls are defined by palm leaves that extend about five feet above the ground, but then are open to a corrugated metal roof that spans an area for 600 worshippers. A platform at the front of the church provides a place for worship leaders. Like many simple or provisional spaces, the architecture of the Glory Hut is valued for its openness and accessibility. The congregation frequently worships in other settings as well, including parks, dirt lots, and open fields (Farhadian 2007: 179–180).

## Scholarly Approaches to Church Architecture

Studies of meetinghouses are not common because church buildings that are closer to the temple ideal have tended to receive more scholarly attention from both architectural historians and liturgical scholars. Architectural historians focus on how churches fit into broader movements of architecture and on the manner in which architects use available material to shape space, particularly in creating a temple-like spiritual atmosphere. They are especially attentive to monumental or path breaking buildings that are often far from typical. Often the inventive churches that receive the most attention are not for regular congregations, but instead are cathedrals or chapels for schools, retreat centers, monastic communities, or a scenic location. Scholars of religion are more likely to be interested in representative structures, but they have frequently focused on those Christian groups, such as Catholics and Anglicans, that explicitly see worship space as important, usually for its temple-like functions. This trend, however, is gradually changing (Buggeln 2003; Kilde 2002; Yates 2009).

To understand the different ways that church buildings function for Christians it is useful to use the four-fold scheme of Richard Kieckhefer (2004). Since a church is built to facilitate the activity of worship, he suggests that it should be considered in terms of its centering focus and its spatial dynamics, that is, the configuration of its various spaces and how they are used in worship. Since church architecture creates a suggestive atmosphere, it also must be considered in terms of its immediate aesthetic impact on worshippers, and lastly in terms of its symbolic resonance, that is the gradual accumulations of

impressions that a church develops in worshippers over time. All of these categories, but particularly the latter two, are shaped by individuals' frames of reference. While universal features of human experience may give certain spatial features common associations for all people, much depends on the social structures, customs, and cultures of particular communities, as well as on the individual's experience.

In terms of the basic spatial dynamics and centering focuses of churches, three basic arrangements existed after the Reformation. In Orthodox churches, an icon screen, frequently in the form of a high wall separated the altar area from the congregational area, though clergy moved through the congregation several times during the liturgy. In Roman Catholic churches, the longitudinal arrangement of the ancient basilica endured as a central aisle leading worshippers forward to the altar with its reredos and tabernacle. This focal point was always ornate by local standards and clearly visible to the congregation, making the church well understood as God's throne room. Pulpits were often high and prominent, but clearly subordinate to the altar (White 2003). In Protestant churches the focus was a high pulpit that emphasized the authority of the minister and assisted in the audibility of the sermon. Prior to the nineteenth century, the altar was rarely more prominent than the pulpit, even in Anglican churches.

## Reform Movements in Christian Worship

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, three widespread movements substantially reshaped the spatial arrangement of churches. First, the Gothic revival brought a new internal arrangement to Anglican churches and soon to many Protestant and Catholic ones as well. Inspired by medieval churches, especially cathedrals, the altar was the centering focus of these churches, but was set further back from the congregation than in early modern Catholic ones. Choirs and clergy were seated between the nave and the altar. Pulpit and lectern flanked the steps up into the choir, creating a more complex internal space than characteristic of either Protestant or Catholic churches of the early modern period (Yates 1991; 2008). By the end of the century, this arrangement would come to be found in churches of many styles and denominations from the Gothic Scottish Presbyterian St. Andrew's Kirk in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1896), to the Ganghwa Anglican Church in Korea (1890).

Also in the nineteenth century, the evangelical emphasis on communal worship, personal witness, congregational equality, and emotional preaching led many Protestants to reject high pulpits and longitudinal spaces and build instead central-plan auditorium churches that arranged the congregation in a semicircle around an open platform from which various speakers and signers could be heard. This enabled worshippers to see one another, breaking down hierarchical order and increasing a sense of social equality and responsibility. The emphasis on technological innovation, artistic quality, and comfort in such churches also reflected evangelical emphasis on evangelism and upward economic mobility (Kilde 2002).

In the twentieth century, the Liturgical Movement brought a third logic to the reordering of Catholic, Protestant, and even Orthodox space. The movement focused on the Greek roots of the word "liturgy," namely "work" and "people," to emphasize that Christian public



worship, particularly the celebration of the eucharist, was not the action of the clergy alone, but, rather, a joint activity in which clergy and people both took an active part. Spatially, this suggested that the altar table needed to be central and that the hierarchical separation between clergy and people characteristic of both early modern and Gothic revival arrangements needed to be abandoned. This movement had significant influence in a few places among both Catholics and Protestants prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Worshippers were arranged on three or more sides of the altar, for example, in the Catholic parish church at Ringenberg, Germany (1935–1936), the Chapel of the Holy Sacrifice at the University of the Philippines, Quezon City (1955), and the Abbey Church at St. John's University in Minnesota (1958–1961) (Torgerson 2007: 105–110, 121–124).

The Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963) marked a major turning point for the influence of the movement among both Catholics and other Christians. In the constitution or the directives that implemented it, priests were instructed to celebrate mass facing the people over a freestanding altar. The idea of the congregation being arranged around the altar was generally encouraged. Equally importantly, the tabernacle containing the consecrated host was removed from the eucharistic altar to a separate location. The council's teaching that Christ is present at the mass not only in the sacrament, but in the word proclaimed, the priest, and the people led to more multi-focal worship spaces. Moreover, the emphasis on lay participation in the liturgy led to the near universal use of vernacular languages in Catholic worship and a general emphasis on inculturation, the adaption of worship including architecture, to local cultures.

## Classical Tradition

Prior to 1800, this contextualization of church architecture outside of Europe had happened only to a limited degree. The history of Christian architecture in the preceding three centuries was shaped by various forms of classical architecture that had developed from the Renaissance. Roman Catholic churches in Latin America, India, the Philippines, as well as in Europe adopted and transformed Classical and Baroque idioms. Local building materials and techniques were often used, but the basic form and aesthetic impact usually aspired to be the same. In some areas, including Goa and Mexico, interactions with local cultures produced distinct architectural styles that later became a source of pride and regional identity (Gomes 2011). Among Protestants neo-Classical designs were most popular. James Gibbs's Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, England (1722–1724), became a prototype for many Protestant churches throughout the British Empire including St. Andrew's Church of Scotland in Kolkata (Calcutta), India (1815–1888). The central feature of these Protestant churches was typically a high central pulpit, though many were later altered to reflect the influence of the auditorium church or the Liturgical Movement.

## Gothic Revival

In the early nineteenth-century, the Gothic Revival emerged as a significant challenge to the classical tradition. In contrast to classicalism, it emphasized tradition, organic

development, and mystery. The Catholic architect A. W. N. Pugin and the high church Anglicans associated with the Ecclesiological Society insisted that medieval forms were the only legitimate sources for church buildings. They regarded proper church architecture as a witness for the Christian faith, a missionary style of architecture that impressed the Christian faith directly on the heart of the observer. Fundamental to these Gothicists' vision was truth in architecture. The outward structure of the building should reveal its various internal spaces, such as nave and sanctuary. Likewise the structure should be revealed, it may be adorned by decoration, but never hidden by it. The church building itself was regarded as playing a sacramental role. True architecture, along with spires and pointed arches as symbols of aspiration and the resurrection, was a beacon of true religion and of a harmonious, well-ordered society. Most importantly Gothic was a sign of a denomination's claim to be a true form of the church of Christ, in continuity with the ancient past. Anglicans erected Gothic revival cathedrals with deep altar-centered chancels throughout the British Empire and beyond as signs of their apostolicity, their legitimacy as the true church, independent of the state and of the church of Rome. This did not always mean the slavish imitation of buildings designed for northern Europe in other climates (see Figure 29.2). For All Saints' Cathedral (1870–87) in Allahabad, India, architect William Emerson used small windows, deep eaves, and thick walls to create a church that remains cool in its hot climate (Bremner 2013: 139–141).



**Figure 29.2** All Saints' Cathedral Allahabad.

Source: © awesomeaki/Getty Images.

Catholics did not embrace Gothic as exclusively, but spurred in part by the effort to complete the medieval Cologne Cathedral (1842–1880) in Germany, they erected many Gothic churches of their own around the world including San Sebastian in Manila, Philippines (1888–1891), and San Ildefonso in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1892–1893). Protestant congregations also employed Gothic styles for many liturgical arrangements including auditorium churches such as First Congregational Church, Portland, Oregon (1889–1895).

Gothic was far from the only revival style used to connect churches to a historic past. Its most prominent rival was the Romanesque or *Rundbogenstil* (“round-arch style”). Based on early medieval or late antique buildings, the style was understood by some as representing a universal non-sectarian Christian ideal that would transcend the division between Protestants and Catholics. Among its promoters was Heinrich Hübsch whose Church of St. Cyriakus at Bulach, Germany (1834–1837), was an early manifestation of the movement (Curran 2003). For others the style simply offered non-Gothic medieval associations that were useful in differentiating a congregation from the Catholic or Anglican identity with which the Gothic was associated in many areas. Also, as H.H. Richardson showed with his Trinity Church (Episcopal), Boston, Massachusetts (1872–1877), the round-arch form was adaptable to the central plan churches often favored by Protestants for their word-centered services. The Roman Catholic Jeondong Cathedral in Jeonju, Korea (1908–1914), is a striking example of the style’s monumental presence outside of the West (see Figure 29.3).



**Figure 29.3** Jeondong Cathedral.

Source: Kyoushoku at the English language Wikipedia, <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>; or CC-BY-SA-3.0, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>, via Wikimedia Commons.

While in most ways the Gothic revival ended with World War II, Gothic arches and details continue to function as signs of a commanding Christian presence. In contemporary China, many churches incorporate Gothic elements. The Xianjiang Church and the Mayu Church in Ruian City both incorporate pointed Gothic windows and small spires with a central multi-level domed tower that suggests a Chinese pagoda (Takenaka 1995). In Wenzhou, touted by local Christian entrepreneurs as “China’s Jerusalem,” evangelical congregations competing with each other to erect large prominent churches have often patterned their exteriors on European Gothic churches. Their towering auditorium churches incorporating Gothic elements and giant red crosses are landmarks in the city (Cao 2010).

The Gothic, in its various forms, often served as a marker of national and imperial identity, yet because of the influence of Gothicists on organic development, national styles, truthful architecture, and the use of local materials, the Gothic also paved the ways for efforts to incorporate local architectural forms into churches. One striking aspect of this in the nineteenth century were the *whare karakia*, or “houses of prayer” erected by Maori in New Zealand. These Anglican churches were fashioned by Maori craftsmen in the form of the traditional *whare* or house where a massive ridge pole was supported by two or more poles along the central axis of the building. In addition to simple pointed Gothic windows, some *whare karakia* were richly decorated with Maori carvings. While Anglican missionaries did not allow figure forms recognized as humans or animals, they did permit the more abstract *mana*, a traditional device which had spiritual significance among the Maori (Sundt 2010: 140–143).

## Intentional Contextualization

Intentional efforts to contextualize Christian architecture through the adoption of indigenous forms of architecture often involved complex debates about the identity of Christians and of nations. Perhaps nowhere were the dilemmas of inculturation more evident than in India. The British Raj built many monumental churches in the classical and medieval traditions of Europe which were clear symbols of empire. The utilization of indigenous styles of architecture seemed to many to be a necessary response, especially given the importance of place, space, and visual culture in South Asian spiritualities. Yet the existence of the caste system within traditional Hinduism meant that many traditional temple forms were signs of exclusion or domination to *dalit* and tribal peoples. For these reasons, inculturation was both an imperative and, at first glance, almost an impossibility.

One early intentional effort by Indian Christians to express their faith in architecture was the Anglican Cathedral of the Epiphany erected at Dornakal, Andhra Pradesh, by Bishop Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah in 1939. He mixed Islamic and Hindu motifs to assert that conversion to Christianity did not mean the loss of Indian identity (Sahi 1998: 142–144). In several other cases, a common form of a South Indian Hindu temple was adapted for Christian worship. One of the first of these was the *jejabalam*, or prayer hall, at the *Christukula Ashram* at Triupattur in Tamil Nadu (1925–1933). The worship space was an open colonnaded hall, with *gopurams*, or



monumental towers, marking both its entrance and the alcove that served as its centering focus. This alcove was reminiscent of the womb-house found in the inner sanctum of a Hindu temple, but rather than containing an image, it was empty. This basic approach was employed by Joseph John, a Church of South India pastor in several churches he commissioned in the 1950s and 1960s. Working after Vatican II, the Belgian priest James Tombeur also employed the same basic approach but with a more nuanced approach to regional styles in the churches he commissioned in the Kotar diocese. In most of these Catholic structures, the womb-house served as the place for the sacrament house, while in similar Protestant ones the womb-house or niche was empty and sometimes quite small (Takenaka 1995: 38–39; Collins 2007: 124–128). The use of the towering *gopruam* connects to Hindu understandings of the temple as the mountain of God, an understanding with strong parallels in the Bible if not in Christian liturgical practice.

While these churches could be seen as impressive achievements in inculturation, Dalit peoples have historically been denied access to the Hindu temples that serve as their prototypes. Sometimes Dalits have accepted these attempts at inculturation as symbols of the divisions that do not exist in Christianity. In other cases, however, these efforts are now rejected by Adivasi and Dalit peoples who look to other structures that draw on traditional tribal structures or incorporate imagery from biblical stories of liberation like the exodus (Sahi 1998: 159–178).

As at Triupattur in India, often the most extensive efforts at inculturation before Vatican II took place in special situations such as colleges, retreat centers, or as part of an estate or planned community overseen by idealistic patrons. This last was the case on the island of Java in Indonesia where in 1924 Joseph Janz Schmutzer commissioned for his sugar plantation in Ganjuran a church in the form of a traditional Javanese house with a high roof, an open colonnade for walls, and traditional carvings throughout. He followed this in 1930 with a chapel in the form of a Hindu temple enshrining a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Küster, Steenbrink, and Sudhiarsa 2008: 927–930).

Protestant churches in Indonesia were initially more resistant to contextualization, but today there are several churches that follow similar patterns. One is the church at Blimbingsari on Bali (1976–1981). Built of wood and concrete, the worship space has a high roof and is open on all sides like a traditional Balinese structure. Worshipers face the pulpit and communion table but look beyond it to a spring and tropical garden. The raised site of the church and its high roof evokes a mountain, a traditional site of holiness on Bali, as in the Bible. The open walls of the church and the garden beyond it are far more suggestive of reverence, spirituality, and Balinese culture than the stone and wood structure that preceded it. Worshipers approach this church through a split gate such as is common at Balinese Hindu temples. This split gate has become common in many Christian churches on the island (Takenaka 1995: 102–103).

Early efforts at contextualization in East Asia include the 1893 Kanghwa Anglican Church in Korea which borrows the form of a Confucian temple, the Jeushi Christian Church in Shantou, China, which incorporates elements of an ancient Chinese palace, and the 1930 Episcopal Christ Church in Nara, Japan, which incorporates traditional Japanese roof lines and wooden paneling. Such efforts were not always the product of

eager contextualization— a Gothic proposal for the Nara church was rejected by Japanese officials, while another proposal was rejected by missionaries as too Japanese (Fleming 1937; Takenaka 1995).

In Africa, some of the most significant efforts at the contextualization of worship space have not involved buildings, but other special spaces. For example, among many Zionist groups in southern Africa worship takes place outside, perhaps under a tree. No shelter is built, but the worship space is sometimes set apart by boundary stones, and worshippers, often dressed in ceremonial attire, must pass by prophets who form the “gates” into the holy area and encourage worshippers to confess their sins (Daneel 2007: 50–53). Similarly in Madagascar, Catholic priests found it necessary to alter the usual practice of having young altar boys sit with them. In this culture elders sit on the opposite side of the room from boys, accordingly the priest seemed foolish in the eyes of the community leaders if he sat with young boys. So instead elders were seated with the priest (Giraud 1994).

Other significant efforts at contextualization in Africa involve various forms of the traditional hut. Mityana Catholic Cathedral in Uganda (1972) designed by Swiss architect Justus Dahinden replaces the traditional bell tower with a drum tower and evokes a traditional Bantu structure with its three spherical segments that honor three Ugandan martyrs (Heathcote and Spens 1997: 91–93). Dahinden’s Uganda Martyrs’ Shrine in Namugongo (1973) is a conical building evoking an African hut with an exposed copper structure but an interior paneled in wood and glass. The round church with the altar in the center reflects both the ideology of the liturgical movement and traditional African practice.

## Modernism and Contextualization

As Dahinden’s Ugandan churches suggest, contextualization is not unrelated to architectural modernism, especially in modernism’s more expressionist manifestations. Architecturally, modernists sought to dispense with adherence to historic styles and instead craft spaces shaped by the structural materials being used: frequently modern ones such as steel, concrete, glass, and laminated wood. A key dictum of modernism, was Louis Sullivan’s “form ever follows function.” The question before modernist church architects, however, was what is the function of a church. Is it creating a spiritual emotion, communicating a sense of the divine, claiming a prominent place for the church in the landscape, or serving the action of communal Christian worship? Some modernists taking the liturgy as their guide insisted with German architect Rudolf Schwartz that architecture was solely generated from the liturgy. He termed this “sacred objectivity.” It was through this emphasis on eucharistic action, as well as an orientation to what the council fathers later called the “noble simplicity” of the liturgy that the liturgical movement became closely allied to modernism. Buildings such as Schwartz’s Corpus Christi Church in Aachen (1930) spurned ornament in order to reveal the action of the eucharist. While this and other modernist churches made substantial claims on the landscape, other architects and theologians such as E. A. Sövik sided firmly with the meetinghouse tradition in erecting buildings that were “non-churches” because they existed solely to serve the liturgy, not to enshrine God or to claim civic space for the church (Torgerson 2007).

Others such as Le Corbusier embraced an expressionist approach where the architecture was a form of sculpture suggesting ideas and explicitly seeking to create a certain atmosphere (Heathcote and Spens 1997: 46). Architectural forms could even themselves use modern building techniques to make themselves into intricate symbols. The chapel of the Trinity Theological College in Singapore (1969), for example, features a sharply rising roofline that at first glance looks like a postmodern tribute to Gothic because of its asymmetrical character and open top. It is intended, however, as the two strokes of the Chinese character for human (*ren*). Yet, unlike the character, the strokes do not meet but are intersected by the cross, emphasizing the continuing search for God and the centrality of the gospel (Takenaka 1995, 98–99). Such symbolic sculpture-shaped buildings were common in the 1960s, but rarely so tied to language and allegory.

Japanese churches by architect Tadao Ando point to the fact that contextualization does not always mean the embrace of traditional forms, but, rather, of the sense of sacred space characteristic of a culture. The Church of the Light in Ibaraki (1989) and the Church on the Water in Hokkaido (1988) both use simple modern forms to create a strikingly serene spiritual space, though through different means. Like many traditional Japanese structures, these churches have clearly defined boundaries, they are not open to the world, yet through simple forms they draw out the essential nature of a space and connect to the environment. The concrete structure of the Church of the Light orients the congregation toward a thin window cross that completely cuts through the wall, making the natural light that comes through this most universal of Christian symbols a primary source of illumination for the church. The Church on the Water is part of a resort that caters to weddings. It orients worshippers to a glass wall through which they see a cross emerging from the water in front of a scenic landscape. Often the most striking church buildings are for such scenic chapels where the architect has free rein to create an environment without the limitations imposed by the location and needs of a regular congregation. The Church of the Light, however, serves a local congregation on a tight urban site. (Heathcote and Spens 1997: 128–137).

Contrasting to Ando's chapels, but perhaps equally successful in contextualizing Christianity in the contemporary landscape are triumphal cathedrals on large urban sites such as Oscar Niemeyer's Cathedral for Brazil's planned capital city, Brasilia (1958–1970). Beneath its soaring crown of architectural ribs, it creates a large circular space. While the altar is not in the center of the circle, it nonetheless seeks to break down division between clergy and people, by placing the altar platform on the edge of the circle and assembling the congregation under the vast canopy of colored glass. A similar arrangement is used in the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, California (2005–2008), though the Gothic arch which frames the entrance and the mammoth traditional image of Christ over the altar gesture in a more traditional direction.

## Monumental Mega-Churches

Less architecturally celebrated, but no less important for the development of Christianity are the mega-churches of contemporary metropolises. The Yoido Full Gospel Church claims substantial civic space for Christianity in South Korea with a 26,000-seat church

immediately adjacent to the Korean national legislature. The exterior of the massive building is distinguished from a secular arena simply by the cross that surmounts it and the large relief of Jesus over the entrance. Inside, it employs a standard arrangement for a modern auditorium church. Giant video screens on either side of the platform provide worshippers with a better view of the leaders. The Brazilian-based denomination, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, has similarly built many large houses of worship, which it calls temples. In 2010, however, it began a so-called replica of the Temple of Solomon on a site in São Paulo. When complete the Temple will house a 10,000-seat worship space in addition to many other facilities. While the Pentecostal and evangelical theology of these churches would seem to favor the meetinghouse tradition, they eagerly erect temples that promise God's presence, mark the landscape for Christianity, and seek to represent Christian commitment and success in the metropolis.

Today, churches pursue dramatically different approaches to architecture depending on their environment, theology, and liturgical tradition. In many parts of the Catholic Church, modernist buildings and the informal communal character of many churches erected after Vatican II are strongly criticized. There is a resurgence of interest in buildings that follow traditional classical and Gothic models, rather than contemporary forms. Still other groups emphasize the fact that early Christians met in homes and that church buildings, if necessary at all, should be everyday seemingly secular spaces equipped for the work of the church. In many contexts, efforts continue to be made to erect churches that relate to the people and culture of the land, though the momentum for such churches is less than a few decades ago.

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## CHAPTER 30

# Charismatic Gifts

## Healing, Tongue-Speaking, Prophecy, and Exorcism

Michael J. McClymond

It is not possible to name the number of the gifts [*charismata*] which the Church, throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ . . . and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practicing deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 2.32.4, in Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1: 409).

Charismatic gifts (Gk., *charismata*) have been part of Christian experience from the first century to the twenty-first. Indeed, the Christian Church was born amid charismatic manifestations. The first recorded statement in Peter's Day of Pentecost sermon was the near-comic insistence that "these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only 9 a.m." (Acts 2:15) – spoken in reference to the wild, apparently dionysiac outburst of words and sounds that bystanders had heard. Around 54–55 CE, the Apostle Paul addressed the issue of charismatic gifts at length in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Despite the disorder that tongue-speaking and other charismatic gifts were causing within the congregation, Paul did not forbid these phenomena. Insisting that "all things be done properly and in an orderly manner," Paul instructed his readers "do not forbid to speak in tongues" and he exhorted them to "desire earnestly to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:39–40). The apostle opposed the abuse, not the use, of the *charismata*. By the time that Irenaeus wrote during the 160s, he spoke of Christians' accomplishments in casting out demons and healing the sick as something well-known among Christians and non-Christians alike. In the passage cited above, Irenaeus went on to speak of how those rescued from demonic possession often became believers in Christ – like the earlier biblical figures of Mary Magdalene (Lk. 8:2) and the unnamed demoniac who may have

been the first person publicly to preach about Jesus (Mk. 5:1–20). For Irenaeus, the healing and exorcising power of Jesus' name was an apologetic argument. It confirmed the truth of Christianity against the false gods of the Greco-Romans.

The varied themes surrounding charismatic gifts during the first two centuries – joy, puzzlement, disorder, healing, apologetics, and the pursuit of ecstasy – reappeared during the modern era. In the post-Enlightenment age, there have been skeptics of the supernatural within the church and without. The reported words of Anglican bishop Joseph Butler to John Wesley are paradigmatic: “Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing” (cited in Knox 1950: 450). The arguments of eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume convinced many of the non-credibility of so-called miracles. Yet recent studies by Candy Gunther Brown on Christian healing prayer (Brown 2012) and by Craig Keener on miracles generally (Keener 2011) have demonstrated that a scientific case can be made *against* – as well as *for* – a naturalistic worldview. On scientific and empirical grounds, the claim that “miracles do not happen” is not self-evident.

While skepticism remains in some quarters, there has been a widespread trend since the 1960s toward a greater acceptance of “miracles” and the scientifically inexplicable. This shift has affected views of the *charismata*. While educated observers previously regarded Pentecostals as retrograde or *déclassé*, today they often show attitudes that range from neutral to favorable. In some contexts it is now chic to be charismatic. There are various reasons for the change. Since the 1960s and 1970s there has been a re-sacralization of Western societies and an affirmation of spirituality in all forms, whether Christian or non-Christian. Experiments with “Eastern” meditation, mind-altering drugs, and novel therapeutic methods led many people to believe in an unseen world. In New Testament studies, there was a new emphasis on the kingdom of God. Jesus' reputed miracles were seen not as random events but as signs of the advancement of God's kingdom. Studies of early Christianity showed that second- and third-century Christians were known for healing the sick through prayer and for casting out demons (Harnack 1908; MacMullen 1984). Catholic theologian Karl Rahner concluded that the “religious man of tomorrow will be a mystic, someone who has experienced God, or else he will no longer be” (Rahner 2001: 22).

Another reason for changing attitudes in Western societies has been the growing influence of majority-world perspectives. Latin Americans, Africans, Asians, and Oceanians generally see their local cultures as linked to the supernatural. The knee-jerk rejection of miracles by many academicians strikes them as mistaken. Worse yet, it seems a mark of Western theological imperialism – a point of view, not supported by scripture or earlier Christian tradition, that modern Western biblical scholars and theologians have sought to *impose* on others. As theological reflection has become more global, it has also become more supernaturalistic. Philip Jenkins wrote in 2002 that “Christianity is actually moving toward supernaturalism . . . a vision of Jesus as the embodiment of power, who overcomes the evil forces that inflict calamity and sickness upon the human race” (Jenkins 2002: 54).

Some church leaders became interested in charismatic gifts such as tongue-speaking and healing when they noticed a strong correlation between the exercise of these gifts and the church's numerical growth. Through his studies of church growth patterns,

C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary in California, first became intrigued with Pentecostalism in the 1970s, and then later emerged as a full-blown Charismatic practitioner and leader in the 1980s and subsequently. During the Great Cultural Revolution in China (1966–1976), there was so strong a correlation between healing prayer and conversion to Christianity that when someone said “I believe in Jesus,” people would ask: “When were you healed?” (Aikman 2003). Since the 1990s, Iris-Arco Ministries in rural, northern Mozambique has reported healings of the sick through prayer, and in consequence several thousand new Christian congregations have been established over a twenty year period. After healings were reported, the news spread to surrounding villages, and new church congregations took shape (Stafford 2012). This church-planting movement replicates a pattern seen in early Christian literature and nineteenth-century missionary narratives, where reported healings or other purportedly miraculous occurrences accompanied evangelistic preaching and were preludes to rapid church growth.

Churches that practice charismatic gifts undergo qualitative as well as quantitative changes. Worship and church life are characteristically celebratory, exploratory, and participatory. Women, people of color, young persons, and those with less formal education are encouraged to come forward and speak publicly about their spiritual experiences. In charismatic Christian contexts, the prominence of women leaders is very noticeable – including the early Kongolese prophetess Beatriz Kimpa Vita (1684–1706) and the Kenyan leader, Gaudencia Aoko (1943–1988) – a co-founder with Simeon Ondeto of the *Legio Maria* (Legion of Mary) that broke from Roman Catholicism to become a separate church. The twentieth-century brought a series of female Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic visionaries, healers, and social reformers – Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844–1924), Pandita Ramabai of India (1858–1922), Carrie Judd Montgomery (1858–1946), Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), Kathryn Kuhlman (1907–1976), and Heidi Baker (1959–). Their lives were in some respects reminiscent of the great female mystics of the European Middle Ages, whose claim to attention rested largely on their reported visionary experiences – Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), Mechthild of Madgeburg (ca.1207–ca.1282), Julian of Norwich (ca.1342–ca.1416), and many others (McGinn 1999).

This chapter will focus on four spiritual or charismatic gifts that seem especially important – healing, tongue-speaking (glossolalia), prophecy, and exorcism. Yet before proceeding, it is worth noting that categorization in this field is hazardous. Even an elastic category such as “charismatic gifts” or “gifts of the Holy Spirit” may be misleading. “Tongues,” “healing,” and “prophecy” are among the nine *charismata* listed together in scripture (1 Cor. 12:9–10). Yet there is no reference anywhere in the Bible to a “gift of exorcism.” In the ancient church the office of “exorcist” existed after the third or fourth century, but the prevailing idea seemed to be that any faithful Christian could cast out demons. One might say that exorcism is a charismatic *phenomenon* but not necessarily a charismatic *gift*. With regard to healing, there is another ambiguity. While some Christians may have “the gift of healing,” it is possible for healings to occur through the prayers of people who lack this gift. Here there seems to be a contrast with the “gift of tongues.” Those who speak in tongues (or those who do so regularly) are said to have “the gift of tongues.” Those who pray for healing (and sometimes succeed in their prayers) might – or might not – be said to have “the gift of healing.” A similar question

arises regarding “prophecy.” God might communicate a message to the community through anyone at any time. Those recognized as having “the gift of prophecy” are not the only ones through whom God might speak. For this reason, some contemporary Charismatic authors distinguish those who occasionally pronounce Spirit-inspired utterances from those who have a more-or-less settled “gift of prophecy” (Bickle 1996). On this basis, one might argue that it is the community as a whole – rather than one individual alone – that might be considered to be “prophetic” (Stronstad 1999). Perhaps it is less appropriate to speak of “prophets” or “healers” than to speak of the church as a “prophetic community” or “healing community.”

A final question pertains to the relationship between charismatic phenomena and the various ministries, offices, or vocations that scripture also refers to as “gifts.” The biblical “gifts” (Gk. *charismata*) include such functions as pastoring, teaching, exhorting, serving, helping, giving, and showing mercy (Rom. 12:6–8; Eph. 4:7–12; 1 Pet. 4:10–11). Are Christians who show mercy, who give materially, or who teach others, endowed or empowered by the Holy Spirit in the same way as those who speak in tongues, utter prophecies, or heal the sick? The New Testament language of “gifts” appears in all these cases, suggesting that there may be such a thing as supernatural mercy in the heart just as there may be supernatural healing in the body. Irenaeus may thus have interpreted scripture correctly: the *charismata* are innumerable and the Spirit works in diverse ways.

## Was There a Twentieth-Century “Revival” of Charismatic Gifts?

Throughout the twentieth century, there was wide-ranging debate as to the reality and legitimacy of the charismatic gifts in modern times. On one side of the debate were the Pentecostals, who insisted that spiritual gifts – and especially the gift of speaking in tongues – was an end-time manifestation of the Holy Spirit that God withheld from the church for centuries but released once again in the church’s final days. Early twentieth-century Pentecostals had no doubt that Christ would soon return, perhaps within years (Faupel 1996). On the other side of the debate were the Protestant “cessationists,” who taught that miraculous gifts and manifestations had appeared during the first century – as attested by the New Testament – and yet ended shortly thereafter. “Cessationists” claimed that God-given miracles ceased either in the first century or early second century (Warfield 1918; Gaffin 1996). Some argued on theological grounds that the purpose of the New Testament miracles was to authenticate the biblical writings, and that, once the canon of biblical writings was completed, there was no further need for miracles. Cessationists opposed early Pentecostalism (from 1901 onward) and the Charismatic Renewal in the mainline churches (from the 1960s onward: Ruthven 1990).

While diminished in influence, cessationism has adherents today, especially in the conservative or confessional branches of the Lutheran and Reformed churches (MacArthur 2013). The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches took a different line. Both affirmed that genuine miracles took place not only in the first century but at the hands of many of the saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith from the first century up to today. Though often unacknowledged, the cessationists and the pentecostals shared a common assumption, namely, that a New Testament era of miracles was

followed by a dearth of miracles for some fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred years. The key difference between the two views was that pentecostals embraced twentieth-century tongue-speaking and healing as a “latter rain” or end-time return of the spiritual manifestations that characterized the first century.

Recent research suggests that neither the Protestant cessationists nor the classical Pentecostals were correct. Evidence indicates that there were many more expressions of the *charismata* through church history than previously imagined. Tongue-speaking was reported among the Albigensians in twelfth-century France, among mendicant friars in the thirteenth century, and among French Jansenists and the “little prophets” of the Cévennes in the seventeenth century (later commonly known as the “French prophets”). In the mid-1800s, the Irvingites were well known and controversial for their practice of speaking in tongues (Flegg 1992), and their movement spread to various parts of the world, including Australia (Elliott 2012). W. Jethro Walthall – a Baptist minister in the United States – spoke in tongues in 1879 and was later ejected from his denomination and went on to found the Holiness Baptist Association (Mills 1986: 3 n.3). African Christians during the nineteenth century experienced a wide range of *charismata* (Kalu 2008). Pentecostalism in twentieth-century Africa thus built on a well-established foundation of charismatic spirituality. Juoko Ruohomäki has provided copious documentation for charismatic manifestations in Finland as early as the 1750s and then reviving again in 1808–1809 and continuing throughout the nineteenth century (Ruohomäki 2009). Prophecy – in the sense of Spirit-given utterance – is also widely reported in church history (Hvidt 2007). The same may be argued with regard to exorcism and divine healing (Porterfield 2005). There is documentary evidence for “pentecostal spirituality” in all phases of Christian history (Burgess 2011).

There seems then to be no good reason to believe that charismatic gifts disappeared from the church permanently after the first century (the cessationist view) or that these gifts disappeared until they returned once again among North American Pentecostals in 1901 (the classical Pentecostal view). The Roman Catholic or Orthodox notion of a continuum throughout history better fits the historical data. On the other hand, one can still argue that *something changed* during the twentieth century. While there were individual cases of tongue-speaking in modern church history, no widespread “tongues movement” existed until after 1901. In retrospect, one can see a snowballing effect beginning in the late nineteenth century. At least among European and North American Protestants, one charismatic gift after another was newly re-emphasized – divine healing (from 1870s–1880s onward), tongues-speaking (from 1901), Christian prophecy (from the late 1940s, but gaining momentum in the 1980s), and exorcism and spiritual warfare (from the 1990s). The last century involved a progressive “charismatization” of large sections of the global church.

## The Practices of Divine Healing

Amanda Porterfield comments that “healing is a persistent theme in the history of Christianity” and adds that when she embarked on writing a book on this theme, “I did not anticipate the extent to which I would come to see Christianity as a religion

of healing” (Porterfield 2005: 3). In the second and third centuries, such authors as Irenaeus (ca. 115–ca. 202) and Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254) reported the healing of the sick and the casting out of demons as common phenomena that occurred among ordinary Christians. Hippolytus (ca. 170–ca. 236) wrote that those who healed the sick ought to be acknowledged in the church though not necessarily ordained to church office. Bishop Novatian of Rome (ca. 200–ca. 258) reportedly converted to Christianity as a result of a healing that he had received. A significant number of healings were linked to the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. A leading scholar on early Christianity – Adolf von Harnack – argued that early Christians were known as exorcists: “It was as exorcisers that Christians went out in the great world and exorcism formed one very powerful method of their mission and propaganda. It was a question not simply of exorcising and vanquishing the demons that dwelt in individuals, but also of purifying all public life from them” (Harnack 1908: 131). Yale historian Ramsay McMullen confirmed Harnack’s judgment and concluded the early Christians’ reputation in healing and exorcising was a primary motive for ancient Greco-Romans pagans to convert to Christianity (McMullen 1984: 36–43).

Augustine’s *City of God* (ca. 413–426) described miraculous healings occurring within his own lifetime and in some instances within his own observation. Among the cases he noted was a blind man in Milan who recovered his eyesight, and others who were avowedly healed of fistulas, breast cancer, gout, and hernia (Patterson 1999; Augustine 1972: 1033–1048). Augustine regarded the miracles of his own day as no less genuine than those of the biblical era, though receiving less attention: “Even now miracles are being performed in Christ’s name either by his sacrament, or by the prayers or the memorials of his saints, but they do not enjoy the blaze of publicity which would spread their fame” (Augustine 1972: 1034).

The link between healing and conversion was well established in ancient Christian history. W. H. C. Frend wrote that “miraculous cures . . . whether by Martin of Tours in Gaul or by monks in Syria, were among the best-documented reasons for conversion” (Frend 1984: 565). The missionary literature of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages is replete with accounts of the miraculous. Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* – written in 731 CE – offers multiple accounts of healing. According to Bede’s narrative, the early English bishops cast out demons from those who were possessed. Germanus gave sight to a blind girl, and then was himself healed after seeing a nighttime vision of a being in shining robes. There are further reports of the healing of a paralyzed girl, a boy with ague, a blind woman, a monk with paralysis, another monk with a diseased eye, and several healings through the prayers of Bishop John (Bede 1990: 66–7, 158–653, 221, 263–274). Bede’s narrative replicates the earlier pattern. Reports of miracles strengthened believers in the faith and resulted in new conversions.

In the Middle Ages, healing was usually associated with holy people – saints, monks, and ascetics – and with the practice of anointing with oil followed by prayer. Gregory of Tours, in *The History of the Franks* (ca. 592 CE), tells of an ascetic named Hospicius, who ate nothing but dry bread and a few dates, and wore iron chains and a hairshirt over his body. On encountering a young man who was both dumb and deaf Hospicius

poured consecrated oil down the young man's throat, and grabbed hold of his tongue as he prayed. After receiving healing, the young man realized that he no longer needed to make a pilgrimage to a distant shrine, since he had already received the healing that he sought. By the high Middle Ages, though, there were fewer reported healings from the prayers of living saints and more resulting from the purported effects of physical objects associated with saints. Bones, teeth, hair, body parts, burial sites, and other "relics" associated with the saints reputedly brought healing to the sick. The saints' tombs were among the most common sites for those seeking healing. One study of 3,000 miracles reported at French and English shrines in the 1100s and 1200s found that 90% of the narratives involved healing. Even in the case of living saints, healing was sometimes mediated by physical objects. In some instances, St. Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181–1226) is said to have laid on hands to heal the sick. Yet in another case, Francis is said to have blessed bread that brought healing to those who consumed it. During Francis's lifetime, people cut off pieces of his clothing to use as relics for blessing and healing. In Eastern Christianity, icons or images of Christ and the saints were used as media of healing (Porterfield 2005: 67, 70, 77–9; Habig 1973: 280–7).

As noted already, many Protestants rejected post-biblical miracles. In large part this began as a Protestant reaction against Catholicism, which claimed a centuries-long legacy of healing and other miracles. John Calvin wrote: "That gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the gospel marvelous forever" (Calvin 1960: 1467). Anglo-American Deism and the continental Enlightenment added further to skepticism regarding the miraculous.

The most influential pioneers of the modern divine healing movement were nineteenth-century Europeans who sought a restoration of the spiritual gifts that existed in the primitive church. In 1830, Edward Irving of the Scottish Presbyterian Church preached to audiences of more than ten thousand concerning God's purpose to restore the gifts of healing and speaking in tongues. Dorothea Trudel and Otto Stockmayer in Switzerland began in the 1840s–1850s to oversee healing homes where they prayed for the sick. Based on her interpretation of James 5:14–15, Trudel encouraged sick people to confess their sins, and then anointed them with oil and sought to utter what was known as "the prayer of faith" – a definite, unambiguous petition or declaration of healing for the sick people. Trudel's biography, published in London 1862, and in the United States in 1872, catalyzed a transnational wave of interest in divine healing. A homeopathic physician in Boston, Charles Cullis, distributed Trudel's books and emerged as a leading American proponent of the "faith cure" during the 1870s and 1880s. After recovering from tuberculosis in 1846, Ethan Allen – descendent of the famous American Deist of the same name – began to travel with the African-American woman, Elizabeth Mix, and together they served as itinerant "healing evangelists." Eventually this approach became known as the "full gospel" – salvation for the soul and healing for the body. Though never united organizationally, a divine healing movement took shape in the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century (Curtis 2007). A distinction emerged between "faith cure" and the "mind cure" of Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science. Eddy's approach to healing rested not on faith in Jesus, but on an understanding of metaphysical principles, allowing the mind to triumph over bodily ailments.



Since the early twentieth century, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians have been among the leading proponents of divine healing in the Christian world. Many healings were reported in Pentecostal churches around the world during the first half of the twentieth century. From 1947 to 1958, there was a widespread revival of healing practices in the United States, involving William Branham, Oral Roberts, and many other itinerant Pentecostal evangelists who were loosely linked through Gordon Lindsay's *Voice of Healing* magazine (Harrell 1975). Beginning in the 1960s, the emphasis among these Pentecostal evangelists began to shift from health to that of wealth, and the so-called prosperity message started to take shape (McClymond 2010).

During the twentieth century, divine healing was reemphasized in the Catholic and Anglican churches. Among Anglicans, the Guild of Health (est. 1905), the Guild of St. Raphael (est. 1915), Agnes Sanford's book *The Healing Light* (1947), and a study commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, *The Church's Ministry of Healing* (1958), turned healing into a mainstream phenomenon. Among Catholics, changes initiated at Vatican II culminated in the *Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick* (1974). Anointing of the sick was seen once again – as in the ancient church – not as a prelude to death but as a path toward recovery. Beginning in the 1960s, the Charismatic Renewal among Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others included not only tongue-speaking but praying for the sick. The 1970s and 1980s brought “inner healing” or the “healing of memories” – an effort to remove negative psychological and bodily effects resulting from past traumatic experiences.

A 2006 study by the Pew Foundation showed that healing practices – more than speaking in tongues or beliefs about financial prosperity – are a distinguishing feature of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. In every one of the ten countries surveyed, there were large majorities (more than 70% in eight of the countries) who reported that they had personally witnessed the healing through prayer of an illness or injury. In Latin American, African, and Asian countries, as many as 80–90% of first-generation Christians attributed their conversions *primarily* to their experiences with divine healing (Lugo 2006). Today many Pentecostals prefer the term “divine healing” to “faith healing” or “spiritual healing,” since they believe that healing comes from God's love rather than human faith or an impersonal healing force. Moreover, the term “faith healing” may evoke the flamboyant, fraudulent, money-grubbing preachers depicted in such films such as *Elmer Gantry* (1960), *Marjoe* (1972), *Leap of Faith* (1992), and *The Apostle* (1997).

While some Pentecostal-Charismatics believe that God has promised unconditionally to heal all who pray in faith, this “Word-faith” teaching is not universal. Many others take a pragmatic stance, praying for everyone who seeks healing but not attempting to explain why some are healed and others are not (Hejzlar 2010). A recent global study of Pentecostal-Charismatic healing practices shows wide variations around the world (Brown 2011). In Ghana, healing practices are so pervasive in Christian churches – Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, etc. – that divine healing cannot be labeled as *Pentecostal* but rather as a *Christian* practice. Argentine churches tend to emphasize the healing evangelist; those asking for a leader's prayers form “healing lines.” Members of unregistered churches in China, by contrast, believe that any Christian can pray for the sick and see healing occur. Laypersons do not lay hands on those whom they

pray for – this gesture is reserved for pastors – but they pray confidently for those who request it. Healing prayer has thus been “democratized.” When asked how healing took place, most Pentecostals do not point to a human being but say that “God healed me.”

## The Gift of Tongues

It is best to start with a definition. Tongue-speaking or glossolalia is generally understood as a “religious phenomenon of making sounds that constitute, or resemble, a language not known to the speaker . . . often accompanied by an excited religious psychological state” (Spittler 2002). Speaking in tongues (or glossolalia) became a matter of widespread discussion and debate only with the rise of Pentecostalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Almost immediately, viewpoints on glossolalia became sharply divided. Pentecostals, who associated tongue-speaking with the experience that they called “the baptism of [with] the Holy Spirit [Ghost],” viewed tongue-speaking with wonder, joy, and gratitude. For some it became a source of pride, a mark that distinguished them and prepared them for the life of heaven. Yet the headline for the *Los Angeles Times* report (April 18, 1906) on the Azusa Street revival read: “Weird Babel of Tongues. New Sect of Fanatics is Breaking Loose. Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street. Gurgle of Wordless Talk by a Sister.” Tongue-speaking was soon linked to fanaticism and mental disorder. Alexander Mackie’s *The Gift of Tongues: A Study in Pathological Aspects of Christianity* (Mackie 1921) captured the prevailing opinion among most church leaders and academics. Tongue-speaking reflected a dissociative process and perhaps even a perversion of sexual life. This pathologization of tongue-speaking continued for decades. Felicitas Goodman argued that glossolalia reflected an altered state of consciousness (Goodman 1972). William Samarin referred to tongue-speaking as “regressive speech” (Samarin 1973). A shift took place at the century’s end, as scholars became less focused on the semantic significance of tongue-speaking and more interested in its experiential, expressive, and sociological dimensions.

For early Pentecostals, tongue-speaking had meaning primarily because of its perceived link to the experience of Spirit-baptism, understood as a new and decisive stage in spiritual development. Early pentecostals drew from Methodist-Wesleyan teaching on “entire sanctification” and the notion of a “second blessing” that came after one’s conversion (Dayton 1987). Yet Pentecostalism was Wesleyanism with a twist. No longer was one’s holiness the outward mark revealing the presence of the Holy Spirit. Tongue-speaking was, in Charles Parham’s influential phrase, the “Bible evidence” that one had received the “baptism of/by the Holy Ghost.” For Parham, the distinction was evident: those who spoke in tongues had been Spirit-baptized; those who did not speak in tongues had not been. This clear-cut claim made pentecostalism controversial. While most pentecostals did not use traditional language, their teaching suggested a kind of sacramentalism. Tongue-speaking, to adapt the language of Augustine, was a “visible sign of an invisible grace.” From another angle, the early American pentecostal focus on “Bible evidence” reflected their position as *outsiders* – socially, politically, economically, culturally, and religiously. Though society had rejected them, God had nonetheless put his mark on them when he gave them the gift of tongues (Anderson 1979).

One of the most textured accounts of tongue-speaking appears in the work of Harvard theologian Harvey Cox – a non-pentecostal who grasped better than some insiders the larger implications of glossolalic experience. For Cox, speaking in tongues was ecstatic experience (Cox 1995: 86–96), a mark of Spirit-baptism (p. 88), sensual or embodied speech (pp. 94–95), “scat-singing” (traditionally called “moaning” in black church culture; p. 148), “populist mysticism” (p. 315), a protest of otherwise unnoticed persons (p. 178), and “cultural subversion, a liberating energy . . . to praise God in a language . . . not controlled by dominant modes of religious discourse” (p. 315). On the other hand, tongue-speaking could degenerate into mere performance – something done for display (pp. 270–271). Cox touched on the eschatology of tongue-speaking – an “anguish and yearning” for the kingdom yet to come (p. 315). Cox linked glossolalia to what he called “primal speech” or “the preverbal expression of pressing needs, demanding urges, and tumultuous emotions that is so evident in infants. Babies gurgle with pleasure, scream with pain, and howl with fear” (p. 88). In tongue-speaking, primal speech once again comes “bursting to the surface” (p. 88; all citations from Cox 1995).

Interpretations of tongue-speaking and Spirit baptism are varied. One of the earliest views – stemming from Charles Parham – was that glossolalia was *xenolalia*, i.e., the utterance of an actual human language. When put to the test, some early Pentecostal missionaries were disillusioned to discover that what they thought was Chinese or Arabic was nothing of the kind. They had to learn foreign languages using traditional methods. Nonetheless, pentecostals did not cease to believe in the divine character of their glossolalia. While the “Bible evidence” or “initial evidence” idea was soon established among North American pentecostals, it too was called into question. Charles Parham’s African-American disciple – William Seymour – argued that tongue-speaking in itself was not “evidence” of Spirit baptism, since this outward phenomenon existed among non-Christians such as psychics and occultists. “Divine love,” wrote Seymour, was the clearest indication (Braithwaite 2010). Love could not be faked. For some participants at the Azusa Street Revival, the overcoming of race, class, and gender barriers was the foremost demonstration of the Spirit’s presence and power. Beginning in the 1980s, the so-called “Third Wave” movement of John Wimber and his Vineyard Church treated tongue-speaking as one of many spiritual gifts – any of which could function as the starting point for a richer spiritual experience. Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia developed an expansive theology of Spirit baptism, interpreting the experience as a Trinitarian act, infilling with divine love, and introducing one to communal life (Macchia 2006; Moon 2012). South Korean Pentecostal leader, David (Paul) Yonggi Cho, affirmed “initial evidence” and yet added a prophetic dimension. Tongue-speakers receive “revelational knowledge.” Through intense, Spirit-guided prayer, they can come to visualize God’s purposes and then pray in faith to receive the “triple blessing” of salvation, health, and prosperity (Chan 2004: 79–89). Cho’s teaching on Spirit baptism centers as much on prophecy as on tongue-speaking.

## The Gift of Prophecy

According to Niels Hvidt, “prophecy” in the sense of Spirit-given or Spirit-guided utterance has existed in the Christian Church from the first century to the present time,

though generally not categorized as “prophecy” (Hvidt 2007: 3–21). To many Christian thinkers, the association of “prophecy” with the writing of scripture meant that prophecy could not continue once the canon of scripture was closed. Yet this viewpoint conflicts with the Old and New Testaments, where one finds so-called speaking prophets as well as writing prophets. In Acts of the Apostles, a man named Agabus, the four daughters of Philip, and other unnamed disciples are all said to “prophesy” or to be “prophets” though none of them wrote any scriptural texts (Acts 11:27–28; 21:4, 8–14). Theologically speaking, it seems that some “prophets” of the biblical era had a universal teaching office and wrote scripture for future generations. Other “prophets” of the biblical era spoke occasional, circumstantial messages to their contemporaries and to them alone – “for edification, exhortation, and consolation” (1 Cor. 14:3). It is this latter form of “prophecy,” arguably, that has continued (Grudem 2000; Hvidt 2007).

Following the church’s second-century controversy over Montanism – describing itself as the “new prophecy” – prophecy was demoted in importance and reinterpreted as a matter of “private revelation.” The idea was that the Holy Spirit might give guidance to individuals but not messages for the community at large. To be sure, some authors did not exclude the possibility of prophecy. Thomas Aquinas wrote: “At all times there have not been lacking persons having the spirit of prophecy, not indeed for the declaration of any new doctrine of faith, but for the direction of human acts” (*Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae, q.174, a.6, ad 3; cited in Hvidt 2007: 4). The prophetic writings of medieval mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen and Birgitta of Vadstena are not properly classified as “private,” since they aimed at the edification of the church. Thus one might question the general classification of post-biblical charismatic experiences as “private revelations” (Hvidt, 2007: 10; Adnes 1987; Adnes 1993). It might be better to distinguish “*private* particular revelations” from “*public* particular revelations” (Hvidt 2007, 12). “Public revelations” are those that include a divine call to preach or transmit a message to others. The “prophet” may be defined as “a Christian who, through experienced revelations, receives a message that he or she is directed to hand on to the church for its edification” (Hvidt 2007: 10).

On the Catholic view, prophetic experiences are not self-authenticating, but must be tested by their conformity to scripture and/or the apostolic tradition or “deposit of faith.” Yet prophecy as such is affirmed. Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) stated simply that “the prophet is someone who tells the truth on the strength of his contact with God” (quoted in Hvidt 2007: vii). Prophecy may represent a rediscovery of, or reemphasis on, previously revealed truths. Francis of Assisi, for example, did not invent the idea or practice of “holy poverty.” Yet Francis – guided by the Spirit – introduced his contemporaries to something that to them seemed new.

Protestants of the sixteenth century reacted sharply to claims to prophetic experience during the 1520s and 1530s, beginning with Martin Luther’s ill-fated encounters with the Zwickau Prophets of Switzerland, the prophetic-revolutionary figure of Thomas Müntzer, and the Anabaptists who seized the city of Münster. Following these episodes, to claim prophetic inspiration was seen as a sign of *Schwärmerei* (“fanaticism”) and a negation of biblical authority. Later Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anglicans followed the precedents set earlier. Post-biblical “prophecy” was a contradiction in terms. If the term “prophecy” was used at all, it denoted biblical preaching.

Early American pentecostalism was more focused on tongue-speaking than on prophecy, though early pentecostal writings include many claims to supernatural knowledge. The Latter Rain Revival, beginning in Canada in 1948, gave central place to the gift of prophecy. Special gatherings, known as “prophetic presbyteries,” brought together pentecostal laity with those reputed to have prophetic gifts. After laying hands on each person, the prophets would speak words of personal instruction, exhortation, and direction, taken to be Spirit-given. The Latter Rain movement became controversial and was soon disfellowshipped by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) and the Assemblies of God (AG) in the United States. Nonetheless, its emphasis on prophetic ministry fed into the earlier phases of the Charismatic Renewal in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, and the more exuberant spiritual expressions of the “Kansas City Prophets” during the 1980s and the “Toronto Blessing” movement of the 1990s (McClymond 2007, *passim*; Jackson 1999: 174–241, 282–338).

Only a few modern field studies of Christian prophecy have been published. Research into prophecy among Catholic Charismatics in the United States in the 1970s suggests that the phenomenon was less revolutionary than might be imagined. In general the prophetic utterances spoken in group meetings functioned as an “affective” reinforcement for ideas and values already prevalent in the group. What is more, the women who spoke up in these meetings were closely supervised by the male laypersons in charge (McGuire 1977). While these results cannot be generalized beyond the time and place where the observations were made, they raise questions regarding the scope and significance of Christian prophecy.

In Africa, the major founders of African Initiated Churches have often been referred to as “prophets.” This includes such figures as William Wadé Harris and Simon Kimbangu. Both men had powerful, visionary experiences through which they were summoned to preach. Both preached to multitudes. Both called for the destruction of fetishes or ritual objects associated with African traditional religions ([www.dacb.org](http://www.dacb.org), accessed October 19, 2015). Within the African context, then, prophecy has not been merely a function within existing churches but a decisive factor in the founding of new churches. The African Christian prophet Johane Masowe complained about the missionary-led churches: “When we were in these synagogues [i.e., mission churches] we used to read about the works of Jesus Christ . . . cripples were made to walk and the dead were brought to life . . . We were taught to read the Bible, but we ourselves never did what the people in the Bible used to do” (cited in Hvidt 2007: 19). Prophecy in Africa has been a starting point for newer and more fully indigenous expressions of Christianity.

## Exorcism or Deliverance from Evil Spirits

The New Testament gospels portray Jesus exorcising or casting out demons from human beings. Graham Twelftree has gone so far as to call exorcism the “cornerstone” of Jesus’ ministry in the gospels (Parry 2011: 3). The episode of the Gerasene demoniac is especially dramatic and strange (Mk. 5:1–20). The text states that the man in question showed superhuman strength, so that he could not be bound by chains or shackles.

When Jesus asks his name, a voice replies “my name is Legion, for we are many.” Then when Jesus commands the demons to leave the man, they enter into a herd of pigs that suddenly rush down an embankment and drown in the Sea of Galilee. Generally speaking, the phenomenology of demonic possession in the New Testament corresponds with phenomena reported from all around the world and through the centuries – in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, medieval and modern Europe, and the societies of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas (Oesterreich 1966 [1930]).

The core idea of demonic possession is that a human being has been “invaded by a new personality” or “governed by a strange soul” (Oesterreich 1966: 17). The normal “self” is displaced by a new “ego” that is typically foul-mouthed and opposed to accepted ethical and religious values. The facial and bodily appearance may alter. There may be bodily contortions. The tone of the voice may change. The “possessed” human being may be unaware of what is happening in the case of “the somnambulistic form of possession.” Two different personalities switch back and forth, and the person in question may have no recollection of what has happened while the other personality is in charge. In the “lucid form of possession” a person remains aware and conscious of the other personality (Parry 2011).

The English word “possessed” does not correspond to any phrasing in the Greek New Testament, which speaks instead of those who are “demonized” (Gk., *daimonizomenos*). On this basis, some contemporary scholars suggest that “possession” may not be a helpful word or concept. They propose instead that there is a spectrum that ranges from harassment or affliction, at one end of the scale, to deeper levels of obsession, and finally to full possession of the sort portrayed in the case of the Gerasane demoniac. Some contemporary Christians disavow the word “exorcism,” because it evokes sensationalized images drawn from popular media, and also because it suggests a ritualized, liturgical practice by a priest. Pentecostal-Charismatics do not rely on liturgies or priests to cast out demons. Generally they prefer the term “deliverance” or “liberation” – corresponding to the Spanish *liberación* and Portuguese *libertação* – in part because these words emphasize the human beings freed from demons rather than the demons themselves (Bottari 2000).

After the well-known witch trials of the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries, Satan and the demonic were deemphasized in most Western cultures. The spectacular exorcisms at an Ursuline convent at Loudon, France in 1634, and the Salem, Massachusetts, witch trials in 1692, brought discredit on those who had accused and prosecuted the supposed witches (Sluhovsky 2007). Johann Christian Blumhardt (1805–1880), whose ministerial career stretched over fifty-one years, helped to reintroduce exorcism into European church life. A key event in his earlier life was an episode involving the sisters Gottlieb and Katharina Dittus. Though Blumhardt had had no previous experience with exorcism, the pleas for help he received drew him into prayers that were initially unsuccessful. Seeking to emulate Jesus’ saying in Mark 9:29 – “this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting” – Blumhardt launched into a prolonged period of fasting and prayer that came to a climax at 2 a.m. on December 28, 1843, when one girl shouted, “Jesus is Victor!” The girls were said to be troubled no more by evil spirits, and Blumhardt drew the conclusion that God’s power would triumph over all forms of illness and evil. Many healings were later reported. The great twentieth-century theologian

Karl Barth acknowledged and drew from Blumhardt's insights regarding the victory of Christ's kingdom over the forces of evil (Barth 1947: 591–597; Barth 1961: 168–171). Another factor in the late nineteenth century was reportage from missionaries around the world who had witnessed signs of demonic possession. A Presbyterian missionary to China, John Nevius, published a well-documented book, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes* (1894) that served as a basis for further discussion.

The final decades of the twentieth century showed a heightened interest in exorcism and demons in Western cultures. The 1972 Church of England report (Petitpierre 1972) was a landmark document that laid out specific guidelines for when and how exorcism might be done in an orderly fashion. By contrast, the Hollywood film, *The Exorcist* (1973), depicted a definitely disorderly exorcism. This movie proved to be a trendsetter and the first of many horror films on similar themes. During the 1990s, the Roman Catholic Church increased the number of exorcists it appointed (Wilkinson 2007), and it replaced "The Roman Ritual of Exorcism" (1952) with a new rite, "Concerning Exorcisms and Certain Supplications" (1999). At the turn of the millennium, some were critical of what they took to be an excessive preoccupation with demons among evangelicals and pentecostals alike. Every human problem – whether the impulses of fear, greed, or lust, or dilemmas of poverty and family conflict – was being blamed on demons (Tennant 2001). What is more, the notion of "territorial demons" suggested that evil spirits could not only possess individuals but whole regions and populations. C. Peter Wagner taught that the progress of evangelism and church ministry in a given region might require concentrated group prayer to "bind" the evil influences of hindering, territorial spirits (Wagner 1991; Wagner 1992; Lowe 1998).

In contemporary Brazil, Pentecostal Christians hold special services to offer deliverance from the demons thought to be associated with Afro-Brazilian religions such as Macumba, Candomblé, and Umbanda. The *Igreja Pentecostal Deus É Amor* (God is Love Pentecostal Church) practices congregational exorcisms of Afro-Brazilian spirits and these have become a major attraction of its services. *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) reflects a pervasive anxiety about the presence and activity of evil spirits. During congregational prayer, and in a state of high emotion, the whole community works to exorcise "demons" present in the service. Some individuals show disturbing physical manifestations, and then the exorcism is completed in a dramatic fashion – on stage and before the whole congregation. Such practices have spread from Brazil to other parts of Latin America, with varying degrees of acceptance and success. Often in Latin American Pentecostalism "alcoholism" is viewed as a demon from which a person needs deliverance (Anderson 2011: 105). In Argentina, the best-known Pentecostal leaders – Omar Cabrera, Carlos Annacondia, and Claudio Freidzon – exorcize demons in public confrontations that take place at the end of their worship services. Yet deliverance in Argentine Pentecostalism does not necessarily happen all at once. Sometimes hours of "spiritual warfare" prayer must take place to get rid of an offending demon. Sometimes there is a call for a verbal renunciation of past practices and a destruction of religious artifacts that are seen as ties or bonds to the demonic world (Anderson 2011: 106).

Deliverance or exorcism in an African context is a complex theme, since it involves an interaction of multiple strands – the classical Pentecostal churches in Africa (beginning

in 1908); the Spirit churches (beginning in the 1910s and 1920s); and the independent Charismatic churches (since the 1980s). In South Africa, there are Zionist and Apostolic churches that have roots in the North American ministry of John Alexander Dowie, in Zion, IL. These churches stress healing, deliverance, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and baptism by immersion. They reject modern medicine and the eating of pork. Opoku Onyinah coined the term “witchdemonology” to refer to the process of exorcism among contemporary Akan Pentecostals in Ghana. He argues that the focus of traditional Akan religious activity is *abisa*, which refers to divinatory consultation based on the desire to know the supernatural causes of one’s problems. Pentecostal exorcism, he argues, rests on the same basic assumptions. In practice this means that a period of consultation must take place before deliverance can occur. “Prayer camps” are set up where a person thought to be possessed seeks to determine what is wrong. One possibility is “ancestral curses.” Deliverance services may take up an entire day (Anderson 2011: 107–109). In 1987, the English Charismatic leader Derek Prince visited Ghana, and this influenced the Ghanaian deliverance ministry of Benson Idahosa (1938–98), which then spread out across West Africa (Anderson 2011: 107–111). Derek Prince was hardly what one might expect in a Christian deliverance minister. A graduate of Eton and Trinity College at Cambridge University, Prince refused a fellowship at Cambridge to pursue Christian ministry.

In Nigeria, there is a strong belief in localized spirits such as Mami Wata – a mermaid-like water deity, also known as the “Queen of the Coast.” Emmanuel Eni has claimed to have been her devotee before he was converted and began in Christian deliverance ministry. Liturgies of deliverance are now emerging within Nigerian Pentecostalism, like Daniel Kolawole Olukoya’s “elaborate liturgy of prayers . . . to liberate Christians from demonic powers and remove obstacles to individual progress and prosperity.” In formal Pentecostal prayers, the actual verbalizing or speaking aloud is crucial. One ought to name all possible sources of demonic attack in one’s prayers (e.g., ancestral curses, witchcraft, unrecognized links to idolatry, particular spirits of envy, anger, etc.). To guide verbal prayer, sometimes questions are first asked or a formal questionnaire is used to determine what evil powers need to be mentioned and then submitted to Christ or placed “under the blood of Christ.” For Ghanaian Pentecostals, deliverance is an encompassing concept. It does not refer only to the casting out of demons but to the whole process of gaining freedom from sin, Satan, and the obstacles of life (Anderson 2011: 111–112).

A stress on evil spirits is more common in West Africa than in South Africa – where traditional cultures affirm the beneficent effects of the ancestors. The departed ancestors were thought to be guardians and protectors of the living. Yet they were also thought to bring harm to those who ignored their instructions. African Pentecostals have responded to the cult of the ancestors in quite antithetical ways. The most frequent response is the rejection of the ancestors – and all their related ceremonies and paraphernalia. The ancestors are simply dead or are demons impersonating human beings. Yet for a minority in the so-called spiritual churches, the ancestors still play a role and need to be respected and obeyed. They may reveal God’s will to the living (Anderson 2011: 113–115).

In East Asian Christianity, the role of exorcism is not as well documented as it is in Africa. Yet we know that a nineteenth-century Chinese pastor – Hsi Shengmo



(1836–1896) – operated “opium refuges” in which he used Chinese medicines for overcoming opium addiction and also prayed for the sick and cast out demons. The Korean Pentecost of 1907–8 commenced at a conference in Pyongyang under the Presbyterian elder Sun Ju Kil. Soon thereafter, the revival preacher, Ik Du Kim, became well known for healing the sick and casting out demons. Western missionaries were not comfortable with the “Pentecostal” direction being taken. Yet after investigating the alleged healings that took place under Ik Du Kim, the Presbyterian Church in Korea under indigenous leadership modified its position on divine healing in 1923 and so accepted healing as a continuing reality in the church. John Sung (1901–1944) – perhaps the greatest Chinese evangelist of the twentieth century – was not technically Pentecostal, but held revival meetings throughout China and the Chinese diaspora that featured healing and the casting out of demons. Episodes of healing and deliverance were reported during the Indonesian Revival of the 1960s (Tari 1973). In India, D. G. S. Dhinkakharam (1935–2008) was a well-known healer and exorcist. Somewhat surprisingly, the global pentecostal leader David Yonggi Cho says little about deliverance from demons, though he does identify Satan as the source of sin, sickness, and poverty (Anderson 2011: 116–117).

In Seoul, South Korea, the Baptist minister, Ki Dong Kim, has been rejected by many Christian leaders – along with his deliverance ministry – because of his non-standard theological view that demons are the spirits of deceased unbelieving human beings (Kim 1997). The continuity with traditional Korean shamanistic beliefs – that sicknesses are inflicted by the spirits of the dead – is obvious. While Kim has “demonized” these departed human spirits, he also insists they are now subject to Christ and so can be cast out. Allan Anderson comments that “this is . . . what happens all over the Majority World, where local religion has been appropriated by Pentecostals and then is confronted by the use of new Christian terminology setting the old spirits against the new Christian revelation” (Anderson 2011: 118).

## Conclusion: On Spiritual Improvisation

The practice of charismatic gifts does not merely add new elements to Christian experience, but it shifts its ethos and tenor in the direction of what we might call spiritual improvisation. One mark of charismatic worship is that no one knows in advance what is going to happen. Early pentecostals refused to print service bulletins listing a preacher, since the Holy Spirit might at any moment designate someone else to fulfill that role. Charismatic worship thus becomes an extended exercise in spiritual improvisation (Suurmond 1995: esp. 20–26). Not surprisingly, many observers have compared Pentecostal-Charismatic church life to jazz music, which begins with a few fixed points of reference (i.e., the key and tempo of the song) but with wide scope for individual players to “ad lib” and take the song in new directions. The drummer or bassist in a jazz quartet might shift the rhythm or riff of the song, with the pianist or horn players following. Any musician in the ensemble might introduce something new.

To share a personal anecdote: in a worship service that I observed among Haitian pentecostals in 2012, five or six songs occupied an hour's time, and yet no song ever came to an end. Each one gradually “morphed” into the next. How the players

accomplished the necessary key and tempo changes between songs baffled me. Yet the shifting soundscape was an acoustical picture of improvisational worship. In a typical service, a leader would arise and pray. He might call on a particular woman to testify. Her testimony would lead another woman to offer a biblically based exhortation. This would lead in turn into a time of intercessory prayer. Then there would be new songs related to the emerging theme of the evening's worship – a theme not set at the beginning. It was charismatic jazz.

In the discussion above, we noted that interpretations of Spirit baptism may be expansive or constrictive, and the same principle applies to each of the charismatic gifts discussed. Healing might be viewed expansively so that nearly all of Christian experience is grouped under this one rubric. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu asks: "What is God doing in the world?" He offers an African answer: "God is healing people. In fact, he is healing the nations by restoring broken persons to health and wholeness" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004: 373). The same may be said regarding deliverance as a comprehensive way of interpreting Christian experience. Interpreting tongue-speaking, healing, prophecy, and deliverance expansively allows us to see these phenomena in their interconnectedness and in relation to the many phases and aspects of church life. Charismatic gifts enable the Christian church to function as a community of healing. In an improvisational process – one that charismatic Christians call "Spirit-led" – one will not know in advance what to do but will discover what to do in the process of actually doing it.

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# Changing Uses of Old and New Media in World Christianity

Jolyon Mitchell and Jeremy Kidwell

## Introduction: Outline and Definitions

The availability and uses of different media have significantly increased over recent decades. Within rapidly evolving communicative contexts, churches regularly interact with multiple kinds of media, while Christians serve both as media producers and consumers. Alongside newspaper articles, radio broadcasts and television programs, there are ever increasing numbers of web sites, phone “apps,” and digital short films. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this exponential growth: advances within communicative technologies and the convergence of different media, as well as the rise of global Pentecostalism and the spread of diverse Protestant and Catholic movements. Within these different traditions media are used for a wide variety of purposes, from teaching or evangelism to self-expression or self-promotion. Such communication often crosses national, continental and ethnic boundaries.

Media production and reception by Christians around the world are so varied and complex that a brief chapter such as this cannot provide an exhaustive survey. Instead, we concentrate upon concrete examples, in order to consider contrasting media productions, contexts and uses found across global Christianity. Though they may appear to be unique to Christian communities, the reasons for using media are not always overtly theological. There are, for example, surprising similarities in purpose between the Bolshevik use of media to challenge the church in the 1920s and the Western missionaries who used media to “evangelize” within former colonies. Such dynamic purposiveness also makes for surprising collaborations, similar to the one described below between political revolutionaries and Roman Catholic Christians in Guatemala.

This discussion is structured around three aspects of media: histories, productions and receptions. These categories are not airtight. For example, media production is

no longer restricted to professional, highly trained producers, as individuals, with no formal training, are now able to create digital productions themselves using mobile phones and the internet. Moreover, communication technologies are evolving and converging so rapidly that radio, television and film can no longer be solely viewed as discrete media. Movies, programs and broadcasts can all be found online. In order to understand the evolving role of media within World Christianity it is also necessary to consider media histories, social contexts, and technological transformations. These elements have contributed to how Christians have used and are using these developing media technologies, as well as how belief and practices have been shaped by their use.

Alongside histories, productions, and receptions, it is useful to distinguish between “primary” and “secondary” media. Primary media include spoken or sung words, facial movements, and other forms of non-verbal communication. The communicator, who uses primary media, must normally be present. This is a direct form of communication where voice, face, or body is the actual tool of communication. The use of primary media by Christians would include monks singing unaccompanied plainsong in monasteries, street or field preachers speaking to crowds of listeners, or liturgical dancers performing expressive interpretations of biblical stories. “Secondary media” refers to forms of communication where the original creator does not need to be present for the media to be effective. In a traditional sense, a pen, a brush, a chisel, or musical instrument may serve as a tools of secondary media. Historically, Christians have made extensive use of secondary media: Missionaries embraced the use of pamphlets, tracts, and posters to promote their understandings of Christianity (Morgan 1999). These early uses of media by Christians have a postcolonial legacy that we discuss below.

These two categories of primary and secondary media are made more complex by the advent of “electronic media.” In this third category, through radio, television, films and computers, the communicator can appear to be present while overcoming barriers of time and space. “Electronic media” is often now also divided between “old media” (such as the telegraph, film, and radio) and “new media” (such as the internet, the mobile phone and other more recent technologies that rely upon digital technologies). Through different “old” and “new” media, space and time can be compressed, so that distant places are brought close and lengthy events abbreviated. These two categories of old and new media are not watertight and often overlap in contemporary practice with the use of the internet, so that a video- or audio-recording of a church service might be distributed over the internet as streaming video or as an audio podcast.

The embracing of these rapidly expanding and changing forms of media by Christians around the world can be seen as a move beyond earlier criticisms of the media. The widespread use of both new and old media stands in contrast to those in past decades, particularly in the West, who were highly critical of new or dominant forms of media, such as radio, film or television. Each new communicative technology became a target of criticism. For example, several highly critical accounts of television emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, which partly reveal logo-centric theologies, as well as a nostalgia for the printed word and the logical, linear world that it apparently upheld (Muggeridge 1977; Ellul 1985; and Postman 1985). Such criticisms have not, however, undermined the use of television or other media by Christians for a host of communicative ends. The extensive uses of media in World Christianity today reveal more confident engagements and creative productions.

## Histories

Any historical account is complicated by the fact that electronic media, even the so-called “old media,” are not very old in comparison to many of the non-electronic media used by Christians. Many of these somewhat confusingly named “old” technologies did not exist until the past century and a half, or in the case of the internet, only a few decades ago. This means that use of the electronic media is still a relatively new phenomenon. Television, for example, became increasingly popular in Europe and North America during the 1950s, but it took several further decades for it to be put to extensive use in the South or “developing world.” As a brief survey of selected media “histories” in World Christianity reveals, there are ambiguous legacies in media use that continue to persist. Media were used to colonize, oppress and even enslave. These histories are not, however, determinative of current use. Instead, use of media in World Christianity carries both continuities and discontinuities with earlier communicative legacies. Media can still be used to caricature or demonize the other, though it can also be used to promote peaceful engagement with former enemies (Mitchell 2012).

The ambiguous use of media can be clearly seen in the colonial entanglement between media and Christianity. Because many of the so-called “old media” were first used by Christians during periods of colonial expansion by Western nations, the history of Christian use of these media technologies is entangled with that of colonialism. This can be seen in the histories of film in both West and East Africa. During the early development of cinema in the first part of the twentieth century, moving pictures were both produced and used by incomers to Africa. In particular, foreign missionaries and colonial authorities made use of moving pictures for educational or evangelistic purposes. Though the novelty of these films, displayed using portable projection equipment or in purpose-built outdoor or indoor cinema, often drew large crowds, early reception of these films varied. For example, Amadou Hampaté Ba, a well-known author from Mali, recalls a screening shown in his village in 1908, which the French governor insisted that the local population should view. In opposition, as Bottomore summarizes, the religious leaders pronounced that it was a:

“satanic seduction” and those people who did turn up thought the images diabolical and closed their eyes. A generation later films were shown in the village and Ba persuaded his mother to watch and a few days later she thanked him for this, because she now decided that cinema was not, after all, irreligious. (1999: 216)

This account shows how for many across the world, initial suspicion of cinema (inspired in part by personal belief and religious authorities) was either moderated or even replaced by appreciation for film. Responses to film evolved as the medium became more commonplace. This can be seen in other parts of the world.

In a similar way, the early reception of film by religious authorities in tsarist Russia was ambivalent or suspicious. Initially, the cinematic portrayal of Jesus was a complete taboo and provided the basis for Russia’s first film censorship document



in 1898: "On the inadmissibility of holy subjects being shown by means of the so-called 'Living photography'." Just over a decade later, in 1913, the tsar famously suggested, "I consider cinematography to be an empty, useless and even pernicious diversion." Yet this denouncement cloaked a more ambivalent attitude. Following the precedent set by the czar, who employed a court film-maker to record significant events, between 1907 and the World War I over 1,800 newsreels were produced and a number of fiction films which depicted religious themes and figures. After the 1917 revolution, the new communist leaders were even more enthusiastic about the use of film for propaganda purposes. An article by Leon Trotsky in *Pravda* on "Vodka, the Church, and the Cinema" (July 12, 1923) reveals the belief that film could be used to undermine Christianity in post-revolutionary Russia: "The cinema amuses, educates, strikes the imagination by images, and liberates you from the need of crossing the church door." In other words cinema had the potential to replace the need for visiting traditional places for worship. Trotsky and other early Soviet film-makers believed that cinema could be used as a powerful tool of persuasion to promote the new atheistic regime.

Several Western governments observed how the Bolsheviks in post-revolutionary Russia used film as a tool for propaganda and deployed this example in various locations throughout Africa. The British Colonial office, the International Missionary Council, and the Carnegie Trust supported the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE) which was set up in 1936 for work in East Africa. The project produced thirty-five black and white films that covered educational topics including soil erosion, infant malaria, and the Boy Scouts. These films were shown to over one hundred thousand people and this paved the way for a new effort begun in 1939, the Colonial Film Unit, which sought to persuade African audiences to support Britain during the Second World War. The films reflect faith in the colonial enterprise and they have been criticized for idealizing the West and caricaturing African culture and traditional religions.

It was not until the 1960s that Africans themselves began to produce films in significant numbers, the success of which can be seen in the All-African film festival (FESPACO) in Burkino Faso, which began in 1969. Many of the films produced under these auspices question the religious traditions that were being brought to Africa. In this way, they offer a critique of the darker sides of the missionary efforts of both Islam and Christianity. The film *Ceddo* (1977, directed by Ousmane Sembène from Senegal) is one the best known films to tackle this subject with the "*ceddo*" or "commoners" attempting to resist the encroachments of both Christian and Islamic missionaries. This critical posture, however, is not universal. As we discuss further in the section on "Productions," there is now a growing movement in West African film towards locally produced productions, which commonly portray certain kinds of Christianity in a highly positive light. Locally produced Nollywood (i.e., Nigerian) films have become big business. Portraying charismatic forms of Christianity has proved attractive to film audiences not only in West Africa but also in Southern and Eastern Africa. In the next sections we examine different Christian uses and experiences of old and new media in contexts across the world. These portraits provide the basis for an examination of the reasons and contexts for Christian use of media.

## Productions

“Productions” serve as the initial stage in the circuit of communication as they provide the basis for the creation of media. This stage includes both the productive processes (e.g. filming, editing, or scriptwriting) and the social relationships by which media outputs come to be made. A substantial change in Christian use and generation of media has come in the past century with regards to infrastructure. While early expressions of Christian media employed existing public and private mass communications infrastructure, more recently Christian media producers have begun to purchase and to develop their own radio and television broadcasting infrastructure. This is, in some cases to gain further control over evangelism, but also as an avenue to enlarging the prestige of individual preachers or churches. These productive enterprises also involve a wide variety of media including television, music, and radio.

In a study of Pentecostal preachers in South America, Smith and Campos observe how preachers in Brazil have “built successful religious franchises that have accumulated sufficient resources to finance major incursions into the commercial media” (Smith and Campos 2005: 49). This marks a new frontier for non-Western Christian use of media. As in many other cases across the world, early experiments by Brazilian evangelicals in television media were frustrated by high costs for production and commercial air time and as a result much of the initial Christian television broadcasting deployed in Brazil, starting in 1978, was imported from the US (p. 57). The recent success of the Universal Church of the Reign of God (IURD) provides a locally developed example of a Christian media empire in Brazil which is able to accumulate necessary funds to underwrite major media ventures. The founder of the IURD, Edir Macedo, acquired a commercial network Reid Record in 1989 for \$45 million and the headquarters and production equipment of a TV station, Jovem Pan, for \$15 million (p. 58). On the basis of this acquisition, IURD’s marketing strategy “includes the use of all forms of media: radio, television, newspapers, magazines and the Internet” (p. 58). While the localization of Christian production of media is a noteworthy change, as Smith and Campos go on to relate, this newly indigenous media empire has also provided the basis for intensified commodification of religious faith pioneered by North American television preachers: “The Pentecostal television preachers market individualized consumer religion . . . consumers, whatever their social class, enter the marketplace and take from the shelf those symbolic goods they need to get them through the week: an ounce of self-esteem, a packet of hope, a portion of pardon, essence of encounter with the divine” (p. 61). In the case of IURD, this is facilitated by media broadcasts with a “blessing address,” which direct people towards local temples where offerings are received. The authors of this study suggest this “highly centralised network of temples” function as “religious franchises, capable of generating a large and reliable flow of cash” (p. 59). While this new Brazilian venture serves as an example of a new local autonomy from Western productions, they nevertheless maintain some connection to the commercial paradigms latent in North American Christian television production.

Another new local expression of Christian media can be found with the contemporary use of film and television in parts of Africa. Here again, one finds local elements, which have been adapted to fit perceived audiences. Just as above, some media critics

argue that practice in this context also contains vestiges of colonial media production practice. Several African countries have not yet produced a full-length feature film, and cinemas and video shops in certain parts of Africa are dominated by films from Hollywood and Bollywood. Significant exceptions to this rule are Nigeria and Ghana. These two countries are experiencing something of a renaissance in locally produced films. Films produced here are gaining circulation and popularity across Anglophone Africa. Particularly noteworthy in these films is the prominence of religious themes, which reflect local beliefs and practices. Yet these films are not without controversy. They frequently caricature, stereotype or even demonize traditional religious leaders (Mitchell 2004). By contrast, in the same films, pastors from the independent Pentecostal or Charismatic churches are often portrayed as powerful and dynamic as they help to overcome evil forces. In one example, in the Nigerian film *Magic Money*, the final scene portrays a showdown between a Christian pastor and African traditional priest where both summon help from their respective Gods. Both dance on the spot and gesticulate aggressively, but the Christian pastor is able to call upon a more powerful force and the traditional priest is literally laid low. In this way, some Nollywood films slide into what has been described as an unjustified attack upon traditional religion. These are consciously produced to appeal to audiences composed of Charismatic or Pentecostal Christians (Meyer 2005).

While in the previous example, media are mobilized to provide entertainment and education for Christians, in another example with the television-saturated Christian context of Ghana, we find that the reciprocal situation is also possible, where media can contribute to the shaping of Christianity. Scholars in communication studies have identified this phenomenon as part of what is described as “mediatization,” where “religion is increasingly being subsumed under the logic of the media, both in terms of institutional regulation, symbolic content and individual practices” (Hjavarud 2008: 11). In a study on televised Christianity, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu argues that neo-Pentecostal Christians in Ghana have developed “a unique religious discursive practice suited to the demands of the media” (2005: 10). In this way of thinking, producers are not passively (or exclusively) shaped by mediatization. Instead, the engagement between producer and media is more dynamic. Asamoah-Gyadu notes that the worship services of Charismatic Ministries (CMs) are often developed specifically around parameters set by television production. Drawing upon the critique of television developed by John Fiske in *Television Culture*, Asamoah-Gyadu argues that the medium and production of television creates a visually generated cultural reinforcement. This is because, as Fiske explains, television production uses elements such as angle and focus to give us a seemingly “perfect view of the scene” (2011: 5). He goes on to argue that “much of the pleasure of television realism comes from this sense of omniscience that it gives us” (p. 5). On this basis, pastors are visually presented as “social heroes” of the charismatic gospel of prosperity. While some scholars (see Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose 1996) deny that this is an authentically African expression of Christianity, Asamoah-Gyadu argues that a more subtle appropriation is at work: “The media ministries of Ghana’s CMs reflect modern African ingenuity in the appropriation of neo-Pentecostal techniques, style and strategy in organization and expression” (2005: 21). While it was assumed that the fall from grace of many televangelists in the USA (such as

Jimmy Baker or Jimmy Swaggert) in the 1980s marked the end of this genre of Christian broadcasting, the examples from Brazil and Ghana demonstrate how forms of Christian production media can find iterations with both contrasts and similarities in different global contexts.

Another crucial element of Christian use of media has been the occurrence of innovation in the production of content. In recent expressions in World Christianity, one finds new creative alliances. An example of this can be found in El Salvador with the collaboration between anti-government guerrillas and elements of the Roman Catholic Church who came together based on a shared desire for political change (Darling 2008: 132). Radio Venceremos, founded in 1981, serves as a prominent example of media use by Christian liberation theologians. The use of radio was a crucial choice as most other media in El Salvador lacked the same footprint. The largest newspapers had a circulation of 100,000, and Salvadorans owned only about 20,000 televisions, in contrast to 1.5 million radios. As Darling's interviews revealed, airing rebel arguments opened up a public media space and created "a community of listeners across the country and around the world who had access to information and a point of view that the government had denied them" (p. 139). The role of local Christians in the venture was of crucial importance for its success: "From the first broadcast, the rebel station looked to the Church to justify the rebellion to listeners, who were potential sympathizers, potential recruits" (p. 141). Broadcasts also used biblical analogies to justify participation in the rebellion and aired recordings of special masses for the dead at massacres by Fr. Rogelio Poncele. The latter in particular provided validation by church leaders of news reported which had been denied by Salvadoran and American government. As Darling relates, "the broadcast became crucial to the struggle for credibility. He was vouching for the guerrilla claims that the massacre did happen, backing that claim with his integrity as a priest" (p. 143). The alliance between priests and guerrillas was not always easy or agreeable, yet this alliance provided the basis for what Darling argues was the "development of a public sphere" (p. 146).

In concluding this section on "productions" it is useful to observe that, in contemporary media production by Christians, commercial success is not guaranteed. In some cases, the shape of Christianity in a particular location frustrates attempts by Christians to develop local media productions. In the study by Smith and Campos cited above, the authors provide Guatemala as a counter-example to Brazil. As their study shows, in Guatemala similarly entrepreneurial preachers have failed to achieve the same levels of media infrastructure development. In the Guatemalan context, "the spontaneity of Pentecostalism has combined with a nascent entrepreneurial spirit to produce hundreds of independent local churches" (Smith and Campos 2005: 55). Yet the consequence of this success is "the highly fragmented social and ecclesial climate" which "has led to fierce competition for the loyalty of the faithful between religious entrepreneurs" (Smith and Campos 2005: 49). As a consequence of this fragmented and competitive climate, Guatemalan Christian television production has a limited impact on the broader society (p. 55). In this example, television is not culturally sidelined, as the competition just described is oriented towards the ownership of a television or radio program but Christians have nonetheless failed to develop the unified and economically viable expression that was found in Brazil.

Across the various productions described above, one finds uses of both new and old media in World Christianity which betrays both new and old production paradigms. Vestiges of colonial influence may remain, as in the stereotypes of traditional African religion in Nollywood film and Brazilian appropriations of televised “consumer” Christianity, yet in all cases it is an open question as to whether local producers may challenge Western production paradigms through creative and subversive uses of electronic media. Here Christians use media in unexpected ways: to effect political change, “perform” or celebrate prosperity, and provide entertainment. Similarly, producers are influenced by media with the possibility of mediation in Ghana, yet these engagements between Christians and media production are not necessarily predictable as producers manage to craft creative alliances and self-representations.

The significant point here is that representations of Christianity in film and other media are not as straightforward a communicative process as a producer may expect, particularly in trans-national productions. Audiences can be active, dynamic, and creative (Hoover 2006). One finds a similar mixture of creative appropriation in tension with the demands of media technology when looking at the life of media after it has been produced as in the case that we turn to next with “receptions.”

## Receptions

“Receptions” refer to the experience, engagement, and interaction with media by audiences. What one finds about Christian use of media from an examination of receptions is that it is unpredictable. Postures towards media and receptions may vary from one region to another and from one style of audio-visual media to another within the same Christian community. In a dissertation, Dwight Friesen analyses the Jesus film *Karunamayudu* (1978) produced by commercial film-makers in South India. Friesen produced a biography of this movie, from its creation and production to its multiple receptions. The film is significant in part because of its popularity: it is one of the world’s most viewed Jesus films and is screened by more than 270 exhibition teams there every week (Friesen 2010: 1). Friesen notes how the film’s final structure and style differs from the original screenplay written (in English) by Fr. Christopher Coelho. In particular, through his analysis, he finds that the film “Indianises the story of Jesus” (p. 128). While Friesen notes how “Coelho was also keen to present Jesus as ‘truly human’ in keeping with a Lukan portrait of Jesus the merciful healer” the “Hindu producers of *Karunamayudu* were more interested in casting him ‘in the style of Hindu mythology, as a superman and magician doing the sensational’ “(p. 131). These subtle changes and the hybrid of Christian and Hindu visual symbolism of the film do not make it less appropriate for Christian devotion and the film continues to be used for apologetic purposes in India. This demonstrates the dynamic where media content may take on an unexpected turn in meaning.

There is another equally important conclusion regarding media “receptions” from this study and this is to highlight the potential value that local productions of Christian films in World Christianity offer to Western audiences and critics.

Assessing the more obvious hybrid Jesus in *Karunamayudu* also invites a reflection on whether there may be similar but unnoticed inflections in Jesus films which have been produced in the West (p. 126). Christians across the world do not only use media, but they also “re-use” it in new creative appropriations. Friesen’s study reflects a further significant move within film criticism of religion in movies, which has tended to be Hollywood-centered and Eurocentric (e.g. Skinner 1993). This research stands alongside several other recent studies that have begun to reverse this trend: attending religious themes and films outside the Western film-making context (May 1997; Plate 2003; Mitchell 2007).

In developing a clearer understanding of various forms of media reception, television provides another useful example, in part because of its ubiquity. It is a part of the domestic landscape across the Christian world, with many homes in the developed world having multiple televisions not only in the sitting room but also in bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms. Even among poorer industrialized nations, one rarely finds a community without television, as they are located in bars, shops, railway stations, airports, and hospitals. A broad survey of media “receptions” in World Christianity may provides us with a preliminary answer to the question of where and when Christians use media: everywhere and at a wide variety of times. With regards to television, wherever electricity is easily available, it has become part of the urban wallpaper and Christians are increasingly experiencing Christianity through television. In one example, as many as 2 billion people saw John Paul II’s funeral at the Vatican, in Rome, on April 8, 2005. The ubiquity of television has made the medium the object of a number of strident critiques including several by Christian theologians as noted above.

It is important to note that reception is far from a universally passive experience. Instead, as media theorist, Stuart Hall argues, there are different modes of reception, or semiotic “decoding” as he describes it (Hall 1999). While production constructs a message, producers do not have absolute control over the subsequent life (as noted above under “creations”) or the *reception* of that message. There are different postures of reception that an audience may take ranging from passive acceptance of a media message to a more active negotiation of meaning. In particular, the ways in which viewers use the content of television broadcasting has come under increased scrutiny (see Hoover and Clark 2002).

Though Christians may use media production for the enhancement of prestige and the deployment of teaching and evangelism, Christian receivers of media also use it to construct meaning. Following the shift in communication studies in recent decades towards the “audience,” there has also been a shift in scholarly study of how *viewers* from different Christian traditions actually create meaning around television today (Horsfield and Medrano 2004). This has led to a reconsideration of the ways in which audiences develop practices of viewing that ensures that they can resist, negotiate or play with the meanings of what they see. For example, just as the use of radio broadcasting in Guatemala was meant to expand public space, some viewers in China during the 1980s appear to have used certain television programs as “a cultural reservoir of alternative visions,” which allowed them to “question traditional values and official interpretations” and thereby helped “them to imagine alternative ways of living” (Thompson 1995, 178 after Lull 1991). Television, and more recently other new media,

provide viewers with symbolic resources that they may then appropriate and recycle as they attempt to define their own identity, narrate their own life stories and understand the traditions and communities of interpretation that they belong to (Mitchell 2003: 339–340). New Christian uses of media leave open the possibility of an active audience, though this may not universally be the case.

Just as media reception may be less predictable than instrumental accounts of media may suggest, the Christian experience of media and, in particular, reception of audio-visual media in a particular cultural site may also be historically unstable. This is demonstrated in research by Sham P. Thomas conducted on television in the homes of Marthomite Christians in Kerala, South India (Thomas and Mitchell 2005). As Thomas relates, Marthomite Christian identity includes a ban on audio-visual media, particularly films. Even recently “it would be a scandal if a priest or bishop was seen to have gone to a cinema or theatre” in parts of Kerala (p. 30). Several decades ago, the supremacy of film in India was challenged with the television broadcasting of the first Hindu epic serial *Ramayana*. This provided the basis for a substantial shift in attitudes in India towards audio-visual media. For Christians, the domestic viewing context in which television was received made it less threatening than film. In India, this domestic context is seen as more “family friendly” because viewers have the ability to censor their viewing and choose their viewing company (p. 34). In this way, Christian attitudes towards one form of audio-visual media (film) did not guarantee that their attitude towards another (television) would be the same. Instead elements such as “viewing context, audience composition and control while viewing” were just as important in determining Christian reception of media (p. 33). The crucial point to be taken from these contexts is that Christian receptions of media are rarely static. Instead, they often have a complex interrelationship with their context such that a strong taboo regarding one form of media may give way to strong support for another. Christian receivers of media across the world are rarely passive, in fact they may covertly pursue alternate forms of media criticism and creation.

## Conclusion: Media Innovations and World Christianity

The digital revolution is radically changing how both communities and individuals use and interact with many forms of electronic media. This is particularly the case with the internet. According to the International Telecommunications Union, over 2.7 billion people (39% of world population) and over 750 million households (41% globally) use the internet, with a rate of 77% in developed countries (WTID 2013). This represents a massive increase from 2005 when rates were 7.8% in the developing world (15.8% overall) and a total of just over 1 billion internet users; and from 2000 when individual internet users represented just 6.5% of the world population; and 1995 when the overall global internet user rate was under 1% (World Bank Statistics).

One of the newest contexts for Christian use of media is therefore that of the internet. As already noted above, the expansion of the internet has been extraordinarily rapid and internet access has begun to be ubiquitous not just for Western Christians, but in a far more global sense. This internationalization of access represents a significant

change in usage for the world and it is paralleled in World Christianity. A widely cited distinction, first made by Christopher Helland (2000), between “Religion-Online” and “Online-Religion” can provide a map for describing how the internet is actually used by Christians around the world today. On the one hand, Christianity-Online (where Christians attempt to use the internet as a platform for communicating about Christianity which exists in an offline context) can be found in the numerous sites set up by specific Christian denominations such as those emerging out of the Vatican in Rome, or international groups such as *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or revival movements such as *El Shaddai* in Manila, and mega or smaller churches all over the world such as in Seoul, Accra, or Rio.

The fragmentary nature of “new media” makes it more difficult to analyze discretely, yet this is also where one finds a growing “Online-Religion” for World Christianity. There are now thousands of examples of web-blogs and web pages that reveal the individual poster’s own spiritual journey or existential questions. Portrayals of internet media as fragmentary can, however, lend a false sense of novelty to the context in which media is deployed, assuming that in previous generations and epochs Christianity has been institutionally monolithic and that this contemporary generation is the first to emphasize individual spiritual practice, trans-national communication, or communicative bricolage. It is important to recognize that this increasing awareness of the fragmentary nature of media (as a result of the explosion in the number of television channels, radio stations, and web sites) is also accompanied by a new awareness of the convergence of media as owners and producers of content in this fragmented marketplace are increasingly converging as a result of merging technologies and consolidated ownership of media outlets. These new fragmented and fragmenting forms of media such as internet-based social media communication represent an important area for future research, particularly in the non-Western context. So too is the blurring of the distinction between online and offline religion (e.g. Campbell 2008).

Though the situation of media fragmentation and increased media use by Christians may not be completely novel, new media perform a dynamic mediative role for Christians across the world, facilitating communication between not only one and many, but also among individuals. Different media may serve to bridge the gap between persons or groups of people, yet the very media which can compress vast distances and bring people closer together can also be used to accentuate difference, to extend divides and to inflame already tense situations. Consider for example, the use by extremist Hutus of a local radio station (RTL) and several newspapers before and during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 to stir up ethnic hatred (Mitchell 2012). Media may serve as a communicative bridge, but it can also create a communicative barrier. These potentially opposing uses underline the importance of informed critical perspectives upon Christian use of media in World Christianity. Such a critical approach is not dismissive of the various forms of media production, creation or reception by Christians across the world but which nevertheless evaluates the reverberations that evolving media can have across religious and ethnic communities. Across the world one finds a dynamic use of media by Christians who have found methods to appropriate different forms of media in both creative and traditional ways to teach, evangelize, perform, and communicate about Christian faith and practice. This dynamic use of media is remarkable and yet it is also consonant with the diverse texture of Christian communities around the world.



