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Creating a Christian faith-based approach to anthropology, incorporating insights from theology into ethnography and analysis, and allowing religiously committed anthropologists to speak freely of the ways in which their commitments inform their theory and practice. Raising new questions and lines of research on subjects such as: the significance of humanity's unique calling in nature for personhood and the construction of culture; the underlying reasons for humanity's destructive behavior toward self, others, and the environment; and the role that divine redemption and hope play in human lived experience and practice. Reincorporating teleology, in the sense of purpose, into scientific understanding, inviting dialogue between Christian anthropologists and anthropologists of all persuasions around a deeper understanding of the human condition, and encouraging the doing of anthropological research and writing through the eyes of faith.

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British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century

Timothy Larsen

Since 1980 there has been an open discussion on the hostility that anthropologists typically have for missionaries. A consensus in this conversation has been that anthropologists dislike missionaries because they are engaged in cultural imperialism. This article, however, explores another hidden factor: the professionalization aspirations of those self-identifying with anthropology as a discipline which created a strong desire to eliminate missionaries as potential rivals. Missionaries indisputably acquired a deep knowledge of indigenous languages and cultures which made it all the more important to dismiss them as biased amateurs lest they should be accepted as competing experts. This dynamic is documented and explored across the twentieth century in the context of British social anthropologists. One particularly telling example is evolving critiques of missionaries in regards to fieldwork as the practice of anthropologists themselves changed in this regard from armchair anthropology, through survey work, to intensive participant observation.[1]

The hostility that anthropologists typically have for missionaries has been a matter of much public discussion in the discipline ever since 1980. In that year, *Current Anthropology* published a landmark article by Claude E. Stipe, "Anthropologists Versus Missionaries" (1980). The journal arranged for anthropologists from a range of countries around the world (including Britain) to respond, and all eighteen commentators agreed with Stipe that anthropologists were generally antagonistic to missionaries. The subsequent literature has continued to affirm the accuracy of this observation. To take just one example, a few years later a volume published by the Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary, went so far as to claim that "the hostility of anthropologists toward missionaries" not only unquestionably existed, but "seems to be on the rise" (Whiteman 1983, 2). A British contribution to this conversation was a special issue in 1992 of the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*. In its introduction, the guest editor, W. S. F. Pickering, observed that anthropologists have "a sort of love-hate relationship" with missionaries in which while they are grateful while in the field for the help and hospitality they receive from missionaries, "the latent 'hate' element began to appear" when they returned home and started lecturing and writing (Pickering 1992, 101).

There has even been a general consensus in this literature as to why anthropologists have this antipathy: it is because they believe that missionaries are engaged in cultural imperialism. The related charge of ethnocentrism is also standardly made, but I see it as a subset of the cultural imperialist critique: one might almost say that cultural imperialism is ethnocentrism in action, impinging negatively on others. The archetypal expression of this point of view was a collection of essays edited by Søren Hvalkof and Peter Aaby, *Is God An American? An Anthropological Perspective on the Missionary Work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics* (1981). As tendentious as the title is, it was nevertheless a coyer version of the essay in it by Bernard Arcand, "God is an American." Bernard's PhD in Social Anthropology was awarded in 1972 by the University of Cambridge. While the cultural imperialism charge was, of course, thoroughly leveled, the contributors seemed to feel that even it was not sufficient to generate the desired level of repugnance, and thus they hinted darkly that American missionaries might be working with the Central Intelligence Agency and thus were also agents of straightforward political imperialism. While these accusatory anthropologists did not have any evidence to support this charge, the editors helpfully reminded their readers that secrecy is stock-and-trade for the CIA and therefore one should expect such connections to be "difficult to prove" (1981, 183).

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[1] This article was originally published in *Anthropos* 111.2016, 593-601.

As the debate unfolded, one corrective to this critique of missionaries was to point out that anthropologists, for most of the history of their discipline, had actively colluded with colonialism and imperialism. Indeed, in a British context (which is the focus of this article), anthropologists successfully marketed themselves during the first half of the twentieth century as possessing an expertise which was essential for the proper training of colonial officers.[2] In 1970, for example, E. E. Evans-Pritchard observed that a strategically directed stream that had steadily brought students to Oxford to study anthropology for decades had now dried up: "In the past we had much to do with the teaching of Cadets and Officers in the Sudan and Colonial Services" (1970, 108). A few years later, Talal Asad's landmark edited volume, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973), helped to launch a period of confession and remorse regarding anthropology's complicity in colonialism (amidst also recurring attempts to explain matters more sympathetically by some of those who had been involved or had been mentored by those who were).

Likewise, the social evolutionism of James Frazer and others in the early decades of the twentieth century was based on the deeply ethnocentric assumption that Africans, for example, were "savages" who had not yet progressed to be "civilized" like Britons and therefore were in some ways still like children. Bronislaw Malinowski replaced social evolutionism with functionalism but as he would refer to the Trobriand islanders as "niggers" and observed that he saw "the life of the natives" as "something as remote from me as the life of a dog," he can hardly be credited with freeing the discipline from ethnocentrism (1967, 167). There is no need to pile on evidence of British social anthropology's shortcomings in the past in terms of either colonialism or ethnocentrism as they have been well rehearsed before. The reply in the context of the condemnation of missionaries, however, was often that anthropology *now* had its own house in order, but no such reform was ever possible for Christian missions: "Missionization is 'essentially' and 'intrinsically' unjustifiable ethnocentrism, nationalism, and exploitation. Mission action must, therefore, be regarded as a form of 'colonialism,' 'imperialism,' and even 'ethnocide' and 'genocide'" (Whiteman 1983, 7f.).[3]

Missionaries and their defenders have rejected such assertions but, for the purposes at hand, what needs to be highlighted is that the hostility toward missionaries is much older than the primary reason that has been given for it in this open discussion that began in 1980. In other words, even back when anthropologists were often themselves ethnocentric imperialists they still typically disliked missionaries. Malinowski vented his own "hatred of missionaries" and fantasized about launching an "anti-mission campaign," and then went on to a career in which he aggressively and systematically forging links between the Colonial Office and the discipline of anthropology (1967, 31, 41). Lucy Mair, who was a student of Malinowski's in the late 1920s and early 1930s—and who survived to join the debate in 1980—was one of the most unsympathetic to the case of the missionaries of all the respondents to Stipe's gripe. She argued that "the anthropologists of my day" were right to protest against these Christian workers because they were agents of "unwanted changes" (Stipe 1980, 171). It is hard to know what to make of such a critique coming from someone who, after the period in which she recollects holding such a view, then went on to a career in which her faculty position was in Colonial Administration. In short, the fact that the antipathy toward missionaries is older than the reason given for it invites us to look for an additional explanation.

For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century anthropologists needed missionaries in numerous ways. In the field, they were almost invariably dependent on them for a wide variety of practical support ranging from transportation to linguistic expertise. In their research, writing, and lecturing, they could not avoid relying on the work of missionary ethnographers.[4] In various vital contexts such as the

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[2] For the wider issue of British social anthropologists and the Christian faith, see Larsen (2014).

[3] In this quotation, Whiteman is offering a composite summary of what is asserted in many sources.

[4] For a source by a historian that is careful to document this debt, see Stocking (1983). For a generous acknowledgment of it by anthropologists, see Plotnicov, Brown, and Sutlive (2007).

International African Institute collaborating harmoniously with missionaries could result in opportunities and funding for oneself and one's postgraduate students. It also did not do gratuitously to insult missionaries in one's lectures and books because they were a natural constituency to populate the former and to buy the latter. Indeed, along with serving the Colonial Office, anthropologists routinely argued that their discipline should be expanded at the universities because it met the practical need of providing useful training for missionaries (for an early example, see Read 1906). Anthropologists actively schemed for the entire first half of the twentieth century to increase enrollment in their courses by targeting those already in, or preparing for, Christian missions.

The result of all these desires and dependencies was that overt hostility was not expressed publicly. Malinowski's candid comments come from his diary which was published posthumously in the changed context of 1967. His public face at the height of his career, on the other hand, included an address to a monthly Methodist missionary lunch in London during which he was the one doing the proselytizing: "Those responsible should see to it that the missionaries they send out have some anthropological training, thereby following the example of an enlightened Colonial Office" (*Methodist Recorder* 1930). To take just one more random example of a very widespread phenomenon, the obituary in *Man* for A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (which was written by Meyer Fortes) credited the Oxford professor with emphasizing "the utility of anthropological studies" for missionaries (Fortes 1956, 150). One of the most frank statements of the antipathy was made by the anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker who studied with Malinowski in the mid-1920s and recalled of the conventional wisdom of that time period: "Missionaries were the enemy" (1966, 43). Once again, the point is that this was something that anthropologists then said amongst themselves in private which she was now revealing in print in the very different context of 1966.

Rather than concerns regarding cultural imperialism providing a full and sufficient explanation, the thesis of this article is that much of the antipathy toward missionaries in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century and sometimes beyond can be attributed to the professionalization goals of anthropologists. Frank M. Turner, who was John Hay Whitney Professor of History at Yale University, argued persuasively that the notion of a conflict between theology and science was generated as part of a campaign of professionalization by would-be scientists (1993, 171-200). In the mid-nineteenth century there was no such profession. Charles Babbage, the brilliant mathematical thinker who first conceived the programmable computer, observed in 1851: "Science in England is not a profession: its cultivators are scarcely recognized even as a class. Our language itself contains no *single* term by which their occupation can be expressed" (Turner 1993, 177). In other words, this was before there were "scientists." Instead, there were only "men of science," a term, like its counterpart, "men of letters," that referred more to the leisure pursuits of gentlemen than to what someone did for a living.

Until several decades into the nineteenth century, there were only two universities in England, Oxford and Cambridge. Both saw Classics as the rightful core of a university curriculum and therefore had few faculty positions in the natural sciences. Moreover, in order to hold a position at these universities one would need to be ordained in the Church of England and thus be also a clergyman (Engel 1983). The same would have been true of schools for children and youths. There were no state schools until 1870, and therefore, most schools, especially the elite ones such as Eton, Harrow, and Rugby, had an explicitly Anglican identity. Indeed, being a priest in the Church of England was widely seen as the most sensible way to make a living for someone who had scholarly interests he wished to pursue. The Christian ministry was a learned profession that often allowed one considerable time to invest in intellectual pursuits of one's own choosing. Therefore, most scientific work in England was being done by clergymen. Moreover, much of it was remarkably good work. Not only were many of the nation's greatest men of science also clergymen, but numerous more obscure clergymen up and down the country were carefully, patiently, and accurately cataloguing the natural world and discovering its secrets.

One can see how this would be very annoying to someone such as T. H. Huxley who wanted to be a man of science himself but, not least because of his agnostic views, was unable to make a living either as an Oxbridge professor or as a clergyman (Desmond

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1998).[5] In fact, as celebrated as Huxley was, his career was not as a university professor or some other such position that we would assume to be a fitting one today for a scientist of his reputation. Rather, he was fortunate to make a living by lecturing at the Government School of Mines, and even this opportunity would not have been available earlier in the century. Huxley and others who aspired to turn scientific pursuits into a profession therefore had a vested interest in presenting religion as fundamentally in opposition to science. The purpose of the warfare model was to discredit clergymen as suitable figures to undertake scientific work in order that the new breed of professionals would have an opportunity to fill in the gap for such work created by eliminating the current men of science. Clergymen were branded amateurs in order to facilitate the creation of a new category of professionals and then they were branded as biased or anti-science so as to exclude them from becoming competitors in this new profession. Francis Galton's *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* (1874) illustrates this point. Galton was also trying to generate a perception of inherent conflict. His research for the book included sending out questionnaires to men of science. To his disappointment, the overwhelming majority reported that religious beliefs were in no way a hindrance to scientific work. In an ironically unscientific way, he decided to ignore these results and simply to assert in his book that religious convictions were "uncongenial" to the pursuit of science, despite the fact that his own data which he had collected specifically in order to make it did not support that conclusion (Turner 1993, 185).

In a directly parallel way, anthropologists were faced with the problem that many missionaries seemed to have already acquired the expertise that they were claiming was distinctively their own contribution. Worse, missionaries often apparently had a much deeper and fuller knowledge of indigenous languages and cultures than anthropologists. As the new breed of professional scientists had done with the ordained men of science, it therefore became highly desirable to attempt to discredit the missionaries-ethnographers as biased amateurs.

Generation after generation, however, it was impossible to deny that some of the best anthropological studies had been done by missionaries. Therefore, a kind of "present company excepted" rhetoric was developed in which anthropologists were carefully taught to label any missionary whose work they were using positively as a curious anomaly, while simultaneously insisting that missionaries as a class were incapable of doing good ethnographic work. This approach was there from the beginning of the discipline back in the Victorian age. E. B. Tylor is generally identified as the founder of the discipline of anthropology in Britain. His seminal classic *Primitive Culture* is cluttered with approving citations of the works of scores of missionaries in order to provide the bulk of the evidence for his statements. Nevertheless, Tylor insisted that while "some missionaries" do really understanding "savages," "for the most part" they have a "hating and despising" attitude which blinds them from comprehending, whilst anthropologists, in marked contrast, are able to discern indigenous cultures accurately (Tylor 1874/I, 420f). Likewise, in a Royal Geographical Society publication, Tylor pointedly contrasted the "unfavourable" perspective of the missionary with the clear-sighted anthropologist (1883, 240).

This pattern was continued with J. G. Frazer. His anthropological writings were also overwhelmingly dependent on missionary sources—not only published ones but also through his soliciting information from them directly. If this work by missionaries was not sound, then Frazer's own scholarship would be *ipso facto* fundamentally compromised. Frazer was willing not only to lean on missionary anthropology, but to laud it. Nevertheless, if the ethnographic work of a missionary happened to get in the way of a pet theory of his, then suddenly Frazer was quick to dismiss it on the very grounds that it came from a missionary and thus was not to be trusted. Thus when Frazer and his allies disagreed with an ethnographical judgment by Carl Strehlow they rushed to pronounce that it was because his profession proved that he could not be relied upon: "the differences between us are due to the fact that Strehlow is a missionary" (Spencer 1932, 110)[6] (This accusation of bias was itself so unfair that R.

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[5] Huxley served as the president of the Ethnological Society and helped to bring about its merger with the (later Royal) Anthropological Institute, so the connections with anthropology are direct as well.

[6] Baldwin Spencer to James Frazer, 10 March 1908.

Angus Downie [1970, 45]—a personal disciple so fervent that he even named his daughter Frazer—had to concede in his thoroughly sympathetic study of his master that anthropologists have since determined beyond dispute that Strehlow was right in this dispute). Likewise, the anthropological work of the Anglican missionary to the Ainu people of Japan, John Batchelor, endured the test of time. In 1959, for example, an article in the Royal Anthropological Institute's *Man* declared it to be "still the outstanding ethnographic study of that area" (Rosenstiel 1959, 109). Nevertheless, when Batchelor's evidence did not support a hypothesis cherished by the author of *The Golden Bough*, Frazer was quite willing to assert that the fact that Batchelor was a missionary should undermine one's confidence in the reliability of his ethnography. Frazer's own gullibility in this clash of views now makes for rather risible reading:

> Mr. Batchelor denies that bear-cubs are suckled by the women. He says: 'During five years' sojourn amongst, and almost daily intercourse with, them—living with them in their own huts—I have never once witnessed anything of the sort, nor can I find a single Ainu man or women who has seen it done'. But as a Christian missionary Mr. Batchelor was perhaps not likely to hear of such a custom, if it existed. (Frazer 1900/II, 376f.)

This mode of attack could even be made through degrees of separation. Andrew Lang, for example (again, on a point where he would be vindicated by subsequent anthropology), although he was not a missionary, nevertheless had his ideas dismissed with the slur that he had probably been influenced by missionaries (Marrett 1912).

No matter how respected a missionary was as an anthropologist, in the heat of a disagreement his anthropologist opponent would always be apt to claim that the very fact he was a missionary was *ipso facto* evidence that he was probably wrong.[7] This was the case for Wilhelm Schmidt, for example, when he dared to disagree with A. R. Brown (later Radcliffe-Brown). Despite Schmidt's high reputation in the discipline, and his even being the founder of the journal *Anthropos*, Brown was quick to assert that "his arguments are rendered suspect from the beginning" because his mind is tainted by "preconceived opinions," whereas Brown himself (in his own self-reporting) was a true anthropologist who followed the "scientific method" of "seeking truth with an open mind" (1910). Schmidt responded by observing how touchingly naïve it was of Brown to imagine that non-religious thinkers have no biases and by pointing out that Brown had actually set out on his fieldwork with the very purpose of discovering evidence for a pre-formed theory of his which—surprise, surprise—he convinced himself he did find and now he would not let go of his preconceived opinion despite the fact that those who had been in the field much longer rejected it (Pels 1990; Schmidt 1910).[8] (Once again, subsequent anthropology has confirmed the correctness of Schmidt's side in this dispute.) Malinowski was particularly good at discrediting the work of missionaries as a class. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, for example, he asserted that "for the most part" they were full of "biassed and pre-judged opinions," in contrast to anthropologists, who are committed to "the objective, scientific view." He then saved for a footnote the "present company excluded" disclaimer regarding "a few delightful exceptions" (1922, 5f.).

Although it will not be belaboured in this article, one clear, related factor in anthropologists' dislike of missionaries was the more straightforward rivalry of the hunt. For most of the twentieth century, both Christian missionaries and anthropologists dreamt of being the first to encounter what in missionary parlance was called an "unreached people group." [9] Alas, the missionaries virtually always won these races and thus anthropologists were perpetually annoyed with them for contaminating what would have otherwise been a pure, scientific sample of "primitive" culture. Malinowski explained to the supporters of Methodist missions that they needed to understand that, from the point of view of his profession, "the missionary was spoiling the game for the anthropologist" (1930). From the late 1960s onward, anthropologists often tried to reduce such continued loses by proclaiming that it was a matter of high principle and ethical duty that everyone (I'm talking to you, missionaries) follow Star Trek's Prime Directive in which introducing anything into a society which might deflect or accelerate its course of development is forbidden (while sometimes also being seemingly willfully naïve about how much change was brought about in a previously "unreached people group" by the very event of having a western anthropologist come to live with them).

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[7] I have discovered no examples of such clashes in which the missionary was a woman and thus I have used male pronouns to preserve the fact that we are discussing how particular individuals are treated.

[8] I am glad to acknowledge here more generally that Pels' excellent chapter is one of the existing pieces of scholarship most in accord with some of the key arguments being made in this article.

[9] This is another example of a counter-theme that has developed of emphasizing how similar to each other anthropologists and missionaries are: see, most notably, Van Der Geest (1990). A desire to at least pretend that they had the field to themselves helps to explain why twentieth-century British social anthropologists often left the missionaries that were there already out of their ethnographies: Van Der Geest and Kirby (1992).

The professionalization aspect of the antipathy of anthropologists toward missionaries is strikingly illustrated by changing judgments about fieldwork. James Frazer's approach was a carefully policed division of labour in which missionaries in the field were merely collectors of data.[10] A true anthropologist, however, was someone who developed grand interpretations and this, the author of *The Golden Bough* insisted, could not be done from the field. Anthropological theory must be based on the comparative method and a missionary fieldworker was stuck in one, remote place, whilst an armchair anthropologist in Britain was at the centre of empire with reports for around the globe pouring in for him to analyze and synthesize. Frazer's main source for Africa was the Anglican missionary to Uganda Canon John Roscoe. In an obituary tribute to Roscoe, Frazer praised him both for being unrivalled as a "field anthropologist" and for not having the presumption to attempt to explain his evidence with any theoretical statements (1935, 77). (This tribute, alas, makes someone who was actually an astute and pioneering ethnographer sound rather like he was Frazer's errand boy.) In his correspondence with obliging and generous fieldworkers, Frazer tried hard to keep them in their place as humble chroniclers: "What we want in such books . . . is a clear and precise statement of facts (as far as they have been ascertained) concerning the particular people described—that and nothing else" (Spencer 1932, 23).[11] The "we", of course, is not the general reading public, but rather the self-styled professional anthropologists who wanted raw data for writing their own theoretical books and not rival claimants to their status.

After the armchair phase came the survey phase in which anthropologists would land in a region for a few days and interview locals through an interpreter (often famously travelling on a missions ship and conducting their interviews on the veranda of a missionary's house). In 1910, W. H. R. Rivers insisted that missionary ethnographic efforts were "amateur" ones that were probably inaccurate. Even though they knew the local language and people thoroughly, Rivers himself had developed a Gnostic technique ('the genealogical method') that meant he could discover better anthropological evidence in a fly-by visit than the missionaries could who had been in the field for decades. To feel the full chutzpah of this boast, it is worth quoting Rivers at length:

> From this point of view the method is more particularly useful to those who, like myself, are only able to visit savage or barbarous peoples for comparatively short times, times wholly insufficient to acquire that degree of mastery over the native language to enable it to be used as the instrument of intercourse. . . . By means of the genealogical method it is possible, with no knowledge of the language and with very inferior interpreters, to work out with the utmost accuracy systems of kinship so complicated that Europeans who have spent their whole lives among the people have never been able to grasp them. It is not an exaggeration to say that in such a matter as this or in that of the regulation of marriage, it is possible by this method to obtain more definite and exact knowledge than is possible without it to a man who has lived for many years among the people and has obtained as full a knowledge as is ever acquired by a European of the language of a savage or barbarous people. (1910, 9f.)[12]

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[10] An astute source that also makes this point and which, in general, is attentive to issues of professionalization is Harries (2005).

[11] J. G. Frazer to Baldwin Spencer, 26 August 1898.

[12] As to ethnocentrism, a recurring figure in this article is an informant whose name was Kurka, but whom Rivers refers to throughout as "Arthur."

In short, Rivers convinced himself that although he did not have extensive experience in the field and the missionaries did, his magical method made him a professional but not them.

The next phase, of course, was the adoption as best practice of what the missionaries had been doing all along: fieldwork in which one stayed among one people for a year or more, learning their language and ways. The need to find a way to explain why missionaries were disqualified from being true anthropologists still remained however. During this new phase, a particularly brazen attempt was made by John Mavrogordato, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, in his presidential address to the Oxford University Anthropological Society in 1943 which was subsequently published in *Man*. Mavrogordato argued that missionaries were not clear-sighted ethnographers precisely because they stayed in the field too long: "We all see what we expect to see; and such misinterpretation may arise either through the shortness of the traveller's visit, or through the length of his residence, which may lead, as in the case of some missionaries, to stubborn and preconceived opinions" (1943, 129). (Part of the genius of this critique is to tie what would appear to be an advantage that missionaries have—length of time in the field—with the old trope that they are uniquely tainted by "preconceived opinions.") Echoing Rivers' approach from the survey stage in this new era of participant observation, Isaac Schapera reassured anthropologists coming to Africa in the 1950s that they need not be intimated by missionaries who seemed "to know all about the culture of the natives" because one could always expose them as amateurs due to their lack of initiation into the Gnostic rites of structuralist kinship studies (Schumaker 2001, 241).[13]

The professionalization thesis helps to explain the "love-hate" nature of the attitude of anthropologists to missionaries. If a principled objection to Christian missions (as, for example, that it is inherently cultural imperialism) was a complete explanation, it would not seem to explain sufficiently the "love" element. What one sees throughout the twentieth century is British social anthropologists who were quite willing to express publicly their affection for particular missionaries who were not in danger of becoming their rivals but were rather content to play subservient roles as their informants, students, or admirers. This has already been illustrated in the case of Frazer with Canon Roscoe. Perhaps most symbolically—not to mention spectacularly—this was even true in the relationship between the LMS missionary William Saville and Malinowski. Saville was the very person who occasioned Malinowski's famous "hatred of missionaries" outburst. This, however, seems to have been largely a defensive reaction to the fact that Saville had the expertise (not least linguistic) that Malinowski lacked. When Saville later actually came to the London School of Economics and attended his seminar—thus demonstrating that Malinowski was the expert—then the professional anthropologist suddenly developed fond feelings for him, and was even happy to praise him as "a modern type of missionary who has been able to fashion himself into an anthropologist" (Young 2004, 332).

The exception that proves the rule is therefore the British missionary-anthropologist Edwin W. Smith (1876-1957). Smith was a Primitive Methodist missionary in what is now Zambia before returning to Europe (and eventually England) to work for the rest of his career for the British and Foreign Bible Society. The main scholar who has attended to Smith's life and work, W. John Young, has observed that he "identified himself as a missionary throughout his adult life" (2013, 245). Nevertheless, Smith was extraordinarily successful and honoured as an anthropologist. His ethnographic monograph, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (1920), was admired immediately—and its high reputation endured.[14] The review in *Man* prophesied correctly that it was "a work which must take rank with the classics of anthropology" (Wener 1921, 125). In 1933, the anthropologist (and religious sceptic) A. C. Haddon (1933, 54) identified it as one of the three great monographs on an African tribe (tellingly, the other two were both written by missionaries as well, John Roscoe and H. A. Junod). In 1949, Max Gluckman (another anthropologist who was also an agnostic) acknowledged that *The Illa-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* had "founded modern anthropological research in British Central Africa" (Colson and Gluckman 1951, ix). As late as 1966, the anthropologist Elizabeth Colson (1968, 1) testified that it had stood the test of time: "*The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* is one of the great classics of African ethnography. This has been recognized since it first appeared in 1920 and the years have not diminished its reputation."

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[13] Schumaker's work focuses on the related effort to keep colonial administrators who did ethnographic work from being accepted as true anthropologists.

[14] Smith generously shared the authorship credit with Andrew Murray Dale, even though it was overwhelmingly his work.

Smith became a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1909.[15] He served on its council in 1927-30, was awarded its Rivers medal in 1931, served on the council again 1932-33, and gave its Henry Myers Lecture in 1952. Most of all, he was elected president of the Royal Anthropological Institute for the years 1933-35, the only missionary ever to be so honoured. In 1926, Smith helped to found what would become the International Africa Institute and he served as a founding council member. He was awarded the Silver medal of the Royal African Society and became the editor of its journal, *Africa* (he was succeeded by Daryll Forde). He gave the Frazer lecture at the University of Liverpool. One emblematic example of the Revd Edwin W. Smith as an anthropologist amongst anthropologists is his inclusion in the festschrift for C. G. Seligman. This volume was edited by no less august a cast than E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Raymond Firth, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Isaac Schapera, and its other contributors included A. C. Haddon, Robert H. Lowie, R. R. Marett, and Audrey I. Richards (Evans-Pritchard e al. 1934).

Nevertheless, Smith's remarkable favour within the discipline was undoubtedly aided by his careful, lifelong efforts to reassure anthropologists that he was in no sense a professional rival. In the preface to *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, Smith and Dale demurely wrote, "While not professing to be scientifically trained anthropologists, we have written with such experts in mind, and if we have succeeded in giving them any valuable material for their studies we shall be glad" (1968/I, xiii). Smith had also sent the manuscript to W. H. R. Rivers and therefore presented the published version to his readers as a text by mere fieldworkers that had been vetted and improved by this true anthropologist. James Frazer was so delighted with Smith's willingness to acquiesce in his division of labour between missionary-collectors and theorizing-anthropologists that he quickly befriended him and had the Primitive Methodist missionary as a frequent house guest. Moreover, far from outgrowing this deferential stance as his expertise became more established and recognized, Smith employed it all the more as his reputation rose. This culminated in the opening remarks of his first presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Society: "When you elected me to this Chair I imagine you did it with your eyes open. You knew that you were bestowing the highest honour you have to bestow upon one who is not a professional anthropologist but an amateur" (1934, xiii). Anthropologists were quite willing complacently to accept Smith's self-designation. For example, Isaac Schapera, writing Smith's obituary in *Man*, pronounced unequivocally that the former president of the RAI was "not a professional anthropologist" (1959, 213). This is particularly rich as Smith had been the external examiner on Schapera's own 1929 PhD thesis at the London School of Economics and Schapera had asked Smith to serve in 1948 as a visiting professor to replace himself while on leave (Young 2002, 143, 190). Moreover, it must be borne in mind that it would be anachronistic to use having a degree in anthropology or a university appointment in anthropology to define who was a professional in Smith's era. (Two great profession-policing figures we have met in this article, for example—Rivers and Frazer—would not themselves readily qualify, although perhaps Frazer's counsel might try to make the most of his purely honorary and quickly abandoned professorship at Liverpool.) Smith had put himself out of competition so successfully that even Powdermaker in her memorable "missionaries were the enemies" confession, immediately offered the "present company excluded" clause, "except for Edwin Smith" (1966, 43).

There are also additional, hidden factors why the hostility of anthropologists toward missionaries became more public and overt from the late 1960s onward. The dramatic expansion of the university sector allowed anthropologists to think much more in terms of doing pure research in the confidence that there was funding to be found and university posts to be had. Correspondingly, Christian missions and colonial administration were no longer significant enough sectors to make catering to them as potential generators of students and funding opportunities a path of prudence. While one can read earnest, wooing statements that it was essential for missionaries to take courses in anthropology by eminent anthropologists and by Royal Anthropological Society officer holders and publications throughout the first half of the twentieth century, by 1987 Stipe could report that an anthropologist had told him that she found the tendency of a growing number of missionaries to pursue a postgraduate degree in anthropology as part of their training "quite frightening" (Stipe 1987, 60). Still, in the last third of the twentieth century anthropologists continued to go into the field only to find that they were dependent on missionaries for practical help and to be embarrassed that, for example, they sometimes had to make it appear in their publications that they had learned the local language much more thoroughly than they did whilst knowing that the missionaries truly possessed this knowledge. Thus one constant across the twentieth century was the recurring temptation by British social anthropologists to define missionaries as biased amateurs in order to shore up their own place and self-perception as professionals.

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[15] The details in this paragraph may be found in Young (2002).

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A Centenary Retrospective: Christian Medical Missions and Medical Anthropology

Vincent E. Gil

This retrospective provides a brief history of Christian medical missions as the critical backdrop to understanding how missions in the 19th and 20th centuries paved the way for ethnographic work among non-Western culture groups, as well as provided insights into other cultures' health and healing practices. Medical missions also brought biomedicine into the care systems of non-Western cultures and set the stage for understanding the importance of cultural knowledge in determinants of health and disease. These endeavors cannot be discounted as motivators for anthropologists to further engage the work of health and healing as these worked to understand other cultures and their needs. This retrospective also explores how the subdiscipline/specialization of medical anthropology became formalized, applied; and how critically important it became in contributing to medical knowledge and practice cross-culturally. Examples of modern-day giants of medical anthropology bring our attention forward and underscore their lasting contributions. The retrospective ends by encouraging Christian anthropologists to consider specializing in medical anthropology. For those in practice, it asks where they 'abide' today: where they can be located, given that there is no formal organization unique to them.

In our 21st century, quasi-dystopian and self-centered global universe, we often lose sight of the value in engaging history to guide our present *and* our future. Thankfully, the *OKH Journal* has prompted us to look back into our respective academic and social histories and glean a better sightline for going forward, hopefully via renewed revelations from examining the past.

Personally, I came to cultural anthropology, and then medical anthropology not via a thought-out trajectory or set of delineated interests per se; but rather, because I felt an initial 'call' to missions after professing Christ as a young adult. This 'call' eventually transmuted to involvements with academic anthropology as a means of preparing myself for "the mission field." "The mission field," however, never happened in the traditional sense: I became enamored with knowing culture at large and individuated; saw its immense relevance to knowing that proverbial *"other,"* and thus went on to deeper involvements with the field via teaching and research.[1] Thus, what started as a preparation for "the mission field" actually *kept me out* of the mission field—until HIV became a threat in the U.S. in the early 1980's, and shortly following became a global pandemic of its own.

My rage then at the misunderstandings which circulated within Christian circles about the virus; the condemnations that floated uncensored; and the titulary epithets which the infected were given, were enough for me as a Christian anthropologist to ask significant questions about how the Church ought to be treating people with HIV. Was this treatment of the "other," and the condemnations cast on them *typical* of how Christians reacted to viral threats these deemed a consequence of sin? Did missionaries treat *their* sick populations in distant lands in the same, culpatory manner?

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[1] I became a professor after completing a PhD (UCLA) at then–Southern California College (now Vanguard University), where I founded one of the early majors in anthropology in Christian colleges. I convinced myself I was at least preparing others with this precious commodity of knowing culture.

In the middle of this mental ruckus and real HIV trauma which had beset itself on close friends and colleagues, I discovered the history of medical missions and the singularity of those Christians that treated the ill from other cultures with outstanding love and care. I also discovered *medical anthropology*.

I was hooked again; but this time, not just for my academic understanding or preparation—*but to do something about what was happening*. I completed two applied postdocs in the process.[2]

I open this retrospective with this story of how I eventually gravitated to, then became a medical anthropologist because in doing so, I've stood on the shoulders of giants, many of whom were *also* Christian—giants who were *medical missionaries*; and giants who were first to engage anthropology and medicine, anthropology and public health; who also *practiced and applied themselves* to the wellbeing of those *others.*

And it is exactly at this time, in this post-COVID pandemic moment, that a retrospective look at anthropology's involvement with health and well-being, Christians practicing within it and as medical anthropologists, ought to bring us significant reminders, encouragements, and cautions to then use in seeding future Anthro-Medical endeavors.

Medical Missions: Knowing and Serving the Other

It would be a *faux pas* to recollect about medical anthropology without acknowledging the contributions of medical missions. Christian missionaries often engaged themselves as early medical anthropologists, particularly when these had to learn about and understand the cultural health traditions of the culture they were serving when transmissible illnesses occurred. Learning local health traditions, learning how to introduce biomedicine without sacrificing local customs, treating the sick and negotiating how to do so alongside local *shamans*, all contributed to the syncretism of cultures and health practices at the local level.[3]

Moreover, these missionaries often conducted extensive *fieldwork* of their own, shedding needed understandings on non-Western cultures and demythologizing them in the process. Volumes were written to acquaint the Western mind with that of others; and much effort was put into valuing cultural differences and preserving them as best these could. Medical missions also helped enable naturopathic medicinal uses by the West; helped stave off starvation and malnutrition in many cultures served; later introduced vaccinations and treatments for such as malaria, polio; also and often deftly, integrating religious and medical engagements with local belief systems and health practices.

Some great names to remember here are such as David Livingstone (1813-1873), Scottish missionary and African explorer who emphasized the need to include *medical care* as part of any missionary work. He documented local health customs and practices to understand not only their cultural roles and significance, but also to know how to assist the integration of biomedicines into the local culture. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) worked in Gabon—and although not a missionary in the traditional sense, established a number of mission hospitals and schools while introducing biomedicine to areas where it was previously unknown. His holistic approach was based on a combination of medical care and a commitment to the spiritual well-being of those he served. Missionary Mary Mitchell Slessor (1848-1915), another Scott who worked in Nigeria, was first to learn local languages and dialects as a means of helping her gain trust among those she served. She went on to promote women's health (one of the first to do so in an area of West Africa where superstitions about females and evil abounded); and also championed the health of children, whom she is often credited for rescuing from the practice of twin infanticides.