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## CHAPTER 32

# Global Evangelical and Pentecostal Politics

Paul Freston

This chapter is about the political implications of the popular forms of Protestant Christianity in the global South (Latin America, Africa, and Asia) of which pentecostals constitute the major segment. This Christianity is variously referred to as “fundamentalist,” “evangelical” or “sectarian.” Its global expansion represents a major religious transformation since the 1960s, affecting more established forms of Christianity as well as non-Christian religions, and constituting (along with Islam) perhaps the major grassroots religious presence in poor and volatile regions of the world. For its sheer size, vibrant growth, geographical spread, social, political and cultural effects, and potential dangers, this is a key phenomenon of religion and politics at the global level. The unifying theme is democracy, in a broad sense which includes not only a religion’s propensity to oppose dictatorships and deepen democracies, but also its attitudes towards political violence and religious freedom, and the presence or absence of notions of sacred community, sacred territory and divine law. The main question concerns what light is thrown by the globalization of Christianity on the historical correlation between Protestantism and democracy. Historically, democracy has been strongest in countries of a Western Christian tradition (initially Protestant, later Catholic as well). But is that a spurious correlation, dependent on other factors in the West which might not exist in the global South? As Christianity becomes more global it may become easier to separate “Western” from “Christian.”

The key theoretical debate is between essentialism and contextualism, i.e. between the weight of traditions and the importance of circumstances. On the one hand, we must question the idea that political consequences can be simply read off from religious doctrine. There may be affinities between certain religious and political doctrines, but many other factors come into play, both within the religious field and from the social context. So we should avoid “essentialist” ideas such as, for example, that Protestantism

is essentially democratic and Islam is essentially undemocratic. Religious traditions are not univocal or immutable; there is always diversity as well as development. On the other hand, we should avoid the opposite conclusion, that religious traditions are epiphenomenal and all show the same internal differences, with any variations being explained by different social contexts. In discussing global popular Protestantism, I want to navigate between these extremes. Religious traditions *are* important; it is sociological nonsense to say “all religions are the same.” If we recognize internal differences within major religions, we can also recognize that each religion’s internal diversity is not identical. The unique relationship of each religious tradition to sacred scriptures and to concepts of law, territoriality, religious organization, and religion–state relations must be thrown into the mix of factors that determine how believers will behave in particular circumstances. At the same time, religious traditions are not *all-important*. How important they are in each context has to be determined empirically, not decided beforehand.

## The Globalization of Christianity

Christianity is still often treated as the religion of the developed West. That is problematic today, when it has notable political involvement in the South. While Christianity as a percentage of world population neither declined nor grew during the twentieth century, there was a vital change in its composition. Its areas of recession (Europe and the “old Commonwealth”) were compensated by areas of accession (sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia, the Pacific). Christianity is now only 40% European and North American, as opposed to 80% in 1900.

Protestantism in the global South is often misleadingly portrayed as largely “made in the USA.” But in fact it has mostly spread independently of Western initiatives. This autonomous third world appropriation of Christianity has enabled it largely to transcend historical associations with colonialism, rendering Western Christian triumphalism and Western post-colonial guilt irrelevant for understanding, and making it necessary to understand non-Western political proclivities on their own terms. This also points to the need for an appropriate terminology to fit the new reality of Christianity into discussions of global politics which often juxtapose terms such as “the Islamic world” and “the West.” Christianity is more and more external to both these categories.

The globalization of Christianity, giving it a huge presence in economically and culturally distinct societies, has increased the variability of its relationship to politics which stemmed originally from its origin as a persecuted sect, the lack of a “law” in the Christian scriptures and the emphasis on cultural adaptation and the use of vernacular languages. At the same time, Christianity’s global spread (not primarily due to migration, as with many other religions, but to processes of conversion) has given it a footing as a minority virtually everywhere that it is politically permitted. If Christian minorities were historically located mainly in Muslim societies, with a well-defined *dhimmi* status, and in the colonial period in Africa and Asia were usually under Christian colonial rulers, nowadays Christian minorities find themselves under an immense variety of political systems.

## Global Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism

Our focus here will be on *evangelical* Protestantism, and in fact most Protestants in the global South would come under this rubric. Compared to Western Protestantism, the third world version is considerably more evangelical and is also largely pentecostal.

What are “evangelicals”? There is no globally accepted definition, but for our purposes the term refers to a sub-set of Protestants, distinguished by doctrinal and practical characteristics but not by denominational affiliation or even necessarily by self-labeling. Many recent studies have borrowed a working definition from historian David Bebbington (1989: 1), consisting of four emphases: conversionism (need for change of life), activism (missionary efforts), biblicism (special importance to the Bible, though not necessarily the fundamentalist idea of “inerrancy”) and crucicentrism (centrality of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross). Evangelicals are therefore found in many denominations. Most Southern Protestants are also pentecostal (highly supernaturalistic believers who emphasize the contemporary manifestations of “gifts of the Holy Spirit” such as speaking in strange tongues to worship God, divine healing, prophecy, and exorcism of evil spirits).

Since the term “evangelical” has become well known globally in conjunction with the American “religious right,” it is important to stress that, even though American missionary efforts are numerous, the vast majority of evangelical growth in the South is not due to them, but rather to indigenous initiatives. Global Southern evangelicalism is institutionally divided, strongly practicing and fast-growing. In most countries it is over-represented among the poor. It is not a state religion, and rarely has any unofficial privileged relationship with governments; in a few countries, it is discriminated against. Being a voluntary, non-traditional religion composed disproportionately of the poor, it usually does not have strong institutions and its cultural and educational resources are limited. Church divisions make it impossible to establish a normative “social doctrine.” It often has no international contacts, cutting it off from the history of Christian reflection on politics. It may be an *arriviste* minority inexperienced in the public sphere and still lacking full political legitimacy, but nevertheless confident (even excessively so) about its future.

Evangelicals probably (in a conservative estimate) number 300–400 million people, or 5% or 6 percent of world population, their importance enhanced by high levels of practice and global distribution. Together with Catholicism (whose 20% of world population includes many non-practicing affiliates), evangelicalism has been a fundamental contributor to the globalization of Christianity which has transformed it into a largely non-white religion, more and more distant from power and wealth. David Martin (2004: 277) discerns two main lines of evangelical expansion: the attraction of voluntaristic popular Christianity which emphasizes the Spirit, “spreading in partial alignment with the English language and Anglo-American influence”; and ethnic-minority evangelicalism (especially in Asia), involving “the emergence of minority self-consciousness which leaps over the pressure exercised by the local majority and links itself to evangelicalism as an expression of transnational modernity.”

The region of most startling expansion is sub-Saharan Africa. Believers of broadly evangelical characteristics, whether in mainline denominations, pentecostal groups or African Independent Churches, number perhaps 100–150 million. Another region of growth is Latin America. Long after their arrival in the nineteenth century, non-Catholic churches remained as insignificant as they still are in Latin Europe. But since the 1950s in Brazil and Chile and the 1970s elsewhere, they have grown considerably. The secure hegemony of early twentieth-century Catholicism is now threatened as Protestants have risen to 10% or more of the population (at least 50 million people). Of these, two-thirds are pentecostals. Pentecostalism is associated disproportionately with the poor, less educated, and darker-skinned.

While Asia remains by far the least Christianized continent, evangelicalism has done well in certain areas and probably totals some 60 million. The Philippines resembles Latin America in having a Catholic majority and a growing evangelical minority. In South Korea Protestantism numbers 20% of the population and has entered the national mainstream. Evangelical Christianity is also fairly strong among diaspora Chinese. And it has become the dominant religion among several ethnic minorities; there is now a swathe of mini-Christendoms among ethnic minorities from India to Indonesia. In addition, in India it is disproportionately located among the Dalits (“untouchables”). Last but not least, it has grown dramatically in China, both in the official Protestant Church and the unregistered churches. If we adopt a fairly conservative estimate of 50 million Christians in China, probably 25–30 million of those would be evangelicals. Some scholars regard China as poised to go through an explosion of Christian adherence similar to that of Africa in the twentieth century.

It is useful to ponder the term “fundamentalism” in relation to a globalizing world. I disagree with suggestions (Waters 1995; Beyer 1994) that a globalized world must lead either to religious relativism or to clashing fundamentalisms. Beyer (1990: 393) sees only two options for religion to have any public influence: the “liberal” option, ecumenical, tolerant, and making few really religious demands; and the “conservative” option which reasserts the religious tradition “in spite of modernity” and champions the cultural distinctiveness of a particular region, such as the New Christian Right and Islamist movements.

However, besides the relativizing reaction and the fundamentalist reaction, there is also what we might call the conversionist reaction to globalization. Peaceful conversionism is another plausible (and frequent) way of resolving the “crisis” of identity of a shrinking world. Indeed, it may fit well with the greater seriousness of faith which often accompanies the transformation of religion towards an achieved identity. The dynamic of conversion places evangelicalism in a different relationship to global cultural processes from either pan-religious ecumenism (tending to global homogeneity) or fundamentalism (tending to irreducible pockets of anti-pluralism). As generally a non-traditional religion (in the global South) spreading by conversion, its interests are usually the opposite of those of a reactive fundamentalism. For evangelicalism, pluralism and cultural diffuseness are advantageous, whereas fundamentalisms (and religious nationalisms) constitute its most serious barriers. It may be that evangelicalism flourishes best in a world that is *tranquilly religious*, rather than one that is either *secularized* or *defensively religious*.

The globalization of evangelicalism is largely conversionist rather than diasporic (although the latter also happens, as with African immigrants in Europe). Conversionist and diasporic globalization have different implications. If the de-territorialization and voluntarism usually associated with globalization really do expand, then conversion will become a major phenomenon of the twenty-first century. But works on religion and global politics often suppose a stable situation in terms of religious identities, varying only in the degree of political mobilization of such identities, whereas in fact switching of religion may be rife and may be creating both new conflicts as well as new bases for social cohesion. Since the rise of evangelicalism is usually related to large-scale conversion, it may provide an additional dimension to existing conflicts (Nigeria and Northeast India), or it may spark off a transition to a new relationship between state and religion (Latin America), requiring dynamic “handling” by the state (in legislation, day-to-day treatment and consultation) and society (social attitudes to religious change; who the media consult for a “religious viewpoint” on issues).

## Christianity and Islam: Law, Territory, and Power

Many leading scholars of religion and politics agree that there are differences between Christianity and Islam which transcend their social contexts. While Christianity started on the margins of an existing empire, Islam became the center of a new empire. Perhaps for that reason, Islam is not carried by a “church” distinct from other spheres of life. It also strongly emphasizes a religiously sanctioned body of laws, something absent in Christianity. Another contrast is in Islam’s stress on territoriality. This intimate original connection with power, law, and territory requires of Islam a theodicy to explain its recent geopolitical humiliations, whereas no such requirement seems to weigh on Southern Christians in countries that suffer similar humiliations. But we must remember that no religion is frozen in time, and ideas originally absent can be acquired (as when Christianity acquired territoriality and became Christendom). Thus, Christians living in cultures influenced by non-Christian models of religion–state relations may start to imitate those models (there are hints of an Islamization of Christianity in Nigeria: for example, Freston 2001: 184). In addition, Christianity’s birth distant from power has left it with dangerous voids (e.g. how to relate to other religious groups once in power) which may be filled by Old Testament models or models from surrounding society. While Islam was born with norms of relative tolerance for some religions and regulated intolerance for others, Christianity lacks explicit norms and thus oscillates between extremes of tolerance and intolerance.

## Political Dimensions of Proselytization and Conversion

The legitimacy and regulation of proselytization constitutes a growing political question worldwide (Hackett 2007). However, the growth of Southern Christianity is changing the composition of Christian missions (Freston 2007). While American proselytizers remain numerous, Europeans have diminished sharply, their place being taken by Latin

Americans, Africans, and Asians. This can affect the debate on the social acceptability and political legitimacy of proselytization, since the new proselytizers are from the oppressed global South and do not carry post-colonial stigma.

In addition, there is now increased interaction among the world religions. Although they have encountered each other before (militarily and peacefully), the encounters were more limited. Today, through the media, diasporas, and missions, they affect more people, even in the heartlands of the respective faiths, and increasingly through peaceful propagation. As the conversionist world religions increasingly target each other's populations, debate over the rights and wrongs of proselytization will become more salient.

The political dimensions of Southern Christian proselytistic activities are thus a key dimension of the relationship between Christianity and public life around the world, especially where the churches are fast-growing. In some countries the political system depends heavily on the maintenance of existing religious percentages, making proselytization a threat to political hegemony. How do Southern Christian proselytizers see questions of religious freedom and "appropriate" methods?

Social class comes into play here. In most of the Third World, pentecostal churches have a genuinely popular nature in which both leaders and led are from humble origins. They are distant from cultural and academic power, and often do not conform to "polite" discourse. In addition, their theology is uncompromising and often seen as intrinsically "aggressive." Yet in general the rising tide of evangelical missionaries from the global South is not, I believe, the final ingredient in a recipe for global religious conflagration. They are, on the whole, engaged in peaceable activities based on the supposition of religious freedom and dialogue. In some pentecostal circles we see a more problematic tendency. Like those pseudo-democrats who want "one man, one vote, one time," some pentecostal leaders appear to want freedom to "win" and then close down religious freedom.

Nevertheless, a survey of pentecostals in the United States and nine countries of the global South carried out by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2006 paints a more encouraging portrait of ordinary pentecostals. To the question whether it is important that there be freedom for religions other than one's own, pentecostals everywhere were at least as affirmative as the general population of their countries (e.g. 94% of Brazilian pentecostals, compared to a national average of 95%), and in the Philippines even more so (95% compared to 87%).

## Southern Christianity and Violence

Another dimension of the relationship between Christianity and Islam in the global South concerns political violence, whether related to international terrorism or to more local forms of violence. The question of a potential connection between Christian poverty and international terrorism leads to the vexed issue of context versus religious tradition. Three leading sociologists (Davie, Heelas, and Woodhead 2003: 13) have predicted that, in the world's most impoverished region which is sub-Saharan Africa, certain forms of "hard and exclusivistic" Christianity have a serious terrorist potential.



All they lack are Al-Qaeda's "knowledge, skills and technology to be dangerous on an international scale."

The only movement cited in justification is the Lord's Resistance Army. But their portrayal of this Ugandan militia as an advance guard of "hard" sub-Saharan Christianity is questionable (the founder is of Catholic origin but has created an eclectic belief system including the Ten Commandments and elements of Islam and traditional Acholi religion, and is funded from Muslim sources, and the movement enjoys no sympathy amongst African Christians in general). But what is the true potential for forms of "Southern" Christianity to become the next constituency of recruits for terrorism?

Political correctness virtually decrees that one admit a similar range of positions as equally feasible within every major religious tradition; that one agree, in short, with what Bruce (2003: 215) calls the "Pygmalion method": that religion is epiphenomenal and circumstances are everything. If Jerry Falwell and the leader of Hizbollah were to swap places (but not religions) their attitudes to violence would simply be reversed; all major religions are so broad that they can legitimate almost any action. Bruce does not want to go to the opposite extreme adopted by Huntington, whose civilizational blocs are defined largely by religious traditions. Nevertheless, between arguing that religion is absolutely crucial and that it is merely epiphenomenal, it is possible, says Bruce, to argue that there are significant differences between traditions. Apart from separation of church and state, Bruce finds the key difference between Christianity and Islam in the question of "law," a religiously mandated way of life. Wherever they are found in significant numbers, says Bruce controversially, "Muslims always want either to take over the state or to secede from it – the goal being the imposition of shariah." There is nothing comparable in the behavior of Christians, he claims (2003: 234f).

One healthy reaction to terrorism in the name of Islam has been to resist the temptation to demonize that religion. But it is also unhelpful to portray Islam as a twin brother to Christianity having a similar diversity of postures and explaining current differences merely as a time-lag ("look at all the similar things Christians have done *in the past*") caused by the geopolitical humiliation of the Muslim world in recent centuries. It is important to ask whether there are any differences (at least, in the *weight* of each posture within each religion, and the *plausibility* with which each posture can be defended theologically) that stem from the religions themselves.

Does a Christianity with massive grassroots support in the cauldron of the global South become susceptible to the appeal of political violence? Thrust into the same context of poverty and geopolitical humiliation, does it reveal itself as Islam's twin brother? In coming decades, Southern Christianity and "Euro-Islam" will help us to answer these questions better. But it would seem that the weaker sense of territoriality in Christianity means that, however much it may come to be associated with the poor and oppressed, it will find it hard to generate a broad sense of a "Christian *umma*" under threat, a generalized sentiment of belonging to a distinct religiously defined community with a common fate. Thus, there will be no diffused feeling of alienation to underpin a cultural cauldron in which Christian terrorist organizations could emerge and find sufficient recruits and broad enough sympathy (for their causes, if not for their methods).

If not a Southern Christian “umma” using religiously justified geopolitical violence, what about more localized violence based on religion? Southern evangelicals have indeed used violence. Recent publications (Ranger 2006; Lumsdaine 2009) talk of increasing Muslim–Christian conflict in West Africa and Southeast Asia. While most of the violence has probably been perpetrated by Muslims, the Christians have been far from blameless. Nigerian bishops have approved taking up arms during interreligious rioting. Evangelicals have killed Muslims who (they would say) were attacking them. During the guerrilla emergency in the 1980s, Peruvian pentecostals filled the Peasant Patrols formed (sometimes on evangelical initiative) to defend the local community from the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas, in the absence of other support. In their armed action, these pentecostals saw themselves as fighting the Antichrist (López 2008).

Violence in self-defence is not, of course, incompatible with democracy (especially where the state is weak or absent). But in other contexts, “self-defence” is construed as necessary against the state itself, e.g. where Protestantism has been adopted by a considerable portion of a small ethnic minority which considers itself oppressed by the post-colonial nation-state. Protestantism has fused significantly with ethnic separatist rebellions among marginal peoples. One example is the Indian state of Nagaland, almost totally Christian and largely Baptist. The main guerrilla group, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), is so influenced by evangelical Christianity that it has an evangelistic music group. The manifesto of the NSCN is imbued with a sense of mission, resulting in a mixture of socialism, democratic centralism, evangelical missionary fervor, a liberal doctrine of religious toleration and a profession of faith in guerrilla warfare. “It is arms and arms alone that will save our nation” (Freston 2001:91; for other examples of Protestant involvement in separatist rebellions, see Freston 2001: 82–83; 94–100; 116–118).

Beyond self-defence and armed separatism, can one talk of evangelical terrorists? There was some involvement in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 (after Rwanda had been the scene of one of the great evangelical revivals of the twentieth century). And there are a few cases in Central America of pentecostal vigilante groups, in a context where such groups are proliferating. However, a recent book on religious terrorists (Stern 2003) mentions only three candidates for a category of “evangelical terrorists,” two of which are in the United States. Firstly, the “Identity Christians” who see Anglo-Saxons as the “true Israel” and America as a sacred land. As the dominant religion of the racist right, it is not very exportable to the Third World. The second group are the extreme anti-abortionists who have bombed abortion clinics and murdered their staff. This is potentially exportable, and we should only find out how much if most of the Third World were to adopt abortion policies similar to those of the United States. The third group are the Christian militias in some eastern islands of Indonesia. As the transmigration of Javanese Muslims and the activity of Muslim militias upset the local religious and ethnic balance, Christian militia groups emerged.

What about state violence? Vásquez and Marquardt (2003: 141) inveigh against pentecostalism’s “rhetoric of war,” with its language of “spiritual warfare” and “crusade,” giving as example of the dangers involved the anti-insurgency strategy of

the charismatic evangelical general Ríos Montt, president of Guatemala in 1982–1983. But that is to underestimate the capacity of pentecostals to comprehend these militant metaphors, and drives a wedge between Ríos Montt and other equally repressive (but non-pentecostal) Central American military presidents. Ríos, in any case, was a recent convert. What is certain, however, is that his pentecostalism did not *prevent* him acting in that way, since he was held in high esteem by his church.

There is a growing tendency on the part of some pentecostals to demonize their religious rivals and social movements they regard as degenerate. Although not necessarily incompatible with peaceful co-existence and democratic life, this is potentially worrying in regions where democratic norms are not soundly embedded.

In short, popular Protestantism in the global South has some connection with violence, but there are few examples not related either to self-defence in the absence of the state, or to ethno-regional separatist movements. Southern Protestants do not have the Islamic concepts of the honor of a sacred community (*umma*) and the defence of a sacred territory (*dar-al-islam*). Nor do they have the geopolitical influence that American evangelicals enjoy. And, as a relatively new religion, only rarely (and then usually only among marginalized minorities) are they connected with ethno-religious conflicts. All these factors minimize their propensity to violence.

## A New Christendom?

Jenkins (2002: 12) foresees a “new Christendom,” a wave of Christian states which may eventually form an African and Latin American axis in which faith is the guiding political ideology. Is there any evidence for this? Or, at least, for attempts to create new “Christian” nations or states in the global South?

As to predictions of a new Christendom, Sanneh (2003: 39) replies caustically that there is “little evidence that Christian Africa will repeat the disasters of Christian Europe . . . there have been no ecclesiastical courts condemning heretics and witches to death, no bloody battles of doctrine, no territorial aggrandizement by churches, no jihads against infidels, no amputations.” As Sanneh’s slide from medieval Christian to modern Muslim deeds indicates, it is not only European Christendom which is the supposed model for future Southern Christian deviations, but also radical Islamism. Yet Southern Christianity lacks the ecclesiastical unity and political muscle necessary for a reconstituted Christendom, while also lacking the Islamist nostalgia for a glorious past. Almost no Southern Christians have political projects similar to those of radical Islamists. This is so even in Zambia (Freston 2004a: 83–91) where the influence of charismatic evangelicalism led to the nation being declared “Christian” in 1991 by president Chiluba. After his electoral victory (which was not on a specifically religious platform), he had State House “cleansed” of evil spirits, organized an “anointing” service modeled on that of King David, and declared Zambia to be a “Christian nation” in a covenant relationship with God.

While some Christians criticized Chiluba for this, others approved but felt it had not gone far enough. Amongst the latter was Nevers Mumba, a televangelist who ran for the presidency in 2001 for his own political party, promising a “revolution of morality

and prosperity.” It was not good enough, he said, merely to have a Christian president and vice-president; all political positions should be occupied by God-fearing people. His intention was to “uphold the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, with a view to making it more practical.” This did not mean religious discrimination, he explained; rather, it meant leaders with a different character. “Abuse of office, high levels of selfishness and overall lack of character in politicians have impeded economic growth . . . Good governance cannot be achieved by bad people.”

Mumba was, in any case, heavily defeated at the polls. But we should notice what is *not* going on in Zambia. It is the *nation* that is declared Christian and not the *state*. There is no established church, no legal discrimination of non-Christians in public life and no limitation on religious freedom, much less any Christian “sharia law.” Even those who lament the inadequate implementation of the “Christian nation” concept do not advocate such measures. Their proposals are all perfectly compatible with democratic life. Mumba’s program says little about specific laws to make the country more “Christian,” but it does talk a lot about public morality and qualities of leadership. While it makes questionable assumptions about the relationship between personal faith, good governance, and national prosperity, there is no idea that a Christian nation should have a “sharia.” With all the limitations of Zambian Christian politics, this is an encouraging sign for the political future of the Christian South.

And yet there are causes for concern in some charismatic theology, such as the concept of territoriality (and a “rule of the saints”) in versions of “spiritual warfare” which talk of “territorial spirits” and are frequently associated with theocratic currents. The sacralization of power in such concepts (and its consequent demonization when in the hands of non-believers), makes criticism difficult. Introducing territoriality into a pluralistic situation brings dangers. If Tertullian ridiculed the pagans who cried “away with the Christians to the lions!” whenever the Tiber rose as high as the city walls, today it is “spiritual warfare” pentecostals who blame such calamities on the particular religious rival or socially “degenerate” group of their choice.

However, the danger to democracy can be exaggerated: some analysts jump from the discourse to the supposed effects, without any empirical evidence. In practice, the language of demonization functions largely as an internal language of justification, a Manichaeism of people and not of ideas (“we must elect men of God”). It is possible for people to disagree strongly about things they regard as supremely important (such as the need to convert others, and even exorcise them of demons) and still be good democrats. The popularity of exorcism has to do with the growing concern with evil in many parts of Africa (Ellis and Ter Haar 2004: 42) and Latin America (Birman 2000: 276–278). A spirit idiom is used to express concern with poor governance. By treating older notions of spiritual evil seriously (rather than with poorly concealed disdain), pentecostalism defuses fatalism and leads a cultural revolution (Jenkins 2006: 99; Soares 1993: 43–50).

## Christian Zionism in the Third World?

Christian Zionism believes that the Jews remain God’s chosen people, apart from any possible conversion to Christianity, and that all the land “from the river of Egypt to the

Euphrates" has been given in perpetuity to them. The Jewish temple should be rebuilt in Jerusalem (on the site of the Al-Aqsa mosque). Christian Zionists support Israeli expansionism, believing this will culminate in the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ. There are an estimated 25–30 million Christian Zionists in the United States (Sizer 2004: 23). Christian Zionism is usually (though not always) linked with a theory of biblical prophetic interpretation known as dispensationalism, which began in Britain in the 1830s but has taken root most strongly in the United States. Indeed, there are many "Judaizing elements" (Martin 1997) in American Protestantism, with its motifs of covenant, promised land and pilgrimage. Such ideas may make it especially susceptible to Christian Zionism.

Does the rise of global evangelicalism mean the globalization of strong support for Christian Zionism? After all, Southern believers read the same Old Testament and may be exposed to Christian Zionist literature from the United States which tells them that their nations cannot be blessed unless they support Israel.

On the other hand, Christians read the Bible for centuries before anyone thought of a national restoration of the Jews and the dispensationalist schema of interpretation. And there are several reasons why apocalypticism in general and Christian Zionism in particular might not be so important for believers in the global South. Intensity of prophetic interest depends on other priorities; for poor people in the global South, survival issues take precedence over idle speculation. Apocalypticism may be popular for existential comfort but not so much for geopolitical titillation; indeed, as Jenkins says (2006: 128), they may not have to imagine End Times scenarios to make biblical references to persecution real for them. They have no impression of a declining church (which dispensationalism prophesies for the End Times), nor do they resent a loss of cultural hegemony within their own cultures (which they have never had), and much less do they fear a receding geopolitical hegemony for their own countries (which most of them could never dream of having). They have no post-Holocaust feeling of guilt regarding the Jews, and probably have little first-hand contact with Jews. They are more likely to have contact with Arabs, and some of them (e.g. in parts of Latin America) are actually descended from Arab immigrants. They feel less threat from terrorism; indeed, they may entertain feelings of third world solidarity against "neo-imperialism." In the tough conditions of the Third World, the idea of blessing as dependent on support for Israel does not seem as cogent. Even though some denominations cultivate links with the "Holy Land," the emphasis is more on "the places where Jesus walked" rather than on current issues.

The Pew survey of 2006 asked respondents whether they sympathized more with Israel or with the Palestinians. Of course, "sympathy" for Israel does not necessarily indicate Christian Zionism, but it is the best data we possess. In all ten countries, pentecostals are above their national average in sympathy for Israel. American (60%) and Filipino (67%) pentecostals sympathize very strongly with Israel, considerably above their national averages (41% and 55 percent respectively). Nigerian, Kenyan and Guatemalan pentecostals are over 40%, but their co-religionists in Brazil, Chile, South Africa, and South Korea are below 40 percent. Even more telling is the sum of the three replies which seem to preclude a Christian Zionist position (sympathy for the Palestinians, both or neither). Only 18% of American pentecostals come in those categories, versus 56%

of pentecostals in Chile, followed by five other countries between 52% and 46%. Once again, Nigeria (32%) and the Philippines (25%) are the only Southern countries whose pentecostals mirror their American brethren.

## Protestantism in the Global South and Democracy

Of the major religions, Protestantism has the longest historical links with religious freedom and democratization. Witte (1993) speaks of three waves of Christian democratizing impulses which accompanied, or even anticipated, Huntington's (1991) "three waves" of democratization. The first of Witte's waves was Protestant, in the Northern Europe and North America of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of course, this first wave was largely an unintended result of the fracturing of the religious field and the experience of wars of religion, rather than the intended result of most Protestant leaders' convictions. Even so, "most of democracy's original exponents were deeply rooted in verities derived from Christian faith and ethics" (De Gruchy 1995: 49). In addition, "principled pluralism" was one of the early Protestant postures toward the state. This position, which first achieved political importance in the 1640s with the Levellers in England and Roger Williams in Rhode Island, supplied the theological basis which allowed Protestant sectarian theology to overflow into democratic politics by rejecting any division of the political world between the godly and the ungodly. The situation of Old Testament Israel was seen as entirely exceptional; today, the state should be non-confessional.

Thus, democratization was strengthened not just by Protestant fragmentation (Bruce 2004: 9–10) but also by elements of Protestant teaching and organization (Anderson 2006: 195; Willaime 1997: 2081; Berger 2004: 78). In consequence, today's Protestants, wherever they may be, are not usually required to allay fears regarding their religion's ultimate ability to coexist with democracy.

But in reality, there have always been *Protestantisms* in the plural. Early Protestantism included not only the "principled pluralist" position of religious freedom in a non-confessional state, but also the "Christian nation" idea of the state promoting true religion and morals, and the apolitical "rejection" of the state. Some non-democratic regimes in modern times have enjoyed Protestant support or at least acquiescence. Protestantism, whether historically in the global north or today in the South, has often been undemocratic at diverse levels: in its internal life, in its attitudes towards other religions, and in its association with undemocratic regimes or with undemocratic political actors. But its historical origins, its theological traditions and its organizational divisions combine to weaken any tendency to theocracy or to a concerted use of political violence.

This is to disagree with those like Bruce (2003: 245; 2004: 18) who believe that "religion taken seriously is incompatible with democracy" because the godly/ungodly division of the world is incompatible with the principle that all people are essentially of equal worth. Bruce ignores "principled pluralism" and its importance in the evolution of religious freedom and democratic ideas. Nevertheless, Southern Protestantism, which is certainly "religion taken seriously," does not yet have both feet firmly in the democratic camp, and it often operates in contexts where few other political actors are

wholehearted democrats either. In any case, by the late 1990s most scholars of democratic transitions thought religious traditions were largely irrelevant to the outcomes of democratization processes. And while democracy is undoubtedly strongest in countries of a Western Christian tradition, that correlation might not hold if one controlled for other factors (Anderson 2006: 204).

Woodberry and Shah (2004), however, allege that the correlation between democracy and Protestantism does hold in the global South, even controlling for other variables. They talk of compelling cross-national evidence of a causal association between Protestantism and democracy, but a relation that is mediated and contingent. Mediating factors include not only characteristics of Protestant activity (such as the encouragement of education), but also opponents' reactions which often imitate its organizational forms and activities. This means Protestantism's effect on democracy may not be as dramatic as before, as other actors adopt its characteristics. Also, they warn, some strains of global pentecostalism may not have as positive an effect as historical Protestantism (amongst other reasons, because of their smaller emphasis on education).

Thus, there is no blanket answer to whether Southern Protestantism is a help or a hindrance to democratization. It arrived in the Third World largely with a critique of Catholic or non-Christian "confusion" of religion and politics. However, with its numerical burgeoning, the political restraint implied in acceptance of democratic rules is less evident in some quarters. As evangelicalism turned global, it became involved in politics in very diverse settings and was put to a variety of political uses (Freston 2001, 2004a, 2004b). This variety is accentuated by "local subversion," in which local contextual factors overwhelm the universal heritage of the church; a danger all the greater in churches with local autonomy. Being a decentralized faith, the globalization of evangelicalism may produce a splintering of political perspectives unable to dialogue with each other.

The political implications have been appraised in very varied ways by scholars. On the one side are authors who emphasize the repressive and corporatist nature of many churches (especially the pentecostal ones). Other authors see Southern Protestantism as a potential or actual contributor to democracy, whether directly through resistance to authoritarianisms and assistance to democratizing movements, or indirectly through creating the cultural conditions for democratic consolidation (as part of a vibrant civil society, offering a free social space, an experience of solidarity and a new personal identity, as well as responsible participation in the community and, for some, the development of leadership gifts) and, in some versions, through stimulating capitalist forms of economic development.

In addition, democratization itself includes both transitions and consolidation. In transitions, pentecostal churches are often not much use. For standing up to dictatorships, it is more helpful to be a traditional, hierarchical, transnational church with elite connections. It is not so easy for a pentecostal church, especially for those with no transnational or elite connections, deprived of intellectual resources and vulnerable to repression. However, in democratic consolidation (the long haul of creating a democratic culture) these churches might be more use because they promote certain activities, encourage economic development, are anti-fatalistic and instill skills of leadership and public speaking. They have certainly provided a significant route for

individuals of lower social origin to achieve political visibility (e.g. some pentecostal congressmen in Brazil or Nicaragua).

However, churches may be enveloped in an apocalyptic mentality which regards the world as hopeless. Such withdrawal is not helpful to democratization and may harm it. That mentality is now less common, especially in churches with a slightly higher social level. One now sometimes finds the opposite, a triumphalistic mentality which says believers should govern their countries in the name of God. In some places (Guatemala) it is better-off charismatics, used to a political role, who entertain such ideas. In other places (Brazil) it is the older lower-class pentecostal churches which have grown so much that their leaders become ambitious. Since democracy is the numbers game, they try to transform their religious leadership into political leadership, either to help their own churches by milking the state, or by dreaming of exercising political power themselves, or by electing a "man of God" as president who will attract divine blessing on the country. That dream has serious anti-democratic potential, but in practice it never happens because they do not control the votes of their members and the denominations never unite behind a single political project. In any case, since they do not have a sharia to implement, their ideas of theocracy generally boil down to little more than their supposed God-given right to rule.

While pentecostals have shown themselves adept at personal transformation, their record in societal transformation has fallen far short, both because of the complexity of social questions and because of the corrupting effect of politics as the supreme focus of power. In fact, the pentecostal self-belief that is positive for personal transformation becomes a liability in politics. And the charismatic ritualism that can produce results at the micro level does not function at the macro level. A "spiritual warfare" mindset which attributes all a country's problems to the "wrong people" being in power, and which imagines a manifest destiny for one's own group as incorruptible leaders, is bound to come to grief.

The fragmentation of evangelicalism means that its direct political impact is always smaller than might be hoped or feared. No evangelical neo-Christendom is feasible, however much numerical success the churches might still have. Despite the dangers of corporatism (using the state to strengthen the ecclesiastical institution), there is now a plurality of competing organizations whose actions can politically cancel each other out. These are voluntary communities which people enter or leave at will, and evangelicalism is perceived in many countries as helping to create a vibrant civil society. However, at times it is a civil society bound up in its own limited projects and unable to develop a more universalist reflection on public life such as characterizes, for example, Catholic social doctrine. In some countries the result has been damage to their public image, associating it with political naivety and vulnerability to manipulation, and sometimes with corruption and hunger for power. While fragmentation is beneficial in limiting the danger of theocratic regimes or large-scale conflict, it also increases the possibility of political underachievement compounded by corruption scandals (as have blighted pentecostals in Brazilian politics).

Several questions in the 2006 Pew survey are pertinent for attitudes to democracy. Pentecostals everywhere are affirming (between 84% and 99%) of the importance of honest multiparty elections, similar to or slightly above their national averages. When



asked whether, to solve the country's problems, it would be better to have a more participatory government or a strong leader, pentecostals always prefer a participatory government. But in the Philippines, Nigeria, South Africa and Guatemala (following their national tendencies) over 40% would like a strong leader, whereas pentecostals in Brazil, Chile, Kenya, and South Korea are less interested (under 30%) in the strong leader solution. In seven countries, pentecostals are less favorable to a strong leader than their general populations, so pentecostal attitudes do not weaken democracy in most of the global South.

When asked whether government should make our country a Christian country or whether there should be separation of church and state, Nigerian (58–35%) and South African (45–37%) pentecostals prefer the “Christian country” option. In all other countries surveyed, pentecostals reject the “Christian country” idea, notably in Chile (23–62%) and Brazil (32–50%). However, everywhere except Chile pentecostals are more favorable to the idea than other religious believers in their country. Africa seems the most propitious location for Jenkins' idea that new “Christian nations” will appear in the global South.

Evangelicalism's emphasis on individual freedom to respond to the religious message results in an opting out of social “sacred canopies” and the creation of an unending pluralism. The results for democracy are paradoxical. Totalitarian regimes are resisted, as are non-Christian religious nationalisms, but authoritarian regimes which do not impinge on evangelical religion may not be. The evangelical world is too fissured to undergird national-level movements advocating major political change in whatever direction. There have been no national “Reformations” of Christendom in the Third World as there were in Northern Europe, no Protestant state churches. Evangelicalism is thus less “useful” during phases of democratic transition than it is during the more extended periods of consolidation. Indeed, the evangelical concept of voluntarism and the duty to convince and publicize bears more than a resemblance to Habermas' concept of the public sphere and communicative action. The massive daily practice of convincing, at the grassroots level, even by groups which are not internally democratic, may be important for the quality of democracy that is possible in the public sphere.

Thus, while circumscribed by certain broad parameters, actual evangelical politics is very hard to predict (not only because evangelicalism is decentralized, but because it is now present in so many contexts across the globe). One implication of this localism is that imitation may prevail: local patterns of religion–state relations may be absorbed as evangelicalism gains in political legitimacy. Probably the greatest danger to democracy will come in Africa, especially with the rise of “Christian nationalism” as the more secular independence movements have lost their luster. But in Latin America, despite the now-fading heritage of a monolithic Catholic model, the more pluralist present will almost certainly keep evangelicals broadly within the democratic and non-confessional track; and future growth curves will change their composition and push them towards more mainstream politics (in the case of numerical stagnation, by increasing the percentage of birth-members; or in the case of continued expansion, by incorporating other social sectors). In Asia, it is unlikely that evangelicals will be influenced by communist or non-Christian religious nationalist models rather than secular ones. Facing Asian nationalisms, evangelicalism generally represents a democratizing force.

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# III. Christianity since 1800

An Analysis by Region and Traditions



## CHAPTER 33

# The Middle East and North Africa, I

## Egypt and North Africa

Georges Berbarry

### Arab conquest of North Africa

The emergence of Islam in the Arabian peninsula inflicted internal conflict upon the Byzantine/eastern Roman Empire, along with foreign wars, particularly the long-term war with the Persians, the last of which broke out in the seventh century. Islam, since the death of Muhammad in AD 632, occupied areas that were under the control of the Romans. The Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab took control in Palestine; Amr Ibn al-Aas, at the head of a small army, took over Egypt between 639 and 641.

Arabs could not open the non-Chalcedonean Christian kingdom of Nubia; a truce between them was held with political and commercial terms, including: non-assault while Egypt was to be given a number of slaves, and Nubia was to be given certain amount of wheat, lentils, and other items every year in exchange.

Historians often wrote about the ease of the Islamic conquest of Egypt, along with the other areas captured by the Arabs. The welcome given to the Muslims was a result of restlessness among the Christians, due to the taxes imposed by Constantinople, and the forcing of the non-Chalcedonean majority to follow the Chalcedonean creed. But we find other cases where the Chalcedoneans were the first to welcome the conquerors, such as the Patriarch Sophronius in Jerusalem, and Sargon, the grandfather of John of Damascus in Damascus. Sawiris Ibn al-Muqaffa' claims in *The History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* that the welcome of the Coptic population to the conquerors was an attempt to appease the Muslim power and a sign of the aid provided by Egypt's population to the conquerors (Troupeau 2001: 461). The eschatological interpretation of

history claims that the conquest was only a divine punishment to the eastern Romans, who converted to the infidel Chalcedonean doctrine, as described by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (Sévère d'Achmounein 2006: 538, 579).

After the Islamic conquest, a gradual legal status of Christians was formed, including Copts. In the beginning, we have the Qur'anic verse that orders fighting against the People of the Book, who do not practice the true religion, "until they give the *jizyah* (poll tax) willingly while they are humbled" (Qur'an 9:29), which was the leading motto of the Muslims that defined the quality of the relationship with the Christians. In addition, the contracts concluded by the caliphs with the Christians, were similar to the one between Muhammad and the people of Najran (631). The contracts were all centered around these basic principles: Christians had to pay tribute, provide a variety of services for the Muslim army, and adhere to restrictions on building churches and establishing rituals. In return for these duties, the Muslim commanders had to ensure to the Christians the protection of their lives, their parents, and their offspring and possessions. Dhimmitude is the bail, and the Christian beneficiaries of this guaranty were named accordingly "dhimmis" (Troupeau 2001: 461).

After the conquest, the services for the military armies were canceled, and the increased restrictions on the Copts aggravated. In addition to the tribute imposed on them, to retain their lands, the Copts were obliged to pay the *kharadj* tax. Several attempts were made to expel the Copts from their official positions, especially after the Arabization of the *dawaween* (bureaucracy or bureaus), when Arabic became the official language of Egypt. These restrictions led to the introversion of the Copts, while many of them chose to convert to the new religion. The relatively hard situation, encountered by Christians, who lived in Egypt, was the result of the rulers' state of mind. The Copts, who never surrendered their faith, subsided further and further into minority status and non-influential presence.

## Copts under Muslim rulers

Copts, who came under the Tulunid dynasty (868–905) and the Ikhshids (935–960), were treated with forbearance. Then came the Fatimids (969–1171), and with them Christians experienced a marked tolerance, along with some severe persecution. The latter situation was rare, and the Christians of the country did not suffer from it until the reign of al-Hakim<sup>1</sup> (1012–1015), who turned against the Christians, persecuted them to the utmost, killing thousands of people, dismissed them from administrative offices, forced them to convert to Islam and turned loose the Egyptian mob to demolish Coptic churches. But apparently the Caliph al-Zaher allowed those, who were forced to change their religion, to return to their original faith. We note that this period witnessed a church revival. The center of Coptic Christianity shifted from Alexandria to the new capital, Cairo, the center of the Fatimid Caliph. This points to an adaptation, by the Copts, to the prevailing rule; this was obvious through the harmony an adaptation in the relationship and the seeking of mediation by the king of Nubia and Abyssinia of the patriarch or the Fatimid Caliph (Coptic Center for Social Studies 2001: 528).

During this era, the Copts spread all over Egypt, and adopted the Arabic language, which contributed to the cultural and civilizational integration of the fabric of the country. They were engaged in the administrative offices of the Empire. They were picked by the Fatimids, who were Shi'ite, perhaps fearing the hostility of the Sunnis, who made up the majority of the population, a fact that raised the ire of Egyptians again.

The Copts did not encounter persecution during the Ayyubids' reign (1171–1250), nor a marked tolerance from the part of Salah Eddin, who barred them from certain control and financial offices (Coptic Center for Social Studies 2001: 530). The Copts kept their loyalty to the Arabs during the Crusades. The Crusaders prevented the Copts from fulfilling their binding religious obligation to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and they hired Latin Clergy instead of local religious men.

The rebellion against the Crusaders and the support of the Arabs resulted in a revival in the Coptic Church in the thirteenth century, a period which ended, as soon as the Ayyubids were defeated by the Mamluks. The church, under the rule of these Mamluks, returned to repression (Berbary 2013: 369–372). Coptic sources are silent about the conditions of Christians in the country from the fourteenth century until the nineteenth century (Mitri 1988: 12). What is noteworthy in the Islamic sources, or the writings of pilgrims and travelers, is the study of architectural history of the Coptic monasteries, and the decline of the creative theological thought until the nineteenth century.

Egypt's Christians suffered, in the fourteenth century, from persecution leading to a significant decline in their numbers. And they participated during the same long era, in the unionist synods held in Florence (1442), but the effort did not lead to unity; and the Franciscans did not give up and continued to send missionaries to Egypt, followed, in subsequent centuries, by other Catholic missionaries and by Evangelicals. They succeeded in creating the Coptic Catholic Church in 1578, and the Evangelical community was established later in the mid-nineteenth century.

Egypt remained, throughout the Ottoman rule (1517–1805), independent and yet controlled by the High Porte governor, the Awjaq<sup>2</sup> and Mamluks; and most people stayed away from politics. Muslims and Christians lived, in this system, in a difficult economic situation, for Egypt did not keep pace with international trade (Atiya 1968: 99). Then people opted for independence, and later found what they wanted in the independence movement led by Muhammad Ali, who despite his Albanian roots, was closer to the ambition and aspirations of the Egyptians, than to those who came to power before him (Marcos 2001: 673–683).

The Copts did not constitute, in Egyptian society during the Ottoman era, a prosperous bourgeoisie. They worked in general in agriculture and management. Some of them were retailers and owners of small workshops. They did not participate, like the other Christians in the Middle East, in dealing with foreigners; consequently they did not benefit from the millet system, devised by Ottoman rule. While most sects strove towards differentiation from each other, the Copts opted to integrate, more and more, in Egyptian society at the expense of seeking foreign sponsors.

The so-called foreign sponsorship was the outcome of several developments in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans awarded major European countries privileges,



benefiting from immunity rights and tax exemptions, and their consulates became states within a state. These privileges led to a reduction in the burdens for foreign merchants and increased costs on Egyptian merchants. This prompted the Muslims and Copts alike to abandon business, and to walk away from foreign trade. The traders resorted, with their consulates, to Jews as agents and translators. In addition to these privileges, European powers were granted the right of religious protection, and the result of these capitulations was the development of the Catholic and Evangelical missions, which began to flourish.

This series of developments did not strengthen Christians in the east, dispersed as they were into small groups that were neither monolithic nor equal. If every foreign country sought to protect a religion in the Sultanate, Copts remained in harmony with their history in the rejection of any foreign intervention, whether Byzantine, Crusader, or later Israeli, and fought any call for external protection (Marcos 2001: 676–677). When the Coptic Patriarch received the Consul of Russia, and the latter offered Russian protection for the Copts, then the Patriarch asked the consul: “Is the Russian Tsar going to die?” When the answer was yes, he said to him: “Why do I put myself and my family under the protection of the mortal, while we are all under the protection of He who does not die.”

The Copts shifted to agriculture and manual work in order to avoid trade. Agriculture was no marginal activity, for it was and still is the one of the major economic and productive sectors. History relates that the Patriarch of Alexandria used to put pressure on the Roman Emperor by preventing wheat from being shipped to Constantinople. Thus agriculture continued to be an essential source of Egypt’s livelihood and agricultural cycles and times of sowing, harvesting and irrigation are still linked to the Coptic calendar, inherited from the ancient Egyptians (Marcos 2001: 673–683).

Copts also contributed to the manual production of jewelry, copper and fabric, architecture and perfumery. Sometimes they assumed leadership positions, such as in the union of carpenters which was led by a Copt. In other areas, they were involved in management positions and it seems that this happened with the Arabization of the bureaucracy which took place in the early Islamic periods. They refrained from managing only occasionally, but they continued in the financial management sector (Marcos 2001: 678–679) during the Ayyubid era or even the Mamluk or the Ottoman, just as they had been present before in the previously mentioned Islamic ages, in particular the Fatimid era.

## Christianity in the Modern Era

Napoleon descended on the shores of Egypt in 1798, and used the Copts in a number of administrative functions exactly as they had been hired by the Mamluks and their predecessors. Many see the French campaign as the beginning of Egypt’s modern history due to several considerations. But those interested in the relations between Copts and Muslims choose the emergence of the state under Muhammad Ali (1805) as a turning point. It marks the beginning of the formation of the Egyptian national community in the modern era.

The personality of Muhammad Ali blended ancient and modern currents. He was a Mamluk and an Ottoman, but at the same time, he destroyed the Turkish and the Mamluk states. He undertook the process of "Egyptianizing" the state starting with the army; he maintained the traditional role of the Copts in the management of the financial affairs of the state (Bishri 1980: 45–46). We read in a report presented by the English envoy John Bowring to the Foreign Minister of Britain in 1837, that:

The influence of the Copts is undoubtedly an increasing one, and they will probably occupy no small part of the field in the future history of Egypt. Theirs have been centuries of cruel sufferings, persecutions, and humiliations. In the eyes of the Turks they have always been the pariahs of the Egyptian people; yet they are an amicable, pacific, and intelligent race, whose worst vices have grown out of their seeking shelter from wrong and robbery. A certain sympathy, perhaps the result of common sufferings, exists between the Copts and the Arabs. They are the surveyors, the scribes, the arithmeticians, the measurers, the clerks; in a word, the learned men of the land. They are to the counting-house and the pen what the fellah is to the field and the plough. The Coptic race appears nearly stationary as to numbers; I have reason to believe that in some of the agricultural districts they sometimes adopt the Mussulman creed, though that subjects them to the conscription, from which as Christians they are free. There are 12 Episcopal districts, and the bishops elect the patriarch, who exercises not only an ecclesiastical, but frequently a sort of judicial authority among them, and his decrees are most reverently submitted to. They employ the ancient Egyptian or Coptic language in their religious services, but it is translated into Arabic for the benefit of the laity. The patriarch informed me that he calculated the number of Copts at about 150,000. I conceive this is too low an estimate. A great many of them are employed in the public offices; their average instruction is far superior to that of the Mussulmans, but between them and European settlers there is scarcely any intercourse, and as little is known of their domestic habits as of those of the Mahomedans. Their females are equally secluded, and they have their harems like other Orientals. In the remoter parts of Egypt they practice polygamy, and circumcise their children. They occupy a particular quarter in Cairo; few of them are opulent, few engaged in commerce on a large scale. They have many schools in which elementary instruction is communicated, but none where the higher branches of knowledge are taught. Intoxication is a frequent vice among the Copts. (Bowring 1840: 6–8)

It appears that in this period Copts were not enlisted in the army. They were exempted until 1855 when the Khedive decided to cancel the tribute and young Copts were enrolled in the Egyptian army. It is noted that the Copts did not participate in the scientific mission of Muhammad Ali to Europe. The Christians who went to Europe at the expense of the state were non-Egyptians, such as Greeks and Armenians (Mitri 1988: 19). With the emergence of the first parliamentary assembly in Egypt, during the reign of Ismail (1866), the Copts pursued their full rights to run the elections.

Coptic patriarchs sought, like all other Christian communities in Egypt, to achieve a church Renaissance. The Coptic Church achievements have been numerous over the last two centuries: from the founding of the Faculty of Theology, to Sunday schools, the introduction of religious education in public schools, to establishing a press in the mid-nineteenth century and using it for official religious publications.

These activities had a purpose. The Coptic Patriarchate sought to respond to the missionaries using the same means, to launch of missionary work in Africa, and to grant to the bishops of Eritrea and Ethiopia the title of Patriarch. Pastoral work resumed in Sudan. There was a more effective engagement in the Egyptian civil society. The high proportion of university-educated is to be noted, and some of them were settled in the monasteries.

In the early twentieth century, a strong stream of the national movement against the British presence in Egypt emerged. Though Muslims and Copts equally supported the movement, the two groups found it difficult to collaborate. A crisis arose between 1908–1911 and it was the toughest in the modern era between the Copts and Muslims. The Copts criticized Muslims for their mistreatment of Copts, and unfavorably compared the unhappy present with the glorious past days of the Fatimids. They noted that the Copts had welcomed the Arab Conquest, recalling the commandment of Muhammad about the Copts: “You will conquer Egypt . . . so command its people to good. They have right to security and ties of kinship” (Ṣahīh Muslim). The Muslims’ reply to the crisis confirmed the Islamic character of Egypt, with the proof that this character does not negate the protection of Copts, past and present.

The Coptic Egyptian Prime Minister Boutros Ghālī was assassinated in that period; this event was followed by a general Coptic Congress. It was supported by the Coptic Church but other parties perceived it negatively, for fear of harming national unity. Issues raised in the Congress included: a Sunday holiday for Copts, a call for an end to religious discrimination in state employment, and proportionate representation in parliament. Some Muslims convened the Egyptian Congress which rejected the principle of sects’ rights and Sunday as holiday. But with these conferences, tensions began to fade in favor of the national independence movement.

This movement crystallized around the revolutionary events of 1919. Saad Zaghloul, and the spokesperson Father Sergius, led the anti-British campaign for independence. The latter was the last of the priests who stood on the pulpit of Al-Azhar, and in other mosques, addressing the audience. He said that he was an Egyptian first, second, and third, and that the nation does not know a Muslim or a Copt, but it recognizes only volunteers, without distinction between a white turban and a black turban. He preached in the streets and squares, he gave also speeches from the window of the train when traveling or when in exile.

There is someone else who had a far-reaching impact in various Egyptian situations, at that era: Makram Obeid. He was the minister of finance who resigned and began to claim independence. He criticized the British in Egypt because they were sowing discord between the Muslims and the Copts. “In vain you are trying to disunite us, you misjudge the blood of our fathers that runs in our veins, and the blood of our children that was shed in our streets, in vain you keep reminding us of the divisions that we had washed with our tears” (Mitri 1988: 26). It is worth noting that the Copts refused, when setting up the Egyptian Constitution, to be assigned a certain quota, because it constituted for them the ghetto model they had already refused and would continue to reject, because they did not want to lose their national unity and their integration in the Egyptian fabric.

Indeed, the Copts of today are the rightful heirs to the people of ancient Egypt. Stemming from their agricultural experience, they show respect for the land, and offer prayers and rituals associated with the seasons of the year. All of this gave the Copts a patriotic tendency and constant quest, under successive regimes, to value the principle of citizenship.

Today they live with other Christian denominations – the Greek Orthodox, the Catholic Copts and the Anglicans – maintaining their hope for the future in the face of disappointments. In light of the so-called Arab Spring, they seek not to be overshadowed by the spread of fundamentalism, nor to be dismayed by the continuing emigration of Copts from Egypt. They hope to remain citizens, with equal rights and duties, to participate in building Egypt – which is the aspiration of every faithful Egyptian. They look for a new political constitution that will make this possible.

## Notes

- 1 He destroyed the Church of the Resurrection, despite the fact that his mother was Christian and her brother was the Patriarch of Jerusalem (Coptic Center for Social Studies 2001: 528).
- 2 They are the armies of Sultan Selim I (Marcos 2001: 675).

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## CHAPTER 34

# The Middle East and North Africa, II

## Christians in the Ottoman Empire and in Bilad al-Sham

Souad Slim

With the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, the Christians of Antioch lived almost nine centuries as dhimmis under the various dynasties of Islam. It is essential before addressing the history of the Christians in the Orient during the Ottoman period to question whether the Christians of that time were privileged communities or persecuted ones. Historical data and documents from this period show discrimination in the relations of Christian subjects with official governors, both in the payment of the *jizya* (poll tax) and at the level of participation in political power. Christians, in the Ottoman Empire, offered major religious and ethnic diversity: Greek, Arabs, Armenians, Syriac speakers, Copts, and later Protestants. Their cultural and ethnic identity matched their belonging to their communities (Mayeur 1995: vol. 11, 792–849).

However, the Ottoman government changed many things in the way Christians were viewed and treated. Christians were no longer considered as dhimmis but *ra'aya* (flock, subjects) (Fattal 1995: 266). They were not treated as individuals but as community groups. The Ottoman Empire launched an approach called the millet system that gives each community a degree of autonomy in managing the affairs of the community, under the aegis of their various spiritual leaders. Many scholars express their doubts about the reality of this system and consider it more as a myth (Braude 1982: 69–89). In this context, it should be noted first that throughout the territories of the empire, the Greek Orthodox Christians were the most numerous, and thus Sultan Mohammed al-Fatih granted privileges related to this community to the patriarch of Constantinople, Patriarch Gennadius II, Georgios Kourtesios Scholarios (c. 1400–c. 1473) (Fattal 1958: 367).

Moreover, it is essential for the Ottoman period to be considered as two distinct periods: the beginning when the empire was still strong, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the following period, when the weakened empire was described the sick man (Mantran 1994: 500).

With the expansion of the Ottoman empire in Syria, Palestine (1517), and Egypt in 1521, the four historic patriarchates of Greek Orthodox came together, after nine centuries of separation, under the same political government. The patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Constantinople came under the conquered territories of the Ottomans. The situation of the patriarchate of Constantinople inside the capital and nearby the headquarters of power gave it certain preeminence over the other patriarchates and for the same reasons it facilitated their relationship with the central power. While establishing direct links with the patriarchate of Constantinople, the other patriarchates submitted themselves to the new authorities, considering them as an emanation of God's will and as protectors of the orthodox faith (Argyriou 1967: 107).

The expanding Ottoman Empire consolidated its power by placing both Christian minorities and Arab Muslim populations under its exacting rule. The latter party criticized the change from the Shafi'i judicial system to the Hanafi School (Rafeq 2000: 7–34). Many measures were taken by the Ottomans against the Christians. These included population transfers and child abduction (*devshirne*) to form janissary troops. The first approach or measure was to transform the *waqf* (religiously endowed) lands into *miri* (belonging to the government) so as to distribute them to the officers within the system of *timar* (revenue-producing land grants). The lands of Mount Athos along with those of the Muslim *waqf*, related to the Mamluk era, and lacking any written documents were taken by the state (Barnes 1986: 40). The functions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were subject, like political ones, to auction; those who offered, in advance, the highest sums of money become governors or patriarchs. The latter gathered monies from taxes (the governors), the patriarchs levied the *jizya* (Ducellier 1986: 459).

This practice of purchasing ecclesiastical functions would cause divisions inside churches; in addition the candidates to the patriarchate, coming from monastic backgrounds, did not possess the funds for the payment in advance of taxes for farming. That is why they were sustained by the Christian urban families, who were merchants in the big cities like Aleppo, Damascus, Alexandria, Cairo, or Jerusalem. Divisions arose each time a patriarch had to be elected. Conflicts between notables raged for the patriarchate of Antioch between the cities of Aleppo and Damascus, a process that paved the way to the division inside the patriarchate, when the schism occurred with the Uniate churches.

Another discriminatory initiative, taken by the Ottomans when they seized power, was to ban processions and religious displays outside of church buildings. These rites were viewed as acts of proselytism away from Islam. This measure led the urban residents to attend village chapels and far or distant monasteries, in order to celebrate the feasts of the liturgical year and those of the saints venerated in certain regions. Such meetings were opportunities for the faithful to discuss community affairs and to celebrate their feasts in peace. From that period on, monasteries in rocky regions became the centers of decision and education of ecclesiastical authorities. The power of the

clergy, installed for a long time around the bishoprics of the cities, began to shift towards the countryside (Argyriou 1967: 57).

The churches witnessed a certain decline during the beginning of the Ottoman occupation. The Antiochian synod of 1528 in Ras Baalbek was held with 28 bishops. The number had decreased to 18 by 1635. And this happened despite the fact that many monasteries were still active in this patriarchate. The formation of clergymen was the monopoly of the monastery of Saint Saba in Palestine. St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai, which in 1512 housed 40 monks, would see its population decrease to 3 monks in 1620. The number of monks in St. Saba would vary between 15 to 50 monks during the same period. Many of them would be slaughtered by the Ottomans in 1566 (Papadopoulos 1920).

Despite persecution and abuses perpetrated by the local governors or the central authorities, periods of development and progress were observed in Bilad al-Sham (Levant). I will cite in this regard two initiatives and two incidents, which highlight the cultural and religious development of the Christian communities in that epoch. The first initiative was the achievement of Metropolitan Meletios Karmeh (1586–1636), who was the bishop of Aleppo and who inaugurated his profession by the translation of the liturgy books from Greek sources. He sought to rid the liturgical books of heresies that he considered as having been introduced by translations made from the Syriac language. For the Orthodox living in the countryside, the Syriac language embodied the ritual and vernacular forms with which they were familiar (Rustom 1988: 44).

The second initiative was that of the successor of Patriarch Karmeh, Makarius al-Zai'm. This patriarch was strongly indebted for financial reasons to the collection of *jizya*. Patriarch Makarius made two journeys to Russia to obtain gifts from the principal princes and *voivodes* (governors) of Valachy, Moldavia, Ukraine, and Russia. During his stay and stops, the patriarch was accompanied by his son Deacon Paul, by the painter Yussef al-Mussawir and by many other notables, who were fluent in Greek and the languages of the countries visited; their job was to collect information and religious data of all sorts. This newly acquired knowledge was translated into Arabic and recorded in anthologies known as *Magmu'*. These accounts, whether translated in full or summarized, covered various subjects: Antiochian hagiography, church history, cities' descriptions, theology, exegesis. Three well-known anthologies were recopied later: *Magmu' Latif*, *Magmu' Mubarak*, and the *Book of the Bee*. Besides accounts of journeys in Russia left by the patriarch's son, Makarius was one of the principal individuals to introduce the Greek enlightenment to the East. During his visits and later on, the visitors who came with him executed translations of major theological works of Hellenic authors of that period. The capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans, which was perceived as the apocalyptic end of the world, provoked a cultural reaction within Greece in the period called the post-Byzantine era and a religious and intellectual revival in these regions (Argyriou 1967: 99).

The collections of manuscripts found in the monasteries of the Antiochian Patriarchate reveal the presence of certain titles such as *The Small and Big Encyclopedia*, *The Evangelical Horn of St. Elias Meniates*, *The Ranged Pearls of the Byzantine See*, and many other works attesting that the East had benefited from the writings of the Greek

Enlightenment (Slim 1995: 69). The observations of this Great Patriarch in the Orthodox World would incite him to promote and encourage a certain intellectual and artistic revival, later known not only through translation and manuscript copying, but also through the painting of icons and illumination works.

The prosperity of the Christian churches in the East was connected, according to several researchers' accounts, to the flourishing of Aleppo and the wealth of the Christian merchants who dwelt in this city. Aleppo, during the Ottoman era, was the third city in the empire after Istanbul and Cairo. It fulfilled the role of a commercial hub between the West and the Far East, Persia, Anatolia, Antioch, and Bilad al-Sham. Aleppo's families offered to the monastery of Balamand a range of icons painted by three generations of painters from the El-Mussawir family. Monks came to settle in the monastery from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and an aisle of the monastery was named after them, the Aleppans' apartment (Slim 1995: 57).

The Aleppans helped to lay foundations for a number of communities. The Aleppan Maronites, educated in Rome, would found the Maronite monastic orders, directly attached to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. So they assisted in the preparations for the Catholic churches' synod, held in Loueizeh in 1738, that established the jurisdiction of Rome over these churches.

As for the nascent Catholic communities, it was in Aleppo that the Latin missionaries in contact with the European merchants dwelling in the city, would conduct the first conversions among the local communities: Greek, Syriac, and Armenian. It was in Aleppo that the first Catholic monks would travel to Mount Lebanon and install the religious order of the Basilian Shweirites, one of the founding orders of the Monastic community of St. John of Shweir (*Dayr mar Yuhanna*) (Abou Nohra 1983), and where the earliest Arabic language printing press started. The Syriac Catholics accompanied Patriarch Mikhayil Jarweh to establish their monastery in Sharfeh and the Armenian Catholics who installed their monastery in Bzommar. These two monasteries, along with the two others, founded by the Greek Catholics, St. Michel and Notre Dame of Annunciation, were located in Kesrouan, in addition to many other Maronite monasteries founded in the sixteenth century. The Maronite family Al-Khazin had hastened their settlement by granting or leasing them lands, which had been made fertile by the labor of monks (Chevallier 1983).

Other researchers advanced the statement that the first center of Christian prosperity, before Aleppo, was the city of Tripoli (Lebanon) where the Sifa emirs, governors of Tripoli, were engaging for their service Christian secretaries, who had worked as translators for European consuls or for rich merchants, dealing with Europe via the city port. The proximity of the city to the Balamand Monastery had aided the cultural, religious, and economic development of Christians in the region. Not very far from Tripoli, lies the religious and spiritual center of the Maronite community which houses, in the Monastery of Notre Dame of Qannoubin, the seat of the patriarchate.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Maronite peasants, encouraged by the Druze emirs of the mountain, began a migratory movement from the south. They were hosted by the Druze governors who levied the taxes in the mountain regions, around Beirut and in Saida. This Maronite migration and generally the Christian migration from the South would create a regrouping of Christians in the central



regions and would change the demography to their advantage. These Christian families, initially engaged as sharecroppers by the Druze, would progressively come to ownership of the territories they were farming (Touma 1972).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the situation of the Eastern churches changed. The weakening of the Ottoman Empire allowed European interference to have more influence on the local Christian populations. The capitulations, which granted trading privileges by the Ottomans to European powers and which were a form of power and tolerance bestowed by the Ottomans, would become a tool for the weakening and decline of the empire. Through these agreements, foreigners who lived on the Ottoman territory enjoyed a right of judicial extraterritoriality in disputes and they were judged according to the laws of their own countries. This privilege was extended to indigenous people working with them. Thus, the Christian communities became protected by the European powers. Thanks to the delegates from the Vatican and the work of Catholic missionaries, the Maronites enjoyed the protection of France, which was the first power to sign a surrender agreement with the Ottomans in 1569 (Homsy 1956).

Following the defeat of the Ottomans in their wars against Russia, the Treaty of Kutchuk Kaynardji imposed the protection of all the Orthodox subjects of the empire by Russia (Hopwood 1961: 5). These capitulations were not always necessary because some Christian residents in the cities of the empire were rich enough through their trade and did not need protection except from the local authorities for whom they were advisers and close secretaries. Other researchers believed that the protection afforded by the system of capitulations was false and served the interests of the European powers. These capitulations did in no case protect the Christians during the massacres in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the contrary, they created distrust on the part of Muslims and exacerbated their hatred towards Christians. Because of this protection, Christians were identified as allies of the foreign powers (Abi Chahla 1924: 183–185).

With the second half of the seventeenth century, the European influence began to be exerted in a more direct and less unobtrusive manner. It was especially in the big cities of Bilad al-Sham that this influence would be most active. Although they started with the Crusades, the Catholic missions intensified with Pope Gregory XV, who established the Synod for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622 (الاي مان إنتشار م جمع ع) (Daccache 2005:). These missions were originally designed to support the Oriental Christians and yet also to 'latinize' these communities and link them with the Eastern churches in Rome (Heyberger 1994: 236). From this period, the Catholic missionaries would flock to all cities: Capuchins, Jesuits, Dominicans, and Carmelites throughout the East would encourage the Eastern churches to recognize the authority of Rome. Parish visits, charitable and educational activities, and promises of protection were often invoked. The authorities of the Eastern churches were not suspicious as they entrusted their parishioners to the new missionaries, often conversing with them and seeing in them a revival and expansion of their churches. Several prelates, bishops or even oriental patriarchs, hoping to benefit from the French protection of their communities, expressed their desire to connect with Rome and to recognize the authority of the pope. These negotiations and theological discussions between the Eastern ecclesiastical hierarchies and the Catholic missionaries led to the formation of Eastern communities united to

Rome: Chaldeans in Diyarbakir in 1713, and Syriac Catholics in Aleppo with André Akhidjian since 1659. (Yet the real beginnings were under the Patriarch Mikhayil Jarwe who was elected in 1774 in Mardin and then settled in Lebanon) (Hajjar 1962: 258). After a succession of crises and divisions between the Damascene and the Aleppan Orthodox people, the Catholics elected Cyril Tanas (the nephew of the bishop of Saida Al-Aftimos Sayfi) patriarch in Damascus. He chose his headquarters in Saida in 1724. The Aleppans recognized and inducted the Greek Orthodox patriarch sent by the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople. From then, the duplication of bishoprics would be perpetual (Hajjar 1962: 240).

Each conflict affecting the communities would involve the local governors, the ambassadors and the European consuls. The distribution of places of worship, of churches and monasteries, did not happen without difficulty. Acts of persecution and humiliation, instigated by both parties, were executed by the officers of the local authorities. The stakes were high: the community who came to seize the places of worship, the churches and the monasteries, guaranteed the alliance of the population living around them. Thus there was a polarization of governors, leaders, foreign consuls, and ambassadors. The Emir Melhim and Emir Yousif Shehab and later Emir Beshir, with the consuls of France and Austria, supported the Catholics, while the *Wali (custodian)* of Sayda Jazzar Pasha along with the Ottoman authorities, contacted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the consuls of Russia, supported the Orthodox. Notables and patriarchs often changed sides to suit their convictions, while the local governors would grant the places of worship to the highest bidder and would later change their minds (Rustom 1962: 6).

Paradoxically, it was in this atmosphere of discussion and discord that religious institutions in Bilad al-Sham multiplied. Catholic and Maronite monasteries were prevalent in the Lebanese mountains and the southern regions, controlled by the Druze emirs. Orthodox monasteries also flourished in the rural area around Tripoli, Matn (central Lebanon), and Syria (Maaloula, Saydnaya, El-Hosn). During this period, a crucial transformation in the Ottoman Empire, touching its administrative and fiscal organization took place. The Ottoman Empire, after several military defeats, had an urgent need for cash to pay the janissary troops, who were constantly threatening to revolt. The provincial administration, based on the distribution of *timars* and which specifically favored military leaders, would turn to farming by auction; farming was given by the government of the regions to those who paid the most and in advance by the tribute of the district they wanted to govern (Mantran 1994: 190). There was another measure, equally favorable to the founding of monasteries and their expansion. It was the initiative of the Ottoman sultans to transform public *miri* lands into *waqf* lands. They immobilized and spent annuities or income on one or other of their families or on religious institutions. It was a way of circumventing the testamentary decisions of the Islamic Shari'a and of favoring especially the women of their relatives or those of their sons who did not inherit. Their example was followed, in the provinces, by governors who also transformed the *miri* lands into *waqf* lands in different regions (Barnes 1986: 43). In provinces, where there were large Christian communities, monasteries benefited from this initiative as local governors who farmed out the tribute would grant these monasteries public lands, in order to make them more productive and be able

to collect more taxes. Thus, in the Lebanese mountains, the Druze emirs granted the Maronite Catholic monks the *miri* lands that were between the villages and which were only pastures and forests. These lands were transformed into terraces and planted by the monks and the mulberry planters, creating olive groves and vineyards in different regions (Van Leeuwen 1991: 613). Monastic centers became important areas of agricultural exploitation, consolidation of production, and distribution of work. One could say the same thing about the great monastic centers of Syria. Thanks to the hard work of their monks and to the generosity of their parishioners, these monasteries were later able to acquire other lands and to conduct an unparalleled land expansion. For some researchers, the expansion of these monasteries coincided with the growth of the silk trade with Europe and especially France. Monasteries became centers of the production of cocoons that were sent to local or French factories (Van Leeuwen 1991: 607).

During the late eighteenth century, some monasteries acted, due to their prosperity, as the first bank. City notables enriched by the flourishing trade would deposit their money, and sharecroppers and farmers in need for cash borrowed from these monasteries while they waited for production revenues. With the heritage of religious manuscripts that has accumulated over the centuries, these monasteries became cultural centers, where religious thought was communicated to the people living around them, the pilgrims visiting these monasteries, and townspeople who found refuge during natural disasters, wars, or epidemics. The colophons of the manuscripts tell us about the moral and cultural achievements from which the prospective readers have benefited (Slim 1995: 62). These monasteries would continue later on to play an important cultural and educational role. The first schools would be based on the premises of these monasteries. For the Maronites and the Catholics, the Council of Louweize had already recommended in 1736 that the monasteries take care of the education of the children of the villages around them. In 1789, the school of 'Ayn Waraqa in Keserwan (Mount Lebanon) was founded. Among the orthodox, education was informally conducted within scriptoria in city bishoprics and in the manuscript-copying workshops in monasteries.

Later in the nineteenth century, when missionary schools became increasingly important, competition between Protestants, Catholics and local churches increased considerably. The foundation of schools in major cities of Bilad Al-Sham, in the Lebanese mountains and Palestine, became a key policy issue of European powers. The efforts of Catholics supported by the Austrian and French, and of the Protestants backed by the British and the Americans, were reinforced in 1882 by Russian missionaries, sent by the Russian Imperial Society of Palestine (Hopwood 1961: 100). But would the local Christian communities establish their own seminaries inside the buildings of their monasteries, schools?

Since the late eighteenth century, the intervention of the European powers and the expansion of trade obliged the local governors to hire Christian secretaries and appoint ministers, as well, who spoke foreign languages and who managed their correspondence with the Ottomans. Recently published lists, from the first half of the nineteenth century, show 63 Christian secretaries for various governors in Bilad Al-Sham. These secretaries, who resemble our current ministers, did not hesitate to intervene in favor of their co-religionists in case of need.

Due to various military defeats of the Ottoman armies and under constant pressure from the European powers, the Ottoman authorities began a series of reforms aimed at modernizing the structures and laws of the empire, to enable it to gain credibility among other powers. These reforms were also enacted to ensure the civil and political emancipation of the Christians in the East. The first reform, imposed by the sultan in 1839, granted the Christians of the empire equality with Muslim citizens and prohibited any tax or legal discrimination against them (Engellhardt 1882: 157). With each reform, Christians posed a challenge and a pretext for the superpowers and for the empire to maintain the balance of power in the region. In 1856, the second reform of Khatti Humayun claimed equality of dhimmis with Muslims in administration of justice, military recruitment, and taxation. Political rights were granted to Jews and Christians who gained the right to vote for municipal and provincial councils, freedom of worship, and the opportunity to build new churches or restore old ones. Discrimination in respect of any subject because of his creed, language, or race was abolished, and with it all forced conversion was prohibited. No discrimination was to be exercised in access to public offices. In return, the sultan invited the millets to reform their temporal administration (Mayeur Joaouen 1995: 793–849). These reforms did not please the Christians of the empire. Most were suspicious and worried about these changes; they preferred the traditional system of privileges, provided to communities through the capitulations.

During the closing of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottomans perpetrated unbelievable massacres against the Armenians, the Syrians, and the Ashurians (Rabbath: 111). But we have to recognize that these atrocities were also caused by political issues, pertaining to the foreign interventions, especially by the British, Russian and French, on behalf of these communities.

These events, despite their severity, did not keep Christians from participating in the Arab Renaissance of the early twentieth century. And this did not hinder them from being its major promoters. Within this frame, we cite the writings of Butrus al-Bustani, which were renowned for their political character, and for their political character and literary merit. His essays in *al-Jinan* and *Nafir Suria* urged people to look beyond the massacres, for the sake of national unity, and to strive for the country's development and progress. Nagib 'Azuri considered that Christians were Arabs as much as their co-religionists, the Muslims. With the modern advent of administrative centralization, which shaped the *tanzimat* (western-oriented reorganization) of the reform era, the state generated statistics in its *wilayat* (provinces), and it turned out that the number of Christians, in the East, had increased to three times what it was before. After four centuries, Christian inhabitants totaled 40% of the coastal residents and Mount Lebanon, and 12–15% of the inhabitants of Damascus and Aleppo provinces (Courbage and Fargues 1997: 151). This increase in the percentage of Christians was due to an increase in growth from natural births. The increase in the number of Jews was due to their migration from Spain, while the population increase among Muslims had been relatively low during this period. In Aleppo, for example, Christians increased by 5.9% while Muslims only increased 0.2%. In

Egypt, the Copts, who counted 6.8% to 8% of the population, registered remarkable growth rates in the late nineteenth century (Courbage and Fargues 1997: 150–151). The phenomenon of the growing proportion of the Christian population in the region, which was unexpected, can be explained in terms of the political and economic developments occurring in the Ottoman Empire. Economic prosperity, resulting from the growth of trade with the West, positively impacted the growth in births in cities; most of the Christian populations in the East were residents of the cities, who benefited from this situation. The urban Christian population was able to avoid the problems of starvation, yet they could not avoid exposure to diseases and epidemics. We note, however, that Christians in their neighborhoods adopted prevention methods that resulted in a lower mortality rate (Courbage and Fargues 1997: 156).

On the other hand, the population movements had played an important role in the re-distribution of the Christian map. The Maronites had expanded towards the southern regions, in Mount Lebanon, benefiting from the refraction of the Druze Yemeni party, and from the Shi'ite migration towards the Bekaa. Many Christian families had migrated from Aleppo and Damascus to Lebanon, as a result of the split between the Orthodox and the Catholics. The sectarian restrictions in Damascus and the encroachments of Kurds in northern Iraq, led to a conglomeration of Christian villagers in conurbations.

The sociologists in the area of population research argue that polygamy and the ease of divorce, within the Muslim population, have had a negative impact on breeding and population growth among Muslim communities, throughout the Ottoman period. The percentage of the Christian population in the East at the eve of World War I, was 26.4% in Syria and Lebanon, 8% in Egypt, and 2.2% in Iraq (Courbage and Fargues 1997: 160). Yet prosperity and growth had negative effects on the growth of the Christian population. Christians, who benefited economically and culturally from their relationships with the West, acquired social attitudes that influenced the rate of reproduction, and the economic and cultural requirements substantially limited the natural process of reproduction. The spread of knowledge among the Christians contributed to low fertility and reproduction. The evolution in health conditions and improved economic conditions resulted in a decline of deaths in children, and in the growth of natural reproduction among Muslims. In 1990, Christians made up only 10.1% of the population in the east, 5.8% of Egypt's population, and 3.1% of Iraq's (Courbage and Fargues 1997: 79).

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# African Christianity

## Historical and Thematic Horizons

Lamin Sanneh

### Introduction

As a world religion, Christianity took root in Egypt and Ethiopia from its very origin, and for many centuries beginning in the seventh it succeeded in withstanding incursions by Islam. This was no mean feat, given the fact that Islam swept through these areas with lightning speed to establish a permanent foothold. It left an indelible mark on Egypt and on populations in Nubia, Ethiopia, and the surrounding societies. The persistence of the Coptic Church and of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the face of rising historical pressure says something for the depth of Christian roots in these societies and the tenacity of tradition to support a chain of unbroken witness.

Nevertheless, in Egypt the Coptic Church was reduced to an enclave status while in Ethiopia an Islamic *cordon sanitaire* sealed the church against expansion beyond its historical borders. The policies of Saladin as ruler of Egypt broke the centuries-long resistance of Christian populations of Nubia and brought about their conversion to Islam. Earlier the Byzantine Church was virtually decimated in North Africa and in Syria, with Spain and Sicily following suit. Egypt and Ethiopia, on the other hand, escaped that fate as they continued to maintain their Christian heritage.

Unlike Egypt, however, the church in Ethiopia was a national institution of formidable stature, with the monasteries as centers of learning, piety, and devotion tending the flame of worship and witness across the centuries. Appropriately, monastic institutions have been the nerve centers of national and cultural identity, inscribing the nation's memory of itself in illuminated sacred manuscripts, and adding spiritual clarity to the country's territorial coherence. Dating back to the sixth century, the monastery of Debre Damo in the Tigray Region near the Eritrean border as among the oldest living monasteries in the world, is representative of this ancient tradition. Sitting at

2,216 meters above sea level and still the center of national pilgrimage every September, the monastery remains accessible only by a rope up a sheer cliff. There some six hundred monks practice holiness, undertaking physical labor as personal discipline.

## Turning Point

Yet, as is the fate of communities penned up to their own custom, the church faced challenges from without and within, creating in Ethiopia's case, a sense of siege. In the attempt to break out of its isolation, Ethiopia since 1402 had sent emissaries to Rome requesting without avail that missionaries come to the country. As a last gambit, Ethiopia decided to send observers to the Council of Florence in 1443, where their persistence awakened Portuguese interest in Ethiopia and in Africa in general.

Thus was laid the foundation of the Portuguese endeavor to embark on maritime expansion. It coincided with the rise of Ottoman power, and after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 Portugal redoubled its efforts to escape the Ottoman stranglehold in the Mediterranean world. The Ethiopian overtures crystallized into an appealing idea when viewed from that perspective, suggesting that such an alliance could offer crucial advantage to Europe. By the sixteenth century Ethiopia's appeals were bordering on the frantic, and papal strategists, confronted with the fallout of the Protestant Reformation and the reality of Ottoman ascendancy in the eastern Mediterranean, started to pay attention to Ethiopia's overtures. Perhaps Ethiopia after all might be the missing link in the defense chain Catholic Europe needed to erect to avert encirclement. Prospects of Christianity in Africa offered the hope of shoring up Europe's falling fortunes.

Juan Bautista Vives, a Spanish prelate, drew up a memorandum for Paul V in which he recommended the creation of missionary seminaries and a new congregation to challenge Spanish and Portuguese patronal rights.<sup>1</sup> On April 18, 1617 Vives wrote to the emperor of Ethiopia proposing that the emperor cooperate with the king of Congo in opening a route between the two Christian states, a proposal that showed ignorance of the realities of African geography and the prevailing poor state of communication. Vives had long been a friend of Jerónimo Gracian, who had organized the first Carmelite mission to Congo, and that personal association may have been responsible for the idea of a Congo-Ethiopia Christian axis.

Yet the idea was by no means a novel one. In a report written in 1578 by a young Venetian, Pietro Duodo, whose father, Francesco, had been captain-general of the Venetian galleys at the defeat of the Ottoman fleet at the battle of Lepanto, it was alleged that some twenty-five years earlier, "two Genoese Negroni and Grimaldi" had sailed from Lisbon to the Congo kingdom and from there "one month by river" had reached the imperial city of Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup> This was, however, no more than a figment of the imagination since no such voyage had or could have taken place, given the geographical reality. But the myth does show in the early modern period evidence of growing interest in taking Christianity to sub-Saharan Africa.

These geopolitical considerations encouraged changes in the policies of church and state, and their ramifications in time altered the priorities of a Eurocentric church. Safeguarding the Christian heartlands of Europe required sallying forth into



the world beyond. The rise of the maritime powers of Portugal and Spain provided a channel and the motivation for the wider dissemination of ideas and practices in the African field.

The errand into Africa and beyond, however, would reveal the disadvantages of entanglement of Catholic missions with the *ancien regimes*, and it complicated considerably while also demonstrating urgently the need for the church to pursue a missionary course free of patronal dependence on Portugal. Indeed, overseas mission exposed the pitfalls and shortcomings of dependence on the state, but also equally importantly the limitations of European Catholic sovereigns in controlling the activities of their agents and subjects abroad. Alliance with the state in Europe was proving to be an unreliable way for the church to pursue its apostolic mandate overseas, while conditions in Africa presented novel obstacles for the idea of perpetuating European forms and styles. The language and cultural barrier presented a formidable challenge.

The difficulties of the mission field reflected fledgling problems at home in Europe that would take time fully to become manifest, by which point the direction for events seemed irreversible. In 1500, say, Europe had never been more Christian, and Christianity more European. Yet in the era before Europe's global outreach and while the dust of the Crusades was still settling, the symmetry of church and society was achieved in relative confinement, thanks to the virtual blockade of the Mediterranean by Islamic power. Some of these expeditions, invested in the discovery of the New World, sailed via the west coast of Africa. In that cause, at the mouth of the Senegal River the emissaries of Prince Henry of Portugal, inspired by the prospects of gaining unhindered range, carved there Henry's arms and motto, *Talent de bien faire*.<sup>3</sup>

In 1482 the Portuguese built in a massive fortress, São Jorge da Mina, or Elmina, on the West African coast in the Gold Coast, modern Ghana. Of such feats, the chronicler, Zurara (1410–1473/4), declared, "Of a surety, I doubt if since the great power of Alexander and of Caesar, there hath been any prince in the world that ever had the marks of his conquest set up so far from his own land."<sup>4</sup> Yet "marks of conquest," with the potential of deferred conflict with the church, are scarcely an adequate way of undertaking the missionary enterprise, and it emboldened the maritime powers to make conquest the prerequisite of overseas mission. The idea of "marks of conquest" left the papacy in a historical dilemma of either embracing imperial subservience or adopting apostolic resistance. Meanwhile, the forces unleashed by the transatlantic slave trade, which laid the foundation of the Portuguese and Spanish sea-borne empires, gave little time to plan a way out. The answer would eventually come, not from Rome, but, appropriately, from the mission field.

The hand of the papacy was strengthened when in the late sixteenth century an anonymous young Congo princess sent an appeal that eventually nudged Rome to action. It played a not insignificant part in the establishment of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1622. The trail began in 1577 when Teresa of Avila asked King Philip II of Spain if he could reform the Carmelite order and allow women to be nuns. The mission that ensued consisted of Carmelite nuns whom Philip dispatched to Congo in 1584. The mission inspired an unnamed princess to aspire to enter the Order as a Carmelite nun, though it is not known what became of the princess' application to Mother Maria de San Jose, prioress of the newly founded convent in Lisbon, who

responded by promising that she would try to meet her wishes. In the end little came of that though the interest it generated persisted.

All this was part of the growing engagement with Africa's Christian prospects and a sign that efforts would bear fruit. Vives was determined to pursue a two-kingdom approach, a strategy that pointed emphatically away from the patronal arrangement with Portugal: away, that is, from the idea of the necessity of Europe. The matter was discussed in Rome and a memorandum subsequently submitted to Paul V on the subject by Girolamo Vecchietti who had also been involved in negotiations with the Coptic Church in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Girolamo succeeded in obtaining the support of Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, the future Urban VIII, for his idea of a Congo mission, though the Jesuits in Rome poured cold water on the scheme.<sup>6</sup> Yet about the time that Vives wrote to the emperor, the papal collector in Lisbon reported that Raffaello di Castro, a priest from Jacuman in New Spain, "a man of an enquiring mind (*uomo curioso*)," went to Ocanga on the northern frontier of Congo and "passed far beyond it in order to obtain information regarding people who wore a wooden cross from the necks and came from the country of Prester John."<sup>7</sup>

The enthusiasm for an African mission allowed fanciful exaggeration to creep into reports, yet the enthusiasm built up a head of steam that pushed popes and emperors to action. In his letter appointing Vives as his ambassador, for example, Alvaro II renewed the request that Rome send other missionaries.<sup>8</sup> In response to this request, Vives approached the Capuchins, who were already being used by the papacy for missions demanding skill and diplomacy. Together with Cardinal Trejo, a Spaniard who had been appointed in the curia as Protector of the kingdom of Congo, Vives assured the Capuchins that they would soon be able to obtain Philip III's support for this initiative. During a visit to the Iberian peninsula in 1619, Lorenzo da Brindisi, Father General of the Capuchins, supported the intended mission to Philip III against opposition by defendants of the *padroado* rights. In July 1620 Cardinal Borghese, Paul V's secretary of state, again urged the collector in Lisbon to take up the question. On March 19, 1621, barely a month after his election to the papacy, Gregory XV assured Alvaro III that the Capuchin mission would soon be leaving for Congo, though he reckoned without the resistance of the Council of Portugal at Madrid that was dead set against any such independent move.<sup>9</sup>

Spanish Franciscans and Dominicans in the New World had been influential agents in tying mission to the colonial project. But that old-style establishment view conflicted with the idea of mission independent of the state. The Jesuits were the first to alert the papacy to the drawbacks of this policy of subservience to the colonial powers, by which time Rome had become all too aware of the perils of political sponsorship in the New World. The *Padroado* of 1514 became a political boomerang, leading to a full-scale assault on the papacy. Charles V of Spain reacted harshly to perceived papal interference in the affairs of empire, and in May, 1527, the imperial troops invaded Rome and rampaged through the city, ransacking everything that lay in their path.

It was a lesson in ecclesiastical subordination not easily lost on Rome: colonial entanglement might be unavoidable, but it could never be dependable, or even desirable in the final analysis. It would tie the hands of the church in a domain central to apostolic authority. Undeterred, Pius III promulgated in 1537 the bull *Sublimus Deus* enjoining

full recognition of the rights and humanity of the Indian populations. In an Apostolic brief to the Archbishop of Toledo, the pope demanded recognition and respect for the rights of the native populations. Las Casas' forceful denunciations of colonial injustice in the New World long made the moral case for mission not as a friend but as an unavoidable foe of empire.

It is against this background that we have to understand how Francis Borgia, with his ambivalent relationship with Philip II of Madrid, took the initiative to break ranks with the old system of state sponsorship. Although the attempt eventually of Pius V and Borgia to establish a permanent institution in the papal curia to direct Catholic missionary activities in Europe and overseas failed, it marked a point of no return as the church moved quickly to assert its independence, and ultimately to reject the political interpretation of the apostolic mandate. It had a renovating effect on the church.

The developments convinced Gregory XV to establish in 1622 the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, known as Propaganda Fide, an institution that became the most influential missionary organization in the history of the church. The dogged appeals and unflagging aspirations of the remote, small community of Congo Christians, with a precarious foothold in the royal family and court, had directly and consequentially contributed to the papal decision to confront the challenge of the overseas missions and the obstacles created by the *padroado*. In that way, the chequered course of foreign mission had the unforeseen outcome of changing church policy, and, indirectly, the role of the *ancien regime* in the church. In that way the norms of reform and modernization of mission transcended purely European interests, with interesting long-term consequences for church–state relations in the colonial empire. Conceding Madrid's supreme control over the churches in Spanish America, Propaganda Fide turned its attention to other overseas areas.

Meanwhile, Francesco Ingoli, Propaganda's first secretary, criticized Madrid for not appointing indigenous clergy, an issue that loomed much larger for mission in Africa and Asia where Portuguese policy opposed this indigenous rule. Portugal's limited manpower capability, furthermore, aggravated the indigenous question for mission in the more densely populated regions of the world, reaching a crisis point with the erosion of Portugal's seaborne mercantile monopoly that occurred long before the union of its crown with that of Spain in 1580. Dutch, English, and French Huguenot interlopers emerged to pose a far greater threat to Portuguese colonialism than to the Spanish New World, and the Protestant nature of the interlopers' threat reminded the papacy of the folly and unreliability of continuing to vest the direction of missions for Africa and Asia in Portuguese patronal rights.

The dilemma for Rome was clear. Access to the mission field could not be had without a maritime ally, but a maritime ally that wanted its monopoly protected would not tolerate international missions except as appendages of empire. Did that mean that mission was doomed for its colonial association? Though Rome was slow, or perhaps even unwilling, to admit it, whatever its incidental advantages, colonial hegemony turned out to require paying little more than lip service to mission on the pretext that hegemony that brooked no papal interference would serve its interest just as well. This situation could not be remedied by any cosmetic tinkering with the policy of inflexible European control without indigenous response Accordingly, when in 1610 Paul V

commissioned the Discalced Carmelites to embark on a mission to Congo from Portugal, Philip III blocked the mission by preventing its departure from Lisbon.

Asserting the right to take the bait without the hook, a Portuguese official objected to the new papal policy, saying that "a monarchy that has lost its reputation, even if it has lost no territory, is a sky without light, a sun without rays, a body without a soul." The words could not be a more apt description of an apostolic authority stripped of its missionary mantle, for what is the church without its mission? Portugal's defense of its patronage system was a more eloquent testimony of the thunder it wished to steal from the church than of the political power over the church to which it felt entitled.

### *Ground rules*

These obstacles notwithstanding, a significant Capuchin mission reached Congo in 1645 to become the most important in Africa before 1700 with over a hundred missionaries dispatched there by Propaganda Fide. Even at that early date Christian Congolese were unwilling to let the missionaries have it all their own way, with King Garcia II, for example, insisting against missionary opposition that Christianity was not incompatible with indigenous customs and practices. Garcia II's defense represented a contestation of European influence in Christianity, an issue of much greater significance in later centuries. Slavery was a sticking point, and criticism by Christian Africans eventually reached the ears of Rome. Accordingly in 1686, following the appeal and intervention of an Afro-Brazilian, Lorenzo da Silva, the Holy See issued a strong condemnation of slavery and the slave trade. The curia ranged itself firmly on the side of the liberty of Catholic Africans against Portuguese slave merchants, an example of the influence converts exerted on changes in attitude and policy in Rome. It is instructive to reflect that, at least in the mission field, the church had to free itself of its European ties to pursue its missionary calling. African realities had a lot to do with that change of perspective.

In what marked the beginning of nearly two centuries of Capuchin involvement in the Congo, the Capuchins established schools in São Salvador and Soyo, learned Kikongo, and began systematic evangelization in the rural districts. They established confraternities among the Africans, among them the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary, which was formed in Luanda in 1658 and which became a forum for promoting African rights. Between 1672 and 1700, thirty-seven Capuchin fathers recorded a total of 341,000 baptisms. Far from being merely a thin veneer of Catholicism and a pawn of imperial Portugal, as critics have argued, Soyo was a significant Christian African outpost. The claim that what remained of its Catholicism was syncretistic and fodder for crass Portuguese manipulation is belied by Soyo's efforts in inculturation by reconfiguring primal African concepts in Christian terms. Soyo showed its independence by preferring non-Portuguese missionaries, and by establishing trading relations with Portugal's arch-rival and ideological opponent, the Protestant Dutch. Other Capuchin missions were established on the Guinea Coast and in Sierra Leone in 1644, in Benin in 1647, and in the small state of Warri in the 1650s. Queen Nzinga of Matamba, in eastern Angola, embraced Christianity through the influence of a captured Capuchin priest. In 1656 she relented, and she and a great number of her troops were received into the

faith. She sought to create a Christian state, personally carrying stones for the building of the church of Our Lady of Matamba, which was completed in 1665, the year of her death. She was a distinguished example of women pioneers of Christianity in the ancient church, as the following account of her role makes clear.

Queen Nzinga's personal example of devotion set the bar of faith for her people. At her encouragement baptisms multiplied, more churches were constructed, daily prayers of the rosary observed, and public processions held. After the communion service she distributed goods to her subjects and arranged for the poor to be fed. She crowned it all with displays of fireworks, music, and songs. It was the high-water mark of Catholicism in seventeenth-century Congo. Given this fact, the picture painted by critics of a superficial syncretism that passed off as Christianity in the Congo kingdom is not accurate; it is a picture based on the assumption that the virtual extinction of Christianity in the area by the mid-nineteenth century must have been because the religion struck no genuine roots in its heyday. In fact Soyo was an outstanding Christian kingdom that assumed responsibility for evangelization and for the consolidation of the church. Christian practice then showed depth and faithfulness, not failure and compromise.

After the Portuguese rounded the Cape, they set up colonies in East Africa, including fortified trading cities along the coast. The island-city of Mozambique became the main administrative center of Portuguese East Africa, with an estimated 2,000 Christians by 1586. The Dominicans held sway over the Mutapa Empire of Zimbabwe whose kings accepted baptism. In the Zambezi Valley, the Portuguese crown made large grants of land (*prazos*) to settlers. Jesuits and Dominicans from Portugal accompanied the colonists, and in some cases the fathers owned *prazos*. According to a Portuguese Jesuit in 1667, there were sixteen places of worship pursuing missionary work in the lower Zambezi Valley – six conducted by the Jesuits, nine by the Dominicans and one by a secular priest. The Jesuits in 1697 established a college at Sena for the children of both the Portuguese and African elite.

The initiatives showed that from the early to mid-seventeenth century, the prospect of Catholic Christianity gaining ground in Africa had never been brighter. A sticking point, as we have seen, was the church's close ties with Portugal's imperial drive, which impeded the mission.<sup>10</sup> While many Africans embraced Christianity to please their Portuguese overlords, many others did so at real personal cost, including colonial attitudes to Africans.

A graphic example bears this out. In 1631 the city of Mombassa was retaken by the Muslims led by Sultán Yúsuf bin Hasan. Earlier, Yúsuf ibn Hasan had been adopted by the Portuguese as a protégé after his father was treacherously murdered by a renegade Portuguese captain. He was baptized as Jeronimo Chingulia and educated in Goa where he was made a knight of the Crusader Order of Christ. On his return to Mombasa Yúsuf ibn Hasan suffered ill treatment at the hands of the captain of the fort, and that experience gnawed at his resolve to hold on to his status as a convert. In an act of vengeance, Yúsuf ibn Hasan had the captain and his guards murdered, and followed it with a full-scale attack on several Christians, who were offered a choice of accepting Islam or death. That seventy-two African men and women, known as the "Martyrs of Mombassa," should have willingly accepted death along with their fellow Christian Portuguese rather than renounce their faith and embrace Islam testifies to their genuine

faith and commitment. Another 400 defiant Africans were taken as slaves to Arabia in exchange for ammunition. Carrying the cross knew few bounds.