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[2] Thus, in my case, a postdoc in sexual medicine (via the Masters & Johnson Institute), and postdoc training in public health epidemiology with emphasis on HIV/AIDS (UCLA–SPH).

[3] Yes, I am aware that early missionization of non-Western culture groups also carried out significant destruction of many cultural traditions in the name of Christianization and 'salvation', and even atrocities. Indigenous populations, such as those in the Americas, did suffer at the hands of perhaps well-meaning, but nevertheless authoritarian forces via missionization efforts. However, by the time the more institutionalized medical missions movement occurred in the 19th century, greater respect for local customs and efforts at cultural preservation became part of missional détente. Early anthropologists of the 20th century also aided cultural preservation by signaling out those missional efforts that thwarted cultural continuity, or pressured conversions to Christianity a la cultural imperialism. See Tucker (2004).

Despite all these great goings-on, antagonism toward missionaries and their work by early (and then later) anthropologists has been an historical fact, well documented in Timothy Larson's article in this volume of *OKHJ*, which you should also read in context.

A more formalized medical missions movement began in the 19th century, one seeded broadly by the larger missions movement among Protestant churches. One of the best examples to remember here was *China Inland Mission*, founded by British Baptist missionary Hudson Taylor (1832-1905). In the 54 years of Taylor's leadership, CIM founded more than 300 medical workstations throughout 18 provinces in China, and 125 schools; many of which also trained student physicians in the Western medical tradition, ushering in early efforts at what we now call *integrative medicine*.[4]

By the early 20th century, a number of missions-based hospitals and even medical schools were established in developing countries. Medical missionaries played critical roles in not only introducing Western medicine to distant regions, but equally as important, addressing then intractable and contagious diseases. The work of Paul Brand (1914–2003) comes to mind here. Brand did extensive work with leprosy, developing treatments and offering compassionate care to lepers in India. As stated, these medical missionaries were also instrumental in gathering the necessary cultural-social information about other culture groups to rectify wrong Western assumptions about those *others.*

In the contemporary era, Christian medical missions has incorporated partnering with local communities, furthering in that respect developments which are not only sustainable, but culturally sensitive and appropriate for the culture at large as well as the culture of care. Local health systems are thus integrated and improved, as well as NGO's capacities through collaborative work.[5] All of these endeavors are also core features of applied medical anthropology today.

Medical Anthropology as Subdiscipline

During the 1960's and '70's, the subdiscipline of medical anthropology was becoming formalized. Its development was heavily influenced by a growing realization that health and healthcare—to be effective—requires a substantial understanding of social and cultural factors that influence health, disease, and prevention. In this respect, early work by such anthropologists as Benjamin David Paul (1911–2005), now considered the 'father' of medical anthropology, brought attention to how culture affects people's responses to health and illnesses. As well, Benjamin Paul enabled Western medicine to understand the contexts of disease governed by cultural ideologies and practices: He was instrumental in incorporating a patient's cultural and personal history into their record, enabling better disease diagnosis, treatment, and foremost, prevention efforts.

"Med Anthro" was given prominence when the American Anthropological Association incorporated the Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA–1967) into its organization in 1971. Medical anthropology also became 'institutionalized' as a subdiscipline via the creation of specialized courses and eventual academic programs training medical anthropologists outright. In tandem, the period of 1970's–1990's saw the *professionalization* of medical anthropology, both as praxis as well as a concurrent subfield of specialization in medicine.[6] This period saw a marked rise of publications in the subfield, as well as texts devoted to *teaching* medical anthropology. With the advent of HIV and its global spread (1981–1995), many who were in the subdiscipline crafted additional specializations to understand social-cultural variables involved in HIV transmission, giving rise as well to additional interest groups within the now formalized organizations of anthropology: one being the *AIDS and Anthropology Research Group (AARG)* of the SMA/AAA.

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[4] It was during the same epoch as Taylor's work that other medical missionaries engaged with and learned from traditional Chinese medicine. Some even integrated Chinese traditional medicine into their practice, recognizing its value, albeit at the time, not knowing how these in fact operated (acupuncture comes to mind here). Such integration was part of a broader trend of mutual influence between Western and Chinese medical practices during the period. See Zhang (2023) and Feiya (2012).

[5] An example is *Project Medical Missions* (part of World Missions Alliance, www.rfwma.org). See Nungaraj (2023) as well as Cattermole (2020).

[6] The term "social medicine" is many times used in the medical profession to refer to the incorporation of sociocultural and economic factors, their impacts on health and disease, in medical training and understandings. Therefore, social medicine practice itself (causality, diagnosis, and treatment) is in kinship with medical anthropological praxis, in that both incorporate medicine and social sciences to further patient health and lessen health inequities.

During this time, I had completed my postdoc preceptorship, training in public health epidemiology with emphasis on HIV/AIDS. As a Christian, applied medical anthropologist now involved in researching the sociocultural dimensions of HIV transmission among Latino/a populations to enable culturally cogent prevention programs (1990–1996), I looked for others of the Christian faith who were in Med Anthro. But these were hard to come across or identify.

I volunteered and became a member of the AARG Board; and it was in these initial gatherings of the group I was privileged to meet Paul Farmer, MD, PhD (1959–2022). I mention Paul, who became a congenial colleague and eventual comrade in arms in HIV, because I cannot think of a more singular presence advancing medical anthropology and praxis in the 20th century than Paul Farmer.

Medical Anthropology as Praxis

Paul Farmer's story is well known.[7] Here, I underscore the fact that Paul, a fledgling MD from Harvard in 1987, was overtaken and heartbroken by the misery and health issues of Haiti, where he initially served. Needing to do "more," he went on to found, with two other partners (Ophelia Dahl and Jim Yong Kim) *Partners in Health.* PIH has grown to serve millions of patients in 11 countries worldwide. At some early stage in PIH's development, Paul saw *his own necessity* to understand Haitian culture and by extension, cultural principles that underlie anyone's health beliefs and practices. He returned to Harvard to earn his PhD in anthropology, and forward, became an MD *and* medical anthropologist. He also became a stellar voice for the inclusion of cultural knowledge into healthcare. His work in Haiti, Rwanda, and other countries infused medical care with depth knowledges of local cultures, as well as knowledges of the social determinants of health.

Knowing Paul up close meant also finding *"this former Catholic,"* as he sometimes referred to himself and his faith of upbringing. I found Paul to be a 'Jesuit at heart': his strong ethic of social justice and healthcare equity became a model for medical anthropology—praxis and research—as well as medical practice itself. More than just caring, he brought a deep rooting in faith, a sacredness to patient interactions, and an awe about what possibilities there may be to save a life. He was an exemplar for those who work with and care about health equity. He also became an activist, urging for a world more equitable by focusing on the health and rights of the poor. As such a force, he embodied a moral imagination of equality. And, despite all his roles he never lost his belief or faith in the *other*—or for that matter, faith in the God of the Universe. In this and every other sense, Paul Farmer embodied medical missions/medical anthropology. He embraced the spirit of the old giants—and with his own sudden passing in 2022, bequeaths us his own shoulders to stand on.

When I refer to *praxis* in medical anthropology, I'm not focusing on *being an MD and an anthropologist*, as Paul was. I am referring to applications that may often come alongside medical practice and/or research, such that enable cultural information necessary to understand, for example, disease transmission; or how to integrate biomedicines with ethnomedicinals in particular cultural settings; or enabling a medical technology's "fit" within cultural frames that operate through different ideologies of health and illness, diagnosis, or treatment.

And yes, this work oftentimes involves—as I discovered—becoming conversant, also '*credible*', via some formalized training in branches of medicine and/or public health. Indeed, medical anthropological praxis brings us much closer to real life applications, and these often involve us with patient care.[8]

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[7] Paul's story as well as that of PIH was prominently written about by Tracy Kidder in *Mountains Beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* (2008). Farmer has written copiously, but among his more well known and recent works are *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, SJ* (2013a); *Reimagining Global Health: An Introduction* (2013b); and *To Repair the World: Paul Farmer Speaks to the Next Generation* (2013c).

Notable names beyond Paul Farmer today should be mentioned, albeit briefly and incompletely here: Arthur Kleinman, American psychiatrist and medical anthropologist noted for his extensive studies of culture and mental health, mental illness. He has introduced the concept of "social suffering," which has deeply impacted how we understand illness and its interactions with social life. Merrill Singer, medical anthropologist known for his work in "syndemics"—how social conditions and diseases interact. Singer has extensive praxis with substance abusers, HIV/AIDS, and has brought to the forefront the intersectionality of diseases and social conditions. He is also noted for "critical medical anthropology," blending the political economy of health, the effects of social inequalities, and people's health intersections. Among the notables, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, whose work on the impacts of social violence on health has had considerable praise. Scheper-Hughes has also brought attention to the organ trade globally. It is thus fitting to note the variegation of applications and topics being pursued by contemporary medical anthropologists.

Where Are You, *Christian Medical Anthropologist?*

In this 21st century, the dearth of Christian medical anthropologists who can be identified as such is, for me, hard to fathom.

Assuredly, there are identifiable Christian Anthropologists, psychologists, Christian MDs, dentists (who together have formed the *Christian Medical and Dental Association*—CMDA). But, short of missional anthropologists who may embrace health issues and factors while on the field . . . or be specifically in medical missions; and those linguistic anthropologists involved in the likes of SIL/Wycliffe who may also run some clinics, I have found few *Christian medical anthropologists* identifiable amongst the rank.[9]

This is not to say that "medical anthropological principles or research" are not being engaged by some Christian anthropologists; or that there is somehow a lack of enthusiasm for health knowledges or the social determinants of health themselves within the field of anthropology. *It is to say* that given the past century's historical rise of the subdiscipline of medical anthropology, shouldn't more Christian Anthropologists *be in medical anthropology today*, have such training,[10] and be identifiable as such?

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[8] As example, my work in China with HIV (1990-2007) enabled the introduction of rapid immunosorbent assays (what we now all know as 'rapid tests') to detect HIV in whole blood, which then facilitated patient testing at points of care via a finger-prick, vs. needing blood draws and sophisticated laboratory equipment. As a developing country in the early 1990's, China did not have the technology available then to rapidly detect HIV transmission in patient populations. However, China's fulminating HIV infection was spreading rapidly through IDU subgroups, rampant prostitution in large cities, and the selling of whole blood to blood banks by rural populations needing money. Rapid testing changed all that was needed to assess infections, virtually overnight, and once we had assisted in the transfer of the technology by deploying *culturally appropriate training* for health staff at key provincial hospitals. See Gil, V.E. and K.A. Peavy (2003); Gil, V.E. (2006; 2016). To understand the role prostitution played in furthering STIs and HIV in China, see Gil, V.E., M.S. Wang, A.F. Anderson, G.M. Lin, and Z.O. Wu (2003).

[9] I pause to acknowledge that "Christian" here is not used to signify solely Protestant Christians. I understand and welcome Catholics and Orthodoxs of the Christian faith to be solely monikered "Christian." For the purposes of this retrospective, I tried to sort through what denominations of Christianity are actually involved in both medical missions as well as medical anthropology. Historically, Catholic medical missions preceded the Protestant medical missions movement, and a thorough acknowledgement of this fact is hereby noted! Practitioners and academics in medical anthropology who are Christian have yet, to date, to come together and form *any* association or grouping which would identify members as sharing a Christian faith tradition. Consequently, those of us who *do identify ourselves as having a Christian faith tradition* while also being engaged in medical anthropology are often seen as outliers in the subdiscipline. I am hopeful that this retrospective may change that. If you are a Christian who is a medical anthropologist, come forward and write to me: vgil@vanguard.edu. I will assemble and publish a list of names and affiliations!

[10] We must deal with the decline in anthropology in general in the academy, and specifically in smaller, private Christian colleges. See Jenell Paris' great article on this decline in "Small is Vulnerable: Anthropology at Christian Colleges and Universities" (2023). Some medical anthropology coursework is being subsumed under public health, such as at the University of Washington, which now offers a combined degree. But in other cases, the anthropological subdisciplines which caught attention in the 20th century are evaporating in the 21st.

Moving Medical Anthropology Forward in the 21st Century

What can we learn from the past that helps us move into a preferred future in medical anthropology?

We learn a great deal from any retrospective if we care to dig through the layers. We find, foremost, that medical missions and its call to serve the poor and the sick has as its bedrock a sacred trust in the dignity of the person—no matter what creed or culture. In our present century, with its tumultuous return to egocentrism, biases and discrimination, we do well to remember that *respect for the other*, *loving the other as self*, is of paramount importance to God and to our anthropological endeavors. Christian medical anthropologists can thus demonstrate this ethos, live its truth while integrating cultural sensitivity, ethical considerations, and holistic care into our work.

This holistic approach to health figured largely among the best of the medical missionaries and is embodied in contemporary medical anthropologists like Paul Farmer. By respecting cultural practices, medical anthropologists and those in the business of health care can build stronger relationships with patients, improve communications, and assist in patient adherences to treatments and medications. Moreover, it takes cultural knowledge and applications that understand cultural contexts to be able to tailor and customize health interventions which are then acceptable and effective.[11]

In this sense, medical anthropological praxis encourages the type of interdisciplinary collaboration that moves knowledge forward and improves outcomes. This is now the gold standard.[12] When we combine insights from anthropology, medicine, public health, and theology, we are building a more comprehensive understanding of those we serve as well as the strategies for care that we need to enable *for them.* The 21st century medical anthropologist, by design, must be an encourager of problem-solving through interdisciplinary collaborations.[13]

I would be remiss not to mention yet another layer of medical anthropological work today which is highly valuable: community engagement and empowerment. The work of medical anthropologists today requires the type of openness and community involvement that enables that ‘thick description’, that depth understanding and inclusion which render for the persons being served a sense of being understood and heard.

In this season, we must also advocate for the social justice involved in inclusion. Empowerment *means* being included, heard, trusted to have the foundational understandings *we* seek to understand, and which enables our efforts. We must emphasize the importance of community participation and representation.

And, as Jenell Paris has aptly written about and investigated (2023), we must also address the dearth of anthropology as a discipline, *and* as a catalyst for seeing the world holistically, which is now part of the dwindling academic training in colleges and universities—Christian ones especially. Without solid programs to train the mind to think holistically, explore interdisciplinary work, understand ethnographically, engage the cultural, we recoil back to presumptions about *others* that not only affect relationships and outcomes, but in the vein of this retrospective, threatens the health of populations.

Finally, Christians who enter medical anthropological work should consider it a ‘calling’—if one is moved from the heart to engage it. We sometimes throw that term around meaning different things, so let me be clear: When I say a *calling*, I mean a profession of faith *to the work* and ultimately *to the God of your faith*, to render your efforts in ways and means that can have significant physical and spiritual impacts on those you seek to serve.

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[11] See for example, Gil (1999; 1996a; 1996b).

[12] I refer back to the Society for Medical Anthropology/AAA’s international conference, “Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Celebrating 50 years of Interdisciplinarity.” New Haven: Yale University, September 24–27, 2009. This conference was pivotal in cementing key areas of disciplinary *intersections*, encouraging and working out plans for collaboration within and between key fields. See www.yale.edu/macmillan/smaconference/index.html.

On this topic, let me be one to also distinguish the differences between “multidisciplinary” collaborations, and the adoption of theoretical and praxis-imbued “interdisciplinarity.” We must move beyond disciplinary methodologies and epistemologies, methodological hyper-specializations, to enable a sustained interdisciplinarity which learns to embrace means and methods, in-depth explanations, from various disciplines to adequately problem-solve.

[13] A good conversation for interdisciplinary collaborations is Rosalyn Vega’s lecture, “Syndemics: Considerations for Interdisciplinary Research.” *Somatosphere: Science, Medicine, and Anthropology*, September 20, 2019, at www.somatosphere.com. Combine this read with Trindle and Phillips (2024).

I started this retrospective with a short clip on my own move to anthropology and never making it to "the mission field." Here I end by telling you *my* medical anthropology was also *my entre* into missions, missions of a different and more personal sort: I never imagined the opportunities for witness that came with my working in China on HIV/AIDS for 17 years; the number of encounters that led to professions of faith by Chinese colleagues and everyday people—amazing 'conversion stories' of changes in heart and lives through the power of the shared Word. I am now the humbled 'American godfather' (*Měiguó jiáofù*) to families of Chinese who engaged Christianity and are living a vibrant faith; some now Chistian pastors of Chinese congregations; two generations of families, and counting . . . .

Christian anthropologist: Why not consider medical anthropology as your subdiscipline and possible 'calling' in this 21st century?

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Anthropological Insights and the Early Voices of Ethnodoxology

Elsen Portugal

"Whither Bound in Missions?"— In Which Direction is the Missions Movement Going? Missiologist Daniel Fleming formalized this question in his book, *Whither Bound in Missions?,* published in 1925. This and several other publications in the early to middle of the 20th century demonstrate the engagement of the missiological community with anthropological perspectives seeking to understand and support the direction of missions for the upcoming century. In doing so, they have contributed as well to practiced anthropology through missions.

This article explores the contributions of three authors who were learning the value of incorporating anthropological perspectives into the missionary enterprise. They were also forerunners of the discipline of ethnodoxology, encouraging the application of local music and art for the communication of the Christian faith when the topic was not yet of great concern within the broader missiological movement. They often demonstrate a perception ahead of their time, and courageously call on their constituency—and even on us in the 21st century— to learn and apply principles that can strengthen the Mission of God in the long run.