## Catholic Missions in West and East Africa

Catholic missions in other parts of the world, however, confronted similar difficulties, without the collapse that was experienced in sub-Saharan Africa. What was distinctive about Africa was the social devastation caused by the slave trade. While slavery and the slave trade co-existed with Christianity in the past, in Africa the sheer scale of this trade was unprecedented. From the mid-seventeenth century, tens of thousands of Africans were shipped off each year to plantations in the Americas. Portugal's African empire became primarily a source of slaves. In order to feed the burgeoning demand for human labor, the slavers began seizing whole villages and devastating and depopulating entire districts. This in turn contributed to civil warfare and social breakdown. It is estimated that 40% of the total number of slaves crossing the Atlantic came from the Congo-Angola area – a figure out of all proportion to the population of the region, and one of the main reasons for the disintegration of the Christian Congolese kingdom.

Some of the clergy in Africa, it must be noted, owned slaves or engaged in the slave trade. For example, Fr Pedro de S. S. Trindade, who lived at Zumbo on the Zambezi between 1710 and 1754, owned 1,600 slaves and worked a gold mine. Nearly all the clergy received financial support through the slave trade. Nonetheless, many of the clergy were prepared to speak out against slavery and the slave trade. In 1686, in response to appeals from the Capuchins and petitions orchestrated by a former Afro-Brazilian slave, Lourenço da Silva (who claimed to be of royal Congolese blood), the Holy Office in Rome condemned the Atlantic slave trade.

Despite this condemnation, the trade continued, with ruinous effects for the Catholic missions until well into the early nineteenth century. When the famed Scottish missionary David Livingstone reached Angola in 1854 on his trek across the Continent, he found only the ruins of Jesuit and Capuchin churches and Christianity among the Africans reduced to a folk memory. The recovery of the Catholic missions would come, but only after the close of our period.

## New Beginning: Protestant Initiatives in West Africa

In time, the antislavery note that had been sounded for so long in Rome became a dominant theme in the renewal of the worldwide missionary movement in a Protestant Christianity that for the most part rejected mission as a Roman Catholic preserve. The first such Protestant organization, the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), was founded in London in 1698. Its stated purpose was “to promote religion and learning in the Plantations abroad and to propagate Christian knowledge at home,” and it decided to allow, as a spin-off activity, the formation of a missionary arm called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) with the

goal of sending out and maintaining missionaries. A Royal Charter in 1701 established the SPG on that basis. But even such early signs of commitment to mission among Protestants remained largely ad hoc and contingent, and often derivative from the work of others. The SPCK's educational and publishing work, however, had a significant impact at home and on the work that others were doing in the mission field. In particular, by 1720 there was an extensive program of Bible translation. The SPCK had by that date produced 10,000 Arabic New Testaments, 6,000 Psalters, and 5,000 Catechetical Instructions. The targets were communities in the Ottoman dominions, and in Russia, Persia, and India. The SPCK began a mission to the Scilly Isles in 1765 that lasted until 1841.

Direct SPG involvement in Africa was prompted by the needs of British trading concerns. Accordingly, between 1752 and 1824 the SPG sent out at the request of the Royal African Company (RAC) English clergymen who were commissioned as chaplains at Cape Coast in the then Gold Coast. One of these clergymen, Thomas Thompson, served for five years and recorded his impressions in a journal entitled, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages*, which he published in 1758. Reflecting the prevailing opinions of the RAC, Thompson took the view that slavery was not an evil, and he wrote approvingly of the slave trade. But in the attention he paid to the value of African languages in the work of missions, Thompson signalled a crucial shift to African cultural materials as a necessary framework for Christian mission. He stressed the importance of developing Fanti-language education, and, appropriately, arranged for three Fanti boys to accompany him to England for education. Two of them died, but the third, Philip Quaque, was ordained in the Anglican Church and in 1765 returned to Cape Coast where he served as schoolmaster, catechist, and missionary. He died in 1816 in those positions.

The Danes had also been involved at the fort of Christiansborg, Accra, a garrison fortress held by Denmark from which they regulated trade in the adjacent area. The chaplains who arrived in the Gold Coast were not strictly speaking missionaries, but, significantly enough, some took a close interest in African life and religion. For example, Wilhelm Johann Mueller, a chaplain between 1662 and 1670 at Fort Frederiksberg near Cape Coast, argued for missionary effort among the local population and asked for the Bible to be translated into the local languages. He followed his own advice when he collected some 800 practical words and phrases. He also demonstrated knowledge of local religious practices, the first such attempt at understanding by an outsider.

Two other chaplains based at Christiansborg found life in the castle too confining, and decided to venture further afield. One was Johann Rask, who served between 1709 and 1712, and the other was H. S. Monrad, who served between 1805 and 1809. Both condemned slavery and the trade that fostered it, and both expressed the classic doubt about the viability of establishing the church in Africa under conditions of European commercial operations. Without a missionary organization behind them, they did the next best thing and encouraged African pupils to enrol in the school at the castle.

Among the bright talents drawn to the school were William Amo of Axim who later obtained a doctorate degree at Wittenberg University, Jacob Capitein who graduated

from the University of Leiden in the Netherlands (producing for his dissertation an ironic defence of the slave trade as not being inconsistent with Christian teaching), Frederick Svane who graduated from the University of Copenhagen, and Jacob Protten. Such early missionary work was the first bloom of the evangelical awakening that eventually spread to Africa. Svane belonged to the Ga tribe and returned with a Danish wife to serve briefly at Christiansborg as a catechist and teacher before returning to Denmark in 1746.

Jacob Protten also returned to the Gold Coast but disappeared into neighboring Togoland, later to re-emerge for a brief spell in far-away Germany. He was then at Christiansborg between 1756 and 1761, and again from 1765 until his death in 1769. The haphazard nature of such careers was a fitting testament to the centuries of dogged effort to take Christianity into Bilád al-Súdn, "land of the blacks," as Arab geographers called sub-Saharan Africa. In 1776, the year of the American Revolution, the missions across Africa had become defunct or marginal, buckling under the global strain of the slave trade. Saving souls had yielded to devoting them to mammon.

## Antislavery Movements and Return of Former Slaves to Africa

Nevertheless, change was afoot, thanks in large part to the unforeseen and far-reaching consequences of the American Revolution. It is relevant to the story of Christianity in modern Africa to point out that what became the United States contained the largest population of Africans anywhere outside Africa. The vast majority of these Africans were slaves, some 700,000 by 1790, with an additional 59,000 free Africans.

Antislavery sentiments acquired a new urgency in the context of the anti-colonial politics of the Thirteen Colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. Many of the leading voices for independence from Britain expressed similar objections to the continuation of slavery on American soil. The first antislavery society was founded in 1775 in Philadelphia, and in 1785 Benjamin Franklin became its president. Franklin joined the emancipation of slaves to the national cause of political independence, vowing, for example, to boycott sugar because it was dyed with the blood of slave labor. A related motive in such ideas of boycott was undoubtedly the attack on the economic interests of the plantation system on which Britain's colonial power was based. The political and economic basis of antislavery agitation connected with the Second Great Awakening that from the 1790s swept the American colonies and drew in throngs of African converts. It was an eventful connection with long-range ramifications for the course of the history of Christianity in Africa. The evangelical awakening brought about an African mass movement in Christianity that was the first of any such movement among non-European populations, and in scale and effectiveness it went beyond anything that had impacted Africa, before or since.

Long before the American Revolution there was a movement among New England puritans to suppress the slave trade. In 1640 in the Puritan colony of Massachusetts a slave captain was arrested and his slave cargo confiscated and ordered to return to Africa at the colony's expense. When later the slave trade gained enough support that it could defy Puritan strictures, it was justified on grounds of economic expedience, not



on those of religion.<sup>11</sup> In 1773, Samuel Hopkins of Rhode Island and a disciple of the leader of the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), approached a fellow clergyman and a future president of Yale University, Ezra Stiles, about organizing a batch of black converts for repatriation to Africa as the bridgehead of an evangelical errand into the continent. Hopkins in 1775 appealed to John Adams (1735–1826), the future president of the United States, for a contribution to the cause of Christian colonization. By the outbreak of the war in 1776 over \$500 had been raised through private donations, but the war interrupted the plans. Hopkins returned to the idea even before the war was formally concluded in 1783, and later in 1794 under the aegis of the African Society of Providence James McKenzie was sent to the West African coast to prospect for a colony.

The wave of conversion spurred by the First Great Awakening had affected large numbers of American blacks who were subsequently caught up in the American Revolution, and afterwards these blacks, reformed and tempered, crossed the ocean back to Africa as new emissaries of the gospel. At the conclusion of the war black loyalist troops were demobilized under British command and transported to Canada in 1783. Later, in January, 1792, a freedom Armada of just under 1,200 of these blacks, disillusioned with life in Canada, set sail from Nova Scotia. They arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in March of the same year, to commence a new phase in Africa's experiment with Christianity and with freedom from slavery. The original colony of free London blacks, settled in 1787 in this "Province of Freedom," had from numerous causes disintegrated beyond being retrievable, and the cause of the new Christian experiment in Africa appeared to have all but foundered. At this point came a fresh impetus from the New World, with a gallant British Parliament backing the enterprise by paying the full cost of repatriation to the tune of £9,600. Perhaps this was simply Britain's ironic way of repaying the Americans for their disloyalty, as George Washington complained.

At any rate, here they were, these blacks originally uprooted from their homes, bound in chains, crammed in slave ships and hauled across the ocean, returning from the horrors of enslavement and racial castigation to the source of their misfortune. They came with a new and different message: liberation for captives, release for prisoners, time of favor for outcasts, and good news for the poor.

Old World missions targeted kings, chiefs, princes, and the other eminences of the land as the principal candidates for conversion, but the kings and chiefs and their circle of officials had as soon repudiated Christianity, reverting instead to the exploitative ways of the old order under which slavery and the slave trade were sanctioned. Now, New World ideas of freedom combined with the revival narrative of redemption and personal promise to declare reprieve for outcasts, the downtrodden, and the bound and gagged. Former slaves, ex-captives, victim populations, and marginal social groups stood in the first line of appeal, representing a stunning repudiation of the old notions of political pedigree and social privilege and of tribal custom as unchanging regulation. This message blunted the pervasive attitudes of lethargy and fatalism. It is not the will of fate that you catch and sell your neighbors, and that counter-narrative had to be as potent to change society. The day was not far off when slave-raiding would be a thing of the past.

## Eighteenth-Century African Christian Leaders

A brief exposé of the careers of some of these eighteenth-century figures will carry our discussion forward. There is the story of Olaudah Equiano, an indefatigable antislavery campaigner who worked on both sides of the Atlantic to mobilize progressive opinion to abolish the slave trade and advance Africa's economic development. There is a question about Equiano's African credentials, with indications that he was in fact born in the American South and not in Nigeria, as he himself claimed. Be that as it may, Equiano's importance for our subject is independent of any questions about his birth. Tradition claims an Igbo origin for him as "Ekwuno." He himself claimed that he arrived as a slave on a Virginia plantation in 1757. He went through a series of remarkable adventures, and in one place he recounted his conversion experience on a ship in Cadiz. Campaigning in Britain in 1789 in the year of the French Revolution, Equiano described slavery as a human rights issue, and insisted that its perpetuation was an obstacle both to human progress and to Africa's economic advancement. Motives of self-interest, he contended, should be joined to those of justice and humanity to give no quarter to the slave trade and slavery.

After Equiano's bid to lead the antislavery mission to Africa was rebuffed in London, it fell to the black veterans of the American Revolutionary War to pursue in West Africa the dual vocation of antislavery and Christianity. Thomas Peters was one of these. Peters had been born around 1740 in Nigeria of Yoruba Egba parents. Kidnapped in 1760, he was sold to French slave ship, the *Henri Quatre*. He eventually arrived in French Louisiana where his French master sold him to an Englishman. By 1770 he had been sold yet again, this time to William Campbell, a Scotsman in Wilmington, North Carolina, where Peters learned his trade as a millwright. When the war broke out in 1776, the town was evacuated, whereupon Peters joined the British side in the hope of gaining his freedom. After the British lost control of Philadelphia at the end of 1777, Peters, who had gone there, left with a contingent of demobilized troops bound for Nova Scotia. Twice wounded in battle, he survived the war and went with his wife to settle in Nova Scotia.

Peters organized a petition among the blacks in Nova Scotia describing the harsh living conditions there in spite of assurances to the contrary by officials. In 1791, he took the petition to London and presented it to William Granville of the Foreign Office. The petition had immediate effect, with the directors of the newly formed Sierra Leone Company saying they "concurred in applying to His Majesty's Ministers for a passage for [the blacks] at the expense of government, and having obtained a favorable answer to their application, they immediately availed themselves of the services of Lieut. [John] Clarkson, who very handsomely offered to go to Nova Scotia in order to make the necessary proposals, and to superintend the collecting and bringing over such free blacks to Sierra Leone, as might be willing to emigrate."

The story of David George is a fitting testament to that repatriation effort. Born in slavery in the state of Virginia in about 1742, George was later converted in the evangelical movement that swept through the ranks of New World blacks. He undertook missionary drives in the South where he succeeded in setting up Baptist churches in the state of Georgia. At the outbreak of the Revolution, George was already an

accomplished religious pioneer, as became evident when he was evacuated to Nova Scotia, where he arrived in 1782. There he resumed his preaching activity, putting up what he called “a meeting house” and holding revival sessions. John Clarkson, brother of Thomas Clarkson and who arrived in Nova Scotia after Thomas Peters’ intervention in London, went to one of George’s revival meetings and testified about George’s talent for the vocation. “I never remember,” said Clarkson, “to have heard the Psalms sung so charmingly in my life before.” No business, obstacle, or thought of favor was capable of deterring George “from offering up his praises to his Creator.” When in 1792 Clarkson as an “unlikely Pied Piper” led the Nova Scotian blacks “across the sea to the coasts of Africa,” George, not surprisingly, was among their number. New World antislavery sentiments crossed the Atlantic to the African continent to decisive effect, for good and ill.

In Freetown George expanded the scope of his work. He continued with his preaching duties, naturally, but he assumed an increasing role as community leader and unpaid ombudsman for the settlers. He defended what he called “the religious rights” of the Nova Scotians against attempts by the authorities to impose an official Christianity as safeguard against seditiously inclined black preachers.

Officials decried the views of black religious leaders as antinomian and they instituted the Colony Chaplaincy as a deterrent, refusing to recognize, or perhaps fearing, that the settlers were not preaching anarchy or subjective retreat, but a social activism of their own vintage. The charge of antinomianism was based on a theological misunderstanding, namely, the erroneous view that the settlers were appealing to the doctrine which says that “to the pure all things are pure,” so that those who are saved consider themselves exempt from moral and political accountability.

The charge of antinomian heresy met with a convincing refutation in the person of Paul Cuffee, an African American from New England, and one of the wealthiest and most influential blacks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Born in 1759 in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Cuffee grew up in the slave household of the Slocum Quaker family, and later converted to that faith. He achieved the unusual distinction of being a black ship-owner, commissioning in 1800 the 162-ton vessel, the *Hero*, a ship that on one its voyages rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

In the ship, the *Traveller*, in which he owned three-fourths interest, Cuffee made a fateful voyage to West Africa. He left Philadelphia in December 1810, traveling via England where early in 1811 he arrived at Liverpool, then a significant slave port. While in England Cuffee met with leading figures of the antislavery and evangelical movements, including William Wilberforce and Zachary Macaulay, since retired as governor of Sierra Leone. Cuffee also met the Duke of Gloucester, president of the African Institution, an influential and active antislavery and humanitarian organization whose directors included Wilberforce and William Allen, the prominent Quaker leader with known sympathies for the Mennonite cause in southern Russia. In September 1811, Cuffee resumed his journey to West Africa, arriving in Freetown in November of that year. He gave free passage to a British Methodist missionary and three schoolteachers, proof here, too, that the missionary impetus even in Europe was enabled by black initiative.

The immediate impetus for Cuffee’s West African odyssey was the act of 1807 abolishing the British slave trade. His purpose was to establish a base for legitimate trade at the source of the slave trade in an attempt to discredit the human traffic there. He

also wished to create a different triangular trade connecting Africa, the New World and Europe – a trading pattern in which African Americans would form an indispensable link. Tropical produce grown by means of scientific agriculture would be carried to America in ships owned by blacks, and profits from that would be used to purchase machinery and goods, which would in turn create the economic infrastructure required for settling more free and productive American blacks in West Africa. Their example, Cuffee argued, would inspire Africans. Legitimate trade and profit, as William Thornton, the Quaker philanthropist, had also argued in 1785, would forge a moral chain to strangle the slave trade and bring benefit to Africans.

African “recaptives” who started arriving following abolition changed Sierra Leone’s position as a “Christian Experiment.” The British Naval Squadron patrolling the extensive West African coastline impounded ships carrying slaves to for the New World and landed them in Freetown. They were resettled in parish communities organized around church, school, and farm. These recaptives hailed from all parts of the African continent and in time formed the backbone of the settlement. They outnumbered the original Nova Scotian settlers, and eventually assumed much of the work of education, community government, and evangelization. From their ranks emerged a new mobile middle class with an influence far beyond its size. That middle class would later become the ironic nemesis of colonialism only to fall victim to the nationalist politics of numerical disadvantage.

When eventually the American Colonization Society (ACS) was formed in December 1816 in a hall in the United States House of Representatives, Cuffee’s proposals and example were the inspiration, and Sierra Leone the model that people had in mind. The board of managers of the ACS paid fulsome tribute to Cuffee in a memorial note, praising him for his clear and unwavering judgment, his informed opinion, his unyielding commitment and unstinting devotion, and, above all, for his hands-on experience of life in West Africa, experience that counteracted the effects of unfounded prejudice. The tribute to him ended with the point that any future engagement with Africa would have to be based on partnership of an uncommon order, one in which fact and knowledge would replace prejudice and aspersion, an order that must be evaluated in terms of its “usefulness to the native Africans and their descendants in this country.”<sup>12</sup> With the antislavery cause in West Africa, the African theme in New World Christianity acquired a transatlantic range.

## Missions and African Rights in South Africa

The eighteenth-century Protestant evangelical movement, as we have seen, served to revive missionary interest in general. Thus was founded in 1795 the London Missionary Society (LMS), and other related bodies such as the Netherlands Missionary Society of Rotterdam (1797), the mission school in Berlin founded in 1800 by Pastor Johann Jänicke of the Brethren Church, and in 1815 the Basel school that supplied recruits for British missions.

The Netherlands Missionary Society picked up the African connection established by the Moravians in the 1740s when John Theodore Vanderkemp went out as a

missionary to South Africa. The Cape had been colonized by the Protestant Dutch from 1652, with the Dutch settlers, or Boers, pressing inland in search of land, viewing themselves as a people in covenant with God, and encroaching upon the local African populations.

In 1795, the Cape had been occupied by Britain, then at war with the Netherlands; the occupation became permanent after 1806. Vanderkemp arrived at the Cape in 1799, establishing a mission to the hard-pressed Hottentots at Bethelsdorp on Algoa Bay, 400 miles east of Cape Town. He made a dramatic entrance into the politics of the slave trade when he purchased from slavery a girl of seventeen whom he then married. The young girl's African mother was from Madagascar. Vanderkemp's personal example of a radical and politically uncompromising evangelical faith that openly endorsed the principle of social and political equality influenced many who followed him in missionary service.

Upon his arrival in South Africa, Vanderkemp was immediately beset by the language question. Unlike the Zulus, the Hottentots in Cape Colony had some knowledge of Dutch and so could act as intermediaries for the missionaries. In that role, the Hottentots could also function as teachers and catechists and thus as second-tier missionaries to their own people, a role that would help accelerate the process of naturalizing Christianity in the society. The more astute of the European missionaries saw such African agency as implying inescapably a sharp role reversal, with Christian Africans becoming the chief agents of Christianization and setting the agenda for mission. Furthermore, the achievements of African agency had the prospects of permanency in a way that foreign agency manifestly did not.

Much in that idea and in its implications of cost-effectiveness resonates so well with the logic of the local reception and adaptation of Christianity rather than with missionary notions of transmission and wholesale indigenous uprooting. Those setbacks of transmission were precisely what occurred in other parts of the mission field, prompting the missionary statesman, Henry Venn (d. 1872), for example, to propound his theory about "the euthanasia of a mission." Vanderkemp's insights were promptly adopted as sound policy by other missionaries, though the fact that Vanderkemp was working with South African Hottentots with some knowledge of Dutch gave an advantage to his ideas.

Yet the rigors of frontier life among Africans on the fringes of a colonial white society on the path of unrelenting expansion into native lands took a terrible toll on Vanderkemp, and he died relatively young in 1811. The leading agent of the London Missionary Society and chief architect of its work in South Africa was John Philip of Aberdeen, Scotland, who was appointed to that position in 1820. He was an eloquent and passionate defender of the rights of Africans against whites in South Africa, carrying the antislavery banner into opposition strongholds.

Appointed to a commission of inquiry into the state of the mission following Vanderkemp's death, Philip found that the colonial government appeared unhappy with the work of missionaries, and that puzzled him at first. However, upon further inquiry, and given what he came to know of the nature of that unhappiness, sadly, he saw little chance of reconciliation. To the bitter dismay of the colonial authorities, the missions had championed the interests of the Africans against the whites. In the course of his

investigations, Philip found that the mission station at Bethelsdorp had been converted into what he called a virtual “slave lodge,” with the Africans there conscripted as laborers at a work camp. For their back-breaking toil, they were paid a pittance or no wages at all, and the women and children were abandoned. A more bewildered and forlorn people he had not met. Everything the missionaries had labored so valiantly to establish and to promote was torn down by a ruthless colonial government.

The defining issue for the missions became African advancement, precisely the ground the government had selected for throwing down the gauntlet. Without choosing it, missions had the race problem tied round their necks like an albatross, and it is a credit to Vanderkemp and to Philip, his worthy successor, that they did not flinch from the challenge. Predictably, the race problem went on to dominate the religious and political landscape in South Africa throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Philip’s book, *Researches in South Africa*, contains a robust defence of his evangelical and humanitarian views.

## Mission Reframed: African Recovery

When one bears in mind that the long shadow of warfare and upheaval fell over much of West Africa in the nineteenth century, with disorder and a sense of despair rampant among the people, one is struck by the fact that the region emerged so soon as stronghold of the Christian movement. Yet change was in the air, with indications that a strategic turn of direction was imperative for survival. The tide bearing Europeans into the continent had to be reversed, and its consequences faced squarely. The old chieftain structures were too involved in slavery and the slave trade to be able to ward off calamity and offer security to their people. In fact, slavery and the slave trade allowed Europeans to establish themselves in African societies, so it was reasonable to conclude that the encounter with Europeans brought harm because Africans were partners, willing or not. Intending to strike out on a new path, the emerging class of African leaders contended that victims condemned themselves the more if all they did was blame others. A different way must be found.

Though painful and demanding, the choice was clear: abandon the centuries-old dealings in human traffic, remove injustice, renounce blood-feuds, unchain the women, and place society on a new foundation altogether, one that would uphold a view of the world that was affirming and all-embracing, a world guided by peace and justice. People did not have to sacrifice their roots to bend with the wind of change. With sanguinary sanctions a staple part of their method, the old religions were on the defensive. Up to their last agonies, the old gods made self-imprecation and potent curses the price for seeking their company, with retribution the stipulated prescription. In a clinch, the old religions delivered millennial, reality-defying commands that fomented insecurity and ideas of vengeance. Beset by recurrent threats and crises, the African people found themselves left to bank on insolvent guardian spirits. Christianity arrived as a second wind amid the flight of the embattled gods; instead of people feeling jinxed in a haunted world, they had the incentive to revamp the old code and its sense of overhanging menace. Even with a whiff of colonial odium, Christianity still felt credible because its claim

of a God who knew the way out of the grave created assurance in the midst of decaying old structures and customs.

The season of an open secret opened with the advent of the Gospel. One of the new Christian charismatic prophets staked his movement's claim on a spot of ground on which evil spirits had placed a curse, which could not be cultivated or otherwise reclaimed. The new Christian leader commanded people to bring all their idols, carvings, charms, and other sacred objects and to heap them in a pile; among the sacred objects was a juju with nails driven through it, called an *aiyara*, which was used to kill one's enemies. The leader doused the pile with kerosene and palm oil before setting it alight; from the ashes, the prophet claimed a trophy convert when the chief of the town was baptized as Solomon.<sup>13</sup>

Africans scrutinized omens with familiar tools of cultural exegesis, such as dreams, dream incubation, dream interpretation, divination, spirit possession, and clairvoyance. Africans concluded that, because of the evils and disruption caused by the slave trade, the old cults were dying and the white man's way of worshipping God was spreading and would one day prevail. In 1863, Samuel Pearse, a local clergyman, reported a conversation with an elderly woman of Badagry, Nigeria, who mused ruefully on the strange times people were passing through, times "when the worship of idols being transmitted from one generation to another was in crisis. The horrors of the wars that ensued doomed many [people] to an untimely dissolution and sold them into slavery. In the state of slavery how is it possible they could do such justice to worship as did their forefathers, and yet the evils came that were never seen nor heard of were the *orisas* [deities] alive?"<sup>14</sup>

Instead of pitting the older and younger generations against each other in a sudden access of inter-ethnic viciousness—as happened with the elderly Sutu and her son, Sandilli—the new ideas of millennialism joined both young and old in the task of renewal, and of salvaging what was worthy in the old ways. The plea of the old Yoruba woman on behalf of the embattled *orisas* reached the ears of the younger Samuel Pearse and inspired him to embark on a salvage operation with the new orientation Christianity represented.

Throughout the continent it was the impetus of reconciling old and new that propelled the work of the new Christian charismatic prophets. The new Christian leaders redefined African millenarianism by dropping the old sanctions and fostering the idea that believers have the choice to influence the future in a direction more advantageous to society. Provoked by the way European power bulldozed its way into the land, the oracles shed their fierce reputation of implacable avenger for the softer and kinder tones of hope and reconciliation. In the new order the poor, the weak, the dishonored, and the underdog would assume leading roles. Schools would be the archway to that future, requiring that victims be their own remedy, and it would begin by honoring the humanity of the whites who brought the gospel. Armed with such values, the new elites of Africa (including Creoles) performed the necessary task of building the bridge between the current of colonial subjugation and reeling hinterland populations. Without the social force of the new elites and the schools missions established, Western encounter and exposure would have produced decay and disarray in indigenous institutions and customs on a calamitous scale.<sup>15</sup>

The circumstances of the emergence of the new modernizing Christian Africans were full of drama and pathos. The tribal ways were being trampled upon by incoming whites, the Africans reasoned, while the guardians of tradition looked on bemused, or (which amounted to the same thing), colluded with their exploiters. An old woman diviner made bitter complaint that the road being built by the colonial administration went through her town and broke her sacred pot. She left the town in protest.<sup>16</sup> The young African who heard her complaint was the one who had manned the steam-roller used in the road construction project, and who later became a charismatic leader prophesying a new millennium. Charismatic power bestowed on the weak and rejected was one way to respond to the challenge of internecine disarray and the pain of white domination. Christianity took hold because it met a real need.

In a spontaneous burst of energy, a new breed of charismatic religious figures emerged to fill the landscape, with throngs of acolytes and sympathizers mobilized in their wake. They did not fit the standard missionary demographic mold of primary schooling in a mission station organized by uniform drills and exercises as part of catechetical formation on the path to baptism and membership in the church. The new converts were not cut to pattern in that way, and, defying official constraints, they grew and spread without set design. They took the story to the next and most ambitious phase of Christianity's development in Africa. In the course of the twentieth century African conversion became a commanding theme of the religion's worldwide expansion.

## Notes

An abbreviated version of this essay appeared in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660–1815*, Cambridge, 2006, and L. Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- 1 Richard Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy, and Mission in Africa*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012, 42–43.
- 2 Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 2012, 38.
- 3 Alvise da Cadamosto, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and other documents on Western Africa in the second half of the fifteenth century*, trans. and ed. G. R. Crone, London: Hakluyt Society, 1937, 17.
- 4 Gomes Eanes de Azurara (Zurara), *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, London: Hakluyt Society, 1896, 1899, 2 vols., New York: B. Franklin, 1963.
- 5 The memorandum by Girolamo Vecchietti is published by Beccari, *Rerum Aethiopicarum*, XI, 176–185. See Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 42–43.
- 6 Report by Girolamo Vecchietti, BAV, Vat. Lat. 6723, f. 6v. Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 41.
- 7 Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 44–45.
- 8 Alvaro II to Paul V, 27. III. 1613, in Brásio, v.6, 132. Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 78–79.
- 9 Jadin in Metzler, I pt.2, 432. Gray, *Christianity, the Papacy*, 79–80.
- 10 Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1985, 179ff.
- 11 W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America: 1638–1870*, 1898, repr. New York: Russell & Russell, 1965, 30–31.



- 12 *First Annual Report of the American Colonization Society*, p. 5; also Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," 220.)
- 13 J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1968, 95.
- 14 Cited in J. D. Y. Peel, "'For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?' Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 37 (3) (1995): 603.
- 15 See E. Adeolu Adegbola, "The Church of the Middle Class Elite," in *Christianity and Socio-political Order in Nigeria*, ed. S. A. Adewale, 581–607. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Christian Studies, 1987.
- 16 "The weakening of the old order is symbolized in the story of how there was a gentle oracular spirit who lived in the forest by Efon, where she looked after the wild creatures and answered people's queries; in 1927 she told Alajedare, the Alaye [chief], that 'her pot of indigo dye had been broken by the new road, and that she was leaving Efon to return no more' – so the old gods were leaving as the new order advanced." See Peel, *Aladura*, 94.

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## CHAPTER 36

# Christianity in Western Europe

Simon Coleman

### Historical Introduction

Christianity did not start in western Europe, but the region played a key role in its development in the centuries immediately after the birth of Christ. Following the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century CE, Christianity was transformed from being a persecuted sect into the state religion of the Roman Empire, with Rome itself becoming the primary political and religious center of Western Christianity. Missionaries spread the new faith into sometimes initially hostile pagan lands throughout Europe. Scandinavia proved the hardest region to convert, and yet it became fully Christianized after around 1000 CE.

Three features of the early centuries of the Western church are worth mentioning here. First, the emergence of monastic orders, which developed powerful economic and political, as well as religious, networks across western Europe and beyond, were to become intellectual powerhouses during the Christian Middle Ages. Indeed, with the decline of classical Roman culture, monasteries became sites for education, with boys handed over to their care at the age of six or seven, and frequently becoming monks in adult life. Second, we need to consider the link between Christianity and conquest. The Holy Land itself was disputed territory, claimed by both Christians and Muslims, and the cutting off of access to the Christian shrines in the eleventh century gave an apparently religious justification to a violent response. Prompted by the Papacy, Crusades were led against Muslims not only in the Holy Land but also in parts of Europe. Thus Saint James (martyred AD 44), whose relics were said to be located in the Spanish pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela, became known as *Santiago Matamoros* (“Saint James the Moor-slayer”), honored and depicted as both soldier and pilgrim. Third, we need to be aware of the deep-felt disputes within Christianity itself. In the eleventh century, after much theological wrangling, the so-called “Great Schism” (1054) would occur between “Western” (Latin) and “Eastern” churches over such issues as liturgy, the role of the priest, and above all the extent of the power of the papacy in Rome.

Significant as these elements of early Christianity proved to be in the West, they were eclipsed by another set of events in the sixteenth century: those that culminated in the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation itself was a long drawn-out process rather than a single occurrence, and took numerous local forms in European contexts. At its root, however, was a single idea that was as much destructive as it was creative, since it involved an attack on what were perceived to be the moral corruption and liturgical compromises of the Roman Church. Martin Luther, the German theologian (1483–1546) who is often seen as the instigator of the Reformation, emphasized the power of the Bible and the faith of ordinary believers over the assumed authority of entrenched church hierarchies. Subsequently, the French reformer John Calvin (1509–1564) made Geneva a center of a new, morally and culturally rigid – “reformed” – way of life. The Reformation would remain more of a northern than a southern European phenomenon. At times, it would become deeply entangled in monarchical politics. In England, for instance, the Tudor King Henry VIII’s struggles with Rome led him to establish the English – “Anglican” – church in opposition to the authority of Rome. The years after his death would witness often bloody struggles over the supremacy of Catholicism or Protestantism in England, before Elizabeth I settled the argument in favor of the reformed church.

Thus were laid the basic theological and ecclesiastical configurations of Western Christianity in Europe, even as they would be transformed and challenged further in coming centuries. In turn, they would be exported beyond Europe, as missionaries – often sponsored by monastic orders – would spread versions of the Catholic or Protestant faith alongside the exploration and exploitation of “newly discovered” continents, such as North and South America, and Africa. The earliest forms of such expansion took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, though they gained renewed power as industrializing nations of the eighteenth and especially nineteenth centuries required resources and markets around the globe. Western European Christianity has never been an isolated phenomenon.

## Bodies of Christ: Models of the Church

The early history of the Western church reveals a series of tensions that have recurred in later centuries, even up to the present: the authority of church leaders versus that of political rulers; official, clerical religion versus the lived faith of ordinary people; Christianity as a site of social and cultural resistance versus its role as an agent of political and religious (and sometimes military) domination. The sociologist Steve Bruce characterizes the nature of formal religion in pre-Reformation Europe as involving a small number of highly trained officials, acting on behalf of the state, and conducting services in Latin that excluded the active participation of lay people (Bruce 1996: 2). At the same time, pilgrimage shrines offered more popular remedies for problems, as people appealed to saints for healing, or sprinkled holy water over houses, fields, even livestock. As Bruce puts it: “What one sees in pre-Reformation religious life is a sophisticated complex organization of formal religion laid over a mass of popular superstition” (Bruce 1996: 3).

Given this background, the Reformation in Western Christianity represented more than just a protest against corruption. It was a remodeling of the very idea of a Christian Church, of the “Body of Christ,” even as it evolved alongside a more general breakdown of older, feudal, social and economic hierarchies. “Reformed” services used simpler hymns, as laity (ideally) took a more prominent and committed role in the life of the church, and as a more personal, individual relationship to God was assumed to be cultivated in each person. The translation of the Bible into local languages combined with slowly increasing literacy and the development of the printing press in shifting the understanding and deployment of religious language away from purely clerical control. In due course, and along with the development of “sectarian,” schismatic groups such as the Quakers, the principles of such religion could be said to be challenging not only old hierarchies, but also the assumptions behind older, “magical” ways of thinking (Thomas 1971).

The contrasts can be overdrawn, but in very broad terms we see two basic models of the church emerging out of such disputes and developments. As Philpot and Shah (2006) note, a Roman Catholic form emphasizes an ecclesiology – an ideal of church order – that stresses visible unity centered upon a single, hierarchical institution (Philpott and Shah 2006: 36, 62). Since the Middle Ages, this model has conceived of Europe itself as a Christian civilization, brought together through, and accountable to, the church. In this view, the church may cooperate with but must also be skeptical of the power of the sovereign state and its rulers. In general, Protestant churches (which after all have lacked a “pope”) have been less keen to promote the idea of such pan-European unity, not least as the Reformation encouraged the embrace of national and linguistic particularities, with national churches being formed in such countries as Sweden and Denmark (both Lutheran), England (Anglican) and Scotland (Reformed).

Fascinatingly, such past differences retain resonances in much more recent European history. After World War II, and fearing the spread of both renewed fascism and secular communism, the Roman Catholic Church took an important role in working with Christian Democratic movements to promote forms of cultural, economic, and political integration that would be realized in the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU) (Katzenstein 2006: 32). Arsène Heitz, who in the 1950s designed the European flag of twelve yellow stars on a blue background, is said to have been inspired by the reference in the Book of Revelation to “a woman clothed with the sun . . . and a crown of twelve stars on her head” (Katzenstein 2006: 32). The link between politics and Christianity was also expressed in the success of individual parties in the post-war years. In France, Italy, and West Germany newly founded Catholic or inter-confessional Christian Democratic Parties won high levels of support (McLeod 1997: 132).

## Secularization: From Cathedrals to Cults?

Bruce’s characterization of the early church in Europe is a preface to his wider project of tracing the transformation of Christianity in the Western world, from the time when Luther instituted the Reformation to the present day. The subtitle of Bruce’s book – “From Cathedrals to Cults” – says much about the basic thesis of his book. Mention

of these two very different kinds of religious organization is intended to make us think about shifts in the locations of religious activity over the centuries since the middle ages. The cathedral – massive, confident, dominating its surroundings in spatial and economic, as well as religious, terms – represents a form of Christianity that is at the center of the life of a city, with its temporal rhythms known to all, whether they attend its services or not. The idea for the cult, on the other hand, comes from a very different and much more fragmented set of religious, cultural, and social conditions, as mainstream Christianity is challenged by a multitude of other (often smaller) faiths and religious groupings, but also by the very idea of choice, that the (modern) individual is offered an array of often obscure religious options that can be dipped into, experimented with. But there is also a larger thesis contained in the depiction of the movement from cathedral to cult, and it is one that has emerged powerfully from the work of many scholars who have studied Western Christianity: that of secularization. To understand what this term means, and why it should have particularly preoccupied those who have studied religion in the West, we need to go back again into history before returning to the present.

We have seen that one way of understanding the Reformation and the wider upheavals accompanying it is to see such transformations as leading to the popularizing, even the democratizing, of religion, and ultimately (after decades or, in some cases, centuries) providing the catalyst for an efflorescence of religious denominations, each dependent on the idea of developing strong and personal religious commitments, ranging from Methodists and Quakers to Pentecostals, and so on. But from another point of view, the Reformation and its aftermath ironically contributed to the decline of religious activity in many parts of the West, especially the northern European strongholds of the Protestant churches. Why should this be?

Briefly put, we might say that the very emphasis on the need for personal engagement, for choice in religious affiliation, for seeing religion as a matter of inner conviction and not just external ritual, provided the potential for religious fervor among some, but also indifference among others. At the same time, as the great German sociologist Max Weber pointed out, the new Calvinist way of thinking about the world resonated with the emergence of a new capitalist order, driven not by tradition, sentiment, or age-old human bonds, but rather by the impulse to give all spheres of life maximum productivity. While such values could be given a religious meaning, in the notion of a “calling” to save others or prosper through hard work and dedication, they could easily be translated into a more secular striving after material success alone.

Faced with the challenges to taken-for-granted faith provided by science, the gradual emergence of a multiplicity of religious organizations, and by the break up of the stable communities in which the church could be taken for granted as a part of everyday life, mainstream Christianity has faced particular challenges in the West. One study indicates that the number of people who “never” or “practically never” attend church has gone up in many western European countries since the 1990s (Knox 2005). In Finland in 1981, for instance, the proportion of people who generally avoided church was 15%, whereas by 2000 it was 28%; for Spain the shift was from 26 to 33%, and for the Netherlands it was from 41 to 48%. The capacity of the church to influence individual behavior also seems to have reduced. Thus the birth rate throughout much of western Europe has been falling considerably in recent years, indicating the use of artificial birth

control, despite the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Attitudes towards divorce, abortion, and gay marriage have also become less strict. A fascinating indication of the unease that some Europeans have felt with the expression of religious faith in the public sphere was contained in the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's attitude towards his deeply felt religious convictions. While it was generally known in the UK that Blair was a practicing Christian, he was careful to avoid any mixing of his personal beliefs and his public persona – in marked contrast, for instance, to his American counterpart, George W. Bush. Only after Blair left office did he convert to Roman Catholicism and begin to talk openly about the connections between religion and politics, while setting up a faith foundation in London.

Despite the widespread signs of secularization, we should clearly not assume that living in the modern world automatically encourages indifference to religion. Thus debate rages over whether the apparently secularizing tendencies of Western churches represents the future of all religion in the modern world, or rather a reflection of exceptional conditions in Europe, where the power of the church has often promoted equal and opposite reactions (as in the anti-clericalism of revolutionary France), or where its ubiquity as a state institution has prompted a mixture of indifference and tolerance (as in the UK or the Scandinavian countries). In general, Catholic countries have retained church-going habits for longer than those of the Protestant north, with Ireland as well as Poland the most “practicing” countries of Europe (Davie 2000: 47). We must also keep in mind the role of the churches in marking the lifecycles of people who would not otherwise consider themselves to be religious: for instance, it has long been a feature of supposedly “secular” Scandinavian countries that rates of participation in baptism have been relatively high, carried out by the majority of the population.

Arguments about the significance of these trends must rest on the very measures one uses to identify the presence or absence of the secular. José Casanova has recently explored some of the nuances of the debate by noting that, in recent decades, western European societies seem to have undergone rapid, drastic, and seemingly irreversible processes of secularization – a kind of “post-Christianity” – in the sense that an increasing majority of the population has ceased regular participation in “traditional” religious practices (Casanova 2006: 65). But along with Casanova we might ask how we are to assess the importance of participation in the church alongside the much more diffuse holding of beliefs. In Casanova's view, if we focus on the persistence of inner convictions – however unorthodox or inchoate they may be – we might talk of the “unchurching” rather than of the secularization of western Europe. Grace Davie has indeed characterized such an attitude as “believing without belonging,” given that large numbers of Europeans even in the most apparently secular countries still identify themselves as “Christian” (Davie 1994). Yet, what is most striking is how little we actually know about what such identification means. Examining the results of responses to census data collected in the UK in 2001, Abby Day has pointed to the apparent anomaly of 72% of respondents describing themselves as “Christian,” and yet many not seeing themselves as religious as such (Day 2011). A similar point is made by Danièle Hervieu-Léger, when she characterizes the European situation as “belonging without believing,” in other words expressing a general sense of closeness to Christian heritage while feeling uneasy about its religious content (Hervieu-Léger 2000).

Whether we see “belief” or “belonging” as primary in our assessment of attachment to Christianity, we need to acknowledge the role of Christianity in orientating people both ideologically *and* socially; in terms of religious identity but also, potentially, in relation to national or ethnic identity. Nor can we associate Christianity with church attendance alone, or purely with the explicit articulation of religious dogma, just as we need to be clear when we talk of secularization whether we are talking about a lack of influence in the public sphere (e.g. over political and social policy), or a more profound loss of faith at the level of individual experience (Hanson 1997). We might also consider the problems over interpreting the actions of churches as promoting “secularization” or doing the exact opposite. Some more conservative commentators might regard the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the famous set of reforms carried out by the Roman Catholic Church, as a form of internal compromise of faith, as it democratized forms of worship and promoted use of local languages rather than Latin (just as Protestant Reformers had done centuries earlier). Similarly, some might argue that the growth in the number of women priests in Reformed churches in recent decades is a concession to secular values. But one might equally well argue that these are signs and causes of revival in the church, and ways of reaching out into the lives and needs of many Christians.

Forms of religious practice are far more complex and multi-faceted than any single measure can reveal, and we see how the distinctions between cultural and religious identity might be very difficult to untangle in a continent that has seen itself as predominantly “Christian” over the last millennium. Davie also encourages us not to see churches as autonomous social phenomena: they are after all social groupings as well as locations of the sacred, and as voluntary (albeit sometimes state-sponsored) organizations they must hold their own along with other leisure-time activities. In these terms, apparently “secularizing” religious institutions are actually doing relatively well compared with, for instance, political parties and trade unions in many parts of the West. For the British context, at least, Davie intriguingly points to the disproportionate numbers of the religiously active that can be found in the unpaid but highly trained voluntary sector – advice workers, prison visitors, charity workers, bereavement counsellors, and so on (Davie 1994: 55, 67–68). Davie also notes that more women than men attend European churches, and that this difference holds across a variety of theological types and across all age groups. In Western Europe, church-going attracts disproportionate numbers of relatively well educated and professional classes; in Central Europe, says Davie, this pattern is largely reversed.

In a curious sense, Davie’s depiction of religion – and especially Christianity – in the modern world has a parallel with that described by Bruce for pre-Reformation Europe. Davie refers to the frequently vicarious nature of modern religion for the mass of people, suggesting that many people who do not themselves see the need to take part in religious services or to observe strict moral codes are nevertheless happy that such activities are carried out by somebody else (Davie 1994: 49). At first glance, this perspective echoes that of the Catholic laity in the early Middle Ages, who were unable to participate in complex ceremonials but very aware of their existence. And yet we are in fact seeing two rather different forms of vicariousness, reflecting wider social and cultural transformations: one a product of social hierarchy, where exclusion is produced by rigid social norms and exclusive forms of religious expertise; the other a result of the opposite process, a democratization of faith, a removal of the sense of obligation from Christian identity, and



a reduction in liturgical competence not through barriers but through relative – if usually benign – indifference. In the latter, democratized version of religious practice, active participation in Christianity becomes one “lifestyle” choice among many possible ones.

## Beyond the Secular? Transformations of Christianity in the West

If people are going to church less than they were before, and if it is perfectly acceptable to say that one is an atheist or an agnostic in most places in western Europe, what might be the future of Christianity in this part of the world? In the following, I shall explore some of the ways in which Christianity in western Europe might be revived, or more probably transformed, in ways that might not always have been predictable just a few decades ago. While Christianity will undoubtedly retain its place within church-like organizations, such churches in the future might look rather different from the old state churches of post-Reformation Europe; and there might be other locations for engagement in Christian faith and culture that bypass or complement attachment to parishes and congregations. Let us therefore explore some of these possibilities.

### Christianity as Heritage?

Whether or not Christianity is becoming less of an active faith in people’s lives in western Europe, there is no doubt that Christianity has been one of the mainsprings of European culture and civilization, though not the only significant world faith on the continent, given the presence of Islam and Judaism, and in more recent years Buddhism and Hinduism (Cimдина 2003: xi–xv). The cathedrals may have been challenged by new religious movements, in Bruce’s terms, but great religious buildings and other sites of Christian heritage such as monasteries, older churches, and shrines are all a valued part of the historical and aesthetic landscape of Europe, at a time when tourism has become one of the major growth industries in the world.

Some scholars have explored the notion of religious heritage and linked it to the idea that Christianity might act as a store of national “memory” in many European contexts. For Davie, for instance, active members of the mainstream churches – many of them older women – might be serving as guardians of an admittedly increasingly precarious knowledge of Bible stories, liturgies, and ecclesiastical histories (Davie 2000: 177–180). The French scholar Danièle Hervieu-Léger has even written a book called *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, where she writes of the important but again possibly dwindling function of religious tradition in generating social links and historical lineages. Such tradition itself may be shifting in significance, as it moves under contemporary conditions from being a “sacred trust” into becoming a “an ethico-cultural heritage” (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 168), in other words a fund of memory and symbolic resources at the disposal of, and subject to, the choices of individuals. We see here a movement of tradition and truth from the institution to the believer.

Yet, heritage and tradition can be revived in other ways, also well suited to the current emphasis on leisure, travel, and the consumption of heritage sites in western

Europe. Hervieu-Léger notes, for instance, “top-down” attempts to revive consciousness of a historical chain of belief in the form of initiatives taken by the Roman Catholic Church in launching pilgrimages of young people to places of special significance in the European Christian past, such as Rome, Santiago de Compostela (in Spain), and Czestochowa (in Poland). Thus, for her, there might in such efforts be an “emotional remembrance and historico-cultural reconstruction of the failing memory of the continuity of belief” (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 175).

Certainly, pilgrimage has been carried out by Christians throughout Europe ever since the early centuries of the religion. Its popularity has continued, with some interruptions, throughout the centuries, and shows signs of growing in the present, despite the supposed secularization of the churches. The Protestant Reformers in the sixteenth century might have regarded it as a corrupted and corrupting influence on believers, but later centuries have seen the revival and rebuilding of many shrines, some of which, such as Compostela (in Spain), Lourdes (in France), and Rome, attract many thousands if not millions of visitors each year. A feature of some of the important shrines has been their willingness to embrace a more ecumenical attitude, bringing Roman Catholics and other Christians together, at least for short periods, as is evident at the important English sites of Walsingham and Glastonbury (Bowman 1993; Coleman 2000).

At the same time, pilgrimage again reveals the complexities of attempting to define any single activity as solely or definitely “Christian,” or even “religious.” One of the significant attractions of pilgrimage sites is less their liturgy and more their identity as pleasant places for tourists to visit. The precise motivation of the journey – religious, secular, or a mixture of the two – may be unclear to the tourist/pilgrim. Thus Nancy Frey writes of contemporary journeys across ancient pilgrimage tracks to Compostela as an activity carried out by a huge variety of people, with exceedingly varied intentions and ways of traveling. Some go by car, others on bicycle or on foot. It is clear that, for many, the journey provides an opportunity to slow down the hectic pace of normal life, to re-engage with one’s own body as well as with others, and even with nature. Such practices may of course be given Christian interpretations – as sacrifice, fellowship, worship – but they might be of equal value to an avowedly secular tourist searching for a more “authentic” or active holiday than simply lying on a beach (Frey 1998). Even the massive pilgrimages sponsored by the pope, which have for instance seen hundreds of thousands of young people gathered together in Spain, might be seen either as revivals of piety among the newer generations, or as celebrations of youth culture with Christian pilgrimage providing a convenient opportunity for enjoyment.

### Away from the State?

Pilgrimage can add a powerful dimension to Christian experience, taking it away from everyday forms of worship, combining it with the excitements of travel and with resonant – sometimes seemingly miraculous – traditions of healing or prophetic vision. It is not the only way to breathe life into the church, however. We have seen that, in the past, some Christian churches have gained power and influence in western Europe through their close association with, and support of, the state, such as the Anglican

Church in the UK or the Scandinavian churches (which have acted as important administrative arms of the state). Such associations with power can become a liability, as the church comes to be seen as a part of the establishment, with little moral leverage in relation to secular authority. Thus, in France, anti-clericalism led to the separation of church from state in 1905. Nowadays, a number of the established churches in western Europe have begun to question their own status as national bodies that have lost a sense of spiritual purpose in attempting to appeal to, and encompass, the population as a whole. One obvious contrast here is with the United States, where arguably the lack of any single, official faith has encouraged the vitality of all denominations as they compete for members.

This point is made by Zsolt Enyedi in a piece attempting to track the current state of church–state relations in Europe, and interestingly one of Enyedi’s conclusions is that “while in the USA churches and politicians have begun to embrace the idea of closer co-operation between church and state, in Europe, the principle of separation finds growing support among religious sectors” (Enyedi 2003: 219). A non-established church has more of a chance to engage actively within civil society, to protest against state policies, indeed to encourage the very spirit of voluntarism that Davie refers to in her examination of the role of activism in a number of areas of modern life. In 2000, the Swedish Lutheran/State Church even took the step of separating from the state: the church hopes that what it loses in state taxes it will gain in support from a committed membership. Such a move was reflected upon in the following way by a Swedish Lutheran priest in two interviews, conducted just at the time of separation: “We’re a heavy organization, not very efficient, suffering from a lack of confidence, with tired and confused priests. There’s no future for such a church. But the church doesn’t exist for itself. It has the purpose of giving the gospel to the people. We had that debate back in the 1950s, and then they said, ‘This isn’t a missionary church’ – and I regret that deeply” (Tighe 2000). We see here in summary a plea for the notion of a church – whether allied to the state or not – that is also an energetic “mission,” reaching out to its potential flock rather than being weighted down by its “heavy” bureaucracy.

## Conversion and Charisma?

If the increasing power of voluntarism within state churches is one possible indication of the future, it is notable that some of the most vital and dynamic churches in western Europe (and elsewhere) are those that require not birth into the church, but an active decision to enter into the faith, often through a “born-again” experience. David Martin notes that in Britain, nearly half of the 14–21-year-olds in contact with the Anglican Church are in Evangelical local churches (Martin 2002: 45). Protestant forms of worship in northern and western Europe have been revived by varieties of Pentecostalism and charismatic worship, ranging from the smaller “house churches” of the 1980s to the emergence of mega-churches (broadly defined as congregations with more than 2,000 regular attendants) in more recent years.

One of the most striking examples of this tendency in Europe is provided by the Word of Life ministry, located in Sweden, but expressing a faith that is self-consciously global, opposed to the staidness of more traditional churches, and preaching a message of Christianity as

leading to material prosperity rather than to pious sacrifice. Despite its foundation in supposedly one of the most secular countries in Europe, the Word of Life has developed possibly the largest Bible School in Europe, explicitly oriented towards the attraction of Christians from all parts of the world, as well as a congregation with some 2000 members.

Charismatic styles of worship have also helped to rekindle Catholic movements in Europe, involving international movements such as the Focolare and the Emmanuel Community. Both share the dynamic outreach and emphasis on youthful dynamism that is characteristic of Protestant evangelicalism, combined with the unabashed use of modern communications media to spread their message. In all of these movements we see how western Europe cannot be regarded as an isolated region: it hosts global movements of renewal that links its Christians with those of other denominations and even faiths. Energetic church organizations such as the newer Pentecostal/charismatic ministries are able to locate themselves on a map of perceived revival that includes countries of the global South, such as Ghana or Brazil, as well as the United States.

## A New Mission Field?

Ironically, the very “secularism” of western Europe has made it a new mission field for Christian and other religious groups, especially since the wealth and colonial history of the region have made it a target for migrant groups since World War II. A fascinating byproduct of the emergence of Islam as a prominent faith within Europe has been a renewed discussion about whether the state has the right to control the religious lives of its citizens. Thus discussions about whether a “secular” government can ban the use of the *burqa* (traditional Islamic dress for women) outside the home raise profound questions concerning the boundaries between assumed “national culture” and religious adherence, as well as between private and public expressions of that adherence.

Meanwhile, the significance of immigrant Christian congregations can hardly be underestimated, given their high levels of participation and activity compared with older, established churches. On a typical Sunday, perhaps half of all churchgoers in London are African or Afro-Caribbean (Jenkins 2007a). In a similar vein, Afe Adogame and Cordula Weissköppel argue that: “The implosion of new African immigrants in diasporic contexts is significant in that it also forms the bedrock for an extensive reordering of European and American religious life” (Adogame and Weissköppel 2005: 5, 122). In this perspective, religious proselytization may not only be a byproduct of migration, but also a central motivation for migrants, many of whom are also training to be effective professionals in their own or adopted country. An organization such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, founded in Nigeria in 1952, attracts some 30,000 people to its “Festival of Life,” held every six months in London, and many of those attending are young students or professionals, aiming to make an impact on economic as well as religious life in Europe as well as Africa.

Thus today, more than ever, it is impossible to study “African” Christian churches as purely geographically or culturally “African,” or “European” churches as reflecting the same cultural heritage – or memory – that they might have done back in the 1960s. churches, along with other contemporary institutions, are both products and

producers of globalized religious cultures. A “Southernized” Christianity is returning to the places from which it departed, as postcolonial Christianity turns western Europe into a location of prime missionary opportunity.

## Concluding Remarks

The German philosopher and social theorist Jürgen Habermas has remarked that “Christianity, and nothing else, is the ultimate foundation of liberty, conscience, human rights, and democracy, the benchmarks of Western civilization. To this day, we have no other options [than Christianity]. We continue to nourish ourselves from this source. Everything else is postmodern chatter.” Habermas’s confidence indicates the potential influence of Christianity far beyond talk of churches and theology, into the roots of European and Western notions of what it means to be a human being, or how to run the ideal state. At the same time, in tracing the history and current position of Christianity in Europe we also see the dangers of assuming that we can grasp the significance of religion along any single dimension of activity – theological, cultural, social, or economic. Nor can we think of Christianity as an isolated religion or culture. Today in western Europe it exists alongside, but is also influenced by, many other faiths, in what has become a deeply multi-cultural and multi-religious context, and to some extent always has been. Perhaps, ultimately, the cathedral is not isolated from the cult, and nor the cult from the cathedral.

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## CHAPTER 37

# Russia and Eastern Europe

Scott M. Kenworthy

Giving due consideration to Orthodox Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe fundamentally alters the shape of contemporary European Christianity. Today the Eastern Orthodox Church, which claims an estimated 250 to 300 million adherents, is the second largest Christian confession in the world after Roman Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> Russia today claims some 100 million Christians, making it the fourth largest country by number of Christians in the world (after the United States, Brazil, and just after Mexico). Four of the ten countries in Europe with the largest number of Christians are predominantly Orthodox (Russia, Ukraine, Romania, and Greece), so that Orthodox Christians make up 35% of Europe's Christians, double the number of Protestants (at 17.8%). The Orthodox countries of Romania, Moldova, and Greece are the only European countries that can claim to have 98% or more of their population as Christian.

The boundaries of what is considered "Eastern Europe" are vague and have shifted over time depending upon a variety of geopolitical circumstances. In the second half of the twentieth century, "Eastern Europe" designated those nations that had fallen under Soviet influence after World War II, were communist, and constituted part of the Warsaw Pact. Since the collapse of communism in 1989–1991, however, the majority of those nations have become part of the European Union, so that the former definition is now of questionable usefulness. Indeed many of those nations, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, would consider themselves part of "Central Europe" rather than "Eastern Europe." A much older and more enduring divide, and the one that will govern the consideration in this essay, is between Eastern and Western Christianity. This distinction traces its roots to the Emperor Diocletian's division of the Roman Empire into eastern and western halves at the end of the third century for administrative purposes. After the conversion of Constantine and the gradual Christianization of the Roman Empire, the church's administration mirrored that of the empire. The eastern half of the Roman Empire fell under the jurisdiction of the eastern Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, whereas the western half of the empire fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome. It was centuries before the bishop of Rome began to claim universal

jurisdiction over the entire church, which was regarded as an innovation and breach of tradition and therefore never accepted by the eastern Patriarchs, and this dispute was the leading cause of the eventual schism. This divide became much more pronounced after the schism between Rome and Constantinople in 1054, though the process of dividing Eastern and Western Christianity was a long and complex one. Since the divide, the Western church under Rome assumed the designation “Catholic” and the Eastern church “Orthodox,” hence today we speak of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.

Most Western Christians are largely ignorant about Eastern Orthodox Christianity, despite the fact that it is one of the three major Christian traditions (alongside Roman Catholicism and Protestantism). In part this ignorance is the fault of the academic study of Christianity in the West, which has traditionally excluded Orthodoxy from textbooks or given it marginal consideration. The study of Christianity in university courses and textbooks primarily meant, until recently, the study of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Western Europe and North America. The recent and welcome shift to the study of “World” Christianity has, unfortunately, tended to perpetuate the marginalization of eastern Christianity because “World” Christianity is implicitly understood to mean Western forms of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, thus still excluding the east. In fact, however, the main story of Christianity for its first, formative, millennium is primarily the story of Christianity in the East. The eastern half of the Roman Empire was far more populous, prosperous, and culturally developed than the western half. The fall of the western half of the empire to the barbarian invasions in the fifth century plunged the west into centuries of what used to be called the “dark ages” of political fragmentation and cultural backwardness. The eastern half of the empire, however, continued uninterrupted for centuries, and this was reflected in the developments in the church. Between Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and the rise of Scholasticism in the late eleventh century, there was far less theological development in the west than there was in the east. In short, for a complete understanding of Christianity, both historically and today, it is imperative to include consideration of Orthodoxy in Russia and Eastern Europe.

## Historical Experience

Eastern Christians have had a very different historical experience than Western Christians. If, for the first thousand years of Christianity, the Eastern church was in many ways more robust than the Western, the situation gradually reversed in the second millennium. At precisely the time when the West was reaching its height, the East was in decline. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Orthodox Christians – with the exception of the Russians – were living either under Roman Catholic or Muslim domination. Many succeeded in gaining independence in the course of the nineteenth century, only to spend much of the twentieth under communist rule.

As a result of these different historical trajectories, Eastern and Western Christians have much to learn from each other. On the one hand, Eastern Christians have yet had very little experience with secular, democratic, and pluralistic modern states and societies, and often regard them with some ambivalence. On the other, Western Christians have often been implicated in colonial domination of other peoples, whereas Orthodox



Christians have experienced colonial domination themselves. Western Christians have related to Muslims from afar, and often with a conflict model inherited from the Crusades. Eastern Christians were themselves victims of the Crusades, and have lived side-by-side with Muslims since the very beginnings of Islam, sometimes ruling over them (as in the Russian Empire) and sometimes ruled by them (as in the Ottoman Empire). The battles over modern Biblical criticism and science largely bypassed the Orthodox, so they have not experienced the divide between liberalism and fundamentalism. As a rule, the Orthodox approach to theology is less cerebral and rationalistic, more holistic and integrated with its rich spiritual traditions. Orthodox tradition is saturated with beauty: the icons, elaborate vestments, church architecture, music; the material world is not something to be despised or conquered, but transformed to reflect God's Kingdom.

The Eastern Orthodox Church is simultaneously one church and a family of churches.<sup>2</sup> In this way it is very different from the way either Roman Catholicism or Protestant churches are generally organized and is therefore confusing for many Western Christians, although there are some parallels such as the worldwide Anglican communion. It is one church in that it shares one faith, a common liturgy, and a common tradition rooted in the teachings of the Church Fathers, the governance of the church as defined by the canons, and a common inheritance of saints. Yet each national church is governed autonomously, uses its own national language in liturgy, develops its own national traditions of sacred arts (iconography, music, architecture), and reveres its own local saints. Today there remain the four ancient patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, in addition to the patriarchates of national churches: Russian, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Georgian. There is also a series of "autocephalous" churches that are fully autonomous in that they can elect the head of their own church (rather than having him appointed from the outside), but are not headed by a patriarch. In this latter category belong the Church of Greece as well as Cyprus, Poland, Albania, and the Czech and Slovak Lands. Although there is a ranking in terms of honor, placing the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople at the head, his authority is not like that of the Pope of Rome. The Ecumenical Patriarch does not have jurisdiction over, nor can he interfere in, the internal affairs of, other autocephalous local churches. Therefore there is no "head" of the Orthodox Church per se (the Orthodox would say that Christ is the head of the church); the highest authority is, in principle, an Ecumenical Council, though one has not taken place since the eighth century. Even within each autocephalous or local church the Council has higher authority than the patriarch.

The Byzantine period was formative for Orthodoxy. During that period, the Orthodox tradition assumed its distinctive shape in theology, liturgy, iconography, and church governance. It was also then that the Slavs converted to Orthodoxy and came into the Byzantine orbit and received that tradition. The Byzantine empire held such esteem that the Slavic nations that became Orthodox still regarded it as the only empire, even if they were politically independent of it. It is no accident that the Russian rulers did not begin to assume the title "tsar" (Slavic for Caesar) until after the fall of Constantinople, when there were no more emperors ruling Byzantium.

Unlike the Western Middle Ages, which were characterized by a unified church under the papacy but political fragmentation after the collapse of the Roman Empire,

in the east the empire continued. There was, therefore, one church and one polity, though within the church power was balanced by the different patriarchs (especially Alexandria and Antioch before they were conquered by the Muslims). The emperor was also influential in church affairs, though never the “head” of the church as Western interpreters sometimes mistakenly assert, and imperial agendas for the church were successfully resisted on several occasions (such as iconoclasm). This ideal of cohesion between church, state, and society, together with the concept of “symphony” between church and state, has held powerful sway over the Orthodox imagination as to what the ideal society should look like. Rather than contrasting the “city of God” with the “city of man,” as Augustine and the West after him had done, the Orthodox tended to see the earthly Christian kingdom as reflecting the heavenly.

From the beginning, Eastern Christianity was ethnically and linguistically diverse. By the end of the fourth century, Christianity spread around the Mediterranean and beyond, encompassing not only Greek-and Latin-speaking populations but Egyptians and Ethiopians, Syriac-speaking Christians as far away as India, as well as Georgians and Armenians. Each of these traditions developed in their own language, including liturgy and scripture. There was never any effort to enforce one ecclesiastical language, as there was in the Latin West. Thus when it came time to convert the Slavs in the ninth century, Patriarch Photius of Constantinople sent two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, to develop Slavic Christianity.

Although there were national expressions of Orthodoxy throughout the Byzantine period, there was also a stronger sense of the universal umbrella of the church. Only those nations that were beyond the scope of the empire, especially those that struggled for political survival such as the Georgians and Armenians, developed very tight links between national and religious identity at this stage. But the unity of the church, especially under the Patriarch of Constantinople, transcended national particularities and identities. The Orthodox Christians of the Middle East, the Balkans, and what is today Ukraine and Belorussia (ruled by Poland and Lithuania) all remained under Constantinople’s authority after the collapse of the empire. The Patriarch assumed particular importance for the Christians of the Ottoman Empire, perhaps even greater than before Byzantium’s collapse. In the Ottoman Empire, civil and religious law were inseparable; therefore Christians could not be governed by Islamic law and had to constitute their own polity, a sort of state within a state – and the Patriarch was placed as their head in both civil and religious matters. Christians in the Ottoman Empire were tolerated as “people of the book,” and by no means forced to convert to Islam. At the same time they were clearly second-class citizens with many restrictions placed upon them; they paid higher taxes, and apostasy from Islam was punishable by death. The church served to preserve a sense of distinct identity for some four centuries.

Revolts in the nineteenth century transformed Orthodox religious communities into modern nations, largely inspired by the upsurge of nationalism in the wake of European Romanticism and the Napoleonic wars. The churches also fragmented along national lines. After the Greek War of Independence, the government declared the Orthodox Church of Greece independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople (who was still in the Ottoman Empire). The independence of the Greek Church was a political act intended to strengthen national independence and royal absolutism. The patriarchate

of Constantinople declared the act uncanonical, however, and the churches were not reconciled until 1850. Other national churches of the Balkans followed similar patterns. The Serbian Church was granted autonomy in the 1830s and, after it became an independent kingdom, Constantinople granted it autocephaly (1879). When the Kingdom of Yugoslavia brought into one state Serbs who had previously lived under Habsburg rule, the Serbian Church was elevated to a patriarchate in 1920. Ecclesiastical independence preceded national independence in Bulgaria and was more complicated and conflicted because it appeared an attempt to define the church on ethnic rather than territorial (national) lines. Constantinople rejected the Bulgarian independence and the resulting schism was not healed until 1945. Although today the link between religious and national identities has become almost inextricable (so that one tends to think not of Orthodoxy per se, but of Russian Orthodoxy, Greek Orthodoxy, Serbian Orthodoxy, etc.), in many instances the identification of church, nation, and people is a result of nationalism and independence movements of the nineteenth century.

## Russia

After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, Russians developed a particularly strong sense of national-religious identity, seeing themselves as the continuers of the Orthodox Christian imperial ideal. They considered Moscow to be the “third” Rome after Rome fell into schism and the “second” Rome, Constantinople, was conquered by the Turks. From that point onward, national and religious identities have been very closely linked in Russia. The Muscovite ideal was still a symphony of church and state, according to which the two remained distinct entities but supported one another and cooperated. The tsars were frequently influential in church affairs, although a powerful patriarch such as Nikon in the seventeenth century could wield considerable power.

In the early eighteenth century, tsar Peter the Great embarked upon church reform that still continues to spark debate. He abolished the office of patriarch and replaced it with the Holy Synod, a collegial body made up of senior clergy. Some argue that this reform was based on northern European Protestant models that violated Orthodox canonical norms and effectively made the church a department of state. Others, by contrast, maintain that Peter’s reforms were a modern variant of church–state “symphony,” clearly separating the spheres of church and state and keeping the two institutionally quite distinct (parish clergy in Imperial Russia did not, as a rule, receive state salaries for example). Also disputed is the role of the “chief procurator,” a lay bureaucrat originally intended only to be a liaison between the Holy Synod and the tsar, who by the late nineteenth century had become a *de facto* – though never *de jure* – head of the church. Peter did not want to weaken the church, because he regarded it as necessary for a well-ordered realm. At the same time, he wanted to ensure that church leaders could not stand in the way of his efforts to Westernize and modernize Russia.

State encroachments on the church increased in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1764, Catherine the Great confiscated the church’s estates and closed more than half the monasteries. In the decades prior to the 1917 Revolution, church leaders were frustrated with the state’s restrictions, and as soon as the monarchy

collapsed, the church began plans for a long anticipated Church Council. The Council had hardly begun to meet, however, when the Bolsheviks seized power and completely changed the situation for the church. The Council primarily succeeded in restoring the patriarchate and electing Tikhon Bellavin (1865–1925), the first patriarch in over two centuries.

The period of the Soviet Union (1917–1991), a militantly atheist regime determined to see the complete secularization of society, was one of the most difficult for any church in the entire history of Christianity. The Soviet regime was far more systematic and destructive in its persecution of Christians than was the ancient Roman empire. The period is enormously complex and still requires extensive and thorough examination. When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, they moved against the church first of all by decree; the decree of separation of church from the state and the schools of January 1918 went much further than similar legislation in the United States or France, above all because it denied legal existence to the church as such. Early decrees had already confiscated all of the church's land and property, including its buildings, which became state property let for use to registered groups of worshippers. Once the Civil War (1918–1921) heated up, the Bolsheviks struck more directly at the church in several ways. In order to undermine believers' faith, they attacked the veneration of saints in an effort to expose saints' relics as frauds perpetrated by the clergy to dupe credulous people. A second campaign targeted monasteries as central to the strength of the church, closing the majority of them.

As the Civil War ended, the Soviets took a two-pronged approach. The authorities sought to undermine the faith of ordinary believers through atheist propaganda and education. At the same time, they attacked the church leadership both directly and indirectly. At the end of the Civil War there was a great famine in the Volga region, which was used as a pretext to confiscate the church's valuables. Although Patriarch Tikhon sought to cooperate, he drew the line at handing over consecrated items (chalices for the eucharist) which, therefore, the Bolsheviks specifically confiscated. There were clashes, and the authorities arrested a number of clergy, including Patriarch Tikhon. After his arrest, a group of reformist clergy seized control of the church administration and sought to carry out a number of reforms such as consecrating married bishops. What resulted was a schism that began to tear the church apart. The authorities were preparing a show trial for Tikhon that would end in his execution, but in the summer of 1923 they reversed course and released him after extracting from him declarations of political neutrality. The troubles deepened after Tikhon's death in 1925, especially after Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodskii) made a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet Union in 1927, thereby causing further splits, this time on the conservative side of those who refused to have anything to do with the atheist regime.

The Soviet strategy of undermining the church hierarchy while tolerating ordinary believers backfired, however, as the believers became empowered and Orthodoxy experienced something of a revival in the 1920s. As a result, when Stalin consolidated power at the end of the 1920s, he made it an explicit aim to secularize the Soviet Union together with his campaign to collectivize agriculture. As the authorities collectivized the villages, they closed the parish churches and deported the priests. Persecution of the clergy reached a peak during the Great Terror of 1937–1938, when religious activists were explicitly targeted and hundreds of thousands of clergy and believers were

arrested and either sent to the gulag or simply executed. Stalin had nearly succeeded in eradicating the Orthodox Church when Hitler invaded in 1941.

World War II brought about a dramatic reversal in Soviet policy toward the church. In order to defeat Hitler, Stalin needed the support of everyone, the church and believers included. The reopening of churches was tolerated, and by the end of the war the church finally received legal recognition and was also allowed to reopen some monasteries and seminaries. Khrushchev, usually thought of for the “Thaw” (a limited cultural openness), paradoxically reinvigorated the anti-religious campaigns in the late 1950s, resulting once again in massive church closures. From the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s, the Soviet authorities sought less to directly persecute the church than to control it tightly and let it gradually die out. By the end of the Soviet period, the Russian population was largely de-churched, having had very little access to open churches or any kind of religious education. The situation began to change dramatically under Mikhail Gorbachev, especially in the last years of the Soviet Union (1988–1991). The Soviet Union relaxed its control over the church and allowed for churches to reopen and for public discourse about religion. The effect was immediate, and great numbers of people were baptized and started going to church.

Orthodoxy has witnessed a dramatic revival in the decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Less than 20% of Soviet citizens claimed to be Orthodox in 1989, while over 70% claimed to be non-believers; by 2012 those percentages have essentially reversed (over 70% self-identify as Orthodox, and 20% claim to be non-believers). Yet the revival of Orthodoxy is paradoxical. Since the presidency of Vladimir Putin, beginning in 2000, the church has enjoyed an increasingly visible and public role in Russian society. But in many ways the majority of Russians still remain “unchurched” in that, even if they self identify as Orthodox, they are largely ignorant of church teaching and rarely attend church services. At the same time, this may simply be a continuation of the kind of informal and extra-institutional expressions of faith made necessary under the Soviets, something which Western interpreters usually fail to grasp.

## Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century

The experiences of other Orthodox Christians in the twentieth century varied considerably from country to country. Greece was the only Orthodox country not to become communist, though only as a result of a civil war that followed the end of World War II. The Soviet Union annexed Moldova, which had been part of Romania in the interwar period, together with parts of western Ukraine that were outside the Soviet Union in the interwar period. There were a great many churches and monasteries in these territories that benefitted from the wartime and post-war policy toward religion, but would suffer the most during the Khrushchev persecutions. The nations of the Warsaw Pact that became communist after World War II but were not part of the Soviet Union each followed the same general line but with its own peculiarities. Bulgaria and Romania were predominantly Orthodox, while Yugoslavia was constituted by the predominantly Orthodox regions of Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. As they all became communist after World War II, none

suffered the types of severe persecution and virtual extinction of the Soviet 1930s. Only Albania – which was a mix of Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox – declared itself to be a completely atheist state and closed all churches. Because the Warsaw Pact countries broadly followed the Soviet line, the immediate post-war years saw an attempt to bring the church under the control of the government. Intense persecution and church closures followed the pattern of the Khrushchev anti-religious campaigns in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when many clergy, for example in Romania, were imprisoned in extremely harsh prison camps.

In the last decades of communism, however, Orthodoxy experienced much more tolerance in Romania than in the Soviet Union. Spiritual leaders such as the Elder Cleopa (Ilie, 1912–1998) survived communism by escaping into the mountains during the periods of persecution but gained renown as a spiritual guide in the last decades of communism and beyond. One of the greatest Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century, Dumitru Stăniloae (1903–1993), was imprisoned from 1958 to 1963, but after his release returned to teaching in Romania for the next decade before his retirement and continued to publish major works in theology in the subsequent decade. In short, although the communist period certainly took its toll in Romania, there were leading spiritual and intellectual figures who outlived communism and therefore maintained the continuity of Orthodoxy from before to after communism, something that was not possible in the Soviet Union.

There were also important distinctions in popular practice between the Soviet experience and that in Romania. In the late Soviet period, it was not unusual for a child to be baptized in secret, something arranged by the child's grandmother. Thus the act was to be hidden from the authorities, but if it was discovered the parents – who would suffer consequences – could claim ignorance. In Romania, only communist party members needed to have their children baptized in secret or go to a remote village to have a church wedding – something that was unthinkable for party members in the Soviet Union. Although the church hierarchy was certainly controlled by the government and watched by the secret police in Romania as well, religious practice by ordinary people was much more tolerated. Only religious education was restricted, so that religious practice was uninformed by its meaning. Nevertheless, the continuity meant that most people were not entirely cut off from the church. Perhaps as a result, religious practice is much higher in post-communist Romania than it is in Russia.

The collapse of communism has resulted in certain fissures in the Orthodox world. A schism erupted in the Bulgarian Church over the complicity of the church hierarchy with communism that vitiated the church's witness in the two decades that followed. The Orthodox Church in Ukraine has fractured into three separate jurisdictions over the effort to have a Ukrainian national church. Ukraine has perhaps the greatest religious pluralism in Eastern Europe (one that is largely tolerated by the Ukrainian government), including the Greek Catholic Church and successful evangelical and Pentecostal missions (the largest church in Europe is the Embassy of God in Kyiv, a Pentecostal church established by a Nigerian pastor). Unlike Bulgaria, this religious competition – including the schisms within the Orthodox Church – has resulted in relatively high levels of religious participation in the post-Soviet era, much higher than those in Russia.

## Theology and Spirituality

The Byzantine Church was preoccupied with theology. Although there were periods when Byzantine theology was characterized by a conservative theology of repetition, there were creative currents up until the fall of Constantinople. Creative theological development essentially stopped with the Turkish conquest, however. Above all, it was virtually impossible for Orthodox scholars to gain a higher education in the Ottoman Empire. Those that did seek higher education went primarily to the West to do so, which left a noticeable Western imprint on their thinking. The Greeks (and other Orthodox) were caught up indirectly in the confessional battles of Protestants and Catholics and sought to identify themselves as something in between, even to the point of creating “confessions” along the lines of Western Christians and usually betraying either Protestant or Catholic influences. Creative Greek theology did not re-emerge until the second half of the twentieth century.

The Slavs followed a different trajectory. They converted to Orthodoxy after the seven Ecumenical Councils and after Orthodox theology and liturgy had taken its distinctive shape. As a result, they accepted Orthodoxy as a finished product, as it were, and sought above all to preserve it in purity. There was almost no creative theological development among the Eastern Slavs until the nineteenth century. Rather, what the Slavs excelled at was manifesting the faith in life. According to the legendary account of the conversion of Rus, what convinced Grand Prince Vladimir and his envoys that Orthodoxy was the religion for them was the beauty, above all the beauty and magnificence of Constantinople’s Church of the Holy Wisdom and the patriarchal liturgy conducted there. The Eastern Slavs would excel in their own right in ecclesiastical architecture, iconography, music, and other ecclesiastical arts. Medieval Russia also witnessed a rich flowering of monastic life following the example of St. Sergius of Radonezh in the second half of the fourteenth century and culminating a century later in two distinct trends, one emphasizing contemplative prayer and the other communal discipline and worship (represented by Nil Sorsky and Iosif Volotsky respectively). Although medieval Russia did not produce much theological literature, there is a rich body of saints’ lives and ascetic instruction.

A significant theological development took place in seventeenth-century Kyiv, then part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Substantial numbers of Orthodox Christians lived in the Commonwealth since the thirteenth century, and the Commonwealth was religiously tolerant until the sixteenth century. In the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, efforts to secure Poland for the Catholic Church had its consequences for the Orthodox as well. The end result was the creation of the “Uniate” or Greek Catholic Church at the Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596, which brought some of the Orthodox (especially the bishops) under Rome. Rome received them while allowing them to retain most of the distinctive features of Orthodox practice (Slavonic liturgy, married priests). The Orthodox Metropolitan of Kyiv, Peter Moyla (1596–1646), was born to a Moldavian princely family and educated in Poland. In the 1630s he created what became known as the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, which sought to strengthen Orthodox identity by providing its representatives with an education equal to that of the West. Students studied philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, music, and history, in a variety of languages (including Latin

and Polish). What resulted was the most advanced educational institution in the Orthodox world, but one that was largely modeled on a Jesuit pattern and used Catholic textbooks.

The Mohyla Academy was influential not only in Ukraine, but subsequently in Russia as well. Kyiv was annexed by Russia in the middle of the seventeenth century. In the early eighteenth century, when Peter the Great sought to reform the Orthodox Church in part through encouraging it to develop educational institutions for the clergy, he turned to the Kyiv Academy as a model for all of Russia. Theological education in Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, therefore, largely followed a scholastic model borrowed from the West.

The resurgence of distinctive Eastern Christian expressions began at the end of the eighteenth century on the monastic republic of Mount Athos. The Greek Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and the Slav Paisios Velichkovsky both sought to recover ancient expressions of spiritual practice, which they sought in early Eastern Christian spiritual and ascetic literature. The result was the *Philokalia*, the Greek version of which was first published in 1782, and the Slavonic version a decade later. This literature, together with Paisios's example and the influence of his disciples, sparked a revival of contemplative spirituality and monasticism in nineteenth-century Russia especially.

Russian theology and religious thought also experienced a revival that began in the nineteenth century, especially among lay intellectuals such as the Slavophiles Ivan Kireevsky and Alexei Khomiakov, but also among the clergy, led by Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow. Perhaps the greatest thinker of the second half of the nineteenth century was philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, who inspired a flowering of Russian religious thought in the early twentieth century with such theologians and thinkers as Sergei Bulgakov, Pavel Florensky, and Nikolai Berdiaev. They sought to engage Orthodox theology with modern philosophical trends. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Russian religious thought continued to develop, especially in interwar Paris, where Russian thinkers engaged with Western Christian counterparts. Among the Russian émigrés a second trend also emerged, one that would ultimately prove even more influential. Sometimes referred to as the "neo-patristic synthesis," represented by Vladimir Lossky and Georges Florovsky, this strain sought above all a return to the early church fathers as the starting point for all theology, and from that basis sought to interpret the tradition in light of contemporary questions. This tendency would be particularly influential not only among Russian, but also Greek, Romanian, and Serbian theologians.

Russian religious thought from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, followed by Orthodox theology in the latter twentieth century, sought a theology or religious philosophy that was holistic in approach. It rarely engaged in "systematic" theology as such to create coherent systems of thought, but rather sought to engage questions in a way that always kept in mind the implications for practice. Moreover, these thinkers held that the West had gone astray by excessive emphasis on analytical rationalism, and sought instead an "integral" knowledge that brought together reason with intuition and spiritual insight.

Both the demographic realities of Orthodoxy in today's Europe, combined with its profound historical experience and rich legacy in theology, spirituality, and religious arts, ensures that Eastern Orthodox Christianity has much to offer contemporary world Christianity.



## Notes

- 1 Although there are more Protestants taken as a whole than Orthodox, there are more Orthodox than there are any of the broad Protestant traditions such as the worldwide Anglican communion, Baptists, Reformed, and so on. The possible exception is Charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity, depending upon how one counts them.
- 2 In fact there are two families of Orthodox churches, the Chalcedonian and the non-Chalcedonian or Oriental Orthodox churches (Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, etc.); the latter are predominantly in the Middle East and therefore not considered in this article.

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## CHAPTER 38

# Latin America and the Caribbean

Stephen Dove

From Catholic evangelization of the sixteenth century to autochthonous Pentecostal growth in the twentieth century, the history of Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean has been marked by inculturation and hybridity. These characteristics do not, of course, describe every aspect or iteration of Christianity across five centuries, two continents, and hundreds of ethnic groups. However, they do form the basis for understanding the development of Christianity in a region that simultaneously contains a plurality of the world's Catholics, hosts many of the globe's fastest growing Pentecostal movements, and is home to several New Religious Movements with an international reach.

Latin America and the Caribbean were relatively late entries into the realm of Christianity. However, by the twenty-first century the region was one of the most Christian areas of the world, having surpassed Europe and North America on most demographic measures and in 2013 even producing the first non-European pope since the eighth century. Despite this, creating a single meaningful definition of regional Christianity is a challenging task. Latin America and the Caribbean contain a mosaic of Christianity that can only be understood in relation to five centuries of historical development. All forms of Christianity in the region, from Catholicism to Pentecostalism, are rooted in missionary efforts from abroad, but they have also been influenced by indigenous spirituality, African cultures, and local institutions that developed alongside Christianity. This mixing has created new but still recognizable forms of Christianity that have in turn exerted their own influence on global religion.

### Colonial Origins

The region's most dominant form of Christianity, Roman Catholicism, arrived with the first Spanish explorers in the late fifteenth century. The majority of early Iberian Catholics viewed the newly discovered lands and peoples of the Americas as potential

targets of evangelism. However, they disagreed among themselves about how to understand indigenous Americans and how to proceed with their evangelization.

In the late 1400s, as the Spanish conquest of the Americas began, the Spanish monarchy was also expelling Jews and Muslims from Iberia, and part of this campaign limited citizenship to people who could prove pure Christian bloodlines. In the Americas, it was clear that indigenous peoples could not claim purity of blood, and so many of the first conquistadors declared them heretics to justify conquest or enslavement. However, other Spanish Catholics led by friars like Bartolomé de las Casas, argued that the indigenous were “most humble, most patient, meekest, and most pacific” and that they were “excellently fit to receive our holy Catholic faith” if only priests would instruct them (de Las Casas 2003: 5–6). Although there was much gray area between these two poles, the latter view became the guiding principle of evangelization efforts for much of the sixteenth century as orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans set up posts for religious education and conversion across the Caribbean and the American mainland.

As evangelization proceeded in the sixteenth century, it became clear that its effectiveness was uneven. Some indigenous populations became loyal Catholics while others surreptitiously practiced pre-Colombian religions. The church responded to this defiance in several ways. The most direct response was through extirpation campaigns that destroyed indigenous artifacts and sites associated with pagan practices. However, another response was to fold indigenous culture into Catholic practice. The most common form of this was the creation of Catholic confraternities in indigenous communities where these lay organizations became extensions of pre-existing social hierarchies. By merging indigenous practices into Catholicism, the church broadened its base in the Americas and often effectively brought indigenous communities into the faith (Schwaller 2011: 85–87).

In the Caribbean, these processes worked slightly differently since disease and enslavement devastated native populations. Instead, Europeans mainly interacted with enslaved African populations. On Spanish islands, Africans usually practiced Catholicism, and the Spanish not only permitted but also even encouraged lay societies among blacks. In British and Dutch colonies, colonization began only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and many planters opposed the evangelization of slaves because they feared that missionaries would preach abolitionism. This allowed several African-derived religions like Obeah and Myalism to flourish underground in places like Jamaica.

One reason the evangelizing impulse was stronger in Spanish and Portuguese Latin America was that those monarchs operated with a special authority from the pope to oversee the operation of the church. Thus, throughout the colonial period, the religious and secular hierarchies often worked together to maintain their power, although each also competed with the other. Secular authorities gained the upper hand in this competition in the late eighteenth century as the new Bourbon dynasty in Spain and the Marquess of Pombal in Portugal implemented reforms that consolidated royal power. This occurred most concretely in the religious sphere with the expulsion of the Jesuits from Iberian colonies in 1767. However, these reforms also highlighted deeper social and political splits between Iberia and the colonies that would bring about some of the biggest changes in Latin American history, both religious and otherwise (Schwaller 2011: 46–48, 106–116).

## The Challenges of Independence and Liberalism

As these bureaucratic reforms took hold, external forces also buffeted the Spanish and Portuguese empires leading to crises. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Napoleonic invasions, legislative attempts to curtail the royal power, and increasing tensions between Iberian bureaucrats and American-born whites produced a series of independence-focused rebellions across the Americas.

Revolutions in Mexico, Central America, and Spanish South America cast off Spanish monarchy but replaced it with familiar patterns of social stratification that privileged citizens of European descent. Nonetheless, these new nations did adopt a rhetoric of republicanism that opened up a new era of political debate in mainland Latin America. In almost every country, this debate split the elite populations between Conservatives, who advocated for protecting traditional social hierarchies including the privileged position of the Catholic Church, and Liberals, who proposed a reshaping of national economies by removing entrenched privileged groups. Some of the most prominent Liberal reforms across the region in the mid-1800s were anti-clerical programs that curtailed the power of Catholic clergy by confiscating ecclesial property and limiting clerics' ability to participate in secular politics.

Another facet of this anti-clerical impulse was the re-drafting of many national constitutions to include clauses guaranteeing religious liberty. In reality, Liberal leaders had little concern for promoting the growth of non-Catholic religion among their national populations, who overwhelmingly self-identified as Catholic. Rather, Liberals intended these new laws to undermine the authority of the Catholic hierarchy and to provide a social incentive for Protestant industrialists and investors from North America and Europe, whom Liberal regimes were courting to spur economic growth in the region. Guatemalan president Justo Rufino Barrios explained that his 1873 edict declaring freedom of worship "would remove one of the principal obstacles which has heretofore impeded foreign immigration to our country, for many do not wish to settle where they are not allowed to exercise their religion" (quoted in Garrard-Burnett 1997: 38).

These laws were marginally successful in encouraging investment and immigration, although most Protestant immigrants chose to live in enclave communities rather than mix with the general population. However, the laws were important in that they opened the doors for the first permanent Protestant missionaries to Latin America. Prior to these constitutional changes, a small number of Bible salesmen and peripatetic preachers had visited Latin America as early as the 1810s. However, the first missionaries to establish lasting churches arrived in the 1870s thanks to the legal protections afforded by Liberal presidents and constitutions, who often valued missionaries' commitment to education and ideologies of progress. In Peru, for example, the government used Methodist schools as laboratories in the early 1900s to develop and implement national education policy (Fonseca 2002: 185–211).

Despite these connections to Liberal leaders, early Protestant missionaries remained largely ineffective in terms of drawing new converts. Nineteenth-century missionaries largely limited their activities to urban areas and "civilizing" projects like education, which left the majority of the region's people beyond their reach. By 1900, fewer than 1% of Latin Americans were Protestant. However, missionaries had established

institutional structures in education and communication that paved the way for expansion during the twentieth century.

## Twentieth-Century Changes in Catholicism

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the level of dramatic upheaval and change that marked the beginning of the nineteenth century did not repeat itself in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Versions of Liberalism and economic-development-focused politics continued to dominate the ideological landscape, but the majority of the population remained loyal to Catholicism.

With regard to religion, even the most tumultuous event of the early twentieth century, the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), was an extension of nineteenth-century conflicts. Most Mexican revolutionaries were vehemently anti-clerical, and their crackdown on the church even spawned a Catholic counter-revolution called *La Cristiada* (1926–1929). The result of these uprisings was a victory for the anti-clerical revolutionaries that officially pushed the church to the margins of power. However, the state could not displace the unofficial power of the church among the Mexican people, and from the 1930s onward, the two sides entered into an uneasy peace that was tense but not openly hostile.

Although Catholicism survived these external threats from anti-clerical governments, the conflict weakened the church internally, largely by limiting the availability of priests. In the early 1900s, there was roughly one priest per 9,000 residents in the region, and this meant that the clergy were unable to ensure orthodoxy in outlying regions where nominal Catholics often practiced syncretic forms of the faith that mixed indigenous and Catholic spirituality into forms that were barely recognizable to the hierarchy but highly valued locally. In communities of African descent, especially in the Caribbean and Brazil, African-derived religions like Umbanda experienced a resurgence. In indigenous communities, the confraternities that formed in the colonial period cemented their power by sponsoring locally regulated religious festivals, and among rural mixed race populations faith healers like Juan Soldado in Mexico and millennial prophets like Antonio Conselheiro in Brazil challenged clerical authority. At the same time, in urban areas, Catholicism had to compete with secular rivals like socialism and labor unions that challenged Catholicism's social roles.

In response to these developments, especially in urban areas, small pockets of lay Catholics began organizing in defense of their faith by forming their own societies dedicated to orthodoxy. In the 1920s, the pope responded to these developments by endorsing Catholic Action, a lay ministry intended to defend the faith and “re-Christianize” society. As the movement spread in Latin America from the 1930s to the 1950s, cells developed among groups as varied as university students, labor unions, and peasant organizations. Although required to report to priests, these cells usually operated without direct oversight because of the lack of available clergy. This produced a two-fold result. First, Catholic Action and similar lay organizations revitalized the church and bolstered the influence of orthodox Catholicism; but second, and perhaps more importantly, they empowered lay Catholics to evaluate political and social issues with some degree of autonomy from the church hierarchy (Schwaller 2011: 207–211).

As the church moved forward with lay empowerment through Catholic Action, two other changes produced a more seismic disruption in the religious landscape. First, the beginning of the Cold War created new ideological and physical battlegrounds in the region that saw the United States closely ally with national militaries to impose “national security” doctrines. These doctrines officially protected countries from the menace of Communism, the danger of which became particularly clear after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, but they also made local dissidents targets of internal violence while at the same time promoting an economic-development paradigm that created strong alliances between regional elites and US business interests. This bifurcation of the hemispheric political system into socialists and capitalists directly affected religion by prompting the rise of Christian Democrats as a political third way, and it also created the backdrop for dramatic religious changes that occurred in the late twentieth century.

The second large change of the mid-twentieth century proceeded from Rome with the reforms instituted by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The council’s official mission, as articulated by Pope John XXIII, was “updating” the church, and the changes announced by the Council had profound effects on Catholicism around the world by altering the liturgy and redefining mission work. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council also provided significant momentum to a social-justice-minded group of bishops operating as part of the Latin American Bishops Conference, commonly known by its Spanish acronym CELAM, which formed just a few years earlier in 1955.

At the time, CELAM was internally divided between traditionalists and reformers, and eventually it would drift in the direction of its more conservative wing. However, in the two decades following the Second Vatican Council, CELAM’s reformist members gave birth to two Catholic movements that significantly reimagined the role of the church: Base Communities and Liberation Theology. These two movements share a common commitment to community engagement. However, each played a specific role in altering the direction of Catholicism in the twentieth century.

Base Communities were grass roots organizations of laity that were not technically churches due largely to their lack of priestly leadership but that were church-like in their operation. At their inception prior to Vatican II, Base Communities were similar to Catholic Action because they relied on lay leadership due to the shortage of priests. In fact, many early leaders of Base Communities had been part of Catholic Action. In Base Communities, however, the emphasis was not primarily on enforcing theological orthodoxy but rather on community improvement through programs related to education, sanitation, or child development. These communities were especially strong in Brazil where they built upon the theories of pedagogue Paulo Freire who argued that education was about empowerment rather than knowledge transfer.

In the 1960s and 1970s, church leaders continued to view Base Communities as a means of serving a widely dispersed religious community in a time when state-sponsored violence limited contact between priests and parishioners. However, participants often took a different view. Base communities offered laity in marginalized areas the opportunity to take ownership of their religion. As such, Base Communities became sites to share information and analyze common struggles, especially related to poverty. Much of what happened in particular Base Communities remains obscure because of

their decentralized nature. However, the best-documented example is Solentiname, Nicaragua, a community led by priest Ernesto Cardenal that demonstrated peasants' willingness to push traditional Catholic interpretations of Scripture, including an eagerness to read themselves and revolutionaries into the text of the New Testament (Cardenal 2010).

Liberation Theology was a more systematic way of questioning how the church should approach Latin American social issues, and its core tenet expressing a "preferential option for the poor" was first articulated at CELAM's 1968 meeting in Medellín, Colombia and more fully laid out in 1971 by the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez explained this preference as "sharing the life of the poor" rather than simply providing charity (Gutiérrez 1988: xxxi, 160). Liberation theologians like Gutiérrez pushed the Catholic hierarchy of CELAM, and later the Vatican, to take an active role in addressing pressing social issues related to poverty, health, and inequality. In doing this, they argued that the church should move away from alliances with those in power and instead approach social issues along side those who suffer most. The result of this methodological approach was a focus on "structural sins," institutionalized inequities that liberation theologians believed the church should speak and act against.

The liberationist condemnation of structural sins identified the leading cause of poverty to be the neo-colonial economic system that promised economic advancement through development and foreign investment. Liberationists argued that development paradigms did not help lift people out of poverty but rather furthered the exploitation of the poor. In the early- to mid-1960s, before the official articulation of Liberation Theology, a small faction of South American priests began publicly and radically challenging the church's complicity in the development paradigm. This movement reached its peak in 1968 when sixty sympathetic priests met in Golconda, Colombia, and committed themselves to "every manner of revolutionary action against imperialism . . . and . . . setting up a socialistic society" (quoted in Smith 1991: 138).