Introduction

The modern missionary movement was springboarded largely from the British Isles and North America thrusting forth thousands of cross-cultural workers into fields all over the globe throughout the 19th century. Those following their divine call had great zeal and passion for proclaiming the Christian faith to nations which had not yet heard and received the gospel of Jesus Christ. Missions had gained great momentum throughout 19th century and many people were brought to faith in Christ. But the general Western mindset of continual progress of the era, the technical advances and economic growth of their nations, coupled and hampered by a limited and frequently biased knowledge of the local cultures missionaries encountered around the world, had "engendered a feeling of superiority" (Fleming 1925, 1) towards nations viewed as less technologically, educationally, and spiritually advanced. By the turn of the 20th century, the protestant missionary community in North America had begun to realize that this general attitude "would . . . be ruinous" (21).

As Westerners—missionaries or secular researchers—encountered more and more divergent cultures around the world and shared their experiences in their homelands, the discipline of anthropology began to take shape. Although humans have sought to document and understand other cultures for millennia, the development of anthropology is a product of the 19th century. The first course in the United States was offered in 1879 at the University of Rochester, New York (Haviland et al. 2008, 65). As we entered deeply into the 20th century, not only did missiology learn from anthropology, but several authors became major contributors to the conversation between anthropology and missions. Among the best-known ones are E. A. Nida, W. A. Smalley, J. A. Loewen, W. D. Reyburn, Charles Kraft, and Paul Hiebert (Allison 1996, 31). An anthropologist associated with SIL, Kenneth Pike, for instance, was responsible for the model currently used in anthropology "contrasting the *etic and emic perspectives"* (35). The institutions, both cross-cultural agencies and schools, to which these writers were related—SIL, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Wheaton College, and Fuller Theological Seminary, to name a few—also helped support the study of anthropology within missiology. The experiences in multiple fields shared by missionaries enriched the discipline and developed a space of collaboration that has continued until today. In spite of the "creative tension" that exists between anthropology and Christianity, anthropology has been "successfully integrated into . . . colleges, universities, seminaries, and missions training programs" (Howell and Paris 2011, 18-19).

Ethnodoxology—An Applied Anthropology: Early Voices in the Twentieth Century

Anthropological perspectives have also had a particularly strong influence on the development of ethnodoxology. Combining content and a number of research practices from anthropology, ethnomusicology, missiology, theology, arts, and social sciences (to name a few), the term *ethnodoxology* is the recent label (turn of the 21st century) to a growing focus of research: the vast world of worship expressions found in the cultures of the world. Although 'art' is not part of the construct of the word *ethnodoxology*, artistic expression of the Christian faith is at the core of its focus. The applications of this discipline naturally provide greater insights into the very fields that provide its resources as well as a new interdisciplinary vision for a number of studies. Through the practices of participant observation, interviews, and other actions, cultural anthropology has been particularly helpful in creating interaction between faith and art, and ultimately the scope of the discipline.

As with every cultural aspect of a new missionary 'field', the local society's art, be it music or other artistic modalities, have been deeply criticized by Western missionaries along the course of the centuries. Bringing with them the natural bias of an elevated state of their own culture's art forms, local expressions were often ignored, disliked, maligned, or even condemned as satanic at times for fear of association with ungodliness (an understandable but simplistic and dismissive stance), and often for the simple fact that they were not perceived to be as 'good' as the missionaries' art forms. Although, sadly, this attitude still persists in some circles, well-informed missiological communities in this century have distanced themselves from this modus operandi. Along the course of the 20th century, cross-cultural workers with an eye for artistic expression have increasingly perceived the depth and the power of local music and art and have advocated for their integration into communicative strategies (Dye 1985, 110; Chenoweth 1972). It is unlikely that we would be able to put an exact birth date for the newer, more respectful, and missional perspective of the arts within missiological spheres. But what we can do is to explore the manifold manifestations of God's wisdom among missiologists along the course of the last century.

The particular authors addressed in this article provided support for the agency of local communities in developing their own artistic language in the expression of the Christian faith. The recent development of the discipline of ethnodoxology is indebted to voices who addressed this need when the topic was not yet of great concern for the missiological movement at large. These authors influenced the spread of this perspective in their particular spheres of influence. Although lesser known than Nida, Garvan, Kraft, Hiebert, and others, these missiologists and missionaries have also pronounced an "Eureka!" about the value of the anthropological perspective in missions and have contributed to the understanding of the value of local art forms. Even now, learning about them can strengthen our own resolve to apply these practices in current missionary strategies.

In their own circles, these 'lonely' voices of the 20th century—some theologians, some missionaries—began to look for possible applications of local 'traditional' music and artistic genres in worship settings. Daniel Fleming, professor at Union Seminary in the early part of the 20th century,[1] encouraged contextualization in missions and the use of local forms. The English missionary and missiologist John F. Butler proposed similar approaches (Butler, *Christian Art in India*). Raymond Buker, a missionary, published an article which touched on the value of local musics in the very first edition of the Evangelical Missions Quarterly in October of 1964 (Buker). He encouraged the perception of the value of local music for proper communication based on an experience in the Ivory Coast. Although relatively few calls for artistic contextualization were made throughout the early 20th century, this outlook began to have deeper traction in the 1970s and has developed into a growing appreciation of local worship arts and a recognition of their importance for the practice of the Christian faith.[2] Today, the literature on ethnodoxology and its practices can be found in many parts of the world.

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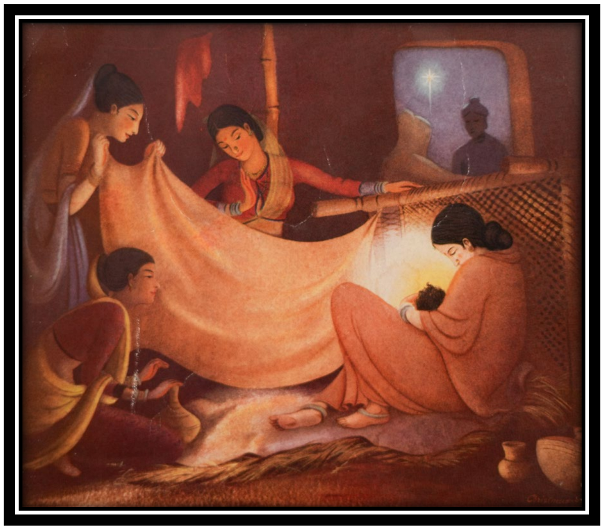
[1] This is a relevant topic addressed in Daniel Fleming's books such as *Whither Bound in Missions* (1925).

Authors such as Daniel Johnson Fleming, John Butler, and Raymond Buker addressed not only the local music, but also other artistic modalities such as architecture, painting, dancing, etc., to name a few. Much of the initial thrust in missiological ethnodoxology came from practitioners trained in ethnomusicology, especially up to the turn of the 21st century. In the earlier years, the rather closed dichotomous view of Western versus traditional musics (Chenoweth 2013).[3] featured prominently in ideas concerning cultural and individual 'heart music(s)' (later also 'heart musics and arts') (Chenoweth 2013). More recently, however, ethnodoxologists have become considerably open to a combination or fusion of internal and external characteristics to form new 'heart' arts (or ethnoarts) or genres. Brian Schrag, former SIL ethnoarts coordinator, proposes that the artistic potential of community can include all those forms in which it "can create, perform, teach and understand from within, including its forms, meanings, language, and social context" (Schrag, 296). Regarding the adaptation of the message to a local context, without doing harm to the actual content or meaning, music and the arts are co-participants and encourage a deeper understanding of a Christian worldview among the members of a given community.

With this promising recent development of ethnodoxology in mind, I would like to pay tribute to the early vision of 20th century missiologists in this article. In their own generations they bravely published ideas that were still being dismissed—often even despised—by their academic and ministry peers. Today, we can rejoice and be motivated by seeing once again that God is at work and speaking to his servants even when the "messenger" seems to be simply a lonely voice.

Daniel Johnson Fleming

Even though most missionaries and the missiological community may not have seen it as relevant at the time, some missiologists did indeed highlight the value of local music and art for cross-cultural and intracultural communication. Daniel Johnson Fleming, of Union Seminary in New York, is representative of this subset of missiologists and missionaries who were envisioning positive developments in missions towards the 'naturalization' of the Christian faith. Three of his publications provide clear glimpses of his missionary vision, and, in two cases, illustrated descriptions of local artistic forms that were already in use: *Whither Bound in Missions* (1925), *Heritage of Beauty* (1937), and *Each With His Own Brush* (1938).



Nativity
by Indian Christian, Frank Wesley
(Fleming 1938)[4]

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[2] The present-day broader validation of the importance of the arts in Christian worship probably received impulse from a variety of global evangelical conferences such as the one held in Lausanne, Switzerland in July of 1974. See: Lausanne Movement at https://www.lausanne.org/our-legacy (Accessed October 11, 2019).

[3] This and some other sources used in this article were drawn from the electronic Kindle format. The books for which Kindle does not provide physical page numbers use place markers called 'Kindle Locations'. To abbreviate the reference, I use the letters KL followed by a number for references from Kindle Edition books.

[4] Permission for reproduction of photo granted by Friendship Press.

In his 1925 book, *Whither Bound in Missions,* Daniel Fleming, who had "caught his first enthusiasm for the Christian enterprise overseas" (Fleming 1925, v) in the home of Rev. James C. R. Ewing in India, described his perspective and drew attention to a growing movement towards adaptation and indigenization in missions:

> We have slowly come to realize that the people of India can *play on their own home instruments chords of religious music that touch and move their own hearts*. They love their melodies. We now see that we have come with our foreign instruments; and, though the music has been that of the great Master, our inability to appreciate their instruments and our rough handling of them has left much to be desired. Certain it is that in most fields we have not waited for the outer forms of religious expression to arise as the natural growth of the religious consciousness of the indigenous group. We have gone into lands which have known only individual worship, and have introduced congregational worship after a western pattern with synods and presbyteries and conferences, with paid pastors, with deacons and elders, with standing committees and the like systems wholly unlike what the native religious consciousness would have created if left to itself.
>
> In the past fifteen years, however, the devolution of initiative and powers and responsibilities from the foreign missions to the young Churches has received an immense amount of attention, and many missions have taken radical steps in the way of transfer of authority and leadership. For the most part it is a consciously accepted principle of missionary work that Churches should be developed among different peoples according to their genius and culture rather than presented readymade by westerners. (Fleming 1925, 163-164). (emphasis mine)

It would take more than half a century before missionary and missiological communities would broadly respond to this call. Along the way, many other voices—such as Nida, Smalley, Loewen, Kraft, and Hiebert, to name a few (Allison 1996, 31)—were raised in favor of this local value and agency that would assist the missiological community to wear more anthropological lenses in their cross-cultural works. Nonetheless, Fleming's enthusiasm for the possibility that Christian worship could and should adapt to local cultures nearly a century ago is stimulating to those of us who are seeing his vision being fulfilled across the globe.

In India, Fleming had observed how "home instruments" could move hearts. Like contemporary ethnodoxologists, he envisioned local worship and witness to come from the community's locus of conscience, and music and arts to be developed in local artistic languages. He conceded that the importation of foreign styles of worship into new communities as a normative practice, as had been generally practiced since the rise of the modern missionary movement, had serious potentially weakening effects for the "naturalization" of the gospel message. At the same time, Fleming expressed hope that the trend he had observed since around 1910 of entrusting the "initiative and powers and responsibilities" to the "young [local] churches," an approach currently described as 'local agency',[5] would become "the prevailing thought movements of [their] age (Fleming 1925, viii)" and that it would bring a profound change "in attitude and method" (Fleming 1925*,* viii). Although this perspective still meets with resistance from those who find safety in their own worship and witness artistic practices, we can rejoice that, by the grace of God and the contributions of these missiological servants, great progress has been made along the course of the last 100 years.

Daniel Fleming's *Heritage of Beauty* (1937) focuses on Christian architecture in several eastern countries. The book records and illustrates through photographs a number of examples of architectural attempts at presenting the Christian faith in local styles. For instance, he describes a church building in Samoa that he encountered in 1935 built by local workers and consisting only of local materials. Fleming reports that the congregation that meets in that building has responded highly favorably, and that the "world-wide Christian fellowship" in that area of the Pacific was already self-supporting (Fleming 1937, 24). In Honolulu, a Japanese-established Christian church had celebrated its 25th anniversary with a new building in 1929. The construction resembled "an old feudal castle in Japan" (34). Although it may come as a surprise to us, he also informs us that "the oldest known Christian church structure in China, built by Franciscan friars in 1383, reveal not only Chinese details in roof eaves but also a Chinese grouping of all the monastery buildings" (38). Only later did Gothic architecture replace such contextualized examples of church buildings.

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[5] Global Ethnodoxology Network (GEN), "Core Values," Value No. 5. https://www.worldofworship.org/core-values/. (Accessed May 14, 2024).

In Japan itself, Daniel Fleming stated that there were examples of contextualized architecture. They had typical curved roofs such as those found on Japanese Buddhist temples, used translucent paper on the windows, and contained other features that signaled the sacred meaning of the building. In spite of the cost of the construction, "the American missionary who designed a 'contextualized' chapel and presides over it, noting how his congregation prefer even the cold chapel to the warmer parish house, and how non-Christians bow or say a prayer as they pass, feels that the cost has been abundantly justified" (Fleming 1937, 52). Fleming does make it clear that the responses to this contextualized architecture were not always positive in Japan. Some had become interested in Christianity when they saw "a real Japanese church!" (55). However, many Japanese Christians—pastors and laymen—in an effort to lay aside "their religious past" (55), preferred choosing a non-traditional structure. In response, Fleming remained hopeful that, in future generations, "an expression of Christianity in Japan may evolve which shall be neither Western nor a slavish copy of old Japan," committed "to bodying forth what God has spoken to Japan" (55). His reflection and vision for arts within the context of engagement with God and the local community is impressively accurate to current ethnodoxological perspectives.

Fleming also provides a number of illustrative instances in China where buildings used for Christian worship were intentionally built in accordance with local cultural artistic styles. Measuring the influence of these constructions on the growth of the church is nearly impossible to gauge. But the intention has always been clear: to enable "Chinese Christians to feel at home in their churches (Fleming 1937, 40), or to convey the idea of a house of God "in the architectural language of the people who would use it (44), or even "to interpret Christian truth through Chinese art and construction" (46). A Roman Catholic authority in the 1930's stated that "if Christianity is to be at home in China it must not be lodged in buildings of Western pattern, totally at variance with the Chinese temperament, climate and landscape" (39). Almost a century later, considering the growth of the Chinese house church, we can confirm that this prelate was correct. As it turned out, the key was not found in contextualized church buildings, but Christianity came to be 'at home' in China, constantly under persecution, by finding itself in the home environments that were regular part of Chinese life.

Heritage of Beauty also provides descriptions and photo illustrations of indigenous art found in other countries where only a minority of the population identifies itself as Christian. Fleming believed that visual art possessed a psychological property that could influence human behavior towards the reception of the gospel message" (Fleming 1937, 92). Local perceptions, he stated, need to be considered when using any type of symbolism because "there are dangers in an uncritical introduction of the Christian symbolism of the West, for it is not easy to know what is going on in the mind of the user of a new form" (95). He asked:

> What is the relation of culture to religion? Granting that the church possesses universal truth, should this truth express itself through universal symbols, or should it take on local cultural modes? In introducing Christianity to a new social group, in helping a people to build and decorate its churches and to choose its hymns and pictures, should one strive to conform to existing local tastes, or aim to develop appreciation for traditional ecclesiastical art which came to acceptance in other ages and areas? (Fleming 1937, 10)

Fleming's discussions surrounding these examples demonstrate his belief in a tendency in human history towards forming a unified culture, not unlike the general Western mindset of the age. On the other hand, this likely "trend toward a common world culture," was, in his view, yet a long way from being realized. He observed that local communities continue to communicate "in certain peculiar and well-defined artistic ways," and that these ways "constitute for that people a living language. Sometimes these native moods and gifts become consecrated to our Lord, thus naturalizing Christianity. When this comes about the Christian churches of Asia and Africa speak to their own as they never could through Gothic, Greek or other Western forms, ritual and architectures. The message becomes embodied not only in words but also in music, color and stone" (Fleming 1937, 11).[6] Although the missionary community still protested in the early 20th century that Christianity was "still an alien religion (13)," Fleming was hopeful that, in time, this status would change. He referred in particular to the previous 15 years, during which "much has been done since the World Missionary Conference of 1910 to rectify this impression of foreignness" (13).

John Butler

Writing around the middle the 20th century, John F. Butler is another excellent representative of a forward-looking missiological perspective grounded in positive anthropological principles of respect for local cultures and of advocacy of local leadership in 'mission fields'. John Butler was an English Methodist missiologist and missionary who received his Ph.D. in Manchester in 1936. He served as professor of philosophy at the Madras Christian College (India) and as literary editor for Madras' Christian Literature Society for an extensive length of time (489).

In *Christian Art in India,* Butler discusses how foreign influences, not only from the West but also from India's middle-eastern and Asian neighbors, had a profound effect on the artistic development of its Christian art. Two of his main Indian areas of focus are the Agra Mission in northern India, where many paintings and engravings were used (Butler 1986, 64), and the Mar Thoma Church in the state of Kerala. He insists, however, that even before Christ, the Greeks had left their imprint through the conquest of Alexander the Great and the subsequent Hellenization of the region. Along the centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century, Arab traders also left their mark among Indian people groups (24-25).