Although this revolutionary fervor continued to play a role in certain quarters of Liberation Theology, the first concrete steps toward the more mainstream version came from the more moderate CELAM meeting the same year in Medellín. The conference opened with an address by Pope Paul VI, the first pope ever to visit Latin America. His presence stoked pride among Catholics in the region, but it also highlighted the difficult issues that divided the bishops' conference. The pope arrived in a Colombian army helicopter, a machine that had become synonymous with military raids on poor villages, and his speech referred to poverty as "inherent discomforts," which many perceived as a purposefully mild description that protected the elite while diminishing the harsh realities of daily life for millions in the region. After the pope departed, the bishops produced several statements that directly addressed poverty, and although these documents explicitly opposed armed revolutions, the bishops also called for drastic reforms to land ownership, business practices, and politics in Latin America, all of which challenged the region's basic power structures.

Building on this framework, theologians like Gutiérrez and Brazilian Franciscan Leonardo Boff moved forward in the 1970s with a more systematic prescription for how the Catholic Church should engage with the poor. This emergence of an activist Catholic theology in Latin America coincided with the growth of Marxist political groups that

revolted against US-aligned military governments. Many liberation theologians openly relied on Marxist theory in their theological writings, and so their more conservative opponents began linking them to the armed Marxist revolutionary groups of Central and South America.

This correlation was usually unfair since the majority of liberation theologians opposed violence in any form. However, the rhetorical connection did invite harsh results for liberation theologians who found themselves at odds with both church leaders and secular authorities. Within the church, the majority of bishops either actively supported or silently assented to the national security doctrines of Latin American militaries against atheistic Communism. This cooperation most often occurred when church leaders chose not to comment on human rights abuses, but in some cases the support was much more explicit. For example, Catholic priests in Chile held thanksgiving services to mark dictator Augusto Pinochet's rise to power in 1973.

In the 1979 meeting of CELAM in Puebla, Mexico, Latin American bishops issued statements supporting more conservative theological positions, and in 1984, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) issued a direct denunciation of Liberation Theology on behalf of the Vatican that referred to it as a "deviation" from historic Christianity. Finally, in 1985, Ratzinger silenced Boff for his writings on Liberation Theology.

Although ecclesial pressure against Liberation Theology was strong, secular pressure proved deadly. The most infamous military assassinations of liberation theologians and their sympathizers occurred in El Salvador, including the 1980 assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Óscar Romero while he was celebrating mass. Early in his career, Romero sided with the more traditional faction of the Latin American episcopate, but after several of his parishioners died in Army massacres in the late 1970s, he offered refuge to those fleeing the army, excommunicated members of military death squads, and refused sacraments to many of El Salvador's business and political leaders. The result of this resistance was an increase in violence against priests and the assassination of the archbishop.

Although rebukes from church hierarchy and violence from outside forces buffeted reformist Catholicism in the late twentieth century, Base Communities and Liberation Theology remained important public aspects of Catholic identity. After Romero's assassination, 250,000 Salvadorans attended his funeral, and Salvadorans continue to treat Romero as an unofficial saint. The persistence of Romero's memory is a concrete symbol of the legacy that Liberation Theology left on the church even as its official influence declined after the end of the cold war. In the 1990s and 2000s, many of the more moderate elements of Liberation Theology such as lay empowerment and theological responses to poverty became part of mainstream conversations within Latin American Catholicism, as evidenced by the priority Pope Francis gave to poverty at the beginning of his papacy.

## Protestant and Pentecostal Growth in Latin America

The tumult of the twentieth century also produced new directions for religion beyond Catholicism as Protestantism grew from a marginal movement into a dynamic force. The legacy of the first wave of Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century was



primarily a network of small congregations that relied on North American organizations for both ideological and financial support. However, in the early decades of the twentieth century, several factors challenged that model and paved the way for the emergence of autochthonous movements that came to dominate Latin American and Caribbean Protestantism.

The first of these factors was a foreign one – the arrival of faith missions. Faith missions were non-denominational missionary groups that relied on individual donors rather than institutional budgets for funding. This de-centralized structure produced two important results that encouraged Latin Americans to take on more significant roles in Protestant communities. First, because their funding levels were often low and uncertain, faith missionaries typically were more willing than their denominational counterparts to grant converts leeway in preaching and evangelizing without direct missionary oversight. This gradual change throughout the first half of the twentieth century meant that a new generation of local leaders not only gained experience but also were able to begin adapting both methods and theology in ways that North Americans could not. Second, because faith missionaries' professional connections were predicated on networks rather than institutional hierarchy, they were more able to take methodological risks in their approach to evangelization.

The best example of these methodological risks is the formation of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, also known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which began in a small indigenous town in Guatemala in the 1920s and grew to become the one of the largest Protestant missions in the world by the twenty-first century. Wycliffe's founder, Cameron Townsend, came to Guatemala with the Central American Mission in 1917 when most mission agencies taught Spanish to indigenous converts as part of the evangelization process. This was a practical policy since it streamlined operations, but it was also a judgment on what constituted "civilized" language and culture. Townsend, however, began translating the New Testament into Cakchiquel Maya against orders from his superiors. When that project neared completion around 1930, he proposed a hemisphere-wide program to translate the Bible into native languages, which his superiors summarily rejected. Unfazed, Townsend set out on his own, lured new financial backers, and negotiated a partnership with the Mexican government that allowed him to open his new faith mission in southern Mexico in 1932. Over the rest of the century, Townsend's focus on evangelizing people in their own language became the *de facto* approach of Protestant missionaries around the world (Hartch 2006).

However, Protestants did not rely only, or even primarily, on foreigners to introduce innovations that propelled them toward greater agency in determining the direction of their religion. As early as the 1910s, but especially beginning in the 1960s, local believers began adapting Protestant theology to fit their contexts by creating religious organizations that were independent of foreign economic or political control. This happened in many different types of Protestant churches, but by far the most prominent of these was Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism is a branch of Christianity that emphasizes the individual's direct experience of the Holy Spirit and the expectation of physical signs such as speaking in tongues, healing, and visions to accompany that experience. In the late twentieth century, Pentecostalism grew into a global phenomenon with as many as 500 million

adherents by 2000, and Latin America was one of the leading regions in this trend, home to roughly one-quarter of all Pentecostals. Unlike Catholicism and most Protestant denominations, Pentecostals' bonds to one another do not rely on institutions, leadership structures, or even common systematic theologies but rather on a shared understanding of how faith is experienced.

Global Pentecostalism traces its roots to a series of parallel but autonomous revivals in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, considered the watershed moment. Most Pentecostal churches in Latin America and the Caribbean trace their history to US missionaries who arrived in the decades following the Azusa Street Revival, but the first Pentecostal movement in Latin America has more complex roots. In 1909, a Methodist missionary in Valparaiso, Chile named Willis Hoover adapted a style of charismatic worship that he learned about from a Pentecostal revival in India. When the Methodist mission declared this new worship unacceptable, the members of Hoover's congregation formed their own church, which they christened the Methodist Pentecostal Church. Although the MPC invited Hoover to serve as pastor, from 1910 onward it operated as a completely autonomous national church. The largest congregation in the new denomination even added the word "National" to its name, and when foreign Pentecostal missionaries arrived decades later, the original Pentecostals differentiated themselves from the newcomers by referring to themselves as *criollo pentecostales* (home-grown Pentecostals).

The origins of Chilean Pentecostalism were typical for the region in its emphasis on local leadership and national identity. However, it was exceptional in its minimal reliance on foreign missionary personnel from an early stage. In most Latin American countries, the earliest Pentecostal congregations were products of international mission programs. In Brazil, an Italian-American missionary established the Christian Congregation of Brazil in 1909, drawing largely from existing Presbyterian converts, and just two years later, Swedish-American missionaries opened a mission that siphoned off numerous members from a Baptist church. This mission later became the Assemblies of God in Brazil, which like the Christian Congregations grew into one of largest Pentecostal denominations in Latin America. Despite their foreign origins, both of these denominations quickly adopted national organizational structures, and they established models for partnering with foreign Pentecostal groups like the US-based Assemblies of God, yet without subordinating themselves to outside groups.

Beyond Brazil and Chile, the origins of national Pentecostalisms are more obscure. The general pattern that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s was that a series of loosely connected and highly independent North American missionaries traversed Mexico, Central America, and South America leaving behind a scattered collection of congregations, often in rural areas. By mid-century, however, these loosely affiliated churches had coalesced into organizations with distinctly national characters compared to their more traditional Protestant cousins who still relied on foreign funding and personnel.

Pentecostalism altered the religious landscape of the region dramatically by combining this local character with an emphasis on the agency of individual believers, an ability to create alternative social structures in marginal communities, and promises of physical healing. By the end of the century, estimates of Pentecostal membership ranged as high as 20 to 30% of the population in places like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Brazil, and

including many from poor and marginalized communities. Pentecostalism's rapid rise also coincided with increasing levels of violence, displacement, and anomie across the region. From the urban favelas of Rio de Janeiro to the indigenous highlands of Guatemala, Pentecostalism became a leading social and religious force among the populations most affected by economic inequality and state-sponsored violence. These were same forces that liberation theologians spoke out against, but unlike Liberation Theology, Pentecostalism drew huge numbers of marginalized followers into its ranks. As historian Andrew Chesnut has neatly summarized this period, "The Catholic Church has chosen the poor, but the poor chose the Pentecostals" (Jenkins 2004: 156).

However, Pentecostalism was not just a religion of the poor. Beginning in the 1970s, it also began attracting middle-class and aspiring middle-class urbanites who built mega churches and shifted the movement's theology away from enduring poverty and toward the promise of material betterment on earth. Often these urban Pentecostals entered social and political discourse by offering new visions of citizenship that replaced secular models with spiritual ones. As Kevin Lewis O'Neill has described, urban Pentecostals in Guatemala "are more likely to pray for Guatemala than pay their taxes; they tend to speak in tongues for the soul of the nation rather than vote in general elections; and they more often than not organize prayer campaigns to fight crime rather than organize their communities against the same threat" (O'Neill 2010: 201).

In other cases, Pentecostals have entered into national discourse more directly. In Brazil, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God operates one of the country's largest television networks, and since the 1980s, both the Assemblies of God and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God have endorsed or run candidates in elections. In Guatemala, a Pentecostal who was also an army general, Efraín Ríos Montt, took charge of the country for seventeen months in 1982 and 1983, during which time he oversaw the violent repression of Guatemala's indigenous population in the name of national security. Ríos Montt's religious affiliation was an integral part of his short dictatorship as he offered moralistic presidential sermons each Sunday and sought policy input from a close group of advisers in his church (Garrard-Burnett 2010).

Despite these visible and large-scale insertions of middle to upper class, urban Pentecostals into national politics, Pentecostalism as whole remained a largely grassroots religious expression. It was this aspect of Pentecostalism that most threatened the dominance of Catholicism and led to a direct response from the Catholic hierarchy. In 1992, Pope John Paul II famously referred to Latin American Protestants as "voracious wolves" who targeted sheep in the Catholic flock and called for a renewed evangelism in the region.

In actuality, that response was well underway in one corner of the Catholic Church even before the pope's call to arms. While most public attention to regional Catholicism in the late twentieth century focused on Liberation Theology, one of the most vital movements within Catholicism was Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), a priest-led program that openly adopted Pentecostal practices ranging from small-group Bible studies to ecstatic worship in order to diminish the appeal of Pentecostal proselytism among Catholics. CCR began in the United States in the 1960s and received its first official recognition in Latin America from the Panamanian bishops' conference in 1975. As it grew in the 1970s and 1980s, CCR retained core Catholic doctrines while adopting

new styles and methods ranging from stadium crusades to television programs. The end result was an internal revival in local churches (Chesnut 2003: 61–64). According to a 2006 study by the Pew Forum, the rate of Catholic self-identification as charismatic was 62% in Guatemala, 49% in Brazil, and 30% in Chile (Pew Forum 2006: 4).

Pentecostalism also spawned a number of new religious movements that self-identify as Christian but whose theology or elevation of key leaders to near-divine status places them on the fringes of orthodoxy. One of the leading examples of these movements is Luz del Mundo, the largest non-Catholic denomination in Mexico. Luz del Mundo defines itself as the restoration of the New Testament Church and claims that its founder and his son are modern apostles chosen by God to restore truth on earth. Luz del Mundo also highlights a growing trend among Pentecostals to export their faith beyond the region, particularly to the United States. Luz del Mundo was one of the earliest groups in Latin America to initiate mission work in the United States, beginning its efforts in the 1950s, and in recent years the majority of Pentecostal and Protestant groups have begun similar efforts either by preparing emigrating members to start new churches in North America or by training pastors to preach to North Americans in much the same way that North Americans did to Latin Americans a century prior.

## Conclusion

In the early twenty-first century, new religious movements, Pentecostalism, resurgent indigenous and African religions, and Catholicism have created a crowded and fluid religious landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although Catholicism is still the region's majority religion, its position is no longer unassailable. "No religion" was among the fastest growing affiliations listed in Mexico's 2010 census, and in nations like Brazil, Cuba, and Guatemala, more Protestants attend weekly services than do Catholics.

This movement is not unidirectional, however. In Mexico, for example, sociologists have found that the Pentecostal conversion boom in the late twentieth century was accompanied by a spike in apostasy rates that ran as high as 68%, meaning that many converts left their new faith searching for other religious options (Bowen 1996: 225). This fluidity means that delimiting the current religious landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean is not a matter of simply counting membership changes over time but also recognizing that individuals may themselves be changing religious identities multiple times in their lives. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is not only a matter of passing through various types of Catholicism and Protestantism but in some cases can include choices as varied as African-derived religions, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, and even Islam, which emerged in the early twenty-first century as a religious option in parts of Chiapas, Mexico. As individuals make these moves between religions, they are not only opting into new systems, they are also bringing with them their experiences from past affiliations and creating new forms of Christianity, continuing the pattern that has defined Christianity in the region since its arrival with the Spanish in the 1400s.

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## CHAPTER 39

# North America

Amanda Porterfield

So many different forms of Christianity have developed in North America over the last six centuries that an appropriate essay title might be, “Christianities in North America.” Even so, a strong constellation of trends may be seen to characterize this diverse and broad-ranging field of religious expression. These trends might not unify our topic, but they do help us discern major developments in Christian expression over the long time period from the beginning of Christian exploration and colonization to the present.

For six centuries, North America has been an entrepôt of global Christianity where different forms of Christianity have arrived, collected, mingled, and been shaped, redistributed, and exported. Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of other Catholic religious orders immigrated to North America along with Anglicans, Baptists, Quakers and other English puritans, Dutch Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, Moravian pietists and English Methodists, German and Swedish Lutherans, Russian and Greek Orthodox, and successive waves of English, French, Irish, German, Italian, Polish, and Hispanic Catholics. Many of these groups supported missions to Native Americans and few Native Americans today come from families untouched by missionary education or conversion.

African Americans contributed significantly to the growth of Methodist and Baptist churches and to the overall vibrancy of evangelical Christianity in North America, which expanded greatly during the nineteenth century. In the United States, evangelicals claimed cultural dominance over a protestant nation, partly in response to the increasing population of Catholics. Then, in the mid-twentieth century, distrust between protestants and Catholics dating back to the wars of the sixteenth century declined as the result of numerous factors, including the build-up of political unity during World War II, rapprochement between protestants and Catholics encouraged by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, and political coalitions that emerged between conservative Catholics and conservative evangelicals on abortion and reproductive freedom, homosexuality, and women’s place in society.

While churches with European roots gravitated toward division between conservatives and liberals, new religious groups also sprang up in North America to interpret Christianity. Disciples of Christ, Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, Christian Scientists,

and Jehovah's Witnesses all originated in North America, where they grew to develop global missions and large international organizations. The modern pentecostal movement also originated in North America, where it developed to become one of the most ubiquitous forms of global Christianity ever to materialize. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, pentecostal practices of spirit possession and community building in Africa and Latin America grew faster than anywhere else, and became a vehicle for the assertion of African and Latin American concerns on a global stage. Many Christians in North America have been touched by the examples of global hunger and suffering made visible through pentecostal ministries, and by the animated supernaturalism that Africans and Latin Americans have poured into the global channels of pentecostal organization and communication.

Much as expanding markets for material things generate new consumers and innovation, the abundance and diversity of Christianity in North America has also generated demand. If Christianity is powerful in North America because there are so many different versions to choose from, and, because its proponents are zealous competitors, it is also powerful because so many Americans have used it to manage other forces. Christianity has played a major role in the history of the continent because millions of people have relied on it to stabilize their environments, and to manage and create change.

With stunning results, people in North America have negotiated the social and intellectual forces associated with modernization through the medium of Christianity, lending themselves to the development of modern patterns of thought, behavior, and industry through their embrace and interpretation of various forms of Christian practice and belief. Through evolving patterns of subjectivity, work, community formation, and material culture, they have employed Christianity to develop influential forms of modern individualism, democracy, and capitalism, enabling Christianity to operate as a carrier of these trends throughout North America, and from this continent to other parts of the world. As this essay will also argue, Christianity has enabled the dissolution of some of the very trends of modernization it earlier helped to establish, operating again at the forefront of new forms of postmodern globalization in North America, as it did in the era of colonization when modernizing trends began.

Christianity's importance in North America as a medium for promoting and managing modernity can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, long before the open market of American religious diversity had fully developed. In the colonial era, North America became a focal point for a powerful cluster of social and intellectual developments originating in Europe that would alter the fabric of human life around the world. These developments included aggressive exploration and global exploitation of natural resources, the consolidation of nation-states to manage global economic opportunities, religious and political conflict over the nature and exercise of authority, increasing enthusiasm for scientific discovery, rising literacy as a result of new printing technology, and not least, growing attention to the human individual as a subject for analysis and locus of moral order. As people who worked through these developments using Christianity as a medium of expression and North America as an important center, Christianity changed in the process. In North America and elsewhere, people used the Christian lexicon of symbols and stories to construct behavioral norms, emotional codes, and political agendas.

Early Europeans in North America invoked Christianity to interpret their struggles for wealth, glory, and survival, and their interactions with indigenous peoples whom they attempted to convert and subdue, or enlist in exploration, mining, and military defense. These Europeans utilized Christianity to legitimate their fierce competition for resources and dominance in North America, and this utilization of Christianity abetted the development of early modern forms of individualism and capitalism. At the same time, Europeans also used Christianity to express reactions against authoritarian brutality, reactions that, in hindsight at least, pointed in the direction of human rights and democracy.

Spanish Catholics led the way in this process in the sixteenth century, exploiting new navigation, sailing, and military technologies in the service of monarchs authorized by the Church of Rome to rule over parts of North America. In the Southwest, along the coast of California, and in Florida, conquistadors planted crosses to assert dominion over lands they claimed for Spain, often reading aloud to uncomprehending Natives the *Requirimiento*, a legal document legitimating the seizure of land and natural resources, and absolving soldiers of moral and legal guilt for any killing or enslavement that might occur. Announcing the Spaniards' right to forcibly subjugate any people who did not voluntarily surrender, the *Requirimiento* cited the history of humanity since Adam and Eve, St. Peter's authority over all humanity, the Roman Church's possession of that authority, Rome's donation of land and people to Spanish monarchs, and the monarchs' empowerment of conquistadors to claim these possessions (Rubios 1513).

In accord with this Christian justification and Christian plan of action, Franciscan priests reorganized Native communities in New Mexico, California, and Florida in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, installing themselves as religious authorities, often with soldiers to enforce labor and punishment. As Spanish priests and soldiers terrorized and exploited Native populations, significant reaction against harsh treatment of Natives developed. After serving as a missionary in Cuba, the sixteenth-century Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas wrote an impassioned defense of Native souls in which he condemned Spanish enslavement of Natives as counter to the charity of Christ. In recent decades, Christians have celebrated de las Casas as an early defender of human rights, and harbinger of modern Christian commitment to social justice (Carozzo 2003). In a process that illustrates how Christianity contributed to modern political order, de las Casas aired his defense of Native souls in a famous debate in 1550 in Valladolid, Spain with Juan Gines de Sepulveda, the humanist philosopher and official historian of the Spanish crown who defended the enslavement of Native Americans. The debate did not end the practice, but in utilizing the lexicon of Christianity to mount a novel defense of the humanity of Native Americans, it did shift European opinion against Spanish abuse.

Partly in response to European criticism of Spanish brutality, French and British Christians made efforts to treat Native peoples humanely, though rarely as equals. In Quebec, Jesuit priests and Ursuline nuns sent to serve French settlers extended Catholicism to Native Americans through persuasion rather than force. In the Great Lakes region and along the Mississippi, French Catholicism filtered through the commercial networks of the fur trade, operating as an explanation of events, means of comfort, or source of anxiety that people shared across cultural boundaries, much as they shared Native medicines or smoked the calumnet. In the French Caribbean, including the port



town of Nouvelle Orléans, where French, Spanish, African, and Native Americans intermixed and French Africans combined Catholic and African elements in the new religion of Voudou, the lexicon of Christianity facilitated the formation of a new sub-culture while also enabling people of different cultures to communicate and influence each other.

Even the most devout Native converts to Christianity imbued their new religion with Native themes, in some cases finding individual empowerment or celebrity among other Christians through the integration of Native values. For example, the seventeenth-century Mohawk convert Katerie Tekakwitha combined the fierce ability to mete out and endure torture for which her people were famous with a penitential desire to purify her soul and condemn bodily lust that she learned from French Jesuits. Although her Jesuit mentors worried about her harsh performances of self-flagellation, legendary accounts of her heroism were disseminated across North America. As the famed "Lily of the Mohawks," Katerie became an inspiration for other Native Christians, and stories of her conversion were exported back to Europe to inspire new missionary vocations (Greer 2006).

French and British Christians cultivated strategic relationships with Native Americans to secure their own positions east of the Mississippi, and to contain each other's growth and power. French and British missionaries also worked earnestly to save Native souls from hell, where they expected souls not rescued by Christ to be cast at death, but many Natives found these Christian overtures unwelcome. Some Natives rejected missionaries as agents of French and British militarism and feared missionaries were witches. Over time, growing numbers of Native Americans embraced elements of European Christianity to describe their own humanity as colonized peoples and to process their own sufferings, impoverishment, and crushing losses. For Natives who rejected European culture as well as for those who tried to assimilate, Christianity provided a language for the experience of colonization that contributed to new political and cultural formations. At one leading edge of modern criticism of Christianity, some Nativists cited Christian principles to condemn European violence and hypocrisy, noting that Europeans were so misguided they had even killed their own savior. Such criticism also reflected familiarity with the lexicon of Christianity, and readiness to conceptualize the world in terms derived from Christianity. Thus Nativists as well as converts appealed to the God depicted in the Bible, the providential course of time, and a future day when Native innocence and the bounty of nature would be restored. Millennial and apocalyptic narratives would draw Native Americans to prophet movements like the Ghost Dance movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, more recently, to the Christian Right (Richter 2003; Smith 2008).

Along the east coast, some British colonists made efforts to befriend and cooperate with Native Americans, but efforts to supplant them and drive them westward proved overwhelming. In New England, puritan leaders were preoccupied with their attempts to construct a thoroughly Christian commonwealth. Native Americans who resisted puritan reeducation were bothersome and hazardous.

New England Puritans established a social system that anticipated several modern developments, systematically interpreting Christianity as a means to the self-discipline that enabled their economic success. Grappling with the challenges that economic opportunities posed for religious life, puritans strove to harness wealth and industry

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to piety. Thus profits from fishing, lumber, mining, and trade in cotton, sugar, tea, and slaves prompted strenuous religious efforts to contain greed and enforce moral discipline. The relative success of this Christian construction of early modern capitalism in colonial New England was often remembered by later Americans, especially conservative evangelicals, as the basis of their claim that the United States was founded as a Christian nation.

New England puritans were also strenuously authoritarian; religious education was mandatory in Massachusetts and Connecticut, ministers set standards for everyone's behavior, and families were strongly encouraged to become centers of practical piety. The puritan commitment to practical piety marked an important step toward modernity, a step in the transition toward the authority and autonomy of the individual subject and away from medieval conceptions of the authority of heaven. Characterized by critical introspection, self-discipline, and fear of God and hell, the puritans' practical piety required intense analysis of individual subjectivity as the arena where applications of the Bible taught by preachers and parents took hold, and the arena where individuals felt God to be judging their emotions, enterprises, and interactions with other people. Derived from medieval penance, the puritan regimen of practical piety brought systematic discipline into the families, businesses, and government of ordinary Christians through interior, subjective exercise, thus exerting pressure on churches to serve individuals, rather than the other way around. Though not the only contributor to the development of modern conceptions of selfhood, or to the individualism associated with American culture, the puritan practice of piety operated as a groundwork for those modern developments. The puritan investment in selfhood provided a basis for a more secular sense of the importance of the ordinary lives of individuals and also for the enthusiasm for personal religious experience so characteristic of evangelicalism.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, evangelicals transformed the practical piety of puritan Christianity into something even more modern. While many seventeenth-century puritan writers, like their medieval predecessors, deferred to ideal types formed in heaven as the basis for ordinary reality, evangelicals turned with increasing enthusiasm to nature and history as the locus of knowledge and revelation. Abetted by the philosophy of commonsense realism promoted by Scottish Presbyterians, and by enthusiasm for natural reason and scientific discovery, evangelicals pursued the puritan dream of infusing ordinary life with Christian piety in increasingly modern, increasingly secular cultural environments. Challenged by proponents of natural reason who demanded evidence for claims about nature and history, evangelicals no longer inhabited a world in which the existence of an overarching framework of heavenly forms could be presumed. In response to skeptics who questioned the reasonableness of belief in miracles and supernatural revelation, evangelicals insisted that upholding the truth of the Bible was a matter of common sense, and that the evidence of nature and history corresponded with biblical revelation.

If the puritans' practical piety helped bring Christianity down to earth, facilitating a transition to modern secularity and empirical thinking that puritans themselves did not foresee, evangelicals worked to maintain religious authority in a world in which secularity and empirical thinking were more fully developed. Taking up the modern task of having to defend the scientific and historical validity of the Bible, evangelicals argued

that science and history could not be understood apart from biblical revelation. Critical of anyone who embraced individual conscience apart from Christianity, evangelicals made personal conversion a prerequisite for individual morality and genuine success in the world.

Evangelicals also reinterpreted the tumultuous political events that had occurred in the Atlantic world at the end of the eighteenth century, filtering revolutionary political demands for human rights and equality through evangelical organizations and evangelical interpretations of the lexicon of Christianity. Seeking to expand their cultural authority in Britain and North America, evangelicals worked to restrain radical demands for democracy through systems of religious governance that celebrated equality, but only among converted protestants. In North America, where evangelicalism surged in popularity during the early decades of the nineteenth century, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches played an important role in controlling immigration, education, and cultural norms. Evangelicals often cooperated to define democracy in protestant terms, outlawing blasphemy, Sunday mail service, and finally, in 1919 in the United States, the sale of alcohol, a source of the immoral behavior to which they believed Catholics were especially prone.

The United States became the dominant power in North America through territorial acquisition and nationalist fervor. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase supplanted Spanish and French claims to the central region of the continent, and in the 1840s, the annexation of Texas and occupation of California and New Mexico ended Spanish control. As the United States expanded westward, white Anglo-Saxon protestants east of the Mississippi worked to manage the cultural development of the continent. Evangelicals sent missionaries to challenge Catholic influence across the continent, and to educate and convert nonbelievers, and drew on the lexicon of Christianity to assert their own authority as spokespeople for national identity.

Catholic population growth accelerated beginning in the late 1840s when famines in Ireland brought many Catholics to the United States; while in 1850, Catholics still counted for only 5% of the population, by 1906 the Catholic population had soared to 14%, making the Roman Catholic Church the single largest denomination in the United States by the beginning of the twentieth century. Protestant evangelicals were greatly alarmed by this sizeable growth, but the American Catholic Church was more divided than evangelicals thought. In Baltimore, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other urban centers where Catholic immigrants settled in ethnic ghettos, Catholics representing different European cultures vied with one another for religious authority, social status, housing, and employment. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Italian and Polish newcomers often lacked priests who could speak their language and faced discrimination from better established French, Irish, and German Catholics, as well as from protestants who resented people they perceived as aliens entering their country. Later in the twentieth century and even today, Hispanic Catholics experienced similar patterns of discrimination.

As ethnic Catholics developed separate institutions to preserve their own cultures, they also joined forces with each other to build schools, hospitals, and communities against protestant efforts to erode Catholic loyalty. The church hierarchy centered in Rome also promoted Catholic unity, emphasizing the need for common devotions such as rosary prayers to Mary and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which helped standardize

emotional feelings toward the church among Catholics from different ethnic cultures. If she exerted less control over ordinary Catholics than protestants feared, Rome worked to lessen ethnic divisions and instill obedience to church teachings by denouncing modernism, secularity, and protestant evangelicalism. Prior to the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, when the church opened itself to the modern world, Catholic teachers also adhered to medieval philosophy, and particularly to the philosophical theology of the twelfth-century Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas, who encouraged believers to look for metaphysical substance behind the accidental properties of ordinary existence. The medieval framework of Catholic teaching supported the church's critique of modernism, and its manifestations in capitalism, democracy, and individualism.

The momentous split over slavery in the nineteenth century profoundly influenced the development of Christianity in North America, affecting its evolving role as both a carrier and medium of resistance to democracy and human rights. Arguments on both sides of the question of whether or not Christianity sanctioned slavery had been debated since Bartolomé de las Casas challenged Spanish enslavement of Native Americans in the sixteenth century. Colonial efforts to enslave Natives Americans were abandoned, but the population of enslaved Africans in the Americas rose dramatically in the early nineteenth century – from 682,000 in 1790 to almost 1.8 million in 1860 – thanks in no small way to US independence from Britain, where slavery had become illegal. The US constitution, ratified in 1787, left decisions about the legality and regulation of slavery to each state in the union; it also favored slaveholding states by counting each slave as three-fifths of a person for purposes of apportioning representation in the US Congress (Waldstreicher 2009).<sup>1</sup>

Christianity was the source of authority that people on both sides of the dispute over slavery invoked to justify their positions. Defenders of slavery appealed to many instances in the Bible where slavery was mentioned without condemnation, to the moral authority of Old Testament patriarchs who owned slaves, and to Paul's assertion in the New Testament book Colossians 3:22, that slaves should obey their masters. Those who condemned slavery called attention to Paul's pronouncement in Galatians 3:28, that in Christ there was "neither . . . slave nor free," but had fewer biblical passages on their side. Those who condemned slavery rested their argument on the idea that Christ embodied a higher law of freedom, and that no one who lived by this law would abide slavery.

Arguments for a higher law in Christ have exerted considerable influence in US history, and not only in the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865, but in civil rights movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well. For Baptist preacher and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., the higher law of Christian love was a non-violent principle that condemned unjust laws of racial segregation in southern states of the United States and inspired his campaign of civil disobedience in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>2</sup> No less important for the evolution of US law and jurisprudence, Jehovah's Witnesses beginning in the 1930s appealed to God's higher law as the basis for their refusals to salute the US flag and serve in the US military. Through a series of controversial US Supreme Court rulings in the 1940s, the Witnesses gained the right not to be imprisoned, fined, or otherwise punished by government authorities for exercising their rights not to participate in activities offensive to their religious principles, so long as their exercise of those rights did not violate the rights of others.

Christianity was not the only medium through which respect for the rights of individual persons developed in North America. At the time of the American Revolution, many Americans believed that men possessed a natural capacity for reason which endowed them with rights to life, liberty, and property, which they ceded to some degree in order to become members of society, but could also rely on to justify rebelling against tyrannical authority. The First Amendment to the US constitution reflected this rationalist conception of individual rights, detached from any specific reference to Christianity, but it was not incorporated into state constitutions until after the Civil War. US commitment to the right to religious freedom was a gradual process; only in the 1940s, when Jehovah's Witnesses finally convinced the US Supreme Court to protect their religious expression, did US courts begin to protect religious freedom.

Jews figured importantly in this process of democratization. Violence against Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States in the 1930s and early 1940s led to uncomfortable comparisons with Nazi Germany, where the persecution of both Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses was notorious. While neither the United States nor Canada entered World War II for the purpose of rescuing religious minorities from Nazi death camps, the celebration of religious freedom developed in both countries during the war in reaction against totalitarianism and then developed further during the cold war in reaction against atheistic Communism.

Jewish intellectuals were often outspoken in their support for religious freedom and other democratic rights. They also played a major role in promoting psychology as a means of understanding human emotion, and as a means of rebutting Christian efforts to stigmatize Jews and removing barriers to Jewish leadership in modern society. Allied with liberal protestants in the twentieth century who also turned to psychology to understand religion and other expressions of human emotion, Jewish psychologists pioneered various forms of self-help, sometimes with the goal of freeing individuals from religion, but more often with aims of humanizing religion and enlisting it as an aid to happiness and moral action (Heinze 2004).

Within American Christianity, the turn toward psychological thinking about religion was part of a larger, modern process of reinterpreting Christianity in terms of humanistic norms to maximize its therapeutic and socially beneficial results, and to minimize or eradicate aspects of Christianity perceived to be psychologically and socially harmful. This pragmatic trend was well-established among American protestants, going back at least to the eighteenth century, when protestant liberals attacked Calvinism as an affront to human reason and morality. Nineteenth-century emphasis on the importance of voluntarism and free will in religious life contributed to the development of this pragmatic trend, along with new theories of child development that advised nurturing natural goodness in children rather than working to break their wicked little wills. Liberal protestant investment in child nurture contributed to the popularity of new psychological theories in the twentieth century, providing a Christian source for humanistic psychology.

Other secularizing forces operated through the medium of Christianity, and especially through the medium of liberal protestantism. Historical and literary analysis of the Bible generated new interest in how the New and Old Testaments had been constructed over time. Historical criticism of the Bible made it easier to ascribe belief in revelation and miracles to premodern times, and to consider how Christianity served or challenged

political power in the present. Other factors stimulated analysis of the social functions of religion, including the development of sociology in the early twentieth century and the increasing popularity of economic theories of history, including various forms of Marxism. While many of these intellectual developments originated in Germany and France, they acquired influential proponents in North America who reinterpreted them in the context of American enthusiasm for pragmatism, moral reform, and practical piety. Through the Progressive movement prior to World War I, the New Deal political response to the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s, liberal Christians played a leading role in passing new laws regulating capitalism, protecting workers, and defending and enlarging citizen rights. Humanistic interpretations of Christianity as a social gospel helped to mediate these developments, with strong support from humanistic Jews, and from Catholics critical of American capitalism.

The surge in psychological and sociological efforts to redirect religion toward humane and socially beneficial ends did not go uncontested. Conservative Christians – protestant and Catholic – resented efforts to remake Christianity according to modern standards. Conservative spokesmen like Orthodox Presbyterian J. Gresham Machen flatly rejected arguments by liberal Christians like liberal Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch that humanistic constructions of the gospel conformed more closely to the original truth than their own conservative devotion to primitive Christianity.

Conservatives saw more clearly than liberals how liberals had used Christianity as a means of making their transition to modern secular culture. But conservatives failed to acknowledge that their defense of traditional Christianity was also a modern development. In addition to defining revelation, conversion, and other supernatural phenomena in circular fashion as realities exempt from modern criticism or as subjective experiences no one could disprove, conservatives were often way ahead of liberals in making use of modern media and technology to convey their arguments for traditional Christianity. In the 1920s, the fundamentalist evangelical Aimee Semple McPherson was the first woman to own a license for radio broadcasting and the first to use radio for proselytizing. In the 1950s and 1960s, the conservative Catholic Bishop Fulton Sheen pioneered religious TV with popular shows promoting traditional Catholicism and criticizing liberalism. The global impact and worldwide leadership of conservative religious media emanating from North America has grown quickly in recent years. In 2003, a “Purpose Driven” satellite conference, inspired by books written by the Orange County, California minister Rick Warren, reached 9,000 preachers in Africa, many of whom had previously downloaded his weekly sermons through *Pastors.com*. In 2012, Trinity Broadcasting Network was the largest Christian television network in the world, with Word of Faith programs viewed in more than a hundred million homes in the United States, more often than programs on ABC, and accessible to millions more worldwide through television, internet, and mobile devices (Warren 2003; Morgan 2005; Hladky 2011: 11, 37).

Global broadcasting of American evangelical appeals for a Christ-centered life represent an important stage in the evolution of the trends described in this essay. But if evangelical broadcasting today represents the culminating reach of American individualism, capitalism, and democracy as they are mediated through Christianity today, it also shows signs of post-modern transformation. Rick Warren’s purpose-driven Christianity is one example of what might be described as the apotheosis of modern American

individualism – an undercutting of individualism at the peak of its evangelical promotion and global reach. Though Warren preaches that God has a purpose for each individual, and that people without God are not fully realized persons, he dissolves the individuality he celebrates by smoothing over cultural difference, personal idiosyncrasy, artistic creativity, and religious and political iconoclasm, and by simplifying self-realization.

This explosion of individualism – in both its popularity and its self-destruction – is part of what globalization means. Everywhere on the planet today, modern individualism expands rapidly through social media that broadcast virtual fragments of individual life. In North America, modern individualism is also expanded and fractured by outsourcing practices tied to personal identity, from weddings, funerals, and childcare to customer service and dogwalking. Coinciding with this fracturing of personal identity, Christianity facilitates the dissolution of individualism through paradigms of selfhood, like that promoted by Rick Warren, that frame concerns about self, and self in relation to others, as simultaneously intensely personal and universal in Christ. Conceptions of Christian selfhood like Warren's have deep roots in the past – in practical piety, medieval penance, and Pauline gnosticism – but the cutting-edge media of North American evangelicalism and pentecostalism, and its increasing command of virtual reality, have created a new context for the growth of Christianity.

The expansion and disintegration of modern individualism through Christianity are tied to the metamorphosis of Western capitalism. Here again, Christians in North America have worked in the forefront of global change. As capitalism has become increasingly corporate, and large, powerful companies have become increasingly international, they wield increasing influence over everything in the world from the distribution of oil and food to decisions about government policy and individual behavior. Financing and managing their own international organizations, North American Christians have played a leading role in the transformation of capitalism. Christian organizations do not simply mimic the growth of international corporate capitalism; they contribute to the global economy by modeling its Christian formation, encouraging personal industry, stabilizing individuals and families, and providing healthcare and education. For example, Catholic Relief Services, the official international aid organization of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, maintains an active presence in almost one hundred countries, working to relieve hunger, provide medical service, foster business growth, and promote Catholic teachings about sex and reproduction. While responding to suffering caused or exacerbated by economic globalization, CRS deploys its own corporate wealth and labor to expedite Catholic manifestations of that process.<sup>3</sup>

While hardly alone in filtering modernity through religion, Christians in North America have been highly influential agents in its process, partly because of the extraordinary malleability of Christianity in North America that religious abundance and increased religious freedom have facilitated. With competitive media and cultural environments manufacturing symbols linked to the past, and to principles believed to be eternal, American Christians have reconciled Christianity to modernity, often taking the lead in global economic and military developments and expanding their influence abroad in the process. At the same time, the universalizing lexicon of Christianity, combined with technologies that make human life more virtual, accessible, familiar than ever before, works to evaporate the modern individual at the center of modern capitalism and democracy.

## Notes

- 1 David Waldstreicher, *Slavery's Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2009.
- 2 <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/list?keys=law+of+love>, accessed October 19, 2015.
- 3 [crs.org](http://www.crs.org), accessed October 19, 2015.

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## CHAPTER 40

# South Asia

Chandra Mallampalli

Over the past several decades, demographic changes in the world's Christian population have directed scholarly attention to the global South as the dominant arena for Christian expansion. In a booming field where African, Asian, and Latin American churches find increasing relevance, the study of South Asian Christianity makes a vital contribution. This can be easily overlooked in a field often driven by the force of surging numbers. Dramatic Christian growth in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America make it impossible to study those regions without grappling with the various implications of this growth. South Asian Christian traditions distinguish themselves according to a different logic, namely their history of cross-cultural and inter-religious encounters. The dominant story told in this chapter is not one of explosive church growth, but of dynamic interaction between the three branches of Indian Christianity – Syrian, Roman Catholic and Protestant – and Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim societies situated within and beyond the world of the Indian Ocean.

While Christian numbers continue to increase in sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Latin America, China and the Philippines, recent census data places India's Christian population at roughly 3%. Granted, 3% of 1.2 billion is a significant number, but this percentage has remained somewhat constant during the very decades that saw surging numbers elsewhere. Key studies that address the big picture of world Christianity – for instance, those by Lamin Sanneh (1993), Andrew Walls (1996), Phillip Jenkins (2002), and Dana Robert (2009) – have highlighted the demographic shift in the world's Christian population from “North to South” and draw extensively from case studies from sub-Saharan Africa. Through their focus on demographics, such macro-studies may incline us to regard Ugandan, South Korean, or Brazilian churches as most representative of the changing face of Christianity and the Arab or Hindu world as being marked by stagnation, resistance, or rebellion.

Important scholarship, however, is emerging on Christians of South Asia that highlights their encounters within predominantly Hindu or Muslim societies. Whereas such encounters are anchored in pre-modern times, they address important developments

in today's globalizing world. Since the publication of Stephen Neill's monumental *History of Christianity in India* (1984), numerous books have described the dynamic and interactive character of Christian movements (S. Bayly 1989; Webster 1992; 2012; Zupanov 2001; Frykenberg 2008). These contributions are not necessarily tied to paradigm-shattering surges in India's Christian numbers. Nor are their findings situated in relation to the relatively recent emergence of mega-churches in the new "heartlands" of the global church. The emphasis instead is on negotiations between colonial power, European church structures, and a diverse landscape shared with Sufi orders, Hindu *bhakti* movements, caste groupings, and local forms of knowledge.

South Asia has more than its share of mass movements of religious conversion, Pentecostal awakenings, independent churches, mass showings of the "Jesus Film," healing cults, and other varieties of Christianity that resemble populist movements elsewhere. What distinguishes South Asian Christianities on the world canvass, however, is not their size or scope, but the fact that they occur within unique constellations of knowledge and identity, arising from important theaters of interaction. Trade routes across the Indian Ocean, Indo-Persian, and Indo-Afghan networks of overland trade and migration, South Indian cultural and linguistic traditions, and Hindu societies scattered across what Sheldon Polluck calls the "Sanskrit cosmopolis" (Polluck 2006) have all provided important contact zones for Syrian Christian, Roman Catholic, and Protestant movements in South Asia.

Well before the advent of colonial modernity, diverse cultural agents and their information networks gave rise to what Chris Bayly refers to as the Indian "*ecumene*," forums for critiquing authority, debating doctrines, and espousing notions of the godly society (C. Bayly 1996: 182). Here, Brahmin pandits debated the parameters of the Hindu *dharma* order, while proponents of *bhakti*, or devotion to God, contested Brahminical authority; Muslim doctors of law interpreted the Qur'ān by exercising varying degrees of independent judgment (*idjtihad*), even as Sufi orders disseminated their ideas to the masses through Urdu prose and poetry. In this manner, the Indian *ecumene*, according to Bayly, "encompassed a dialogue between elite and popular culture" (C. Bayly 1996: 210).

To study South Asian Christianities is to examine their participation in this *ecumene* at different points in time, how they shaped it, and how they conformed to it. Bible translation and tract distribution by Christians were matched by similar activities of Muslims and Hindus, who interpreted the Qur'ān or Gita in a changing world. These acts of theological visioning defined the boundaries of sacred community and made a significant impact on wider social and political currents within South Asian societies.

## Syrian and Roman Catholic Integration

The interreligious and global connections of Indian Christianity are well illustrated by the history of the Syrian Christians of the southern state of Kerala. Legends circulating during the third century, largely based upon the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*, trace the origins of this community to Jesus's apostle Thomas. As a way of introducing the worlds straddled by the Syrian Christians, some aspects of the Thomas legend are worth

recounting here. After Jesus had commanded his disciples to “go into all the world and preach the gospel,” the disciples divided regions of the world and the task of preaching to India fell to Thomas. The disciple was so reluctant to go that Jesus had to sell him as a slave to an agent of an Indian king, Gundaphar, who was looking for a carpenter to build his palace. In a journey involving both overland and maritime travel, Thomas eventually reached a port city on the shores of western India. There he is reported to have converted a number of Jews living in diaspora.

When Thomas eventually reached Gundaphar’s kingdom, he disappointed the king when he declared that the palace he would build him would only be seen in the after-life. After Thomas had managed to convert Gundaphar and others in his kingdom, he embarked on his “second mission,” which took him southward to India’s Malabar Coast of India, then eastward to the Coromandel Coast. There he made a number of converts from among the Brahmin caste before dying a martyr’s death near Madras. After his death, families of these “Thomas Christians” lasted for several generations without a leader. In 345 CE, another traveler from West Asia, Thomas of Cana, encountered this dispirited community and brought them under the jurisdiction of the Church of the East. Thereafter, the Thomas Christians adopted Syriac for their rites and came under the influence of the Nestorian theology held by other so-called Oriental (non-Roman) churches.

The traditions that trace the beginnings of Indian Christianity to the apostle Thomas intersperse actual names and places with accounts of miracles and apparitions. What is most significant about them, however, is their geographic imaginary linking first-century Palestine to Indo-Bactrian regions of Northwest India (from Kabul to the Ganges, where Gundaphar’s kingdom would have been located) to coastal South India. This imaginary signals important contact zones of Syrian Christians during more well documented periods of their history. In subsequent centuries, ties to the Church of the East would create a steady flow of clerical personnel and ideas between South India’s Syrian Christian churches and Edessa, Baghdad, or Mosul. These connections, however, did not contribute to perceptions of Syrian Christians as being a “foreign” community. Over the centuries, Syrian Christians would play a variety of roles that contributed to their integration into local structures of power and a social terrain shared with Muslims and Hindus.

Within the South Indian kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin, Syrian Christians played an active role in the pepper trade and as warriors in princely armies. During the eighteenth century, the Hindu rulers of Travancore used revenue from the sale of pepper, cardamom, and timber to build an army that established control over much of the Malabar Coast. Their state monopoly over the sale of such goods benefited from the expertise and services of Syrian Christian elite warriors, merchants, and landholders. Through intricate combinations of ceremonial, political, and economic participation in the affairs of the state, Syrian Christians contributed to state building under Keralan rulers. As Hindu kings patronized Syrian churches and shrines, Syrian Christians lived like high-caste Hindus, observing ritual norms of purity and pollution along with ceremonies and institutions shared throughout their region (S. Bayly 1984: 178, 183-184).

As an elite community that stressed their Nambudri Brahmin roots, Syrian Christians deviated from patterns set in much of the subsequent history of Indian Christianity. Christian converts during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would come primarily

from low-caste and Dalit (formerly “untouchable”) backgrounds. In order to retain their high status, however, Syrian Christians had long discouraged proselytizing neighboring communities, especially lower ranking ones. With the arrival of the Portuguese and later the British, however, many aspects of their church life in Travancore and Cochin would undergo dramatic change.

During the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic missionary orders arrived in India in the wake of Portuguese conquests. At first they were delighted to encounter the Syrian Christians, regarding them as potential allies in a region controlled by Hindu kings and heavily influenced by Muslim traders. Syrian Christians responded in kind by securing the pepper trade of Cochin for the Portuguese and attempting, at least for a time, to harmonize their rites and practices with those of Rome. As awareness of the differences between “Thomas and Peter” became increasingly apparent, however, the Portuguese began a process of Latinizing their fellow Christians. Part of this process had occurred under the auspices of the Inquisition, which in 1560 had been established in India. Under the Inquisition, Syrian Christians risked being tried as heretics if they resisted the orthodox Latin ways introduced by the Portuguese (Moffett 2005: 13–15).

An even more aggressive Latinization occurred in 1599 by way of the Synod of Diamper. Under the royal patronage or *padroado* extended by the pope to the Portuguese crown, an archdiocese had been established in Goa from which Portuguese-backed priests and orders were sent to other regions of the South. From 1595, a new archbishop, Alexis de Menezes, had arrived in Goa determined to bring the Syrian Christians once and for all under the authority of Rome. Leveraging Portuguese power over the Hindu kings of the region, he persuaded the Hindu rajah (king) of Cochin to relinquish his patronage of his Syrian Christian subjects. He also ordained nearly ninety new priests from among them, requiring them to disavow their allegiance to their Nestorian prelate. Finally, he called for a general synod to cement the “absolute authority of Rome over the Syrian community” and called for a purging of their tradition of its “heretical” doctrines, rites, and loyalties (Moffett 2005: 14–15).

As the British rose to power during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Syrian Christians would experience yet another set of pressures to conform to outside influences. When Colonel John Munro served as British Resident to Travancore (1810–1819), he summoned missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to the region in order to Anglicize the Syrian Christians. The CMS missionaries promoted Anglican doctrines and practices among the Syrian Christians and the integration of members of lower castes into their churches. Under both Portuguese and British influence, Syrian Christian integration into South Indian society was subject to enormous strain and ultimately compromised (S. Bayly 1989).

In spite of their Latinizing posture toward the Syrian Christians, Roman Catholic missionary orders in India were committed to their own variety of cultural adaptation. This is well illustrated in the early history of the Jesuits in South India. Some of the most trend-setting activities of Catholic missionaries occurred during the sixteenth century within Tamil and Malayali districts. In coastal areas, they oversaw the conversion of more than 15,000 low-caste fishermen, coming from the Mukkuva and Parava castes. The Jesuit, Francis Xavier (1506–1552) was said to have established forty-five churches

in Travancore state, primarily among these two caste groups. The Jesuit Robert de Nobili (1577–1656) founded the Madurai Mission, with an aim of converting Brahmins to Catholicism. Toward this end, he adopted the dress and manners of Brahmins and sanctioned Brahminical customs among his converts (Zupanov 2001). He also learned Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit.

According to Susan Bayly, South Indian Catholic traditions centered on their saints are evidence of their participation in a common landscape of belief and devotion shared with Sufi saints and Hindu bhakti cults (S. Bayly 1989: 329–331). Catholic cult traditions in the South devoted to the Jesuit, John De Britto, for instance, were associated with the healing and mystical powers of his blood (Bugge 1994: 44–46). Similar traditions of blood and sacrifice were practiced in shrines erected in honor of Francis Xavier.

These early Jesuit missions laid foundations for a distinctive cultural strategy that would be employed by other Catholic missionaries. Scholars have often associated this strategy with efforts to disassociate with Europeans and adopt a more accommodating approach to local cultural practices, including caste observances (Bugge 1994). It is perhaps for this reason that caste identities and conflicts were such a salient feature of church life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Ballhatchet 1998: 7–12). The open approach of the Jesuits to other languages and cultures, both in India and China, would eventually sound alarms among other Catholic orders of doctrinal compromise, resulting in a heated “rites controversy.”

## Protestants, Textuality, and Knowledge

The arrival of Protestant missionaries in the Indian sub-continent brought a more confrontational element to a long history of cross-cultural encounter. The change in tone, however, was neither immediate nor comprehensive. The earliest Protestants to arrive in India were the German Pietists who shared with Jesuits a commitment to knowledge production and cultural adaptation. The English Evangelicals who followed them, by contrast, employed a style of preaching that fomented tensions across the Indian *ecumene*. Through inflammatory bazaar preaching and the dissemination of various printed materials, Evangelicals attacked Indian cultural and religious traditions. In doing so, they clearly gave rise to new forms and degrees of confrontation and more pronounced notions of cultural and religious difference.

Examples of a distinctively Protestant style of cultural engagement can be observed in the work of the very first missionary to South India, the German Pietist, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719). The King of Denmark, Frederick IV had commissioned Ziegenbalg and his compatriot Heinrich Plutschau to make converts among the Hindus. Ziegenbalg combined a tremendous aptitude for cross-cultural learning and sensitivity with a desire to defend the Bible against the errors of other religious texts and beliefs. In spite of his sharp critiques of Hindu belief (referring to Hindus as “heathen”) he was remarkably well received by Tamil speaking people in Tranquebar, largely because of his lack of racism and the distance he maintained from either Danish or British imperial power (Singh 1999: 157).

From his arrival in the Danish settlement of Tranquebar in 1706, Ziegenbalg committed himself not only to learning Tamil, but also to mastering the names of all of the local deities worshipped by the various castes of Malabarian Hindus. Ziegenbalg and his Pietist successors did not attack the caste system as did later missionaries and permitted churches to observe some caste distinctions in seating and the serving of communion. Ziegenbalg and his Pietist successors also may be said to have inaugurated a new era of missionary book printing and knowledge production about Indian society. In addition to publishing two Tamil grammars and a dictionary, he published some forty other works in German, Tamil, and Portuguese during his fourteen years of service in India (Jeyaraj 2006: 32–48).

It is widely recognized that Protestant missionaries, through their translations, printing presses and propaganda catalyzed other forms of expression through print, including organized opposition to Christian missions. What is less known is how Bible translation itself, far from being insulated from wider socio-cultural developments, was profoundly shaped by them. As the first language into which the entire Bible had been translated in India, the Tamil Bible became an important reference point for later Bible translation projects. Missionary printing catalyzed the printing of non-Christian texts and contributed to the development of linguistic theories and ethnography. The Anglican bishop Robert Caldwell's association with a uniquely South Indian or "Dravidian" family of languages played an important role in manufacturing Tamil linguistic consciousness and resistance to upper-caste, Sanskritic hegemony.

A study by Hephzibah Israel notes an important difference between Bible translations of the eighteenth-century German Pietists and those of the nineteenth-century Anglicans. German Pietists certainly grappled with cultural and theoretical issues of translation, but did so while focusing on Tamil alone. The Anglican missionaries who came a century later, however, tried to standardize translation methods to be "applied broadly across *all* Indian languages" (Israel 2011: 38). Bible translation in the nineteenth century became a way to show evidence of missionary gains in the field, to raise more funds, and to effect more conversions. The pursuit of uniformity in translation methods coincided with the pursuit of a uniform Protestant reading community, and made translation a highly contested endeavor, often evoking heated opposition from native speakers (Israel 2011: 42).

The missionaries who came to India a century after the German Pietists included those of the Anglican based Church Missionary Society (CMS) and a range of Dissenting (non-Anglican) missionaries. These missionaries exhibited far less toleration for vernacular traditions. Beyond attacking inhumane practices such as *sati* (widow immolation) and untouchability, CMS missionaries often displayed an impatience for many aspects of indigenous culture. In church life, they decried the separation of castes, the observance of local festivals, and the use of vernacular songs and poems in worship services, even when used to convey Christian beliefs.

A key figure who opposed such reforms within the Tamil Protestant community was the Vellalar poet, Vedanayagam (Pillai) Sastri (1774–1864). As someone who had served as court poet in the palace of Serfoji II and had been educated by the German Pietist, Christian Fredrick Schwartz, Sastri was well positioned to promote a distinctively Tamil expression of Christianity. Sastri praised the accommodative outlook of

his Pietist forebears while criticizing the Anglicans for going too far in their zeal for reform. Sastri attacked Charles Rhenius's early nineteenth century translation of the Bible for embracing what he called *Cutchery* Tamil, which mixed Tamil with other South Indian languages and wedded it to a lower-caste vocabulary. Sastri's defense of a certain kind of Tamil for Bible translation went hand in hand with his defense of caste hierarchy. Defenders of the new translation, however, seemed to resonate with aspirations for a greater mixture between castes and a more democratic appeal of the Bible.

With regard to members of other religions, English Evangelicals developed a text-oriented strategy, which carried significant implications for their reading of South Asian society. Evangelical missionaries often criticized Hindus and Muslims by citing contradictions in their sacred texts and exposing inconsistencies between what was taught in the Qur'ān or the [Hindu] *shastras* and how Indians actually lived. In so doing, they contributed to understandings of Indian society that were largely constructed around normative texts (Mani 1998). Not surprisingly, Hindu, and Muslim elites responded to missionary critiques by defending their sacred texts through printed tracts or open debates.

Examples of this approach can be found among missionaries early nineteenth century missionaries to North India. The Serampore Baptist, William Ward tried to expose the ignorance about the Qur'ān among Muslim villagers in Bengal. Henry Martyn, who had employed learned Muslims for his translation of the Bible into Hindustani and Persian, published a series of controversial tracts refuting Muslim claims about the Qur'ān and the prophethood of Muhammad. The renowned Muslim convert, Abd al-Masih, preached the divinity of Christ among prominent *maulavies* (religious scholars) in the city of Agra. His conversion raised anxieties among them of a more pervasive demise of Islam under the auspices of colonial rule. In some instances, missionary activity resulted in organized debate (*munazara*) as Muslims responded to critiques of their beliefs (Powell 1993).

Officials of the ruling English East India Company had long feared that missionary preaching – and their support of it – would eventually foment unrest or rebellion among the local population. Many of these fears were validated during the 1857 Rebellion. The Rebellion began as a mutiny among Indian soldiers in the North Indian town of Meerut, but soon sparked both civil and military uprisings in other regions of northern and central India. Historians attribute Rebellion to many factors; but by far the most widely cited pertain to the role of culture and religion. Through preaching and tract distribution over the span of several decades, Evangelicals had denigrated Hindu and Muslim traditions (Dalrymple 2006: 57–81). A combative approach to India's religions aroused anti-British feelings; and when these feelings finally reached their boiling point, Hindus and Muslims engaged in what many refer to as their "First War of Independence." During the course of this uprising, English officers and their families and Indian Christians became targets of violence.

Regardless of how one interprets the causes of the 1857 Rebellion, the literature surrounding this event has tended to assign an enduring place to Christians in the history of modern South Asia. Christians, Protestant missionaries in particular, functioned as assailants and interlocutors of indigenous culture and religion. Rather than



winning them large numbers of converts, the path of confrontation and inter-textual argumentation elicited organized defenses of other traditions as well as their reform and revival. Efforts by missionaries to produce knowledge about the Other for purposes of conversion sometimes resulted in the invention of the very identities they critiqued. Missionaries had a hand in the construction of a modern Hinduism (Oddie 2006) just as their activities stimulated Muslim reformers to formulate a purer, text-based Islam in contrast to popular “innovations” that had absorbed local practices. As with Protestant propaganda, the purified, reformist Islam would be disseminated in the most accessible manner to the masses through popular preaching and vernacular pamphlets (Pearson 2008).

Perhaps an even greater implication of the 1857 Rebellion is the manner in which Christianity, as never before, came to be seen as a “Western religion” in spite of its ancient beginnings and its long history of adapting to South Asian contexts. Since the days of the Portuguese conquests, Christianity had been labeled as the religion of *farangis*, or foreigners. After the Rebellion, however, this stereotype acquired new meaning and force. Hereafter, the imperial or Western associations of Christianity would cast a shadow over its long history of cross-cultural encounters and adaptations.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries evaluated the merits of their strategies in light of the small numbers of converts that resulted from them. Perhaps their approach was too oriented to upper-caste (and more “resistant”) South Asians and too tied to an Anglicizing and civilizing mission. Or perhaps it was not confrontational rhetoric per se, but such rhetoric wedded to imperial power. The growing strength of the Evangelical movement in Britain and within the ranks of the East India Company’s Court of Directors had resulted in more state backing for missionary endeavors in India, notwithstanding persistent fears of provoking social unrest (Carson 2012). The alignment of imperial and missionary goals, especially within the realm of education, evoked opposition from South Asian elites, including leaders of the growing nationalist movement in India.

Toward the turn of the twentieth century, Indian nationalism placed a stronger emphasis on India’s Hindu heritage. In the name of retrieving a lost heritage and resisting Western civilization, Hindu nationalists increasingly portrayed Christian conversion as a form of de-nationalization. No one articulated this viewpoint more clearly than Mohandas K. Gandhi. Declaring all religions to be different paths to the same summit, the Mahatma became a staunch critic of conversion, especially conversion performed under the guise of humanitarian work. The vast network of schools, hospitals, orphanages, and clinics established by missionaries created an infrastructure of care that benefited India’s outcastes. As more and more Dalits converted to Christianity, sometimes as large communities, Gandhi and other nationalists portrayed them as having been induced by material advantages presented by Westerners.

Tribal communities of Northeast India, which are ethnically distinct from mainland Indians, converted in large numbers to Protestant Christianity under the auspices of Baptist and Presbyterian mission organizations. The Christian identities of Nagas, Mizos, Assamese, and other northeasterners coupled with their tribal organization and location toward the border with Myanmar and China placed them in a vulnerable

position relative to the evolving Indian nation. After Indian independence, their aspirations for autonomy resulted not only in rebel movements against the government of India, but also in inter-ethnic strife between tribal communities competing for land and influence.

Hindu nationalists, who were mostly from upper castes, not only saw mass conversions as dividing "Mother India," but also as a threat to Hindu majority status. During the 1920s and 1930s, the South Indian bishop, Vedanayakam Samuel Azariah (1874–1945) was compelled to respond to charges that conversions within his diocese were induced by foreign funds. He oversaw conversions among low ranking Mala and Madiga communities of the Telugu country. Insisting that these conversions were neither forced nor induced, Azariah maintained his commitment to the spiritual and material uplift of low-caste Indians, even against the Mahatma's objections (Harper 2000).

As the anti-colonial movement gained momentum, Indian Christians endeavored to formulate theologies more tailored to their contexts. Attempts to Indianize or "rethink" Christianity were largely centered on shedding the foreign complexion of the church. This went hand in hand with rejecting theological and denominational categories inherited from the West. The establishment of the Church of South India in 1947 and the Church of North India more than twenty years later brought many of the mainline denominations that had functioned autonomously in India together under more unified creeds.

Within both British India and the neighboring crown colony of Sri Lanka, the shape of politics marginalized Christians. During the 1920s and 1930s, constitutional reforms in Sri Lanka drew Christians into the political process amid a rising Buddhist revival movement. Buddhists grew increasingly resentful of Christian representation on district boards, legislative councils, and professional services, which often exceeded their actual numerical strength. Gradually, Sinhala Buddhist activists succeeded in gaining the upper hand over Christian and Tamil minorities, reversing in their view a long history of discrimination against the majority. Their interest in protecting Sri Lanka's Buddhist heritage extended beyond 1948, when Sri Lanka gained its independence from the British. Christian schools were now seen as alien institutions of privilege. In the interest of educational reform, the government nationalized education, which along with measures to curb conversion had the effect of marginalizing Christian influence within Sri Lankan society.

Three developments in the post-independence era profoundly affected the experience of Christians in India: a resurgent Hindu nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s, the predominantly Dalit and tribal composition of the Indian Church, and the rise of charismatic and Pentecostal movements that accompanied mainline decline. The rise of *hindutva*, or Hindu-ness in politics not only challenged theories of secularization in the social sciences, but also challenged the secular, scientific emphasis of Jawaharlal Nehru and his dynasty, which had controlled Indian politics for decades (1948–1991). Unlike the Indian nationalism of Gandhi's era, the resurgent nationalism of the 1980s and 1990s accompanied India's movement toward economic liberalization. As India became more globalized, violence toward Muslim and Christian minorities actually increased.

Much of this hostility is aimed at curbing conversions from among tribal and Dalit communities. During the late 1990s, Indian news media and human rights groups drew attention to churches being destroyed, nuns assaulted and raped, priests hacked to death, and social relief organizations solemnly warned not to engage in conversions. In December 1998, a spate of attacks against tribal Christians in the Dangs District of Gujarat drew the attention of major political parties and national forums (Mallampalli 2004: 4–5). Other acts of violence were launched in 2008 against tribal Christians in Orissa, who were literally burned out of their villages and forced to seek refuge in the forests.

Such attacks not only reflect the changing political climate of India since the 1980s, but also the predominantly Dalit, tribal, and low-caste composition of the Christian population. Since independence, Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders have been committed to formulating theologies that address the unique experience of marginal communities. Contrary to what is often assumed, debilitating stigmas and discrimination did not cease for Dalits or tribals upon conversion. In fact, as John Webster has noted, Christian Dalits experience a double marginality on account of their caste and Christian identity (Webster 1992). To this day, the government of India offers assistance in the form of educational and employment quotas to “Scheduled Castes” (SC’s), but denies such assistance to those Dalits who have converted to Christianity. Having left Hinduism, they no longer qualify for assistance aimed at rectifying the historical abuses of Hinduism.

In recent decades, the Indian Church has experienced a decline in church attendance among older, more established churches and growth among independent, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches. In this regard, developments in South Asia are in step with patterns observable in other global contexts. Pentecostal qualities of adaptability, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism make it well suited to an evolving India, shaped increasingly by a privatized, global economy that rewards such virtues (Martin 2002). Through an emphasis on healing, the experience of the supernatural in everyday life, and a prominent place for emotion in worship, charismatic and Pentecostal churches are able to address needs that have historically been met by Hindu devotional (*bhakti*) movements and Sufi orders. Mega-churches in commercial centers such as Mumbai or Bangalore demonstrate the appeal of new expressions of Christianity not only for the marginalized, but also for sections of India’s burgeoning middle class. The use of mass communications and participation in global networks of information and personnel build on a longstanding interactive history that has formed the bedrock of South Asian Christianity.

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## CHAPTER 41

# China

Daniel H. Bays

After the apparently complete demise of Christianity in China in the late Tang Dynasty (618–907) and then again in the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), there ensued a hiatus of more than two centuries before European missionaries again arrived in China. The Jesuits (Society of Jesus) were the first European Catholic order to work in East Asia in early modern times, in both Japan and China. Unlike the Catholic emissaries of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, they came by sea, transported by the ships of the Portuguese and Spanish (both Catholic states) seaborne empires. The Roman Church's new zeal for foreign (non-Western) missions was an important component of its response to the challenge of the Protestant Reformation of the early sixteenth century. The reforms of the "Catholic Reformation" included the founding of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1540. Immediately young Europeans in significant numbers joined the dynamic new order established by talented leaders such as Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) and Francis Xavier (1506–1552). Most of them headed for mission fields around the world (the Jesuits were founded as a missionary order), and many of them were attracted to Asia, especially to China. Many more missionaries could go on the maritime route than ever could have gone by land; moreover in the 1550s Chinese local officials gave the Portuguese a tiny spit of land on the Southeast China coast. This was Macau, primarily a trading post, but also a base from which missionaries could be sent into China. Eventually, by 1800 several hundred had been dispatched to China, though the casualties on the harrowing voyage to Asia were high, and many died of disease after arrival. The largest number of missionaries in China at any one time in the 1500–1800 period was about 140, in the early 1700s. These few men had a remarkable impact; and the China missionary who had the most impact, scholars would almost unanimously agree, was the Italian, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610).

Ricci, having prepared himself by study of the Chinese language before he gained permission from the Chinese actually to live there, entered China in 1583. Almost immediately he set his sights on gaining access to Beijing, the North China imperial

capital city, and systematically pursued this goal. His purpose was to approach the core of the Chinese socio-political elite and eventually the throne with the Christian gospel. A brilliant intellect, also gifted with a photographic mind which enabled him to perform stunning feats of memory, he was astute, perceptive, sociable, and sensitive to the friends he made in the Ming bureaucracy; eventually several did convert to Christianity. Ricci finally made it to Beijing in 1602; the Ming dynasty was already in decline at this point – it would fall to the Manchus, who would found the Qing dynasty in 1644. With the sorry state of political life and a series of intractable economic problems plaguing the Ming, a number of high officials were open to learn about Christianity; some of them, for example Xu Guangqi (1562–1633), a Grand Secretary, among others, were baptized. Several members of the emperor's household were also baptized. Ricci, respected by many in Beijing, died in 1610, and was allocated an honored grave site by the emperor (the site has become a tourist attraction today). Ricci and the Jesuits who followed him to reside in Beijing were almost without exception of the European elite or upper classes, and received a fine education, including math and sciences such as astronomy. Their status and learning gave them good access to the Chinese elite, the scholar-officials, or “gentry.” After Ricci, there were a number of Jesuits who succeeded him in having special relations with officials at court; some were employed by the court, for example as painters, metallurgists, and especially as royal astronomers. After the Qing dynasty replaced the Ming in the 1640s, the Jesuits ingratiated themselves to the new rulers as useful employees, and stayed on at court, still hoping to convert high officialdom and even the emperor himself.

The Jesuits seemed to be in favor in Beijing until just after 1700, when the famous “rites controversy” erupted. Some of the other orders among the European missionaries, especially the mendicant orders (for example, the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians) for years had denounced the Jesuits in complaints to Rome. They claimed that the Jesuits, in order to maintain their standing at court and with the elite, compromised the truths of Christianity. One of the ways they allegedly did this was in allowing ancestral rites (rituals or ceremonies) showing respect for family ancestors to continue after conversion. The critics claimed this was pandering to gross paganism and idolatry, and insisted that it was “ancestor worship.” Finally in 1706, after the Holy See in Rome had ruled that the critics were right, the greatest Qing emperor, Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), who personally liked the Jesuits, intervened on behalf of the Jesuit interpretation. But this was unacceptable to the pope, who would not budge. Kangxi, offended and enraged, decreed the deporting of all missionaries who would not subscribe to the Jesuit interpretation. Kangxi lived until 1722, and in his last years did not zealously pursue his edict of expulsion. But his son, Yongzheng (r. 1723–1735), upon his succession to the throne harshly expelled most of the remaining European missionaries, leaving only a handful of Jesuits in key court positions such as machinery technicians and astronomical specialists. Moreover, Yongzheng issued edicts outlawing Christianity altogether, labeling it an “evil sect” in the same category as dangerous and subversive native Chinese religious sects such as the White Lotus or the Eight Trigrams. Local authorities were sometimes vigilant in tracking down the European missionaries who continued to come to China, sneaking into the country to

meet the need for priests to administer the sacraments for the faithful scattered across the land (there was an acute shortage of Chinese priests until late in the eighteenth century). When apprehended, the foreign priests were usually expelled, though some were executed.

Thus what we might call the “Jesuit interlude” in early modern Chinese history, which some scholars believe had a chance to influence Chinese society along Christian lines, did not overtly do so. But in this period of history, approximately 1600 to 1800, nevertheless Roman Catholicism established itself firmly in China, creating an unbroken narrative from 1583 to the present. For China as a whole, looking beyond the walls of Beijing and the drama of the Jesuits at the emperor’s court and the rites controversy, recent scholarship has pointed out that a significant number of Chinese, probably at least 300,000, became Christians by 1700. Most of them were rural, and a high percentage of these converts lived in communities where a majority, or at least a large minority, of members were Christians. Christian community formation often followed kinship lines. Entire or nearly entire lineages would become Christian. Urban Christians were important, and groups of them were scattered around the country. But the center of gravity of the church was in the rural areas.

In these communities, which had typically begun with only a few converts by a European missionary, the scarcity of foreign priests necessitated that the local leadership of the believers had to take over management and administration of many responsibilities normally under the purview of an ordained priest. These included the sacraments: for example, baptisms, last rites, marriages, confession, and others, including some duties which were not officially sacraments, such as teaching the catechumens, who would be examined by the priest on his peripatetic visitations to the local area once or twice every year. It seems the case that the European missionary priests, although overworked and stretched much too thinly in performing their duties, nevertheless were hesitant to train and ordain as priests a large number of Chinese. They apparently feared that native priests might be more susceptible to the temptations of theological syncretism or ritual overlap with native Chinese religions, or to permit practices which served as a cover for retaining the practice of ancestor veneration or other activities prohibited by the Vatican. But as time passed, and the number of European priests available shrank, the foreign element of the church perforce gave way to a growing assertiveness of the local Catholic communities. By the early 1800s, there were often only tenuous strands of authority which tied Chinese Christians to foreign supervision and oversight. For example, several Chinese Catholic localities formed societies of Christian virgins, which made the foreign priests rather nervous, because the women who joined often then played public roles as teachers, mentors of girls in Catholic families, or even as catechists.

Christianity in China was in temporary equilibrium during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Despite proscription by the Qing authorities, the resilience of the Catholic communities ensured that the faith could not be completely extirpated. But now the situation became much more complicated. With Protestant missionaries and Western trading vessels both coming to the China coast with more frequency by the 1830s, pressures were building to expand both kinds of enterprises, whether the Qing government was willing or not.

## Protestant Beginnings, 1800–1860

In 1800, Christianity had an established but limited presence in China. Roman Catholic Christianity, carried by Jesuits and other orders, had formed permanent communities from the late 1500s on, though after the 1720s Christianity had been proscribed as a “heterodox cult.” In 1800, there were still about 200,000 Catholics but very few Chinese priests and almost no resident foreign priests; priests had to sneak into China from Macau to bring the sacraments to the faithful. In this situation the scattered Catholic communities were run by lay catechists and other non-ordained Chinese leaders, including women, some of the latter in orders of Christian virgins.

There were no Protestants in China in 1800. The first Protestant missionary was Robert Morrison (1782–1834) of the London Missionary Society (LMS), who arrived in 1807. For several decades Protestant work was very restricted. Missionaries, like merchants, were not permitted to live for more than a few months in a small area in the harbor of Canton (Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province); at other times they had to live in nearby Portuguese Macau. Thus the first generation of Protestant missionaries, who by the 1830s included the flamboyant Pomeranian Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff (1803–1851) and the Americans Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801–1861) and Dr. Peter Parker (1804–1888), did extensive work among the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. Linguistic foundations were also laid in the decades before 1840. Morrison compiled the first Chinese–English dictionary in 1815 and, with William Milne (1785–1822), published the first translation of the Bible into Chinese.

The Opium War of 1839–1842 was a major event in China’s Christian history. After the British victory, the treaties which China signed with Britain and other Western powers from 1842–1844 constituted much of the basic edifice of the imperialist treaty system which lasted well into the twentieth century. China was forced to open several more coastal cities to foreign residence, trade, and evangelizing. The Protestant missionaries were of one mind that the war and treaty settlement were the work of God in opening China up to the gospel.

On the Catholic side: as part of the 1840s treaties and linked agreements, France, which now proclaimed itself protector of all Catholic missions of whatever nationality, succeeded both in moderating the legal ban on Christianity by an imperial edict of toleration, and in gaining the concession that former church buildings should be restored to Catholic ownership. Although foreigners were supposed to be physically limited to the five port cities stipulated in the treaties, the existence of old established Catholic communities in the interior caused many missionary priests to travel widely, and their newly established legal privilege of extraterritoriality (which, as part of the treaty settlement, they enjoyed with all foreigners) made them relatively immune from harsh treatment by Chinese authorities. The late 1840s and 1850s was a period of rejuvenation for Catholic missions, with a large number of new missionaries from several orders arriving (almost sixty Jesuits alone). It was also a period of suppression by the European missionaries of some of the patterns of indigenous Chinese clergy and lay leadership that had emerged in the decades of absence of the Europeans, especially in old Catholic strongholds like Jiangsu province. As we know from recently available documentation, the coerciveness and insensitivity of the reimposition of European control



in the 1840s caused a near-revolt in the Catholic communities in Jiangsu, including letters of complaint by Chinese Church leaders to the Vatican. From the mid-nineteenth century on, European hegemony in the Catholic Church would prevail until well into the twentieth century.

Before 1860 Protestant missionaries had no significant number of converts beyond the five coastal treaty port cities where they were permitted to reside under provisions of the treaties of the 1840s. The one exception to this pattern was the successful evangelization in the 1850s of some communities of Hakka (Chinese, but of distinct ethnicity and culture) in Guangdong province. Although linked to the Basel Mission in Hong Kong, the evangelization was actually the work of Hakka Christians, some of them the products of Karl Gützlaff's ill-fated Chinese Christian Union of the late 1840s, a scheme to use native evangelists based in Hong Kong to penetrate and distribute scriptures in the interior. Gützlaff's scheme, reviled as a disaster by missionary opinion because of its abuses, in many ways was actually a precursor of indigenization policies of the twentieth century. With fewer than one hundred missionaries in the five port cities as late as 1860, in these years some Protestants continued the foundational literary work of previous decades. A new translation of the Bible in classical style, the "Delegates Version," was produced with much effort and considerable controversy over the proper term for God; it became the most popular translation for decades, until efforts later in the century to create a more usable translation resulted in the vernacular "Union Version," finally published in 1919. The 1840s also saw James Legge (1815–1897) of the LMS, soon after arrival in Hong Kong, take up his monumental decades-long task of translating (with capable Chinese assistants) the entire Confucian canon, eventually published as *The Chinese Classics*.

In the 1840–1860 period, undoubtedly the most important set of events related to Christianity was the Taiping Rebellion, which nearly overthrew the Qing dynasty, wreaked vast damage to city and countryside alike, and cost millions of lives in the lower Yangzi valley from 1850 to its bloody denouement in Nanjing in 1864. Profoundly influenced by Christianity, and perhaps best seen as a variety of folk or indigenized Christianity, the unorthodox ideas of Taiping founder Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864) were dismissed by foreign missionaries. But to the dynastic government and the elite class (gentry) or literati, the iconoclastic anti-Confucian content of Taiping ideology was anathema, and they viewed the Taipings unambiguously as Christians, thus confirming their conviction that Christianity meant social disorder and sedition. This perception was a large obstacle to Christian evangelism in the decades after 1860.

## Institution-Building and Local Conflict, 1860–1900

After the second China war of 1858–1860, in which the French joined the British, France expanded upon its self-appointed role as protector of Catholic missions. The Sino-French treaties of 1858 and 1860 included new guarantees for Chinese Christians to practice their faith without harassment, and for Catholic priests to preach and reside anywhere in the empire (eliminating the old restriction to treaty ports for foreigners). This included the right of missionaries to rent or purchase land anywhere, and to erect

buildings thereon. Although these provisions first appeared in the French treaties, all the Western powers soon had equivalent rights extended to them through the most-favored-nation clause that was part of all the treaties. These clauses granting unfettered missionary travel and property rights throughout the interior were instrumental in engendering local tensions and violence during the rest of the century.

After 1860, with the entire empire thrown open to travel by missionaries, both the Catholic and Protestant sectors, especially the latter, increased rapidly. In 1890, there were over 700 Catholic missionaries, but more than 1,300 Protestants. Many of the Protestants at first stayed in the treaty port cities along the seacoast and major rivers, but with aggressive new "faith missions" such as the China Inland Mission of J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) leading the way (the CIM was already the largest single Protestant mission in China by 1890), most missions expanded inland as well. Catholic missionaries on the other hand, who were distributed around the country through jurisdictions assigned to different orders, tended from the first to organize rural communities of converts as cohesive components of local society. In so doing they normally constituted a simple addition to the complex mix of social organizations that interacted in local society. But this process of change in the local balance of social or economic power sometimes also constituted a threat to the existing social order, especially to the prerogatives of the educated local elite or gentry class, who were already suspicious of Christianity because of its association with the despised Taiping rebels. By using their outside resources to build schools and clinics (and for Catholics, orphanages) and by using their special treaty rights to interfere in lawsuits on behalf of converts, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries could spark gentry-inspired *jiaoan* ("missionary cases") involving attacks on church property or even riots injuring or killing Chinese Christians or foreign missionaries. And sometimes local tensions which were centered on popular resentment of Christians' alleged privileges or special treatment contributed to cases of popular grassroots violence not engineered by the elite. For example, anger at perceived advantage in a lawsuit, or at Christians' exemption from paying the subscription fee for what they or the missionaries called "idolatrous" temple festivals or fairs, could stimulate acts of retaliation against Christians or missionaries. And when for whatever reasons such acts occurred, the treaty rights of the foreigners (often in their practical effect extended to Chinese Christians as well) could bring the case to the attention of officials and diplomats in Peking, with resulting headaches for all and possible official recriminations, reprimands, and indemnities.

The decades between 1860 and 1900 saw an explosive burst of institution-building in the Christian project in China, especially among Protestants. The missionary community in China was commissioned and sent by denominational mission boards which were becoming more bureaucratized and professionalized by the end of the century. Even the CIM, the antithesis of a complex organization in its early years, was forced by its very size to adopt a more bureaucratically-driven style. Most Protestant missionaries remained in large or medium sized cities, and there increasing numbers of them spent most of their time not in churches or street chapels (more preaching was devolving to Chinese colleagues), but in schools, hospitals and clinics, publishing offices (for secular as well as Christian literature), and in the management of other services such as famine relief. The cultural hubris that characterized most Western missionaries of the Victorian

age typically led them to assume that with the “Christianization” of China would naturally come its Westernization – of political, social, and economic patterns – as well. Very few worried about foisting culture along with Christ upon the Chinese. In education, for example, although Catholic communities often had elementary schools, they usually did not teach English or a Western curriculum. But by soon after 1900 Protestants had 50,000 students in a system which went all the way up to higher middle-school and even “college” (post-middle school) level. In most of these institutions one studied a Western curriculum, including English.

The achievements of these years among Protestants were facilitated by a generation of strong-willed, resilient, indefatigable personalities who lived a long time, including over a half-century in China: Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) of the CIM, Griffith John (1831–1912) of the LMS, US Presbyterian Hunter Corbett (1835–1920), Chauncey Goodrich (1836–1925) of the American Board, Martha Crawford (1830–1909) of the Southern Baptists, and others.

In most aspects of missionary endeavor in the late 1800s, and especially in the reports and publicity written for the home constituency in Europe or North America, the foreign missionary took center stage. In the great nationwide Shanghai conferences of Protestants in 1877, 1890, and 1907, the first two had no known Chinese delegates, and the 1907 conference had fewer than ten Chinese out of 1100 delegates. Yet Chinese collaboration and assistance was crucial for all mission efforts, especially those of the Protestants, whose many institutions needed Chinese staff to do most of the real work. By 1900, in addition to more than 800 foreign priests there were nearly 500 Chinese priests (but no Chinese bishops until 1926). In 1905 there were 3,440 Protestant foreign missionaries, about 300 ordained Chinese pastors, but over 10,000 Chinese staff of Protestant mission stations and institutions. This growth of institutional personnel indicates that by the turn of the century a number of Chinese, especially in urban coastal areas, had found in Protestantism a channel of upward mobility; these communities of urban converts, many of them products of the mission school systems, became important participants in modernizing activities in the twentieth century.

At the same time, many Protestant and most Catholic converts were rural, apparently finding in Christianity a social community providing identity and security or a religious faith which to some had resonances with familiar strains of Chinese popular religion. Chinese rural converts’ agendas in conversion and affiliation with Christian communities varied from the utilitarian (whether advantage in a lawsuit or miraculous healing of a sickness) to empowerment in the world of the supernatural. These agendas did not necessarily follow missionary expectations or guidance. For example, Pastor Xi of Shanxi, who was active in the 1880s and 1890s especially in establishing Christian opium refuges, often cooperated with CIM missionaries, but he never took orders from them.

Well before 1900, missionaries, especially Protestants, became heavily committed to agendas of social reform in China. Famine relief, an end to the opium trade, and the abolition of the practice of binding and crippling young girls’ feet, attracted the attention of many, particularly of the now more than half of the Protestant missionary “force” (as it was called) made up of women. Just before the turn of the century, there was a response from within the Chinese elite class interested in schemes of national reform

such as Japan had been carrying out for over twenty years. But instead of a national reform movement came the disastrous Boxer Uprising, in which obscurantist elements at the Qing court allied with xenophobic mobs of commoners to massacre over 250 foreigners, almost all of them missionaries, and perhaps 30,000 Chinese Christians in the summer of 1900. In turn, much of North China was traumatized by the retaliatory killings by foreign troops of eight nations which occupied Beijing and other key cities until 1902. Moreover, the “Boxer Protocol” that foreign diplomats forced upon China was humiliating and with its huge indemnities threatened to bankrupt the dynasty. China’s future looked bleak.

### The Precommunist “Golden Age” of Christianity in China, 1900–1925

Unexpectedly, what followed the Boxer events was that the Qing government finally embarked on an ambitious national reform agenda during the next decade. Reforms included abolition of the traditional examination system, promotion of modern education, and creation of a constitutional political system. Many reform projects were ones where Protestant missionaries and Chinese Christian leaders had an established track record, such as a modern school system including schools for girls. Until Chinese schools with a new curriculum could develop in sufficient numbers to meet the demand, that is until the second decade of the century, Protestant schools, in a system now capped by post-secondary-level colleges in major cities, set the standard for modern education. Even after Chinese government schools multiplied rapidly, the mission schools continued to enjoy a high reputation and impressive growth. In 1915 there were almost 170,000 students in mission schools (as opposed to 17,000 in 1889).

Protestant Church growth between 1900 and 1925 was impressive by all indices. Foreign missionaries numbered about 3500 in 1905, and reached a high of 8000 in the mid-1920s. Chinese Protestants, about 100,000 in 1900, numbered half a million in 1925. The Chinese Protestant community also began to come into its own as a partner with foreign missionaries in the years after 1900. Most Chinese Protestants undoubtedly were rural, and of only modest means. However, with the Christian school system providing upward mobility for many urban converts, by the early 1900s there were prosperous Christian communities in several coastal cities. Well-educated, respected Chinese Protestants were active in social and political reform activities in cities such as Fuzhou in the period 1900–1920, founding YMCAs (both YMCAs and YWCAs expanded rapidly in the first two decades of the twentieth century), leading anti-footbinding or opium suppression societies, and holding office in provincial legislatures before and after the Revolution of 1911–1912, which toppled the Qing dynasty and established a republic. Sun Yat-sen, a longtime revolutionary and a Protestant, who had worked to overthrow the dynasty since the 1890s, was the first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912.

The scene was changing in the early twentieth century in other ways as well. The increase in the number of Protestant missionaries came mainly from the proliferation of new, small, often non-denominational faith missions and many independent missionaries. Theologically, many of these were at the fringes of the traditional evangelical

consensus that had characterized Protestants until the early twentieth century. Seventh Day Adventists, Holiness groups, and Pentecostals proliferated, and fast-growing established conservative missions, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the China Inland Mission moved the mission community's theology distinctly towards the conservative/fundamentalist side.

As the resources and leadership potential grew in the Chinese Protestant community, a desire for autonomy or even outright independence from missionary control surfaced. In Shanghai, a group of Chinese Christian businessmen and professionals formed the Chinese Christian Union in 1903. Soon after that, Shanghai Presbyterian Pastor Yu Guozhen (1852–1932) spearheaded a movement to create several fully independent churches in the Shanghai area. A similar federation of former mission-run churches in the Beijing area in effect declared their independence in the years before and after 1910. Foreign missionaries were for some time largely indifferent to the desire for autonomy of Chinese Christians. After the spur towards indigenization provided by the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, the creation of a Sino-foreign China Continuation Committee to follow up its initiatives, and a personal visit to China by John R. Mott (1865–1955, head of the worldwide Edinburgh “continuation committee”), the missionary community was somewhat more open to real partnership with a new generation of Chinese church leaders. By the 1920s, dynamic young leaders like Cheng Jingyi (1881–1939) and Yu Rizhang (David Yui, 1882–1936), and distinguished Christian academics like Zhao Zichen (T. C. Chao, 1888–1979) were rising rapidly in visibility. Together with their missionary colleagues, they constituted what might be called the “Sino-Foreign Protestant Establishment.” But the sticky problem of power-sharing between missionaries and Chinese remained unsettled; it was never effectively addressed. The fact that missionaries still controlled resources and budgets prevented full equality in decision-making and responsibility.

Like the Protestants, the Roman Catholic communities in China recovered quickly from the Boxer chaos, and in the ensuing years continued to expand, mainly in rural areas. In 1912 there were 1.4 million Catholics (more than a quarter of them in Hebei province), with about 1,470 foreign and 730 Chinese priests. The Catholic community was more self-contained than the Protestants. It had as yet few modern schools beyond the primary level, and also lagged behind Protestants in medical work and publishing efforts. Shortly after 1900 France renounced her protectorate of all non-French missions, even as several new Catholic orders made their initial appearance on the field in China. In the United States, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America and a seminary were established in 1911. This became the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, whose first missionary priests went to China in 1918.

Some leading Chinese Catholics were impatient with the slowness of the church to participate in national reform and modernization activities, especially in higher education. Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939) was a brilliant former Jesuit priest who was instrumental in laying the groundwork for three important Catholic universities between 1903 and 1913, two in Shanghai and one in Peking. The latter, which would eventually become Furen University, was also the work of Ying Lianzhi (1867–1926), an important Catholic layman and publisher of the respected Tianjin daily *Dagongbao*. Nevertheless, the Catholic church as a whole remained fairly indifferent to such reform

initiatives, and even more than in the Protestant case, positions of power remained firmly in the hands of foreigners. Catholic hierarchies in China, mostly dominated by the French, had for decades permitted but closely supervised the training of Chinese priests, who after ordination were often given mundane tasks and little responsibility. But no Chinese bishops were consecrated until 1926, after a small group of missionary priests, notably Fr. Vincent Lebbe, a Belgian, convinced the pope to break the stranglehold that the French hierarchy had over the Chinese clergy. And even then, the new bishops were not given dioceses to head, but shunted into less important roles.

## Multiple Challenges, 1925–1950

When, suddenly, missionaries and Christianity became targets of mass nationalism from the mid-1920s on, and were denounced as agents of cultural imperialism, it was traumatic for missions and Chinese Christians as well. The obvious continued foreign domination of the church made it hard for Chinese Christians to rebut these charges. Moreover, morale sank among Christians. The violence of the attempts to unify China and civil war between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) in 1926–1927 resulted in almost all the missionaries fleeing the interior for the safer coastal cities, or returning home. Missionary numbers never again approached those of the mid-1920s.

Events of the 1920s rattled Protestants more than Catholics, who were deeply embedded in rural communities, especially in North China, and thus less affected by urban events. In the 1930s the sense of Christianity being under siege worsened, despite the fact that the leader of the Guomindang government, Chiang Kai-shek, married into a prominent Chinese Protestant family (the Soong family) and was baptized. In the early 1930s mission budgets were decimated by the Great Depression. Then in 1933 came publication of the Rockefeller-funded *Laymen's Report on Foreign Missions*, compiled by William Ernest Hocking. This report, which questioned many of the assumptions of the entire foreign missions enterprise, coming on top of draconian budget cuts, further eroded missionary morale. Then in 1937 the longstanding tensions between China and Japan exploded into full-scale war, plunging much of China into chaos until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. Most foreign missionaries left China, but many did stay and stood bravely with the Chinese people in the first stages of the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1941. Some continued to serve in unoccupied areas throughout the later wartime years, whereas others were interned by the Japanese in concentration camps from 1942 to 1945. Despite these foreign contributions, the age of foreign leadership of the Chinese church was in effect gone. The elimination of missionaries of the Allied nations after December 1941 in those parts of China occupied by the Japanese resulted in an extended period of Chinese Christians being in charge of their own affairs in the difficult circumstances of wartime.

The Catholic experience in wartime was somewhat different. Several missionary priests were citizens of one of the Axis powers, that is Italian or German. They were not incarcerated by the Japanese; some of them took over the parish or other duties of their imprisoned colleagues. And some foreign Catholic missionaries engaged in resistance

activities, although cooperation with Chinese Communist resistance groups was problematical because of the deep anti-Communist sympathies of Pope Pius XII and the Vatican.

In the 1930s and 1940s, while the old missionary churches slowed in growth, some new Protestant movements which had begun in the 1920s grew steadily in these decades of national turmoil. These movements, some of which have continued down to the present, included organized networks of congregations in the True Jesus Church and the Jesus family, both of which were strongly Pentecostal, and the "Little Flock" of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972), which had inputs from the Brethren and the Holiness traditions. These were joined in the 1930s by several dynamic independent evangelists, all theological conservatives and revivalists. These included Wang Mingdao (1900–1991), Song Changjie (John Sung, 1901–1944), and others. They were not active in resistance to Japan. Rather, they stressed repentance and personal salvation, miracles, and a millenarian doomsday conviction of the imminent end of this world. They attracted tens of thousands who were beset by war, political turmoil, and the often impossible conditions of daily life.

As of 1950, the Catholic Church in China was not a great deal different from what it had been in 1900. Protestants, however, were. They were much more diverse, with a wide array of independent churches and evangelical sects having joined the traditional denominational churches coming from the historical missionary movement. Chinese leadership was more in evidence among Protestants, although their numbers (800,000, at the very most one million) were smaller than the Catholics, who had about three million.

## The Church 1950–1978: Control and Coercion

Some Protestants, missionaries and Chinese alike, were apprehensive of the future when the communists set up their new state in October 1949 after winning the civil war. But many others were hopeful that some form of a Sino-foreign Protestant community could continue to coexist with communism, and might make some Christian contribution to the "new China." Catholics were not so sanguine. The Catholic Church was more dominated by foreigners than the Protestants, more concentrated in rural areas, and the Catholic hierarchy was openly anti-Communist. In 1949 the Vatican forbade Chinese Catholics to cooperate in any way with the new regime, on pain of excommunication. The Italian papal nuncio actively fomented hostility to the new state, which earned him an early expulsion from China.

The new state was the first in over a century to be able to implement the measures of control that the Qing and Republican-era governments undoubtedly would have liked to have extended over religion. Christianity, among all religions, was especially worrying to the regime because of its close foreign ties. Catholics were linked to the pope, of course, and even though Protestants were few, they were influential, with respected colleges and universities and close links with foreign organizations and governments. It seemed imperative for the regime to sever those foreign ties and bring the churches into compliance with its policies. This was done in a series of steps that was traumatic for many.

First attention went to Protestants. As early as spring 1950 Premier Zhou Enlai and Wu Yaozong (Y. T. Wu, 1895–1979), a YMCA national officer and editor of a liberal Protestant magazine, created a document usually called the “Christian manifesto”, which pledged eradication of “imperialist” foreign influences in the church and pursuit of the “three-self” principles (self-government, self-support, self-propagation). In 1951–1952 remaining foreign missionaries were expelled from the country, and by 1954 there had been created the mechanism of party-government management of Protestant affairs which is still in place today: the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), headed by Y. T. Wu, which was (and is) intended to manage the relationship between all Protestants and the party-state.

Compared with the Protestants, the Catholics were a nightmare for the party to get under control. With the Vatican and the Chinese bishops openly hostile to the government, no well known national Chinese Catholic figure comparable to the Protestants’ Y. T. Wu stepped forward, around whom a new structure could be built. Several prominent prelates, for example Shanghai bishop Gong Pinmei, flagrantly defied the government and were imprisoned. It was not until 1957 that the government could cobble together enough delegates to convene the new Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, to run the Chinese Church independently of the Vatican.

The regime’s urge to control all Protestants through the TSPM, and all Catholics through the Patriotic Association, resulted by the late 1950s in a bifurcation of both Catholics and Protestants. Vatican loyalists among bishops, priests, and lay Catholics, who outnumbered those who cooperated with the government, formed a secret hierarchy and communication network, and ostracized clergy and parishioners who went to the “patriotic” churches. It took Protestants a bit longer, but by 1960 many of them had also given up on attending the TSPM churches, which at any rate were being shut down at a rapid rate during the pressures of the big national campaigns of the late 1950s, especially the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Great Leap Forward. These disgruntled Protestants began meeting in homes and out-of-the-way places where they could worship more or less freely.

Thus little remained of a visible Christian community when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, shutting down venues of worship or gatherings of any kind for all religions, and making religious faith itself illegal. Despite occasional reports through Hong Kong of surviving groups of Christians in China during the next decade, there was very little concrete evidence of continuing Christian life in China for the next decade. After Chairman Mao’s death and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, followed by Deng Xiaoping’s move towards radical reforms in 1978–1979, including the reopening of churches, no one expected the avalanche of millions of believers who reappeared. Both the Catholic Church and especially the Protestant churches seemed to have risen from the dead. It soon became apparent that Protestantism, in small-group “house church” form, had spread rapidly during the Cultural Revolution.