Syrian Christian influence in the early centuries after Christ is still noticeable in the Mar Thoma church in the state of Kerala, a church with "Orthodox affiliation but Reformed Protestant influences" (Wickeri 2007, KL 878). Philip Wickeri describes it as "an Indian ethnic church with a strong commitment to ecumenism and social justice" (KL 913-914). Compared to the overall 2.3% Christian population in India, the region of Kerala boasts a much higher 30%, according to a 1991 census (KL 935-936). Wickeri makes no specific reference to intentional contextualization efforts among these Christians, but he does identify visible traits of "Indianness" such as norms of dress. In essence, rather than loading the burden of influence fully on the 'West'—first the Portuguese with papal Christendom, then the British—Butler describes a much larger pool of influencers on Indian art to include Greeks, Syrian Christians, Arabs, as well as the Chinese, who may have had the greatest impact on India by means of Persia until the arrival of the Portuguese (Butler 1986, 27).

Focusing mainly on architecture and visual art, however, Butler sees the arrival of the Portuguese as the most significant moment in the development of Christian art in India. "The Portuguese began their church building in India almost as soon as they arrived," he states (Butler 1986, 44). The designs were practically all European, "except in a few respects" (48). In spite of the common perception of the inculturation of that era as a "destructive force" since it interrupted "the natural development of Indian art with the intrusion of alien and incompatible styles" (60), John Butler suggested that Indian art, in that time in history, lacked innovation, and he questions whether it would have developed positively if the Portuguese had not brought in Western art.

The British rule in India for two centuries was certainly the most significant influence on Indian art until the more recent explosion of global communication through radio, television, and the internet. During the time of British domination, "most of the early work was for Western expatriates" (Butler 1986, 117). Butler explains the dynamics of conquest, art, and conversion during that age:

> The ethos of the age accepted that conquerors brought their art with them: the Muslims had done just that, centuries before. The theology of the age distinguished sharply between the one true religion and false ones. The early converts were subjected to so many social forces pulling them back from Christianity that they dared not flirt with forms which might look like, or might ease the way to, unchristian compromise . . .Yet Indian nationalism, both political and cultural, was beginning to stir (Butler 1986, 117-118).

In a nutshell, Butler identifies legitimate psychological, theological, and social reasons for the acceptance of imported artistic expressions as standard during that period. The church's longing for a move away from Western styles is a development of the 20th century which has been slowed and often stalled both by foreign missionaries and conservative Indian believers. Nevertheless, rather than criticizing believers of that age, Butler accepts the difficulty they faced in disregarding earlier associations of their art with heathenism:

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[6] All citations in this paragraph up to this point.

> This feeling, I am given to understand, is now much less widespread than it used to be; but as long as it exists *it calls for brotherly understanding*. The fact that we do not share certain fears and scruples, even the fact that we consider them false and obstructive, does not give us the right to domineer over those who feel them strongly as matters of conscience (Butler 1986, 123). (emphasis mine)

Throughout the 20th century, Christian artists in India produced wonderful works and have often helped shift the tide towards what Butler called 'Indian-ness." Although he saw himself as one who preferred "ancient beauty and emotion-soaked tradition" (Butler 1986, 159), Butler believed that Indian Christian art, by challenging and compelling people to look for the right answers, was "in line with God's purposes for the church today" (159).

In a 1956 article, "The Theology of Church Building in India," Butler outlines his philosophy on Christian art outside the West in eight theses before proposing ideas of contextualized church structures. While a thorough discussion of all eight theses is not possible in this article, two of Butler's theses discuss facts and perspectives that are of great relevance to the understanding of the place of arts in Christian faith expressions.

The heading of the first proposition states: "Christian art is necessary" (Butler 1956, 1-20). He explains that "the side of human nature which makes art is (for the community, even if not for every individual) an essential side which like the rest of human nature must be redeemed and used to God's glory, or else it will remain as sin and as a centre of the personality's disintegration" (1). In his second proposition he explains the historical aspects of contextualization of culture and art in Christian expansion. Although it was true that, until the 1920s, Western missions had "exported its own art into the newly evangelized areas" (2) (with notable exceptions, he says), during the "first great expansion" of the Church Christians had actually taken over "local art-forms and used them freely, till gradually out of them it developed forms uniquely its own" (2). Thus, with anthropological keenness and by the employment of historical facts, Butler affirms the value of arts as an integral part of human culture and calls on practitioners to reconsider the practices of the "first great expansion" of the Church.

Daniel Fleming and John Butler, as scholars of the development of Christian art in Asia, suggested that each situation could call for either the rejection or acceptance of local forms. Through their writings they attempted to impress on the readers the importance of trust in divine guidance, addressing not only missionaries, but primarily the local population. The implication of their suggestions is an affirmation of the need for a solid discipleship that leads to maturity among the new Christians, and a diminished dependence on outside leadership. Christian faith and love are testified in missions' efforts that hold to the relevance of obedience to the divine mandate of proclaiming the gospel and discipling the nations. They are accompanied by the assurance in the associated promise of Jesus' presence with his emissaries on their journeys and of the Holy Spirit as guide (Matthew 28:20). Likewise, they imply that a demonstration of love towards the people whom missionaries serve includes the validation of their creative spirit in culture—maintaining discernment as to sinful practices—and of their voices as newly incorporated partners in ministry.

Raymond Buker

Missionary Raymond Buker addressed the applicability and advantage of local musical tunes in cross-cultural settings in an article of the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* in 1964. The example he cites from Donald McGavran related to church musical practices in the Ivory Coast in 1962 leads him to conclude that, "this example of adopting the local cultural situation to the need in Christian development of a given group is indicative of what may well be done in any culture" (Buker 1964, 16). This particular article has the distinction of being featured in the very first edition of the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ).* (The EMQ is now published by Missio Nexus.) In the article, well in line with cultural anthropological principles, Buker points to seven cultural areas to which the missionary *must* give attention. The seventh—Hymnology—is portrayed as "a specific example of cultural adaption" (16).

Firstly, the missionary needs to "learn the factors of his given locality" (Buker 1964, 10). He affirms the unchangeability of the Gospel but understands its versatility in the area of communication. The missionary, he states, "must know not only the past, but also the present" (10). The second area is linguistics. Honoring the achievements of organizations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) during the early part of the 20th century, he acknowledges their immense contribution towards "the right use and knowledge of a given language to enter into the life of the people" (11). Thirdly, he mentions the importance of communication, focusing on the value of transportation, radio, and television as achievements that have made "the possibilities of reaching every person of every tongue and nation . . . within reason" (13).

Urbanization is the fourth area of attention. Transportation and life opportunities have allowed for the development of centers including "great unassimilated populations in our urban areas" (Buker 1964, 14). In classic anthropological fashion, Buker understands that, in order to "minister to the souls of these replaced, misplaced, peoples," there is not a single "technique . . . for each and every country. These people must be approached in terms of their particular cultures and needs" (14). Fifthly, Buker refers to McGavran's term, "*cultural overhang*" (15),[7] warning missionaries against applying their own cultural habits and understandings to the new culture where he or she is now living. The sixth area is that of social reforms. Buker acknowledges that remedial measures concerning social needs of a society are efforts that "Christians cannot oppose in principle" (16). However, he calls on missionaries to "implant the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that the layman of each cultural situation will be doing their part to fulfill God's will" (16).

Finally, very much in line with the topic of this review, Buker illustrates cultural adaptation, to which he is calling missionaries in a number of ways (the first six areas), by encouraging missionaries to apply anthropological principles in the area of hymnology. By "hymnology" he refers to the creation, collection, and utilization of hymns, i.e. Christian songs of worship and faith. Buker does not criticize the use of Western hymns as a whole and considers them "an integral part of the life of the Protestant church in Europe and America" (Buker 1964, 16). However, the method of translating these hymns "into the languages of the Orient and Africa, using tunes that have been written for the Western church" (16), have demonstrated a disregard for "anthropological rules and findings" (17). As a positive alternative to the 150 years (in round numbers at the time of the article—1964) during which "the representatives of Christ from the West have been teaching the Christian church of Asia, of Africa and of South America the hymns of the European and American church," Buker directs our attention to "the peoples' movement" described by McGavran about the Ivory Coast (16). [8] In this environment, after unsuccessful attempts by missionaries to help the local communities "retain the tunes or the words" (17), being unaware of the local culture's 5-note musical scale and its correlation to their tonal language, it was an indigenous leader who, stirred to share the gospel through song in the surrounding villages, "made up his own theme song," singing "it to a tune of his own people" (17). He relates that, "during the next few months the Africans composed many hymns to their own tunes. Now the tribes of these parts are edified in their own worship and aided in the spread of their faith by the indigenous music directly related to the Gospel" (17). Buker concludes: "This example of adapting the local cultural situation to the need in Christian development of a given group is indicative of what may well be done in any culture" (17).

Conclusion

This article celebrates the contributions of three missiologists of the 20th century who encouraged best anthropological practices in missions, in particular touching the use of local music and arts. Their spiritual insights, supported by respectful and thorough consideration of cultural diversity, provide an early vision of the potential of local church creative artists to develop artistic works that communicate their faith in ways that can best engage their own cultures. Their discussions spoke strongly to cross-cultural workers of supporting the local agency of believers as they engaged with their communities.

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[7] Reference to Donald McGavran (1959, 85).

[8] Reference to Donald McGavran (1955, 13).

These three representatives are a very small sample of missional thinkers around the world that were/have been/are in essence, under this label or not, ethnodoxologists. In fact, they are all from the English-speaking world although with a broad vision for the whole world. There are certainly many other missiologists and/or anthropologists from all continents who have key insights and an understanding of ethnodoxological principles. Their work and inspiration, even though often limited to their local spheres of influence, will hopefully be broadcast to the missiological and theological community as well as the churches in the near future.

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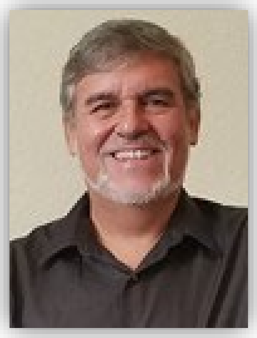

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The Christian Missionary Enterprise and Its Effects on Idemili (Igbo, Nigeria) Culture

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This study examines the impact of Christian missionary enterprises on the socio-cultural settings of Idemili, Anambra State, Nigeria. The study employs qualitative research methods such as interviews, observations and literature review to collect data; a phenomenological approach is used to analyze the data. Through an analysis of primary and secondary sources, the research highlights ways in which Christian missionaries influenced the beliefs, practices, and values of the Idemili people. Through their efforts, Christianity spread, leading to the establishment of schools, hospitals, and other institutions that brought about social and economic development. However, there have also been conflicts with traditional cultural practices and divisions among family members. The findings suggest that the introduction of Christianity led to the transformation of the socio-cultural landscape of the Idemili, resulting in a blend of traditional and Christian beliefs and practices. The study concludes that while Christian missionary work has brought many positive changes to Idemmili, it is important to also preserve and respect the people's cultural heritage.

Introduction

The Idemili clan lives in a conglomeration of Igbo towns that make up the present Idemili North and Idemili South Local Government Areas of Anambra State. The history of the people of Idemili is linked with the Idemili River which is networked through towns like Obosi, Ogidi, Oraukwu, Nnobi and Ojoto. The name, Idemili, was derived from the river, while the snake called Eke Idemili lives in the river. The people of Idemili regard the snake as a representative of their deity and therefore, a custodian of their culture and tradition. Idemili people, just like other Igbo clans, had ancient cultural values that made them unique. Nonetheless, the encounter between the people and Christian missionaries introduced new ideas which consequently brought about a new form of value orientation and societal development in the area. These new ideas can be seen clearly in the changed religious and social lives of the people. Every culture exhibits both a predisposition toward stability and a tendency toward change. Thus, while the people of Idemili have enthusiastically accepted Christianity and westernization, this does not imply that they have done so at the expense of their own identity or by abandoning their ancestral culture in all its aspects. That is to say that even though Christianity seems to have replaced the ancient religion, some traditional ideas and values still exist in the hearts of most Idemili people, even among those who have converted to the new faith. This study is designed to investigate critically the impact of Christianity on the socio-cultural life and values of the Idemili people. The research shall consider the socio-political and economic values of Christianity on the people to show that people adapt to changing circumstances to meet needs, particularly when the old order is no longer beneficial to human development and has become counterproductive. The study will further make a deliberate effort to discover elements of traditional socio-cultural values that persist and the positive impact of Christianity on these cultural values.

Over the years, Christianity has been attacked for its negative impacts on the cultural values of the Igbo people. The introduction of Christianity to Igbo land has been considered by some socio-religious analysts as a challenge to the old order as was put forward by Achebe (1958, 176), who wrote that "the white man has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." Just like Achebe, other authors have emphasized the negative impacts of Christianity on African Traditional Religion and culture. The implication of this position is that the Christian faith has had no positive effect on the African people's cultural and social existence. Such a negative perspective of Christianity ignores the contributions of Christianity in education, business, health, housing, politics, culture, economy, and social services, among other areas. There is, therefore, a need to examine the impact of Christianity on the lives of the people of Idemili with the view to striking a balance in the evaluation of its positive and negative impacts on the people. A good number of communities were chosen for a closer investigation in this study. These communities include Nnobi, Nkpor, Ogidi, Oraukwu, Obosi, Alor and Umuoji. They were selected for their historical significance, cultural diversity, economic activities, and geographical representation in relation to Christian missionary activities in the area. Idemili culture in this study will be used interchangeably with Igbo culture since Idemili is a clan in the larger Igbo culture area.

Christianity in the Literature on Nigeria

The encounter of Christianity with the socio-cultural values of the Igbo/African people left influences that have attracted several scholarly analyses with diverse approaches or inquires. A good number have written on the geographical enclave of Igboland from the perspective of conflict between Christianity and traditional socio-cultural values amongst converts and non-converts, while others have highlighted the disintegration of the old system and the eventual rise of new socio-cultural values resulting in moral decadence in Igboland. It suffices to state that while this research will maintain a focus on the Idemili in Anambra State, it will review the various divergent viewpoints of scholars of Christianity in Nigeria with the intention of identifying researchable gaps in the existing literature.

Ekechi (1971), in his effort to denounce aspersions cast on Igbo religion and beliefs, and the consequential misconception the Europeans have about African religion, proposed that the Igbo society was set ablaze by the revolutionary teaching of the missionaries, and he re-echoed the question whether Christianity was not a license for outlandish excesses and the violation of the traditional moral code. Ekechi seems not to have noticed the positive impacts of Christianity on the Igbo socio-cultural settings.

Despite being a work of historical fiction, *Things Fall Apart,* written by Chinua Achebe in 1958, has become one of the literary works that must be read in any anthropological study of the Igbo people. Achebe describes the Igbo as a people who were self-contained. That the Igbo are self-contained implies that they had little or no contact with people who were not Igbo, but still had a way of life and a system that worked effectively for them until the system was allegedly destroyed by British invaders and missionaries. According to Achebe's depiction, the white man sent in his warriors before his missionaries. While the troops employed force to dismantle the society, the missionaries mostly did so through the establishment of mission schools that started to alter the Igbo worldview. Overall, Achebe's work also fails to describe any positive outcomes of Christianity for the Igbo people.

Adichie (2006) believes that the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe. In effect, she says, "I am Nigerian because the white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came." She disproves the myths that persist about Africa being traditional and backward through juxtaposition, showing that colonization really created a cross-cultural fusion where the two are intermingled. In doing so, she deftly refutes common misconceptions about traditional Africa and demonstrates its rich cultural diversity, yet she too could not point to any positive impacts from the Christian religion on the Igbo people.

Nmah (2016) investigated critically the religious values, beliefs and practices among the Awka people of Nigeria in relation to the socio-religious conflict associated with the Imoka festival and burial rites. His research is useful for academic knowledge and practical understanding intended to correct misinterpretations and misinformation surrounding the Awka. Nmah focused his research on identifying the conflict areas between religions; however he did not identify areas of harmonious encounter. Sibani (2018) posits that western culture had tremendous impact on African traditional society in both positive and negative dimensions. His point is that, though the encounter posed a challenge to Africans at the initial stage, it gave birth to a hybrid culture that is currently beneficial to African people. Though his work is thought provoking, he did not cover all areas of the encounter between African culture and Christianity, some of which this study intends to address.

Metala (2019) examined the impact of Christianity on African culture in Nigeria. In his study, he emphasized the religious way of life of Africans and Europeans. He considered most especially the modes of worship, birth, sacred streams, marriage customs, magic and witchcraft, just to mention a few. Metala asserts that Christianity as it was presented from western culture had great impact on the African way of worshipping God. Metala made recommendations of inter-religious communication and respect for each other's beliefs. However, having the whole of Nigeria as the scope in a work of this nature was too broad given the diversities of religio-cultural practices among the various Nigerian ethnic groups, and as such, his work could not have addressed specific issues correctly in particular areas like Idemili in Anambra State.

Onwuegbuchulam (2021) opines that Christian missionaries presented the Christian Bible and faith as standing in contradiction to the cultural practices of the African people. He observes that many Africans who like to abide by the demands of their culture and to participate in them whilst still claiming to be Christians have adopted a kind of schizophrenic identity. He raises the question as to whether the Christian Bible and faith are incompatible with African culture and traditional practices. Although Onwuegbuchulam did consider it a dilemma, there is a hybrid produced by the encounter over these years that his work did not identify.

Nkwoemezie believes that "when Christianity arrived, it was not only a religious force, but also a veritable social and cultural force, disrupting the Igbo's initial idyllic, happy, and harmonious life lived and observed" (2003, 139). Ibenwa (2004) observes that with the coming of Christianity and westernization, farming work of crop cultivation and animal rearing declined and people now sought white-collar occupations in cities. This has resulted in the importation of almost everything and in urban overpopulation. He seems not to have noticed how missionary enterprise brought about improved commercialization among the Igbo. Isichei points out inter alia that "the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were an 'age of anxiety' in the whole Igboland owing to the intrusion of British culture and eventual conquest and assertion resulting in a cauldron of social and cultural instability" (1976, 167). Erojikwe and Nnanna opine that "through a calculated long-range plan for total wipeout of indigenous culture and religious beliefs and practices the missionaries turned the people against their own cultural principle and values" (2021, 30).