The regime also resurrected the same apparatus for monitoring religion and implementing religious policy that had existed in the 1950s. So now all Protestants were expected to register their congregations with the government via a revived TSPM. When the TSPM was reestablished in 1979, Y. T. Wu had just died. The new TSPM head was Bishop Ding Guangxun (K. H. Ting, b. 1915), who had risen through the ranks of



the organization in the 1950s, becoming Principal of Nanjing Theological Seminary in 1953 (a position he held until his death in 2012); he was consecrated Bishop of Zhejiang in 1955. Bishop Ting was also made President of the China Christian Council (CCC), a new body created in 1980 to work in tandem with the TSPM and supposedly to shoulder some of the task of liaison with local churches, leaving the TSPM with more “political” functions. There is great overlap between leadership personnel of the two organizations; they are referred to by all as the *lianghui*, the “twin committees.” Ting himself remains a controversial figure, accused by some critics of not only toadying to the CCP but actually being a party member himself.

Some Christians did not respond positively to the reestablishment of the TSPM. For many reasons, large parts of the house church community were suspicious of and stayed at arm’s length from the TSPM. The key issue was registration of the congregation. As church buildings were re-opened and new ones built, these were registered with the government through the local TSPM. This registration brought with it a fairly dependable guarantee that the congregation would not be harassed by the police. It also facilitated access to the Protestant seminaries which were being reestablished in the 1980s. Sometimes registered groups were also given grants or funding by local governments.

Many house church groups discounted these possible advantages of registration with the TSPM, seeing instead the dangers of being subjected to interference in their preaching or other activities. They saw this as especially threatening to their habits of enthusiastic evangelism, which they feared would be curtailed by the control system. So although some house churches registered, many did not, and that division of the Protestants into two large sectors, registered and non-registered, has persisted since the early 1980s. During that time both the TSPM-led registered churches and the unregistered ones have grown rapidly.

The growth of Protestantism since the 1980s has in fact been startling. In 2006, the TSPM included about 17,000 registered churches and about 18 million persons, increasing by over half a million per year. This sector of Protestantism is actually more similar to Western forms of worship than are the so-called “house churches;” and the greater number by far of its believers and pastors are conservative or evangelical, in fact very similar theologically to the unregistered churches.

A larger sector of Protestants comprises the many unregistered gatherings, especially in the countryside. Estimates of the number of Christians in unregistered churches vary widely, from 25–30 million to an unlikely 130 million or more. The fact is that no one knows, including the Chinese government; every figure is an estimate, and every estimate is at bottom a guess. There were perhaps around 35–45 million unregistered churches in mid-2008. There are several reasons why the unregistered groups remain unwilling to register, but theological issues are not foremost among them.

The reform era beginning in 1978–1979 also affected China’s Catholics. The Catholic Patriotic Association was reestablished, and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference was raised in status, to provide a less direct link between church and government than the old Patriotic Association. Catholic growth since then has been much slower than that of Protestants; in fact, it has just about paralleled the population growth rate.

This more modest Catholic growth has been due partly to the continued bitter standoff between the Holy See and the Chinese government over control of the church. One dispute is the Vatican's continued diplomatic recognition of the government on Taiwan. Another is who will have the final say on the consecration of Chinese bishops. A possible breakthrough occurred in the 28-page "open letter" of Benedict XVI to all Chinese Catholics in late 2007. He urged the two warring camps to lay aside their bitter conflict, to forgive, and to reconcile. Only time will tell if this is a feasible goal for China's Catholics.

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## CHAPTER 42

# Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia

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A region of the world that has seen numerous interactions between Islam, Confucianism, indigenous religiosities, as well as varying traditions of both Christianity and Buddhism deserves serious attention by students of religion. If that same area has tremendous diversity in its socio-political-economic makeup, and if there has been a plethora of recent transformational events involving colonization, war, ideological conflict, modernization, urbanization, and social movements, giving attention to that area becomes all the more compelling. Such a region is comprised of what we today call Southeast Asia (including the Philippines), Japan, and Korea.

For our purposes here, the Christian streams that have flowed into, shaped, and been shaped by this colorful region make for a fascinating set of accounts. What follows is a historical summary of that collection of Christian stories, starting with the earliest appearance of Christianity in the region, namely in Southeast Asia.

### Southeast Asia

It helps first to define what we mean by “Southeast Asia.” This area consists of two geographic regions. One is mainland Southeast Asia, or Indochina, which today includes the countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam, and West Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia). The other region is the Malay Archipelago, or Maritime Southeast Asia, made up of Brunei, East Malaysia, the islands of Indonesia and of the Philippines, Singapore, and Timor-Leste (East Timor) (Nations Online Project 2013).

Over two millennia ago, movements of people from China and India into parts of Southeast Asia brought Buddhist and Hindu influences into the already present

indigenous religious settings. Centuries later, Muslims from India spread into modern-day Malaysia, Indonesia, and contiguous areas, such that Islam was a dominant presence in much of the Malay Archipelago by the thirteenth century. The Straits of Malacca may have been the first site of Christianity's appearance in Southeast Asia, as first Nestorian and then Catholic Christians traveled through there en route to China in the seventh century and during the Middle Ages (Ho 2006: 513). Christianity's lasting presence began in the early sixteenth century with the appearance of European traders and others, including missionaries, beginning with the Portuguese and (in the Philippines) the Spanish, soon followed by the Dutch. The British and then the French came later, followed by US-Americans and others. Accordingly, the various Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity that took root in parts of Southeast Asia accompanied the various Europeans and North Americans that were most prevalent in particular areas, including during the nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial periods.

A quick scan of post-1970 religious demographics in Southeast Asia is revealing: first, in showing the region's religious diversity (Johnson *et al.* 2013: 40–41). Islam still has the highest number of adherents at over 35% of the overall population, constituting a majority in three countries where Muslims spread widely centuries ago: Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Buddhism, reflecting its entrance and growth even earlier, has the second-largest overall number despite a percentage decline from 32% in 1970 to under 27% in 2010. Buddhists are still a majority in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Christianity's growth has equaled Buddhism's decline, rising from under 18% of Southeast Asia's overall population in 1970 to over 22% in 2010. Remarkably, the various Christian traditions have grown by similar proportions, unlike most other areas of the world.

It is impossible adequately to cover all Christian developments throughout Southeast Asia. Particularly noteworthy here is the substantial growth in Myanmar (Burma before 1989) of Baptists over the past two centuries. Earlier, isolated forays by French and Portuguese emissaries beginning in the sixteenth century were short-lived, and eighteenth-century efforts by Italian missionaries had yielded a bit more substantial fruit in terms of church structures, schools, and literature production. But it was the American Baptists, beginning with Adoniram Judson who took over from the initial efforts of English Baptists sent from Serampore, India, that developed into what today is the conglomerate Myanmar Baptist Convention, by far the largest Christian denomination in the country today (Chain 2006: 574; Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001: 521).

The substantial and long-time Christian presence in Vietnam also requires brief mention. For their part, Protestants have grown over the last century, beginning primarily from Christian and Missionary Alliance initiatives. Roman Catholic missionaries appeared in the sixteenth century; increased French influence from the nineteenth century enabled accelerated church growth. Despite many points of opposition from the very beginning, Vietnam has the second largest number of Catholics in Asia, after the Philippines (Phan and James 2006: 876–880; Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001: 806).

Due to Catholic Spain's colonizing enterprise that began in the mid-sixteenth century, the Philippines remains over 90% Christian and is home to two-thirds of Southeast Asia's Christian adherents. That country's disproportionate weight in the region's Christian history and presence merits its own consideration.

## The Philippines

Prior to being claimed for Spain and named after King Philip II, this chain of 7,100 islands had an absence of major Asian cultures and religions, being separate and set apart from the mainland of Asia. Because of the islands' strategic location and easy accessibility to foreign powers, there was at least a small measure of cultural contact and trade relations with China and some southern Asian peoples. Nevertheless, the islands were inhabited by ethnoreligionist tribal groups without intertribal political unity. Muslims spread into the southernmost islands, including Mindanao, in the fourteenth century well before the Spanish came ashore further north.

### *The Spanish era*

The Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in 1521, and the first mass was celebrated the ensuing Easter Sunday. The concurrent first baptisms numbered between 800 and 1,500 in Cebu Island. Systematic evangelization was conducted by Augustinian Friars in 1565.

Political challenges to stable Spanish rule included colonial maladministration, foreign threats from China, Holland, and England, and sporadic disturbances from indigenous peoples. In terms of church development, the royal control of ecclesiastical appointments and of church revenues inherent in the *Patronato Real* allowed the regular interference of bishops and friars into people's affairs and hindered the development of native clergy.

While starting out as reformists, the late-nineteenth-century revolutionaries failed to wrest power from Spain. However, after its decrepit naval fleet was destroyed, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States at the Treaty of Paris in 1898.

### *The advent of the United States*

The United States championed two innovations which the European colonial powers did not and which were totally alien to Spanish bureaucracy: namely, the separation of church and state and a promise of eventual independence. The US presence complemented the Catholic parish churches with school buildings that aimed toward providing universal education throughout the Philippines. Moreover, Americans taught the English language, a catalyst for unifying the colony and familiarizing Filipinos with tenets of democracy.

The main bulk of Protestant missionaries arrived with the Americans, representing the mainline churches in the early 1900s and more fundamental and Pentecostal denominations after World War II.

### *Interval of revolution and schism*

The revolution of the late nineteenth century failed to oust Spain partly because of a lack of resources and and partly because of Spain's determination to retain her last

colonial venture. Another factor was that the *ilustrados* or educated Filipinos, most of whom were reformists, did not support the revolution. A further complication was the taint of anti-Friarism among the revolutionists. Also, their masonic connections did not win them the sympathy of the native clergy and ordinary people.

After the failed revolution and the handing over of control by Spain to the United States, there was expectation within the Filipino Church of more native leadership. However, disappointed by the inaction of the Holy See to name Filipino bishops, Gregorio Aglipay, a diocesan priest closely associated with Aguinaldo and other nationalists, founded the Philippine Independent Church. This movement, also known as Aglipayanism, at its height in 1904 comprised 25% of the population. Over time, however, the church could not sustain its numbers due to lack of support from the native clergy and the vigorous opposition of the reorganized Catholic Church. Today the Aglipayans make up less than 4% of the population.

### *The Vatican enters*

Because of the American victory and the consequent end of the *Patronato Real*, the Vatican could enter directly to guide ecclesiastical affairs in the country. America's "Manifest Destiny" and McKinley's declaration of "benevolent assimilation" prompted Pope Leo XIII to dispatch three apostolic delegates. The second delegate, the Italian Giovanni Battista Gudi, brought with him in 1902 the apostolic constitution *Quae mari sinico* (1902) to reorganize the church by creating four new dioceses. Hence the American principle of separation of church and state happily advanced the Vatican initiatives. Furthermore, with the exit of the remaining Spanish bishops, the future of the church was left in the hands of the Americans rather than of the insurgents. Cardinal Secretary of State Rampolla could hardly hide his elation at the favorable turn of events, reportedly remarking to Governor General William Howard Taft, "Bear in mind that the Philippines is a Catholic country," demonstrating the Catholic Church's influential government access.

### *The present Philippine Church*

The overall population of the Philippines is somewhere between 97 million and 106 million (Central Intelligence Agency 2013; Johnson *et al.* 2013, 40; Philippine Commission on Population 2013). Baptized Catholics constitute 79% of the population, and the Christian landscape is also dotted with a multitude of Protestant and independent movements of several million adherents. One of the most prominent independent movements is the *Iglesia ni Kristo* (Church of Christ), a recent indigenous sect that exerts considerable political influence, even though its membership numbers remain unknown.

The Catholic Church is deeply engaged in education, starting with the founding in 1611 of the Catholic University of Santo Tomas. Throughout the country, the Catholic faithful show great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Catholic Hierarchy consists of 16 archdioceses, 77 dioceses, 7 apostolic vicariates and a military

vicariate. The 77 million Catholics are served by 9,040 priests, a ratio of 1 priest to every 8,400 faithful. Clearly the number of priests is not adequate for meeting the needs of the ballooning population. In addition to the lack of priests, popular religiosity and secularism continue to challenge the Philippine Church.

## Japan

Certain characteristics of Christianity in Japan resemble aspects of Christianity in Southeast Asia and in Korea. Such commonalities include modern Western channels of Christianity's entrance and, by extension, a variety of imported Christian traditions plus subsequent indigenous movements. Also, except for the Philippines, Japan and other countries under consideration here each houses a minority Christian presence, albeit to differing degrees. And as has been the case worldwide, Christian emissaries have had to negotiate with pre-existing religious realities in their verbal and non-verbal communication of the Christian message.

Japanese Christianity has also exhibited features that distinguish it from other settings being considered here. The intensity and length of persecution that Japanese authorities inflicted on the Christian communities in Japan, from the early-sixteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, was an instance of religious persecution perhaps unique in all of world history. The consistently low percentage (approximately 1%) of Christians among the Japanese population has also gone unmatched, even with the extreme minority status of Christian communities in such countries as Thailand. Japan is often cited as a setting in which the Christian gospel has failed to penetrate, despite the commitment of substantial missionary resources.

These shared and unique features of Christianity in Japan will be evident as we next survey the history of Japanese Christianity.

### *Mid-sixteenth century*

Beginning with Francis Xavier in 1549, Jesuit missionaries started coming to Japan in connection with Portuguese trading ventures. How were Japanese people to understand the strange message of these strange "southern Barbarians," so called because the Portuguese entered Japan by sailing in from the south? Xavier's initial Japanese label for deity was *Dainichi* ("Big Sun"), having been advised of that term by his untrained translator. Xavier became alarmed, however, upon subsequently learning that *Dainichi* was a Buddhist term. He thus switched to the established Latin label *Deus* – which of course made no sense to his Japanese hearers and was mocked by Xavier's critics for its auditory similarity to *dai uso*, or "big lie." Thus began the adventure of Japanese human beings hearing about the distant Europeans' religion across significant cultural and linguistic divides.

Even so, especially in southwestern and central Japan a number of regional rulers (*daimyo*) as well as commoners were baptized into the Christian faith. While converts' motives can be variously analyzed – armaments acquired from the Portuguese certainly



strengthened the position of some Christian *daimyo* in relation to other regional rulers, for example – enough Christian growth took place to where the Christian population reached approximately 300,000, or about 1.5% out of an overall Japanese population of 20 million.

The arrival on Japanese shores in the late sixteenth century of non-Portuguese Europeans, namely the Spanish, English, and Dutch, complicated matters. The Japanese General Hideyoshi had begun to consolidate an unprecedented geographic reach of military power (within what we now know as the modern nation of Japan). Hideyoshi was annoyed to hear that the unknown and faraway Spanish king aspired to conquer the world and that missionaries, primarily Franciscans in the case of Spain, were his frontline shock troops. Hideyoshi's eventual ordering of the crucifixions of 27 Christians in Nagasaki on February 5, 1597, was the result.

After 1600 Tokugawa Ieyasu supplanted Hideyoshi and was named *Shogun*. The newly established Tokugawa Shogunate also became concerned over the presence of these various European groups that clearly did not get along with each other. Systematic and brutal persecution of Christians was set in motion. The ill-fated Shimabara Rebellion of late 1637 into early 1638, inspired by the teenage messianic leader Amakusa Shirō, was due to heavy taxation but also strengthened by Christian aspirations (Ross 1994: 101–104). That rebellion's crushing defeat by Tokugawa forces was part of the virtual elimination of any Christian presence in Japan by the late 1630s. It also began Japan's 200-plus-year seclusion from almost all foreign intercourse.

### *Mid-nineteenth century*

Japan re-opened to international relations following the 1853–1854 Perry Expeditions from the United States. In order to avoid the type of colonization that other Asian nations were experiencing, and to join the Western powers in a quest for economic and military strength, Japan began a period of rapid Westernization and modernization following the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Christianity also grew during these exhilarating decades of the 1870s and 1880s as Japan frantically imported all things Western.

Missionaries had started entering certain port cities in 1859: French Catholics, Russian Orthodox, and various (American, British, Scandinavian, German and others) Protestants. With the Tokugawa-era ban on Christianity still in effect until its official abolition in 1873, only a few baptisms secretly took place. There was also renewed persecution in 1867 of newly discovered “Hidden Christians” who had somehow survived the long generations of Christianity's suffocation.

During the 1870s and 1880s, Protestant growth was centered in three representative “bands.” The “Yokohama Band” developed out of the initiatives of American and Scottish Presbyterian-Reformed missionaries. Uemura Masahisa emerged as the leading pastor and organization builder in what became in 1890 the *Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai* (“Japan Christ Church”). The “Kumamoto Band” was based further southwest. Leaders in that movement's *Kumiai* (“Congregationalist”) churches were trained at Doshisha University in Kyoto, founded by Nishima Jo. During the nationalistic 1890s, following the 1889 Meiji constitution and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education, Yokoi Tokio

and Ebina Danjo were representative *Kumiai* leaders who developed a self-consciously *Japanese Christianity* that embodied Shinto-Confucian ideals of filial piety.

The third or “Sapporo Band” is best known by its leading figure Uchimura Kanzo and the *Mukyokai* (“Non-church”) movement that he started. Uchimura and the *Mukyokai* rejected ecclesiastical structures and sacraments, determining them to be basically Western and inappropriate for Japanese Christianity, which was still developing within the cultural and religious milieu of Japan. Uchimura openly acknowledged that he could not decide which of “two Js,” Japan or Jesus, he loved more. At the same time, Uchimura and indeed the entire Christian movement in Japan came under pointed socio-political criticism in the early 1890s after he instinctively did not bow to an unannounced display of the new Education Rescript at a school assembly, where he was teaching at the time, out of “*hesitation and conscientious scruples . . . at that moment.*” As Uchimura continued gravely to write about the incident in an English letter to an American friend, “It was an awful moment for me, for I instantly apprehended the result of my conduct” (Uchimura 1983: 332–333).

The Catholic Church, remembering its earlier growth and foundations in Japan, sought to rebuild itself with the 1844 arrival of French missionaries in present-day Okinawa. After Western nations signed treaties with Japan following the Perry Expeditions, in 1859 Prudence-S  raphim-Barth  lemy Girard commenced his chaplaincy and interpreting work for the French Consul General in Edo. Eventually four dioceses and a number of educational institutions were established, following early growth that emerged from the remarkable descendants of the “Hidden Christians” in the Nagasaki area.

The place of Russian Orthodoxy in modern Japanese Christianity is important and must not at all be overlooked. In connection with Russia’s eastward expansion, the international nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox Mission grew extensively in the northern half of Japan. Bishop Nicolai was particularly instrumental in the growth of the Russian Orthodox Church, having first arrived in Hakodate as the Russian consulate chaplain in 1861. Among his other noteworthy deeds, Nicolai is remembered and appreciated in Japan for remaining there during the trying 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War and until his death in 1921. Nicolai’s most visible and lasting accomplishment was overseeing the construction and consecration in 1891 of the beautiful Orthodox cathedral in central Tokyo.

### *Early twentieth century*

Japan continued its national growth and gradual imperial expansion during the closing years of the Meiji era (until 1912), the Taisho era (1912–1926), and the early Showa era (beginning in 1926). During this period Christian denominations consolidated their growth and presence, while new holiness, pentecostal, charismatic, and indigenous Christian movements began as well. Theological development continued, especially as the second generation of modern Japanese Christians processed the faith coming to them both through various Western avenues and through first-generation Meiji Japanese Christians (Jennings 2005). Wider social impact was wrought by Christians in

education, women's rights, and the labor movement, the last associated with Kagawa Toyohiko.

Christianity's tenuous place within the Japanese socio-political arena was a running matter of concern. The churches were thus ever desirous of demonstrating their patriotic loyalty, for example through medically and otherwise supporting Japanese troops during the 1894–1895 Sino-Japanese and 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese wars. Uemura Masahisa's Fujimicho Church held annual gatherings for public officials – again, to show Christians' involvement in the public order but also to further Uemura's and other first-generation former-samurai Christian leaders' visions for a new Christian Japan to succeed the bygone glory days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. In 1912, Christian leaders participated in a special government-sponsored meeting of representatives of Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Some Christians questioned the political acquiescence associated with that participation, while others rejoiced that Christianity had received an official recognition on par with the longstanding traditions also participating.

The 1930s and early 1940s brought difficult days to Christian circles in Japan. The militarist government enveloped almost all sectors of society. Churches were forced to express devotion to the Japanese emperor system, or *tennōsei*, in hymns, teaching content, and flag displays. Organizationally most Protestant churches were combined into the *Kyodan* (“United Church”). The tightly woven Japanese communal fabric, interwoven with all levels of life including families, schools, and other social structures, made external compliance that much easier for government and military authorities to achieve.

### *Contemporary period*

After World War II and during the Allied occupation, many Western missionaries came to Japan at General Douglas MacArthur's urging. New evangelical churches thus began and soon outnumbered the pre-existing churches, and the Catholic Church quickly regained its pre-war numbers. Once again, however, that growth dropped after a few years, as had happened after earlier growth periods of Christianity in Japan associated with Western influence. That pattern of growth in connection with Western input has contributed to the image held by many Japanese people that Christianity is fundamentally a foreign, in particular Western, religion.

Forged in the crucible of wartime and minority suffering, however, Japanese Christianity has produced representative expressions of indigenous faith that simultaneously bear marks of universal Christianity. One of the best-known examples of such expressions is the writing of the Catholic historical novelist Endo Shusaku. Many of Endo's works, the most widely read of which is probably his 1966 *Silence* about the persecution of Christians under the early Tokugawa Shogunate, are set in the early 1600s in Japan. Endo's works essentially (and autobiographically) wrestle with the relationship between being Christian and Japanese. As Endo's Japanese magistrate Inoue explains to the young Portuguese priest Rodrigues, “This country of Japan is not suited to the teaching of Christianity. Christianity simply cannot put down roots here [in] this swamp of Japan” (Endo 1982: 292). The theology of Kitamori Kazoh is another

example of indigenous-universal Japanese Christianity, particularly his monumental *Theology of the Pain of God* (first published in 1946).

Christianity in Japan has always been a small minority. Indeed, the consistently minuscule growth of Christianity in Japan, despite sizeable waves of resources deployed by Western countries, has been a missiological puzzle to many. Reasons given range from missionaries' inadequacies to Japan's sense of superiority vis-à-vis the rest of Asia. One significant but less mentioned reason concerns the indigenous sense of deity. In Japan there is little to no sense of a single all-powerful creator. Hence there is a significant gap between the meanings of Japanese labels for deity and Christian understandings conveyed by the biblical terms *Elohim* or *Theos*. Communicating this and other basic realities in the Christian faith has proven to resemble the "swamp" described by Endo and other analysts of Christianity's challenges in Japan.

Even with their slow growth, Christians have had an impact far beyond what their relatively small numbers would indicate. Enduring throughout persecution and sociopolitical pressure is a gracious sign of God's goodness and mercy. The lessons for larger Christian groups, for example about not trusting in one's own resources and about bearing strong witness to peace, are invaluable. With or without the new growth that some today detect in the midst of Japan's social and economic malaise, the entire Christian world can give thanks for the blessing of the Christian presence in Japan.

## Korea

When Christianity was first introduced to this secluded land, Korea bore religious, political, and cultural characteristics similar to other Asian countries. A strong religious inclination had long bolstered such traditional religious streams as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism. However, by the late nineteenth century Koreans had grown unsatisfied with such belief systems and longed for a new religion. And just as God sent Jesus Christ to this world in "the fullness of time," Christianity arrived at the right moment.

### *The beginning of Christianity*

Gregório de Céspedes came to Korea as early as 1593, and Lee Seung Hoon, baptized by Jean-Joseph de Grammont in Beijing in 1784, began to spread Roman Catholicism, attracting 42,441 followers by 1909. The Protestant faith was introduced to Korea by Karl Gutzlaff, a visiting Protestant missionary, in 1832. In 1866, Robert Jermain Thomas was martyred at the Taedong River, Pyongyang. But several people, who encountered the gospel through John Ross and John McIntyre, who were in China from 1873, translated the Bible and brought it back to their hometowns in Korea to sow the seeds of the gospel.

While Bible translation and evangelism spread quietly throughout Korea, Western missionaries began to enter. First, Horace Allen, member of the Northern Presbyterian Mission, entered in 1884, followed by Horace G. Underwood, a Northern Presbyterian,

and Henry G. Appenzeller, a Methodist, the following year. By 1908, the Australian Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Southern Presbyterian, Southern Methodist, Canadian Mission, Oriental Mission, and Salvation Army traditions had begun their respective missions in Korea, all within just 24 years. Simultaneous arrivals of various Protestant missionaries offered both missionaries and Koreans the opportunity to learn their own differences and strengths, adding to the richness and variety of Protestantism (Kim and Kim 2014).

These missionaries, having experienced prior revivals, were outstanding young evangelists who burned with the passion of the gospel and recognized fully the importance of preaching the Gospel, historic Christianity, and social responsibility. Mostly in their twenties, the missionaries adopted the Nevius Plan, based on John Livingston Nevius' field experience, emphasizing church-planting and indigenous Korean leadership. They also actively promoted medical missions, Christian education, literature, Bible translation, comity, and cooperation and union work beyond denominational barriers (Underwood 1908: 92).

### *Korean response to the gospel*

Even though Christianity spread late to Korea, compared to Japan, China, and India, by 1910 the 160,000-strong Korean Christian population had surpassed the other countries' Christian numbers. Several factors aided such remarkable growth in Korea.

First, even with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism thriving, to Koreans the Christian God not only seemed to harmonize well with their indigenous concept of God, but also was understood as the Greatest One, highest among all gods. For Koreans, with their distinct concept of divine hierarchy, the Christian God seemed clearly unique (Oak 2013: 33–83). Second, Korea's strategic location for such powerful nations as China, Russia, Japan, and the United States spelled constant conflict, turning Korean hearts into fertile soil for receiving the Gospel. Third, the mission policy adopted by early missionaries sustained a good balance between missions to the elite and to ordinary Koreans, winning the hearts of the royal family as well as the people. Fourth, educated young Koreans created the Enlightenment Party, which attempted modernization of Korea and advocated Christianity for the nation's well-being. Fifth, the Korean Church experienced the Pyongyang Great Revival in 1907 – one of the most powerful spiritual awakenings since Pentecost – maturing the Korean Church both in quality and quantity. Consequently, Korean Christianity flourished and gained international recognition.

### *Korean Christianity in the Japanese colonial period*

Viewed in retrospect, the 1907 Great Revival in Pyongyang and other religious revivals may have prepared Korean Christians for the difficulties of the Japanese colonial era from 1910 to 1945. The church was the most influential leader of nationalism and social reform during the Japanese colonial period, thus instilling in wavering Korean hearts a sense that the church was truly the hope of the world. Leading figures of the

early twentieth-century national independent movements were Christians. The 105 keynote figures of the Korean Conspiracy in 1911 were all Christians; it was Christians who led the 1919 March 1st Movement; and, those who spearheaded other social reform movements, including Encouragement of Korean Production, Patriotism, Temperance, and Forward Movement, were Christians.

Even at the height of Japan's colonial exploitation, Christians became the driving force against Communism and Shintoism. However, as Shintoistic compulsion increased, many denominations and church leaders began to comply with Japanese demands. At the same time, streams advocating Protestant Orthodoxy, Neo-orthodoxy, Liberalism, the Non-church Movement, and revivalism emerged through scholars returning from study in Japan or in the United States. Korean Christianity overall was divided into Methodist pro-social gospel liberals and Presbyterian evangelicals. A division also grew between pro-Japanese and strict Bible believers who struggled to maintain the historic Christian faith against Shintoism.

### *Korean Christianity after liberation*

Liberation of the Korean Peninsula in 1945 granted total freedom only to the southern half; in North Korea, countless Christians were martyred by Communists between 1945 and 1950. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, numerous South Korean church leaders were either martyred or abducted by Communists.

With dark threats of war engulfing the nation, renowned revival leaders like Billy Graham and Bob Pierce led many evangelistic meetings throughout Korea, resulting in spiritual awakenings among the people, soldiers, and even North Korean prisoners of war. The revivals were soon followed by social reforms, sowing hope among the ruins. The return of Western missionaries reactivated the Korean Church's reconstruction. Yet dysfunctional phenomena also emerged amid the social turmoil. During the Japanese colonial period, new religious movements with strange apocalyptic teachings sprang up and multiplied.

### *Theological identity: contextualization, fundamentalism, and evangelicalism*

Korean Christianity contributed significantly to modernization through the abolition of class distinctions, the founding of hospitals and schools, and the support of nationalism, social reforms, and democratization. Since the 1960s, however, the Korean Church, having faced continual schisms, theological and social transitions, and theological fragmentation during the 1950s, has sought to find its own identity and future direction. As a result, in addition to the plethora of denominational distinctions, the Korean Church is divided largely into three groups: the contextualized theological community, the fundamentalist community, and the evangelical community (Park 1998: 72–114).

Attempts at contextualized theology have sought to harmonize Christianity with traditional Korean religions and culture, seemingly in response to three historical tasks:



liquidating the colonial view of history, seeking the Korean way of theology separate from Western theology, and adjusting the Gospel to political-economic situations that resulted from modern industrialization since the 1960s. At that time, Gustavo Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) and other works of Latin American liberation theology presented a great challenge to Korean scholars of indigenous theology. The sweatshop labor brought by industrialization, the wealth gap, oppression of human rights under the military regime, and theological transitions within the World Council of Churches (WCC) prompted Korean theologians since the 1980s to discuss actively various indigenous theologies that have emerged, most prominently the theology of *Sung* (誠), *Minjung* Theology, Religious Pluralism, and *Sangsaeng* Theology (KNCC Theological Committee 1982: 19–26, 86–103, 287–301, 319–347).

The fundamentalist community has defended historic Christian beliefs while opposing the WCC. These Christians, with separatist tendencies, have strongly advocated historic beliefs such as biblical infallibility, the substitutionary atonement, the virgin birth, Christ's bodily resurrection, and the second coming of Christ. They have also had a tendency toward anti-culturalism and anti-socialism, while disregarding socio-cultural responsibility.

Korean evangelicalism began from a sense of the limitations of both the contextualist and fundamentalist approaches to Christianity, as just described. Evangelicals believed that Korean Christianity should continue in the tradition of biblical-historical Christianity in carrying out faithfully its socio-cultural responsibilities for effective proclamation of the Gospel. Western Evangelicalism, the Lausanne Covenant, plus the emergence of evangelical presses, inter-denominational missions, and mass-evangelism of the 1970s, all played an important role in shaping Korean evangelicalism. As the Korean Evangelical Fellowship (KEF), Korea Evangelical Theological Society (KETS), and such mega-churches as the Sarang Community Church, Nam-Seoul Grace Church, Onnuri Church, and Global Mission Church were organized, evangelicalism became more influential (Park 1998: 72–114). Even though Protestant Korean churches are largely divided into those who support the WCC and those who oppose it, in general most denominational churches, including Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness, Baptist, and Pentecostal, have evangelical allegiances that generally do not favor WCC emphases and initiatives.

Evangelicalism impressed on contextualized theologians the importance of the biblical texts and also reminded fundamentalists of the importance of socio-cultural responsibility. However, due to such problems as religious elitism, the introduction of Western marketing, and the pursuit of mega-church status, the Korean Evangelical churches have often failed to embody biblical ideals of teaching, preaching, and healing.

As a result, in spite of the rapid pre-1990s growth of Evangelicalism in Korea, the Korean Protestant churches now face a new challenge of a serious recession, whereas the Roman Catholic population, which had previously been much smaller than Protestant population, surpassed 1.85 million in 1985, 2.95 million in 1995, and 5.1 million in 2005. If such growth continues, the Catholic population will soon exceed the Protestant population. In addition, Korean Protestant world mission initiatives, which have grown since the 1980s to emerge as the world's second-largest source of missionaries (behind the United States), face stagnation, while Christian cults and heretical

sectarians have emerged rapidly. Furthermore, Islam continues to grow rapidly in Korea as the number of workers from Islamic countries increases.

The Korean Church, faced with these challenges, may be in need of another great awakening, to overcome its current stagnation, denominational division, and internal competition.

## Conclusion

There are advantages and disadvantages in considering Christianity across such a disparate field as Southeast Asia, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea. The first disadvantage one might detect is that such a grouping does not follow more familiar and conventional approaches, for example a framework of “Northeast Asia” (including Korea and Japan) versus “Southeast Asia.” Another disadvantage is that wide contextual distinctions somehow have to be considered together, for example Confucian settings coming out of longstanding Chinese influence and those that have received little or no such influence. Moreover, because of the varying nature of the European channels through which Christianity entered and developed throughout these regions, the spectrum of Christian traditions now present is almost too wide to be analyzed collectively.

One could argue, at the same time, that these apparent disadvantages are in fact themselves advantages by examining together Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Japan, and Korea. With its inherent feature of translatability, worldwide Christianity exhibits more diversity than any other religious tradition – and that diversity is undeniable in looking together at these contiguous, if varying, areas. Going against the grain of conventional geographic groupings can help jog us out of a conventional tendency to forget Christianity’s inherent diversity. Being forced to acknowledge the different religious settings that the one Christian faith has encountered is a helpful reminder of how diverse God’s world actually is. Having to step back and look at how scattered and messy the spread of the modern West was into Southeast Asia, Japan, and Korea corrects any simplistic notion of a monolithic West expanding uniformly around the globe.

In the end we are given a fresh appreciation of the creative adaptability of the Christian gospel’s development. The astounding diversity in religious traditions, cultural heritages, and socio-political realities in the regions under consideration here forces one to see how far and wide the Christian faith has to reach to be embraced within all human communities.

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## CHAPTER 43

# Christianity in Australia and Oceania (ca. 1800–2000)

Stuart Piggin and Peter Lineham

### Introduction

The evangelization of Oceania from the end of the eighteenth century was an outworking of the rise of the modern missionary movement among Protestants. Military and commercial motives for the exploration and settlement of the southern Pacific by Europeans were accompanied by the missionary ambitions of the burgeoning evangelical movement with its vision of “the world for Christ.” This resulted in the settlement of New South Wales, not only as a place of confinement for convicts, but also as a base for missions to the many islands of the South Seas. Polynesia (which covers a vast expanse from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south and includes Tahiti, Samoa, and Tonga), Melanesia (which includes Fiji and New Guinea and the islands between), and Micronesia (which includes the Marshall Islands and Kiribati) were progressively evangelized and now contain states with the highest percentage of Christians in their populations in the world.

Australia and New Zealand evolved as major primary producing economies and exemplars of the Protestant ethic. They were shaped by the forces of secularism and liberalism, and so their constitutions were based on the separation of church and state. But for much of their history they have been identified as “Christian nations,” often enacting Christian values and funding churches for their provision of welfare and education.

### Origins

The attention of the British was turned to Oceania principally by the exploration of Captain James Cook between 1769 and 1779. Christianity came to Australia with the

settlement of Sydney Cove in 1788. It came as a chaplaincy to soldiers and convicts rather than as a mission to the indigenous people. The transformation of a convict society into a nation of the law-abiding is arguably one of Christianity's major achievements in the nineteenth century. The well-connected evangelical network in Britain was responsible for the training and selection of many of the early chaplains and ministers. Members of this network had links with many of the early governors, soldiers, merchants, farmers, and settlers. They helped to shape the justice system and laws of the fledgling colonies. They tried hard, although too often unsuccessfully, to protect indigenous peoples, and many who previously campaigned to abolish slavery turned their experience to the abolition of transportation (i.e., penal transportation, or the sending of convicted criminals to penal colonies).

In August 1796 the "Duff," commissioned by the newly created London Missionary Society (LMS), set sail for Tahiti. On board were 34 artisans including five women and three children. Some of the missionaries were taken to Tonga; others to the Marquesa Islands. It was an over-extended mission and some parts failed. In Tahiti tensions over a demand to supply guns led the missionaries to flee to New South Wales in 1798.

Samuel Marsden, appointed chaplain to NSW in 1793, encouraged LMS missionaries to persevere with the Tahiti Mission, and in 1812 Chief Pomare II became a Christian and his whole island went over to Christianity. His military conquest of the Society Islands led to their mass Christianization. LMS missionary, William Henry, hailed this development as "one of the greatest miracles of grace ever exhibited on the stage of this world" (Henry 1814: 158).<sup>1</sup> The missionaries adjusted to the role of law-givers, courtiers and facilitators of trade. They also translated the Bible and created strong Congregational churches.

In New Zealand, the Church Missionary Society began work in 1814. Marsden himself led the first missionaries to the Bay of Islands in December 1814 and delighted to see the British flag flying there, signifying "the dawn of civilisation, liberty, and religion in that dark and benighted land." On Christmas day he preached on a text from Luke (2:10): "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy." The CMS mission to New Zealand was followed by the Methodist mission in 1822 and the French Catholic Marist Order in 1838. The Maori, like most of the South Sea Islanders, were slow to respond to the faith, but accepted it en masse following the conversion of their chiefs. Relations between Maori and new groups of European settlers raised issues of land and sovereignty, necessitating the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840, which made New Zealand a British colony.

Meanwhile a new team of LMS missionaries, including the remarkable John Williams, recruited a group of "native missionaries," and by the late 1820s the Cook Islands were Christianized. In 1830 the LMS placed native teachers in Samoa and, from there, a new mission developed, initiated primarily by converts from other parts of Polynesia.

In 1834 a wave of Methodist-style revival engulfed the Society Islands, including Tonga, cementing evangelical Christianity into the fabric of society: another Protestant kingdom emerged. In Fiji, Wesleyan missionaries arrived in 1835 and they united with Tongan visitors to spread the faith. A dramatic revival movement erupted in the 1840s. Tongans also spread Wesleyan Christianity to parts of Melanesia, including New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon Islands. The Presbyterians established a successful mission in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), as did the Anglican Melanesian Mission

which also worked in the Solomon Islands and Papua. The Queensland Kanaka Mission (later the South Sea Evangelical Mission) also operated in the Solomon Islands, while the Lutherans also had mission stations in Papua.

Sectarian rivalry between Catholics and Protestants in the South Seas was exacerbated by the economic rivalry between the French and the British in the Pacific. The French government made the Society Islands a protectorate in 1843 to ensure the safety of Catholic missionaries. The Marist Fathers labored as missionaries in the South Seas from 1836. Their romantic history includes the story of St. Peter Chanel, martyred on the island of Futuna in French Polynesia in 1841. Catholics were also active in the Solomons and in the New Hebrides, and outflanked the LMS to take control of mission work to New Caledonia. In the Loyalty Islands, LMS and Catholics missionaries competed with each other, enlisting British and French authorities for support.

It was not until the 1870s that evangelism commenced in New Guinea. LMS workers, William Lawes and James Chalmers, depended heavily on the pioneering work of Ruatoka (a Polynesian convert) from the Cook Islands in their work in the Papua region. At the eastern end and surrounding islands, Wesleyans established a presence, led by the Australian, George Brown.

## Colonial Constructions

Apart from chaplains, clergy and missionaries the Christianization of Oceania was given much support by men of influence, including high officials in the Colonial Office, the governors of new colonies, and by merchants and pastoralists.

### *Christian settlements in Australia and New Zealand*

Settlements established at Melbourne in 1834, Adelaide in 1838, and Brisbane in 1859, were Puritan counters to the gaol colonies. The surrounding regions of Victoria and South Australia were populated by Nonconformist and evangelical middle-class migrants displaced from Britain. Melbourne quickly became more observably “holy” than Sydney, and Victoria a conspicuous example of the Protestant ethic.

South Australia was settled in 1838, the product of a dissenting vision. George Fife Angas, a devout Baptist and prosperous shipowner, injected capital and pious young settlers into the new colony. He financed the immigration of evangelical Lutheran settlers under Pastor Kavel rejoicing that consequently there could be bestowed on South Australia “the honourable epithet of Pilgrim land” (Pike 1967: 131). The colony won self-government in 1856, gave women the right to vote in council elections in 1861 and the right to vote and stand for parliament in 1894. “Paradise of Dissent” was historian Douglas Pike’s apt description.

Queensland had convict settlements before its creation as a separate colony in 1859, but, thanks to the efforts of Presbyterian leader, John Dunmore Lang, was able to boast many staunch Protestant settlers among its pioneers, including Lutherans and Baptists. They established a robustly anti-Catholic society. That soon met with an equally stout response from the newly appointed Catholic Bishop, James Quinn. In 1862 he

established the Queensland Immigration Society. Many Catholic immigrants poured into Queensland, driven out of Ireland by famine and denied entry to the United States because of the Civil War.

In New Zealand a marked Protestant presence characterized some of the planned settlements, although the Canterbury settlement of 1851 had Anglican High Church roots. Otago was established by those who had seceded from the Scottish establishment in 1843 and formed the Free Church. Captain Cargill, leader of the small group of 250 who settled Otago in 1848, espoused a conservative Scottish vision of a Christian society. An emphasis on the virtues of education was combined with staunch opposition to Sabbath-breaking, to the use of the organ in worship, or the use of hymns other than the metrical psalter. In this Protestant culture, liberal views of education struggled with a revivalistic vision.

### *The new denominational mix in Australia and New Zealand*

In 2006, 65% of Australians and 50% of New Zealanders identified with a Christian denomination. In each region a distinctive denominational mix had evolved from its British base, largely reflecting patterns of immigration. The higher combined percentage of Presbyterians, Methodists and Catholics in Australia and New Zealand populations than in the British Isles made sectarian rivalry more significant and made the acquisition of establishment status by the Church of England impossible.

In his Church Act of 1836, New South Wales Governor, Richard Bourke, offered state aid to the major denominations to assist them in building churches and paying the stipends of their ministers. This Act was duplicated in other Australian colonies although not in New Zealand. It effectively bankrolled sectarian rivalry, which was to become a major theme in Australian history. The other side of that coin, however, is that the colonial populations were very well supplied with religious services and pastoral care. Typically four churches (Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist) were built even in small towns, often on opposite street corners. Anthony Trollope, visiting Australia in 1871/1872, observed, "wherever there is a community there arises a church, or more commonly churches . . . The people are fond of building churches" (Trollope 1873 [2013]: 225).

Denied Establishment status, Anglican bishops devised new forms of governance. Charles Perry, the evangelical Bishop of Melbourne, procured from the legislature a bill granting self-government to his church. In 1856 he presided over the first synod in the colonies. His procedure was followed by the dioceses of Sydney and Tasmania. By contrast, the High Church bishops of New Zealand, Adelaide, and Newcastle (Selwyn, Short, and Tyrrell) created synods without any reference to the legislature.

Anglicans continued to be the largest denomination in New Zealand until 2013 when they were overtaken by the Catholics (12.61% Catholics to 11.79% Anglicans). Similarly, in Australia Anglicans were the largest in Australia until 1986 when they were surpassed by the Catholics. Anglicans were 53% of the Australian population in 1851 and 18.7% in 2006. Some states were far more Anglican than others. In 1986 the Anglican population of Tasmania was 35.5% whereas that of Victoria was only

17.8%. Regional differences in denominational adherence in Australia and New Zealand have been marked especially among Protestants.

Nonconformists, especially Congregationalists and Calvinistic Methodists, were respected early settlers in New South Wales. Wesleyan Methodists, by contrast, were not valued by colonial leaders. By the 1840s that had changed dramatically, after several revivals swept through the colonies, and even more after the discovery of gold in the early 1850s which brought many Cornish Methodists to the Australian colonies. Revivals within Australian Methodism probably explain the growth of that denomination from 6.7% of the population in 1861 to 10.2% in 1901 and in New Zealand Methodism grew to 10.9% in the same year. Methodism was the great success story of nineteenth-century Australian and New Zealand Christianity.

Catholics represented about 25% of the population in the Australian colonies (but only about 14% in New Zealand) for much of the nineteenth century. Yet it was not until 1820 that they were allowed to have their own priests. Though most of the Catholic convicts were Irish, the first two members of the hierarchy appointed by Rome in 1833 were English Benedictines, John Bede Polding and William Ullathorne. On the establishment of a diocesan structure in 1842, the ascendancy of Irish bishops in Australian Catholicism began, and with it the consolidation of strong Irish Catholic sub-cultures, fertile soil for sectarianism. There were those who transcended sectarian prejudices. Caroline Chisholm, “the immigrants’ friend,” a devout and philanthropic Protestant before marrying a Catholic and becoming one herself, gave equal support to the 11,000 people of whatever country of origin and religion whom she settled on the land. She believed the family to be the key guardian of society, not clergy and teachers.

John Dunmore Lang, Australia’s first Presbyterian minister, arrived in Sydney in 1823. He promoted Protestant immigration to Australia, and campaigned unceasingly and unscrupulously in the pulpit, press, and parliament for democratic rights in three colonies. He was also an early prophet of federation and republicanism. In New Zealand a number of Congregationalists and northern Presbyterians had a prominent role, but Lang was a unique figure.

Baptists did not hold their first service in Sydney until 1831, and unlike their American counterparts, remained among the smallest of the main Christian denominations in Australia. The Campbellite Churches of Christ and the Seventh Day Adventists came in the second half of the century. In 1883 Charles Strong formed the Australian Church, a liberal breakaway from the Victorian Presbyterians. It did not thrive. In contrast to American Christianity and the Christianity which developed in other parts of the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand produced few genuinely indigenous Christian movements until the twentieth century when Aboriginal, Maori, and Charismatic indigenous churches were formed.

Especially in New Zealand the denominational landscape was transformed by the rapid growth of a number of new revivalistic denominations originating in Britain and the United States, but planted in the colonies primarily through evangelism rather than immigration. The Churches of Christ was one such group, whose evangelists made an impact beginning in the 1850s. The Plymouth Brethren made a deep impression in Tasmania and in the country districts of New Zealand, where small farmers responded positively to a church built on lay endeavor, discounting theological education and

rejecting ordination. As dairying became crucial to the New Zealand economy, the Brethren became very strong and their evangelism created a conservative core to the Protestantism of the country. Then in the 1880s the Salvation Army sent missionaries to the Antipodes, and a sensation was created as they reached out to the working class urban communities on both sides of the Tasman Sea, and attracted strong initial support. But the largest groups remained the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church.

## Consolidating “Christian” Countries

### *Education issues*

In the first Australian settlements, it was assumed that the Church of England was responsible for all education. This assumption was soon challenged. Richard Bourke, Governor of NSW from 1831 to 1837, sought to subsidise the school systems offered by the various denominations. This plan failed due to opposition from the Anglicans who wanted to retain their educational monopoly, but in 1872 “free, compulsory and secular” education was established in Victoria and soon after that in New Zealand and the other Australian colonies. These state systems, which allowed religious instruction from visiting ministers did not reflect anti-Christian feeling, although the New Zealand government declared in 1877 that primary education should be “entirely of a secular character.” Consequently nervous Protestants put considerable voluntary effort into Sunday schools and Bible classes. Catholics campaigned, unsuccessfully, for state aid for their own schools. But public schools in Australia and New Zealand were probably what the majority of the Protestant laity wanted, systems which would allow the Christian religion a positive role in developing civic-mindedness in the rising generation, while excluding any denominationalism. Until the 1950s the state education systems achieved that end.

The Catholics created and funded their own education system, for which they received no state aid at all until 1963 in both NSW and New Zealand. In 1866 in South Australia the highly educated romantic, Father Tenison Woods, and the practical, courageous Mary MacKillop, who was beatified in 1995, founded the Sisters of St. Joseph. By 1901 there were 100,000 pupils in Catholic schools but this was a much larger sector of the school system in Australia than in New Zealand. This heroic campaign intensified Catholic identity, which was compounded with Irish anti-British feeling and galvanized the sectarian divide between Catholic and Protestant. Nineteenth-century Australian and New Zealand Catholics were a minority sub-culture: alienated, defensive, and clericalized, but cohesive, certain that to be Christian, one had to be Roman, and, though poor, better off than they had been before coming to the colonies.

### *Legislating for a Christian nation*

The majority of the Australian and New Zealand populations in the second half of the nineteenth century were Protestants who believed in the separation of church and

state. They also believed, however, that the prosperity of the nation and the freedoms of its people depended on the morality and values of the Christian religion, and that the practice of righteousness should have the force of law behind it.

Protestants argued that Sabbath observance had made Britain great and free, and that Australia should follow Britain and not the European continent. In 1889, the New South Wales Council of Churches was formed, representing the six major Protestant denominations (Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Primitives, Baptists and Congregationalists). Similar councils were formed in the next decade in other colonies, but not in New Zealand until 1941. Their chief task was to protect the Christian Sunday. The legislative brakes were kept on the secularization of the Sabbath until 1966.

Protestants were also eager for legislative restraints on the liquor industry. In 1882 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, formed eight years earlier in the United States, began in Sydney, and it began in New Zealand in 1886. Among the Australian women associated with the Union who had worldwide renown was Bessie Harrison Lee (Cowie). Australians and New Zealanders "added value" to the messages of temperance, purity and women's rights which they imported from America, and but ran ahead of Britain and the American states in reforms such as women's suffrage.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Australian workers sought to civilize capitalism, first by industrial power in unionism, and then by political power in the formation of the Labor Party. Christian values were foundational to both. W. G. Spence, the organizer of the shearers and workers unions, was a Presbyterian elder and Methodist preacher. A leader in the temperance movement, he insisted that he was doing what Jesus would have him do for the downtrodden of society. He wrote in 1892: "New Unionism was simply the teachings of that greatest of all social reformers, Him of Nazareth, whom all must revere" (Spence 1892).

With the spectacular failure of unionism in the Maritime Strike of 1890, working men turned to politics, and in 1891 the New South Wales Labor Party was formed. The notion that the Labor Party was formed as an ally of the Catholic Church, was fixed in popular folklore very early in the party's history. The evidence suggests that the Labor Party only later became strongly Catholic. In the inner suburbs of Sydney, the population did not consist mainly of the Catholic Irish working class, but of Protestants. In New Zealand the Labour Party was not formed until 1916, and the presence of Methodists and Baptists was even more apparent in it.

The ambivalence which Australians felt about their experience of Christianity at the beginning of the twentieth century was nicely reflected in the debates over the Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth enacted in 1901. The preamble speaks of "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God," while section 116 affirms that there are to be no religious establishments and no religious tests for holding office. The majority of Australians wanted to "recognize" the deity, but, weary of sectarianism and allergic to establishments, they would not allow preference to any denomination. The great majority of Australians and New Zealanders adhered to a Christian denomination, a sizeable minority attended church weekly, and most wanted their society and their children to be shaped by the teachings of Christ. But they were wary of entrusting either their souls or their civic life to the clergy.



### *Gender issues*

Women's suffrage, divorce and temperance were all aspects of a deeper social movement. Women won not only the vote. Aided by clergy and the demand of capitalism for a sober and industrious workforce, they also won the fight to domesticate their men. But it was a victory won at a price. The Christian moralizers in Australia and New Zealand were saddled with the label of "wowsers," by which was meant a hypocrite, a Methodist, a puritanical kill-joy.

Australian Protestant males were keen to demonstrate that they had not been feminized. They spoke fervently of "muscular Christianity" and were eager to endorse the popular male creed of "mateship." "Mateship" was a genuinely indigenous working-class creed. It had one doctrine: that at all times and whatever the cost, a man should stick by his mate. Some argued that it distilled the essence of Christianity.

## **The Experience of Christianity by Indigenous Peoples**

The land wars in New Zealand from 1860 to 1863 led to the withdrawal of missionaries. In their absence indigenous adaptations of Christianity flourished among Maori who faced systematic confiscation of their lands. In 1918 a new movement led by a Maori farmer, T. W. Ratana, called Maori back to a covenant with Jehovah. There was enough religious revival and renewal in the early movement to make churches look with sympathy towards it, but later theological, political, and exclusivist trends frightened most away, and its spiritual life was dissipated as the movement threw its support behind the Labour Party.

Evangelical missionary societies working among Australia's indigenous people started too late, and in the first half of the nineteenth century all failed. Later in the century failure was still chronic. Missions needed to recognize Aboriginal culture, teach in the vernacular, and develop indigenous leadership and spirituality. Evangelical convictions made it hard for missionaries to learn these realities. Early in the twentieth century the Aboriginal population began to increase again, for which Christian missionaries, most of whom were evangelicals, deserve a modicum of credit.

One highly significant outcome of traditional evangelical missionary work combined with new Charismatic insights was the Aboriginal Revival which began in the Uniting Church in Elcho Island, 500 kilometers from Darwin in 1979. Few on the island were left untouched. Then the Elcho Islanders spread their joy all over Arnhem Land, and northern and northwestern Australia, and perhaps most effectively, the central south of western Australia, in a great swathe of blessing.

Revival can be the power sufficient for the indigenization of Christianity in minority cultures. It was one of the means by which Aboriginal people were able to persevere in their campaign for land rights and for a just recompense for the land from which they had been dispossessed. The churches, together with the Aboriginal people, have been in the vanguard in the matter of land rights and self-determination, and together they have changed the views of many Australians into seeking reconciliation between

black and white and atonement for past wrongs. There are signs today that indigenous ministries in New Zealand and Australia have much to offer in the re-awakening of the spiritual power of the Christian movement.

## Wars and Depression

The identity of Australians and New Zealanders was shaped profoundly by their extensive involvement with two world wars. In World War I Protestants were commonly uncritical supporters of the war effort. The appallingly high death toll had profound consequences. In World War II there was less enthusiasm among churchmen for the conflict, only holy resignation to the fact that the evils of fascism had to be stopped. Far fewer men died, so the churches of the 1950s were far more effective than those of the 1930s.

Between the wars, Protestant churches wrestled with the challenge of theological liberalism, championed in Australian Presbyterianism by Samuel Angus, Professor of New Testament in their theological college in Sydney. The controversy left the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists weakened and divided as the 1930s came to a close. Anglicans, Baptists, and other evangelicals in Sydney watched and learned from the Presbyterian experience with Angus. Sydney's Archbishop Howard Mowll with the aid of T. C. Hammond, Principal of Moore Theological College, G. H. Morling, Principal of the Baptist College, and C. H. Nash, the best-known of Australian Bible college principals, launched a counter-offensive.

In New Zealand it was Baptists who began the fight against Modernism, in the person of J. W. Kemp from Scotland, pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Auckland from 1920. He followed the strategy of the urban fundamentalist chapels of America: strongly apologetic Bible teaching, support for interdenominational missions, the establishment of a holiday spiritual convention and a Bible Training Institute. Kemp's best-known convert was E. M. Blaiklock who became a Professor of Classics and an influential apologist. With a strongly dispensational theology and an evangelistic passion, Kemp made these institutions beacons of conservative Protestantism. Meanwhile in Christchurch an Anglican vicar with a passion for biblical preaching, William A. Orange, recruited a remarkable group of evangelical ordinands, the "orange pips," who profoundly affected the New Zealand Church, and there was also an evangelical movement in the Presbyterian Church. Meanwhile small fundamentalist churches – Brethren, Baptist, and Salvation Army, rapidly increased their following in society.

English institutions also played a role. The newly founded Inter-Varsity Fellowship sponsored the visit of Howard Guinness to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in 1930. Challenging the liberal emphasis of the Student Christian Movement, he created "Evangelical Unions" in many cities in the dominions, and they birthed an educated elite for the future, distancing themselves somewhat from Kemp's sharpness. Meanwhile Scripture Union sponsored the growth of an evangelical movement of state school Christian clubs, called Crusaders. Thus Fundamentalism was modified by a more positive evangelistic outlook.

## The 1950s

The 1950s was the decade when church-going in Australia and New Zealand grew rapidly and peaked in the early 1960s. The Billy Graham Crusades in 1959 brought Australia and New Zealand close to revival in 1959. During the three and a half months of the Southern Cross Crusade, nearly 3,250,000 people (one-quarter of the whole population) attended meetings. Of these 150,000 decided for Christ - in Australia that was 1.24% of the population. To that point it was the largest, most successful evangelistic campaign in human history and there were initial promising consequences in social trends. The rate of retention of converts was high, and the dramatic increase in student enrolments in Bible and theological colleges produced a ready supply of evangelical ministers of religion and missionaries in the next generation.

The crusades were the high point of fifteen years of very active growth in all churches, Catholic and Protestant. Huge Marian processions honored the newly promulgated dogma of the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary in 1954. The Methodists in Australia were stirred by Alan Walker's "Mission to the Nation" in the early 1950s. Anglicans in Australia and New Zealand mounted large-scale stewardship campaigns organized by the Wells Organisation. The Presbyterian Church in New Zealand renewed its conservative and evangelical tone, with its New Life Movement, led by Norman Perry. The result was a very extensive expansion of the denomination. It was a decade of rapid urbanization of Maori, and evangelical churches and missions (notably the United Maori Mission and Maori Evangelical Church) provided hostels and support for many young Maori.

## Pentecostal and Charismatic Developments

Though the origins of Pentecostalism in Australia has been dated back to 1870, its expansion in Australia may be traced primarily to the visits in 1920 and 1921 of the British Pentecostal evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth, whose missions reported scores of miracles, and the American female evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson, whose meetings were attended by huge crowds. In New Zealand Smith Wigglesworth laid the foundations of Pentecostalism in two visits in 1922 and 1924. In Wellington and Christchurch new congregations were founded, and although the movement was unstable, there was a provocative evangelistic energy about it which laid strong roots for the future.

After World War II the South Seas Evangelical Church was formed in Melanesia, but its spiritual life was subdued through involvement in politics. Then Muri Thompson, a Maori evangelist affected by the Charismatic Movement in New Zealand, held evangelistic meetings in Papua New Guinea and throughout the Solomons. There was a huge and highly emotional result.

New Zealand moved more rapidly in a Charismatic direction than Australia. Beginning in the South Island in 1960, a group of young men from Sydney began a new Charismatic movement. Their style was not sectarian. Friendly contacts were forged across the theological spectrum. It emphasized new experience, an existential encounter with

Christ in an age of existential authenticity. “Tongues” were ecstatic proof of the reality of God, and not capable of rational explanation. Pentecostal evangelists began to attract new believers and more ardent Christians from many of the more formal wings of the church.

These challenges towards new spiritual life have continued to be burning issues in many other parts of the Pacific. The old mission churches proved unreceptive to the emphasis on personal spiritual experience. Their old evangelical theologies were nominally in place, but cultural and political identification with the maintenance of the traditional status systems of the islands made them resistant to any emphasis on spiritual democracy. Consequently, particularly in Tonga, where church splits have been common over the last hundred years, and where concern at the growth of the Mormons was high, Charismatic separatism occurred. When the Pacific peoples came in very large numbers to New Zealand and a lesser extent to Australia in the 1960s–1990s, their churches were the key organizations that maintained their social identity. While their traditional churches were conservative rather than evangelical, they challenged the liberalism of the denominations, especially Presbyterians and Methodists in New Zealand. Streams of Tongan, Samoan, and Cook Islands native speaking Charismatic congregations also emerged. The same phenomenon has not really happened within the Maori community except in sectarian groups like the recent Destiny Church.

In the last four decades of the twentieth century the Pentecostal movement within new and existing churches achieved annual growth rates between 20 and 30%. The largest church in Australian history is a Pentecostal church. Hillsong, an Assemblies of God church, founded in 1983, had 18,000 members in 2005 and was courted by state and federal politicians. With 200,000 attending their churches in 2005, Pentecostals now outnumber church-going Anglicans in Australia.

## The Resurgence of Conservative Evangelicalism

At the same time as the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements burgeoned, so too did Reformed Christianity. In 1962 the Reformed Church of Australia opened their first Christian school. The Christian schooling movement has become the third major player in Australian education, after the public and Catholic systems. When in 1977 the Uniting Church was created out of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches, the Reformed evangelical wings of the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches favored continuing in their traditional denominations. Within a generation, the Presbyterian Church of Australia was no longer liberal, but evangelical, Reformed and augmented by Korean immigrants who have not neglected the experiential dimension of traditional evangelicalism. In New Zealand after powerful liberal leadership within the Presbyterian Church produced forty years of theological controversy from 1965, conservative evangelicals gradually asserted the leadership that their numbers warranted and by 2006 the denomination was largely in their hands.

It was, however, through the Anglican Moore College in Sydney that Reformed theology was to have its greatest impact on Australian Christianity. During his long

principalship, Broughton Knox (1959–1985) forged “the biblical theology movement.” The chief work of the ministry, he insisted, was to teach the Bible, the chief work of the theologian was to defend the inerrancy of Scripture, and the chief glory of the believer was to learn the Scriptures. It is a formula which has galvanized the Diocese of Sydney into one of world Anglicanism’s evangelical powerhouses. Its counter-cultural stance attracts much media attention. The opposition of Sydney Anglicans to the ordination of women and gay clergy has forged links with similar conservative groups throughout the world. Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney from 2001, is seen as a warrior for the truth by African bishops and by those who have had liberal change thrust upon them.

## The Recovery of a Christian Social Conscience

In recent decades the evangelical movement has recovered the social conscience for which it was so celebrated in the days of William Wilberforce (1759–1833). Though commenced in America, World Vision’s international President from 1989 to 1995 was Australian Graeme Irvine and he led its rapid growth. In Sydney, David Bussau established Opportunity International, which specialized in giving small loans to the poor in developing countries. Many other development agencies flourish at local, national and international levels. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the commitment of all branches of the Christian Church to welfare, aid, and relief had become unequivocal. In 2006 23 of the top 25 charities by income in Australia were Christian. Protestants are now joining with Catholics, who have a longer track record of effective political involvement, to defend by legislative means, what they have failed to achieve by cultural influence, a conservative moral society, based on Christian values.

## Conclusion

During the past two centuries, for most of the peoples of the Pacific Islands, Christianity has become the prevailing worldview, fashioning their identity, values, and cultures. Pacific Islanders are arguably the most Christianized people in the world and have developed indigenous Christian movements. Yet they, like Australians and New Zealanders, have been shaped by the Christianity they inherited from the West and, where they do change denominational allegiance, they are likely to adopt imported conservatively evangelical or Charismatic values. Australia and New Zealand are far more secularized than the Pacific Islands; they have not been adept at generating indigenous Christian movements and Christianity has not been the key to their identity. But the great majority of Australians and New Zealanders still are at least nominally Christian, and, while nominal adherence to Christianity has declined in recent decades, Christians have turned away from the sectarianism which prevailed through much of their history. The Christian movement has displayed its essential unity, established a Christian presence in culture and society, and deeply contributed to national life.

## Note

- 1 Henry to LMS Directors, June 17, 1813, *Evangelical Magazine*, 22, 1814, 158.

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## CHAPTER 44

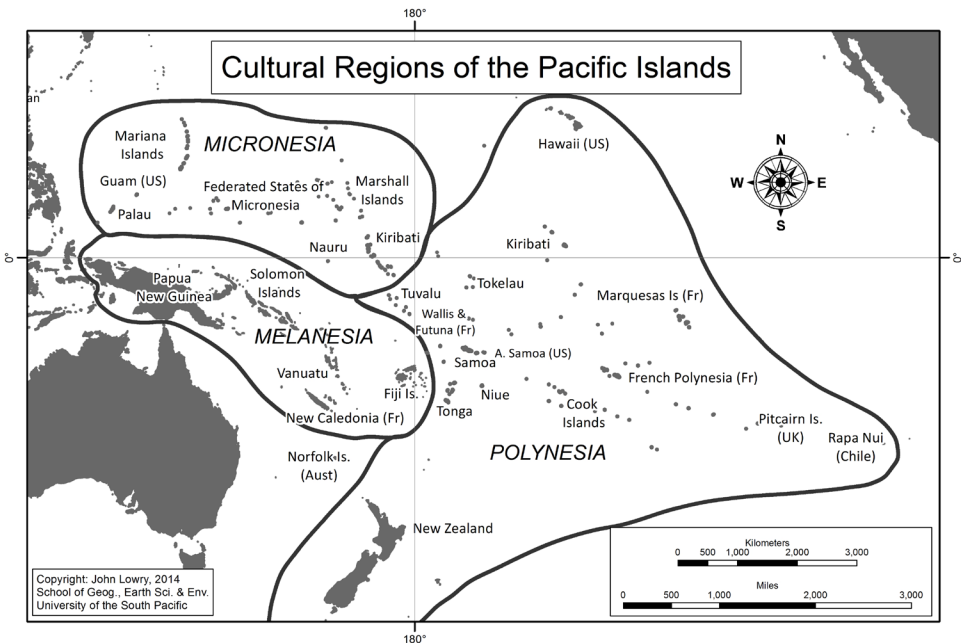
# The Historical Development of Christianity in Oceania

Manfred Ernst and Anna Anisi

### Introduction to the Region

Oceania, the majestic “liquid continent,” covers about one-third of the earth’s surface, yet it is inhabited by roughly only 10.6 million people – of which approximately 7 million alone inhabit Papua New Guinea (SPC 2013). This number may seem insignificant to some, yet Oceania boasts hundreds of different language and cultural groups (Lal and Fortune 2000: 53, 54), each unique to their Pacific island environment. Thus this cosmopolitan region contributes greatly, although largely unacknowledged due to its “small size” (in terms of landmass), to the world’s natural and human diversity. To the north of the Pacific Ocean there is Micronesia (comprised of the Mariana Islands, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Marshall Islands, and Palau). To the south and east lies Polynesia (comprised of the Hawaiian Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Easter Island, Pitcairn, Norfolk, and New Zealand). To the west is Melanesia (comprised of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji: see Figure 44.1). Within these broad ethnographic regions lie thousands of scattered islands, some of continental, but most of oceanic origins engulfed by what is known as a seismically active region – the “Pacific ring of fire.”

It is believed that the ancestors of modern Pacific Islanders originated from Southeast Asia and first settled in waves of colonization in Melanesia (PNG) around between 60,000 to 30,000 years ago and then gradually moved eastward towards French Polynesia, Hawaii and New Zealand as late as 3,500–600 years ago (Lal and Fortune 2000: 56). Until this day, the “Oceanic” Pacific Island people are known as great navigators, fishermen and craftspeople. Due to their isolation and limited influence from Europeans until the advent of sixteenth-century explorers and traders, unique cultures and languages developed which are to a large extent still upheld and practiced today – although as with



**Figure 44.1** Cultural regions of the Pacific Islands

Source: © John Lowry, 2014, School of Geography, Earth Science, & Environment, University of the South Pacific.

any culture, this is changing given the rapid external influences brought about by globalization (see Lockwood 2004; Ernst 2006b). The advance of early traders and explorers by the likes of Ferdinand Magellan (1521), Alvaro de Mendana (1567) and Captain James Cook (1769), to name a few, mark the beginnings (even if not wholly intentionally) of a steady advance of Christianity in the Pacific (Garrett 1982: 1–4). What developed, was not only a colonization of the islands in search of natural resources and strategic military bases, but also a colonization of the mind of the indigenous people – one that many missionaries believed required conformity to “Western” ideals using Christianity as a catalyst (Nokise 2009: 91–92). The drive to “save lost souls” is a process within Pacific Christianization that still continues, albeit in differentiated forms, to this day.

It seems astounding that within a period of only two hundred years, Christianity had established a firm stronghold, that is, by the turn of the twentieth century about 90% of Pacific Islanders were professed Christians (Ernst 2012: 4; Trompf 2012: 245). Garrett (1982; 1992) suggests that the rapid success of Christianity can be related to various factors; one is that the indigenous people often reasoned that to gain the missionaries’ *mana* (special power or strength) one must worship his God. Moreover, the material wealth of the early missionaries and literary skills quickly became the locals’ desired possession – one that opened doors to a new world and way of life (Nokise 2009: 92; Press 2009: 40). Guns and other weaponry were also deeply coveted for tribal and inter-island warfare, thus the local chiefs were often eager to befriend and let the missionaries stay on their lands in hopes that they could trade such valuables with the missionaries – only to be disappointed when they found otherwise. Others have



suggested that in some cases the introduction of smallpox, measles, influenza, and other European diseases were seen as a punishment for disobeying the “white man’s” God (Zocca 2006a: 281). It is for these reasons (and perhaps more) that Crocombe (2001: 208) has described the transition from traditional religions to Christianity as “pragmatic rather than dogmatic.” The subsequent flourishing of education through various church-run schools, and the end of cannibalism among other practices, remain to be heralded as some of the greatest achievements due to the adoption of Christianity in the Pacific.

To this day, it can be seen that Christianity in the Pacific has been adapted and adopted in various ways, and an outstanding example is the distinctive form of a “communal Christianity” evidently manifested through the historic mainline churches<sup>1</sup> (Ernst 1994: 305). Local chiefs had always been vital gatekeepers for missionaries. Although the indigenous social structures were not always fully understood and appreciated, the missionaries quickly realized that if a chief could be converted, it often meant securing support from the whole community (Press 2009: 40). Conversely, the chiefs knew this and used this advantage to gain some of white man’s *mana* in exchange. The pioneer missionaries fervently spread the gospel, perhaps not fully realizing that the gospel was being subtly syncretized – often on the locals, own terms (Breward 2012: 220). The evident ethical and cultural imperialistic attitude of the missionaries had not altogether changed the core of the Pacific identity – it was merely adapted. This important issue of identity has been, and to some extent still is (as will be later discussed), an important factor in understanding the modern island nation-states, political culture and the re-shaping of Christianity in the Pacific.

The Pacific is often stereotyped as “Paradise.” Tourists flock in their millions each year to enjoy the sand, sun, and sea. However, all is not well in “Paradise.” In Oceania’s post-colonial setting, some countries in the region<sup>2</sup> continue their struggle towards full political independence from France. Moreover, rapid population growth, urbanization, unemployment, climate change, and sea level rise, land and sea pollution and dependency on foreign aid are among the most pressing issues in the Pacific and continue to plague the small island-states economies. There is still considerable influence by wealthy nations (such as EU countries, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Japan) in the regions, politics and extractive resource industries. Some countries in the region seem caught in a relationship of dependency on the wealthier nations and monetary institutions in a way that has contributed to poverty, poor governance, and weak leadership.

Notably, within the imaginary lines that encircle the various small island states, there are often diverse ethnic, tribal, and kinship groups. Therefore it becomes extremely difficult to generalize about a Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian Christianity since it has been adopted in different ways. Even within Melanesia there are pockets of Polynesian inhabited islands such as Rotuma (in Fiji) and Rennell and Bellona, Tikopia, Sikaiana, and Ontong Java (in the Solomon Islands). Inter-island marriages were not uncommon, often to maintain ruling alliances such as between Fiji and Tonga (evidently in the eastern Lau group in Fiji). Hence, the region is cosmopolitan as a whole, but also extremely diverse and complex within these seemingly tiny island nations.

Whilst Australia (the Aborigines) and New Zealand (the indigenous Maori), Hawaii, West Papua, Norfolk, Pitcairn, and Easter Island, are ethnographically, culturally,

geographically and historically intertwined within the Oceania region, these islands currently have less in common with the other Pacific islands, due to diverging political developments<sup>3</sup>, and thus will be excluded from this review. There are several reasons for this, one being that the process of Christianization in the Oceania is strongly linked to past political processes (within the broader contexts of colonization, de-colonization, and ongoing calls for independence) and, second, because of the pattern of globalization that is vividly apparent through a historical analysis of Christianization and missionary work in the selected countries (Ernst 1994; Forman 1992).

## The Dawn of a New Era: The Advent of Christianity and Mission Work in the Pacific

Initial encounters with European traders and explorers were marked by a mixture of curiosity and hostility. It quickly became evident that the cosmologies of the foreigners and the island people differed greatly. Explorers depicted the Pacific as a hidden Paradise, but filled with lurking dangers from the land and sea. They described what, to them, were primitive practices such as cannibalism, frequent warfare, sorcery, wife strangling, human sacrifices, infanticide, polygamy, and other “strange” sexual customs (Garrett 1982; Crocombe 2001; Breward 2012). When Catholicism first arrived in Micronesia, in the northern Marianas and Guam, through Spanish Jesuits in 1668, the mission failed to take root (Lal and Fortune 2000: 178). Islanders were at first perplexed by the “strange” missionary teachings of chastity, monogamy, dress, and strict moral codes. It is for these reasons that early missions often failed because the inability of the missionaries to acculturate and adapt Christianity into a local context.

It was not until the late eighteenth century that the first Protestant missionaries, from the London Missionary Society (LMS), gained a firm stronghold in Oceania and began their work in the eastern Pacific which gradually moved throughout the entire Pacific through the work of local and foreign missionaries, deacons and catechists. In fact, it was not until the training and involvement of local missionaries in spreading the gospel (especially Tahitians, Cook Islanders, and Samoans) that Christianity set firm roots in the region (Lange 2005: 34). Unfortunately, the instrumental groundwork done through the local missionaries that led to the rapid spread of Christianity in the region has not been adequately acknowledged by the majority of church historians.

In the pre-Christian era, it has been noted by Breward (2012: 218) that for many Polynesians, their world revolved around; pleasing their Gods and ancestral spirits, performing various forms of sacrifice and dance to ensure fertility, protection from enemies, strength during warfare, and bountiful harvest. Communal life and a distinctively intertwined communal religion based on the fear of supernatural retribution of ancestral spirits lay in stark contrast to the monastic teachings of the early white missionaries, of individual salvation through repentance for sins, and a single God (Garrett 1982). In Melanesia, a distinctive warrior-like “culture of payback” was evident in pre-Christian times (Trompf 2012: 246). This translated into what missionaries perceived as “hostile natives,” making Melanesia one of the last and most difficult places to reach out to the people, mainly because of the common fear and suspicion that missionaries were malevolent spirits.

Whatever gloomy picture these descriptions make of pre-colonial Islanders, it is also important to point out that Pacific Islanders were experts at surviving in their harsh environment and not all customs were barbaric and brutal. The customs of reciprocity and decision-making through consensus have often been promoted as the “Pacific Way” – which is still proudly being promoted by many modern government and church leaders today.

## Polynesia: Early Phases of Christianization (ca. 1800s)

The first mission to take root in Oceania, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society (LMS), arrived at Matavai Bay, Tahiti<sup>4</sup> in 1797 (Breward 2012: 218). The LMS was guided under a comity agreement<sup>5</sup> that sent missionaries out for evangelism in Oceania and Africa. The LMS forms part of what later became to be called the Council for World Mission (CWM). Cultural differences soon became evident between locals and foreigners and the Christian message did not gain influence in French Polynesia until the conversion and baptism of Chief Pomare II in 1819 (Breward 2012: 220). The influence of Christianity quickly spread to the Cook Islands through the auspices of one of the missionary pioneers, John Williams, in the early 1820s. Soon after, indigenous missionaries such as Papeiha and Vahapata spread the gospel to other islands in the Cook Island group, consolidating the LMS presence. Other denominations not under the comity agreement such as the Latter Day Saints (LDS) established missions in the Tuamotu and Austral Archipelagos in 1841 but these missions had slower impacts (Breward 2012: 202). At the time of the pioneer missionary work in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand were already British colonies and often sent reinforcement missionaries for the LMS and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) (Lal and Fortune 2000: 178). However, it was not until the establishment of Takamo College in 1839 (in the Cook Islands) that more indigenous missionaries were aptly trained and groomed for mission work. Lange (2005) describes how, in contrast to foreign European missionaries, local missionaries were more tolerant and encouraged giving traditional meaning to the new influences and allowed symbolism and chants from before to continue albeit dressed in “new clothes.”

Mission work continued for the LMS despite the early misfortunes in Tonga in 1797 where several missionaries were killed or abandoned their posts. In Tonga, the work of early WMMS, through the Wesleyan missionary Walter Lawry (in 1826), had long lasting influences on the archipelago (Breward 2012: 221). In 1830 a high chief, Taufa’ahau,<sup>6</sup> was baptized and several loyal followers also converted with him. This conversion marked what were to be the beginnings of the influence of the Tongan monarchy in not only political but also spiritual matters. From Tonga, the influence of Methodism spread to Fiji and Samoa through ties among chiefs and by means of trade (Breward 2012: 221). Joeli Pulu (in Fiji, called Bulu), a Tongan local pioneer missionary, was very influential in consolidating Methodist influence in the Lau group (Fiji) (Lal and Fortune 2000: 180).

In the early missionary years, the competition between the LMS and WMMS soon became evident. The race to convert as many members as possible often led to zealous missionary drives. When Malua Theological College was established in 1844 (by the Congregationalists), it had a unique focus on family devotion and habits of personal

industry (Nokise 2009: 94). Peter Turner helped to strengthen the Methodist influence in Samoa in 1835 but it was not until 1868 that Piula Theological College (Methodist) was established in Samoa. The establishment of Malua and Piula had considerable influence in the region as a large number of Samoan missionaries were sent out as pioneers to other islands in the region. On Niue, by 1852 Congregational protestant missions were strongly established through the work of Paulo – a Samoan LMS missionary, since foreigners were not received well on Niue (Garrett 1982: 136). In Tuvalu as well the influence of Cook Island and Samoan LMS missionaries became evident from 1861. Yet those on Tuvalu, because of the absence of a resident missionary, had more autonomy over their church for developing their own church identity (Garrett 1982: 155).

The Catholic (Marist order) established a substantial influence on Samoa in 1845 when they converted a chief by the name of Mata'afa (Breward 2012: 221). In Samoa, Catholicism and other churches that came later such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) at first did not gain as much popularity and spread slowly because of the failure to syncretise *lotu* (referring to the Church or religious life) with the *faa Samoa* (the Samoan "way of life"). Furthermore, Garrett (1992) explains that many Samoan missionaries were sent to New Guinea in 1900 when it became a German protectorate until the Germans lost their colonies after World War I, showing that inter-island missionary work was closely related to the colonial setting at the time.

The influence of the LMS also became evident in American Samoa in 1830 through the work of John Williams and a handful of Cook Island and Tahitian missionaries (Ernst 2006a: 584). Although American Samoa shares a rich cultural and ethnic heritage with Samoa, the countries diverged politically when American Samoa became an unincorporated overseas territory of the United States after World War II. However, American Samoa remains largely Congregationalist, like its western Samoan neighbor.

In Wallis and Futuna, the first Protestant (Methodist) missionaries came from Tonga in 1836 (Rensch 1983: 6). They landed on the island of Wallis but were promptly killed in aggression because of suspicions that they wanted to undermine local authority. A year later, in 1837, a group of French Catholic priests (from the Marist order) led by Pompallier gained the King's trust and became firmly established to this day (Rensch 1983: 6). The French and Roman Catholic influence became consolidated in 1842 when it became a French protectorate. Wallisians also played a role in bringing the Catholic Mission to Tokelau between 1845 and 1863 (Giese and Perez 1983: 132). Samoan missionaries also became influential in the establishment of Protestantism around the same time. In the establishment of early missions in Polynesia it remains clear that the spread of the gospel went hand in hand with the establishment of strong theological education and the willingness of the local missionaries to remain flexible over the nature and extent of integration of culture and gospel.

## Micronesia: The Micro-Island Atoll States

Micronesia is comprised of several micro-states, most of them atoll islands reaching barely a few meters above sea level. The first Christians in Micronesia were Spanish Catholic Jesuit missionaries in 1668 on the northern Marianas and Guam (Lal and

Fortune 2000: 178). Yet, the mission failed to take root amongst the locals because of its suppressive nature. It was not until the 1820s that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) trained local Hawaiian missionaries that the gospel was spread through the region notably in the Marshalls and in the Federated States of Micronesia.<sup>7</sup> It was during this time that the American influence became strongly established in Micronesia. In the 1850s the ABCFM work was already strong in Kosrae and Pohnpei.

Pohnpei saw an influx of German missionary workers (from the Evangelical Liebenzell mission) during its colonial period from 1899 to 1914 (Jimmy 1972). The Marshall Islands as well underwent German, Japanese and US occupations, for strategic military purposes and during those years, missionary work followed suit (Garrett 1982: 142).

The first missionaries to Kiribati in 1852 were Hiram Bingham II, an American-Hawaiian, and the Hawaiian J. W. Kanoa and his wife. Later the mission work in Kiribati was continued by Hiram Bingham Jr. and his wife, facing constant danger from being caught in the middle of inter-island warfare, although they enjoyed the support of some chiefs in the atolls. In 1888 the influences of the Hawaiian missionaries eased and French-led Roman Catholicism stamped its mark in the islands.

Like the Polynesians, locals were curious and coveted the goods of the white man, especially whiskey and tobacco, which they had been exposed to before the missionaries arrived through beachcombers and explorers. Many were utterly disappointed to find out that the missionaries had not come to trade such goods with them. Nevertheless, within a short timespan, many were converted and inter-island warfare ceased.

## Melanesia: Late Beginnings (ca. 1830s)

Melanesia, especially the highlands of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, were amongst the last places in Oceania to be Christianized. The nature of the complexity of Melanesian culture and heritage has led Trompf (2012: 246, 248) to describe Melanesia as the “most complex ethnological scene on earth” and the Christianization thereof as “one of the most dramatic religious shifts of the last hundred years.” Distinctive in many Melanesian cultures are the “Big Man”<sup>8</sup> politics, which contrast with the Polynesian hierarchical chiefly style of leadership, except in the Fiji archipelago. Although Christianity drove out tribal warfare, beliefs in sorcery and evil spirits have died hard. In an attempt to make sense of the new Christian teachings, people often drew parallels between customary religious symbolisms and Christian elements. It is for these reasons that evangelizers encouraged what they perceived as positive elements of “*kastom* ways” (customary ways) to win souls – incorporating elements of reciprocity, feasting and gift exchanges (Trompf 2012: 251). However, sexual *kastom* elements were often suppressed and considered unworthy.

The Fiji archipelago was the first in Melanesia to receive Christianity in 1835 through the links with Tonga and the Wesleyan Mission. William Cross and David Cargill, along with Tongan missionaries were pioneers in the Fiji group (Newland 2006: 333). John Hunt was one of the few foreign missionaries that was able to integrate well with the people and acquired sound knowledge of their language and respect for their



culture. The fearsome Chief Cakobau was converted in 1854 which led to the strong establishment of Methodism in Fiji (Garrett 1982: 111; Trompf 2012: 245). Methodism in Fiji has had considerable influence on traditional social structure and hierarchical leadership that is still evident in the church today (Tomlinson 2009; Newland 2006: 333). Later, Catholic missions (1844) usually spread to areas that were not yet heavily influenced by the Methodists. These were followed also by the smaller and less influential Anglican, Presbyterian, and Seventh-Day Adventists missions (Newland 2006: 334).

In Vanuatu, on the other hand, there was a strong influence in various parts of the island archipelago of Presbyterians (1846), the Anglican Melanesian Mission (1860), and French Catholics (1887) (Zocca 2006b: 208). The southern Vanuatu group were also greatly influenced by the Scots missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand (Lal and Fortune 2000: 178) whilst the North remained largely Catholic. It was also in Vanuatu that one of the pioneer Protestant LMS missionaries in Oceania, John Williams, was martyred on Erromanga Island during his first visit to the Vanuatu group in 1839. Therefore the LMS did not make their presence felt in the islands early on, but later collaborated with the Presbyterian mission (Zocca 2006b: 208, 219).

The Solomon Islands was another territory only few missionaries dared to set foot in. Known for its fearsome warriors and "headhunters," the first successful mission, the Anglican Melanesian Mission from New Zealand, was established in 1849 (Garrett 1982: 187). The mission was headed by the Anglican Bishop John Patterson who was later martyred on the island of Nukapu, Temotu Province. The Anglican mission had a lasting influence in the archipelago because it allowed cultural elements to be integrated into church practices such as exorcisms which continue to be conducted by the priesthood (Press 2009: 43). An earlier Catholic mission in 1845 was abandoned because of the hostilities encountered with locals (Ernst 2006c: 165). It was not until the archipelago became a British protectorate that more missionaries from the Methodist Church, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Catholics established strongholds in most provinces.

New Caledonia is currently the only Melanesian country under colonial rule. Its rich nickel mineral resources and geopolitical considerations have made it the largest French stronghold in the Pacific. When the French annexed New Caledonia in 1853 it also consolidated Catholicism on the main island (*Le Grand Terre*) (Trompf 2012: 246). However, the Christianization of the island group dates back to 1840 when the LMS under the auspices of Thomas Heath, with the help of Samoan and Cook Island missionaries (Noah and Taniela), established Protestant missions on the *Isles de Pine* and later in the Loyalty Islands (through the Cook Island missionary named Fao) (Zocca 2006a: 278). Although the missionaries often encountered hostilities from the local people, the real competition lay in antagonism between the Protestant and Catholic missions. One was considered to be under British rule (LMS) and the other under French (Catholic), so with the islands coming under French rule, many of the LMS Protestant missionaries were banned from evangelization on the mainland and were promptly replaced by French Protestants from the Evangelical Missions of Paris (*Société des Missions Evangeliques*) that took over in 1898 (Zocca 2006a: 278).

In Papua New Guinea, the early attempts by the Catholic (Marist order) mission in the 1840s failed to take root and was abandoned (on Woodlark Island) because of malaria and other difficulties encountered by the early missionaries (Gibbs 2006: 81). However, in 1871 the London Missionary Society was successful in converting coastal and outer-islanders, notably in the southern Provinces with the help of Polynesian local missionaries. Australia, being a close neighbor, sent out Methodist missionaries in 1875 who became firmly established in many parts, especially in the Bismarck Archipelago (Gibbs 2006: 81). In 1882, German Catholics began evangelization on New Britain Island. It was to be followed closely in 1886 by the Lutheran, Rhenish, and Liebenzell Evangelical missions from Germany (Trompf 2012: 246). Like other parts of the Pacific, powers such as Britain, Germany, and Australia over considerable time periods colonized parts of Papua New Guinea until its independence in 1975 and with that status were able to introduce the mainline churches at the time (Trompf 2012: 246).

## Colonialism, Resistance, and the Church

Until the end of the nineteenth century, missionary workers held considerable influence over chiefs and island politics. Most educational and health services were in the hands of the missions. This changed with the dawn of the colonial era. By this time, most Pacific island territories were under one or many colonial rules. In French Polynesia a French territory was established as early as 1836 shortly after the arrival of the Roman Catholic Picpus Fathers in 1834. Although during this era, many local missionaries were being trained and sent out, the European missionaries were still conceived as being superior and more important (Nokise 2009: 97). This phenomenon fits in with the wider pattern of colonialism at the time and is evident until today as many developed countries still have much influence in setting the regions development agenda.

Decolonization started early in the twentieth century. For example, after World War I Germans eased rule in their colonies when they lost the war. After World War II, most other colonizers were slowly departing, with actual independence occurring from the 1960s onwards. Self-determination and moves towards decolonization were part of a process that started many years before actual independence and in many islands it was accompanied by fierce resistance, protests and fighting. In Samoa, the *Mau* movement which started around 1900 was a reaction to the suppressive character of colonial rule, disregard for the *faa* Samoa and inability of the colonial government (New Zealand at the time) to curb the influenza epidemic which killed many locals. The movement led to Samoa's political independence in 1962 – the first in the Pacific. Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, the *Ma'asina* Rule movement after World War II was a resistance movement against what locals, mainly from the island of Malaita, perceived as suppression and disregard for *kastom* by the British administration. The Solomon Islands gained independence in 1978, although many argued they were not ready for it at the time.

The obvious ethical and cultural imperialism created by the early traders, settlers, and even missionaries created the beginnings of what could be seen as resistance

movements or first breakaways. The Mamaia movement in Tahiti is one example of a breakaway church (between 1826 and 1841) which advocated a return to polygamy and integrated aspects of millenarianism (Breward 2012: 223). More resistance movements occurred in French Polynesia due to the French government conducting atomic testing (1966–1995) which caused a huge outcry by the local churches and eventually ceased, despite the islands not attaining full political independence.

Bhagwan (2009) points out that the churches could (and should) play a substantial role in conflict resolution and nation building although this role is often neglected. In both Samoa and the Solomons during years of self-determination the church was influential in averting a full blown civil war through peace negotiations. Even in post-independence years, the conflicts that plagued Bougainville<sup>9</sup> (1989–2001) and the Solomons (1998–2003) were largely handled through many peace negotiations carried out by the churches (Douglas 2007).

Despite the need for resistance to colonialism after years of suppression, Christianity has remained an inseparable aspect of Pacific people's new identity and social structure. Forman (1992: 26) noted that "because of the merging of traditional and Christian ethics most people now see no difference between the demands of Christianity and the demands of culture." Therefore, Christianity, albeit being a legacy of imperialism, remains a strong force in the Pacific.

## Developments since World War II

Christianity took on a new dimension and intensity since World War II. The rapid invasion of Japan and the United States during the "Pacific (proxy) War" of World War II was marked by the attempt to secure strategic military bases in the region. The war made the highlands more accessible (such as in PNG) through upgraded infrastructure and allowed a huge influx of sects, churches, and para-churches into previously inaccessible places. Soon after the War, "migration to New Zealand and Australia by Tongans, Samoans, and Cook Islanders increased rapidly for education and employment" purposes (Breward 2012: 225). Also, inter-island migration e.g., from Wallis and Futuna to New Caledonia) added to the complexity of the changing socio-economic scene in the islands. Historic mainline churches that were already firmly established before the mid-twentieth century were increasingly losing members to rapidly growing new religious groups in the region.

## Ecumenism and Contextual Theologies

For centuries there has been competition between Protestant and Catholics, each striving to reach "lost souls" and arguing over theological differences. The move towards ecumenism in the region can be traced back to the time when the World Council of Churches was starting to promote ecumenism worldwide in the 1950s. However, the ecumenical body of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and Pacific Theological College (PTC) were not established until 1966 (Nokise 2009; Press 2009). These insti-



tutions were to serve not only as advanced theological institutions but also as centers for developing a Pacific regional ecumenical identity. In 1968 the Methodist Church and former LMS Church merged as the United Church of the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, in 1976 Catholic missions joined the PCC and strong concerns for social justice, especially for calls for political independence, environmental justice and social justice began to emerge in the region. Many historic mainline churches were very vocal at the time. Sadly, by the 1980s the strong spirit of ecumenism that had flourished in the Pacific had faded away (Forman 1992: 31), with the reasons for this phenomenon still in need of further research.

The significance of the formation of regional ecumenical bodies has its roots in the search for a regional identity. Paunga (2009: 73) asserts that the “coconut theology,”<sup>10</sup> developed by Tongan Methodist Minister ‘Amanaki Havea, did not gain roots in many of the churches in the 1980s as it was a “form of belittlement” for many as it in some ways symbolized backwardness and was also considered unorthodox. Nevertheless, in many contexts advocates of the “Pacific Way” still prefer to use coconut juice and flesh as substitutes in the eucharist’ as the coconut is itself the widely professed symbolic tree of life. Others, such as the Anglican bishop Winston Halapua, called for a deep spirited reflection of Pacific identity and Christianity based on the concept of *moana* (ocean) as a symbol of unity rather than a divide (Paunga 2009: 78). These indigenous conceptions and symbolizations of what Pacific Christianity is, or could be, are still in their infancy but depict the ongoing endeavor to develop an ecumenical Pacific identity.

## The Church in Post-Independence Politics

Officially, the church and politics are separate – however in reality, the churches have permeated the political scene on several levels. For most Pacific Island countries, independence<sup>11</sup> brought out both the best and the worst in local leadership. Fiji, for example, has since her independence in 1970 from Britain struggled to grapple with rapid socio-economic changes as well as to build a representative democracy (Newland 2006). Fiji has experienced four coups as a result of racial differences, land issues, power struggles and conflicting interests amongst various sectors in society: the chiefs, ordinary Fijians, descendant of the Indian indentured laborers, businessmen, the elite working class, and church leaders (Newland 2009). The Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma has strongly been linked to politics in the past, most evidently by a display of support for the 1987 and 2000 coups (Dropsy 1993; Ernst 1994; Newland 2009). As a result, ethno-nationalistic sections of various historic mainline churches and new apostolic and charismatic churches act as barriers to harmonious nation building in the modern nation-state context.

The churches, representing the majority of their respective island populations, are influential as well in policy formulation, human rights advocacy and use of natural resources, and many churches own land, businesses, and property as well. In many countries, the pastors or church ministers are considered second in rank to the chiefs and enjoy a privileged status. In Vanuatu, the first Prime Minister, Walter Lini, was an Anglican priest (Crocombe 2001: 217). Ernst (2013: 7) noted that “[i]t is not

unusual that evangelists such as Benny Hinn, Bill Subritzky or Reinhard Bonnke are treated by respective governments like heads of State. Many governments are regularly active and willing in supporting, organizing, and participating in evangelization activities." The influence of religious life in politics remains to be seen as a remnant of the pre-Christian traditions where clear-cut boundaries of the natural and supernatural powers did not exist, with the latter exerting its influence over the former in the socialization process.

## Globalization and the Re-shaping of Christianity (1960s–present)

In his study of the re-shaping of Christianity in Oceania, Ernst (2006b: 713–716) argued that the rapid growth of new religious groups in Oceania since the 1960s is closely related to the rapid, contemporaneous, socio-economic change that has taken place simultaneously. World War II and the economic boom that followed in the 1960s opened up the doors for new ideas, flows of people and rapid urbanization. Lifestyles were rapidly transformed from subsistence-based to market-based economies, allowing capitalism to take root (Ernst 2006b).

Since World War II, the activity of North American based evangelical, charismatic or fundamentalist missions and para-organizations became more widespread (Ernst 2013). This phenomenon emulated what Forman (1990: 29) has described as "a new wave of Christianity that is trying to supplant the old." It is becoming ever more clear that Christianity, since its early inception, has been "the most powerful and influential globalizing force in the Pacific" (Ernst 2012: 32). It is also becoming clear that over the past fifty years or so, the percentage of non-mainline churches<sup>12</sup> (see Ernst 1994: 306) have increased substantially. Subsequently, the percentage of the combined historic mainline churches declined significantly (Ernst 1994; 2006b; 2012) (see Table 44.1). This raises the question as to which factors contribute to the growth of the newer arrivals of Christian denominations and groups in Oceania and, vice versa, to the subsequent decline of the historic mainline churches of Protestant origins.

It has been argued that the rapid growth evident among the non-mainline churches can be attributed to their dynamism. Trompf (2012: 253) has described their nature of worship as "outwardly vital (as against steady), spontaneous and spiritistic (rather than circumscribed by introduced form) and engag[ing] in more bodily movement (rather than up-and-down good order)," holding up striking parallels to the pre-Christian nature of worship.