These scholars may not have observed that, actually, the arrival of Christianity marked a turning point in the cultural setup of the lgbo people. Though the traditional aspects of their beliefs have been considerably weakened through the influence of Christianity and the rapid developments of modern times, they still persist today. Their disappearance in future is not within sight. This situation is at the foundation of this research work. The study will interrogate the precarious equilibrium between Christianity and the socio-cultural norms in different communities in Idemili with the view to promoting a greater understanding of the cultural variety that exists among religious communities. The study will further examine ways in which the people's traditional values sustained a feeling of continuity and community, while Christianity offered a moral foundation.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Evolutionary Theory of Social Change

The evolutionary theory of social change is one of the theoretical frameworks used in this study. According to Kanavagh, et al (2021), social change is the alteration of the social order of a society which may include changes in social institutions, social behaviours or social relations. It may lead to social transformation. The evolutionary theory gained prominence in the nineteenth century. The evolutionist theorists tied Christianity with western culture, and described Christianity in the stream of history as one of the great religions of the world. Auguste Comte, known as the father of sociology, believed in the evolutionary model. According to him, just as organisms evolve from simple to more complex, so do societies evolve into higher levels of complexity and organization. Those societies that don't adapt fast enough will fall behind.

The concept of social evolution is rooted in the theory of biological evolution by Charles Darwin, who proposed the idea that everything in the universe originated from simple beginnings. He believed that everything has undergone an evolutionary process to reach its current state. This process might be applicable to religion because it too started off very unstructured and lowly, just like any other phenomenon which has undergone evolutionary change in the context of historical circumstances. It is important to note that religion has historically been used as a catalyst for both positive or negative societal transformation. Religious disagreement, friction, or conflict has resulted in wars and genocides. Religion, on the other hand, has ushered in new, constructive developments. It is therefore necessary to point out the complex connection between social change and religion.

Religion, according to some Neo-Marxists, can be a force for positive social change. Neo-Marxist Otto Maduro cited Liberation Theory in Latin America as an example of religion driving social change. According to Weber, the principles and values of the Protestant Church gave rise to capitalism in Western Europe around the 17th century. It is against the above theoretical background that religion can be viewed as a catalyst for social transformation. This study will undertake an investigation into the role that Christianity has played in the economic and socio-political revolution in Idemili, Anambra state.

Culture Lag Theory

Culture lag theory as expounded by the American sociologist, W.F. Ogburn, holds that material culture changes more rapidly than non-material culture, so that a lag is created between the two realms. Culture lag theorists consider the continuity of traditional beliefs amidst all religious changes. They emphasize that religion as a system of beliefs dies hard. Metuh adds that "African world views have an adaptive potential which respond to the impulses of change and yet hold their own" (1985, viii). This explains the persistence of traditional values in a changing culture. The theory has been criticized, but its main contention is usually accepted and makes a lot of sense in explaining the ability of African converts to combine traditional values with western Christian culture. The theory is basically concerned with the dialogue between Christianity and culture through the church. Onwubiko refers to this encounter as "a natural interaction between faith and culture in an effort to evangelize the people of the culture" (1992, 1). In the same vein Achilike (1995) termed this phenomenon, "culture interactionist." This theory explains that through enculturation, faith is grasped in a more profound and personal manner by the local people, and it can take deeper root among them (Saldanha 1996). Ogbuji (2015) states that enculturation is the cultural re-expression of faith.

The African religion originally practiced in Idemili is not about to totally disappear, despite many impinging foreign ideas. It has rather retained much of its past. Many African Christians still hold on to traditional religion, cultural practices and ideas. The encounter with Christianity in Idemili has influenced the cultural identity of different communities in the area, yet enculturation processes have contributed to the development of a unique cultural identity which reflects both Christian and traditional elements. Through this process individuals in Idemili have been socialized into both Christian and traditional value systems. The study explores the role of family, community, and religious institutions in shaping the beliefs and practices of individuals through the process of enculturation. With the introduction of Christianity in Idemili, there is a transmission of not only traditional cultural knowledge but also Christian doctrines and narratives. In the encounter between Christianity and socio-cultural values in Idemili, certain cultural practices transformed and evolved. This influenced rituals, ceremonies, and the daily life of the people leading to a blend of Christian and traditional elements. Today, the blend in the two cultures can be seen in the area of marriage ceremonies where the traditional form of marriage and the church wedding complement each other, burial rites where there is no conflict between the Christian and traditional funeral rites for a deceased person, and traditional title taking. For instance, the churches in Idemili area can now accept a traditionally titled man as a fully fledged member of the church. There is observance of both Sunday and traditional market days as non-working days, and so on.

Idemili Traditional Religion

As mentioned above, the name Idemili was derived from the biggest river in the area that flows through the length of the towns. Animals in the river, especially the totemic python, referred to as 'Eke Idemili', are revered. It is believed that the first man who founded Idemili came from the river goddess and as a result, people pay homage to the deity. The people of Idemili regard the totemic python as a representative of the deity, and as such the python is revered to the extent that it is taboo to harm or kill it. In fact, it is considered a heinous crime to kill a python, and the killer is compelled to accord the snake a befitting burial.

Idemili is a derivation of two words: "Ide" which means king or owner and "Mmili" which means water or river; the combination of the two words, "Idemili," describes the king or owner of the river, and this refers to the river python; thus, the python is believed to be the king or owner of the river and the messenger of the goddess of the river. When pythons visit homes they are believed to be on a spiritual mission to deliver messages from Idemili. The Idemili python species is short and fat with clean spots, and is not venomous. It has never been known to bite humans. It is usually removed from homes with long sticks and taken back to the bush where the stick is thrown away together with the python. The Idemili python is not worshipped, but rather respected as the messenger of the river goddess; hence the relationship is more social than religious and is regarded as one of the socio-cultural values of Idemili people. Amadiume and Umeji (cited in Udengwu, Erojikwe and Nnanna, 2021) assert that Idemili is a very powerful goddess who has her shrines in all communities through which the river passes, and the sacred python is her totemic symbol. The Idemili priest is regarded as a 'female man' because the priest is required to dress in a wrapper like a woman. Hence it is said that the goddess prefers female gender attire, though ironically she forbids women from entering her shrine.

The Coming of Christianity to Idemili

In this section, we present information obtained from our research with Christian elders in Idemili communities. Our field research was complemented with further information obtained from the existing literature on Christianity in the Idemili area. We observed that the earliest communities to witness the presence of Christianity in Idemili were the towns of Obosi, Ogidi, Oba, Nnobi, and Nkpor. This was because of their proximity to Onitsha, the seat of the first Christian missionaries in Igboland, which has been described by Kanu as the "catalyst center at the turn of the twentieth century" (2003, 94).

Obosi welcomed a band of Christians from Onitsha on Easter Day, 1882, with Archdeacon Johnson as the primary missionary. The then traditional ruler of Obosi, Igwe Anene, gave land for a mission station near Akuora market. Mr. J. Strong from Sierra Leone laid the foundation of the earliest bamboo-walled church with a wattle roof, measuring 60 feet by 20 feet. On December 28th, Holy Innocent Day, Archdeacon Johnson performed the first baptism of Obosi converts in the presence of Bishop Ajayi Crowther at Christ Church, Onitsha. A total of 22 children, 26 adult males, and 19 females were baptized. In 1900, land was purchased from Chigbogwu Ogbuezie for two pounds ten shillings for the construction of a new St. Andrews Church with a zinc roof.

Christianity entered Ogidi in 1892 as a result of missionary expansion of the Church Missionary Society, exactly thirty five years after its arrival at Onitsha. The long delay to the arrival in Ogidi was as a result of the war between Onitsha and Ogidi. This was in addition to the lack of adequate personnel and materials necessary for mission expansion, which restricted missionary activities to Onitsha. Furthermore, in 1846, which is seven years after the establishment of the first Christian mission at Onitsha, a prophet was said to have arisen in the Onitsha hinterland called "Odesoruelu" who was believed to be a restorer of the old practices. His agents visited a number of towns within a ten mile radius of Onitsha, including Ogidi, Obosi, Nkwelle Ezunaka, Nsugbe and Ogbunike. They did not visit Onitsha itself, because the white man was there. Odesoruelu was protesting against the rise in food prices which he said the presence of Europeans and their agents on the Niger had brought about. Also the small pox epidemic of the same year 1864 gave added impetus to his appeal for the restoration of the old way of life, and for a general rise in moral standards of the Igbo people. For this, it would have been difficult for Christianity to spread to Ogidi without the instrumentality of Walter Amobi.

The move to extend Christianity to Ogidi was initiated by an Ogidi chief who felt that Onitsha had an edge over other Igbo towns because of the presence of the missionaries there. Walter Okerulu Okafor Amobi, (later Igwe Amobi 1 of Ogidi), who was living with Obi Ogene of Onitsha, was instrumental in bringing missionaries to Ogidi. Okerulu Amobi, who was attending the Anglican adult school at Onitsha, became a Christian and was baptized as Walter. Early in 1892 five Anglican missionaries led by reverend Henry H. Dobinson, arrived in Amafo Aka odu in Etiti Ogidi-Ani where the parents of Walter Amobi were living. In the missionary group were some early Igbo converts, namely, Thomas D.I. Anyamene, Theophilus B. Akpom, Joshua Kodilinye and George Nicholas Anyaegbunam (who was in future to become the first Anglican priest in Ogidi, 1913–1916).

The Church Missionary Society pioneered stations around Ogbunike, Nsugbe, Ukpo, Umudioka, and Nkpor between 1900 and 1906, with missionary contact with Nkpor in 1904. The Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) established itself in the area in 1906. The Odozi Obodo Sabbath Mission arrived in Nkpor as the third Christian denomination.

According to Muogbo (2019), the introduction of Christianity to Umuoji came after the British colonial army's military conquest and subjugation of their traditional governmental structures in 1904. The establishment of the Catholic Church in an Umuoji hamlet in November 1905 was a watershed moment in the village's history. Chief Okafor Ugwumba, the then traditional ruler of Umuoji, took the daring and foresighted decision to invite Rev. Father McDermoth to build a mission in Umuoji through his friend, Obi Okosi 1 of Onitsha. As a result, the economic and social fortunes of the hamlet have been inextricably linked to the arrival of Catholicism in Umuoji. Father McDermoth arrived in Umuoji in 1905 and was welcomed by the then traditional ruler, Igwe Okafor Ugwumba, who received the name Michael after his adult baptism. The sacrament of baptism was first administered in Umuoji in 1908 to a total of 50 persons. Rev. Fr. Joseph Shanahan, accompanied by Fathers L.J. Ward, Terrell, and McDermott, delivered the sacraments of Holy Communion and confirmation for the first time in 1909, following rigorous catechism classes and tests. Rev. Fr. Eugene Groetz performed the first infant baptism in the same year. In the same year, Mr. George Chigbo was appointed as the first indigenous catechist. In 1912, there was another mass baptism. Fr. L.J Ward, accompanied by Fr. F.E. Groetz, was supervising Umuoji station from Onitsha from the commencement of their evangelization effort, but in 1912, Fr. Groetz took up a residence in Umuoji, becoming the first priest to live among the people. The first Christian marriage was celebrated in 1914. The first church in Umuoji was started in 1922 and was completed in 1927. It became an independent parish in 1951. Fr. Matthew Osita Udegbunam (1970-1974) was Umuoji's first Nigerian parish priest. During their evangelizing, the early missionaries in the community established educational institutions that grew into schools.

Prior to the coming of the missionaries, the people of Alor had been practicing traditional religion which involves belief in the indispensability of God Almighty as well as diviners and ancestors. They had various shrines with the major one at the main market square in Nkwo Alor. Particular days of the year were set aside for the sole purpose of celebrating the God Almighty by way of various rituals.

According to an interview conducted with Chief Okafor Ugoka, when the Alor people learnt of the “destructive effect” of the penetration of the white man into the neighboring towns, they resolved that any Alor person who would facilitate such an incursion into Alor would be put to death. They invited a famous native medicine man from Oraeri to prepare the most potent preventive medicine in an attempt to ensure that no such incursion ever happened. Incidentally, according to Chief Ugoka, the incursion did happen. In 1907, some officers of the colonial government in charge of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria arrived at Nkwo Alor and ordered that all Alor men who had guns should surrender them. They complied because of fear. The white men set the guns ablaze. In this way, they defused any form of resistance. The highly weakened people became completely submissive to the white man's rule.

Alor was not particularly fast or early in accepting outside influence. It was around 1908 when something started changing. When at last the Alor people capitulated to the white man, and their guns were destroyed, Nweke Ugochukwu's Ogbutu of Uruezeani was appointed a court messenger at Ojoto Uno. In 1914 he came back to Alor with his brothers and they brought with them the Roman Catholic Mission. Thus, the R.C.M. made the first Christian contact with Alor. However the missionaries applied coercion to win membership. They compelled attendance at church services and seized livestock and other personal effects. This caused the failure of the first attempt to plant Christianity in Alor.

In 1915, the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society who had been established at Nnobi and Adazi Ani planned evangelical outreach to Alor. Although this did not firmly plant the church at Alor, there was enough influence that some Alor people began to secretly attend church services at Adazi Ani and Oraukwu. They even sent their children to attend schools in these towns. Eventually, the Anglican Church came to Alor with the founding of St. Paul's church by Chief Ogbue Okobe Ibekwute through the assistance of Igwe Ezeokoli I of Nnobi. Towards 1916, the founders of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in Ezi Alor assembled at the residence of Chief Ogbue Okobe Ibekwute at Umuoshi village and began to use it for worship and as a school too. Through the agency of one Mr. Anyaoku of Obosi, then a court clerk and interpreter at Nnobi, a teacher was secured for the young mission. On Friday, the 17th of January 1917, Mr. Isaiah Okeke of Nnewi Ichi arrived in Alor as the first school teacher. He was posted by Rev. Ekpunobi, the priest in charge of Nnewi parish. The first proper service in St. Paul's Anglican Church, Alor was conducted by the first church teacher, Mr. Isaiah Okeke. As a memorial to this great event, every Eke Sunday became a special service day, and open-air evangelism was referred to as Okwuchukwu Uka Eke.

The Alor people's initial reluctance to co-operate with the white man gradually changed as they began to realize the benefits accruing from such a relationship. The white man brought exotic gifts in order to soften their attitude towards the new Christian religion. Those appointed as warrant chiefs saw it as social prestige to relate to the introduction of Christianity and this made them willing to offer their residences for churches and schools.

The gospel message got to Nnobi in 1908 through the instrumentality of his Royal Majesty, Igwe Solomon Ezeokoli (Ezebube of Nnobi) even before his conversion to Christianity. He was the son of Ezebube of Umuagu, Nnobi and he was a traditional doctor by vocation and famous for treating diseases that afflicted people of Nnobi and surrounding environs. He had established a base in Obosi for the treatment of the sick in the area. Ezeokoli had extraordinary foresight; his regular healing visits exposed him more to the Christian missionaries. C.M.S. had already firmly established the gospel in Obosi, and Mazi Onyeabo was then serving as a catechist when Ezeokoli was converted and baptized as Solomon. Through the friendship of Onyeabo and Ezeokoli, the Christian missionaries of the C.M.S. entered the town of Nnobi. Nnobi became the spring board for the spread of the gospel to towns like Uke, Ideani, Oraukwu, Alor Nnokwa, Adazienu, Ichida, Azigbo and Igboukwu.

Chief Solomon Ezeokoli became warrant chief of Ngo Nnobi in 1911, and this attracted the jealousy of the warrant chief of Awuda village at that time, Solomon Ezeomeisheuku, son of Ezeokigbo. He felt that the great popularity of Solomon Ezeokoli was a threat to his popularity and performance with his own people. This made him try to undermine Ezeokoli's influence by introducing a rival Christian sect, the Roman Catholic Mission in Nnobi.

In 1936, the issue of dogma reared its head and became a significant challenge to the church. The issue was whether the polygamists within the fold would be allowed to participate in or receive Holy Communion. While the Anglican Church was trying to resolve the issue, the concerned polygamists within the fold of believers who would not wait for an amicable solution broke away and formed their own new church known as the Salvation Army Church.

The Christian religion arrived at Oraukwu town in 1914 through itinerant evangelists from Nnobi. They did not establish any church, but simply came to preach and returned back to

Nnobi. But like the biblical farmer, the seed they sowed fell on good soil, to a large extent. The earliest converts, such as Isaac Okongwu, Julius Akanegbu, Wilfred Ewelukwa, Michael Ikeme, Okafor Odunukwe, Okafor Obialigha, Eleazer Onyedibe and Gilbert Obojiofor, had to risk going to Adazi-Enu for their religious services and fellowship as they were against the prevailing conservative community. They set a pattern for others, demonstrating clearly that the God they had discovered was more powerful than the local deities of their forefathers. In 1915, the Church Missionary Society arrived at Oraukwu through an indigene, Abraham Ejidike. He returned from Arondizuogu with the good news. He summoned the meeting of the elders and traditional rulers and informed them of his intention to introduce a new religious worship and school system to the community. He solicited their support and invited them to attend religious services and fellowship on Sundays as well as to send their children to school on weekdays. The compound of Chief Ndulue Ogbunanwafo from Otta village served for both meeting-church service and school. The response to this call was quite impressive, including people of great weight such as Warrant Chiefs, Uzochukwu and Ezinwa of Amaeze village. They encouraged those who wanted to attend the religious services to send their children to school as well. Those early converts, who had been attending services at Adazi-Enu, were relieved of the stress of travelling to Adazi Enu for services. They therefore joined the new and only C.M.S. church in town.

The Roman Catholic Church arrived at Oraukwu in 1916 though Moses Obianonwo from Amaeze village, who also had returned from Arondizuogu. He visited many elders and leaders of the town, including Chief Uzochukwu. He tried to convince them that the R.C.M. was by far better than the C.M.S. that had been established by Mr. Ejidike. When Moses Obianonwo could not succeed in attracting the patronage of his village chiefs and leaders, he threw in the towel by joining the rival group, the C.M.S. This switching over led to a power tussle between him and Mr. Ejidike. Mr. Ejidike eventually joined the R.C.M., soliciting and gaining the full support of Chief Metu. Chief Metu threw in his support for the R.C.M. Church and also invited the mission at Adazi Nnukwu to come to their aid. Missionaries were sent to assist Mr. Ejidike in establishing the Roman Catholic Church firmly.

In 1918, the C.M.S. Church had been well established except that it had not been given a name. It existed and operated simply as C.M.S. Church, Oraukwu. The overzealous members went further to destroy shrines of local deities, to capture, kill and eat animals consecrated to deities, and to touch or associate with things considered unclean. This generated oppositions to the Christians which resulted in frequent clashes and frictions in Oraukwu. The C.M.S. Church lost many prospective converts by its inflexible application of policies, and this, to a very great extent, explains why the Anglicans today are smaller in population than the Roman Catholics, even though the C.M.S. arrived first in Oraukwu.

The Impact of Christianity in Idemili

Christianity has had a significant impact on traditional Igbo culture. According to Ekpunobi and Ezeaku (2011), aspects of traditional values and morality have been influenced by processes of modernity that are passing through African societies. To deal with the expanding socio-religious difficulties of modern society, traditional ideals and morals are donning new frameworks. This corresponds with Woodberry's argument: "That Western modernity, in its current form, is profoundly shaped by religious factors, and although many aspects of this 'modernity' have been replicated in countries around the world, religion shaped what spread, where it spread, how it spread, and how it adapted to new contexts" (2012, 244).

Positive Impacts:

Educational Development

Christianity has impacted communities in Idemili socially, religiously, economically, educationally and politically. The most important impact was the introduction of western-style education, which enabled the people to grasp the white man's language, so reducing the type of damage that occurred prior to the creation of a lingua franca shared by Europeans and the Igbo. This has enabled the people to become more active in global scientific and technological growth.

The C.M.S. and the Roman Catholic missions carried out their missionary activities using the school approach. Uruakpa (1996) confirms that the two missionary groups had a common aim of Christianizing the people through western education. When the students had not gotten fully immersed in the traditional beliefs of their diverse cultures, the missionaries felt it simpler, and rightfully so, to achieve their goal of conversion through the school. Second, through the schools, they hoped to produce indigenous persons who would help spread the gospel in vernacular languages among their people. Furthermore, the growth of colonial government and the expansion of mercantile houses necessitated the education of people to fill positions such as clerks, messengers, church teachers, chefs, and so on. As a result, for the first time, Idemili people saw education as a means to economic potential.

In Oraukwu the church established the famous Central School and the Community Primary school. The church engaged in financing the education of pupils from poor families. Prior to 1949 when the school attained the status of having standard six, pupils had to travel to neighbouring towns like Nnewi and Nnobi to complete their primary school education. In 1955, the church was granted permission to build a modern school for girls. Land was procured with concerted effort, and the school took off in 1958. Later on, the modern school was converted to a grammar school for boys in 1959. This school competed with and even surpassed some of the known secondary schools in the Eastern Region. This school so far has produced and is still in the business of producing a lot of prominent people.

In Ogidi, the Church Missionary Society successfully constructed their mission station. The C.M.S. founded schools and a hospital in 1907. The Roman Catholic Church flourished in Ogidi, as is evident in their schools founded at Odida, Uru-Ogidi and Nkwo-Eziudo in 1925. St. Vincent Central School was founded in January 1953, with the late Mr. A.N. Udeogalanya as its first headmaster. The technical school, initially opened in 1966, was shuttered following a conflict in 1972, but reopened later that year and was taken over by the government. The current Ogidi vocational school was founded in 1965 and became Ogidi Boys Secondary School in 1971. It is now known as Archbishop Heery Secondary School, Ogidi.

Missionary schools in Idemili communities grew tremendously as more parents and guardians became aware of the need of acquiring western education, which was then one of the key criteria for assessing development and advancement in this part of the world. As the products of the local mission schools began to increase in number, the commercial advantages of education became very evident.

Commercial Revolution

The elimination of the overseas slave trade was most likely the most dramatic influence in changing the Igbo people's economic system in the nineteenth century. It is documented that missionary activity and legal treaties with local chiefs on the banks of the Niger were the first steps in putting an end to the slave trade. The goal to effectively end the slave trade prompted fresh initiatives by British traders and authorities, as well as new relationships with local rulers. The abolition also resulted in a shift to legal trade in Igboland, particularly in palm oil. This was the precursor to Igboland's commercial importance. According to Guardian (2023), life for the Igbo community takes place in the busy marketplace. The market is more than just a location to do business; it serves as the focus for social connections, cultural exchanges, and economic activities. Their enterprising drive and shared language play an important role in business dealings, dating back to their participation in the slave trade in the 15th century.

Egwuonwu and Mgbemena (2019) note that with the arrival of Christianity in Igboland people began to notice huge positive changes in many areas. As movements evolved between rural communities and mission stations, people came to sell to strangers or to answer the clarion call of the gospel and its associated pecuniary incentives. This new economic system which entails free participation by all and sundry was the foundation for the free enterprising nature of the people of the new Igbo nation. According to Afigbo (1981) the impact of this development on Igbo society was quite far reaching. It vested a new value on money as an end in itself, and the Igbo came to say, "*ego bekena-ekwuokwu*" (the white man's money talks). Hitherto, people had made money and accumulated wealth in order to marry wives, raise large yam barns, and buy admission to the revered title and secret societies, since it was from these that prestige and status derived. But with the new development money came to have value for its own sake and to convey status even when not invested in the purchase of status in the traditional manner.

Through Christian missionary activities the Igbo people are contributing to a scientific revolution characterized by inventions and innovation in different fields of human endeavour that will enable Nigeria to enter into a new era of industrialization. This will help Nigeria free itself from the economic yoke placed on it by both the western and eastern influences.

Health Care Delivery

Modern medicine was introduced into the Idemili communities through the activities of the Christian missionaries and this resulted in improved healthcare. Before western influence in Igbo land, traditional medicine was employed to ensure healthy living. However, in order to gain expertise in traditional African medicine, one frequently had to be inducted into a secret society, as many aspects of this type of medicine can only be passed down to initiates. Traditional medicine's relevance, however, waned at the arrival of the missionaries with modern medicine. Traditional medicine was frowned upon due to its affiliation with "witchcraft", supernatural and magical overtones, and was referred to as "*juju*" or "native medicine" because it employed charms and symbols to cast or remove spells. Some forms of treatment also included ritual acts such as animal sacrifices to placate or curry favour from the divinities if the illness was thought to be caused by divine afflictions, particularly in the treatment of mentally ill individuals.

Western medical missionaries arrived in Idemili in the beginning of the 20th century, bringing with them not only Christian doctrine but also cutting-edge medical procedures (Smith 2005). Acknowledging the health issues encountered by the community, the missionaries established clinics with basic amenities to offer medical attention to the locals. These clinics developed into more complete healthcare delivery systems over time. In close collaboration with the locals, the missionaries trained members of the communities in fundamental medical procedures and established a network of community health professionals (Johnson & Okeke 1998). These community health professionals were essential in helping to provide basic medical requirements, preventative treatment, and health education. Additionally, the missionaries helped to establish a hospital in Idemili (Iyi Enu hospital, Ogidi) that was staffed by both medically qualified missionaries and local healthcare professionals, and had state-of-the-art amenities (Brown & Igwe 2010). This hospital developed into a major hub for healthcare services in the area, including immunizations, maternity care, and health education initiatives in addition to medical treatment. The evolution of Idemili's healthcare delivery system was significantly influenced by missionary activity. The missionaries were instrumental in lowering mortality rates, increasing community well-being, and expanding access to healthcare by integrating western medical methods and working together with the indigenous population.

Re-Evaluation of Certain Traditional / Cultural Practices

Christian ideals were opposed to very many religious practices of the Idemili people. Some features of the two religions were seriously at odds. Christian missionaries held to western ideas that were considered to be superior to the Idemili traditional worldview. The missionaries believed, as noted by Woodberry (2012), that Christianity came to reconstruct states along "godly" lines and limit sinful human institutions. Before the coming of the missionaries, the birth of twins was an occurrence that the people did not understand; they believed it was an indication that the local deities were displeased with them. Having twins was a curse or an abomination. As a result, these defenseless children were either executed immediately or abandoned to die in the "evil" forest. The same fate befell everyone who suffered from any inexplicable ailment, and from most communicable diseases, such as leprosy, small pox, tuberculosis—any sickness that caused the body to waste or distend, or were classified as unexplained. Sufferers were frequently abandoned to die alone in the wicked forest, with no funeral ceremonies.

Casting out the sick was thought of as a manner of protecting the living and their environment from the wrath of the deities, who might be offended if the ailing person was permitted to die within the homestead. As has already been noted, along with having certain moral implications, these bans have their roots in religious practices and rituals associated with Ala, the earth divinity. Udengwu, Erojikwe and Nnanna affirm that "religion and culture are inseparable. Religion reflects the cultures of its origin embedded in the philosophy, symbols, values, customs, norms and beliefs and worldview of the culture group" (2021, 27). The ecological holy earth, variously referred to as Ani/Ana/Ala in different dialects of Igboland was at the top of the list of deities revered by the Igbo. It was considered a measure of respect to mother earth not to bury corpses that died from unknown causes within her gut.

The Osu caste system was a cultural practice in Idemili before the coming of the Christian missionaries. It was considered a taboo for a freeborn to get married to an osu/ohu, or have anything in common with an osu/ohu (outcast). When Christianity came into Idemili communities, however, the missionaries condemned some of these cultural practices for being offensive to Christian morality. They worshipped together with osu/ohu in the same church, under the belief that in the sight of God, all people are equal. It is to be noted that many of those who first embraced the Christian religion were either slaves or osu/ohu. These were people who, because of their social disabilities, had a grievance against the traditional Igbo culture and the society that had subdued them. They therefore saw the newly forming Christian order as an alternative to Igbo society whose constraints they were happy to escape. And what was more, it did not take much time before the value of the missions as means of getting ahead in the new world ushered in by the colonial rule was proved beyond all reasonable doubt. They were soon employed as clerks, messengers and the like in the government and commercial firms and as teachers and agents in the schools and missions. In these jobs they acquired a new economic power and social status far beyond the wildest imagination of the elders, and thus became objects of admiration and envy.

Christian impact has also brought an end to child marriage, and female genital mutilation in the area. Thus, Christianity effected significant changes on indigenous Idemili societies because it was the instrument through which a lot of the younger generation of Idemili people were made aware of the sometimes cruel practices inherent in their traditional societies. It drew them away from participating in those celebrations and social process by which the values of the group were transmitted from generation to generation. So while time and death thinned down the ranks of the defenders of the old order, the ranks of the Christians were progressively being augmented. Slowly but steadily a positive new trend became observable, and gained dominance over the old, a point which hitherto has not always been stressed in discussions of the spread of Christianity in Igboland (Nwadialor and Umeanolue 2013).

Negative Impacts:

Early Conflicts and Challenges between Christianity and Idemili Culture

While there has been positive influence from Christianity and Christian missionaries, there has also been conflict, along with negative impacts on Idemili culture.

Cultural Iconoclasm

The early missionaries regarded themselves as social and religious reformers, with the goal of condemning Igbo religion, social ideas, and customs and replacing them with their own. Anagbogu (2001) adds that many of the converts made hasty decisions that lacked a degree of religious conviction, since conversions were a means of shielding against worse situations in traditional culture. Ekechi (1971) further notes that during their interaction with the Igbo, the dominant culture of the missionaries attempted to displace the Igbo culture. According to Achebe (1958), Christianity changed the Igbo worldview.

The first direct conflict between Christianity and the socio-cultural values in Idemili was seen in the disregard and sacrilege against the Eke Idemili (the totemic python). The Idemili community is known for its reverence to the sacred snake. Conflict arose when some early Christian converts felt that because they had become Christians they were no longer bound by the socio-cultural values and norms of the traditional religion. They thought they were at liberty to violate with impunity the values and sanctions of the traditional religion. They deliberately killed the Eke Idemili and used them as food. They claimed that God has given man dominion over all animals and as such they can kill and eat the snakes. These young overzealous Christians introduced their reformist ideas and plans by violating the people's traditional practices and by trivializing the indigenous belief system, regarding them as primitive and superstitious. According to Meziemadu, "Attack on indigenous cultural values and norms . . . from the foreign religions of the colonialists forced the people to hate their culture and accept the culture of their invaders" (cited in Udengwa, Erojikwe and Nnanna 2021, 31).

It is pertinent to observe that indoctrination was a tool adopted by some Christian missionaries to cajole the people into attacking and destroying their own culture adjudged sinful and primitive by the early missionaries. Early converts were therefore taught to look down with disgust and contempt on certain aspects of their traditional religion, culture and social institutions. They were discouraged from participating in traditional festivals or to fulfill filial duties towards their ancestors. They were also discouraged from taking local chieftaincy titles, since the reception of these titles seemed to the missionaries to involve them in the service of the traditional divinities by paying homage to them (Nwadialor 2012).

Christian missions emphasized monogamy as the Christian standard of marriage. In 1936, the issue of polygamy became a serious challenge to the church at Nnobi when some polygamists within the Anglican Church who were denied the Eucharist on account of "wrong marriage" moved away to found the Salvation Army Church. The issue of polygamy did plague the church very adversely, not only in Idemili, but throughout Africa, since the idea of monogamy appears to conflict with the economic and socio-religious set-up of the African people. It is to be noted that in the traditional African society, farming was the major occupation of the people. A man's wealth was determined by the extent of his farm, which in turn was determined by the number of children, particularly male children, that he had. People, therefore, married many wives so as to have a good number of children to assist them in farming.

Christian missions also despised Nso-ani, the traditional religious sanctions which were established for the preservation of the society. For instance, Nso prohibits women having their menstrual periods from visiting streams. This was a simple hygiene mechanism since women did not have modern sanitary pads at the time, and streams were the only source of water supply for the communities. Under these conditions it was simply logical to demand that women in such conditions not visit local streams. Unfortunately, all the missionary bodies encouraged their converts to defy these religious sanctions because they regarded them as taboos emanating from primitive superstitious beliefs.

Muogbo (2019) notes that the first phase of the church's expansion in Umuoji was troubled by a number of problems that hindered conversion and school enrollments; among the difficulties were the discord between the traditional and educated elite. This societal tension did not bode well for the expansion of the church and mission schools as many of the new converts ultimately abandoned their new found faith and returned to a more traditional way of living. Others had one leg in the church and one in the shrine.

According to Nwadialor (2012), the church would have recorded more substantial gains in Igbo communities if, while maintaining its own position, it had paid more attention to the people's religious institutions and worldview as regards life crises and how they should be handled. The denial by missionaries of the people's traditional values and aspirations without satisfactory substitute or explanation sparked criticism not only from the non-believing population but also from Idemili Christians themselves. To this, Okolugbo (cited by Nwadialor 2012, 74) notes that "Christianity has of course largely over thrown African moral tabus and sanctions but Christianity while destroying them has put nothing in their place." It is therefore firmly established as a social and missionary institution but it is foreign in character and alien to the life and institutions of Idemili. Idemili people thus view this failure to integrate with the people, their society and institution as a major weakness of the church, responsible for its inability to meet the spiritual needs of the indigenous converts. Thus instead of displacing the traditional religion in the lives of its adherents Christianity became an appendix of the indigenous beliefs and practices, the Christian God being worshiped on Sundays while recourse was freely made to traditional divinities on week days. During life crises such as birth, marriage, sickness, poverty and death, traditional customs matters more than Christianity, and it is during these crises that the church significantly becomes an alien institution in Idemili.

Division among Family Members

Like any other religion, Christianity can influence family and community dynamics in both positive and negative ways. It can lead to conflicts and divisions, particularly when family members have different religious beliefs. The new religion resulted in internal division among families in Idemili. This in turn resulted in a strong sense of hostility between people which began to destroy the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood which previously existed. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, an elder of the mother's kinsmen said that the new religion has brought division among family members. The converts were compared to a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master.

The *umunna* (kinsmen) play an important role in the society; they are regarded as one of the most powerful institutions of traditional democracy among the Igbo. They exist in addition to one's immediate family and serve as an instrument of social justice; they are a group of men who share the same family and lineage. Achebe portrayed the *umunna* as an extended family of kinsmen . . . the clan, whose name is greeted with a cheer of applause at social and traditional gatherings, implying that they remain unified. For Mbiti (1970), the *umunna* simply means the extended family system, consisting of people up to four generations with one ancestral origin. In Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, the *umunna* is one's ancestral village's extended family. This demonstrates that in the Igbo traditional setting the *umunna* was a sort of patrilineage. In Igbo cosmology, the *umunna* holds great influence over their members, particularly in law creation, tying all together for good.