Ernst (2006b) argues that the factors for change are quite complex and need to be understood in their wider socio-political context. Since the 1960s the Pacific Islands have been transforming so rapidly that amidst these changes people are in search for clarity and orientation, a sense of community (in urban areas), and clear ethical principles (2006: 59). Second, many of the new religious groups have successfully incorporated elements into their style of worship which addresses the affective and changing cultural needs and realities in the region. Moreover the authoritative teaching and preaching styles reflected in certain kinds of fundamentalist biblical interpretation are popular among believers in the "end-times."<sup>13</sup> Another factor is the dissatisfaction of

**Table 44.1** Trends in church affiliation (%) in selected island nations of Oceania: Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea<sup>a</sup>

	Tonga		Samoa		Fiji		Papua New Guinea	
	1966	2006	1961	2011	1966	2007	1966	2000
Historic mainline churches	90.1	63.1	91.0	64.9	48.2	44.4	77.8	61.2
New religious groups	9.7	34.9	8.9	34.9	2.9	20.8	14.1	34.8
Other religions or non-stated	0.2	2.0	0.1	0.2	48.9	34.8	8.1	4.0

<sup>a</sup> The data presented is based on available official censuses and extensive field research between 1991–2004. The Historic Mainline Churches in Table 44.1 refer to the Methodist Church in Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, Anglican Churches of Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, United Church of Papua New Guinea, Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Roman Catholic Churches in the respective countries. The term “new religious groups” here includes: the Assemblies of God, Seventh-Day Adventists, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and a variety of other Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that are usually summarized in government statistics under “other Christians.” For details see Ernst (2006b: 92, 93, 97, 98, 337, 586, 617, 701).

members of the historic mainline churches with the preaching, teachings, or traditions which sometimes may not connect to the people and their lived realities. Young people are especially likely to be dissatisfied and bored with the routine services and lack of participation in their church. Also, Ernst (2006b) stresses that the new religious movements are often well staffed and funded from missions overseas (mainly US based), seem professional and modern and also contribute greatly to secondary education. Whilst some may see the rapid re-shaping of Christianity in the region as a threat, the phenomenon is also an expression of a very interesting process of adaptation and adjustment of mainline churches that might even curb the growth of new movements. Churches that have given space to charismatic movements and Pentecostal worship patterns in their own denominations have proved more stable than those who oppose it.

## Outlook

The attitude of church leaders within the mainline churches regarding new religious groups can be best described as a mixture of ignorance, antipathy, arrogance, and retreat to denominationalism. The growth of new religious groups with the subsequent decline of mainline churches is often denied or at best seen as a temporary phenomenon. Apart from occasional calls simply to ban all new religious groups, there is no apparent strategy on how best to deal with them. With few exceptions, attempts at critical self-reflection are rare. There is no visible strategy or vision with regard to how the ongoing loss of members could be stopped and in most churches (on both sides) there are not many signs of attempts to seek dialogue and cooperation.

The community spirit that has been so evidently preserved in Pacific Christianity is a strong asset that the churches should not lose sight of. It not only fosters identity in a

world that is rapidly changing but also represents a strong force for action through the churches' participation in civil society. The Pacific Island churches need to stand in solidarity to address the most pressing issues facing society today. The search for personal salvation should not eliminate the progress towards ecumenism and regional peace-building. There is a need for more research in areas related to the perceived decline in ecumenism in the region since the 1980s and on opportunities for future ecumenical cooperation.

Looking at the churches in the Pacific islands one cannot help but recognize that most of them are, for a variety of reasons, ill-prepared to cope with problems deriving from rapid social change as a result of globalization. A former moderator of the Pacific Conference of Churches, the late Catholic Archbishop Patelisio Finau, stated in the 1990s that "there seems to be apathy and frustration with a seeming lack of progress of ecumenism. In general the clergy and church leaders are so busy with maintenance that they forget about mission and ecumenism." These words describe very much the situation today.

In summary it can be said that upon the Pacific churches rests a great responsibility for meeting the challenge of rapid social change. The fulfillment of their responsibilities requires nothing less than a thorough review of their life and actions. They need to discover new ways and patterns of witness and service relevant to the context of their people. Therefore, ecumenism in the twenty-first century must find fresh forms of expression, new avenues to overcome divisions, and an inspiring vision that realistically engages the churches not only on a spiritual level but also on the socio-political level in the face of capitalism and other global forces in the Pacific.

## Notes

- 1 These are the: Anglican Church, Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, Cook Islands Christian Church, Ekalesia Niue, Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Church of Tonga, Free Church of Tonga, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Kiribati Protestant Church, Methodist Church in Fiji, Methodist Church in Samoa, Nauru Congregational Church, Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholic Church, United Church of Christ in the Marshalls, United Church in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, United Church of Christ in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Kosrae.
- 2 French Polynesia (annexed 1842) and New Caledonia (annexed 1853).
- 3 Countries excluded from the review have not achieved political independence from their mother colonies and for this reason they have developed quite differently. The Aborigines and Maori represent minority groups in the independent Australia and New Zealand but have for a long time been integrated into these settler colonies. However, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, American Samoa, Guam, Cook Islands, and Tokelau are under special arrangements that grant differentiated forms of self-government, although some have entered into such agreements voluntarily whilst others have not.
- 4 Part of the Society Islands Archipelago in French Polynesia

- 5 The comity agreement (among mission agencies) specified the mission territories allotted to the London Missionary Society (LMS) – a Protestant and primarily Congregationalist society that was based in London.
- 6 Later to be crowned King George Tupou of Tonga in 1845.
- 7 Formerly known as the Caroline Islands and comprises of Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae, and Yap.
- 8 Refers to the prestige or high status that males can achieve throughout their lifetime. Gained through respect, good oratory skills, hard work, and previously, being a fearless and successful warrior for one's tribe.
- 9 Now an autonomous province in the eastern part of Papua New Guinea.
- 10 A move towards expressing Christianity through locally derived items and symbols of traditional importance.
- 11 With the exception of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Marianas, Tokelau, Guam, and American Samoa lacking the status of full independence. They are in some way or another still attached to their "mother colonies."
- 12 The *established* new religious groups: Assemblies of God, Brethren Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Church in Palau, Evangelical Church in Chuuk and Yap, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, South Seas Evangelical Church.  
 Amongst the *most recent arrivals* are the: Apia Christian Fellowship, Fiji Baptist Convention, Christian Mission Fellowship, Christian Outreach Center, Church of Christ/Nashville, Church of God/Cleveland, Church of the Nazarene, Covenant Evangelical Church, Independent Baptist Churches, Nauru Independent Church, New Apostolic Church, Revival Center International, Salvation Army, Samoan Full Gospel Church, South Pacific Evangelical Fellowship, United Pentecostal Church, and World Wide Church of God.
- 13 Based on interpretation of the Bible that the end of the world is approaching soon and people must get spiritually prepared for the event.

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# Roman Catholicism since 1800

Thomas P. Rausch

If the French Revolution (1789) and its aftermath symbolized the beginning of political modernity in Europe, for the Catholic Church it was a traumatic event. The church had been a staunch defender of the *ancien régime* and was secure in its privilege. In France it possessed as much as 10% of the land. Too many bishops and abbots lived in luxury, while many monasteries were wealthy in revenues from their lands but nearly half empty. Though a considerable number of priests were in favor of reform and many people recognized the church's spiritual role in society, popular Catholicism was hierarchical and authoritarian. Dominated by clerics, it was moralistic, preoccupied with a repressive sexual morality, and reinforced with threats of damnation.

The Revolution was not anticlerical in its initial phases, but the forces it unleashed quickly moved in that direction. In July 1790 the French National Assembly passed a Civil Constitution of the Clergy which attempted to reorganize the church along democratic lines. Without consulting pope or bishops, it decreed that priests and bishops be popularly elected and were responsible to the state, breaking jurisdictional links with Rome. The dioceses were realigned to correspond with the country's administrative departments, reducing their number from 135 to 83, and parishes were reorganized. Monasteries were suppressed. The requirement that priests and bishops promise under oath to uphold the constitution effectively split the church between "constitutionals" and non-jurors who refused to take the oath. Between 6,000 and 9,000 priests married, some against their will, while another 20,000, mostly constitutionals, left the priesthood. More than 30,000 priests left the country, many of them deported. The number of priests killed may have been as high as two or three thousand. A new calendar appeared in 1793 which eliminated all Christian feasts and references to Christianity while radicals in Paris attempted to establish Deism as the official religion of the republic, symbolically enthroning a young woman dressed as the Goddess of Reason on the altar of Notre Dame Cathedral, all part of a systematic effort to de-Christianize the country. Not unsurprisingly, many Catholics took sides against the revolution and so were considered unpatriotic.



Napoleon's conquests spread the forces unleashed by the Revolution throughout much of Europe. Religious orders were devastated; more than a thousand Benedictine abbeys and priories were secularized. After French troops took Rome, Pope Pius VI was moved to France as a prisoner where he died (1799). The virtual schism in France was resolved only in 1801 when Napoleon signed a concordat with the Holy See. All the bishops were forced to resign and new ones, nominated by Napoleon, were confirmed by the pope. If the concordat brought some peace, the church lost much of its power in the temporal sphere; the concordat provided that priests were to be paid by the state, established religious liberty, and stripped the church of its authority over education, marriage, and the family. Nor was it allowed to lay claim to its confiscated properties.

With so much damage to its clergy and its power in society radically altered, it is little wonder that the church remained hostile for at least another century towards "liberalism," with its Enlightenment driven rejection of authority and tradition, its tendency to privatize religion, confining it to the sphere of the personal, and its emphasis on material interests, individual rights, and democratic forms of government. In reaction, the papacy struggled to reassert the alliance between church and state; it opposed freedom of conscience, the press, assembly, and scientific inquiry as species of liberalism. Gregory XVI (1831–1846) in his encyclical *Mirari vos* (1832) argued against liberty of conscience, since human nature was "inclined to evil" (no. 14), and against the separation of church and state. Pius IX (1846–1878), though initially well disposed to the political changes in Europe, turned increasingly conservative in his efforts to hold on to the Papal States. His *Syllabus of Errors*, attached to his 1864 encyclical *Quanta Cura* but never signed, condemned eighty erroneous concepts and movements considered typical of modern civilization, among them the proposition that "it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship" as well as the notion that "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization."

## Vatican I: 1869–1870

When Pius IX summoned the bishops of the church to take part in the First Vatican Council, it was in the context of a church whose authority was under assault on a number of fronts. The Enlightenment's exaltation of reason over faith challenged the church's teaching authority and left no room for revelation, while the increasingly secular states of Europe radically limited the church's power in society and its authority over the everyday life of the faithful. In France some continued to maintain the Gallican position that although the pope has the principal part in questions of faith, his judgments are not irreformable without the consent of a general council. In response, the church turned inward. The ultramontanist ("beyond the mountains") movement emphasizing papal supremacy saw its goals realized when Vatican I defined papal primacy and infallibility.

The Council's constitution *Pastor aeternus* (1870) taught that the Roman Pontiff has a primacy of jurisdiction over the universal church, not only in regard to faith and morals, but also in those things that relate to the discipline and government of the church throughout the world, thus over churches, pastors, and faithful (DS<sup>1</sup> 3064).

After considerable debate, it declared that the pope when speaking *ex cathedra*, that is, from the chair of Peter, “is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals: and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church” (DS 3074). But the definition was carefully circumscribed. The charism of infallibility belongs primarily to the church. It is exercised only when the pope teaches with full authority in regard to faith and morals; its purpose is not to reveal new doctrine but to “faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith delivered through the apostles” (DS 3070). The often misunderstood clause “not from the consent of the Church” (*ex sese*) does not mean that the pope teaches independently of the church, but that such irreformable definitions are not contingent on a subsequent ratification by the church, that is, by the bishops, as the fourth Gallican Article of March 19, 1682 held. The Council, brought to a premature close because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, was not able to address a planned schema on the church. After the Council some German-speaking Catholics protesting the definition of infallibility joined with the Old Catholic See of Utrecht in the Netherlands to form the Old Catholic Church.

## Modernism

The period after Vatican I was dominated by the Roman reaction to “Modernism,” but it also saw the beginnings of a number of renewal movements that prepared the way for Vatican II. The term Modernism was used to characterize an attempt on the part of some Catholic scholars to enter into a dialogue with modernity by adopting modern, “critical” methods of biblical and historical investigation, developed largely in the secular universities of Germany. Alfred Loisy (1857–1940), a French biblical scholar, sought to explain how the church resulted from efforts to institutionalize Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom of God. George Tyrell (1861–1901), a convert to Catholicism and a Jesuit, was a philosopher of religion who interpreted revelation as an inner religious experience that could be expressed symbolically but should not be understood propositionally. Friedrich von Hügel, often associated with the modernists, analyzed Christianity as a blend of institutional, intellectual, and mystical elements. While not without faults, the modernists were arguing – in more contemporary terms – against a propositional model of revelation, an exaggerated supernaturalism, and for historical consciousness. To more traditional theologians, often called “integralists” because of their conviction that challenging any point of the traditional structure of theology was to threaten the whole edifice, the modernists were seeking to replace traditional scholastic theology with Enlightenment reason. Rome’s reaction was decisive.

Two 1907 documents, Pope Pius X’s encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* and a decree of the Holy Office, *Lamentabili sane*, condemned what Rome understood as the heresy of Modernism. The results were devastating for Catholic theology. A long period of repression followed; vigilance committees were set up in dioceses, those suspected of modernist ideas were “delated” to Rome, and bishops and seminary professors were required annually to take an oath against Modernism. For the next fifty years Catholic theology rarely moved much beyond the manual or text book theology of the Roman schools.

## Currents of Renewal

There were, however, some movements more reflective of historical consciousness that were to renew the theology and life of the church and bear fruit at Vatican II. The modern biblical movement, made possible by the development of historical-critical methods of investigating biblical texts, using form criticism, redaction criticism, and source criticism, was strongly resisted by the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Commission during the years between 1905 and 1915. But the 1943 encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, was a breakthrough; it encouraged Catholic scholars to use these methods. The result was to transform Catholic theology. The liturgical movement, with its roots in the Benedictine monasteries of Germany, Switzerland, and France, sought to renew the church's liturgical life by popularizing the use of Gregorian chant and encouraging a more active participation in the liturgy by the laity. Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805–1875) at Solesmes in France and Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873–1906) in Belgium as well as Virgil Michel (1890–1938) and Godfrey Diekmann (1908–2002) at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota were especially influential. Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici corporis* (1943), with its sacramental vision of the church as the body of Christ, had implications for the liturgical movement, while *Mediator Dei* (1947) addressed it directly, giving it cautious encouragement. The modern ecumenical movement, tracing its roots to the Protestant World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 and bearing fruit at Amsterdam in 1948 in the foundation of the World Council of Churches, bringing in the Orthodox, was to reenergize Catholicism at Vatican II.

A fourth current (1930–1950) was the movement known as *ressourcement*, a "return" to the classical sources of the tradition in the Scripture, the liturgy, and the fathers of the church. Sometimes referred to as the *la nouvelle théologie* (the new theology) this movement, exemplified in the works of French scholars Marie-Dominique Chenu, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Daniélou, was to challenge the hegemony of neoscholasticism and move Catholic theology in a direction that was at once more pastoral, more historical, and more traditional in the deepest sense. Other currents of renewal include the growing body of social teaching since Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* (1891), the neo-Thomist movement led by Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson, and some tentative interest in the ecumenical movement, represented by the 1949 instruction of the Holy Office, *Ecclesia Catholica*.

## Vatican II: 1962–1965

When Pope Pius XII died in 1958 and the conclave to elect his successor deadlocked, the 76-year-old Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, was elected as a compromise as Pope John XXIII. Few expected him to make any significant changes. But on January 25, 1959, at a vesper service at St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls, he shocked the seventeen cardinals present, many of them from the Roman Curia, the church's bureaucracy, by announcing that he intended to summon an ecumenical council. Their response was cool; few welcomed the news. As his vision for what became the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) crystallized, two principal goals emerged. One

was the internal renewal or updating of the Catholic Church, *aggiornamento* as it was soon called. The second was “a renewed cordial invitation to the faithful of the separated churches to participate with us in this feast of grace and brotherhood, for which so many souls long in all parts of the world.” This language was given a more “Roman” expression in the official texts of the council. Pope John also stressed repeatedly that the council was to be primarily pastoral, not concerned with new doctrinal definitions. To underline his ecumenical intentions, he took a number of steps, both practical and symbolic. He invited the Orthodox and Protestant churches to delegate official observers to take part in the council, and seated them in a place of honor, at the head of the nave of St. Peter’s, close to the table from which the council presidents presided and opposite the cardinals, and he established a new Vatican congregation, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, putting it at the observers’ service. As the 2500 bishops were assembling for the council, he gave a radio address, speaking of the need for the church to address issues of peace, the equality and rights of all peoples as well as the miseries faced by so many, suggesting that the church should be presented as “the Church of all, and especially as the Church of the poor.” In his opening address on October 11 he again gave voice to his desire that the council be pastoral rather than dogmatic; in a memorable sentence on theological language he said that “the substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another,” thus distinguishing between the essential meaning of a doctrine and its historically conditioned expression.

If Pope John’s initiative was widely welcomed, he encountered considerable opposition from many in the Roman Curia. When they could not dissuade him from holding the council, they tried to keep it firmly under their control by filling the ten preparatory commissions, charged with developing the drafts or “*schemata*” to be discussed by the assembled bishops, with curial officials. Though Pope John had hoped to complete the council within the year, the more than seventy *schemata* presented by the Central Preparatory Commission suggested that no clear plan existed for how the council should proceed. Working with four other cardinals, including Cardinal Giovanni Montini of Milan and Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens, the Archbishop of Malines-Brussels proposed three additional sessions and by the end of the first session had reduced the seventy plus *schemata* to a manageable seventeen, one more than the sixteen documents that the council would actually produce. Another important step towards the ultimate success of the council took place at the first working session on October 13. The agenda called for the bishops to elect the 160 members of the ten conciliar commissions, presuming that those who had served on the preparatory commissions would simply be reelected. But when Cardinal Liénart from Lille in France suggested a delay, so that the bishops could consult in their national or regional groups, his suggestion was endorsed by Cardinal Frings of Cologne and both were supported with loud applause from the council fathers. The proposal carried the day, meaning that the commissions would be more representative of the whole church, evidence that the bishops were starting to take responsibility for the council. This became even more evident at the first session. Two of the *schemata* presented were unacceptable to the majority. The constitution on revelation, after considerable criticism, was withdrawn by the pope. The *schema* on the church was also sent back to the Theological Commission after the bishops responded

with applause to Suenens' call for it to be redrafted. That summer, on June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died. Cardinal Montini, who had shown himself to be on the side of renewal, was elected pope, taking the name of Paul VI. He quickly took charge of the council, appointing a steering committee composed of four cardinals, three of whom were known for their progressive views (Döpfner, Lecaro, and Suenens), while the fourth, Cardinal Agagianian who represented the eastern churches was hardly a strict traditionalist. Pope Paul also made it clear that members of the Curia would have "a conformity of minds" with what the pope desired for the council.

In the three sessions that followed, the council produced sixteen documents that outlined the parameters for the renewal of the church. While the Second Vatican Council represented a renewal of the church, not a break with its tradition, it meant in many ways that the Catholic church finally had come to terms with modernity. After the long struggle against "Modernism," the constitution on divine revelation as well as other documents reflected an acceptance of historical-critical ways of thinking. The Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis humanae*), affirmed modernity's principle of religious liberty. The Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*), reversing previous policy, committed the church to the ecumenical movement. The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra aetate*) adopted a new, positive attitude towards interreligious dialogue, teaching that the Catholic Church looks on the great world religions with respect and affirming that their teachings often reflect a ray of the divine truth that enlightens all men and women (NA 2). Finally, abandoning the defensive position that had so often characterized the Catholic Church in its long battle with liberalism, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*) turned the church towards the world and especially towards the poor. In the years following the council the emphasis on social justice and the theologies of liberation would find its inspiration in this document.

Other documents were important for the internal life of the church. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) moved Catholic ecclesiology from the juridical, "perfect society" model of Vatican I to a presentation of the church in biblical, sacramental terms. The church was described as "a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race" (LG 1). Several themes stand out. Chapter 2 treats the whole church as the People of God, enriched with diverse "gifts" or "charisms" (LG 12). Chapter 3 develops a collegial theology of the episcopal office. Like the apostles, the bishops constitute a body or college which with the pope exercises supreme authority over the universal church (LG 22), while each bishop is placed in charge of a particular church (LG 23). Reinterpreting Vatican I on papal infallibility, it taught that the bishops when united with the pope share in the church's infallible teaching office (LG 25). They are not to be considered vicars of the pope, but govern the churches assigned to them (LG 27). Chapter 4 develops a theology of the laity in the church; they do not merely cooperate in the apostolate that is proper to the hierarchy, but share in the threefold mission of Christ as prophet, priest, and king (LG 31) and thus in the church's mission through baptism and confirmation (LG 33). This laid the foundation for the explosion of lay ministries in the postconciliar church. Chapter 5 emphasized that not just priests and religious, but all the faithful are called to holiness. In regard to non-Christian religions, the constitution affirmed that those "can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know

the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience" (LG 16). This would help the church enter into the dialogue with other world religions that would be so important in the twenty-first century.

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) taught that God's self-communication in history, witnessed to in Scripture, reaches its fullness in the person of Jesus (DV 2). Thus its view of revelation is personal rather than propositional; it is trinitarian in form, historical in mediation, and christological in its fulfillment. Correct interpretation of Scripture requires concern for the biblical author's intention, implying the importance of historical critical study, though under the guidance of the church (DV 12). The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*) encouraged the renewal of the church's official prayer and worship, providing for full participation by the people (SC 30), simplifying the rites (SC 34) and adapting the liturgy to the traditions of peoples, including their languages, making possible vernacular translations (SC 36).

The Second Vatican Council brought enormous changes to Catholic life. Without giving up its unique claims to apostolic origin, the Catholic Church acknowledged its share in responsibility for the "sin of separation" and entered into ecumenical dialogue with other "churches and ecclesial communities," teaching that their members through baptism are already in an imperfect communion with the Catholic Church (UR 3). It sought to heal its often tragic relations with Judaism with new teaching (LG 16; NA 4) and adopted a new attitude of respect towards the great world religions. Within a few years Catholics were worshipping in their own languages, with a new lectionary that was often adopted by other churches. The Catholic charismatic renewal which began in the late 1960s grew rapidly, making many Catholics more familiar with a Pentecostal style of praise and worship. For Catholic Hispanics it remains one of the fastest growing movements in the United States and Latin America today. Other lay movements like Marriage Encounter, *Cursillo*, Focolari, Sant'Egidio, and basic Christian communities in many third world countries have contributed to the renewal of Catholic life.

But for many Catholics the council and its aftermath brought uncertainty and polarization. Some "traditionalist" Catholics refused to accept the vernacular liturgy; they formed Latin mass societies or joined the Society of St. Pius X, a schismatic movement led by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, a French bishop who had spent most of his life in Africa. Opus Dei and *Comunione e Liberazione* are conservative lay movements that have sought to bring Christian witness into everyday life, including politics. Founded in Spain in 1928, Opus Dei was made a personal prelature by John Paul II in 1982; it has close to 90,000 members, mostly lay men and women who are under the spiritual direction of its prelate and priests. Communion and Liberation, founded in Italy in 1954, began as an anti-communist movement. On the other hand, many Catholics have been impatient for change. Many were disappointed by *Humanae vitae*, Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical on contraception; the result was a diminished authority of the magisterium, particularly on questions of sexuality. As seminary formation became more open, religious life less dependent on external symbols, and some looked forward to a change in the requirement of clerical celibacy, thousands left the priesthood and religious life. In the United States between 1966 and 1978 about 10,000 men left the priesthood, and the number of religious women dropped by 50,000. Theology experienced a sea change; no longer

done exclusively by priests in seminaries, it underwent a process of laicization and has become increasingly pluralistic. New movements for optional celibacy, women, homosexuals, and the empowerment of laity have appeared, reflecting not just the council but also cultural changes in the United States in the years following Vatican II.

## A World Church

Other tensions reflect the challenges of trying to balance the concerns of a world church with over a billion members with those of local and regional churches, sharpened by the council's retrieval of the notion of the "particular church" as a local realization of the whole church and its implicit theology of the church as a communion of churches (LG 23). Karl Rahner described Vatican II as the church's first self-actualization as a world church, for it represented the first gathering of a genuinely indigenous episcopate, unlike Vatican I where most of the bishops from Asia or Africa were European or North American missionary bishops. Vatican II brought together bishops from 116 different countries, most of them native born, though 70% were from Europe or North America. But by the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome, 74% of the bishops came from countries other than those in Europe or North America, as do more than 70% of the world's Catholics today. At the 2005 Synod on the eucharist, the 244 bishops participating came from some 118 countries. Since the last half of the twentieth century, the church has continued to grow as a world church. While the global population increased by 117% in this period, Catholics increased by 139%, growing by 278% in Asia alone. Similarly, while some 2,500 bishops attended Vatican II, today's episcopate numbers 5,065, with 14% from Africa, 40% from the Americas, 13% from Asia, 30% from Europe, and 3% from Oceania. In a globalized world, the Catholic Church has been a quintessentially transnational actor (John Coleman), a primary agent and subject of globalization for at least as long as any other body (David Ryall), at the vanguard of the global human rights revolution (Samuel Huntington) (Coleman 2005: 20–22). It has the structures and networks to serve communion in a world church, among them the synod of bishops, international religious orders and movements such as Opus Dei or Focolari, a developed social teaching, and the office of the bishop of Rome.

Yet the very diversity of the Catholic Church as a world church, together with the shift of Christianity's center of gravity to the global South, has brought into focus new problems, among them the tensions between contextual theologies, rooted in the very different cultures of the particular churches, and the center in Rome. The multiplicity of new lay ministries, particularly in the United States, has led to several Roman documents emphasizing the difference between clergy and laity. The theology of liberation, developing largely in Latin America, represents an attempt to do theology from the side of the poor, addressing the continent's endemic socio-economic problems. It has occasioned two cautionary documents from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, an "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'" (1984) and another "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation" (1986) and led to the appointment of conservative bishops to many Latin American sees.

In Africa, where the number of Catholics tripled between 1978 and 2004, local churches have sought to become less European, using the African sense for the extended family as a

local expression of the communion of the church; they also continue to struggle with clericalism and discrimination and violence against women. The churches of Asia have discovered their own voice; they emphasize a threefold “dialogue of life,” with the poor, with local cultures, and with other religions. The bishops of Indonesia have several times asked for permission to ordain married men. Tensions over how best to proclaim Christ in Asia’s pluralistic religious context, emphasizing the reign of God over the traditional salvation of souls, resulted in the controversial CDF declaration, *Dominus Iesus* (2000), declaring that members of other religions, “objectively speaking, are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison to those in the Church” (no. 22). It has also led to the investigation or censuring of a number of theologians for, among other things, their emphasis on religious pluralism, among them Roger Haight, Jacques Dupuis, and Peter Phan.

## Pope John Paul II: 1978–2005

Karol Wojtyła, the former archbishop of Krakow who took the name John Paul II, was the third longest reigning pope in history. He dominated his age as few other popes have. He wrote fifteen encyclicals, fourteen apostolic exhortations, and presided over fifteen synods of bishops. His deliberate support for the Solidarity union in Poland played a major role in the collapse of the communist governments across eastern Europe and finally in the Soviet Union itself. Through his 104 trips outside Italy and in his writings he called the church back to its primary mission of evangelization, including the “new evangelization” of the millions who no longer practiced their faith. He commissioned a new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), the first universal catechism since the *Roman Catechism* of 1566 that followed the Council of Trent (1545–1563). He reached out to the great religions of the world, drawing implicit criticism from members of his curia for his efforts to bring their representatives together for prayer at Assisi in 1986 and again in January 2002 after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, demonstrating the potential of the papacy for religious leadership on a global level.

Both Catholics and Protestants mourned his passing. He was the first pope to visit a mosque as well as a synagogue and he gave diplomatic recognition to the state of Israel in 1993. To inaugurate the third millennium he called for a great Jubilee Year, inviting the church to an examination of conscience and “purification of memory,” repeatedly requesting forgiveness for the sins of the church’s members against Christian unity, the Jewish people, the rights of immigrants and ethnic groups, the dignity of women, the poor and defenseless, the unborn, as well as sins in the church’s efforts to defend the truth and spread the gospel in ways that did not respect other cultures and the conscience of individuals. A strong advocate for the poor, he critiqued both communism and capitalism, warning against a type of capitalism “in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality,” which at its core is ethical and religious (*Centesimus annus*, no. 42). In the face of modern threats to human life, including murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or whatever violates the integrity of the human person, he called for the creation of “a new culture of human life” (*Evangelium vitae*, no. 6). But he also recentralized authority in Rome, leaving decision-making power with the members of the Roman Curia rather than with the episcopate and their local and regional councils.



New bishops were often appointed without consulting local bishops and representatives of their churches, liturgical renewal was opposed by traditionalists in the Curia, and Roman documents on laypeople in the church, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue reflected a narrower Roman perspective.

## Pope Benedict XVI: 2005–2013

When John Paul died on April 2, 2005 he was succeeded by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. A professor of theology for twenty years with an international reputation and more than 100 books to his credit, Ratzinger had been a *peritus* or theological consultant at Vatican II at the age of thirty-five. For almost twenty-four years he served as prefect of the powerful Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. During that time he had enforced John Paul's policies, censoring or silencing theologians, issuing documents and decisions against the theology of liberation in Latin America, and challenging changing attitudes towards homosexuality in the West and what he called the "canon of criticism"—women's ordination, contraception, celibacy, and the remarriage of divorced persons. He played an important role in winning approval for the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. The agreement, signed in 1999 by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, explicated a common understanding on the issue that had first divided the churches in the sixteenth century.

As pope, he sought to diminish the cult of personality that surrounded his predecessor and the first Synod of Bishops over which he presided (2005) allowed more freedom of discussion than those under John Paul. His primary concern remained the diminishing faith of Europe, evident in his choice of the name Benedict, to recall both his predecessor Pope Benedict XV who had worked for peace during World War I and Benedict of Nursia, the great founder of the Benedictine Order whom he saw as a symbol of the Christian roots of Europe's culture and civilization. He made John Paul's emphasis on the "new evangelization" his own, declaring a "Year of Faith," beginning on October 11, 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and calling representatives of the worldwide episcopacy to Rome for a Synod on the New Evangelization. His tendency to speak like a professor, isolating issues with surgical precision and pointing to the truth as he saw it made him controversial, though as pope he found a more pastoral voice. Less supportive of interreligious dialogue than John Paul, he wanted a dialogue with Islam, but also challenged Islamic countries to a greater recognition of human rights and reciprocity, freedom for non-Muslims to practice their faith in Muslim countries.

Among the accomplishments of his pontificate was his classic three volume work on Christology, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and his trilogy of encyclicals on the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity. *Deus caritas est* stressed a God who is both reason and love. *Spe salvi*, on hope, argued that reason without faith substitutes a secularized hope in human progress, losing sight of the transcendence of the kingdom of God and leading too easily to atheism. *Lumen fidei*, which appeared under the name of his successor, showed how faith allows us to see more deeply and depends ultimately on love, thus involving not just the mind, but also the heart. He also took significant steps to simplify and centralize the church's response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis and met personally

with several groups of victims. But Benedict was not an innovator. He did little to reverse the recentralization of authority that had begun under Pope John Paul; his emphasis was always on the continuity of the tradition and he showed little inclination to question current practices. With his energies failing, he stunned the world by announcing his resignation on February 11, 2013, the first pope in 600 years to do so. His resignation, an example for his successors, will remain an important part of his legacy.

## Pope Francis: 2013–

When the cardinals gathered in Rome to elect a successor to Benedict, the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, was well-known to them, but few thought he would be a candidate. A runner-up to Benedict in the 2005 conclave, eight years later he was considered by many too old at seventy-six. But on March 7, after he took his turn addressing the congregation in a four-minute talk, using notes written on a piece of white paper, the others took a new look at him. He warned that the leaders of the church had become too focused on its inner life. The church was navel-gazing, too self-referential. It needed to shift its focus outward, to the world beyond Vatican City walls, to the outside. He was elected after only five ballots. He is the first pope from the southern hemisphere, where two-thirds of the world's Catholics live today, the first from the Americas, significantly the first to choose the name of Francis, the *Poverello* or little poor man, and the first Jesuit.

Interviews with Pope Francis suggested from the beginning that his theological vision was quite different from that of his predecessors. As archbishop in Buenos Aires, his way of life was simple, taking the bus to work, cooking his own meals, and living in a simple apartment rather than the episcopal palace. Shortly after his election he announced that he would not reside in the papal apartments, but, rather, in the Casa Santa Martha, the Vatican guesthouse, home for some of the priests and bishops who work in the Vatican. There he would live and celebrate his morning mass. His speech is personal and direct, rich in stories and images from the Bible or the fathers of the church.

Within months of his election he had become enormously popular. He immediately set up a committee of eight cardinals from around the world to assist him in the reform of the Roman Curia, the church's bureaucracy, so important to the cardinal who elected him. Frequently he has spoken out against clericalism and ecclesiastical careerism. He has long been an advocate for the poor. He wants a humble church, not focusing narrowly on doctrinal or sexual issues, but seeking out the lost. In an interview with the editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica* he said, "We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that. But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time" (Spadaro 2013: 26).

As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Bergoglio had good relations with Pentecostals and the Jewish community, which suggests his openness to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. More than his first encyclical, drafted by Pope Benedict, his first apostolic

letter, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), is indicative of his concerns. He called for the conversion of the papacy, decentralization of the Vatican, recognizing the authority or “juridical status” of episcopal conferences, citing the concerns of conferences from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, preferring a church “bruised, hurting and dirty” (no. 49) and at the service of the poor, one preaching not a multitude of doctrines but the saving love of God manifest in Jesus, and arguing that “trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. .. [have] never been confirmed by the facts” (no. 54).

Pope Francis will not be able to fully renew his church in the first years of his pontificate, but with his down to earth evangelical language and calls for simplicity and mercy, he has already changed the way many perceive it.

## Note

- 1 Citations of “DS” refers to the standard collection of Vatican documents by Henrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, always cited by section rather than page number. This exists in a Latin-English dual edition as: *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, compiled by Heinrich Denzinger; revised by Peter Hünermann, Robert Fastiggi, and Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012).

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## CHAPTER 47

# Anglicanism

Kevin Ward

In 2013 a number of dioceses of the Church of England submitted a motion to its governing body, the General Synod, declaring “that this Synod rejoice in the fellowship of the world-wide Anglican Communion, which is rooted in our shared worship and held together by bonds of affection and our common appeal to Scripture, tradition and reason.” This well expresses the aspiration for a common Anglican identity in a diverse global communion. Until the last decade of the twentieth century, this assumed fellowship was more or less taken for granted, but it has come under increasing strain. Classically, Anglicanism understands itself to be a “communion” of churches, not a single church, consisting of autonomous churches spread throughout the world, each church embodying a national or regional character. There exists no central legislative and executive authority, nor a single doctrinal formulary which defines what Anglicanism is. It is a single communion, rather than a collection of communions or denominations, an organism rather than a manufactured structure.<sup>1</sup>

There is a certain disparity about calling the Anglican communion worldwide. “Anglican,” after all, basically means “English,” a specific people, a specific language. Anglicanism began as an extension of the Church of England, and its global spread is intimately connected with English colonization and the expansion of the British Empire. In a post-colonial world, one might have expected that Asian and African members would wish to substitute a less historically and culturally specific designation, but in fact the reverse is happening. While some Churches prefer to designate themselves “Episcopal” rather than Anglican (Scotland, the United States, Sudan, the Philippines), the churches in Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa have, in recent years, changed their official titles to include the word “Anglican” for the first time. The term has been adopted in other languages: in Spanish (*La Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico*), and in Portuguese (*L’Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*). On the other hand, the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai* of Japan and the *Hong Kong Sheng Kong Hui* do not use the word “Anglican” in their official titles, but are nevertheless fully part of the Anglican Communion. The

term Anglican only came into common use in the nineteenth century. It did so partly to distinguish the worldwide communion from the Church of England; partly to give theological expression to a way of being church which was different from what was perceived as Roman Catholic centralization and Protestant fragmentation.

This sense of being a *via media* goes back to the Reformation when the Church of England retained many characteristics of its Catholic heritage, while participating in the new theological world created in Europe by Lutheranism and Calvinism. Archbishop Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), created a pattern of worship which was recognizably both catholic and reformed in spirit. The *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* (1563), while clearly affirming the central evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, attempted to be as inclusive as was practically possible at the time of the diversity of theological opinion in England. This sense of a distinctive ecclesiastical identity was given classical articulation in Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* of 1600. Nevertheless, the English reformation was instrumental in creating a decisively Protestant national identity in popular consciousness. The authorized version of the Bible, the King James Bible of 1611, came to be universally accepted, not only by Anglicans, but by all British Protestants as the Bible of the English speaking people. At the same time Protestantism created a sense of obligation for non-English speakers within the British Isles, particularly the needs of the Welsh speaking community, where Bible translation, associated with Bishop Morgan's Welsh Bible of 1588, had a profound impact on Welsh religious life and on the long-term viability of the Welsh language (Williams 1991). It was the failure of similar attempts to translate Bible and worship into the Irish tongue which marked the longstanding problem of establishing the reformed faith in Ireland, where a church modeled theologically and liturgically on the Church of England was imposed. Ireland can be seen as the first English colony (Howe 2000). Scotland, in contrast, was a separate country, with its own reformation history more influenced by continental Calvinism. After the union of the crowns in 1603 Scotland remained resistant to attempts to bring about church uniformity on an Anglican model. Eventually the United Kingdom accepted that there would be two established churches in the British Isles: Presbyterian in Scotland, and Anglican in the rest of the British Isles. As a result there emerged, for the first time, a non-established form of Anglicanism: the small Episcopal Church of Scotland.

The planting of English Protestantism in America in Elizabeth I's reign was part of a new patriotic spirit (Canny 1998). It had initially a strong anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic, impulse. Yet in many respects early Anglican mission looked to the models of Spanish and Portuguese missionary work: the so-called *patronato* or *padroado*, in which church, nation, and culture were fused. The conversion of indigenous peoples to Christianity was understood to be a conversion to the cultural norms of the European prototype. As far as conversion of native populations was concerned, Protestants suffered a big disadvantage, in that they had dismantled the religious orders which were so important for the Catholic missionary enterprise.

The first English settlement of a permanent kind in North America was in 1609 at Jamestown, Virginia. Here an attempt was made to recreate the ordered, parochial life of the Church of England, using the *Book of Common Prayer* and the English Bible, and supplied with a clergyman licensed by the Bishop of London. This model, however, could not be enforced universally in the English colonies, as the religious disputes of the Civil

War era were exported to America. Religious conformity could not be easily enforced outside England. The Anglican way thus became only one of a number of competing expressions of English Protestantism in America. While the church concentrated on providing pastoral ministry to English settlers, it was also aware, if only dimly, of a wider missionary responsibility. From the beginning alliances were sought with indigenous people. Conversion to English Christianity went hand in hand with loyalty to the English crown. From Roanoke at Jamestown, to the Iroquois chiefs who visited Queen Anne in the early eighteenth century, and the native Indian loyalists who eventually moved into British Canada after the American revolution, there was a vision of a society based on Christian values and English culture, but open to those native Indian people (whether individuals or communities) who wished to be in alliance with the English.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) was created in 1699 as a voluntary missionary society of the Church of England. Throughout the eighteenth century the SPG provided many of the clergy engaged in pastoral work among the British settlers in the New World, but the society was always keen to promote missionary work among Native American Indians and among black African slaves. SPG operated as the missionary arm of the British Atlantic world created by the slave trade. At the Codrington estate in the West Indian island of Barbados, the society sought to promote the idea that a slave owning society could also be a humane one. This became increasingly hard to justify as abolitionist sentiment grew in Britain (Langley 1962). On the West African coast, SPG provided pastoral services at Cape Coast castle, the main British slaving “factory” in the area. The first black African-Anglican priest, Philip Quaque, served as chaplain there from 1765 till his death in 1816. Celebrated as a pioneer of African Anglicanism, there is also considerable ambiguity about his invidious position as a black collaborator in the slave trade. Quaque is buried in the castle grounds, along with a small number of other British officials from this era (Carretta and Reese 2010). Present day tourist guides note that Quaque’s chapel and school room were directly above the stinking dungeons where some 2,000 slaves were held at any one time, for up to three months, and that Quaque was himself the son of a Fante slave trader. Quaque was all too aware of these dark realities, and complained about them in his correspondence with the Connecticut clergyman Samuel Johnson, but felt powerless to change the situation (Carretta and Reese 2010).

That was left to the next generation of abolitionists, including the Igbo ex-slave Equiano Olaudah (Carretta 1995), who acted with Clarkson and Wilberforce effectively to bring the horrors of the slave trade to the British public and to introduce legislative change. With the abolition of the slave trade in British vessels in 1806, followed by the abolition of slavery itself in British territories in 1834, the old conservative Anglican view of mission espoused by the SPG was becoming increasingly anachronistic. The dynamic passed to the societies created by the Evangelical revival and the abolitionist movement. Foremost of these agencies was the Church Missionary Society (Stock 1899–1916; Ward and Stanley 2000; Sanneh 1999). CMS was avowedly a “church society,” and thus distinguished from such dissenting mission societies as the Baptists and Methodists and the interdenominational London Missionary Society. Yet, in its ethos, CMS conformed to the classic pattern of Protestant evangelical societies: based on the freedom from institutional ecclesiastical restraints and the conservative social

norms of establishment, Evangelicals believed that pagans could respond to the gospel just as much as “civilized” Europeans. Evangelicals hoped to imbue whole societies with Christian values, but it believed it could best do this through emphasizing individual conversion. It had less faith in a hierarchically ordered society in which the church provided stability and continuity. For Evangelical Anglicans the whole world was their mission field, not just British colonies. In reality, Anglican Evangelicals still looked primarily to areas where the British government had some influence. Indeed Evangelicals often urged the British government to extend its jurisdiction to other parts of the world. Only thus, they argued, could slavery be eliminated, “legitimate” trade fostered, and civilized values prevail (Stanley 1990; 2003).

CMS looked not only to Africa but also to the East as a mission field. In the early nineteenth century British interest in India operated through the East India Company. This became the target of Evangelical wrath because of the company’s reluctance to allow Christian missionary work, for fear of antagonizing Muslim and Hindu sensitivities.

Evangelicals felt that that this was a denial of the right of all people to hear the gospel. In turn, Evangelicals have been widely seen as insensitive to cultural diversity, and dismissive of the insights of non-Christian religions (Said 1979; Neill 1985; Gibbs 1972). The Anglican contribution to India is immensely varied. Some Evangelicals (like the first Bishop of Lahore, Thomas Valpy French) developed a sensitivity in religious dialogue, and a warm appreciation of Indian culture, culminating in the life and work of C. F. Andrews, Anglican priest, political activist and friend of Mahatma Gandhi (Tinker 1979).

Anglican work in India had in fact begun in the early part of the eighteenth century, but it was well outside “British” India, among the independent rulers of southern India. Here, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, similar to the SPG in inspiration, acted in collaboration with the Danish authorities and Pietist German missionaries, to send agents to Tanjore in 1706 (Hudson 2000). The ecclesiastical status of this Indian Christian community was somewhat ambiguous – it had a Lutheran church order, but the Book of Common Prayer was translated for use in worship. In other respects, the older Anglican missionary vision of an organic society, deferential and respectful of hierarchy, operated here too. Caste sensibilities tended to be respected and translated into church life. Just as with slavery, the nineteenth century evangelical movement wanted a more radical reordering of Christian society within the Indian Church. Evangelical mission, Anglican and Protestant alike, felt that there could be no compromise and that caste had no place in the Indian Church.

The Church Missionary Society was not overly concerned with the precise ecclesiastical implications of mission. They presumed that the growing local church would make its own decisions on ordering its life and work. The great CMS missionary strategist, Henry Venn, made a sharp distinction between the settled life of a church community, and the pioneering evangelism which had brought that community to birth. His famous dicta – the “euthanasia of a mission” and the “three self” principle – signalled that missionaries plant the church, but within a relatively short time move on to new fields, as soon as a self-governing, self-propagating and self-financing church has been firmly established. The shape of the resulting church, in particular its ecclesiastical ordering, was not, therefore, the direct concern of mission, though no doubt a form of episcopal government and of prayer book worship, was likely to emerge (Yates 1978).

For Venn, bishops were the “crown of the church,” the final step in the creation of a church, a rather different vision from that of high church Anglican missionary strategies becoming increasingly compelling by the mid-nineteenth century. But even Venn effectively argued against his own principles, by recommending in 1862 that Samuel Ajayi Crowther (Ajayi 2001), the Yoruba freed slave, be appointed Bishop – on the Niger, still an area of pioneering missionary work, rather than chief pastor for the more established churches of Sierra Leone or of Abeokuta, in present day Nigeria. In this Venn can be seen as accommodating to a growing sense of racial distinction on the mission field, which was beginning to undermine the earlier optimism that a common humanity would somehow resolve cultural diversity (Williams 1990).

The episcopal system of the Church of England, bound up with establishment generally, was a somewhat rigid institution with regard to the development of an Anglican communion. It had caused a perennial, unresolved controversy in the American colonies (Mills 1978). It was only after the war of independence, and the creation of the United States, that an episcopal system, unencumbered by establishment, was created. The American Episcopal Church also pioneered the idea of “missionary bishops,” who would go out to plant the church in a new area, embodying in their person the church in its fullness as an ideal, but only gradually to be realized in actuality. These ideas about the place of the episcopate in mission were originally an experiment in spreading the church on the United States’ expanding frontier. It was seen as an antidote to the individualism and democratization of Christianity which Episcopalians discerned in Protestantism, as well as an acknowledgement of the failure of colonial Anglicanism to provide effective episcopal ministry. The ideas also proved popular in connection with a burgeoning Anglo-Catholic understanding of mission, promoted by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. (Strong 2007: 218) Throughout the nineteenth century, there were persistent tensions between a vision of Anglicanism understood primarily in ecclesiastical terms, and one which focused on the gathering of an indigenous community of individual converts, where institutional issues were subsidiary.

But even Evangelical Anglicans were forced to turn their attention to ecclesiological issues, as a native clergy emerged, as a local church developed its own self-understanding and desire for autonomy, and particularly as the pressure to create autonomous Anglican provinces grew in the period of decolonization (Farrimond 2003). Cutting across these debates were tensions between churches predominantly of English settlers, where the needs of indigenous believers were subordinated to settler demands, and churches where native peoples were able to create distinctive forms of Anglicanism.

The fact that Anglicanism could no longer be accommodated exclusively within the structures of a national established church led to the call for a pan-Anglican conference, and the convening of the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, the first of what was to become a ten-yearly meeting of Anglican bishops, as an advisory and consultative body, shying away from defining doctrine or ethical practice in a prescriptive way. The Chicago–Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888 was not so much a creedal statement as a broad definition of the contours and boundaries of what it means to be Anglican: acceptance of Scripture, the catholic Creeds, the two dominical sacraments, and the historic episcopate “locally adapted . . . to the varying needs of the nations and people called of God into the Unity of His Church.” Felt to be lacking in doctrinal specificity by



some Evangelicals, but also as being too prescriptive about church order, it was accepted by Anglicans as a whole as an important statement of Anglican identity and also a basis for ecumenical relations.

At times the assertion of an Anglican identity and the search for a wider ecumenical unity could come into conflict. In 1913, a covenant signed at the Church of Scotland Mission in Kikuyu, Kenya, affirming the intention to create a united church in East Africa alarmed the Bishop of Zanzibar. Bishop Weston was a representative of the Anglo-Catholic movement within the church. In his view the Kikuyu covenant compromised the catholic status of the Anglican Communion. The “Kikuyu controversy” made ecumenical schemes for reunion more difficult, but also clarified the issues of episcopacy, ministry and sacrament which needed to be hammered out if successful unity schemes were to be realized. It was in Asia rather than Africa that the need for Christian ecumenism was felt most keenly, in a situation where Christianity was always a small minority. Missiological and ecclesiological issues were always central to the long negotiations which eventually led to the creation of the Church of South India in 1947, and subsequent united churches of North India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Sundkler 1954; Harper 2000).

Anglicans have often had an interest in relating to other non-Western Christians, particularly where ancient Orthodox churches have survived. They have made friendly overtures at various times over a long period to the Eastern and the Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox churches, such as the Copts, the Ethiopians, and the Yakoba, the Orthodox Church in India. These relations have often been mutually beneficial. At times they have rested on misunderstandings and have ended in rancor. In Kerala, the emergence of the Mar Thoma Church, while symbolic of a sad breakdown of relationships between Anglicans and Orthodox, also provided an interesting example of a church which has combined Orthodox liturgical practice and evangelical biblical study. In Iraq, the recent work in peace and reconciliation undertaken by Andrew White, “the vicar of Baghdad” (White 2009; 2011) is also rooted in a tradition of Anglican interest in the Nestorian Christians of Assyria (Coakley 1972).

Anglican mission work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often colluded in the establishment of British colonial rule. But missionaries were also concerned to mitigate the negative effects of colonialism. They acted as advisers to the Maori in helping them to negotiate the tricky issues of white settlement in New Zealand (Davidson 1989; 2000); they helped draft the Buganda Agreement of 1900 in Uganda (Hansen 1984). British colonial officials were often supportive of Christian mission. But official British colonial policy was one of neutrality in the area of religion. Outside England itself, Anglicanism was rarely an established church. The British authorities were often acutely sensitive to the rights of other religious traditions. Nevertheless, Anglicans were accorded an informal privileged status in many parts of the British empire, especially in those parts of the empire, like Canada, Australia, and South Africa, with large settler populations. In Uganda the Native Anglican Church exercised a quasi-established position during the colonial period, with the Kabaka of Buganda (the King and a member of the Anglican Church) and the Bishop of Uganda forming a hierarchy of precedence after the Governor. In all British colonies, the fact that the Anglican Church was the “religion of the Queen” gave it a certain gravitas. The development

of a worldwide Anglican Communion was always premised on a multi-cultural and multi-racial identity. But those parts of the Anglican world which were predominantly white tended to hold the reins of power and influence, not least because so many of the bishops who met every ten years at the Lambeth Conference were British born and educated (Ward 2006: 296–318).

In the period of high colonialism, from the 1880s to the 1960s, it was relatively easy to associate Anglican mission with colonialism. Anglicanism seemed largely coterminous with the British Empire. Its hierarchy, like the colonial service, was overwhelmingly manned by British people rather than locals. In the late 1880s, on the eve of the establishment of colonial power in Nigeria, a sustained attack on the episcopacy of the aging Bishop Crowther was mounted by young missionaries (Ajayi 1969; Tasie 1978). On Crowther's death, an African bishop did not replace him and it was not until the 1950s that African Anglican diocesan bishops were again appointed. The missionary critique of Crowther was ostensibly motivated by ethical and spiritual deficiencies in the diocese, inspired by the Keswick holiness movement with its insistence on converts exemplifying a "higher" "victorious" life. But there was an underlying strain of racism influenced by what was often known as "scientific" Darwinian theories of race.

From the beginning, it had been indigenous Anglican converts who did the main work of preaching and organizing both in their own societies and as missionaries to other people. Tamil evangelists have contributed enormously to building up Anglican work in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. Chinese evangelists (particularly from low status Hakka groups) have been instrumental in forming Christian communities throughout the Pacific diaspora. A Japanese Anglican established a church of Japanese Brazilians in Sao Paulo. Baganda evangelists were responsible for the rapid spread of Christianity throughout Uganda, in Rwanda, Burundi, the Congo Democratic Republic and Sudan (Pirouet 1978). This was reinforced from the 1920s by the extraordinary dynamism of the East African Revival, a movement which had its origin in the Anglican churches in Uganda and Rwanda. The missionary zeal of the modern African-Anglican communion is not a new phenomenon of the postcolonial era – it has been there from the beginning of Anglican mission.

Anglicanism also developed far outside the boundaries of the British Empire.

In East Asia, American Episcopalian and Canadian Anglicans have been particularly active, alongside British mission societies (Douglas 1996). China in particular proved fertile ground for American mission. Japan also became a strong focus for the American Episcopal Church, as part of their increasing geopolitical interest in the Pacific. There was a time when Episcopal missionaries were hopeful that a form of Anglican Christianity might even become the official religion of the Meiji restoration. This did not happen, but mission work in Japan showed the importance of developing Anglicanism beyond its "Englishness," leading to the creation of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (the holy Catholic Church of Japan) in 1887 (Takeda 1996). The need to separate the church from an identification with a foreign cult was even stronger in China. The inauguration of the Chung Hua Sheng Kuing Hui (Holy Catholic Church in China) in 1912 came at the dawn of a new era, with the declaration of a republic the previous year, and a strong sense of Christianity being ready and willing fully to participate in the creation of a new Chinese identity, one extremely sensitive to covert cultural colonialism (Gray 1996).

In Latin America, Anglicans have been active in a predominantly Catholic milieu, working among Native American Indian populations, among Latin peoples from a Catholic background (especially important in Brazil and in Mexico), and among black Caribbean migrants in central America (Milmine 1994). In the Middle East there are small but significant Arabic speaking Anglican communities among Egyptians and Palestinians. And in Africa, there are strong Anglican Christian churches in the francophone countries of Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Madagascar and the islands of the Indian Ocean, as well as among Quebecois and Haitians in the New World (Dean 1979). English is not the first language of most Anglicans, and is not even the second language of a substantial proportion of its members. For too long, the rather weak institutional expression of a worldwide Anglicanism, expressed mainly by the decennial Lambeth Conference, and, more recently, by the Anglican Consultative Council, has only palely reflected this diverse reality.

The contrast between a languishing, declining Anglicanism of the north, and a vibrant, defiant, and assertive Anglicanism of the south may be overdrawn. But there can be no doubt that Anglicanism is growing by leaps and bounds in the south. Nigeria, in particular, regularly records rapid expansion, in terms of diocesan growth and actual growth of membership. In 2011 it had 166 dioceses, several of them described as “missionary dioceses” (Church of Nigeria 2011). The (Anglican) Church of Nigeria is one of the biggest and most influential churches in the country. Nigerian Anglicans are quite conservative – their liturgy is largely modeled on Cranmer, they still do not ordain women to holy orders, and they are strident in rejecting the idea that homosexuality is “normal.” At the “Divine Commonwealth” Conference held at Abuja in 2011, the assembly lamented “the erroneous teachings that have infiltrated our beloved Communion” and they declared their “refusal to be dogged down by relentless debates about matters we consider settled.”

This confrontational style is partly an expression of a confidence in the established position and social influence of the Anglican Church in Nigeria, a country where religious allegiance is well and truly in the public space. It is also symptomatic of the polarized nature of Christian–Muslim relations, particularly in the Middle Belt, and of the very real current fears of Christians generally about what they consider to be Muslim aggression, exacerbated since 2011 by the activities of Boko Haram, a militant organization opposed to all “Western” values. Nigerian Anglican engagement with Islam cannot be reduced to the purely confrontational, and there is a history of creative dialogue. But in the present crisis to be robust in the defence of Christianity and assertive of Christianity’s place in Nigeria is seen as imperative. The creation of missionary dioceses is a deliberate re-appropriation of Crowther’s legacy. Nigerian Anglicans justify their mission strategy in terms of the importance of a Christian presence where they might always expect to be a small minority and the need of serving Nigerian Christians who are living in those parts of Nigeria regarded as Muslim. The comparatively rich Nigerian Church also has a mission to help other, more fragile, Anglican churches in other parts of Africa, in particular the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also sees its work in North America both as a support for Nigerian expatriates and as a missionary enterprise for American Episcopalians who feel alienated from their church. The Anglican Church of Nigeria was instrumental, in many ways, in creating the new

charismatic movement in the 1960s. Nigerian Anglicans, in turn, have been much influenced by Pentecostalism, in terms of worship styles, and the strict ethical demands of Christian discipleship. But they feel strongly that they have a special contribution to make to civic life generally, based on the stability which Anglican liturgy and structure gives and which unstructured Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements do not have. They also have the confidence robustly to defend their understanding of Anglicanism, even if it does not find favor with the contemporary Church of England. Gone are the days when there should be a missionary deference to the English Church.<sup>2</sup>

Anglicanism has taken a different trajectory in South Africa. It bore a faithful witness against apartheid, though during the apartheid era it was often hampered by its perceived “foreignness.” For too long the Anglican Church in South Africa was dominated by British born clergy rather than South African, by the predominance of white over black leadership. The great radical clerics of the 1940s to the 1970s were all expatriates. Only with the remarkable accession of Desmond Tutu as Archbishop of Cape Town in the 1980s did leadership decisively pass to Africans. The Anglican Church is quite small as a proportion of the total Christian population of South Africa, and is probably still declining proportionately (Hastings 1975). But the historic witness of Anglicans in South Africa, whether English, white South African, or black African, is outstanding.

Nowhere has Anglicanism been more thoroughly reshaped and transformed than in the People’s Republic of China. Anglicans were always a minority in Protestant work in China, though with a wide influence particularly through their educational institutions such as St John’s College, Shanghai. Whereas Christians in China were apprehensive about the triumph of Communism in 1949, there were a number of Chinese Anglicans who had a much more positive attitude. Chinese Anglicans played an important role in the formation of the Three Self Patriotic movement, and in reacting positively to the pressures on the church. K. H. Ting (1915–2012) was one of the last people to be ordained as an Anglican bishop in 1955, before events in China made it impossible for the church to operate on denominational lines (Wickerli 1988). Ting was of enormous importance in forging a new Protestant Christian identity in China, in a post-denominational world. Bishop Ting brought certain distinctively Anglican characteristics (an incarnational theology, a concern for order and ritual, a social ethic) to building up the post-denominational church. He tried to provide a means by which the church can exist along with the Communist state, can develop its internal life in some degree of freedom, and can provide for the church’s basic needs of training pastors and making the scriptures available. Ting was important for enabling the church to grow, as it is doing to unprecedented levels, in the twenty-first century. He restrained some of the more impatient forms of “Bible” Protestantism and put great store on order and form in church life, respect and negotiation with the state, while fostering the conditions in which evangelism can flourish in ways which do not alarm a suspicious state (Wickerli 2007). Some might hanker for the old forms of denominationalism and look to their revival, others might want a more confrontational stance towards an atheist regime. As in India, Anglican mission has to be understood in wider contexts as a contribution to a wider form of indigenous Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years attention has been paid worldwide to showing forms of Anglicanism which transcend Englishness. The vigor with which local churches have engaged

themselves in mission and evangelism both within their own cultural contexts, and in programs of mission to other people, continues to work toward releasing the Anglican communion from its “Anglo-Saxon” captivity (Pobee 2009). The Anglican Communion has made a very distinctive contribution to mission in the modern world – both as evangelists (Chinese Hakka, Tamils, Baganda, Japanese in Brazil, African Americans in Haiti) and as campaigners for social justice (Wilberforce, Tutu, Ting, C. F. Andrews, Bishop Azariah of Dornakal). Anglicans have also made important contributions to worldwide inter-religious dialogue, and in forms of renewal and Christian spirituality (for example, Pandita Ramabhai and Amy Carmichael in India, the brethren of the East African Revival). More recently, questions of gay inclusion have threatened to divide the communion. While there is some truth in the idea of a liberal and secular north being challenged by a more conservative religiously orthodox south (Jenkins 2002), the fact is that these issues have divided both north and south. In the twentieth century some great Anglican mission theologians and statesmen – Roland Allen (the SPG missionary in China), Max Warren, John V Taylor (both General Secretaries of CMS), Marc Nikkel (the remarkable liturgical scholar and Episcopal mission partner in Sudan) – played important roles as mediators of African and Asian Christianity to the Church of the North. Now, increasingly, Africans and Asians are participating directly in the life and mission of the Anglican Communion in Britain and America, in a process of reverse mission. A Ugandan is Primate of England. A considerable number of Ugandan priests work for the Episcopal Church in the United States and in Canada. The assumption of an Anglican Communion based on shared history and values can no longer be taken for granted, and needs constantly to be reasserted in a practical sense of interdependence.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, the controversies about the ethics of homosexual practice and the status of gays and lesbians in the church crisis over sexuality has questioned those Anglican assumptions to the core. It has raised the specter of a neo-colonial imposition of “Western” liberal and permissive values on the communion as a whole. This, in turn, has provoked fears that conservative theological values are using the “global South” to suppress perceived traditional Anglican values of tolerance and compromise, and dialogue with other religions and with secularism. It is too easy, however, to polarize the dispute as one between north and south, when in reality tensions between “liberal” and “conservative,” “revisionist” and “orthodox” cut across old divisions between evangelical and catholic and between north and south. But how to live with such differences and at the same time express a cohesive vision of being an Anglican communion?

This question has tested the “shared affection” and “common appeal to Scripture” to the core. The declaration of the 1998 Lambeth Conference of “homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture” provoked anger on the part of those Anglicans who desired a radical rethinking about homosexuality. They felt that their position had been compromised by a new reactionary force of North American and British intransigence. Although a tactical victory for conservatives, they too became progressively disenchanted with the inability of the Anglican “Instruments of Communion” [the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates’ meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council] to enforce the Lambeth resolution. The Anglican Covenant is an attempt to create a sense of mutual responsibility, morally, if not legally, binding on all members of the Communion. Its adoption by a only a minority of churches

and its rejection by the General Synod of the Church of England have created a sense of pessimism about the ability of this particular way forward to bring harmony. Anglicanism is seen as fragmenting. The newly formed Anglican Province of North America claims to be the authentic voice of Anglicanism in the light of the stubborn refusal of the Episcopal Church of the United States and the Anglican Church of Canada to draw back from its “revisionist” policies in affirming the ministry and partnerships of gay and lesbian people. Some African churches denounce the apostasy of Western churches, including the Church of England. The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), has met twice in Jerusalem in 2008 and in Nairobi in 2013. Some would see this as an alternative to the discredited Lambeth Conference and its colonialist legacy, the nucleus of a New World Anglicanism directed from the South. GAFCON officially denies any intention of schism, but sees itself as issuing a call to repentance for the whole Anglican communion. The Nairobi conference appealed to the spirit of the East African Revival to legitimize that role.

The old sense of unity in the faith and a common liturgical and ecclesiastical tradition, is in danger of being replaced by the marketplace in which competing versions of Anglican orthodoxy vie with each other. The way forward for Anglicanism must include justice for gay and lesbian people, present, as they are, in all parts of the world, including the churches of the South. Anglicanism must also strive continually to eradicate forms of racism and cultural superiority, and the other legacies of colonialism, and to create a truly worldwide, multi-cultural Anglican communion.

## Notes

- 1 See [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org), accessed October 19, 2015, for motions tabled at the General Synod, November, 2013, and [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org), accessed October 19, 2015, for the text of the Anglican Covenant.
- 2 Much of this material was gleaned on a visit to Nigeria in December 2011 to January 2012. I am particularly grateful to Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi of Jos for an interview I had with him on December 20, 2011 at his home in Jos.
- 3 I am grateful to Revd. David Shi, a pastor on the staff of the China Christian Council in Nanjing, for enlightening discussions about Christianity in contemporary China. I met him at Westcott Hall in Cambridge, November 25–27, 2011. The meeting was kindly arranged by Franklin Lee, a Hong Kong ordinand of Lincoln diocese, studying at Westcott.

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# Orthodoxy and Eastern Christianity

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## The Origin of the Term Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy is a composite term deriving from Greek words signifying “Correct Belief” (*Ortho* – straight; *doxa* – opinion). It began life in the ancient Hellenistic schools of philosophy to connote a correct set of axioms as distinct from conflicting and incorrect propositions (such as the world is flat or the world is round, in an age when the proof of the matter still lay in obscurity). In medieval Slavic Christianity the literal translation of these two words gave to the Russian equivalent, *Pravoslavie*, the connotation of “Right glorification” (or proper manner of worshipping God). This came about as a semantic possibility since the Greek term *Doxa* had also been developed in biblical literature to signify the divine glory. Since the early modern period this has often been (wrongly) suggested as the root of the term Orthodoxy by Slavic commentators. At first the Hellenists regarded a wrong opinion in the schools as a matter of basic learning: regrettable when precise information revealed the mistaken belief, but not censurable as long as erroneous opinion was not stubbornly clung to in the face of contrary evidence. Having a wrong opinion at times was a feature of the necessary dialectic of being a scholastic. But by the late fifth century of the Common Era, when this term Orthodox really starts to be used extensively in the Greek-speaking Christian churches as a self-descriptor, the word develops a very different set of resonances.

The great debates and crises over doctrinal matters that came in two very turbulent periods in the second to third, then the fourth to fifth centuries (known now as Gnosticism and Arianism, respectively) had sharpened Christian sensitivities massively and made it very conscious of the need to protect its preaching tradition, and thus its core teachings, from the vagaries of free-for-all debate. In response to a string of early crises of belief which touched foundational elements of ancient Christian

tradition – Gnosticism denied the pressing significance of the historical record and the primacy of scripture, Monarchianism denied the trinity, Arianism denied the divinity of Christ – the church’s clerical leadership, which chiefly meant rhetorician-theologians and bishops in councils, increasingly tightened control of its intellectual tradition. By the end of the fifth-century heresy (*haireisis*) which among the Hellenists had simply meant an expected divergence of opinion among teachers, had now come to take on among the Christians the sense of an evil corruption of an original and simple truth, a perversion inspired by demonic deceits (see Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.7.1). The concept of heresy as a culpable turning away from (revealed) truth became seen as a fundamentally spiritual matter: an interior sin of apostasy; not just making a mistake about the facts but actually being led by the spirit of evil to “sow weeds of disbelief and discord” in the pure fields of the faith. Heresy, therefore, soon became the polar opposite of Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy thus became one of the cardinal definitions of what the church was and how it saw itself as the faithful recipient and preserver of Christ’s gospel. In the years following the Council of Chalcedon (451), numerous and large sections of the Eastern Christian world (Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, and Armenia) protested so strongly against the decrees of what the Byzantine and Latin churches regarded as the latest ecumenical council, that they seceded from communion with Rome and Constantinople. This new crisis among the Christians, concerning the very structure of how to preserve Orthodox doctrine on an international front, so alarmed the majority imperial church of the era that its authors, after the late fifth century, further stressed the paramount importance of holding to authentic and traditional beliefs. So it was that the word “Orthodox” became part of the way the Eastern church habitually came to describe itself.

Even before this time it had long been common to find a nexus of key adjectival descriptors for the church in use by early Christian writers; and four of these terms were rising to prominence anyway, eventually to become known as the “four marks (*notae*) of the Church”: namely that it was “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.” These four *notae* became core elements in all ancient Christian self-understandings of what church meant and how it was to be identified. They still exist as common ecclesial self-definitions in most of Christendom. The Eastern (mainly Greek-speaking) churches entered them into the Creeds that became internationally standardized after the fourth century. “Orthodox” became a synopsis of them after the fifth century when many dissident movements (often employing other languages than Greek, such as Coptic, Ge’ez, Armenian, or Syriac) had also claimed to represent the authentic ecclesial heritage on other terms; and the sense of a need to protect the core of authentic doctrine had risen to higher prominence in the main body of the churches. And so, while both the Latin-speaking Western churches, and the Greek-speaking Eastern churches both held on to the self-definition of all four “marks,” the Latins nevertheless began to prefer “Catholic” as a self-descriptor and a synopsis of these four; while the Greeks for their part elevated the term “Orthodox” against the dissidents. Long before the medieval parting of the ways, of course, both sides of the Christian world understood that these short-hand descriptors were non-exclusive summations of the ecclesial definitions contained in their common (Niceno-Constantinopolitan) creed. The Catholics continued to affirm their orthodoxy; and the Orthodox affirmed their catholicity, and still do.

## Families of Orthodox Churches

Today the title “Orthodox” appears in the self-descriptions of most of the Eastern churches of ancient foundation. The largest of all those families is the Byzantine Orthodox tradition. This is that family of churches that derives from the four ancient patriarchates of the Roman imperial eastern provinces. The patriarchate system was one of the early forms of ancient Christian self-organization, as we shall observe shortly. The Byzantine Orthodox are most easily delineated as that family of Orthodox churches which, like the Western catholic tradition, holds to the core structuring of Christian faith as set out by the Scriptures (Breck 2001) and the Seven Ecumenical Councils (Davis 1987). This includes, the Greek, Russian, and Romanian Orthodox churches (just to mention the three largest) as well as other ancient and more modern members of the same family, such as the churches of Cyprus, Serbia, Bulgaria, Georgia, and others. A complete list of the different families of the Byzantine Orthodox tradition, followed by their dates of “independent organization” will be given at the end of this essay.

## The Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches

Apart from the Byzantine, there are also two other families of Orthodox churches. The first is that ecclesial family which used to be widely called the “Oriental Orthodox” and is now more often designated as the “Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox.” In older texts, they were often referred to (pejoratively) by the Byzantine and Latin Church writers as “Jacobites” in reference to one of their antique leaders, Jacob Baradaeus. They have also been designated (again usually pejoratively – though it became a common text book designation until recently) as “Monophysite” churches. This derived from their affirmation that after the Christological Union (of God and Man in Christ’s Incarnation) there was “only one nature of God the Word made flesh.” In modern times, and as a result of a more eirenic scholarly atmosphere these churches are now often designated as the “Miaphysite Orthodox.” This group includes the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Eritrean, and (some) Syrian Orthodox churches. They are united in terms of doctrine by common agreement with all the other principles of Byzantine and Catholic ecclesiastical belief, but differ mainly by not accepting the validity of the ecumenical councils coming after the Third of that series (the Council of Ephesus in 431). Essentially they object to Chalcedon’s affirmation that Christ was God and Man: one person in two natures.

The fourth great council, held at Chalcedon in 451, caused deep divisions in the Eastern churches over its implications and effects, and large parts of Egypt and Syria refused to accept the lead of Rome and Constantinople in proposing the Diphysite (two-nature–one-person) Christological settlement. The Egyptians believed that it excessively tolerated Nestorian ideas (an archbishop-theologian condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431) and that the council of 451 had to be vetoed. The Armenian church leaders were not even invited to the Council of Chalcedon, and subsequently they did not see the need or utility of adopting its theological formularies. From the fifth century onwards, therefore, this Christological division (and more deep-seated divisions over

who had the authority to declare that a synod was an “ecumenical” council) set up a rift in the Eastern churches, and internal divisions appeared over which was the authentic “Orthodox” way (Chalcedonian or Non-Chalcedonian).

Regardless of this separation, which has remained unhealed, despite many historical attempts at reconciliation for more than 1,600 years, the Byzantine and Non-Chalcedonian traditions generally still regard one another as very close in spirit and ethos: and with good reason, for common to both are the ancient core practices and attitudes that constituted the original Eastern Orthodox tradition in those shared formative first five hundred years. It is a patristic, liturgical, monastic, and mystical common culture that still endures as a treasured heritage.

The second ecclesial family among those who would not recognize the definitive status of seven ecumenical councils constituting Orthodoxy’s faith tradition, was those Syrian churches associated with the ancient Patriarchate of Antioch. These used to be commonly called “Nestorian” (a pejorative parlance used by the Byzantines). They are now more properly referred to as the “Assyrian Church of the East.” They supported the deposed leader Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and set up their own counter-synod condemning those (the great majority) who had condemned him. They have endured to the present day, often as a deeply suffering Christian people, in the original heartlands of Iraq and Iran, and parts of Syria. In the seventh century, as they were pressured out of territories controlled by the Orthodox Byzantine emperor, they launched imaginative and creative missions. It was the Assyrian Church that first penetrated China (ancient monuments remain to testify to their achievements) and moved along trade routes such as the Silk Road and the sea passages to India. Like the Non-Chalcedonian churches mentioned above, they too do not accept the standard of the seven ecumenical councils, but in their case they also anathematize the Council of Ephesus in 431 (where they believe their ancestral tradition was unfairly censured) and they give high authority only to the first two Councils, Nicaea 325, and Constantinople 381. In Christological doctrine they were once diametrically opposed to the Miaphysites and stressed the need to affirm two natures in Christ (divine and human) for the purpose of defending the incarnate Christ’s enduring full and authentic humanity. They were often heard (whether or not this was their intention) by both the Byzantine and Miaphysite Orthodox communities as endangering the unity of the divine person by their heavy stress on the difference of natures. Recent statements from the Assyrian church on this christological question have clarified many things that past alienations had served to wrap in confusions and mistrust; and among theologians of the Eastern churches today there is growing optimism that a solution to the longstanding divisions might yet be found.

## The Orthodox Churches and “The Unia”

So this is the broad outline of the historical road of Eastern Christianity (further see McGuckin, 2008; Paraskevas and Reinstein 1969), and we see three major divisions, all claiming the mantle and title of the Orthodox Church. The Byzantine tradition is by far the largest, both numerically and in terms of national (thus international) spread.

Although it is not in theological or sacramental communion with Western catholicism, the reason for this is not substantively doctrinal (since the same system of doctrinal definition of truth is held by both churches) but chiefly turns around the authority afforded to the papacy. Orthodoxy in general sees the church as a federated communion of autonomous local communities: each one being whole and complete in its local diocesan unit, gathered around one eucharist with one bishop in a communion mutually supervised by various regional synods of bishops committed to maintaining patristic theology, precedents, and canonical rules. Orthodox ecclesiology (the concept of what the church is) resists approaching the church as a hierarchical juridical structure, and claims that this is a point of view excessively manifested in the late medieval papal system of the West. It was the increasing growth of papal monarchy that effectively led to the great schism between the Orthodox and Catholic churches at the end of the first millennium: a rift that still has not been healed, even though relations have been greatly improved since the end of the twentieth century.

“Eastern Christianity” is a larger umbrella term, therefore, to bind together all the existing dissidences among the Orthodox families. To make matters more complicated, over the course of long centuries when Byzantium had fallen before the armies of Islam, and the Patriarch of Constantinople had become an ecclesiastical administrator of all Christians in the Islamic world, under the control of the Sultan, many of the Non-Chalcedonian churches, and the Assyrian communities too, turned westwards for support from the one Christian Church that could offer protection and support: that is, to Rome. These negotiations, entered into from the sixteenth century onwards, in many cases led to local communities of the Non-Chalcedonians and Assyrians joining together in communion with Rome. In this case, obviously, they abandoned their previous objections to the Chalcedonian council and adopted the fundamental structures of Latin Christian theology. In so far as they did this, they also entered into harmony with the Byzantine Orthodox theology.

In similar fashion many local Byzantine Orthodox bishops, in localities pressed by Ottoman or Hapsburg or other political force, also sought local reconciliations with Rome, much to the annoyance of the mainline Orthodox churches. So it was that there came to be set up a series of Eastern Orthodox churches in communion with Rome: usually small minorities within the same countries as the larger Orthodox bodies of those national churches. The original Orthodox families generally regarded this process of entering Roman communion very severely, as a “secession” from Orthodoxy itself and thereafter broke off communion with them; regarding their former members (pejoratively) as “Uniates” (from the notion of seeking an unlawful union). But these churches have endured to the present (though still not in great numbers). They are referred to generically now (whether their origin was once Byzantine, Assyrian or Miaphysite) as Catholics of the Eastern Rite (or as “The Eastern Catholic Churches”). Though they have been heavily Latinized in many respects over the centuries (mainly in thought forms and minor matters of liturgical style), they still retain their own sense of being Eastern Orthodox. In the contemporary *Realpolitik* of the Eastern churches, especially in places such as Romania, Ukraine and Poland, where much Latin proselytization of the Orthodox communities happened in earlier times, these churches stand as an enduring and controversial “issue” in terms of church relations between

Orthodoxy and the West, though this is probably more true of inter-relations between the Byzantine Orthodox tradition and the Catholic church. What follows from here will be predominantly a discussion of the largest body, what is most commonly meant by the "Orthodox Church": namely the Byzantine family of Orthodox Eastern churches.

## The Organization of the Ancient Eastern Church in Patriarchates

The Eastern Orthodox Church at present consists of the four patriarchates which remain in communion, out of the five ancient exemplars of the Pentarchy of Patriarchates that once established the largest-scale (what we would call the "international") form of the canonical structure of early Christianity. The five original patriarchates were: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The last in the series was always simply an honorific. It was a tiny church and never commanded great sway. But the other four patriarchal sees served as supervisory macro-synods for the larger Christian world and out of their mutual relationships emerged the system of the ecumenical councils: to whose theological vision the Orthodox and Catholic worlds afford the highest Christian authority on earth: accepting them as the "mind of Christ."

The four great super sees (largely excluding Jerusalem from the picture) gained pre-eminence in early Christian times because of their social and political pre-eminence. Their bishops were from earliest times, trend setters and courts of appeal. Rome and Alexandria headed the lists, and the great city of Antioch was not far behind. Constantinople was late on the scene (founded in 324) but soon ran faster than them all until the end of the first millennium, when Rome got a second wind and reasserted itself massively from the medieval period to the Renaissance. All of them were centers of classical learning, legal skill, and theological schools. The schools of each place made great advances in establishing the internationally accepted form of core Christian teaching. By the mid-fourth century the capital of Rome had been moved to Constantinople on the Bosphorus, and from that time onwards the latter city grew to equal its older predecessors. In 325 the first council of Nicaea established the rule that the organizational structures of the church should follow those of the newly Christianized Roman Empire (Dioceses were originally a civil political unit of administration) and in 381, at the second great Council of Constantinople, the see of Constantinople was elevated to high rank in the order of precedences, and put forward as a "New Rome": that is, not merely a new capital as Rome had been for political affairs, but also a new court of international appeal, as Rome and Alexandria had once been in the international church (Every 1962). This elevation caused great controversy at the time. It was soon accepted as the new order of precedence in the affairs of the Eastern churches. But Rome always regarded Constantinople as being a subordinate and junior church – a view never shared by the East. So were sown the seeds of eventual separation between the Orthodox and the Catholics at the end of the first millennium: a serious falling out that was basically about issues of relative power between the two sees (Runciman 1956).

After the separation of the Latin West and Greek East at the dawn of the second millennium only four patriarchal sees remained in the eastern Roman territories. The date of 1054, the schism between Patriarch Michael Caerularios and Pope Nicholas, is often

given as the symbolic date of the separation of the churches and designated as “the Great Schism,” but it actually took longer to be really effective and was a matter that had been gradually developing – an accumulating alienation of mind and heart rather than a falling out at any precise moment.

The course of events after the early medieval period saw Eastern Christianity giving way to the relentless expansion of militant Islam in the East. At the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Orthodoxy finally lost its independent political power and entered into almost four centuries of subjugation to the Ottomans, who afforded it an unenviable role as the religion of a *millet*: a tolerated but taxed (and, it must be said, oppressed) “religion of the book.” All public preaching and evangelism were outlawed, churches were destroyed and requisitioned and strict limits were imposed on any new building. Christian higher academies dwindled and progressively disappeared. The period has been called the “Babylonian Captivity” of the Orthodox Church (Runciman 1968). Political fortunes for Orthodoxy began to change for the better in the sixteenth century with the rise of Orthodox Russia (evangelized from Byzantium in the tenth century); and for many centuries the Russian tsars and the Orthodox princes of Moldavia (Romania) were the protectors of Orthodox affairs in the domain of the Sultans. The nineteenth century saw extensive gains for the Eastern churches when numerous Balkan states began to break away from Ottoman control and assert their independence. Often the church played a leading role in the rise of Christian nationalism at this period.

These political changes after the fifteenth century were reflected in the way that to the first four antique patriarchates were soon added those other churches that had been formed as the Orthodox church expanded outwards in post classical history, and as new nations and peoples were added to the family of Christ over the ages, or as former missions reached a stage of legitimate self-determination and organized themselves more independently from the ancient centers of the empire. These later Orthodox communities can be briefly listed: firstly, those that were once part (or allies) of the ancient Byzantine empire but emerged into separate nationhood as that vast system fragmented: Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, Georgia, Romania, Greece, Poland, Hungary, Albania, Latvia, Moldavia, and Macedonia. And, secondly, those also that were historically never part of the eastern Roman Empire but came into their Christian maturity at a later date: Finland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, Estonia, China, Japan, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, America, and many parts of western Europe as missions and exarchates of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Some of these newer churches have subsequently, and more recently, themselves been lifted to the designation of “patriarchates” signifying their large extent, historical importance, and general venerability. When Romania, for example, in the late nineteenth century, reached the position (after centuries of border changes and foreign interference) of being internationally recognized as a stable national and self-determining territory, the status of ecclesiastical independence and prestige as a “new” patriarchate was soon given to it. There is a precedence operating in the Orthodox understanding of the “order” of the churches, but it is not one that can be understood in the sense of a jurisdictional order, such as a hierarchical line of authority that runs down, in the manner of military authority, working in a simple linear fashion. Orthodox ecclesiology is adamant on the point that each local church under its single ruling bishop is the full

and entire church of Christ. Each Orthodox bishop is, therefore, co-equal with all his other brother bishops throughout the world. There may be a “ranking of honour” in the sense that a Metropolitan of a large city (an Archbishop, for example) has a supervisory role over a number of the other bishops of his local province (as head of the local synod), or in the way that a Patriarch has a significant degree of precedence in the National Synod of all the bishops of his country, and sometimes (in accordance with the canons) in relation to appeals sent to him from other parts of the church over which he has the right to adjudicate; but all of this does not contravene the more fundamental principle that each bishop in his own diocese is entirely equal in apostolic status to all other bishops in the world.

For this reason Orthodoxy has no pope, among its patriarchs. Although this title is afforded sometimes to the Patriarch of Alexandria it carries none of the associations raised by the word in relation to the Western papacy: where it means a senior bishop with juridical authority over all other churches and bishops in the catholic universe. The outside world, especially the ill-informed secular media, often simplify their reports of Orthodox organization, so as to describe the Patriarch of Constantinople as “The Leader of the Orthodox World,” but in fact this is an erroneous representation of the inner life of the Eastern church. The Patriarch of Constantinople is certainly “first among equals” (*primus inter pares*) among all Orthodox bishops; but the issue of who leads the church, who speaks for it, cannot be answered in this simplistic linear sense of monarchical governance. In terms of authority within the church polity, the Patriarch of Constantinople has a prestigious office rooted in his responsibility to call the world’s senior bishops together in cases of international crisis, and in addition he often “speaks for” Orthodox interests on a broad world platform. The current Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, for example, has gained a large and high international reputation for the quality of his mind and character and for his interventions on ecological matters. But the Patriarch of Moscow, on the other hand, is the senior hierarch of the single largest Orthodox Church in the world, and directly governs millions of the faithful, while the Christian population of Constantinople (Istanbul) is now in the low hundreds. For generations past the Russian Patriarch’s office has been stifled, and censored by oppressive political regimes. Today it is learning to speak out again in freedom. Its future will be immensely significant for worldwide Christianity, just as it once was, before the disaster of the Soviet oppression of the early twentieth century overwhelmed it. The Patriarchate of Constantinople has taken the lead through many decades past in opening dialogues with separated churches such as the Catholic and the Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox. Its ecumenical efforts have resulted in a much greater spirit of mutual trust operative among and between the Eastern Orthodox churches at a time when increased immigration and movement of populations has more and more interspersed the Orthodox among nations and peoples where they had not usually been seen before.

America has become a second home for the Coptic and Assyrian Christians, for example, as political forces and the upsurge of militant Islam make their continued safety, or even survival in antique homelands such as Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and Syria ever more doubtful. The Byzantine Orthodox are currently rebuilding theological schools, libraries and churches all over Russia, Romania and Serbia after decades of painful oppression, and many Orthodox thinkers in western Europe and the



United States have entered advanced schools of theology there and contributed to the academic pursuit of Christian culture in the public forum. Although for centuries past, Orthodoxy has been seen in the West (often unfairly and imperialistically) as a minority faith, obscure, backward-looking, “subaltern” and exotic, its growing presence in the midst of the Western ecclesial and academic scene, and its extensive size as a church body, will mean that for the next century Orthodox thought and culture will probably play a larger and more significant part in Christian affairs in the Christian West; while at the same time the very concept of “The Christian East” (always a dubious notion when it really concerned “East-Roman,” and even more so when it referred merely to “Eastern Europe”) will probably fade back somewhat so that Orthodoxy’s message of “essential core Christianity” might be more clearly accessed without the concomitant ethnic trappings getting so much in the way.

## Appendix: The Present Structure and Organization of the Eastern Orthodox Churches

### *The four ancient patriarchates*

Constantinople  
 Alexandria  
 Antioch  
 Jerusalem

*Rome, formerly the first in the patriarchal rankings is no longer counted as being in the Orthodox communion.*

### *The eleven autocephalous churches*

Autocephalous status means a church (usually national) is self-governing in all aspects that relate to its ecclesiastical and political life, without regard to any other church’s synod: except that it maintains communion with the other churches in all matters of faith and doctrine (and there is always much interaction between them all). These are honored, in terms of formal precedence only, since each diocesan bishop of the Orthodox is regarded as equal and subject only to the presiding organizational character of the head of the local synod (the Metropolitan or Archbishop), and to the authority of his regional (or national) synod of bishops as a collective. The various churches are practically treated in terms of their synods of bishops, and are listed according to the ancient date of their independent establishment, which is here recorded in the bracket. Some of them (such as Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Georgia, and Bulgaria), had ancient establishments long before this date. Cyprus, for example, was a New Testament era church, as was mainland Greece. Romania was Christianized in the first century. Bulgaria and Georgia were historical Patriarchal churches long before the later “agreed” date when they received patriarchal status a second

time. But this list represents the precedences that have been commonly accepted among the Orthodox churches today.

Cyprus (431)

Sinai (1575): This church is so tiny, comprised of one monastery and its dependencies one, that some regard it as autonomous rather than autocephalous. It is technically the latter since its archbishop has no supervisory senior other than his own synod.

Russia (1589)

Greece (1850)

Bulgaria (1870)

Serbia (1879)

Romania (1885)

Georgia (1919)

Poland (1924)

Albania (1937)

Czech Lands and Slovakia (1951).

The Orthodox Church in America (formerly the Russian Metropolia and under the supervision of the Moscow Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church is arguably “in process” of belonging to this group, in the sense that it is still in the stage of gaining worldwide Orthodox recognition. It assumed autocephalous ecclesiastical status in 1970 with the blessing of the Patriarchate of Moscow, its founding synod (Bogolepov 2001). The autocephaly has not been acknowledged by the Patriarchate of Constantinople or a majority of the other Orthodox churches.

#### *The three autonomous orthodox churches*

While not entirely self-governed in all matters by their own synods, these churches for various reasons (not least local government suspicion of foreign ties) have been afforded a very high degree of independent governance of their own affairs, though retaining a notional allegiance to the “founding synod” (Bolshakov 1943).

Finland (1923, Patriarchate of Constantinople)

Japan (1970, Patriarchate of Moscow).

China (1957, Patriarchate of Moscow).

#### *Various “diaspora” churches*

The so-called Diaspora churches are comprised of the Orthodox of different ethnic groupings who for historical reasons, such as immigration or trade over past generations, have been removed from their original homelands and now reside in what were formerly seen as “Western” countries. Orthodoxy is now deeply rooted in most

parts of western Europe, Australasia, and America, as the old geographical simplicities have increasingly been blurred by global mobility. There are, for example, incomparably more Orthodox belonging to the Patriarchate of Constantinople living in North America and Australia, than there are in the old heartlands of Thrace, Asia Minor, or Greece. There are more Orthodox living in Britain today than there are Baptists, and again many times more than there are in Constantinople (Istanbul). America holds the largest amount of diaspora Orthodox communities, followed by Australasia, and western Europe. Russians and Greeks form the majority, though the spread of Romanians throughout Europe after the fall of the communist governments there in the late 1990s, has had a notable impact in recent decades and has led to the establishment of many new Romanian Orthodox diaspora dioceses in such places as Scandinavia, Ireland, Britain, France, and Germany.

The twenty-first century may well be a “Second Spring” for Eastern Orthodoxy as it recovers itself and founds new churches, academies and charitable institutions; and eventually takes its place once more on the world stage in a new, and much longed-for, condition of freedom (Pacini 2003).

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## CHAPTER 48

# Protestantism

Alister McGrath

**P**rotestantism designates a form of Christianity that is distinguished from Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and Eastern Orthodoxy on the other. Historically, Protestantism emerged within the Western church during the early sixteenth century, initially as a reforming movement or tendency within the church. The movement gained momentum and became increasingly diverse in the sixteenth century. Patterns of European emigration and cultural expansion led Protestantism to become a global movement in the nineteenth century, and remained a highly significant element of global Christianity in the twenty-first century.

### The Historical Origins of Protestantism

Protestant narratives of identity emphasize the continuity of the movement with the early period of Christian life and thought. This narrative identifies Protestantism as representing a renewal or retrieval of an authentic vision of early Christianity, especially during the apostolic period. While most Protestants regard their faith as representing a recovery of the life and thought of the church from its distortion or corruption during later periods, there is disagreement within the movement about when this period of distortion began.

Mainline Protestant writers of the sixteenth century – including Martin Luther (1483–1546), Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531), and John Calvin (1509–1564) – regarded apostolic Christianity as having been compromised by developments in the Middle Ages. They tended to use the language of “reform”, holding that Christianity had taken a series of wrong turns during the medieval period, which were in principle capable of being corrected. More radical Protestants, especially within the Anabapt movement, took the view that Christianity was corrupted much earlier – for example, as a result of the entanglement of the church and state during the Constantinian age.

Such was the extent of this corruption that Christianity needed to be recovered, rather than reformed.

Most scholars suggest that the origins of Protestantism lie primarily in the western European Renaissance, with its emphasis on the renewal of culture through a return to the glories of the classical period. The slogan *ad fontes* (“back to the sources”) encapsulated a program of cultural and religious renewal, using classical Rome (and to a lesser extent, Athens) as the foundation and criterion of authenticity. The image of a stream was widely used to justify a return to the fountainhead of Western culture. A stream was at its purest when it emerged from its source; the renewal of Western culture therefore depended on returning to its sources for inspiration and guidance. Culturally, this led to a resurgence of interest in classical architecture and Ciceronian Latin; religiously, it led to a new interest in the New Testament, which was seen as a witness to, and expression of, a vibrant and authentic Christianity.

Humanist writers such as Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam argued for the reformation and renewal of Christian life and thought through a return to the New Testament. Although Valla and Erasmus primarily emphasized the need for a reformation of the life and structures of the medieval church in the light of the simpler models of the New Testament, their approach implicitly pointed to the need for a reformation or reformulation of at least some Christian ideas. For Erasmus, the Middle Ages represented a period of unnecessary and inappropriate theological inflation and complexification; it was time to return to simpler theological formulations.

Protestantism emerged, at least in part, from these reforming trends in the later Renaissance. It is significant that most of the major Protestant reformers of the first generation – especially Zwingli and Martin Bucer – emerged from within the humanist movement. For Luther, however, the Middle Ages distorted, rather than merely obscured, the theological heartbeat of the Christian gospel: correction, not merely simplification, was called for.

## The First Phase of the Reformation: Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin

The term “Protestantism” emerged during the late 1520s. The term *Protestantes* (“protesters”) was used to designate delegates to the second Diet of Speyer (1529) who were opposed to the curtailment of religious liberties within the Holy Roman Empire. The term gradually came to be adopted to refer to the emerging factions in many parts of Europe campaigning for reform and renewal of the church. Early Protestants did not use this term, preferring such terms as “evangelicals” (i.e., someone who wished to return to more authentic forms of Christianity).

Protestantism gradually came to refer to a group of originally independent movements, especially in Germany and Switzerland, characterized by broad programs of reform, based on the New Testament. The most important such movement emerged in the German city of Wittenberg during the 1520s, based on Luther’s demands for a form of Christianity that gave a higher profile to the Bible, which recognized the priority of the grace of God in the Christian life, and which campaigned for church liturgies and sermons to be in the vernacular.

Other reforming movements gained sway around the same time, sometimes essentially independent of Luther, sometimes inspired by his approach. Zwingli's reformation in Zurich paralleled Luther's in some ways, although not placing quite the same emphasis on the need for the reformation of the church's teaching. In Strasbourg, Martin Bucer tried to reform both the city and church on the basis of the New Testament. Calvin's reformation in Geneva, which was consolidated during the late 1540s, shows evidence of being influenced by the model of Strasbourg, where Calvin resided briefly during a period of exile from Geneva in the early 1540s. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* became a theological landmark for Protestantism, and is generally seen as one of the most important religious works of the sixteenth century.

Other movements in western Europe took their lead from these models. For reasons that are not entirely understood, Protestantism appears to have been particularly attractive to the imperial cities of western Europe. At this stage, Protestantism was based around a number of centers and individuals, lacking central direction and a common program. The divisive debate between Luther and Zwingli over the "real presence" in 1529 highlighted divisions within the movement, which often paralleled national dividing lines.

## The Second Phase of the Reformation: Confessionalization

After the death of Calvin in 1564, Protestantism entered a new phase. Lutheranism and Calvinism had emerged as two quite distinct implementations of the Protestant vision, and were in open competition for influence, especially in Germany. A more radical form of Protestantism, generally known as "Anabaptism", gained relatively little influence, partly because of its critical attitudes towards secular authority, and its tendency to reject the idea of private property. As a result, pressure grew to define boundaries between Protestantism and Catholicism on the one hand, and between the various forms of Protestantism on the other.

The most important outcome of this was the development of "Confessions of Faith", such as the famous *Heidelberg Catechism* (1562), a Calvinist statement of faith which distinguished Calvinism from its religious alternatives. These newer confessions of faith were subordinate to the earlier Christian creeds, marking off Protestant movements as specific forms of Christianity, with their own distinct sets of beliefs.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, different forms of Protestantism began to establish regional strongholds. Lutheranism took hold in many parts of Germany and Scandinavia; Calvinism in the Low Countries, and parts of Germany. The increasingly close link between regions and religion was an important contribution to growing religious and national tensions, which eventually led to the Wars of Religion of the seventeenth century. The formula *cuius regio, eius religio* ("your region determines your religion") was useful as a means of achieving social cohesion within a specific locality, but inevitably created tensions with neighboring regions with differing religious commitments.

This period also witnessed the development of "Protestant orthodoxy" within both Lutheranism and Calvinism. These codified theological systems, paralleling works such

as Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, reflected a need to provide theological justification for Lutheranism and Calvinism, defending their intellectual merits in the face of competition and criticism from Catholic and Protestant alternatives. These over-intellectualized forms of Protestantism proved unattractive to many. Pietism, which placed an emphasis upon the experiential aspects of Christian faith, began to become a significant presence in Germany in the seventeenth century, stimulating the rise of Methodism in England in the eighteenth century.

## The English Reformation: Anglicanism

A distinct form of Protestantism emerged in England. Although religious tensions had been building up within England since about 1500, the precipitating cause for the emergence of Protestantism in England was Henry VIII's desire to have a male heir. His first wife, Catherine of Aragon, failed to produce such an heir; Henry then sought to divorce her. Meeting papal resistance to this move, Henry began to distance himself from Rome, asserting the autonomy of the English Church, with the monarch as its head. By the time of his death, England had moved in a more Protestant direction, although there is evidence to suggest that Henry was reluctant to abandon Catholicism in its entirety.

Henry was succeeded by his son Edward VI, who was under the age of majority, and initially had to govern through advisers. The English church now moved in a more explicitly Protestant direction. Martin Bucer was appointed to the Regius chair of theology at Cambridge University, to facilitate a more Protestant outlook within the church. Yet Edward's health was poor. His early death meant that his program of redirection of the English church was only partially implemented. His successor, Mary Tudor, sought to reverse it, and restore England to Catholicism. This process of re-Catholicization became unpopular, partly on account of its associations with Spain, and partly through the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer and other senior Protestant churchmen. Mary's premature death in 1558 brought an end to this process.

Elizabeth I sought to end simmering religious tensions within England through a "Settlement of Religion", which can be seen as a *via media* ("middle way") between Protestantism and Catholicism on the one hand, and between Lutheranism and Calvinism on the other. England's identity as a Protestant nation was consolidated significantly through a failed attempt by Spain to invade England and overthrow Elizabeth.

## The European Wars of Religion

The increasingly complex religious situation in western Europe made conflict of some kind inevitable. In the later sixteenth century, major confrontations took place between Catholics and Protestants in Germany and France. The Schmalkaldic War (1546–1547) and the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598) presaged more complex and destructive conflicts on a wider scale. The most important of these was the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), which was the most destructive and prolonged war yet seen in Europe. The English Civil War can also be considered to be a "war of religion", although on a

smaller scale, in which two variants of Protestantism – Anglicanism and Puritanism – fought for the religious soul of England.

These conflicts achieved little politically, and were widely regarded as demonstrating the need to curb religious influence in order to secure social and political stability. While the origins of the Enlightenment are complex, one significant contributing factor is known to have been a desire to find a basis for authority that was independent of religious texts and institutions. As the conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism made painfully clear, the Bible was open to multiple interpretations. Why not appeal to reason as a universal human resource, and use this as the basis of social and political discourse?

In England, Deism emerged as a form of Protestant rationalism. Although its origins can be traced back to the early 1600s, the movement gained influence after the Civil War. During the “Augustan Age”, Deism emerged as a rationally prudential form of Protestant Christianity, well adapted to sustaining political and social cohesion. Growing interest in Deism is evident in France in the decades prior to the Revolution of 1789, and in Germany from about 1720. It is often suggested that the Enlightenment influenced Protestantism; perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that Protestantism and the Enlightenment were essentially symbiotic. The Enlightenment had relatively little impact on Catholicism until the nineteenth century.

## Protestantism in America

The discovery of the Americas soon led to leading European sea powers establishing colonies in the region. Most of these were Catholic nations, including France, Portugal, and Spain. However, England rapidly established a colonial presence in the northeastern parts of America, especially in the Massachusetts Bay area. The rise of religious tensions in England, especially during the reigns of James I and Charles I, led to many Protestants emigrating from England to find a new life in the American colonies. Many of these – including the “Pilgrim Fathers”, who set sail in the *Mayflower* in 1620 – were Puritans.

By the opening of the eighteenth century, American Puritanism was becalmed, having lost much of its original energy. The situation was transformed by a religious revival, traditionally known as the “Great Awakening”, which began in New England in 1740–1741 (foreshadowed in 1734–1735), and which had ripple effects throughout New England. In some ways, there are parallels with the “Evangelical Revival” in England around this time, which centered on the emerging Methodist movement. By 1760, it was clear that the revival was bringing about significant changes in American Protestantism. It was not simply that people were returning to church, or that religion was playing an increasingly significant role in public life. The revival brought about a changed perception of the relationship of the individual, congregation, and state.

The American Revolution of 1776 was not primarily motivated by religious concerns, although there was much opposition to making the Church of England the “established church” of the region. The constitutional separation of church and state is best seen as an expression of the principle that no denomination should have ecclesial privileges, rather than of any attempt to exclude religion from public life.



Further Protestant emigration from Europe continued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with specific regions of North America in effect becoming émigré communities. Dutch forms of Protestantism became established in Pennsylvania, and Swedish in Minnesota. The “Second Great Awakening” (1800–1830) was a diffuse series of localized revivals over about three decades that affected nearly all areas of the newly-established United States. A well-known revival broke out in rural Kentucky in 1801, taking the form of large camp meetings. The most famous of these was the “Cane Ridge” meeting, which lasted a week, and was attended by at least 10,000 individuals. These set a precedent for a wave of revivalist meetings throughout the frontier territories, making an appeal primarily to common folk, emphasizing the emotion rather than intellect. The outcome was the transformation of antebellum America, leading to the emergence of the Protestant “Bible Belt”.

The American Civil War brought to a head simmering tensions within Protestantism in the region, especially over the issue of slavery. Many Protestant denominations found themselves facing major fissure over whether to support the abolition of slavery. The abolitionist movement gained considerable headway in northern states, especially as a result of the rise of the “Holiness” movement within Protestantism. This movement’s distinct emphasis on “holy living” came to be linked with support for the abolition of slavery in the antebellum period. Oberlin College, Ohio became a stronghold of abolitionism, even advocating “civil disobedience” in the face of the fugitive slave laws, designed to force runaway slaves to return to their servitude.

Protestant supremacy in the United States was challenged by the rise of Catholicism, primarily through the arrival of émigré communities from Ireland and Italy, which changed the religious dynamic of many cities, including Boston and St. Louis. Yet by the opening of the twentieth century, Protestantism was seen by many as defining the religious establishment of the United States.

One of the more significant controversies within American Protestantism broke out during the 1920s. The “Fundamentalist” controversy reflected a perception that American culture was moving away from its traditional Protestant moorings. Fundamentalism arose as a religious reaction within American conservative culture to the development of a secular culture during the 1920s, in an attempt to safeguard the Christian heritage. The movement reaffirmed Christian “fundamentals,” based on a direct reading of the Bible, to counter this process of cultural drift. Yet “Fundamentalism” rapidly became a reactive movement, defined by what it opposed as much as what it affirmed. A siege mentality became characteristic of the movement. Fundamentalist counter-communities saw themselves defending their distinctive beliefs against an unbelieving and increasingly secular culture, often withdrawing from cultural engagement to avoid being contaminated by a corrupt culture. After the Second World War, fundamentalism gradually gave way to what was initially known as a “New Evangelicalism”, which retained an emphasis on the authority of the Bible, while encouraging public engagement.

## **Beyond the West: Protestant Missionary Movements**

Protestantism became the religious establishment in many parts of western Europe in the late sixteenth century. At this time, Protestantism showed little interest in

missionary activity, despite the growing realization that there were parts of the world – such as the newly discovered Americas – which had no Christian presence. The establishment of Christianity in North America took place primarily through the emigration of European Christians, rather than through missionary work among the indigenous peoples. The situation in Latin America was very different. The Catholic church took missionary work seriously, and sought to establish Christianity among the native peoples through mission stations and various forms of outreach.

The rise of the missionary movement within Protestantism was a relatively late development. By 1790, Protestant missionary societies were actively promoting missions throughout the world. Protestantism was spread through a complex amalgam of trading links, colonial activity, and intentional outreach. The rise of Protestant maritime powers, such as Holland and England, led to growing confidence amongst Protestant missionary agencies. England would play an especially important role in Protestant missionary work, as it began to become a global power, establishing colonies throughout the world.

Yet missionary work tended to be undertaken primarily by voluntary organizations, rather than by the leadership of Protestant churches. In the second half of the eighteenth century, missionary leadership passed into the hands of entrepreneurial individuals, who created dedicated missionary societies which focused specifically on the objective of overseas mission. These societies arranged their own fundraising, created support groups, and identified and recruited missionaries. The Baptist Missionary Society (founded 1792, and initially known as “The Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen”) and the Church Missionary Society (founded 1799, and originally known as “The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East”) developed a particular focus on specific regions of Africa. The Baptist Missionary Society focused on the Congo basin, and the Church Missionary Society on West and East Africa.

Missionary expansion on the part of nations such as England and Holland in Asia (especially India and China), Africa, and Australasia led to the entanglement of Christian outreach and colonial concerns, particularly commercial interests. David Livingstone (1813–1873), for example, declared his intention to go to Africa “to make an open path for commerce and Christianity.” While it is a simplification to suggest that missionaries were covert agents of colonialism, it was difficult to avoid the political realities which led to at least a partial convergence of missionary, commercial, and colonial agendas.

By the end of the twentieth century, Protestant churches in Latin America, Asia, and Africa had grown substantially, so that the numerical epicenter of Protestantism was in the process of shifting from its original heartlands in the West to the developing world. This process of expansion has often been accompanied by various forms of cultural assimilation, in which Protestant denominations came to reflect some aspects of the values and practices of its social context. This is particularly evident in Southern Africa.

With the departure of the colonial powers in the decades following World War II, African Christianity underwent significant changes. Leadership within the churches gradually devolved from Europeans to Africans, resulting in a growing adaptation

of the colonial churches to local customs and traditions. Many indigenous churches began to emerge, without any historical connection with European denominations. These “African Initiated Churches” (AICs) are strongest and most numerous in Southern Africa, West Africa, the Congo Basin and Central Kenya.

The rise of Pentecostalism has had a significant impact on transforming the shape of Protestantism in the developing world. Although the movement had its origins in the United States in the early years of the twentieth century, since the 1960s the movement has become especially influential in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The rise of Pentecostalism in Latin America has transformed the religious dynamic of the region. In Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, Pentecostals now far outnumber all other Protestant groups, and on some projections may soon constitute the majority of the population. Pentecostals are also growing rapidly in areas adjacent to Latin America, such as the Caribbean, where Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Haiti have seen large increases in Pentecostal congregations.

Pentecostalism’s emphasis on a direct experience of God and concern for personal transformation, especially when coupled with a vibrant, occasionally exuberant, worship style, has secured it a large following among those who find Protestantism’s traditional book-based services emotionally unengaging. A similar pattern can be seen in Korea, in which Pentecostalism has emerged as a leading religious force since World War II.

## The Two Basic Ideas of Protestantism

So what are the core ideas of Protestantism? We have already noted its refusal to acknowledge papal authority as an integral aspect of its self-understanding. But what other themes have been important, historically and more recently? Two themes are of particular importance to understanding the distinct identity of Protestantism. Both of these emerged during the sixteenth century, and are embodied in the confessional formulas of core Protestant communities. Although these have been subject to a certain degree of reinterpretation over the centuries, they continue to function as core themes within the Protestant self-understanding.

### *The authority of the Bible*

One of the core themes of the early reforming movements associated with Luther and Zwingli was a return to the Bible as the fundamental source of teaching and moral guidance. Despite some divergences over how the Bible was to be interpreted, both insisted that a right reading of the biblical text, unimpeded by the vested interests of the institution of the church, was essential to the renewal and reformation of Western Christianity. The Latin slogan “*sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone)” expressed this idea of the supreme authority of the Bible for Protestantism.

Yet Protestantism rapidly developed subtly differing ways of conceptualizing the place of the Bible in Christian life and thought. Lutheranism and Calvinism developed

approaches which interpreted the Bible alongside tradition and reason. Although the Bible was traditionally given supreme authority, other sources were used in ascertaining its correct interpretation. At the time of the Enlightenment, reason came to be given increasing importance as a theological resource, leading to the displacement of the Bible from its central theological position within some Protestant traditions.

Debates within Protestantism over biblical interpretation rapidly demonstrated that the movement had to come to terms with multiple readings of the Bible. The Copernican controversy of the sixteenth century raised questions about how to interpret biblical passages which spoke of the sun standing still. The Darwinian controversies of the nineteenth century raised questions about how the Genesis creation accounts were to be understood. The question of authority is implicit in these debates. If the Bible itself has supreme theological authority, who has the right to determine what is the correct interpretation of the Bible?

The reassertion of the centrality of the Bible in American Protestantism in the 1870s is of particular importance in understanding contemporary Protestant sensitivities. Apparently with the First Vatican Council's declaration of papal infallibility in mind, conservative Protestant writers such as Charles Hodge asserted the "infallibility of Scripture". This idea remains important within conservative Protestantism today, although it is increasingly recognized that declaring a text to be "infallible" does not evade the question of how that text is to be interpreted.

The Protestant emphasis on the importance of the Bible has always been linked with an insistence that the Bible ought to be available to all, to be read in their own language. Protestantism gave a new impetus to the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. This led to some biblical translations achieving the status of literary classics – most notably, the famous King James Bible (1611), which had considerable influence over the shaping of English literature for three centuries. Protestantism has given rise to a large number of organizations dedicated to the translation of the Bible into minority living languages, such as the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The chief debate within Protestantism today concerns the interpretation of the Bible, not so much in doctrinal debates, but in shaping Protestant attitudes towards contemporary social issues, such as sexuality. Some interpreters of the Bible feel a sense of cultural distance between its original contexts and contemporary Western society. This has led to important debates about how the Bible articulates an ethical vision, and how this is to be applied to contemporary concerns.

### *Justification by faith*

Luther famously regarded the doctrine of justification "*sola fide* (by faith alone)" as standing at the heart of his reforming program. Luther was convinced that the church of his day had lapsed into some form of Pelagianism, holding that human beings could earn their salvation or purchase favor in the sight of God. The famous "indulgence controversy" of 1519 – widely seen as a tipping point in the origins of the Reformation – reflected Luther's unease over the orthodoxy of the medieval church's views on grace and salvation.

These views were, however, open to misunderstanding. Luther's concern had been to ensure that good works were not the basis of acceptance by God. He soon found that he was being understood to have said that good works were not necessary within the Christian life. Luther tried to correct this misapprehension, insisting that good works were to be seen as the appropriate outcome, not the cause, of acceptance in the sight of God.

Protestantism drew a sharp distinction between "justification" as a declaratory event, in which a sinner was pronounced to be righteous; and "sanctification" as a transformative process, by which the sinner was internally renewed, and the process of "becoming righteous" was initiated. This forensic understanding of justification emerged in the 1530s, and became typical of Protestantism, particularly in the developed form associated with Calvin.

Since World War II, there has been an emerging consensus that Protestantism and Catholicism are not as widely separated by their respective understandings of justification as once seemed to be the case. In part, this reflects a growing appreciation of the complexities of the historical development of the doctrine of justification; in part, it is based on the realization that Protestantism and Catholicism used quite different theological frameworks to frame their discussion of the issues, leading to potential misunderstandings.

In more recent decades, Protestantism has had to come to terms with the fact that contemporary Western culture is generally uninterested in the core question that stood at the heart of Luther's program of reform. "How do I find a gracious God?" does not resonate with contemporary cultural concerns in modern Western culture, leading some Protestant apologists to reformulate its core concerns in relational or existential form.

## The Cultural Impact of Protestantism

Finally, we need to consider the broader impact of Protestantism, which has left a significant imprint on history, particularly in the West. Many have noted the importance of Protestantism's tendency to "desacralize" the world. Nature in itself cannot be seen as being sacred; at best, it can point beyond itself to the realm of the divine or transcendent. Nature is thus "disenchanted"; it can only play a symbolical role in reminding people of sacred realities, or acting as a signpost to where they may be found and encountered.

Protestantism can thus be argued to have played a role in laying the foundations for a secularization of culture. Many argue, however, that Protestantism's most significant cultural impact lay in the areas of economics and the natural sciences.

### *Economics*

One of the more noteworthy aspects of the rise of Protestantism is the stimulus the movement provided to the rise of modern capitalism, especially in Calvinist regions

of Europe. Under Catholicism, the accumulation of capital was seen as intrinsically sinful; under Calvinism, it came to be seen as praiseworthy. The German sociologist Max Weber saw this fundamental change in attitude particularly well illustrated by a number of seventeenth-century Calvinist writers such as Benjamin Franklin, whose writings combined commendation of the accumulation of capital through engagement with the world, while at the same time criticizing its consumption. Capital was to be seen as something that was to be increased, not something that was to be consumed. Calvinism, according to Weber, thus generated the psychological preconditions essential to the development of modern capitalism.

A second link between Calvin and the rise of modern capitalism concerns usury – the practice of lending money at interest, with a view to making a profit on the loan, which was prohibited by the Old Testament. Throughout the patristic era and the Middle Ages, the entire consensus of the church was that usury was a mortal sin.

Calvin declared that money lending was legitimate, provided a fair rate of interest was charged. The new economic realities of the sixteenth century meant that interest is simply to be seen as rent paid on capital. For Calvin, the real concern about usury was the exploitation of the poor through high interest rates. This, he argues, can be dealt with in other ways – such as the fixing of interest rates at communally acceptable levels. Calvin's willingness to allow a variable rate of interest shows an awareness of the pressures upon capital in the more or less free market of the age, and laid the foundations for modern economic practice.

### *The natural sciences*

The emergence of the natural sciences is often considered to be linked with the Christian intellectual environment of western Europe. In recent years, a growing body of scholarly work has emerged, arguing that the decisive contribution to the emergence of the natural sciences is not to be attributed to Christianity in general, but to Protestantism in particular. Protestantism created a new motivation for the scientific study of nature. A persistent theme throughout the works of John Calvin was that the wisdom of the invisible and intangible creator God might be discerned and studied through the created order. Calvin thus commended the natural scientists of his day, who were able to experience and appreciate the beauty and wisdom of God through what God had created and shaped.

This fundamental motivation for the scientific study of nature has remained characteristic of Protestantism. It can be seen in many confessional documents of the Reformed church in western Europe. For example, the Belgic Confession (1566) declared that reading the “book of nature” enhances the believer’s appreciation of what is known of God through the “book of Scripture.”

In both cases, Protestantism can be argued to have laid the groundwork for a positive religious engagement with the natural sciences. While this relationship has occasionally been complex – think, for example of conservative Protestant reaction to the theory of evolution – it remains of importance in understanding the historical development of the sciences in the West.

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# Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity

Allan H. Anderson

## Defining Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity (henceforth, “Pentecostalism”) has become a poly-nucleated and variegated phenomenon that has spread rapidly throughout the world during the twentieth century (A. Anderson 2013: 1–10). One way to understand this variety of movements is from their theological center, and considers Pentecostalism to consist of related movements where the emphasis is on the experience of the Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts (R. Anderson 1979: 152). The term “Pentecostalism” itself is one with shortcomings, but despite its inadequacy refers simply to churches with a “family resemblance” that emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit, especially in the use of such “gifts of the Spirit” as healings, prophecies and speaking in tongues. The latter gift of “unknown tongues” may be said to distinguish most Pentecostals and Charismatics from other Christians, and although many members do not speak in tongues themselves or see it as a normative experience, their churches allow and often encourage its practice. Definitions depend on which range of criteria one takes. Criteria are always subjective and arbitrary, and differences may not be perceived as significant by the movements themselves on which these criteria are imposed. On the other hand, there is also the possibility of overlooking differences that may be quite important to church members. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches include a wide variety known by many different names.

Historically, Pentecostalism has multiple roots that include the radical evangelical missionary movement, the African-based slave religion of the United States, and the healing and holiness movements of the late nineteenth century. These historical roots in the radical fringes of “free church” Evangelicalism tend to create a certain fundamentalist rigidity among Pentecostals; while paradoxically, Pentecostalism’s



emphasis on “freedom in the Spirit” renders it inherently flexible in different cultural and social contexts, and made the transplanting of its central tenets in different parts of the world more easily assimilated. With the passing of a century, the historical roots are not as easily recognizable. Pentecostalism began as a restoration or revitalization movement at the beginning of the twentieth century among radical evangelicals and their missionaries expecting a worldwide, Holy Spirit revival before the imminent coming of Christ. The fundamental conviction of these early Pentecostals was that before the cataclysmic eschatological events, the “old-time power” of the Acts of the Apostles would be restored to the church and “signs and wonders” would enable the Christian gospel to be preached rapidly all over the world. The message traveled quickly as its messengers spread out into a world dominated by Western colonial powers. As the world of the twentieth century lurched through two devastating world wars that created disillusionment with Western “civilization” and the colonial empires crumbled, Pentecostalism changed with it. It no longer saw itself as a form of Christianity imported from the West, but by the end of the century had developed thousands of local mutations from large urban mega-churches with high-tech equipment and sophisticated organizations to remote village house churches meeting in secret with a handful of believers. In the middle of the twentieth century and especially from 1960 onwards, Pentecostal phenomena began to reappear in the so-called “mainline” Protestant churches, and from 1967 in the Catholic Church. The resulting “Charismatic movement” in these churches grew exponentially during the 1970s and tensions led to a new type of independent Charismatic church that by the turn of the century was the most prominent form of Pentecostalism globally.

The answers to the question of what actually defines “Pentecostalism” are many and debates rage on. As we have seen, different scholars in differing disciplines have different criteria. Scholars in the Western world speak of “classical” Pentecostalism referring to those denominations that arose through the impetus of early revivals in North America, or of those denominational Pentecostals whose theological basis is an experience subsequent to conversion called “Spirit baptism”, the consequence or “evidence” of which is usually speaking in tongues. Others follow the church growth guru Peter Wagner’s lead and write of successive “waves” of Pentecostalism. In this schema, the first wave is classical Pentecostalism formed at the beginning of the twentieth century; the second wave is the Charismatic movement in the older churches that began in North America in the 1960s; and the “Third Wave” consists of the neo-evangelical, independent Charismatic churches that arose in the 1970s and 1980s. Wagner now speaks of a “Fourth Wave” and a “New Apostolic Reformation” (Wagner 1999). Each of these categories has its own personal “heroes” and catalyzers in the emergence of the category. But these terms are overused, clichéd and inappropriate in a global context. Even in the Western context there are large groups of churches that would fall somewhere in between the different “waves”.

Although the term “Pentecostalism” is now widely used by scholars of religion and most of them assume they know what it means, the term has been used to embrace churches as widely diverse as the celibacy-practicing Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, the sabbatarian True Jesus Church in China with a “Oneness” theology, the enormous, uniform-wearing, ritualistic Zion Christian Church in southern Africa and Brazil’s

equally enormous and ritualistic, prosperity-oriented Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. These are lumped together with the Assemblies of God, various Churches of God, the Catholic Charismatic movement, “neo-Charismatic” independent churches with prosperity and “Word of Faith” theologies, the “Third Wave” evangelical movement with their use of spiritual gifts framed within a theology that does not posit a subsequent crisis experience of Spirit baptism, and many other forms of Charismatic Christianity as diverse as Christianity itself. Clearly, such a widely inclusive definition is problematic and leads to wild speculations about the extent of the movement. Classical Pentecostal scholars tend to use the statistics of David Barrett *et al.* as proof of the numerical strength of their particular form of Pentecostalism (Synan 1997: ix, 281; 2001: 373). These scholars begin their history with the early American movement and state rather triumphalistically that “Pentecostalism” has grown to half a billion members without analyzing what is included in these figures. Barrett estimated some 601 million Pentecostals, Charismatics and neo-Charismatics in the world in 2008 (Barrett, Johnson, and Crossing 2008: 30), and three distinct forms are included – “Pentecostal”, “Charismatic” and “neo-Charismatic”, numerically the largest category. Although not expressly stated, presumably “Pentecostal” here means “classical Pentecostal”; “Charismatic” means those who practice spiritual gifts in the older Catholic and Protestant denominations (with Catholic Charismatics forming the great majority); and “neo-Charismatic” includes all others, especially the vast number of independent churches – perhaps two-thirds of the total. The possible permutations are endless.

If we are to do justice to this global movement, we must include its more recent expressions in the independent, Charismatic and neo-Charismatic movements, especially as found in the global South. It is often easier to criticize the inclusive definitions of others without providing an alternative. Whatever we consider to be included needs to be completely flexible, so that we make room for the fringes where constantly changing new developments deviate from the “normal”. Despite the seeming diversity within global Pentecostalism, the movement has “family resemblances”, certain universal features and beliefs throughout its many manifestations, most of which emerged in the early twentieth century. Although this is not at all a homogeneous movement, and there are very significant differences, the thousands of different Pentecostal denominations and movements independent of those founded in North America and western Europe at the start of the twentieth century could all be described as “Pentecostal” in character, theology and ethos.

## Pentecostalism in the Global South

In these highly debatable, annually published statistics, it was estimated that there were 68 million “Pentecostals/Charismatics/neo-Charismatics” in the world in 1970. Thirty years later this figure had risen exponentially to 505 million, and in just eight years (2008) another 100 million were added to make a total of 601 million, about a quarter of the world’s Christians. This figure is projected to rise to almost 800 million by 2025 (Barrett, Johnson, and Crossing 2008: 30). Whatever one may think about the accuracy of these numbers, at least they do illustrate that something remarkable has

happened in the history of Christianity in recent times. The rapid rate of growth of Pentecostalism and its associated movements accelerated dramatically in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and especially in the global South. Much depends, however, on what are included in these statistics, which are considerably inflated by including such large movements as African and Chinese independent churches and Catholic Charismatics. These movements, although having a “Spirit” focus, do not consider themselves “Pentecostal” and in many cases eschew such identification. But however we define Pentecostalism (this task is by no means easy and probably unnecessary), its many varieties have contributed to the transformation of the demographics of global religion itself. This has enormous implications for understanding both Christianity and its encounter with other faiths. The future of Christianity and the nature of global religion are affected by this seismic change in the character of the Christian faith.

There are other studies pointing to this global proliferation. In the Pew Forum’s *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*, conducted in 2006, it was discovered that in all ten of the countries surveyed,<sup>1</sup> Pentecostalism constituted a very significant percentage of Christianity. It was, declared the summary, “one of the fastest-growing segments of world Christianity”, and was defined as those that “emphasize such spiritually renewing ‘gifts of the Holy Spirit’ as speaking in tongues, divine healing and prophesying.” Although the proportion varied from country to country, in six of the countries, Pentecostals and Charismatics were over 60% of all Protestants. In Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, South Africa, and the Philippines, they constituted over a third of the total population – in Guatemala and Kenya it was over half, a remarkable statistic that indicates how pervasive and influential Pentecostalism is becoming (Pew Research 2006a).

In Latin America its rapid growth in the second half of the twentieth century prompted David Stoll to ask whether the continent was turning Protestant, or “evangélico/a” (Stoll 1990).<sup>2</sup> In some countries of this region Pentecostals and Charismatics are close to outnumbering Catholics and in Guatemala they have become half of the total population. The Pew survey states that Pentecostalism has grown from 4% of the total population of Latin America in 1970 to 28% in 2005 (Pew Research 2006b). Brazil has the largest population of Pentecostals in the world, even found in the national legislature and consisting of some tenth of its members. Even in those Latin American countries where Pentecostalism is less than 10% of the population, Pentecostalism is now growing rapidly (Freston 2004). They have become catalysts of social change and are already becoming instruments of political and public clout. Guatemala has had two Pentecostal presidents, and Brazil and Nicaragua also have political parties initiated by Pentecostals. Whether Pentecostals proactively oppose reactionary structures or bolster the forces of conservatism remains to be seen (A. Anderson 2014: 283–290). Pentecostals have also grown rapidly in the Caribbean, particularly in Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Haiti (Martin 1990: 51).

On the African continent, Pentecostalism began with the independent church movement in the second decade of the twentieth century. In West Africa, William Wadé Harris, Garrick Sokari Braide, and Peter Anim heralded in a new form of spiritual African Christianity that was paralleled simultaneously in South Africa by Edward Lion, Elias Mahlangu, Elias Letwaba and Engenas Lekganyane. The movements they

founded together form a prominent part of Christianity in west and southern Africa. Early manifestations of Pentecostalism in the United States were found previously in the religious expressions of the slaves, who retained much of the African religious culture from which they had been abducted. In African and African diasporic Pentecostalism there is an adaptive remolding of African religious practices in a decidedly Christian context. These early roots paved the way for other African initiatives in Pentecostalism that interacted with Western forms to make Africa one of the most vibrant areas of Pentecostalism today. It is now one of the most prominent forms of Christianity and this has also profoundly affected older mission churches that have become "Pentecostalized" as a result. It is important to note the role of Pentecostalism and expatriate Pentecostal missionaries in the early years of African, Indian and Chinese independency and the links with some of its most significant leaders. The independent "Zionist" and "Apostolic" churches in South Africa together form the largest grouping of Christians in the country today. Although these independent churches may no longer be described as "Pentecostal" without further qualification, the most characteristic features of their theology and praxis are overwhelmingly Pentecostal and, in the case of South Africa, also influenced by the Zionist movement of John Alexander Dowie in Illinois. Healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, baptism by immersion, and even the rejection of medicine and the eating of pork, are some of the features that remain among these African churches. Whatever their motivation might have been, Pentecostal missions in South Africa were unwitting catalysts for a much larger movement of the Spirit that was to dominate South African Christianity for the remainder of the twentieth century. Although these Zionist and Apostolic churches have gradually increased the distance between themselves and classical Pentecostalism in liturgy and practice, their growth and proliferation are further evidence of the spread of churches of the Spirit throughout Africa.

Much more recently, new Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have become a major expression of Christianity, emerging all over the continent with services that are usually emotional, enthusiastic, and loud, especially as most make use of electronic musical instruments. Benson Idahosa in Benin City, Nigeria, was one of the earliest leaders of this new African Pentecostalism that propagates a prosperity gospel and holds seminars on how to get rich and prosper. Some of the largest Pentecostal churches in the world and the largest Christian gatherings are found in Nigeria today, especially in its southwestern region. Zambia has had two Pentecostal presidents. This new form of Pentecostalism has spread throughout Africa and into Europe and North America in the wake of African migration. Mega-churches in African cities that make judicious use of the media and electronic music play a prominent role in public life and attract many thousands, especially young people.

Pentecostalism is also expanding remarkably in many parts of Asia. In India, vigorous missionary and church planting activities characterize Pentecostal churches, especially in and from South India. Chinese Christianity is growing rapidly and is also dominated by a Pentecostal type of spirituality that began in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai in the first decade of the twentieth century. Greater freedom of religion in this country since the 1989 tragedy of Beijing's Tiananmen Square has resulted in the proliferation of unregistered Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like independent churches, who probably form the majority of Christians and have an uneasy relationship with

both the Communist Party and the officially recognized China Christian Council. South Korea has had the largest Protestant churches in the world, including the Yoido Full Gospel Church founded by David Yonggi Cho in 1958 in a slum area of Seoul, reputed to be the largest congregation in the world by 1990 with 700,000 members. There are now several large Charismatic churches in Seoul with memberships exceeding 20,000. In Singapore there are similar churches, the independent City Harvest Church being the largest one, appealing especially to the city's youth. Churches like these have opulent buildings holding thousands of worshippers, reflecting the emerging Pentecostal middle class in some parts of the world, or at least housing those aspiring to be such (A. Anderson 2014: 303). Large Pentecostal churches founded by Asians have emerged especially in the continent's Pacific Rim in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. In the Philippines, the largest Catholic Charismatic movement in the world with some seven million members exists in the El Shaddai movement led by Mario ("Mike") Verlade.

However, Pentecostalism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America often consists of grass-roots movements appealing initially to the disadvantaged and underprivileged, whose desire for upward social mobility is nurtured (and occasionally realized) by its support of an alcohol-free, thrifty and industrious lifestyle. A focus on the prominent and wealthy urban mega-churches should not detract from the fact that many Pentecostals in the South meet in small groups and in shacks, schoolrooms and in the open air. Pentecostal spirituality reaches into some of the most remote and rural areas of the world and also into places where Pentecostals must meet in secret for fear of religious and ideological persecution. Pentecostalism has become the preference *of* the poor in places like Latin America where liberation theology has declared God's preference *for* the poor. The globalization of these various kinds of Pentecostalism is a fact of our time.

## Pentecostalism in the North

There are some who say that Pentecostalism originated in the United States and there is some truth in this statement, at least as far as giving the movement its initial global impetus is concerned. Some of the roots of what is "classical" Pentecostalism today are found in American revivalism and its radical evangelicalism. The rise of Pentecostalism in the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles (1906–1908) under its leader William Seymour gave a certain authenticity to African American holistic Christianity with its bodily manifestations. This flexibility in different cultures and religions, however, did not always satisfy Westerners, who were drawn by their own sense of cultural decorum toward promoting a more cerebral and less emotional expression of Pentecostal practice. This also occurred in early American Pentecostalism, when the founder of the doctrine that speaking in tongues was "initial evidence" of receiving the Spirit, Charles Fox Parham of Topeka, Kansas, recoiled in horror at Azusa Street when he saw the intermingling of the races in manifestations of ecstasy (MacRobert 1988: 9, 31, 60). The Azusa Street revival, although part of a wider series of revivals in the early twentieth century, became the launch-pad for a new form of revivalist Christianity that emphasized spiritual gifts over cerebral ones, especially advocating an experience of baptism with the Spirit subsequent to conversion, accompanied by speaking in tongues and other miraculous signs

that would enable ordinary people to spread out into all the world with the gospel before the imminent return of the Lord, into some twenty-five nations within two years. Many of these early Pentecostal missionaries reached out to existing evangelical mission networks with their message, resulting in new centers of Pentecostalism in different parts of the world that became the means of propagating the movement.

The American Pentecostals soon fell out with each other and began a series of acrimonious schisms that reverberated internationally. By 1916 American Pentecostalism was divided into three hostile sections that took different positions on Holiness and the Trinity so that Holiness, "Finished Work" and Oneness Pentecostalism emerged. African-American Pentecostalism also was isolated as Pentecostals followed the racial segregation that characterized American society at the time. But the Church of God in Christ, led by Charles H. Mason, took on its own distinctive form of Pentecostal spirituality and became the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States and the largest African American one. Early Pentecostals were also pacifist during World War I and in Britain were interred for this stand. As a result of the growth of the movement in North America and particularly the post-World War II healing evangelist Oral Roberts, Pentecostalism was seen as less of a fringe group and was gradually accepted into mainstream American society. By 1942 the major white denominations were admitted into membership of the newly formed National Association of Evangelicals. The 1950s also saw the emergence of the Latter Rain revival movement that advocated a return to New Testament Christianity and resulted in new divisions in Pentecostalism. The ministry of the New York evangelist David Wilkerson and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in this decade, accompanied by popular books like Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade* and John and Elizabeth Sherrill's *They Speak with Other Tongues* furthered the cause of Pentecostalism in "mainline" churches and opened the way for the Charismatic movement to become public.

In 1960 Episcopalian vicar Dennis Bennett was forced to resign from his church in California because he had received the Pentecostal experience. This event was given national publicity in the media, Charismatic experience in mainline churches grew during the 1960s and led to large interdenominational conferences and eventually, to new Charismatic churches that claimed to be "non-denominational" and independent. These churches constitute one of the most prominent features of American religious life, but their influence was not confined to this. Pentecostals and Charismatics like Pat Robertson, John Ashcroft and more recently, Sarah Palin, entered public life. Pentecostal expansion in the United States in the 1990s was restarted by the new migrations to the country through Hispanic, East Asian, and West African churches. North American Pentecostalism has also been the scene of various revitalization movements within Pentecostalism, including the Latter Rain movement and the healing revivals of the 1950s, the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s, the Jesus Movement commencing in California, and the shepherding movement of the 1970s. All these various movements extended their influence as its leaders traveled internationally. New revival movements occurred in Pentecostal churches during the 1990s, the most prominent being that in the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship popularly known as the "Toronto Blessing", and in the Brownsville Assembly of God, Pensacola, Florida. These became centers of pilgrimage for others, mainly from the Western world, to come and "catch the fire".

In contrast to most other parts of the world, the Pentecostal movement in Europe is quite small (A. Anderson 2014: 92–111). This reflects the secularization of Europe in the past century, and although Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity has been able to hold its own in western Europe in the face of declining church attendance elsewhere, this form of Christianity remains relatively small. Pentecostalism was introduced into Europe mainly through the Norwegian Methodist Thomas B. Barratt, whose church in Oslo became a place of pilgrimage for future Pentecostal leaders, the most notable of which were Anglican vicar Alexander Boddy from Sunderland, England and Baptist pastor Lewi Pethrus of Sweden. Pentecostal churches across Europe emerged and grew slowly between the two world wars. By the 1950s European Pentecostalism was still a small minority regarded as a fringe sect by most European state churches. The Charismatic movement in Europe was earliest in France, where there were Reformed and Baptist Charismatics in the 1940s. The largest Pentecostal churches in western Europe were in Sweden, Finland, England, Portugal, and Italy. A significant Pentecostal movement among Europe's Roma people began in France and Spain in the 1950s. The migration of Africans into Europe has resulted in new mega-churches springing up like the Kingsway International Christian Centre in London and the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God in Kiev, Ukraine.

Classical Pentecostalism has been relatively more successful in eastern Europe, where it has grown (especially since World War II) in the face of severe restrictions and persecution from Communist regimes. Yet after many years of repression this has not been without its difficulties. Perhaps the most significant pioneer of Pentecostalism in the Soviet Union was Ivan Voronaev (1886–ca. 1940) who first encountered Pentecostalism in a New York Russian Baptist church and later founded several large churches in Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Russia before disappearing into a Siberian labor camp. Since the disintegration of Communism there has been more freedom for Pentecostals in Central and Eastern Europe, but this has also presented various challenges. Pentecostalism expanded in many of the former Communist countries in the 1990s, but not without stiff opposition. There, the role of resistance to Pentecostalism that characterized the Communist era has been taken up by the dominant Orthodox Christianity. The latter has struggled to re-establish its hegemony in newly emerging secular democracies – and in some cases, like that of the post-Communist Russian Orthodox Church, has been quite effective in doing so.

There were an estimated 780,000 Pentecostals in Ukraine in 2000, the highest number in any European nation. There the Evangelical Pentecostal Union is probably now the largest Pentecostal denomination in Europe, with some 370,000 members. The largest single congregation in Europe is probably the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God in Kiev, with an estimated membership of 20,000 and branches throughout the country and throughout the former Soviet Union. What is even more remarkable about this church is that its founder and senior pastor is a Nigerian, Sunday Adelaja, who has lived in the region most of his adult life and presides over a church and staff that is almost totally Ukrainian. In Romania, there are over 300,000 Pentecostals, about half of whom are Roma, the so-called “Gypsies”. The Pentecostal Apostolic Church of God is the largest denomination, founded in 1922 by George Bradin and later (1929 and 1950) uniting with other groups, the last occasion at the behest of the Communist

government. This was largely a rural phenomenon until the 1950s, when it began to work in urban areas, and it now has flourishing city churches. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution in December 1989 in which the Communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu was executed, evangelicals and Pentecostals were given permission to hold public evangelistic rallies in several Romanian cities, which thousands attended with many conversions were. Clearly, there was a new religious freedom unprecedented in the previous four decades (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001: 536; Ceuta 1994; Pandrea 2001).

Since the fall of Communism in 1989 in Hungary, the “Faith Church” (“Hit Gyülekezet” in Hungarian), led by Sándor Németh has grown from a small underground church founded in 1979 to a mega-church with some ten thousand members in Budapest in less than twenty years, and with three hundred branches in other Hungarian cities, now the fourth largest denomination in the country.<sup>3</sup> These new churches are spreading throughout the former Soviet block. Some of them emerging since the collapse of Communism like this one have succeeded in attracting large crowds to their services. One of the reasons for the relative success of these new Charismatic groups is their openness to the forces of globalization; this is in sharp contrast with the tendency towards self-isolation and puritanical dress codes that still characterize many of the Eastern European older Pentecostal groups. The flip side to the successes of home-grown and foreign forms of Pentecostalism in Eastern Europe is that new Pentecostal and Charismatic groups from the West on a quest for mission have entered former Communist countries with aggressive evangelistic techniques provoking fierce opposition from Orthodox churches and national governments. The Pentecostal churches there are in danger of becoming dependent on Americans for theological education, although there are also signs of resistance to any such dependency. The institutionalizing of those Pentecostal denominations that had been forced to share their identity with evangelicals and Baptists, and the creation and expansion of Pentecostal theological colleges has resulted in a more inward-looking Pentecostal movement in some of these countries.

## Pentecostalism as an Attraction to Global Communities

Finally, in considering the reasons for the changes in global Christianity that have occurred in the late twentieth century through the influence of Pentecostalism, I will tentatively outline some of the characteristics of Pentecostalism that have made its message attractive in global communities. The following five features are not meant to be exhaustive.

- 1 *Infectious enthusiasm.* For Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, worship is a joyful experience to be entered into with the whole person. In the South, a new emphasis on the role of the Spirit in the worship, work and witness of the church is one of the main reasons for this enthusiasm. The experience of the Spirit’s presence is seen as a normal part of daily life and is brought to bear upon all situations.
- 2 *Positive attitude to mission.* With their enthusiasm, Pentecostals have a positive attitude to their mission. From its beginning, Pentecostalism has been a highly migratory, missionary movement with an emphasis on evangelism (A. Anderson



2013: 62–64). Throughout the world it is still both transnational and migratory, or “missionary” in its fundamental nature. In the processes of its vigorous expansion Pentecostalism sees the “world” as the space to move into and “possess” for Christ. Pentecostals make full use of opportunities to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, which often brings them into confrontation with older, established religion.

- 3 *Leadership based on calling.* The nature of church leadership is a fundamental historical difference between Pentecostal churches and older churches. In Pentecostal practice, the Holy Spirit is believed to be given to every believer without preconditions. One of the results of this was that the dichotomy between “clergy” and “laity” did not usually exist (Saayman 1993: 43). Pentecostal leaders are those whose primary qualification has been a “call of God” and an ability to preach effectively.
- 4 *Salvation in the “here and now.”* The phenomenon of growing Pentecostal churches with a strong emphasis on healing and prosperity indicates that there are unresolved questions facing the church, such as the role of “success” and “prosperity” in God’s economy, enjoying God *and* his gifts, including healing and material provision, and the holistic dimension of “salvation now”. A belief in a daily divine encounter and the involvement or breaking through of the sacred into the mundane, including healing from sickness, deliverance from hostile, evil forces, and perhaps above all, a heady and spontaneous spirituality that refuses to separate “spiritual” from “physical” or “sacred” from “secular” are all important factors in Pentecostalism’s growth in the midst of incredible economic, political and natural adversity in the South. The corresponding decline in membership among older churches in the North means that the strategies of these churches should be examined. This is neither meant to be a quick-fix solution for an ailing church, nor to suggest that growing Pentecostal churches are exemplary in every respect, but it does raise important questions about the relevance of the faith and life of older churches.
- 5 *The church as community.* Pentecostal and Charismatic churches see themselves as God’s people, called out from the world around them, with a distinct mission: a sense of identity as a separated community whose primary purpose is to promote their cause to those outside their community. “Church” for them is the most important activity in life, and Christianity is brought to bear upon every situation.

Pentecostalism developed its own characteristics and identities in different parts of the world during the twentieth century while developing its transnational connections and international networks. The shapes of the new Pentecostals that have emerged as a result of the globalization process, how they differ from the older networks of denominational Pentecostalism and specifically what the features of this global shift of center from the North to the South means for Pentecostalism and world Christianity have yet to be precisely described.

## Notes

- 1 United States; Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala in Latin America; Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa in Africa; and India, the Philippines, and South Korea in Asia.

- 2 David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.
- 3 Observation in August 2008 by the author, and Nils Malmström's visit to the church on August 24, 2008, personal communication.

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# Indigenous and Vernacular Christianity

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World Christianity has been enriched by both the historical and recent development of indigenous and vernacular movements. Christianity is not bound to the original culture of its founder; it expands through a process of translation, taking on the flavor of local cultures as it sinks its roots into different contexts (Sanneh 2008). Indigenous and vernacular Christianity is one multi-faceted way to describe Christian faith in the process of inculturation: an initial phase of cultural and theological translation during which new converts and their fledgling communities actively search for ways to be Christian within their own particular contexts.<sup>1</sup>

While indigenous and vernacular Christianity might be described, in the words of Andrew Walls, as Christianity “at the margins,” it is also a primary component in the expanding world Christian movement. Indigenous churches are growing rapidly in the global South, where many cultures still rely on oral tradition: the narrative of scripture is transmitted through music, dance, and holistic healing, within a worldview that understands all of life as a religious act and where Christians embrace a theology of spiritual experience in which the Holy Spirit plays a key role in both religious and social revitalization. The idiosyncratic characteristics of these movements derive from their particular contexts, and their wide diversity of beliefs and practices cannot be limited to a single church category (Gerloff and Akrong 2010). Indigenous Christianity is the result of interactions between traditional religions and Western Christianity, representing a substantial departure from both (Turner 1983) and, like revitalization movements, is the product of a dialogue between two cultural entities (Harkin 2004). These movements tend to display fluidity in ecclesiology, authority structures, and doctrine; openness to experimentation in the maturation of structures, worship practices, and liturgy; lay leadership; an emphasis on healing; engagement with the supernatural; and a general

acceptance of cultural and theological elements sometimes censored as non-normative in a later institutionalized phase. All of these elements, including liturgy, music, and theology, are expressed in a wide variety of local languages.

The growth of indigenous Christianity requires a certain autonomy from prevailing religious systems, whether rooted in missionary Christianity or traditional religion. Autonomy can be expressed when groups break with historic churches or when churches arise independently of older ones to form new Christian communities. Autonomy can also refer to historic indigenous communities that have a substantial degree of local leadership and governance. One of the primary representations of indigenous and vernacular Christianity in the twentieth century was Independent Christianity – churches outside of historic, organized, institutionalized, and denominationalist Christianity (Johnson 2013).

## Independent Initiatives

Harold Turner's definition of an African Independent Church (AIC) underlines the discontinuity with Western Christianity: "one which has been founded in Africa, by Africans, and primarily for Africans" (Turner 1979). This definition offered a complementary perspective to David Barrett, who had coined the idea of "independency" to describe any religious group that separated from a mission church under African initiative and leadership (Barrett 1968). Marthinus Daneel took issue with those who reduced African independency to protest movements, agreeing with Turner's assessment of AICs as "creative religious movements" and calling for more research that considered their role as "serious mission institutions in their own right" (Daneel 2001). Furthermore, Turner noted that in the mission literature, "indigenous" signified "self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing" (Turner 1979), a watchword for Independent Christianity worldwide, especially in Asia.

Independent Christianity is not derivative of Western missionary Christianity even though missionaries have, in many cases, contributed to its emergence. For example, the translation of the Bible into local languages has often been the catalyst for the rise of Independent movements. For Africans, the reading of Scripture in their own tongue has enabled them to formulate African questions to which they seek African answers (Bediako 1995). In a similar vein, Philomena Mwaura sees independency as an "African response to prevailing religious, social, economic, cultural, and political circumstances" and as a desire for "an authentic African Christianity, sensitive to African cultural values of solidarity, community, and spirituality" (Mwaura 2004).

Global Independent Christianity includes two broad streams: (1) indigenous movements with strong roots in primal religion; and (2) groups that emerge from the realm of Pentecostalism. These two streams are distinct from each other because of the ways they have departed from the prevailing religious institution. Indigenous movements, often found in rural areas, tend to retreat from modernity toward a more primal source of spirituality. By contrast, Independent Pentecostal churches typically want access to the resources of the modern, urban world. Both movements share the same ethos: a spirituality rooted in experience, orality, emotionalism, the work of the Spirit, local leadership, and vernacular culture in discontinuity with Western Christianity. However,

these two expressions of Independent Christianity are also in competition with one another. For example, even though both streams battle powers and principalities in their ministries, their fundamental attitudes toward the spirit world are different: indigenous movements tend to work through the Holy Spirit to subdue and control the local spirits while Pentecostal communities generally reject them as being demonic.

Whether or not a certain Pentecostal church can be considered “independent” depends on the degree to which it represents a significant departure from both Western and traditional religion. In Africa, the recent surge of Pentecostal/Charismatic forms of Christianity has disrupted traditional approaches to classifying African forms of Christianity (Kollman 2010a, Kollman 2010b). In Latin America, local Pentecostalism relies on alternative sources of health care in a way that is reminiscent of Brazilian *Umbanda*, a blend of African religion, Catholicism, and Spiritism. The Pentecostal preference for oral traditions and narrative sermons not only echoes practices within indigenous religions but also opens up opportunities for the use of modern media (radio, Internet, television). Autocratic and charismatic leadership among Pentecostal Independents reflects an indigenous understanding of social hierarchy.

In 2010, Independents made up 19.9% of African Christians, 7.6% of Latin American Christians, and 40.5% of Asian Christians, boasting a global growth rate of 3.75% per year between 1910 and 2010, over twice the rate of the world’s population (1.38%) (Johnson and Ross 2009). Table 50.1 presents Independents by their home continents (where groups originated) and abroad (in diaspora). Independent Christian churches are multiplying primarily in the global South but the “abroad” category reveals that these movements are spreading out due to increased rates of migration and the phenomenon of globalization. Asia is the original home to the most Independent Christians (128.8 million), followed by Africa (97.0 million), with large numbers of Asian Independent populations in Europe, Latin America, and North America. Due to the close proximity of the two continents and ease of movement between them, Latin American Independent Christians are mostly concentrated at home in Latin America and North America. African Independents are located primarily in Africa, with comparatively few abroad.

**Table 50.1** Independents worldwide, mid-2010<sup>a</sup>

Independents at home		Independents abroad					
Continent	Total	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	North America	Oceania
Africa	97,000,000	96,800,000	17,000	151,000	—	36,000	—
Asia	128,800,000	6,000	127,900,000	154,000	111,000	670,000	10,000
Europe	21,500,000	8,800,000	2,200,000	9,800,000	518,000	79,000	112,000
L. America	40,000,000	77,000	28,000	671,000	38,400,000	790,000	—
N. America	89,900,000	3,900,000	2,300,000	3,700,000	11,200,000	68,000,000	647,000
Oceania	1,100,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,100,000
Total	378,300,000	109,600,000	132,400,000	14,500,000	50,200,000	69,600,000	1,900,000

<sup>a</sup> Figures are given as decimal fractions of millions or as thousands.

Source: Todd M. Johnson, ed., *World Christian Database*, Leiden: Boston: Brill, accessed August 2013.

With the massive growth of Christians in the global South over the past century, Christianity is now understood as a global phenomenon that is both polycentric and multi-cultural. The shift of Christianity's center of gravity from Western Spain in 1910 to northern Mali in 2010 is one indicator of the changing face of global Christianity (Johnson and Ross 2009).<sup>2</sup> Independents have become an important contributor to Christianity's demographic expansion in this shifting global context.

As a result of the legacy of colonialism and Western paternalism, the terms "independent" and "indigenous" have acquired negative connotations in the global South, especially in Africa. However, with the evolution of terminology over time, these same, albeit inadequate, terms can hopefully embody afresh some of the changing realities in the contemporary religious landscape (Kollman 2010a; 2010b).

## Indigenous and Vernacular Christianity in Africa

As Africa has passed out of the era of decolonization in recent years, perspectives on the root causes of AICs have evolved, affecting the current understanding of typologies of Independent churches. In 1998, John Pobee and Gabriel Ositelu II's strategic rewording of the acronym AIC as "African Initiatives in Christianity" introduced a new meaning that carried less historical baggage than the appellation African Independent/Initiated/Instituted Church, while also widening the scope of churches and movements in that category in the interest of ecumenical dialogue. What most characterizes AICs in this new understanding is the "commitment to the adaptation of the gospel to African needs, life-view, and life-style" (Pobee and Ositelu 1998). The authors urge the global church to engage in ecumenical dialogue with AICs, which have many insights to offer, in particular, "how the church may maintain the necessary balance between the global and the local" (Pobee and Ositelu 1998).

Socio-political factors were often the catalyst for the creation of the earliest AICs as Africans confronted the trauma of colonialism and postcolonialism, realities to which missionary churches either responded inadequately or not at all because of racism and paternalism. However, not all AICs emerged as reactions to European missions because some founders never belonged to the historic churches. Protestant denominationalism also played an essential role in the formation of AICs; predominantly Protestant missionary territories gave birth to more AICs than the Catholic regions, with the exceptions of Zambia, the Congo, and Kenya. In addition, the vernacularization of Scripture enabled AICs to see continuity between the Bible and their culture (Anderson 2001a), and many AIC leaders founded their communities after experiencing a dramatic conversion and call to ministry through visions and dreams.

## Typology

Turner warned in referring to African Independent Churches (AICs) that a typology should account for "tendencies and emphases rather than [for] individual religious

bodies and movements” (Turner 1979). He and Daneel (2001) signaled the danger of establishing a typology because it overlooks the complexity of the field and might reflect a way of thinking founded on Western concepts, categories, and history. The dynamism of independent Christian movements, which are young and continually in flux, makes it difficult to place them into absolute categories. One group can easily move from one classification to another over time, both in the degrees of their indigeneity and Christian identity.

African Independent Christianity can be loosely classified into the following three fluid categories: Ethiopian/African Churches, Prophet-healing/Spiritual churches, and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. However, many AICs do not neatly fit this classification, nor would they want to (Anderson 2001b).

The first fruits of the Christian independent movement in the late nineteenth century took the shape of secessions from mission churches. These churches, known as “Ethiopian” in southern Africa, “African” in West Africa, and simply “independent” in East Africa, retain many of the traits of the historic churches, including traditional liturgy, doctrine, and church structure. These “non-prophetic” churches also do not engage in exorcism or healing (Daneel 2001). Their originality lies in the ideology of Ethiopianism, a form of proto-nationalism that can be defined as “an African remonstrance against the European captivity of the gospel” (Pobee and Ositelu 1998). Theologically speaking, the roots of Ethiopianism are in Old Testament passages such as Psalm 68:31, “Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God” (NRSV).

What is referred to as “prophet-healing” or “spiritual” churches generally emerged in the early twentieth century, about two decades after the Ethiopian/African churches. In Southern Africa they include Zionist and Apostolic churches, and some of the largest and most important AICs in Africa fall under this category. They emphasize spiritual power, healing, charismatic leadership, and the use of sacred objects in worship. Unlike earlier Ethiopian churches, many prophet-healing churches generally adopt some Old Testament practices as well as taboos against the use of alcohol, tobacco, and pork, and their adherents often wear robes. They actively engage in the struggle against spiritual powers and principalities through ministries of exorcism and supernatural healing (Anderson 2001b).

More recent Pentecostal or charismatic churches share many of the characteristics of the Spiritual churches but they reject African traditional practices and the use of distinctive clothing. In these churches, the Holy Spirit is at the heart of a theology of empowerment for all individuals, not just the leaders (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007). Neo-Pentecostalism falls into this category of churches, which in Central and Eastern Africa traces its roots to the East African Revival (Mwaura 2004). Africans have appropriated Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in spite of the fact that it draws stylistically from Western Pentecostalism and urban society rather than African rural society. In contrast to the Spiritual churches that retain traditional identity in their struggle with the spirit world, Pentecostal Independents tend to consider that all spirits are demons and combat them as such. Nevertheless, their willingness to engage with the supernatural and seek solutions to illness, poverty, and misfortune – which were concerns previously denigrated by white missionaries – resonates with an African worldview (Mwaura 2004).

## Brief history by geographical region

Some of Christianity's most ancient indigenous expressions began in Africa. In the Coptic tradition of Egypt, the beginning of the church is remembered in the Liturgy of St. Mark (the Evangelist) who is considered the church's founder. The first missionary to Ethiopia was the Eunuch whom Philip baptized on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26–40). According to Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, Christianity entered the ancient kingdom of Axum in the fourth century when Frumentius returned from Egypt, where Athanasius had consecrated him the first bishop of the Ethiopian Church.

Chief Ntsikana, the Christian Xhosa prophet, was a precursor to the AIC movement in Southern Africa. In 1815, after missionaries from the London Missionary Society evangelized in his area, Ntsikana had a vision that prompted his conversion to Christianity. He taught his people to pray to the almighty God and to forsake the "red clay" (traditional practices). Ntsikana composed hymns to "the Great God" whom he called "Shield of truth," "Stronghold of truth," and "Thicket of truth."

Many early Ethiopian churches were ethnically rooted. The first Ethiopian church in South Africa, the Thembu National Church, emerged in 1884 under the leadership of former Methodist minister Nehemiah Xoxo Tile.

Dutch Reformed missionary Pieter le Roux joined with African evangelists Daniel Nkonyane, Fred Lutuli, and Muneli Ngobesi to form the first African Zionist community in South Africa in 1903. Zionist and Apostolic churches then sprang up in large numbers throughout southern Africa. Some of the trademarks of their form of Christianity are the Holy Mountain and the importance of water for cleansing. Engenas Lekganyane founded the largest Zionist Church, Zion Christian Church (ZCC), in 1924. The ZCC has a large independent branch in Zimbabwe founded by former Dutch Reformed member, the late Samuel Mutendi, who was reputed to have gifts of miraculous healing, exorcism, and raising of the dead.

Among the Zulu, Isaiah Shembe (d. 1935) was an iconic leader and a powerful prophet-healer of the *amaNazaretha* (Nazareth Baptist Church). He wrote parables and prayers and composed hymns that speak poignantly of African indigenous Christianity. An excerpt of one of his hymns reads (Sundkler 1961):

We stand before thee  
O, beautiful hen.  
Thou dost not love  
Jerusalem alone.

O love us and hatch us  
Wondrous Hen!  
We dwell in thy kingdom,  
Our Hen of Heaven.

Zimbabwe is the home of another remarkable church, that of the *vaPostori*. In 1932, John Maranke, founder of the African Apostolic Church, and Johane Masowe, founder of the Gospel of God Church, both received a call from God. Independently of each



other, they were instructed to take on the role of a “John the Baptist.” At the height of the colonial era, Masowe’s teaching condemned many African traditional rituals as well as many Christian practices that required grounding in European culture. He rejected the Bible for a time because, as a book, it required a white man’s education to read it. Celibate women, called the “Sisters,” play an important spiritual role in the community. At the end of the twentieth century, it was estimated that the *vaPostori* numbered around one million (Reese 2008).

In West Africa, Samuel Ajayi Crowther was consecrated the first indigenous Anglican bishop in Africa in 1864. His removal from office in 1890 dealt a severe blow to the indigenization of the West African Church. It is therefore no coincidence that secessions from Anglican, Baptist, and Wesleyan Methodist churches began in West Africa at about this time. The first African (Ethiopian-type) church in Nigeria, the Native Baptist Church, was established in 1888 by Mojola Agbebi (David Brown Vincent).

William Wadé Harris, a former Methodist lay preacher, was the most successful prophet from among the Spiritual churches in West Africa. The classic exemplar of the African indigenous prophet, Harris traveled through Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, where he baptized upwards of 100,000 Africans in 1913 and 1914 alone. He wore a long white robe, carried a Bible and a staff, and was accompanied by several women assistants. His followers formed the Harrist Church in later years when they found themselves at odds with Methodist polity (Shank 1986).

In Nigeria, the early Spiritual churches emerged from prayer groups in the mission churches. The first *Aladura* church (from a Yoruba word meaning “owners of prayer”) was founded in 1925 by Moses Orimolade Tunolase and Abiodun Akinsowon, a fifteen-year-old girl he had healed, under the name the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim. In 1941, Joseph Ayo Babalola led a revival within the Christ Apostolic Church that became one of the largest *Aladura* churches. Mass conversions and popular enthusiasm for Babalola’s ministry worried the colonial authorities who arrested him.

One of the fastest-growing churches in the world in recent years is the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), an indigenous Pentecostal church founded in Nigeria in 1952 by Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi. The RCCG is entirely locally funded and has expanded to fifteen foreign nations, including Great Britain, Germany, France, and the United States. Their Holy Ghost service, an all-night miracle service, draws an average of 500,000 people on the first Friday of every month at Redemption Camp in Lagos (Ogunewu 2009).

The eighteenth-century Antonian Movement of Kimpa Vita (Dona Beatriz) in the Kongoles Kingdom is considered an ancestor of the independent movement in Africa. Kimpa Vita’s spiritual descendent, Simon Kimbangu, received his call from God during a flu epidemic in the Belgian Congo in 1918. In 1921, his ministry of miraculous healings in his sacred city of Nkamba drew such crowds that the Belgian colonial authorities tried to suppress the movement by arresting him and persecuting his followers. His church, l’Église de Jésus Christ sur la Terre par le Prophète Simon Kimbangu (the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu) flourished and is now the largest AIC in Central Africa, with over ten million members in 2010. Kimbangu’s powerful legacy led to the emergence of AICs throughout Central Africa, launching many *Ngunzi* (prophet) movements, such as Simon-Pierre Mpadî’s Church of the Blacks founded in 1939 in the Congo.

African discontent with colonial rule was also instrumental in the rise of Independent movements. In Malawi, John Chilembwe, a Baptist minister, founded the Ajana Providence Industrial Mission near Blantyre in 1900. He embraced the idea of “Africa for Africans” and in 1915 led an armed uprising against the settlers during which he died. In Zambia, Alice Mulenga Mubisha Lenshina organized the Lumpa Church after she was expelled from the Presbyterian Church in 1955. Her refusal to participate in the struggle for political independence sparked conflict with the nationalist movement and an armed struggle ensued in which hundreds of Lumpa members perished.

In eastern Africa, several movements have arisen out of the ranks of the Catholic Church. In 1963, a prophetess named Gaudencia Aoko started the *Legio Maria* Church, one of the largest secessions from the Catholic Church in Africa (Anderson 2001a). Another exceptional independent church, the African Greek Orthodox Church led by Reuben Sebbanja Ssedimba Mukasa, arose in 1934 within the ranks of the Orthodox Church.

In post-independence Uganda, violence has unfortunately been a hallmark of several independent movements. A group of AICs with a mission to restore the Ten Commandments started with another former Catholic, Severino Okoya, in 1958. His daughter, Alice Auma Lakwena was the leader of the Holy Spirit Movement that attempted to overthrow the Ugandan government in 1987 (Anderson 2001a).

The first AICs in Kenya began among the Kikuyu, sparked by issues of female circumcision, land ownership, and later a desire for education independent of European missions. The *Akorinu* movement, a prophet-healing group also known as the *Watu wa Mungu* (“the People of God”), arose in the 1920s out of a Pentecostal revival amidst the suffering of the Kikuyu at the hands of the British settlers. The *Akorinu* reject elements of Western culture and maintain traditional practices such as circumcision, polygyny, and prayer facing Mount Kenya.

The Kenyan *Roho* (“Spirit”) movement was an early twentieth-century revival among Anglican youth. The *Dini ya Roho* (“Religion of the Spirit”) emphasizes the reign of the Holy Spirit and its outreach ministry has led to the formation of many *Roho* churches throughout East Africa, such as the African Israel Church Nineveh, founded by Daudi Zakayo Kivuli in 1942.

The East African revival, which emerged in the 1930s in Rwanda, changed the face of established Christianity from Tanzania to the Sudan. In Madagascar, an indigenous revival movement called the *Fifohazana* has continued since 1894, in which eight out of ten of the shepherds (evangelists) are women (Holder Rich 2008). These two revival movements continue with a mission to renew the older churches.

## Indigenous and Vernacular Christianity in Latin America

Latin America stands out as a unique case in the study of Christianity, which arrived in the New World in 1492 and launched four centuries of Christianization first by the Spanish and the Portuguese, then by the British, the French, and the Dutch. Unlike Europe, Latin America has not become a post-Christian society, in spite of its long history of Christendom-type Christianity. Latin America’s singularity also lies in its Hispanic culture that loosely unifies the continent through its European and Catholic

heritage and the widespread use of Spanish, a linguistic unifying factor that does not exist in Africa or Asia. This Latin American heritage, a reality that arises from the four hundred years spent under colonial rule, is a key component in the culture of each individual nation-state. Roman Catholicism serves as a powerful mark of cultural and national identity for the large majority of Latin American countries (Bastian 1993).

Contemporary Latin American civilization is a result of the clash between pre-Hispanic Amerindian civilization and Hispanic Christendom. In the Caribbean, the early arrival of the English colonialists in the late sixteenth century further complicated the cultural landscape as two great imperial powers clashed over territory as well as religion for the next several hundred years. When the Spanish conquistadors arrived in 1492, they not only brought diseases that devastated the local populations, but they also imposed a European-style feudal system of forced labor called the *encomienda*. The result of this widespread exploitation of local populations as well as other violent forms of abuse was the virtual annihilation of pre-Hispanic civilizations. Missionary Christianity in Latin America therefore had few indigenous interlocutors with whom to forge a new indigenous Christianity. Essentially unchallenged, Hispanic Roman Catholic Christendom sank its roots deep into Latin America. The missionary presence in Latin America, along with the twentieth-century emergence of liberation theology, greatly affected the development of indigenous Christian movements, both in their inspiration and in their cultural expression (Cleary 2005).

A further contributing factor in the rise of Independent movements was the Roman Catholic Church's ongoing struggle with personnel problems in Latin America. Although the first dioceses were founded almost immediately after the conquest, the region did not have enough priests, and educating so many people in a vast geographical space was an enormous task for which the church was unprepared. With leadership of unequal quality and commitment, indigenous people found it natural from the beginning to mix traditional religion and Catholicism. Many combined resistance to and acceptance of Christianity with relative ease, always doing something to keep their tradition alive while performing enough of the Christian requirements to avoid punishment.

### *Popular Catholicism*

Latin America has a very strong tradition of popular Catholicism. This widespread phenomenon describes practices that are not strictly orthodox and only secondarily accept the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, while still remaining technically within its bounds (González and González 2008). Popular Catholicism was born out of the desire of indigenous people to translate the totally foreign European Catholicism into something that made sense in their own traditional worldview (Jacobsen 2011). One major feature is the veneration of saints, and most prominently, Mary, who showed God's mercy to native peoples in a way the official church could (or would) not. God was bound up with the institution of a church that treated the indigenous populations poorly, while Mary was viewed as an embracing, poor, and humble figure.

One of the most well-known tales of Mary in Latin America is that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who first appeared to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin in 1531 as an

indigenous Mexican, dark-skinned and wearing local clothes, bearing a message of love, compassion, and protection. Her powerful message gave hope to people who had endured terrible suffering as slaves at the hands of invaders. This encounter revolutionized Catholicism in Latin America, making it a religion that could be embraced by indigenous peoples. Degrees of popular Catholicism can also be seen in the syncretistic religions of the region, such as Santería (Cuba), Candomblé (Brazil), and Voodoo (Haiti).

### *Recent independent Christian movements*

The history of Christianity in the Caribbean is quite distinct from the rest of Latin America, reflecting a greater diversity of religious, cultural, and political influences because the region was originally divided among between Spanish, French, British, and Dutch colonizers.

Caribbean independent churches were strongly influenced by the African slave culture of the islands. For example, the Native Baptists, an indigenous movement that originated in Jamaica in the nineteenth century, interpreted sin as sorcery, “categorized as the destructive, alienating, and self-centered pre-occupation of anti-social people” (Lawson 1996). This understanding of sin emerged from the non-Western non-missionary worldview that framed the slaves’ theology. This example highlights the parallel between the characteristics of African Indigenous churches and the black roots of Pentecostalism, traits that also describe Caribbean Independent churches (Gerloff 2006).

Despite the long history of the indigenization of Roman Catholicism, a significant element in Latin American independency is the desire for complete liberation from Roman Catholic Hispanic Christendom. This is seen poignantly in the rise of *evangélicos* (Latino Protestants) and Pentecostals, two distinctive movements within Latin American Independent Christianity. The presence of *evangélicos* in Latin America has grown substantially, with most of these new communities originating from the missionary efforts of North American mainline denominations (Steigenga and Cleary 2007). In particular, Protestantism in Guatemala has grown tremendously since 1970 and has a reputation for its adaptability and its agency in social change. This perception encouraged conversions during the country’s 36-year civil war (1960–1996) and after the massive earthquake in 1976 that claimed 20,000 lives and left over one million homeless. Guatemala has had three evangelical Protestant presidents in its history, including Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983), who ordered the near extermination of rural villages during his time in office and was formally indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity in 2012.

Latin American Pentecostalism is characterized by empowerment through spiritual gifts, entrepreneurship and adaptability, lay participation, competitive pluralism, equality for minorities, and embrace of modernity (Martin 2001). Pentecostalism represents a synthesis of Protestantism with popular religious spirituality, similar to other indigenous movements in Africa and Asia, but with different social consequences. It has challenged traditional societal norms in many Latin American countries, particularly in regard to families and gender roles. Pentecostal spirituality offers new definitions for what it means to be male by providing an alternative to traditional *machismo* bravado and honors women by encouraging female leadership and promoting self-confidence (Brusco 2010).

Chilean Pentecostals were the first in Latin America. American revivalist Willis Collins Hoover (1858–1936), who served as the pastor of the largest Methodist congregation in Chile, was influenced by the 1905 revival in India among Pandita Ramabai's widows and American missionary Minnie Abrams. In 1910, he resigned from the Methodist Episcopal Church to become superintendent of the independent Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal (Methodist Pentecostal Church). The creation of the Methodist Pentecostal Church was an affirmation of authentic Chilean expression of non-Catholic Christianity not based on a Western missionary model (Anderson 2004).

Brazilian Pentecostalism holds a similar story to its Chilean counterpart. Italian-American immigrant Luigi Francescon (1866–1964) founded the Congregação Cristã do Brasil (Christian Congregation of Brazil) in 1910, now with over 1.9 million members in Brazil (González and González 2008; Johnson 2013).

In a society that maintained a separation between the white Europeans and the *mestizos* and black slaves, Pentecostalism is seen as the path to bridging the socio-economic gap wrought by classism and racism. Pentecostal churches mostly work among the urban poor where migrants and displaced peoples on the margins of society have a deep need for structures that provide community and a message of hope. Their work ethic, discipline, and egalitarian ethos between men and women are forces that facilitate the integration of local populations into the global economy (Kim and Kim 2008). Pentecostals communicate their message of hope in the language of magical power and, in contrast to other Protestants, they take seriously concerns related to the supernatural (Miller and Yamamori 2007).

The Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God; UCKG) is one of the largest and most widespread independent prosperity-type churches in Latin America, and exhibits many of the classic characteristics of Pentecostalism. It was founded in 1977 under the leadership of Edir Macedo in Brazil, a former Catholic-turned-Pentecostal. The church's emphasis on exorcism has not only enabled mass conversion of Catholics and practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions to Pentecostalism, but has also created an opportunity for individuals to make a definitive break with the prevailing Brazilian Catholic worldview (Birman 2007). The UCKG has made intelligent use of marketing strategies and technology, which has undoubtedly helped to expand the movement. From just one temple in 1977, the UCKG has expanded to over 90 countries, including the United States, India, and South Africa.

## Indigenous and Vernacular Christianity in Asia

Christianity in Asia has a long and dynamic history since its inception in Palestine in the first century. This history – from ancient Christian communities in the Middle East to newly formed mega-churches in South Korea and house churches in Vietnam – has undergone numerous ebbs and flows. Where once thriving communities have disappeared, Western forms of Christianity have become vernacularized and new indigenous movements and communities have been born.

Asia represents the most populous and diverse continent on the planet. Numerous ethnic, national, and linguistic groups are found across each of its regions: Western

Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Asia, and Southeastern Asia. Each region has a different and often multi-layered history of Christianity, presenting unique challenges for indigenous and vernacular Christian expressions. Except for a few countries, such as the Philippines and Georgia, Christianity is a minority tradition that in many cases struggles to coexist with other religious adherents. In South, Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Asia Christianity is predated by Hinduism and Buddhism, which have played decisive roles in shaping culture and national character. Although Christianity has ancient communities that predate Islam in Western Asia (such as in Syria and Iraq), these communities remain vulnerable in an increasingly hostile and politically unstable region. Notwithstanding political challenges and religious competition, there are important ancient and new forms of indigenous and vernacular Christianity in Asia.

### *Ancient indigenous churches*

The story of indigenous Christianity in Asia dates back to the first century, as ancient Christian communities began forming in the eastern Mediterranean, moving to Asia Minor, and spreading into Western Asia in the fourth and fifth centuries. Notable ancient indigenous Christians were present in Armenia starting in the early fourth century with the conversion of King Tiridates III, marking Armenia as the first state to officially adopt Christianity. In a kingdom torn between the Roman and Persian empires, adopting Christianity was a way for Armenians to maintain independence, especially from state-imposed Zoroastrianism from Persia. Christianity continues to play an important role in national formation and identity in Armenia. Oriental Orthodox Christianity also thrived in Syria in the fifth century, and these Syrian ancient indigenous churches continue in unbroken succession. Existing early indigenous communities struggle against intolerance, and, in spite of their long history, anti-Christian factions sometimes infer an association with Western imperialism.

Nestorian Christianity, twice condemned by catholic (*katholikos*) ecumenical councils in the fifth century, was largely pushed out of Roman-controlled provinces but thrived in the Persian Empire. These ancient indigenous churches are notable for their missions to Central Asia and for sending the first missionary, Alopen, to China (Xian) in AD 635. Such communities were geographically widespread and missionary activity continued until the tenth century; the remnants of Nestorian monasteries, for example, can be found along the Silk Road. One example is the Nestorian monument in the form of a stone pillar that was discovered in 1623. The monument provides a glimpse of how early Christianity in China became infused with local religious context, with Chinese characters, theology, and iconography integrating Buddhist and Christian themes (Moffett 1992; Jenkins 2008).

Indian Thomas Christianity claims roots in a first-century form of Syriac Christianity based on an early visit of St. Thomas to Kerala. In many of these communities the liturgy retains the Syriac linguistic heritage, and from very early on Thomas Christians integrated themselves into the social fabric of the Indian sub-continent, even going as far as developing a distinct caste category (Frykenberg 2008).

*Popular Christianity and newly formed independent churches*

Western traditions of Christianity were introduced to Asia via Roman Catholic missions starting in the sixteenth century and Protestant missions most notably in the nineteenth century, resulting in the development of Christian communities throughout South Asia, Southeastern Asia, and Eastern Asia. Since the initial introduction of Western forms of Christianity, local reception and transformation of the faith has produced a wide spectrum of Christian communities that vary in the degrees to which they are incorporated into local cultures and have adapted vernacular forms of worship and community expression.

Significant strides in creating vernacularized and popular Asian Christianity are particularly notable in Eastern Asia. Roman Catholicism had a significant missionary presence in China starting in the late sixteenth century. Its message resonated with the rural masses and became integrated with traditional family lineages. Popular forms of Catholicism appeared in local charismatic leadership, which included *beatas* (female spiritual ascetics) such as Petronilla Chen in seventeenth-century China (Menegon 2009). Such popular practices were publicly curtailed with the Qing dynasty's ban on the Catholic faith in the 1720s. However, the ban did not eliminate Catholicism, but instead drove it underground.

Popular Protestantism in China was also successful in rural areas in the nineteenth century. The brief expulsion of foreign missionaries in the 1830s and, more significantly, the upheaval by the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in an accelerated transition to indigenous leadership and the process of adapting vernacular worship and life with little foreign guidance as religion came under closer state supervision. During the time of the Cultural Revolution, underground house churches lived in a precarious and hostile relationship to the state. Such hostilities helped to create a milieu ripe for new, popular Protestant movements, especially millenarian- and apocalyptically inclined sects, such as the Shouters, founded in the 1960s and banned by the Chinese government. Underground Protestant Christians often tended to eschew formal theological training and derived ecclesiastical authority from particular charisma and spiritual gifts, which were passed down to apprentices (Lian 2010). Some groups broke off early on from mainline churches, such as one of the earliest, the Chinese Independent Christian Church (1915), while others were independently founded, such as the Three Grades of Servants.

Pentecostal manifestations and spin-off movements also gained momentum from indigenous groups and the work of charismatic leaders. Two examples of indigenous underground groups that have expanded and received state recognition are the True Jesus Church (founded by Paul Wei in 1917) and the Little Flock (founded by Watchman Nee in 1922). Since the liberalization policies in 1979, Chinese Christianity has been most visible in the Three Self Patriotic Movement churches (TSPM). Churches under the TSPM are officially sanctioned by the Chinese government and thus enjoy a greater presence in the public sphere, including, perhaps ironically, less overt state intervention than non-sanctioned religious associations.

In Japan, a noteworthy twentieth-century independent group is the Non-Church Movement which eschews traditional sacraments and aligns itself with the Confucian teachings of character cultivation, learning, and family values. This movement was also transplanted to Korea and Taiwan, and its emphasis on education has produced several intellectuals and educators, like founder Uchimura Kanzō. In Japan a cross-fertilization of Shinto and nationalism was pushed by the state at the beginning of World War II (1939), resulting in the creation of the United Church of Christ in Japan, an amalgam of over thirty Protestant churches. It continues to be the largest Christian body in Japan, an expression of Christianity pushed by the state and exported to Korea during Japanese occupation (1910–1945).

On the Korean peninsula, Christianity has been a player in the struggle first against Japanese imperialism and then against Communism – the latter perceived less as a hostile foreign entity and more as a resource for Korean independence and combatting an atheistic state agenda. The first Protestants in Korea were established by indigenous merchants who had encountered Christianity in Manchuria in the 1860s, and Korean revivals from 1907 to 1910 helped spur large numbers of conversions and lay the groundwork for the inculturation of Christianity into Korean society. This process adapted Confucian cultural values and social norms, sometimes viewed as conservative, particularly in regard to female pastoral leadership. Christianity in South Korea is a sizable religious tradition representing over 33% of the population (Johnson 2013), and is home to significant locally founded Pentecostal churches such as the Yoido Full Gospel Church, one of the largest Christian congregations in the world. Korea is also the second-largest missionary sending nation in the world, offering and producing contextual theological constructions such as *Minjung* theology.

Since the introduction of Western forms of Christianity to Southern Asia, Christians have integrated among local communities. In the early twentieth century, indigenous Christians spread the gospel by establishing indigenous organizations such as the Indian Missionary Society (1903). National unified churches have also been established regionally in India (Church of South India, and Church of North India), as well as in Bangladesh and Pakistan, all of which have helped to create new local institutional structures and ecumenical collaboration across several denominations. This process of Protestant regional or national church merger is common throughout Asia, and in addition to the Japanese example mentioned, has also taken place in Southeast Asia, with the largest Thai Protestant body, the Church of Christ in Thailand.

Beginning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were also new movements of indigenous Christianity in South Asia that began with large-scale conversions, many of whom came from marginalized and Dalit communities seeking both spiritual and socio-political betterment. Scholars have come to refer to these various local Christian developments as churches of indigenous origins (CIOs) and as Indian instituted churches (IICs), paralleling the “AIC” designation in Africa (Hedlund 2004).

Christianity has been particularly successful among ethnic minorities in the northeast region of India (Mizoram), the mountain regions of Myanmar (Kachin and Chin), and in Vietnam and Laos (Hmong), a process consistent with the pattern of more successful conversion to Christianity among people from other world religions across



Asia (Walls 1996). In India, Adivasi Movements and Baptist Nagas in the region have transformed the social fabric of those people groups. In Myanmar (Burma), Christianity – particularly in the Baptist tradition of the Karen (Kayin) people groups – has been an important source of identity and resistance to state persecution and majority Buddhist religion. Ethnic minorities continue to constitute a large proportion of Christians in Thailand. Many of these groups are autonomous in leadership and are self-supporting, and some have established their own educational institutions. They also wear traditional clothing, celebrate local festivals, and follow indigenous cultural norms.

In the majority-Roman-Catholic Philippines, the independent church Iglesia Ni Cristo, founded by Felix Manalo in 1913, has grown to become the third largest religious association in that country with over two million members (Johnson 2013). Independent Pentecostal Christianity has also emerged as a major movement within Christianity in Southeastern Asia, with Pentecostal churches in Singapore acting as an important base for missions to countries in the region.

## Conclusion

Indigenous and vernacular Christianity does not represent one particular concept within a single category of church. These movements arose in distinct ethnic, societal, and political contexts and each has a unique history that deserves a voice in the grand narrative of World Christianity. Despite the complexities in defining and typologizing these movements, there are similarities that cut across cultural lines. Fluidity in doctrine and ecclesiological structures is apparent in *minjung* and *dalit* theology in Asia, as well as in theologies of suffering in Africa. They share openness to experimentation in worship and liturgy apparent in examples such as Isaiah Shembe's hymns and prayers and the whole tradition of popular Catholicism, the latter rising out of a translation of European Catholicism into something that *works* for the local people. Another common theme is lay leadership, exemplified in the *Aladura* churches of West Africa and the compulsory rise of local leaders in post-Cultural Revolution China after Western missionaries were banned and the church driven underground. These movements also generally accept many traditional cultural elements, seen early on in the fusing of Buddhist and Christian ideas in ancient Nestorian Christianity and recently in Japan's twentieth-century Non-Church Movement, which heavily draws from Confucian teachings. Despite all these similarities, the impact of indigenous and vernacular Christian movements has been different in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Most notably, indigenous Christianity in Latin America has adapted many cultural and theological elements from local culture, but at the same time has challenged traditional gender and family roles and has contributed to encouraging social and sometimes political change.

The significance of Independent Christian movements is increasingly recognized in the scholarly community and their social effects are just beginning to be seriously explored. One important area for further study is the role of women in Independent Christianity. How have women contributed to expanding and sustaining these churches and are they, in fact, serving as agents of social or theological change? In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese bible women, many of whom

were widows, served as evangelists and helped to establish Christianity in the home, creating new opportunities for rural women (Lutz 2010). Among *evangélicos* and Pentecostals in Colombia, the testimony of Christian wives has encouraged their *macho* husbands to convert and take responsibilities in their household, in the church, and in society (Brusco 2010). In Africa, women leaders in Independent churches serve as role models for equal partnership between men and women both in church and in society, drawing out the under-recognized potential of female resources and talents (Mwaura 2007).

In the area of women's contributions as well as in other questions of theology, worship, and holistic ministry, the many expressions of Independent Christianity are challenging the global church with the question: "*Quo Vadis?* – Where are you going?" In the global religious landscape of the twenty-first century, indigenous and vernacular Christianity offers opportunities for the development of contextual theologies, creative ecclesiologies, and liturgical innovations, providing fertile soil to foster the growth of culturally relevant Christian communities that offer a true sense of home.

## Notes

- 1 "Inculturation" and "contextualization" are terms often used interchangeably.
- 2 The "center of gravity" is the point on the map where there are an equal number of Christians to the north, south, east, and west.

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## CHAPTER 51

# The Transmission of Christian Faith: A Reflection

Andrew Walls

For Catholics, 1492 marked the start of a new missionary era. The fifth centenary of Columbus's landfall in the Americas was widely, if contentiously, commemorated in 1992. For our present purposes we need to recognize that it represents an event of immense importance for the history of the Christian faith, because from that time onwards, a Christianity that had become thoroughly identified with and conditioned by the lands and life and thought of Europe had to extend its consciousness, its vision, and eventually its theology to cope with the realities of the world beyond Europe. These included some items outside all previous Christian experience. The chapter of intra-European difficulties that we call the Reformation to some extent distracted attention from this even more fundamental reformulation of the Christian view of the world, and has continued to distract the attention of historians of Christianity since. The bicentenary of the publication of William Carey's *Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathens* and the formation of his missionary society was less of a media event than the Columbus anniversary, but in some quarters it was celebrated as marking the birth of the modern missionary movement. How one identifies that movement's origins is a matter of perspective, but 1792 is at least as good a date for it as several others. That same year also saw the arrival in Sierra Leone of some 1,100 people of African birth or descent, bringing with them from North America their own churches and preachers, to form the first church in tropical Africa in modern times.

Taken together, 1492 and 1792 stand for the two great cycles of activity that make up the missionary movement from the West. The first, largely Catholic in composition, though with a small, vital Protestant component, began in the late fifteenth century and was nearing exhaustion by the eighteenth. The second, beginning in the late eighteenth century, was largely Protestant in its origins, but by the nineteenth was enjoying the

support of every sector of European Christianity. But the landfall in Sierra Leone has its significance as well as that in the Caribbean islands. The first church in tropical Africa in modern times was not a Western missionary creation, but an African one, an African creation marked by the experiences of America. Columbus and Carey stand for Western activity, and in their different ways they also represent Western Christianity; but the peoples of the new worlds beyond Europe were not passive in the encounter, either with Europe or with its faith. After the meeting with the Americas, Africa, and Asia instituted in the fifteenth century, Europe was never the same again. It is the submission of this chapter that the meeting with the Americas, Africa, and Asia has been equally transformative of the Christian faith, marking a new and decisive period in its history. It is a further submission that such periodic transformations are entirely characteristic of Christian history and belong to the nature of the faith, being rooted ultimately in the central Christian affirmation that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

### **Islam Compared to Christianity: Progressive versus Serial Expansion**

The history of the expansion of the two great missionary faiths, Christianity and Islam, suggests a contrast. While each has spread across vast areas of the world and each claims the allegiance of very diverse peoples, Islam seems thus far to have been decidedly more successful in retaining that allegiance. With relatively few (though admittedly important) exceptions, the areas and peoples that accepted Islam have remained Islamic ever since. Arabia, for example, seems now so immutably Islamic that it is hard to remember that it once had Jewish tribes and Christian towns, as well as the shrines of gods and goddesses to which the bulk of its population gave homage. Contrast the position with that of Jerusalem, the first major center of Christianity; or of Egypt and Syria, once almost as axiomatically Christian as Arabia is now Islamic; or of the cities once stirred by the preaching of John Knox or John Wesley, now full of unwanted churches doing duty as furniture stores or night clubs. It is as though there is some inherent fragility, some built-in vulnerability, in Christianity, considered as a popular profession that is not to the same extent a feature of Islam. This vulnerability is engraved into the Christian foundational documents themselves, with their recurrent theme of the impending rejection of apostate Israel, and their warnings to early Christian churches of the possible removal of their candlestick. Neither of these eventualities are seen as jeopardizing the saving activity of God for humanity. I have argued elsewhere that this vulnerability is also linked with the essentially vernacular nature of Christian faith, which rests on a massive act of translation, the Word made flesh, God translated into a specific segment of social reality as Christ is received there (Walls 1990: 24–39). Christian faith must go on being translated, must continuously enter into vernacular culture and interact with it, or it withers and fades. Islamic absolutes are fixed in a particular language, and in the conditions of a particular period of human history. The divine Word is the Qur'ān, fixed in heaven forever in Arabic, the language of original revelation. For Christians, however, the divine Word is translatable, infinitely translatable. The very words of Christ himself were transmitted in translated form in the earliest documents we have, a fact surely inseparable from the conviction that in Christ, God's own self was translated into

human form. Much misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims has arisen from the assumption that the Qur'ān is for Muslims what the Bible is for Christians. It would be truer to say that the Qur'ān is for Muslims what *Christ* is for Christians.

It is quite in line with fundamental Islamic convictions that Islamic expansion has been progressive in concept and, to a large extent, in experience also. Mecca, the original theatre of the revelation, retains its cosmic significance for all the faithful, demonstrated in the *qiblah*, the direction to which they turn in prayer. And the missionary preaching that calls all humankind to surrender to Allah has produced a progressive, generally continuous, and remarkably durable geographical expansion. The rhetoric of Christian expansion has often been similarly progressive; images of the triumphant host streaming out from Christendom to bring the whole world into it come to mind readily enough. But the actual experience of Christian expansion has been different. As its most comprehensive historian, K. S. Latourette, noted long ago, recession is a feature of Christian history as well as advance (Latourette 1945: esp. vol. 7, ch. 16). He might have gone on to note that the recessions typically take place in the Christian heartlands, in the areas of greatest Christian strength and influence – its Arabias, as one might say – while the advances typically take place at or beyond its periphery.

This feature means that Christian faith is repeatedly coming into creative interaction with new cultures, with different systems of thought and different patterns of tradition; that (again in contrast to Islam, whose Arabic absolutes provide cultural norms applying throughout the Islamic world) its profoundest expressions are often local and vernacular. It also means that the demographic and geographical center of gravity of Christianity is subject to periodic shifts. Christians have no abiding city, no permanent sacred sites, no earthly Mecca; their New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven at the last day. Meanwhile, Christian history has been one of successive penetration of diverse cultures. *While Islamic expansion has been progressive, with each new stage building on that which preceded it, Christian expansion has been serial, with each new stage in effect representing a new beginning.*

## Christianity's Shifting Center of Gravity

The first change in the center of gravity of the Christian world, entirely representative of what was to follow, took place within the first century of the Christian era, and its pathway is marked within the New Testament itself. Within a remarkably short time, Christianity ceased to be a demographically Jewish phenomenon centered in Jewish Palestine and expressed in terms of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. It moved towards a new expression as a demographically and culturally Hellenistic one, dispersed across the eastern Mediterranean, and then beyond it. The Gentile mission, initially a mere byproduct of the messianic movement centered in Jerusalem, sparked by the forced removal from the city of many of the leading activists (Acts 8:1), turned out to be the means of the movement's very survival. The crux was the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the accompanying destruction of the Jewish state. With that state, the original Jewish model of Christianity typified by James the Just – the righteous, deeply observant Jew who was the very brother of the Lord – was swept away forever. That Christianity itself

was not swept away was due to the cross-cultural diffusion that had already begun, and the consequent emergence of a new Hellenistic model of Christian expression.

The Hellenistic-Roman model of Christianity was by the fourth century quite as secure in its identity and its place in the world as the now vanished elders and apostles at Jerusalem had been in their vision. The Hellenistic-Roman model had a byproduct, too, that proved crucial for the future: the movement or series of movements that transmitted the faith, no doubt in partly assimilated forms, to the peoples beyond the imperial frontiers whom the Hellenistic-Roman world called barbarians and feared as the likely destroyers of civilization. The significance of this process of transmission became evident only when the overextended frontiers of the Western empire collapsed under the weight of the barbarians in a sequence of fierce and nasty little wars, and when the provinces of the Eastern empire, which could point to the tombs of the most glorious martyrs and to the brightest treasures of Christian spirituality and scholarship, took on a new existence as Islamic states. Once again the survival of the Christian faith as a major force in the world depended on its having crossed a cultural frontier. Against all expectations, the future of Christianity lay with the barbarians. The Christian heartlands moved from the urban centers of Mediterranean civilization, with their advanced technology and developed literary tradition, to a new setting among peasant cultivators and semi-settled raiders. A new model of Christianity developed among the Celtic and Germanic peoples between the Atlantic and the Carpathians, and another took its most distinctive shape among the Slavic peoples.

But the serial process of recession and advance, of withering heartland and emergence within a new cultural setting, can be seen in much more recent times. I would not wish to go to the stake for the figures given in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, but I am sure that the direction that they indicate, the situation that can be extrapolated from them, is broadly correct. On this basis one can reckon that in the year 1800 well over 90% of the world's professing Christians lived in Europe or North America. Today, perhaps 70% of them live in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Pacific, and that proportion is rising year by year. Still more strikingly, in sub-Saharan Africa, during the twentieth century the Christian population mushroomed from 9 to 335 million Christians – and the number is now well over 400 million and continues to grow (Johnson 2009).

In other words, the period bounded by the two anniversaries of 1492 and 1792, and substantially the period since the second of them, has seen the Christian center of gravity steadily move away from the West and towards the southern continents. That movement has accelerated in the twentieth century, and is now in spate. The last hundred years have seen the most considerable recession from the Christian faith to occur since the early expansion of Islam, and the area most affected has been Europe. A rather longer period has seen the most substantial accession to the Christian faith for at least a millennium; and that accession has taken place in the southern continents, especially in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. Always predicted by gloomy prophets, the pace of Christian recession in the West has probably been faster than even the gloomiest expected. If the first open sign of recession came when Holy Russia embraced an officially atheistic ideology, it eventually became clear that it bit most deeply within the open, liberal regimes of the West. And the accession of Christians in the southern continents, so often regarded as the marginal effect of a misdirected missionary activity that



largely failed, has been such as would have startled the most sanguine of the missionary fathers of 1792. When the delegates of the World Missionary Conference gathered in the Assembly Hall at New College in 1910, they did so with a view to organizing the resources of the Christian West to bring the Christian gospel to the rest of the world. A symbolic handful of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Christians pointed to the future of the church; there was not a single African present. Today, the signs suggest that what the Christianity of the twenty-first century will be like, in its theology, its worship, its effect on society, its penetration of new areas, whether geographically or culturally, will depend on what happens in Africa, in Latin America, and in some parts of Asia.

There is a significant feature of each of these demographic and cultural shifts of the Christian center of gravity. In each case a threatened eclipse of Christianity was averted by its cross-cultural diffusion. Crossing cultural boundaries has been the lifeblood of historic Christianity. It is also noteworthy that most of the energy for the frontier crossing has come from the periphery rather than from the center. The Book of Acts suggests that it was not the apostles who were responsible for the breakthrough of Antioch, whereby Greek-speaking pagans heard of the Jewish messiah as the Lord Jesus, but quite unknown Jewish believers from Cyprus and Greece (Acts 11:19–20). The same book indicates that, for Christians who lived there, the real center of the church was always Jerusalem. It was Jerusalem that sent out commissions to decide whether the conversion movements among Samaritans and Antiochene Gentiles were really acceptable; it was Jerusalem that had to settle the question of how far non-Jewish believers in Jesus must conform to Jewish cultural norms (Acts 8:14ff.; 11:22ff.; 15:1–2). And when Paul tried to tell Jerusalem believers of the success of the good news about Jesus in Asia, Acts reveals that he was told to look at the still more spectacular successes among Jerusalem Jews who were zealous for the law, and invited to vindicate his own Jewish credentials (Acts 21:20–25). The whole Gentile mission of Paul and his colleagues must have seemed a sideline in comparison with the work in Zion, where the words of the prophets were daily fulfilled, where the Lord's own brother was in regular attendance at the temple of God among the covenant people of God at the place where the Lord would return. But the day came when there was no temple, no sign of the nation, no brother of the Lord, and no Jerusalem church, no dominant community of the believing circumcised. It was at this point that the real significance of the apostle to the Gentiles and his colleagues became plain. So did the significance of those unnamed people from Cyprus and Cyrene who decided that Jesus had something to do with their Greek-speaking pagan neighbors in Antioch.

In the same way, we can read the substantial writings of the great theologians of the fourth and fifth and sixth centuries, or follow the accounts of the ecumenical councils, establishing with infinite pains acceptable formulations of the doctrines of trinity and incarnation. Or if we choose, we may look at the same period, and many of the same events, in terms of the power struggles within church and state, or between metropolitan center and outlying provinces. Whichever focus we adopt, we are dealing with central concerns of Hellenistic-Roman Christianity. But those concerns might today be no more than chapters in Greek intellectual history or late imperial politics had it not been for a peripheral development within Hellenistic-Roman Christianity that gave the outcome of those concerns significance for a later time. That development is

the beginning of the transmission of Christianity from the imperial to the barbarian setting. Its symbolic figures are people like Wulfila, the son of Christian prisoners brought up among the Goths, a man whose Christology was formed in the wrong place, away from the influences eventually determined as orthodox, who became the pioneer of Gothic Christianity; or Patrick, another prisoner of war a generation or so later, brought up on the crumbling British fringes of imperial influence, who had no Greek and was apologetic about his Latin, yet is crucial in the Irish Christian story.

What of the more recent development that has produced a transforming change in the center of gravity of Christianity within the last century? There is much about this development, as I hope to show, that has nothing to do with the West at all; but at the same time it is impossible to ignore the presence of the missionary movement from the West as the detonator of a considerable explosion. But the movement was for most of its life a peripheral and minority concern within Western Christianity. One can work through great monuments of historical scholarship about the nineteenth-century church with hardly a glimpse of it. Neither Owen Chadwick's *The Victorian Church* nor Sydney Ahlstrom's *A Religious History of the American People* gave even a chapter to the missionary movement; the former, indeed, though its distinguished author knows a great deal about the missionary movement, has only incidental references to it (Chadwick 1966: 1970; Ahlstrom 1972). This is not due to carelessness; it reflects reality, or at least the sort of reality that these historians are recording. The missionary movement, though for much of the nineteenth century widely applauded, was never more than a marginal concern of Western Christians. Alexander Duff, in his speech in which he argued for his missionary chair and institute, claimed that all of the Scottish missions could be sustained and increased from the resources of Aberdeen or Dundee alone, were their church people really concerned about such things (Duff 1866). Andrew Ross has shown how the common belief in a significant Scottish missionary response to the news of the death of David Livingstone has little foundation in fact (Ross 1972: 52–72). The tragic end of the visionary Scottish traveler (who was, incidentally, a member of neither of the great Scottish churches, and frequently called himself an Englishman) brought no great stirrings of liberality or flood of offers of missionary service from the parishes of Scotland. Until well on in the nineteenth century, a majority of missionaries did not even reflect Western Christianity in its most developed expressions; for at least two generations, a high proportion of Anglican missionaries would not have met the requirements for ordination in England. As in the early church of Jerusalem, so in the churches of the West, charity began at home, and it was only the few who lifted their active vision beyond it. From the standpoint of posterity, the sideline of the Gentile mission looks like the single most important development in Palestinian, that is, New Testament, Christianity. In terms of total Christian history, the missionary movement may prove to be the single most important development in modern Western Christianity.

The missionary movement is a connecting terminal between Western Christianity and Christianity in the non-Western world. I propose now, in the most tentative way, to explore the relationship between the two, using three hypotheses. The first is that the history and outlook of Western Christians right up to the present time has been shaped by the peculiar circumstances in which the northern and western barbarians received the Christian faith, which led to the idea of a Christendom, a conception in

which Christianity was essentially linked to territory and the possession of territory. The second is that the gap we now recognize between the idea of Christendom and the realities of the contemporary religious situation in the post-Christian West should be seen in the context of the mode of contact that the Western world established with the non-Western world. I do not wish to belittle the elements indigenous to the West that have eroded Christendom, but I do want to suggest that one of its major solvents has been colonialism. The third is that in keeping with the serial nature of Christian expansion that seems so characteristic of the Christian faith, the dissolution of Christendom made possible a cultural diffusion of Christianity that is now in the process of transforming it. The process should be seen as analogous in significance to the shift whereby the urban centers of the eastern Mediterranean replaced Jerusalem as the workshop of the Christian world, or that whereby the new Christians of Western lands found themselves in situations once held by the likes of Athanasius and Augustine. The new Christian heartlands in Africa and Asia – and, it is now becoming curiously evident, even in Latin America – are neither extensions nor replicas of Christendom. Christendom is dead, and Christianity is alive and well without it.

## Christendom Encounters the New World

The Iberian voyages, with the French, Dutch, and English ones that followed, and their results in settlement and conquest, altered the whole map of European and Christian knowledge. J. H. Elliott has pointed out that the maps and the reference books did not immediately alter; it took contemporaries some time to take in the new discoveries (Elliott 1970). It is often the way: discoveries that remove the old landmarks and undermine accepted concepts of the world are ignored as long as possible. The natural objective was to incorporate the new lands within Christendom. The only known model of Christianity was territorial; and the precedent of crusade, so recently blessed with prosperity in the restoration of Granada to the rule of Christ, seemed to authorize the use of the sword to bring about that extension. Conversion would be the fruit of conquest.

At first it seemed to work. In Mexico and Peru the Spaniards destroyed Amerindian cults, proscribed traditional rites, baptized whole populations. It was not long, however, before the difficulties such methods created were apparent. A century afterwards one earnest priest was lamenting that because of the work of destruction he knew little of the old culture; and, because of his ignorance “they can practise idolatry before our very eyes.” Meanwhile, the brutality and rapacity of the representatives of Christendom, taken as a whole, called into question the moral, and thus the Christian, status of the Spanish mission. The story of Bartolomé de Las Casas, and in particular his passionate debates with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, show how the affairs of America forced new questions onto the theological agenda – questions about the constitution of humanity, about the place of compulsion in religion, about the conditions of the just war (Losada 1971). Already America was showing the limitations of that apparently assured encyclopedia of theology developed over the centuries of Christian Europe. An observer attentive to the issues facing the missionaries in Peru and Mexico, even those arising out of the catechism itself, might decide that the task of theology was far from

complete. The wider question of the extent to which Andean Christianity was developing a life of its own did not become apparent until the twentieth century.

The success of the Spanish project to incorporate its New World into Christendom was thus more apparent than real. More important for the future of Christendom, however, than the apparent success of the Spanish was the fact that the Portuguese found the task impossible. The Spanish presence was concentrated in America and the Philippines; the Portuguese presence stretched like a thread along the coasts of Africa, along the Persian Gulf and across the Indian Ocean, into South India and Sri Lanka and the coasts and islands of Southeast Asia, to offshore China and on to Japan – not to mention Brazil. Much of this area was not so much an empire as a system of trade monopolies staffed by little companies of merchants, soldiers, and priests. And Portugal was a small country with a standing army never above ten thousand men. Portugal began its empire with joyful acceptance of the task of expanding Christendom. But its resources were slender, its hold often precarious, and even in the territories it occupied, resistant Islam, and resistant Hinduism, and resistant Buddhism refused to lie down.

The result was important for Christianity. It was in the Portuguese territories, and still more in the powerful states on which the Portuguese presence in India and China depended, that the conditions appeared that called forth the modern missionary movement. In the Spanish territories the task was to teach the faith to people already obliged to receive it. The Portuguese experience allowed only limited scope for this. It did, however, make necessary the creation of a new body of people who did not have the power of coercion, whose function was to commend, persuade, demonstrate, and discuss; and who in order to perform these tasks needed to understand and enter into the life of other societies. The original conception of the expansion of Christendom involved laying down terms for other people; its development in the missionary movement involved preparedness to live on terms set by other people. The Jesuits first arrived at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great by invitation; they arrived at the court of the Chinese emperor by perseverance. Once there, in either case, their ways of working were circumscribed by the interests of those monarchs. They had to conduct themselves in accordance with local custom and to find a niche within local society. Some sought a high degree of identification and cultural transfer, the most famous early example being Roberto de Nobili, with his adoption of the lifestyle of a Brahmin *sannyasi* (religious ascetic) and his refusal to be classed as Portuguese (the only locally known form of European). Sometimes the approach to another culture was less dramatic but equally remarkable in its cultural achievement; the missionary Giuseppe Beschi, for instance, is a seminal figure in Tamil literature. In this strange way, interfaith dialogue was born of frustrated colonialism. Putting it another way: in the mercy of God, the King of Portugal never had enough servants to go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in.

The fundamental missionary experience is to live on terms set by others. This was true in a literal sense for a high proportion of missionaries between the middle of the sixteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth, who were subject to the conditions laid down by the sovereign rulers of the territories in which they lived, or were able to carry on their missionary work only because the leaders of the society found them useful for something else. In the case of the early Scottish mission in Calabar, it was commercial interest, to boost their international trading advantage; in many another

African situation it was an intermediary with the whites, or a contact for commerce; in the early New Zealand mission it was a regular source of iron goods. The colonial advance, of course, and especially the high imperial period between 1880 and 1920, altered a great deal of this by creating another power structure of which missionaries were part. Even with these conditions, however, missionaries as a class, and not always by their own desire, had to take note of others' terms more than most Europeans of the colonial period. The need to speak someone else's language, the consciousness of doing it badly or even laughably, being unsure of etiquette, constant fear of giving unintended offence, realization of the vast depth and complexity of another community's traditions and history, and thus identity – all this was part of the daily experience of thousands. It led to some herculean efforts of understanding and sympathy, and to the collection and systematization of knowledge. The primary missionary aim was to enter the minds and hearts of other people, since that was the only way they could effectively talk about Christ. In the process they altered the map of Western learning more than any other group of Western residents in the non-Western world.

Scholars today (though in practice it is more the custom of the popularizers and media exponents) can afford to be snide or patronizing about the missionary movement, but many branches of Western learning now exist because of it. Scientific anthropology became possible as a result of the missionary movement. It is instructive to follow the correspondence of Max Müller, or J. G. Frazer, or A. C. Haddon with missionaries; not because these luminaries could identify with missionary aims, but because they were aware of no other group of Western people so regularly engaged at such a fundamental level with the languages and cultures of the non-Western world. If some of the results now seem absurd or offensive, it is well to remember that we are all subject to the principle enunciated earlier: it is only possible to take in a new idea in terms of ideas we already have.

The science of comparative African linguistics was the almost single-handed creation of Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, a lonely, eccentric, and rather cantankerous German missionary in Sierra Leone. The significance of tone and the devisal of a system of marking it were due to the insistence of the African missionary Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the most important influence in the production of the Bible in his mother tongue, Yoruba, and pioneer of the substantial literature in that language. The most important single figure in the Western understanding of the Chinese classics is probably the Scottish missionary James Legge, whose first aim was to understand China, and who from that understanding concluded that Christian theology could be regarded as continuous with the ancient religion of China now obscured by modern accretions. Another Aberdonian, John Nicol Farquhar, produced the fullest comprehensive compendium of information on Indian religious literature, still in print in India: Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the missionary movement affected every department of scholarship – except theology. Even for missionaries, theology generally remained a “given”; it is the post-missionary era of the non-Western churches that has shown that they opened both new issues and new directions in theology. It is part of the prescience of Alexander Duff, Edinburgh's founder of modern mission studies, that he realized that the Brahmo Samaj and Kes-hub Chunder Sen were raising theological issues in India that had not been discussed in Western theology; and that the Xhosa cattle killing in South Africa was a religious event for which Western experience had no analogy and therefore no tools for understanding.

Perhaps part of the significance of the missionary movement is the very converse of the cultural imperialism with which it is often quite justifiably charged. The missionary movement arose from the need to live on someone else's terms, to make Christian affirmations within the constraints of someone else's language. The missionary movement is the learning experience of Western Christianity. But it is far more, since, in the process of introducing Christian affirmations in other languages, it set them free to move within new systems of thought and discourse. Lamin Sanneh has shown how in many parts of Africa missionary activity acted as a means of cultural renewal by its use of vernaculars, and, in the production of vernacular worshipping communities and the creation of vernacular literatures, hymnody, and liturgy, provided resistance to eroding influences from outside. He draws attention to the fact that his own people, who have been Muslim for centuries, have forgotten their own name for God; whereas in almost all areas of West Africa where Christian influence has predominated, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ has a vernacular name (Sanneh 1989). The Western theological process starts from the fact that the northern and western barbarians abandoned their old pantheons and took in God from the outside, envisaged in terms of Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel, merged with the highest Good of the Greek philosophical tradition. African theology starts at a different point. God has a vernacular name. As Olorun, Nyame, Ngewo, God is there in the African, indeed, in the Yoruba, the Akan, the Mende past. From one point of view, the Western missionary movement can be seen as the last flourish of Christendom. From another, it represents a departure from Christendom or perhaps an Abrahamic journey out of it.

The missionary movement had another effect on Christendom not envisaged in its origins. The establishment of a body of European Christians working, however inconsistently, on a different set of terms from the "official" colonial presence gradually introduced a principle of separation between the religion of Christendom and its political, military, and economic power. The wedge was narrow to begin with, but it is visible in de Nobili's vigorous rejection of the Portuguese name, and in the demeanor and activities of many other early missionaries who did not come from the lands that held the *padroado*. The later colonialisms witnessed a thickening of the wedge. The Dutch, who succeeded the Portuguese in so much of their empire, broadly retained Portuguese religious policy, simply substituting Reformed for Catholic worship. But the Dutch had no missionary orders, and the predikants of the East and West India Companies were inevitably limited in their effect on communities outside the church. Planters of Protestant origin in the British Caribbean colonies frequently feared missionary activity among the slave population lest it make slaves ungovernable. The Honourable East India Company, the mode of British administration in India down to 1858, for a long time ostentatiously dissociated itself from Christianity, and even after 1813, when evangelical pressure in Parliament secured the insertion of "pious clauses" into its charter, maintained a more than discreet distance.

Missionaries, whether Protestant or Catholic, had grown up in the Christendom concept, and, taken as a group, they had no quarrel with it. The first evangelical missionary project for British India envisaged what would in effect have been a state mission. What better gift could Britain give to the territories over whom Providence had set it than the gospel of Christ? What greater treason could it commit than to hide that gospel? Even after the cataclysm of 1857, evangelicals were demanding that Britain identify

itself in India as the Christian nation it was. Britain is the first conqueror of India, said John Clark Marshman to a meeting at Exeter Hall, who has not let it be known what his religion is (*Christianity in India* 1858: 22). But they spoke in vain, and great was their scandal to find the British government the official guardian by treaty of the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, and legally responsible for the appointment of Buddhist priests (de Silva 1965). Nor did Catholic missionary spokesmen fare better. Cardinal Lavigerie saw in Algeria the possibility of an Arab Catholic peasantry that would be the mirror image of Brittany; the French government legislated against the conversion of Muslims, and were prepared to prosecute any who tried to leave Islam (de Montclos 1965).

By the end of the nineteenth century there is a clear note of embattlement in missionary literature, a sense of betrayal by the Christian state. At the beginning of that century the great Islamic power had been the sultan of Turkey; by the end it was the British Empire, with the Royal Republic of the Netherlands in second place. The missionary interest was lamenting that Britain kept missionaries out of the emirates of northern Nigeria, that Britain was encouraging the Islamization of the Sudan. Furthermore, the British did these things more efficiently than the sultan ever did. In the twentieth century it appeared that the most considerable religious effects of imperial rule were the renovation and reformulation of a Hinduism that had seemed to be disintegrating at the time British rule was established, and a quite unprecedented spread of Islam. Colonial rule did more for Islam in Africa than all the jihads together.

Colonialism, in fact, helped to transform the Christian position in the world by forcing a distinction between Christianity and Christendom. Colonial experience undermined the identification of Christianity with territory and immobilized the idea of crusade. It introduced new theological and moral questions, for the issues argued in one century by Las Casas and in another by Buxton and Philip go to the heart of religion; fundamentally they are questions about salvation. It opened the way for Christian understanding and interpretation of other religions and cultures for which the conditions of Western Christianity provided no space. It undermined that pillar of Christendom, church establishment, because the principles of establishment could so rarely be maintained abroad. It is usual, and entirely correct, in describing the colonial period to point to the connexions between Christian missionaries and the colonial states. Perhaps the reverse, however, is equally true: it is the colonial period that marks the divergence of interest between Christianity and the Western powers, the separation of the religion of the West from its political and economic interests. If several generations of missionaries once felt betrayed when a state nominally Christian refused to offer the support they felt due, we now may be humbly grateful that God is kinder than to answer all the prayers of his people.

Paradoxically, and in sharp contrast to its first vision, colonialism helped to ensure that new Christendoms did not arise. The pattern of colonial rule prevented the development of the relationship of throne and altar that developed in the northern lands. The nearest approach to a new Christendom has come in some Pacific island communities – Samoa, Tonga, Fiji – where entire populations with their rulers moved towards Christianity during the nineteenth century and where until quite recently a single church predominated in each state. Even there, however, it was often colonial overrule that produced arrangements incompatible with the Christendom pattern, as with the introduction of a substantial Indian population to work the sugar plantations of Fiji. Latin America, scene of

the earliest colonial attempts to extend Christendom (and, as we saw, with initial apparent success), has progressively departed from the Christendom model since the end of the colonial era. The new republics could not encourage the immigration they needed without liberalizing their religious policy, and the evangelical explosion since the 1960s has complicated the situation still further. And what of sub-Saharan Africa, the most remarkable theatre of Christian accession in the modern world? It would be easy to draw African parallels, in the last two centuries, with the stories from Gregory and Bede with which we began. That the two movements of conversion did not have the same issue is due at least in part to colonialism. Colonial rule brought together diverse peoples of different religious affiliation in units dictated by administrative convenience. The present states of sub-Saharan Africa are virtually all colonial constructs, based on colonial frontiers. This makes them of their nature religiously as well as ethnically plural, a natural home of the secular state among incorrigibly religious people.

## Christianity without Christendom

The latest chapter of Christian history, then, seems to relate to a Christianity without Christendom, a Christianity more and more determined by the southern hemisphere. The closing remarks will relate to a few of its features.

- 1 The missionary movement from the West is only an episode in African, Asian, and Pacific Christian history – a vital episode, but for many churches an episode long closed. Missionary enterprise continues, but its Western, and especially its original European, component is crumbling. The great missionary nation is now Korea; in every continent there are Korean missionaries by the hundreds, and in coming years we can expect hundreds more, preaching from Tashkent to Timbuktu, and reaching where Westerners have long been unable to tread. In a more modest way, Brazil is now a major sending country. The eventual effect of such transformation in the sending structures can hardly be calculated.
- 2 The first churches in tropical Africa were African, not missionary, creations. Most Africans have always heard the gospel from Africans, and virtually all the great movements towards the Christian faith in Africa have been African-led.
- 3 The Christian communities of the southern continents are not struggling infants, but mature churches with substantial Christian histories behind them. Theology is always a hazardous business, “an act of adoration fraught with the risk of blasphemy.” It grows and develops in situations of crisis and urgency. The churches of Africa and Asia have abundant experience of crisis and urgency. No Western church has ever had to beat a way to survival in the way the church in China has; yet in its period of isolation, the Chinese church has not only survived but multiplied. We talk of theologies of poverty and options for the poor; African churches routinely face hunger, oppression, extortion, plague, endemic war, and pandemic AIDS. What this does for life and thought and liturgy and preaching is manifest in preaching in Kenya, where Deuteronomy and Amos became contemporaries, or the remarkable songs of suffering of Dinka Christians uprooted from their soil and largely ignored by the world.



- 4 Such experiences have produced a greater degree of theological development than has often been recognized. Such development has been needed, for the churches of Africa and Asia are being forced to work out some sort of Christian response to situations where Western theology has no answers because it has no questions or any relevant experience. Kwame Bediako has shown the parallels between the quest of Hellenistic theologians of the second and third centuries coping with their own identity as Christian heirs of a tradition of culture and literature, and a whole generation of African theologians seeking at once to be Christian and African (Bediako 1992). Cyril Okorochoa shows how conversion has different significance and takes on different expressions at different points of the religious itinerary of an African people (Okorochoa 1987). Christian theology is expanding as it comes into contact with new areas of human experience, new accumulations of knowledge, relationship, and activity. Themes are being recognized in the Scriptures that the West had never noticed.
- 5 In the process, new theological methods will be developed. Western theology has evolved, in comparatively recent times and from within its own resources, a particular approach to the Bible and its exegesis. There are quite different approaches to the Bible in large areas of the Christian world. These are not necessarily the products of naivety or obscurantism, but of different approaches to sacred and classical texts, rooted in a cultural and religious tradition much older than the Western. Those who have noted the polite boredom of Eastern Orthodox colleagues with some of the questions raised by Western scholarship about the New Testament and patristic literature will already be alerted to the need to take account of other approaches.
- 6 The Christianity of the southern continents has been visited by remarkable religious movements that have put down deep roots. Pentecostalism is a worldwide phenomenon. It must not be forgotten that even in the West it was originally a product of black Christian agency. In the West, Pentecostalism, though growing in importance, has generally remained marginal to church life; in Latin America it has become central, not least because its rationale makes such clear Christian sense within some local worldviews. West Africa has seen Pentecostalism move into a new phase that has unsettled earlier scholarship. A Pentecostal woman singer produces beautiful and moving hymns to Christ, combining “biblical allusion with the formal structure and imagery of Ashanti kings” (Kuma 1981). It is a bestseller. A recent study of popular literature in Africa concluded that the popular culture of Ghana was virtually all religious. Then there is also the remarkable and essentially African phenomenon of the East African revival, which after well over half a century stubbornly refuses to go away.
- 7 Many strands are woven into the Christianity of the non-Western world. Some Western theologians – and let us rejoice at it – are seeking serious encounter with the religious traditions of South and East Asia, and are showing deep veneration for some of their features. It is instructive to read the passionate reaction of Indian Christians of Dalit origin, the traditionally oppressed communities, for whom those same features are symbols of their oppression and rationalizations of it. It will hardly be possible for the West to enter serious dialogue with Eastern religions without the help of Indian Christians.

Perhaps the most striking single feature of Christianity today is the fact that the church now – more than ever before in its history – looks more like that great multitude whom none can number, drawn from all tribes and kindreds, people and tongues (Rev. 5:9; 7:9). Its diversity and history leads to a great variety of starting points for its theology and reflects varied bodies of experience. The study of Christian history and theology will increasingly need to operate from the position where most Christians are, and that will increasingly be the lands and islands of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific. Shared reading of the Scriptures and shared theological reflection will be to the benefit of all, but the oxygen-starved Christianity of the West will have most to gain.

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## CHAPTER 52

# The Demographics and Dynamics of the World Christian Movement

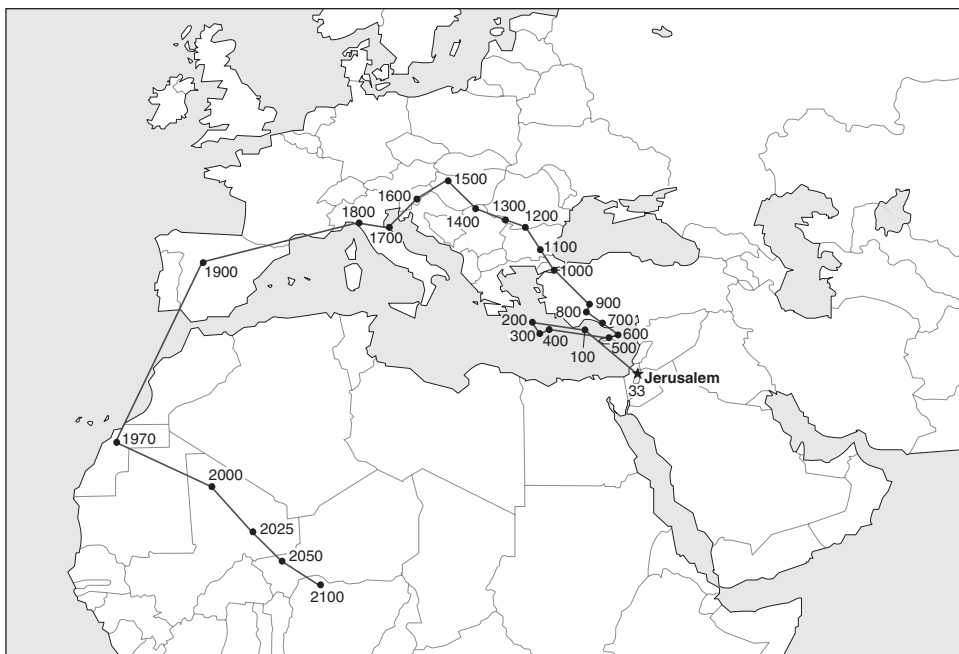
Todd M. Johnson

The demographics of the world Christian movement can be viewed through two different lenses: a 2,000-year view and a 100-year view. The longer view covers the entire history of Christianity and uncovers larger trends in the numerical expansion of Christianity over the centuries. The shorter view examines the twentieth century, and remarkable shift of Christianity from the North to the South.

### The 2,000-year View

Yale historian Kenneth Scott Latourette viewed the 2,000-year history of Christianity as a series of expansions and recessions. He noted how, at times, the Christian message was embraced by whole villages, tribes, or peoples. But he also saw how Christians lost ground, often through wars or the expansion of another religion. In either case, at any given time in history, Christians have had definable geographic distributions. It is possible then to locate a demographic or statistical center of all Christians. In practical terms, a single geographic point on earth can be seen as the statistical “center of gravity” of all Christian followers at any given date – where the number of all Christians living to its north, its south, its east, and its west are the same (Johnson and Chung 2004).

The demographic 2,000-year history of Christianity is viewed precisely through this lens in Figure 52.1. Here, a single geographic point has been identified as the statistical center of gravity of Christianity for each of 25 different dates in Christian history, beginning with AD 33 (the traditional date for the origin of the church) and projecting to AD 2100 (the end of the twenty-first century). The points have been connected in order to approximate a “trajectory” of the demographic center of gravity of Christianity throughout its history.



**Figure 52.1** Trajectory of the statistical center of gravity of global Christianity, AD 33–AD 2100.

*Note:* The trajectory is calculated for each of the 25 dates above on the numbers of Christians in the 21 United Nations regions, utilizing a geographic center for each region to calculate the center of gravity for all Christians. See Tables 52.1 and 52.2 for documentation.

*Source:* Data from *World Christian Trends*, WCL 2001. Map by Global Mapping International, [www.gmi.org](http://www.gmi.org).

## Documenting the Statistical Center of Gravity of Christianity

Table 52.1 provides more information on most of the dates analyzed in Figure 52.1 and on the line connecting them. Column 1 lists 25 different years, from AD 33 to AD 2100, for which Christian demography is examined. Columns 2–8 refer exactly to the date in column 1, while columns 9–11 refer to the period leading up to that date. Column 2 gives an estimate of the number of Christians (in millions) in the world at the corresponding date in column 1. Column 3 gives the percentage of the world's population represented by the number of Christians in column 2. Columns 4 and 5 report the latitude and longitude of the statistical center of gravity of Christianity for the date in column 1. Column 6 gives an approximation for the land mass or settlement (existing in the year in column 1) nearest the latitude and longitude in columns 4 and 5. Columns 7 and 8 show the percentages of Christians living in the North and the South (as defined by the United Nations). Column 9 gives the average direction of the line over the period leading up to the date in column 1. For example, the center of gravity in AD 200 lay almost due west of its location in AD 100. A century later, the center of gravity had moved to the southeast (represented in column 9 under AD 300). Column 10 reports the distance, in kilometers,

**Table 52.1** Global Christianity's statistical center of gravity, AD 33–AD 2100

Year	Christians (millions)	% of world population	Geographic center <sup>a</sup>		Closest settlement <sup>c</sup>	% North <sup>d</sup>	% South	Direction	Rate km/year	Growth or decline of Christianity by geographic region
			Latitude <sup>b</sup>	Longitude						
1	2 <sup>e</sup>	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
33	0.01	0.01	31.8°N	35.3°E	Jerusalem	0	100	—	—	Christian followers meet in Jerusalem and surrounding Palestine
100	0.80	0.45	35.6°N	31.4°E	Cyprus	39	61	Northwest	8.3	Followers in southern Europe, western Asia and India
200	4.66	2.43	35.9°N	26.1°E	Crete	42	58	West	4.8	Churches grow in southern Europe and northern Africa
300	14.01	7.30	35.4°N	27°E	Kassos	36	64	Southeast	1.0	Orthodox churches grow rapidly in Syria and Mesopotamia
400	25.32	13.43	35.6°N	27.3°E	Karpathos	40	60	Northeast	0.4	Edict of Toleration: Roman Empire over 50% Christian for first time
500	37.80	19.86	35.3°N	33.2°E	Lefkosia	37	63	East	5.4	Church of the East follows the Silk Road; Patrick evangelizes Ireland
600	40.40	20.83	35.7°N	33.8°E	Cilicia	36	64	Northeast	0.7	Churches strong in Central Asia; Celtic peregrini in Northern Europe
700	40.57	19.80	36.5°N	32.6°E	Anamur	38	62	Northwest	1.4	Islam expands in northern Africa, central Asia; first Christians in China
800	40.87	18.75	37.6°N	31.1°E	Attalia	44	56	Northwest	1.8	Continued expansion of Islam; Charlemagne crowned emperor
900	40.83	17.13	38.3°N	31.3°E	Iconium	48	52	North	0.8	Vikings convert to Christianity; Islam strong in Spain
1000	44.67	16.94	40.5°N	28°E	Cyzicus	58	42	Northwest	3.7	Russia and Iceland convert to Christianity
1100	51.96	16.32	42.4°N	26.2°E	Yambol	67	33	Northwest	2.6	Schism between Catholic and Orthodox; Norman conquest
1200	65.71	18.38	43.8°N	24.9°E	Pleven	74	26	Northwest	1.9	Papal and monastic reform; Crusades
1300	83.91	23.18	44.5°N	22.9°E	Turnu Severin	77	23	Northwest	1.8	Nestorians grow under Pax Mongolia; Franciscans and Dominicans

(continued)

Table 52.1 Continued

Year	Christians (millions)	% of world population	Geographic center <sup>a</sup>		Closest settlement <sup>c</sup>	% North <sup>d</sup>	% South	Direction	Rate km/year	Growth or decline of Christianity by geographic region
			Latitude <sup>b</sup>	Longitude						
1	2 <sup>c</sup>	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1400	56.73	16.10	45.8° N	19.7° E	Subotica	85	15	Northwest	2.9	Black Death in Europe; Tamerlane wipes out Church of the East
1500	75.89	17.94	47.3° N	18° E	Budapest	92	8	Northwest	2.1	Conquistadors and missionaries arrive in the Americas
1600	100.44	18.40	46.1° N	15.2° E	Ljubljana	91	9	Southwest	2.5	Roman Catholic missions to India, China, and Japan
1700	130.11	21.34	44.4° N	12.7° E	Ravenna	86	14	Southwest	2.7	Christianity grows in the Americas; Muslim states declining
1800	204.98	22.68	44.4° N	10° E	La Spezia	86	14	West	2.1	Protestant and Anglican missions gain momentum
1900	558.16	34.46	40.5° N	4.6° W	Madrid	82	18	Southwest	12.8	Latourette's Great Century; new churches in Africa and Asia
1970	1,234.97	33.39	26.9° N	12.9° W	El Aaiun	57	43	Southwest	32.0	Churches declining in Europe but mushrooming in Africa and Asia
2000	2,004.56	32.73	21.4° N	3.0° W	Taoudenni	41	59	Southeast	39.3	Independent churches in China and India grow
2025	2,708.03	33.81	18.2° N	4.4° E	Essouk	32	68	Southeast	37.6	Southern churches (of all kinds) continue to grow
2050	3,220.35	35.04	15.4° N	8.5° E	Agadez	26	74	Southeast	21.4	Europe and Australia secular; Southern Christians move to the North
2100	3,583.00	35.44	13.3° N	8.8° E	Zinder	22	78	Southeast	4.6	Vast majority of Christians in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania

<sup>a</sup> Columns 4 and 5 are calculated using data in Table 52.2 on the numbers of Christians in each of the 21 current United Nations regions.

<sup>b</sup> Latitude and longitude in columns 4 and 5 are expressed as decimals (for use in calculations); thus 40.5° N refers to 40 degrees, 30 minutes North latitude.

<sup>c</sup> Closest settlement in column 6 refers to locations in existence at the date in column 1 near the geographic center in columns 4 and 5.

<sup>d</sup> Columns 7 and 8 are represented as an area graph in Figure 52.1. North is defined by 5 UN regions that comprise Europe and North America; South as 16 UN regions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.

<sup>e</sup> Columns 2–8 refer exactly to the date in column 1 whereas columns 9–11 refer to the period leading up to that date.

between the statistical centers of gravity of Christianity at two consecutive dates, divided by the number of years, and then presented as an average rate in kilometers per year. For example, the distance between the statistical center of gravity in AD 400 and AD 500 was 560 kilometers; thus, the average rate of movement for that 100-year period was 5.6 km per year. Column 11 provides a short explanation for why the center of Christianity changed location since the previous date. This could be in the form of an advance into a new area, a retreat from an existing Christian area, or simply gradual growth or decline. Column 11 also accounts for the direction and extent of the demographic shift between consecutive dates.

Table 52.2 provides further evidence for the trajectory of global Christianity. This table lays out in detail the number of Christians (in millions) in each UN region (current boundaries) for each of the 25 dates in Table 52.1 and in Figure 52.1 (derived from Barrett and Johnson 2001). The 21 UN regions are set out in the table under “The ‘North’” (Europe and North America) and “The ‘South’” (Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania). The North/South dichotomy is significant for Christians today because the term “Southern Christians” or “Christians of the Global South” is increasingly replacing the near-synonymous terms “non-Western Christians” and “Third-World Christians.” Additionally, Table 52.2 sets out the geographic center of each region by latitude and longitude. As an extra feature, the UN region with the most Christians is highlighted in gray for each of the 25 dates. This single figure is often helpful in explaining the trajectory of Christianity at a particular date in Christian history. Totals are given in the table for Christians in the North, in the South, and globally.

It is important to point out that a series of single points connected by a line, or a trajectory, is compatible with differing explanations of the geography of Christian growth. All historians are aware that the drama of Christian expansion unfolded in a complex set of events, but differing interpretations are offered. As noted, K. S. Latourette explains these events in terms of expansion and recession. Andrew Walls utilizes the motif of serial expansion, where Christianity moves into new areas and dies out in areas of previous numerical strength. Nevertheless, utilizing any of these explanations or others, a demographic center of all Christian followers can be identified for any date in Christian history. Locating and following the statistical center of gravity of Christianity over time helps us to visualize the overall numerical growth of the Christian movement.

## Following the Trajectory

As pointed out earlier, having identified a single point as the statistical center of gravity of Christianity for each of 25 different dates, it is instructive to connect these points, resulting in a line that can be considered a trajectory or general path taken by the statistical center of gravity of Christianity. The first application of the trajectory is as a visual marker for Christian demographics. The trajectory of the demographic center of gravity of Christianity throughout the centuries provides a visual context to the Christian story, especially from the standpoint of Christian expansion. For example, in the earliest Christian centuries, Christianity spread among dozens of peoples in

**Table 52.2** Number of Christians in millions by UN region and by North/South dichotomy, AD 33–AD 1400<sup>a, b</sup>.

UN region	Geographic center		Year														
	Lat	Long	33	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400
<i>The "North"</i>																	
<i>Europe</i>																	
Eastern Europe	55° N	40° E	—	0.01	0.10	0.30	0.70	1.00	1.40	1.70	2.30	2.70	5.00	8.00	11.50	14.20	13.50
Northern Europe	60° N	10° E	—	0.01	0.10	0.20	0.40	0.70	0.80	0.85	0.90	1.20	2.60	3.50	4.80	6.30	4.70
Southern Europe	40° N	10° E	—	<b>0.25</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>7.80</b>	9.40	8.00	7.00	7.50	8.00	<b>10.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>	15.00	19.50	14.00
Western Europe	50° N	5° E	—	0.04	0.15	0.60	1.20	2.70	4.20	6.00	7.20	7.50	8.50	11.50	<b>17.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>16.00</b>
<i>North America</i>																	
Northern America	40° N	100° W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Total in North</i>			<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.31</i>	<i>1.95</i>	<i>5.10</i>	<i>10.10</i>	<i>13.80</i>	<i>14.40</i>	<i>15.55</i>	<i>17.90</i>	<i>19.40</i>	<i>26.10</i>	<i>35.00</i>	<i>48.30</i>	<i>65.00</i>	<i>48.20</i>
<i>The "South"</i>																	
<i>Africa</i>																	
Eastern Africa	4° S	40° E	—	—	—	0.01	0.30	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.70
Middle Africa	0°	20° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northern Africa	30° N	10° E	—	0.09	0.91	3.00	3.92	5.00	5.30	4.80	3.45	2.01	1.06	1.10	1.10	1.00	1.00
Southern Africa	25° S	25° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Western Africa	10° N	0°	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Asia</i>																	
Eastern Asia	35° N	110° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.30	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.60	0.80	0.01
South-central Asia	30° N	70° E	—	0.20	0.80	2.40	4.00	<b>10.90</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>11.00</b>	9.00	8.50	7.00	7.30	7.50	7.70	0.80
South-eastern Asia	5° N	110° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02
Western Asia	33° N	35° E	<b>0.01</b>	0.20	1.00	3.50	7.00	7.60	8.20	8.60	<b>9.50</b>	<b>9.60</b>	9.50	7.50	7.00	8.00	5.00



<i>Latin America</i>																						
Caribbean	20° N	70° W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Central America	20° N	110° W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
South America	20° S	60° W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
<i>Oceania</i>																						
Australia/New Zealand	30° S	150° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Melanesia	15° S	170° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Micronesia	10° N	150° E	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Polynesia	20° S	160° W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
<i>Total in South</i>			0.01	0.49	2.71	8.91	15.22	24.00	26.00	25.02	22.97	21.43	18.57	16.96	17.41	18.91						8.53
<b>Global total</b>			<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>14.01</b>	<b>25.32</b>	<b>37.80</b>	<b>40.40</b>	<b>40.57</b>	<b>40.87</b>	<b>40.83</b>	<b>44.67</b>	<b>51.96</b>	<b>65.71</b>	<b>83.91</b>						<b>56.73</b>

**Table 52.2** (cont.) Number of Christians in millions by UN region and by North/South dichotomy, AD 1500–AD 2100

UN region	Geographic center		Year									
			1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	1970	2000	2025	2050	2100
<i>The "North"</i>												
<i>Europe</i>												
Eastern Europe	55° N	40° E	19.80	24.00	32.00	56.00	151.94	158.05	239.14	248.36	226.37	205.00
Northern Europe	60° N	10° E	6.90	8.50	12.30	21.70	56.89	75.75	72.37	75.36	76.33	67.00
Southern Europe	40° N	10° E	19.00	25.50	26.50	39.00	68.54	111.13	120.39	127.13	121.29	83.00
Western Europe	50° N	5° E	24.00	33.00	41.00	55.00	103.27	146.80	132.61	120.95	111.08	110.00
<i>North America</i>												
Northern America	40° N	100° W	—	—	0.40	5.60	78.81	210.94	255.46	291.85	322.62	310.00
<i>Total in North</i>			69.70	91.00	112.20	177.30	459.46	702.68	819.97	863.65	857.68	775.00

(continued)

**Table 52.2** *Continued*

UN region	Geographic center		Year									
	Lat	Long	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	1970	2000	2025	2050	2100
<i>The "South"</i>												
<i>Africa</i>												
Eastern Africa	4° S	40° E	1.80	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.52	54.15	163.64	322.82	548.03	<b>550.00</b>
Middle Africa	0°	20° E	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.19	30.11	78.51	151.06	234.51	335.00
Northern Africa	30° N	10° E	1.00	0.80	0.70	0.85	2.68	7.58	14.04	22.07	30.56	37.00
Southern Africa	25° S	25° E	—	—	0.02	0.10	2.06	19.29	42.32	51.44	54.79	61.50
Western Africa	10° N	0°	0.03	0.08	0.15	0.30	0.47	31.48	85.18	167.13	284.70	260.00
<i>Asia</i>												
Eastern Asia	35° N	110° E	0.01	0.10	0.40	0.30	2.16	11.45	95.35	199.03	247.29	240.00
South-Central Asia	30° N	70° E	0.20	0.40	1.00	0.85	4.60	27.22	56.94	101.39	131.02	185.00
South-eastern Asia	5° N	110° E	0.02	0.20	1.00	2.20	8.41	50.37	109.80	164.82	209.81	250.00
Western Asia	33° N	35° E	3.00	3.30	3.80	5.00	6.74	6.36	12.84	15.57	16.48	26.00
<i>Latin America</i>												
Caribbean	20° N	70° W	0.02	0.04	0.30	1.70	6.72	19.82	31.23	38.22	39.88	46.50
Central America	20° N	110° W	—	1.00	3.00	5.00	17.77	68.34	130.28	175.76	202.18	237.00
South America	20° S	60° W	0.10	1.50	5.00	8.20	37.52	182.09	<b>320.12</b>	<b>402.23</b>	<b>430.59</b>	540.00
<i>Oceania</i>												
Australia/New Zealand	30° S	150° E	—	—	—	0.08	4.44	14.52	17.29	20.22	22.05	23.00
Melanesia	15° S	170° E	—	—	—	—	0.22	2.89	6.36	10.78	15.51	14.30
Micronesia	10° N	150° E	—	—	—	0.01	0.06	0.23	0.46	0.58	0.65	1.52
Polynesia	20° S	160° W	—	—	—	0.01	0.11	0.40	0.59	0.72	0.80	1.18
<i>Total in South</i>			6.19	9.44	17.91	27.68	98.67	526.30	1164.95	1843.85	2468.85	2808.00
<b>Global total</b>			<b>75.89</b>	<b>100.44</b>	<b>130.11</b>	<b>204.98</b>	<b>558.13</b>	<b>1228.97</b>	<b>1984.92</b>	<b>2707.49</b>	<b>3326.53</b>	<b>3583.00</b>

<sup>a</sup> The methodology employed in this chapter is based on the United Nations' definitions and statistics of the world divided under 6 continents and 21 regions, as shown above in the first column. The United Nations also utilizes the North/South dichotomy defining the North as Europe and Northern America and the South as Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. The geographic center of the North ranges from 40-60° North and the South from 35°N southwards.

<sup>b</sup> For each year the UN region with the highest number of Christians is highlighted. A dash signifies no Christians in that year.

Source: Barrett, D. B. and T. M. Johnson, Table 7-2, *World Christian Trends*, William Carey Library, 2001, pp. 319-334; updated for 1900-2100 from World Christian Database, Brill, 2012.

Asia, Africa, and Europe, including Jews, Romans, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, Indians, Berbers, Syrians, and Persians. Within a few centuries, Vandals, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Slavs, Turks, Russians, and Chinese were added. The trajectory reveals the general direction where Christian growth was the greatest – serving as a visual representation of the center of gravity of Christian expansion.

Second, a trajectory formed by the center of gravity signifies more than simply a demographic reality. Where there are more followers there are more churches, more priests and pastors, more Christian institutions, more potential missionaries to be sent out, more theologians, and so on. The trajectory, then, has ecclesiastical, missiological, and theological implications. These can be examined in the context of Christian history and the future of Christianity.

The trajectory of the statistical center of gravity of Christianity can be viewed in four time periods: (1) early Christian expansion in various directions from AD 33 to AD 600, (2) a consistent northern and western trajectory from AD 600 to AD 1500, (3) a slight southern and western trajectory from AD 1500 to AD 1970, and (4) a southern and eastern trajectory after AD 1970.

## Early Christian Expansion, AD 33–AD 600

Christians were concentrated in and around Jerusalem at the time of the origin of the church on the Day of Pentecost. From there Christians began to spread in several directions. The Acts of the Apostles provides an outline of Christian expansion in its initial decades. If Christians had spread out in exactly the same numbers in every direction from Jerusalem, then the statistical center of gravity of Christianity would have remained in Jerusalem. But the growth of Christianity did not follow a uniform pattern. Instead, Christianity, in its first 100 years, grew more to the north and northwest than to the south or the east.

After AD 100 Christianity grew in an irregular fashion, first in one direction and then in another, pulling the demographic center in the direction of growth (or away from areas of decline). In fact, this is precisely what can be viewed on Figure 52.1 from AD 100 to AD 600. After AD 100 Christianity grew to the west, then back to the east, and finally in the northwestern direction that would define the bulk of Christian history. Maps of early Christian expansion unmistakably illustrate this zigzag growth pattern. Table 52.2 shows that, despite this pattern, southern Europe was the region with the largest number of Christians in AD 100, 200, 300, and 400. Nonetheless, there were more Christians in Asia and Africa as a whole than in all of Europe for all of those dates.

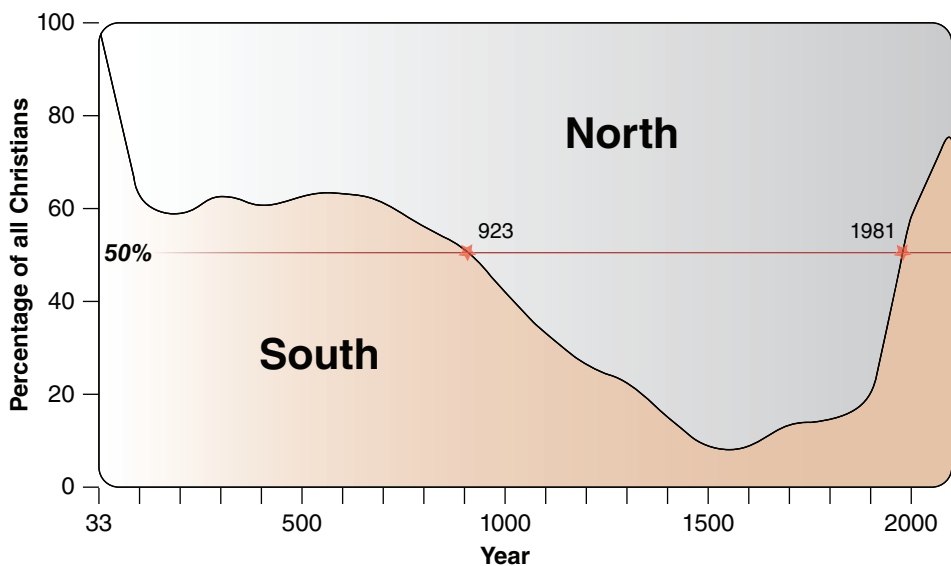
One of the clear features of this zigzag pattern in early Christian history was the emergence of multiple Christian centers of theological study and missions. As churches grew throughout the Mediterranean world, theologians were attracted to centers such as Hippo, Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. The same was true of missionary-sending centers such as Alexandria, Edessa, and Rome, and some farther afield such as Merv in Central Asia and Iona in Scotland. The trajectory depicts the movement of the centerpoint of all of this activity. The fastest rate of

expansion in any single direction in this period was from AD 400 to AD 500, when the growth of the Church of the East along the Silk Road pulled the center of gravity to the east at an average rate of 5.6 km per year over the 100-year period.

## Christianity Moves Decidedly North and West, AD 600–AD 1500

Figure 52.1 illustrates an astonishingly consistent trajectory for Christianity from about AD 600 to AD 1500. The line moved steadily north and west after AD 600, reaching its northernmost point in about 1500. Table 52.2 reveals that in AD 600 and AD 700, the region with the highest number of Christians was still deep in Asia (South-central). In AD 800 and AD 900, more Christians lived in western Asia, and the statistical center of gravity of Christianity was near Iconium (present-day Turkey). However, after AD 900, the line moved unquestionably to the northwest, and for the first time in Christian history, Northern Christians were in the majority (see Figure 52.2).

By AD 1000, the statistical center was quite near Constantinople – coinciding with one of Christianity’s great ecclesiastical and spiritual centers. However, during the next 100 years, the great schism between Catholics and Orthodox occurred and Catholics in Europe launched the Crusades, both which were, in the end, disastrous for the Orthodox Christians of western Asia. In AD 1000 and AD 1100, southern Europe was, once again, the most populous Christian region. This distinction then shifted to western Europe for five centuries, from AD 1200 to AD 1700. By AD 1500, the statistical center of Christianity had reached its northernmost point. The churches in Asia and Africa had waned and Christianity was almost exclusively identified as Northern and European.



**Figure 52.2** Christians, by percentage in North or South, AD 33–AD 2100.

Source: Data from *World Christian Database*, Brill, 2012.

## Christianity Begins to Move to the South, AD 1500–AD 1970

After 1500, the Age of Discovery brought Christianity to the Americas, which further pulled the Christian center of gravity to the west. The statistical center of Christianity also began to move southward, however, due to growth in Latin America. Although first Roman Catholic missionaries (1500s) and later Anglicans and Protestants (1800s) made inroads into Africa and Asia, the resulting Christian communities were numerically small. In 1500, 1600, and 1700, western Europe still had more Christians than any other region. In 1800 and 1900 eastern Europe held this distinction, largely due to the growth of the Orthodox Church. But by 1900 Christians were located in significant numbers in most regions and no single region would have much impact on the trajectory.

Even so, by 1900 something profound was happening to the trajectory of global Christianity. In the early part of the twentieth century the line turned precipitously southwest. As Kenneth Scott Latourette's *Great Century* (1815-1914) was coming to a close, churches outside of Europe and the Americas that took root in the nineteenth century grew rapidly in the twentieth century. By around 1950, Christianity's statistical center of gravity crossed below 31.8° north latitude (where it started in Jerusalem) for the first time since the time of Christ. Africa, in particular, led this transformation, growing from only 10 million Christians in 1900 to 383 million by AD 2000. Given current trends, there could be over 700 million Christians in Africa by 2025.

By the twentieth century the move to the south accelerated greatly. From AD 1700 to 1800 the statistical center of gravity of Christianity did not move at all to the south. From AD 1800 to 1900 it moved only 3.9° to the south, but over the next 100 years it shifted to the south an astounding 19°. Over the same period, the center of gravity moved at its fastest average rate (32 km/year from 1900-1970, then 39.3 km/year from 1970 to AD 2000) of any time in Christian history.

## Christianity Shifts Back to the East and Continues South, AD 1970–AD 2100

Then around 1970, in an equally stunning development, the trajectory of the Christian center of gravity turned back east (still moving south) for the first time in almost 1,400 years. This was largely due to the rise of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa (south) and in Asia, particularly in China and India (east). Shortly after 1980, Christians in the South outnumbered those in the North for the first time in 1,000 years (see Figure 52.2). Nonetheless, according to Table 52.2, North America had more Christians than any other single region as recently as 1970.

Projections for the future show that the Christian churches of the global South (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania) will likely be home to an increasing share of global Christianity, causing the Christian center of gravity to continue to move southeastward. By 2100 the geographic center of Christianity is expected to be a full 34° of latitude south of its most northernmost point (around AD 1500), and 18.5° south of Jerusalem, where it began in AD 33. Table 52.2 shows that in AD 2100 Southern

Christians (2.8 billion) could be over three times as numerous as Northern Christians (775 million).

## 2,000 Years of North and South

Percentages for Christians living in the North and South for 22 dates, derived from Table 52.2 and presented in Table 52.1 in columns 7 and 8, are represented in graphic form in Figure 52.2. Christians were all Southerners (western Asians) at the time of Christ, gradually becoming more Northern until 1500 when fully 92% of all Christians were Northerners (Europeans). This percentage began to decline gradually until 1900, when it was 82%. After 1900 the Northern percentage declined precipitously while the Southern rose meteorically. By 2100 over three-fourths of all Christians will be living in the South. This represents a return to the demographic makeup of Christianity during the first century (predominantly Southern) but also depicts a vast extension of Christianity into all countries as well as into thousands of peoples, languages, and cultures.

## The 100-year View

A second view of global Christian demographics is the profound Southern shift in the past 100 years. In 1910 over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and North America. By 2010 this proportion had fallen to under 40% and will likely fall to 26% by 2050.

Table 52.3 lists the 10 countries with the most Christians in 1910 and 2010. In 1910 these were all Northern countries (except Brazil), whereas in 2010 only the

**Table 52.3** Countries with the most Christians, 1910 and 2010

		<b>Christians 1910</b>			<b>Christians 2010</b>
1	United States	84,800,000	United States		248,544,000
2	Russia	65,757,000	Brazil		177,304,000
3	Germany	45,755,000	Russia		116,147,000
4	France	40,895,000	Mexico		108,721,000
5	United Kingdom	39,298,000	China		106,485,000
6	Italy	35,219,000	Philippines		84,742,000
7	Ukraine	29,904,000	Nigeria		73,588,000
8	Poland	22,102,000	Congo DR		62,673,000
9	Brazil	21,576,000	Germany		57,617,000
10	Spain	20,354,000	India		57,265,000

Source: Data from *World Christian Database*, Brill, 2012.

United States, Russia, and Germany remain in the top 10. By 2050 the United States will likely be the only Northern country on the list (noting that large numbers of immigrant Southern Christians will be counted among the Christians in the United States).

Table 52.4 lists the 10 largest Christian mother tongues in 1910 and 2010. Northern languages predominated in 1910 (although Spanish and Portuguese represent Latin American Christians as well as European ones). In 2010 the 10 largest languages are from both the North and South. Spanish moved to the top of the list around 1980 as Latin America, already heavily Christian in 1910, had much higher birth rates than Northern America and Europe. Similarly, Portuguese moved to third due to high Christian birth rates in Brazil. Chinese and Tagalog are newcomers to the list, representing the growth of Christianity in Asia.

Table 52.5 also illustrates the Southern shift of global Christianity by highlighting the cultural traditions of Christianity. Europeans (78.3%, including Americans of European descent), in the vast majority 100 years ago, are now in the minority (32.9%). Africans (18%), Asians (13.9%), and Latin Americans (21.6%) are more typical representatives of Christianity than Northern Americans or Europeans. One can immediately spot the dramatic rise of Christianity in the South and the corresponding decline in the North.

Table 52.6 puts the shift in the context of 21 UN regions and 6 continental areas. Here one can easily compare Christian growth rates with population growth rates. It is apparent from this table that Christianity is outpacing population growth in most of the global South, while it lags behind population growth in the global North. One notable exception in the South is western Asia, the birthplace of Christianity, where emigration of Christians has led to a shrinking presence.

**Table 52.4** Ten largest Christian mother tongues, 1910 and 2010

		<b>Christians 1910</b>		<b>Christians 2010</b>
1	English	93,234,000	Spanish	367,792,000
2	Russian	67,930,000	English	252,944,000
3	Spanish	58,726,000	Portuguese	189,494,000
4	French	44,510,000	Russian	121,245,000
5	German	42,365,000	Chinese, Mandarin	89,548,000
6	Ukrainian	29,469,000	French	42,790,000
7	Portuguese	27,646,000	German, Standard	41,809,000
8	Polish	25,767,000	Polish	38,693,000
9	Italian	24,157,000	Ukrainian	35,494,000
10	Romanian	11,684,000	Tagalog	33,533,000

Source: Data from *World Christian Database*, Brill, 2012.

**Table 52.5** Christianity and cultures, 1910 and 2010

Cultural tradition (e.g.)	1910			2010		
	Population	% of world	% of all Christians	Population	% of world	% of all Christians
African (Bantu, Nilotic, Sudanic)	74,032,000	4.2	2,243,000	689,715,000	10.0	388,457,000
Afro-American (USA black, creole)	24,228,000	1.4	24,628,000	160,968,000	2.3	138,706,000
Asian (Chinese, Indo-Malay, Korean)	730,954,000	41.6	26,937,000	2,451,801,000	35.6	298,701,000
European (Caucasian, Germanic, Slav)	478,544,000	27.2	479,221,000	949,334,000	13.8	707,429,000
Indo-Iranian (Dravidian, Iranian, North Indian)	328,113,000	18.7	7,589,000	1,670,822,000	24.2	66,606,000
Latin American (Mestizo, Amerindian)	62,869,000	3.6	63,164,000	507,898,000	7.4	466,061,000
Middle Eastern (Arab, Berber, Ethiopic)	56,114,000	3.2	6,991,000	445,193,000	6.5	70,886,000
Oceanic (Fijian, Melanesian, Papuan)	2,774,000	0.2	1,037,000	20,158,000	0.3	16,446,000
<b>World population</b>	<b>1,757,628,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>611,810,000</b>	<b>6,895,889,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,153,292,000</b>

Source: Data from *World Christian Database*, Brill, 2012.



**Table 5.2.6** Christian growth by United Nations region compared with population growth, 1910–2010

	1910			2010			1910–2010 annual growth rates		
	Population	Christians	% Christian	Population	Christians	% Christian	Population	Christians	% Christian
Europe	427,044,000	403,546,000	94.5	738,199,000	579,959,000	78.6	0.55		0.36
Eastern Europe	178,184,000	159,695,000	89.6	294,771,000	247,549,000	84.0	0.50		0.44
Northern Europe	61,473,000	60,324,000	98.1	99,205,000	74,218,000	74.8	0.48		0.21
Southern Europe	76,828,000	74,391,000	96.8	155,171,000	127,817,000	82.4	0.71		0.54
Western Europe	110,558,000	109,136,000	98.7	189,052,000	130,375,000	69.0	0.54		0.18
Northern America	94,689,000	91,429,000	96.6	344,529,000	272,178,000	79.0	1.30		1.10
Africa	124,541,000	11,636,000	9.3	1,022,234,000	494,046,000	48.3	2.13		3.82
Eastern Africa	33,012,000	5,266,000	16.0	324,044,000	214,010,000	66.0	2.31		3.77
Middle Africa	19,445,000	207,000	1.1	126,689,000	104,579,000	82.5	1.89		6.42
Northern Africa	31,968,000	3,081,000	9.6	209,459,000	16,761,000	8.0	1.90		1.71
Southern Africa	6,819,000	2,526,000	37.0	57,780,000	47,598,000	82.4	2.16		2.98
Western Africa	33,296,000	557,000	1.7	304,261,000	111,098,000	36.5	2.24		5.44
Asia	1,026,693,000	25,086,000	2.4	4,164,252,000	342,958,000	8.2	1.41		2.65
Eastern Asia	554,135,000	2,251,000	0.4	1,573,970,000	127,831,000	8.1	1.05		4.12
South-central Asia	345,718,000	5,182,000	1.5	1,764,872,000	70,028,000	4.0	1.64		2.64
Southeastern Asia	93,859,000	10,124,000	10.8	593,415,000	130,924,000	22.1	1.86		2.59
Western Asia	32,982,000	7,529,000	22.8	231,995,000	14,175,000	6.1	1.97		0.63
Latin America	78,254,000	74,462,000	95.2	590,082,000	544,685,000	92.3	2.04		2.01
Caribbean	8,172,000	7,986,000	97.7	41,646,000	34,774,000	83.5	1.64		1.48
Central America	20,806,000	20,595,000	99.0	155,881,000	149,426,000	95.9	2.03		2.00
South America	49,276,000	45,881,000	93.1	392,555,000	360,486,000	91.8	2.10		2.08
Oceania	7,192,000	5,651,000	78.6	36,593,000	28,018,000	76.6	1.64		1.61
Australia–New Zealand	5,375,000	5,207,000	96.9	26,637,000	18,869,000	70.8	1.61		1.30
Melanesia	1,596,000	245,000	15.4	8,748,000	8,003,000	91.5	1.72		3.55
Micronesia	89,400	68,600	76.7	536,000	499,000	93.1	1.81		2.00
Polynesia	131,000	130,000	99.2	673,000	647,000	96.1	1.65		1.62
<b>Global total</b>	<b>1,758,412,000</b>	<b>611,810,000</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>6,895,889,000</b>	<b>2,261,844,000</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>1.38</b>		<b>1.32</b>

Source: data from *World Christian Database*, Brill, 2012.

## Features of the Present Southeastern Trajectory

What does it mean for the future of Christianity that its demographic center of gravity continues to move on a southeastern trajectory while the global South accounts for an increasing percentage of global Christianity? Three areas have been identified for brief consideration here: (1) theology, (2) translation, and (3) mission. Although over the past 40 years numerous authors have written about the southward shift of Christianity, tracking the trajectory of Christianity may shed new light on these areas.

## Theological Implications of the Trajectory

In recent centuries, the dominant theologies of Christianity have been written by Northern scholars, but the massive movements of Southern Christianity will likely chart the future of Christian theology. Throughout the history of the church, theological reflection has emerged along the Christian center of gravity's trajectory, from the Church Fathers in the earliest centuries to Europeans in the next 1000 years (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, and Russian Orthodox). Today, then, one would expect voices to emerge along the southeastern trajectory. However, one unique feature of Christian demographics today is the near total geographic spread of Christianity worldwide. Therefore one would anticipate contributions not only from near the center of gravity in Africa, but also from Southern Christians far from the trajectory such as Filipinos, Brazilians, and Chinese. Southern Christians can also position themselves on today's trajectory by interpreting and critiquing Northern Christianity's 1,000-year dominance (AD 950–1950) of the faith (see Figure 52.2). Furthermore, they can rediscover the theological, ecclesiastical, and missiological wealth of the first Christian millennium, when Southern Christians were in the majority and the center of gravity was in western Asia. Christians, North and South, are equally grounded in these early Christian achievements.

## Translation as a Central Feature

The rapid southern trajectory of Christianity since 1900 also suggests that the dominant languages of Christianity will shift from North to South. Already by 1980, Spanish (primarily in its Latin American forms) was the leading language of church membership in the world. But Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America worship in numerous other languages. Thus, translation of the Christian message has become increasingly important, since all peoples, languages, and cultures have a unique contribution to make to global Christianity. Northern scholars, no longer at the Christian center of gravity, will also have to recognize and seriously consider writings in non-English and non-European languages. Consequently, there is a great need for Christian scholarship in Southern languages to be translated into English, French, German, Italian, etc.

## Whom Shall We Send?

For 100 years the majority of Christian growth has been taking place not in the traditionally Christian countries of the North but in both non-Christian and newly Christian lands in the South. As a result, Muslims and Christians are in close proximity in countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The same is true of Hindus and Christians in India and of Buddhists and Christians in Southeast Asia. Some see inevitable conflict in the future, while others are more hopeful. Recent research has shown that the vast majority of non-Christians do not personally know Christians (*Atlas of Global Christianity*, Johnson and Ross 2009: 316). The trajectory has given Christians around the globe a new opportunity to show hospitality to non-Christian neighbors and to take a genuine interest in their religions and cultures. With the Christian center for gravity moving from Europe to the Southern hemisphere, Africa, Asia, and Latin America can no longer be seen as the periphery. Instead, as Samuel Escobar envisions it, the future is one in which “Christian mission to all parts of the globe will require resources from both the North and the South to be successful.”

Finally, it is important to remember that there are at least 4,000 cultures out of 13,000 (listed in *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Barrett *et al.* 2001) that have not yet been reached with the Christian gospel. Most are Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists who are found in the South. Who from the South (or North) will be presenting the gospel to these peoples? What cultural expectations are likely to be made for those who choose to follow Christ? Perhaps surprisingly for many Northerners (and Southerners?), there are encouraging signs that people from these great religious systems may not have to entirely leave their traditions to become Christians. Nonetheless, the frontier missions task still remains unfinished in the context of global Christianity’s southeastern trajectory.

## Features of World Christianity

In light of these interesting trends in world Christian demographics, one can ask the question, “What is world Christianity?” In describing the history of Christianity, Andrew Walls utilizes the tension between an indigenizing principle and a pilgrim principle. He acknowledges the fact that Christianity can and should go deep within each culture of the world but at the same time is never fully at home in any particular culture. The emphasis in the study of world Christianity to date has been almost exclusively on the indigenizing principle or “the particular.” Thus, compendiums on world or global Christianity contain case studies from different cultures around the world, emphasizing their differences from Western Christianity. Of course, it is vital to understand the trends that have left us with a “post-Christian West” and a “post-Western Christianity.” But some scholars go as far as defining “world Christianity” as “Christianity in the non-Western world.” There is also an increased use of the term “Christianities,” as in the recent *History of Christianity* volumes published by Cambridge University Press. In this context, it is critical to emphasize also the pilgrim principle or universal side of world Christianity.

Recent reflections on world culture, global culture, and globalization can help us to better understand the unifying or universal aspect of world Christianity. In particular, one can understand unifying forces while not diminishing cultural differences. Cultural globalization is a double process. On the one hand, it differentiates. On the other hand, differences play out within a common framework. Guided by global ideas and norms, Christians become more similar in the ways they identify themselves as different (e.g. African and Asians identifying themselves as non-Western). World Christianity helps us both to articulate and to bridge these differences.

A useful parallel can be found in world music. In his *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Philip Bohlman (2004) examines the inherent tension between what world music tells us about human diversity and what it tells us about human similarities. Neither tells the whole story. Bohlman tries to strike a balance in his description of world music by emphasizing difference as one feature and similarity as another. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma takes this a step further. He also recognizes the way in which world music is, at the same time, both local and universal. For him the next iteration of classical music posits Western and non-Western styles, as well as classical and vernacular traditions, on equal or near-equal footing. It mixes popular and folk music with Eastern and Western art-music structures, tonal and atonal. This music appeals to younger audiences whose iPods are loaded with an astonishing variety of sounds from past centuries and from any spot on the planet. He further utilizes the ecological concept of the “edge effect”: where two ecosystems meet one finds the least density but the greatest variety. Ma has actively promoted this effect in music by inviting musical strangers (from different cultures) to meet each other and to compose music together. Ma writes: “As we open up to each other, we form a bridge into unfamiliar traditions, banishing the fear that often accompanies change and dislocation. In other words, when we broaden our lens on the world, we better understand ourselves, our own lives and culture. We share more in common with the far reaches of our small planet than we realize.”

The dynamics in world Christianity are similar. There is enormous difference at the same time as clear similarity. This is even true in the larger categories of “North” and “South” that frame most discussions on world Christianity. In the North, French, American, and Russian Christians are very different from each other. In the South, Nigerian, Chinese, and Papua New Guinean Christians are profoundly dissimilar. And yet, Christians from all cultures are part of a global unified body of believers. When these differing forms of Christianity meet (especially in conferences and compendiums), an “edge effect” is apparent. Interaction between Christians adds an important dimension to world Christianity.

With this parallel to world music in mind, and borrowing language from the literature on global citizenship, it is possible to consider what world Christianity is not.

- World Christianity is not simply the sum of the thousands of local expressions of Christianity.
- World Christianity is not created by stirring old ideas into a melting pot; it represents something new over and above previously existing forms of Christianity.

- World Christianity is not a mosaic, since that metaphor conveys a picture of neatly juxtaposed and unchanging cultural forms of Christianity. Instead, differences are fluid and relative when they are caught up in ever-shifting global interactions.
- World Christianity is not an alien force suppressing difference; as long as global symbols are freely appropriated, they can be anyone's authentic Christian experience.
- World Christianity is not the opposite of diversity; rather, it harmonizes diversity. Far from hovering abstractly above the planet, world Christianity provides ideas and symbols, concepts and models that seep into daily life and thereby add a layer to a Christian's local experience.

Uniqueness and diversity are not lost in these metaphors. Piet Hein stated: "We are global citizens with tribal souls." The Christian parallel could be "we are global Christians with unique cultural locations." With that in mind, world or global Christianity might be defined as the interaction and sharing between local Christianities. More fully, world Christianity is a world-cultural fellowship comprising norms and knowledge shared across ethnic, linguistic, temporal, and political boundaries, practiced and extended by churches and parachurch organizations, enacted on particular occasions that generate global awareness, carried by the infrastructure of world society, spurred by market forces, driven by tension and contradiction, and expressed in the multiple ways particular Christian groups relate to universal ideals (adapted from Dower 2003).

Borrowing language from studies on world citizenship, one could state that world Christianity is:

- *Global*: the globe-spanning culture of Christians from all peoples.
- *Distinct*: growing alongside of, and in complex interaction with, the more particularistic Christianities of the world.
- *Complex*: encompassing different domains and containing tensions among its different components.
- *An entity*: a distinct and recognizable unified Christianity which is crystallizing as a phenomenon with its own content and structure.
- *Dynamic*: constructed and reconstructed; not a finished structure; open to new ideas, vulnerable to new conflicts, and subject to continual reinterpretation.
- *Significant*: not a veneer or a set of fairly abstract notions, but an internalized and externalized reality.

For Christians these ideas are not inventions of our current globalized world context. Augustine wrote in his *City of God*: "This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace." With the recent expansion of Christianity around the world, perhaps these ancient ideas have the potential to be more fully realized.

## Conclusion

The 2,000-year view of Christianity reveals a fascinating story of its demographic roots in Asia and Africa, its gradual move into Europe, and its recent return to the South. The 100-year view focuses on the twentieth-century shift of Christianity to the South. Christianity's great institutions and leaders have followed this trajectory. Therefore, the present southeastern trajectory of Christian demographics represents a new chapter in world Christianity. What is certain is that Christianity can no longer draw on a dominant Northern cultural, linguistic, or political framework for direction. Neither can the future be seen exclusively through the perspectives of Southern Christianity. World Christianity today is a phenomenon of global unity in the context of ever-increasing diversity. The unanswered question for Christians from both the North and South is how well they will respond to this new reality.

## Note

All demographic data provided in this essay are available in the *World Christian Database*, [www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org), Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Online, 2012.

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# Christianity in Europe and North America

## Decline, Transition, or Pluralization?

David Martin

### Historical Patterns

Religion is associated *with* empire and with resistance *to* empire. This encompasses the resistance of religion under the heel of a religious or secular oppressor all the way from Christian resistance in Europe to Islamic religious imperialism to Islamic resistance to European secular imperialism. In addition religion is either associated with, or resists, the Enlightenment(s), and copes with the rise of nationalism and the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Less than half a millennium ago Islam was more advanced than Christendom and once again advancing into Christendom, as far as Vienna. Over centuries the Ottoman Empire in Europe encountered what we would now call post-colonial resistance.

Between the seventeenth century and the twentieth the balance of power tipped the other way and European countries, some of which became explicitly secular or secularist, advanced into North Africa and the Middle East, and stimulated a post-colonial religious reaction. In the earlier centuries of this European counter-attack Christendom advanced into Iberia after nearly a millennium of Islamic imperial domination and then exported Catholic Christianity to Latin America, where it eventually stimulated another post-colonial reaction from 1820 on. In the nineteenth century Protestant England and Catholic (later secularist) France exported Christianity to Africa and Asia, stimulating a post-colonial reaction, above all in India and China.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century much of northern Europe accepted the Reformation, in three forms: one coextensive with the nation, another which created

voluntary bodies separate from the state, and yet another creating radical sects and utopian communities. This fragmentation heralded modern pluralism, inside a state church, outside in voluntary denominations, radical sects, and utopian communities. A highly personal piety emerged in Protestant northern Europe, but only achieved critical institutional expansions in Britain, in two waves, the Puritan Revolution and the Evangelical Revival, establishing a pattern of state church faced by religious voluntary bodies. This was exported to Britain's "first empire" in North America, where pluralism emerged *without* a state church, and then to its "second empire" in Canada, Australasia, and sub-Saharan Africa. In all these cases Protestantism worked in partial alliance with several moderate Enlightenments and also with nationalism.

In Catholic Europe the "Counter-Reformation" maintained a monopoly against fragmentation, resisted the Enlightenment, and even resisted nationalism, except where Catholicism was aligned with an oppressed national consciousness, as in Poland and Ireland. The struggle between the Enlightenment and Catholic Christianity, more particularly in France, was exported globally, often by the intelligentsia, to Belgium, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and Latin America. It was also exported to Turkey, and in the historicized form of Marxism to Russia and China, and then re-exported by Russia to eastern Europe post-1945. There it generated a "post-colonial" reaction, especially wherever Catholicism or Orthodoxy had historically been aligned with nationalism. The Enlightenment initially expanded with French, Austrian, Prussian, and Russian autocracy, but then with a French revolutionary and nationalist imperialism that sparked off German and Russian nationalism. These imperial expansions and post-colonial responses over half a millennium provide the essential background for Europe and North America today.

## Revolutions and Migrations

They also frame the Agrarian, Industrial and Post-Industrial Revolutions and associated migrations. The first migrations occurred over a whole millennium: successive "folk-wanderings" and invasions into the heart of Europe, some pagan and some Islamic. The movement then reversed. Islam retired towards the southern Mediterranean, towards the borders of Turkey, mainly by Russian pressure southward, but also Russian pressure eastward, till it sparked off post-colonial reactions in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Global migrations out of Europe occurred from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, propelled by a mixture of economic and political motives and the search by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish dissidents and refugees for "living room," above all in North America. Over time the pressure for conformity shifted from religion to nation, race and political ideology: Jewish populations were under pressure up to and beyond the European holocaust; ethnically Muslim populations were expelled from the new nations of southeastern Europe; ethnically Christian populations were expelled from the new nations of Turkey, North Africa, and the Middle East. In Greece, Turkey, and elsewhere ethno-religious homogeneity was reinforced.

In the post-industrial period, as European fertility drastically declined, Europe ceased exporting labor and started to import it, often from ex-imperial territories: Caribbean, African (and eastern European) Christians, and North African, Turkish, Middle



Eastern and Asian Muslims, as well as Hindus and Sikhs. Arab states did the same, so that proportions of Muslims in Europe and Christians in the Gulf edged to between 4% and 7%, and in parts of European cities, for example London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, Muslims edged towards 20%, generating political reactions all the way from Greece to the Netherlands. Emigrants to North America were mostly Christian, including those from the Middle East and Korea, though a sizable Indian middle-class diaspora also emerged. Hispanic migration and some West Indian and African migration substantially altered the character of the American "melting pot," giving a boost to the Democratic Party and casting the Republicans in the role of a party with disproportionate white and Evangelical support.

During the Industrial Revolution there had been immense migrations to the Americas, and from the countryside to the city, which in Europe led to some de-Christianization and political radicalization, notably in areas of working-class concentration and heavy industry. In North America however, the separation of church and state and religious fragmentation stimulated different denominations to adapt to all kinds of status group, while European migrants to the city protected their identity through their original European churches. In the earlier phases of industrialization in both Europe and North America the churches reinvented themselves as social capital, but whereas in the pluralistic conditions of North America they continued to provide social capital, in Europe and (later) Canada, they faltered, and with the rise of a new secular professionalism they lost their functions in education, welfare, communications and media. Western Europe became passively secular with the churches playing the role of residual service stations and residual welfare associations, and as clergy became dissociated from both old elites and new professions the churches engaged in intermittent political critique. Moreover the moral and gender revolution and the cultural relativism that began in the elite in the 1890s, spread down the social scale in the interwar period until it took off in the 1960s with the empowerment of youth, new media and affluence. It affected western Europe far more than American Christianity. In the immediate aftermath of World War II there was a stabilization of religion that in America maintained itself up to the end of the cold war, whereas Europe was more ambivalent about the confrontation of a Christian America with atheistic communism.

That confrontation ended in 1989 through economic and religious factors and the impetus of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The religious factor was integral to a "post-colonial" reaction in eastern Europe fueled by a historic ethno-religiosity, above all in Poland where a Polish Pope played a major role in association with Solidarity. There was a moment when from L'viv in the western Ukraine to Leipzig and Vilnius change emerged behind religious banners. Much depended on how religion was associated with nationality: positively in Poland, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, the western Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, and Armenia, confusedly in Albania, Bulgaria, the DDR, and Hungary, negatively in Czech Lands, Slovenia, Estonia and Latvia, where religion often signified German dominance and imposed secularism succeeded.

Confidence in the churches declined as post-Soviet nations stabilized and clergy sought power and influence or argued over assets. In Russia itself some observers have discerned a religious revival filling the vacuum left by communism, though others

point to enfeebled practice and a rather formal cultural identification associated with church–state collusion. Maybe Russia is a case of “collective religiosity”: embedded and diffuse folk practices received as a birthright inheritance. Collective religiosity extends beyond Russia to the whole Orthodox world and the Balkans generally. It contrasts with a more individualized and less embedded religion in the secularized plain of post-Protestant Northern Europe from Birmingham to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Berlin, and Tallinn.

## Differences and Contrasts

The contrast between the collective religion of southeastern Europe and the more individualized religion of northwestern Europe (Jakelc 2010) is not so unlike the contrast between the American south and northeast. In the American south the difference is played out in school and courthouse and signals different approaches to religion and nation, religion and state, religious symbols in public space, and religious competition. In Europe the tussle over symbols was played out in the Lautsi case before the European Court of Human Rights concerning crosses in Italian classrooms in which Italy gathered support from Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and the Greek Orthodox Church. Catholic and Orthodox cities and mountain areas are inscribed with religious artifacts whereas in Protestant cultures the presence of religion is more discreet and private. The argument in the early 2000s over whether the European constitution should include an *Invocatio Dei* broadly pitted some Catholic countries, like Poland, against Protestant countries, and against secular countries, like France.

There are parallel differences, between the Protestant north of Holland, Germany, and Switzerland and the Catholic south. Historically these differences have given rise to culture wars: the late nineteenth-century *Kulturkampf* in Germany causing considerable migration to the United States; political parties championing the interests of Catholic areas, most notably the German Center Party and (later) the Christian Social Union of Bavaria. In the same way there is a contrast of religious tonality between Alpine areas, sometimes with pilgrimage sites, and the more lowland, urban and secular areas, for example in Austria, notably Vienna, and Swiss cities like Zurich and Basel. Recent evidence suggests that Catholic areas have moved in the Protestant and secular direction, a shift reflected in an informal ecumenism, but Catholic areas, even quite small ones within countries, like Latvia, continue to be more practicing than Protestant ones.

Differences between center and periphery have also diminished with the penetration of metropolitan media, and social and geographical mobility, and this has sometimes meant a shift from religious to linguistic/cultural criteria, as in Wales. The shift from religious criteria to cultural criteria occurs from Wales in the far west to Albania in the Balkans. Wales and Scotland, and their own northwestern peripheries, are less marked by differences of religious practice and tonality than they were, and the same is true of Flanders, Brittany, Jutland, and the Basque country in Spain. Separatist movements are active in, for example, the Basque country, Catalonia, and Scotland, but the religious component is muted and implicit.

There are also historic regional differences, such as the relatively religious and religiously mixed area of Alsace-Moselle, and Italy south of Ancona, at one time the heartland of Christina Democratic party support, and on the other the anticlerical traditions of the ex-papal regions of Emilia-Romagna, once the heartland of Italian communism. The most religious areas of Europe lie at its island peripheries, like Cyprus and Malta. Malta has only relatively recently (2011) legalized divorce whereas Italy did so in the 1970s. Ireland remains an area of relatively high practice, but the rise of secular professional elites, especially in the media, has challenged the dominance of the clergy and exposed unsavory practices to the point where practice and clergy recruitment have both fallen very rapidly. The scandal over paedophilia and associated cover-ups affected the Roman Catholic Church in Europe and North America alike, and weakened its moral authority.

Ireland legalized divorce in 1995 but not abortion. Ulster just about maintains its Protestant majority and remains the most practicing area of the United Kingdom. The “troubles” that afflicted Ulster have mostly disappeared with the removal of anti-Catholic practices and the Good Friday Agreement providing for power sharing, though the province is still marked by the effective separation of populations in many areas, in particular parts of Belfast. Spain went through a similar process to Ireland in the aftermath of the Fascist Franco regime. Spanish law has been liberalized with surprising speed: it legalized gay marriage in 2006 ahead of the United Kingdom. Portugal legalized same-sex marriage in 2010 joining Scandinavia and the Netherlands.

In Europe explicit homophobia is largely confined to the East and the Balkans, though it is also a problem for conservative Christians and for churches with large constituencies in the “global South.” In the United States same sex marriage was first legalized in parts of the relatively secular northeast and west coast, before being legalized on a national basis by a US Supreme Court decision in 2015. In Europe and the United States alike the proportion of those approving of same sex marriage rises in all demographic categories. The culture clashes which in the United States focus on issues like the family, abortion and homosexuality, due to its large Evangelical population and small Muslim migration, in Europe focus more on issues related to the growing Muslim presence. These include: the Salman Rushdie affair in Britain over his purportedly blasphemous, anti-Islamic novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), and the strong reaction to the suggestion that English law might take account of Sharia, the wearing of female headdress in France, the presence of minarets in Switzerland, the rise of anti-Muslim politics in the Netherlands, and the offense to Muslim self-respect provided by the Danish cartoons of the prophet.

The strongest sense of religious difference emerges in sizable countries like Croatia, Serbia, Poland and Romania, many of them located in “bloodlands” where successive incorporations in Poland or Ukraine, Russia or Austria, has brought about chronic conflict and expulsions of populations. Historically Ukraine was a Russian periphery. In the Soviet era religion was unusually resilient in Ukraine, especially in its western region. The suppressed Uniate Catholics of western Ukraine were prominent in the movement for national independence and for links with the West, whereas people in the more Russian-speaking and eastern part of Ukraine had a stronger association with the Moscow Orthodox patriarch and were more ready to see themselves as the Russian Near-Abroad. Church politics are aligned with national and regional politics, including the Orthodox interest in regional geopolitics, for example Russian interest in Serbia and Cyprus.

Each European country and each associated religious confession has constituencies in North America, some of them with spatial concentrations: French Catholic Quebec and Louisiana; Hispanic California, New Mexico and Florida; the Evangelical and Texan South; the Lutheran German and Scandinavian midwest; and the concentrations of Greeks and Ukrainians in Chicago and central Canada, of Poles in Chicago, and of Irish and Italian Catholics in the cities of the eastern seaboard, like Boston and New York. Quebec is a vast territory, with about 45% of the total Canadian population that was historically defined by French-speaking Catholicism, but has in recent years been defined by cultural and linguistic criteria. Broadly in the United States the most religious areas are found in the states of the center with the northeastern seaboard and the western states relatively secular: Vermont in the northeast and Oregon in the northwest have relatively low religious practice.

## Secularization

It seems agreed that in Europe there was a relative religious stability after World War II that lasted to the mid-1960s. From then on there has been constant decline in institutional religion, attributed by some in part to changing female roles (Brown 2000) and by others straightforwardly to an inability religiously to socialize a new generation. The same period has seen a rise in “spirituality,” though debate continues about how far spirituality compensates for the decline in institutional religion or indeed whether spirituality is all that distinct from institutional religion even when people describe themselves as “spiritual and not religious” (Woodhead and Catto 2012). The decline can be illustrated by selected figures from the secular countries of northwestern Europe: France with a long tradition of *laïcité*, Belgium with a similar *laïque* tradition in Francophone areas but with a Flemish-French speaking divide, and the Netherlands which was a practicing society up to the 1960s with religion bound up in quite distinct Protestant and Catholic “pillars.” The pillars weakened and secularization followed, beginning with the Liberal Protestants, then the Catholics and finally the Orthodox Protestants (or “Re-Reformed”). The speed of secularization in the Netherlands was only paralleled in Quebec, the only society in North America that replicates Europe.

The French data show that in 1952 four in five of the population identified as Catholics and this stayed stable until the early 1970s when it fell consistently, until in 2009 the proportion was under two in three. This compares with the drop in those self-identifying as Christian in the UK from seven to six in ten between the censuses of 2001 and 2011 and in weekly church attendance from roughly 15% in 1952 to 6/7% in 2012. Mass attendance in France dropped from one in four in 1952 to one in seven in the late 1970s and to one in sixteen in the late 1980s with slight declines thereafter (IFOP 2009). The declines are towards no religion (28% in 2009), though Islam rose from 3% in 1987 to 5–6% two decades later. Among self-identified Catholics there was a skew towards the more elderly while among practicing Catholics there was a sharp skew towards the non-employed, females and the elderly. De-Christianization has not affected the geographical distribution of Catholics: strongest in the northeast and east on the German and Swiss borders, the west, and the Massif Central; weakest in the Paris

basin and some south-central areas. Politically, non-practicing Catholics have been somewhat to the right of the population as a whole while among practicing Catholics nearly 40% have identified with the centrist UMP compared with 25% of Catholics as a whole. Catholics have been firmly of the center and center right with few either on the extreme left or the extreme right.

In Belgium around half the population identify themselves as Catholics with some 6% identifying themselves as Muslim, about a quarter of whom live in Brussels. A surprising 4% was claimed by Evangelical and charismatic Protestants. Traditionally Catholicism provided a marker of Flemish identity but mass attendance in Flanders more than halved between 1998 and 2009: from 12.7% to 5.4% while in the country as a whole it dropped from 11% to 5%. If one takes the longer view, Sunday mass attendance was 42.9% in 1967, with baptisms 93.6%, while by the early twentieth century mass attendance was 5% and baptisms something over half the population. Roughly half the Belgian population describe themselves as “religious” and rather less than half believe in God. In other words in both France and Belgium about half the population identifies with Catholicism, and one in twenty are practicing Catholics, skewed to the older age groups.

In the Netherlands religious identification and practice have declined sharply, though faith is often discussed, in particular how to integrate or live beside several diverse Muslim communities. Secular tendencies first emerged in northern Protestant areas and then in Amsterdam. Without animus and without regret people stopped going to church. The Catholic Church experienced a period of theological afflatus in the 1960s which soon faded into disillusion and disengagement: the Catholic proportion of the population dropped from 40% to 25% and mass attendance to a little over 1% each week. Of those under thirty five 70% have no religious affiliation. Muslims comprise about 6%, and it is hypothesized that like Christians they experience more lax and individualized religious practice in the younger generations, though the social solidarity of a minority and a worldwide Islamic revival in which educated youth return “to the sources” clearly counter secularization in Muslim minority contexts, and not only in the Netherlands.

A study of belief in the Netherlands suggests that people still have conceptions related to religious worldviews but increasingly individualized (De Graaf and Te rotenhuis 2008). The Dutch are religious consumers. Some one in four retains belief in God and one in three professes belief in “a higher power.” There is a growing category of the “spiritually unaffiliated,” in particular among well-educated urban dwellers. Such people conceive of a transcendent dimension and seek a harmonious relation to the environment. Orthodox belief and belief in the supernatural have declined in tandem but the former has declined somewhat more than the latter. The same study throws doubt on the Inglehart/Norris thesis (2004) about the negative effect on religion of greater existential security. The decline of welfare exacerbated insecurity but secularization continued.

This overview of three highly secular societies focuses on different aspects. A final example, Lithuania, concentrates on history and culture to show how they assisted or retarded communist indoctrination. Among the three Baltic countries that were for some decades absorbed in the Soviet Union (and today retain Russian minorities),

Estonia ranks with the Czech Republic and the former DDR as the most secular country in Europe. In Estonia, Latvia and the Czech Republic religion is associated with German-speaking domination. In Estonia belief in God is confined to one in six. The traditionally dominant Lutheran Church affects roughly the same proportion and is even less vigorous than the Orthodox Church among the Russian minority. There was no overlap between nationalism and religion, whereas in Lithuania, as in Poland, they almost coincide. The Roman Catholic Church took the lead in Lithuanian resistance under the Soviets and was singled out for persecution. In Lithuania 80% adhere to Catholicism. One in two believes in God, with one in three believing in a higher power and only one in twelve without belief. About one-third of the population claims to attend church on religious holy days and another third at least once a month. Pilgrimages to holy sites are also popular, and crosses in public space are cherished as symbols of faith and nation, and protected as "non-material heritage." The massive difference between Estonia and Lithuania is *not* explained by differences in existential security following the Inglehart/Norris hypothesis, any more than is the difference between East Germany and either "West" Germany or Poland. The difference is historic and cultural and the history begins with the late fourteenth century forcible conversion of Lithuania to Catholicism. That is why some Lithuanians embrace paganism or nature religion as their own authentic religion. This trend also appears in Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Greece, and is analogous to North and South American interest in Native American spirituality.

When Russian pressure tried to replace Polish Catholic influence with Russian Orthodoxy it simultaneously stimulated Lithuanian self-consciousness and Catholicism. Discrimination against Lithuanian Catholics in secular employment stimulated the recruitment of talented priests from peasant families who challenged the growing influence of secular nationalism in the intelligentsia and promoted Catholic social justice and educational programs to rival the influence of socialism. These Catholic initiatives carried over into the new era of independence beginning in 1918 and Lithuanian Catholicism was further reinforced by resentment against the territorial claims of the new nation-state of Poland and ethnic hostility within Vilnius. Until 1926 political life was dominated by the Catholic Democratic Party: ethnic German Lutherans were tolerated and even the large Jewish community of 7% which made up 45% of the population of Vilnius. However, the new left wing government elected in 1926, though initially well disposed to the church, also sought to control it and in the 1930s treated the Christian Democratic Party as an arm of Catholicism. It therefore tried to reduce Catholic influence in education and offered support to minorities, including the Orthodox. Matters changed dramatically when Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940: clergy became targets of repression so that the German occupation that followed was experienced as temporary relief in spite of considerable tension. With the Soviet conquest in 1944 repression returned with a focus on atheist propaganda defining religion as an outmoded social formation, as well as on the control and suppression of the clergy and the creation of loyal priests. The church developed a fortress mentality it still retains, though gradually believers began to agitate for their human rights and a religious revival emerged under a conservative surface associated with a new Catholic intelligentsia which tried to combat increasing religious illiteracy and indifference and created an underground church with some social authority.

With independence in 1990 the church remained quite marginal. It was suspected by the reformed communists who gained power in 1992, and the prestige gained earlier fairly soon evaporated. People complained about the political ambitions of the church particularly when a right-of-center government was elected in 2008 with a socially conservative agenda and a strong Christian Democrat component. Especially among an urban middle class open to changes and responsive to the new media, particularly attitudes to the family and “deviant” minorities, the church is an ambiguous presence. The borders of the religious “field” lack definition and the church is a complacent monopoly facing quite modest religious competition; the small pagan movement, a mild interest in eastern religions and a vigorous neo-Pentecostal Word of Faith church. It remains a fact of history and the Christ’s Resurrection Church built in the inter-war period serves to memorialize nationhood and political independence (Alisauškiene and Schroeder 2012). This cameo evokes a historical period where the Catholic Church in Europe, especially in France, Belgium, Germany and Ireland, underwent a late nineteenth-century revival, mobilizing against liberalism and competing with the secular intelligentsia as the authentic voice of nations. Though it allied itself to conservative regimes before embracing Christian democracy post-1945, it also began to embrace issues of social justice. It suffered under both the Nazis and the Communists, and in recent years has become a rather ambiguous and conservative presence.

In the Evangelical world, broadly understood, there have been major changes over recent decades both in Europe and North America. Word of Faith churches such as one finds in Sweden, Lithuania and Hungary are just minor manifestations of a wider charismatic movement that affects the mainstream churches as well. In Britain, for example, there is a lively charismatic and Evangelical presence both within and outside the established bodies, and (as in the rest of Europe) these are very active among the Christian migrants from Africa and elsewhere. Pentecostalism lacks the impact it has in the two thirds world but has established a presence at the margins: a mega-church in Kiev for example, churches in southern Italy, Sicily, and Romania, and among the Gypsies of western and eastern Europe.

If we take European religion as a whole, religion is strongest in the south and east: the most religious countries are in order: Malta, Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Italy, Ireland, Croatia, Slovakia, Spain, and Lithuania. At the secular end there is a concentration towards the north and west: the Czech Republic, Sweden, Estonia, France, Denmark, Slovenia and Finland. Clearly the most secular area includes the whole of Scandinavia, the UK, and the countries of the northwest seaboard. The secular islands in Eastern Europe are explicable historically in terms of a negative relation between religion and nationality. Secular Slovenia and Bulgaria are not “existentially secure” or religious Poland and Romania “existentially insecure.” Nor are the differences between Spain and a more practicing Italy due to differences in security. Three in four Europeans identify themselves as Christian, one in two claims to believe in God, though that is declining and also lower in the younger age cohorts; and perhaps 15% are present in church on any given Sunday.

In the United States the proportion of those identifying themselves as Christian is roughly the same as in Europe, though the proportion has declined in both cases, but in the United States reported regular attendance is more than twice as high and

90% believe in God. The proportion of Catholics to Protestants is roughly reversed, though the historic Protestant dominance is declining with Catholic and non-Christian migration. Religious switching is very frequent and works to the disadvantage of Catholics, including migrants. The numbers of people with “no religion” have risen to between 15% and 20% (Pew Forum 2012). “Nones” are concentrated among young adults though analysis identifies them as non-attached rather than irreligious. The stigma attached to non-affiliation has weakened, and there is probably some response to “New Atheist” militancy among the large minority of them identifying as agnostic or atheist. Yet most “nones” believe in God and many pray and describe themselves as “spiritual.” (American belief has been described by sociologist Christian Smith as “moralistic therapeutic deism.”) White Evangelicals are strongly inclined to the Republican Party, whereas Catholics now split evenly, perhaps reflecting increasing numbers of Hispanic Catholic and their identification with the Democratic Party. Black Protestants strongly identify with the Democrats, as do Liberal Protestants and secular Americans.

In Canada three in four identify themselves as Christian, though migration has increased diversity, as it has in the United States. Regular attendance is lower than in the United States at perhaps 15–20%, and the proportion of Evangelicals is lower, as is polarization over religion. The middle states mirror the conservative religiosity of the American midwest, while British Columbia mirrors the slacker religiosity of the western US seaboard, with one in three unaffiliated. Overall one may say that the contrast between North America and western Europe remains evident, that Canada hovers between the American and the European model and that Eastern Europe retains a collectivist form of embedded religion contrasted with the passive and individualized secularity of northwestern Europe.

## Overview

Survey research continues apace (for example David Voas in the Religion in Numbers website, and the World Values Survey), but it needs to be embedded in historical/theoretical debates, for otherwise one misreads cultural meanings. Peter Berger was the pioneer of sensitive cultural readings in tandem with metrics, in particular the role of religion as a sacred social canopy, the emergence of the “homeless mind” and the secularizing effects of pluralism. Later he changed his mind about these effects in favor of de-secularization in the world at large, and European “exceptionalism.” David Martin initiated the critique of secularization in 1965. He also developed the first general theory of secularization, by summarizing broad empirical trends and their inflection by contrasting histories such as the difference between England and France with respect to the role of voluntary religious bodies in averting revolution and outright conflict over religion (1969; 1978). Some of the crucial background work was provided by the empirical studies of Gabriel LeBras (1955; 1956) and Fernand Boulard (1960) in France, and by Talcott Parsons on Christianity and social differentiation (1968). Martin’s work was taken forward by Grace Davie in a series of major interventions (2000, 2002), some of which related to Daniele Hervieu-Léger on religion and memory (1993). Bryan Wilson elaborated the standard model of secularization (1966). His work has



been taken forward by Steve Bruce (1996) who has also attacked the critique of secularization theory by Rodney Stark and his associates (Stark *et al.* 1987; Bruce 1999). Problems with the secularization thesis were raised in Philip Hammond's edited volume *The Sacred in a Secular Age* (1985), and again by José Casanova (1994). Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2004) have restated it in comparative research emphasizing the role of existential security in dampening religious fervor.

Key debates regarding religion in the public arena and its "privatization" have centered on José Casanova's reassertion of the public role of religion (1994) and on Jürgen Habermas's interest in a "postsecular" negotiation of the public role of religion (Calhoun *et al.* 2013). These debates can be set in the context of the work of Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age* (2007), reviewing the changes of the last half millennium towards "an immanent frame," of Robert Bellah tracing religious evolution over millennia (Bellah 2011) as well as the contemporary moral mentality of the United States (Bellah *et al.* 1986), of Robert Wuthnow on the resilience of American religion and its political role (Wuthnow, 1988) and of Robert Putnam on *Bowling Alone* (2000) – the erosion of religion as social capital. In Europe major analyses of the political role of religion are to be found in the work of José Casanova (1994), Arend Liphart (1999), Steve Bruce (2003), John Madeley (2003), and Stein Rokkan (1982, 1983, 1999). There have been summaries of the field by Dobbelaere (1981), Lechner (1991), Warner (1993), Keenan (2002), and Goldstein (2009), and overviews by Roberto Cipriani (2000), Christian Smith (2003), and Martin Riesebrod (2010).

Major disagreements continue over the role of the Protestant Ethic and the Reformation(s) (Fernandez-Armesto and Wilson 1996), the Enlightenment (Gay 1966; 1969; Clark 1994; Sorkin 2008), early modern religion (Laslett 1965; Thomas 1971; Duffy 1992; Collinson 2003; MacCulloch 2003), the Industrial Revolution and thereafter (MacLeod 2000; Blaschke 2002), religion in Britain as the first industrial nation (Gilbert 1976; Brown 2001; Green, 2012; Woodhead and Catto 2012), and religion in America as the first new nation (Lipset 1963; Marty 1970; Butler 1990; Bloom 1992; Noll 1992; Hempton 2005). Jonathan Clark has elaborated an historical critique of secularization (Clark 2012). Key concepts are civil religion (Hammond 1985), culture wars, spirituality, "new religious movements" and cults (Barker 1984), along with the issue of "European exceptionalism" and "believing without belonging," the destabilization of the binary concept of religious-secular (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and Van Antwerpen 2011), the watershed of the 1960s (MacLeod 2007), fundamentalism (Marty and Appleby 1991; Bruce 2008), and charismatic/pentecostal Christianity (Martin 2002; Hefner 2013).

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## Note

- 1 The index to this volume was prepared by Joshua Schendel, currently a PhD student in the Department of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University (St. Louis, Missouri, USA).