There is no doubt that *umunna* membership is dropping; their fortunes and the active engagement of people who should be members are witnessing a decline. While the *umunna* institution still exists in contemporary Igbo society, the love, passion, and symbolic fervor that drives members to obey the laws and follow its peace processes has faded in most communities in Idemili as a result of membership in different and opposing Christian denominations, as well as the unnecessary antagonism between Christians and non-Christians in the area. Furthermore, individuals are becoming more individualistic as a result of globalization, migration, and cultural hybridization. Many would say that the rise of Christianity caused some people to abandon their kinsmen as a way of distancing themselves from their belief system. The golden age when the *umunna's* belief system was protected and nourished is now destroyed and disregarded.

Many people feel that the arrival of Christianity separated people from their traditional way of life. As a result, there are higher crime rates in society. Christianity, science, and technology have changed many things in the Idemili world, making kinship gatherings appear to be local, obsolete fetishes. Some people who consider themselves to be modern believe that the concept of *umunna* is outdated and should be forgotten. As a result, some modern youths are no longer interested in the concerns of their relatives.

Conclusion

This study has established the dynamism of the presence of Christianity in the Idemili culture area of Igboland by showing its strengths and weaknesses. The socio-cultural values in Idemili are products of their traditional religious beliefs. The conflict that exists between Christianity and the cultural values of the people are moral and ideological in nature. The study validates the fact that Christianity has had a positive impact on the socio-cultural values of Idemili people. Christianity has, no doubt, added a human face to cultural practices such as the redefinition of widowhood, the Osu caste system, the killing of twins, child marriage, genital mutilation, and so on.

The advent of Christianity in the area has also led to a synthesis between the people's culture and the western culture for easy adaptation and accommodation of those outside the culture area as well as those who have unapologetically taken to the Christian faith. This can be seen in important events in Idemili such as marriage and funeral ceremonies. After performing the traditional marriage rites, the marriage is solemnized in the church; also after the church funeral ceremony, the traditional and social ceremonies will follow. But at the same time Christianity has given rise to disintegration and the lack of unity among the people. Isolating oneself from one's kinsmen is a pointless and fruitless endeavour in Igbo society. The study therefore recommends that while the majority of the people have embraced Christianity and must be encouraged to remain in that faith, they must be educated on the critical need for cherishing, appreciating, and adopting the foundations of their culture; they must comprehend that staying away from their kinsmen is equivalent to denying their Igbo identity. The Igbo culture prioritizes humanity and the ideal of brotherliness above all else . . . it unites, and it is concerned with the people's achievements. Udechukwu (2017) affirms that the Igbo people have strong cultural values. These are the ideals that their forefathers lived by in order to achieve excellent human development. These values are still in place along with modern values. Therefore, if the Igbo people are to achieve concrete human development in the modern society, they must return to the drawing board, that is, bring back their former good cultural values and incorporate them into their current way of life, in the way they think, eat, dress, train their children, worship, work, and so on. Only when this is accomplished will they have positive human development overall.

There is no denying that one key aspect of culture is its changing nature; as a society's socio-economic systems evolve, so do its culture and customs, and a tradition appropriate for that civilization has to be developed. There is no such thing as a finished civilization. As a result, both Igbo culture and western civilization must learn from one another.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

Response to Timothy Larsen's "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century"

Lindy Backues

In this timely article, Timothy Larsen does a fine job of helping set the record straight concerning the historical animosity long evident between cultural anthropologists and Christian missionaries (Larsen focuses on the British context—though I believe a similar division also obtains between academic anthropologists and Christian missionaries in the US.) Larsen points to the standard explanation put forward by those in anthropology as they seek to explain this rift: anthropologists understandably dislike Christian missionaries simply because of the latters' long-standing alignment with cultural imperialism. Such a position carries with it such prima facie explanatory power that it might seem a fool's errand to even question it.

But question it Larsen does! Because of their long-term involvement in local cultures and their impressive linguistic skills and cultural understanding, Christian missionaries were significant sources and guides for early pioneers of social anthropology. Missionaries acted almost as docents for anthropologists, especially before fieldwork became a common practice (during the early days of armchair theorizing). As Larsen illustrates, this reliance on missionary knowledge was essential for early anthropologists as they developed insights and tools for deep cultural and contextual understanding. Larsen's discovery seems odd given the already-mentioned standard explanation for the division between these two groups. In a word, if early anthropologists had genuinely found missionary practices and presence so repugnant (due to the inherent cultural imperialism embedded in the missionary task), why would they have (at least privately) relied so heavily on missionary assistance and cooperation as they developed their field into a bona fide academic discipline? Such a conundrum prompts Larsen to seek an alternative explanation for the divide.

Based on substantial textual and historical evidence, his explanation is this: Christian missionaries have come to represent a challenge to the exclusive expertise that cultural anthropologists have increasingly claimed for themselves, particularly as the latter have sought to establish their academic and professional credentials and their authority within the academy. This growing rivalry has caused anthropologists to dismiss missionaries outright, often engaging in what have been essentially ad hominem critiques. Missionaries' insights have been deemed suspect simply because they have come from missionaries, and this has relegated them to the status of biased amateurs. Ironically, the missionaries who have continued to be cited or respected by anthropologists are mostly those who have willingly acknowledged they are "not an anthropologist." Thus, respect can obtain provided proper missionary obsequiousness has been in place.

All of this represents a powerful and, in my view, accurate critique of how the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists has evolved over time. Occupational rivalry certainly provides a plausible, and generally overlooked, explanation for much of the distaste many anthropologists have shown toward missionaries over the past 100 years or so—the evidence Larsen presents in this piece is simply impossible to ignore. However, I believe the situation might be too complex to be reduced to a single explanatory variable alone. Therefore, I would like to suggest two additional factors that might be considered alongside the presence of professional rivalry that Larsen so astutely identifies.

Firstly, we should not too easily dismiss the accusation long leveled by anthropologists against Christian missionaries: the fact is, cultural imperialism *has been* closely intertwined with much of historic Christian missionary efforts, with civilization, commerce, and Christianization serving as the three pillars of Western imperialism. This pervasive and problematic fusion has often gone unchallenged over the years and globally it persists—even today—in much of what is promoted as Christianity. I believe this to be deeply problematic from a theological standpoint, but evaluating it theologically is *not* the duty of cultural anthropologists, nor can we fault them for understandably registering grave misgivings about it as they have encountered it in its various forms worldwide. A wise response to such a critique would be to emphasize theological housecleaning, adopting a stance of communal self-critique that aligns more closely with the marginalized, with the oppressed, and with the silenced, a liberative posture more in keeping with the gospel and with the standpoint of the biblical Jesus himself. Ironically, such a stance will probably even end up challenging Western anthropology itself.

What leads me to this last statement is the peculiar fact that anthropologists can only validly accuse missionaries of being imperialistic (often a valid critique, as I have just admitted) to the extent they themselves have been exempt from colonialist behavior. However, given the work of thinkers like Hans-Georg Gadamer, Alasdair MacIntyre, Zygmunt Bauman, or Charles Taylor (there are many others), things have shifted a good deal over the last several decades. In this new "post-modern" context, what Taylor calls "exclusive humanism" can no longer be considered value-free or devoid of its own imperialist tendencies (Taylor 2007). For Taylor, the stance of "exclusive humanism" is one that only allows for sources of meaning that derive from within human life; it refuses to acknowledge any reality beyond or outside of it. Yet, we know that much of the globe's population embraces a position quite in opposition to "exclusive humanism;" much of the globe's inhabitants are nurtured by a cosmology that acknowledges and deeply incorporates transcendent sources of meaning and reality. These sorts of perspectives embrace the idea that there are realities and values beyond mere human existence, ones often rooted and anchored in religious or spiritual beliefs. Taylor argues that such a stance offers space for deeper, more profound sources of meaning that extend beyond the confines of human life and experience. As I have noted in a previous article in this very journal (Backues 2023, 13), if we fail to take seriously the religious underpinnings of these people's cosmologies, we risk imposing yet another form of imperialism on them—this time, by way of a disenchanted regnancy deeply rooted in a dominant secularism that (sometimes secretly, sometimes openly) disdains persons who hold to worldviews funded by transcendent values. In short, many anthropologists need to address their own conceptual housecleaning regarding imperialism. This critique, it seems to me, lies directly at the surface of much that Larsen puts his finger on.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that what Larsen points to as increased disdain for missionaries among anthropologists over the last three or four decades should not surprise us, given what Thomas Kuhn taught us long ago about "paradigm shifts" (this is now a famous and surely an overused aphorism). Kuhn described the social process of epistemological conversions, where new experts rise to replace old ones, driven by a crisis in the old paradigm and a consequent yet necessarily different way of seeing things, by way of a new pre-analytical model that was previously unrecognized or not permitted. The paradigm shift process is long, arduous, agonistic, and contentious, often extending over a generation or more as it comes to fruition; and it rarely, if ever, happens peacefully. Old experts—who gate-keep by way of the expertise they command, the terminology they control, and the methodologies they steward (tied to the old paradigms they owed their positions to)—do not easily surrender their authority nor do they tolerate dissent within their orthodoxy. As Kuhn's famous book title suggests, the result is more akin to a "revolution" than an academic exploration (Kuhn 2012).

What we have here is something that involves much more than mere professional rivalry; this sort of shift involves competition between deeply rooted conceptual and epistemological perspectives, and each group ends up viewing the other with deep suspicion. Since what we are examining is a paradigm shift, there arises a clash of cultures, a contest of worldviews, and there is much speaking past each other, especially in terms of questions asked—not merely answers or solutions proffered.

I must be clear: though missionaries have historically existed longer than anthropologists, the latter have long enjoyed the dominant position in the academy. With the advent of increasingly deeper fieldwork methodologies taken up by anthropologists (as Larsen pointed out), and with growing dominance of post-modern, reflexive, autoethnographic perspectives, the religious predilections of tradition-based populations have become very difficult for ethnographers to ignore. So, to conduct truly epistemologically humble fieldwork, anthropologists have been increasingly forced to open their discipline to what could be called "inclusive humanism," a necessarily inclusive and accepting approach to the religious other, those with base worldviews different from the ethnographer, and the only consonant stance is for the anthropologist to not expect these new-found religious friends necessarily to convert to the deep grammar perspective of the secularized visitor.

And, as I stated earlier, while such a stance does challenge the variety of imperial Christianity that has historically aligned itself with centers of political power, it also challenges the committed secular individual, the person who has a priori aligned with modernist doctrines of science, academic dogma, and other "secular" narratives of power that bid others toward a type of conversion. I believe that, should missionaries (or transcendently oriented anthropologists) adopt forms of cultural exploration that mirror the kenotic, non-control style of the Crucified One—a style that serves but does not dictate nor demand compliance—such an approach will confront both old-line missionaries and secular anthropologists with a starkly new paradigm, one that does not require compliance (I have previously explored precisely this topic elsewhere. See Backues, 2017).

As Kuhn taught us, such a change is sure not to unfold before us in a manner that is peaceful, linear and cumulative with what came before it, nor in a manner that brings tranquility in its wake. Instead, it will feel more like a revolution. In respect to any sort of paradigm shift, old ways of thinking simply do not go down easily, nor do new paradigms generally emerge to applause nor welcome.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

The Anthropologist in the Evangelical Cinematic Gaze

Naomi Haynes

In this insightful history, Timothy Larsen ably demonstrates that anthropologists' historic distain for Christian missionaries was occasioned by more than just the belief that missionaries were engaged in what Jean and John Comaroff (1992, 251) have called "the colonization of consciousness." Beyond charges of "cultural imperialism" (2024, 1), Larsen shows that anthropologists routinely denounced missionaries in an effort to solidify their professional status; by dismissing missionary knowledge and skill, anthropologists could argue that they alone were the rightful producers of ethnographic data and theoretical insight. While in practice the twentieth-century British anthropologists in Larsen's analysis were often kinder to specific missionaries—hosting them in their homes and occasionally bestowing on them scholarly honors—the professional imperative to draw a hard line between themselves and missionaries in general remained.

In reading Larsen's piece, I was reminded of a film that I first saw as an undergraduate at Wheaton College in the early 2000s. *Beyond the Next Mountain* (Forsberg 1981) is a Christian biopic exploring the life of Rochunga Pudaite, a member of the indigenous Hmar people of northeast India. Pudaite's father converted to Christianity after a brief period of contact with the Welsh missionary Watkin Roberts, and encouraged his son to pursue western education so that he could translate the Bible into the Hmar language. The film outlines Pudaite's journey from India's University of Allahabad to the Glasgow Bible Training Institute to Wheaton College, where he completes his Hmar-language translation. Pudaite eventually went on to found Bibles for the World, an international organization that distributed Bibles across the globe, often through the mail. *Beyond the Next Mountain* was directed by two luminaries of twentieth-century Christian filmmaking, James Collier, who did extensive work for Billy Graham's World Wide Pictures, including an adaptation of Corrie ten Boom's *The Hiding Place*, and Rolf Forsberg, who also wrote the film, in addition to other Christian cinema classics, most notably *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

Near the end of *Beyond the Next Mountain*, after Pudiate has returned to India from Wheaton, he has an encounter with an anthropologist. Pudiate has been offered a position in the Indian civil service, a good job with a high salary and plenty of perks. He interviews for the post with a regional officer, Dr. Alan Montforce, played by the British actor Barry Foster. Montforce's wife Ruth is played by the British-American actor Madhur Jaffrey. The interview takes place in Montforce's home. Seated in his comfortable living room, Pudiate declines Montforce's offer of a whisky, gratefully accepting fruit juice as an alternative. Ruth brings the juice and the three sit down together as Montforce pages through Pudaite's resumé. Noting his international education, Montforce remarks that such training is "remarkable" for someone from a "tribal" background. Pudaite, in response, says simply, "Prayers are answered." At this reply a shadow crosses Montforce's face, but he presses on. "Did you read anthropology by any chance?" he asks, "That's my field." Pudiate replies that he concentrated his studies on Greek and Hebrew so that he could translate the Bible. On hearing this, Montforce's face falls, and he asks his wife to refill his whisky glass.

Pudiate recounts the details of his translation project to the scowling Montforce, who can hardly wait for his guest to finish before launching into a fierce rebuke:

> Well, Mr. Pudiate. Of course, I should have suspected from the way you came here dressed

> tonight. But it seems, it seems that in my enthusiasm to enlist qualified personnel I am guilty of overlooking certain things about [you]. I am most certainly. Well, it comes as a great disappointment to me to discover that you are a mission native. Some ill-informed, short-sighted white missionaries have ruined you!

Here Pudiate breaks in to insist that Montforce is mistaken, that only one missionary ever came to the Hmar, and that before he was born. "Well," replies Montforce, "he's turned you out looking like something out of Ball Street or Saville Row!" Pudiate defends Watkin Roberts, insisting that the missionary lived with the Hmar "like a brother" until the British Raj drove him out. But Montforce rejects Pudiate's claims while simultaneously repudiating British colonial rule. "Guns and gospels!" he cries, "The British overtook this land with guns and gospels! Happily, at least the guns have been withdrawn!" At this point, Ruth steps in, reminding her husband that there is freedom of religion in newly independent India, but Montforce replies that this is "not the issue." Taking Ruth aside, he tells her that he cannot approve Pudiate's appointment. "I must consider what the missionaries have done to these tribals," Montforce insists. "While failing to consider what they may have done for them!" Ruth retorts. They return to the living room, Ruth in the lead, but Pudiate has already gone, leaving behind the opportunity that had initially been so tempting.

There are two things I'd like to take away from this brief moment in American Evangelical cinema, both of which follow from Larsen's treatment of British anthropologists. The first is what this film told Christians about anthropology. This is a movie made for Evangelical audiences in the days before the internet, and likely screened primarily in churches. (I remember watching *China Cry*, another film by James Collier, in a darkened Baptist sanctuary in my tiny Minnesota hometown sometime in the early 1990s). Most people who saw *Beyond the Next Mountain*—like most Americans then and now—would not have known what it was that anthropologists did. We can therefore safely assume that *Beyond the Next Mountain* was for many viewers the first impression they had of anthropology. In that impression, they saw the discipline's contempt for missionaries represented back to them in Dr. Montforce's ire toward the hero of the film, a fellow Christian. There's no way to determine the ultimate impact of this representation, but I'm tempted to see in this brief scene a warning to Evangelicals about anthropology: this is a discipline in which stories like Rochunga Pudiate's (and yours) are scoffed at, rather than celebrated.

But beyond the simple reproduction for an Evangelical audience of anthropology's distain for missions, *Beyond the Next Mountain* also offers something of a rejoinder to this position. The film portrays the anthropologist as arrogant and godless, appalled at what missionaries had "done to" people like the Hmar. Most of the foreigners in the film are painted in a similar light. There's the British colonial officer, who in the opening scene tells missionary Watkin Roberts, "Colonial policy absolutely prohibits you mucking about with the tribals!" Later, Rochunga Pudiate's father meets an American missionary who wants to build a church for the "tribal" people down in the valley, away from their home. When the elder Pudiate refuses, insisting that his people can worship where they are, he is beaten for his insubordination with the missionary's consent. Even at Wheaton Rochunga Pudiate is met with some skepticism, responding to a professor's question about his denominational affiliation to say that the Hmar people have "only Jesus." The only real exception to this paternalistic rule is Watkin Roberts, who ignores the injunction against "mucking about" and enters Hmar territory alone, striking out over the hills with a pith helmet and a pack mule, "Guide me, Oh thou Great Jehovah!" on his lips.

Roberts and the Pudiate men are the clear heroes of *Beyond the Next Mountain*, mainly because of their shared resistance to earthly authority, whether that of the British Raj, the Indian government, or denominational structures. This characterization is partly a reflection of American Evangelicalism's strong anti-institutional bent. But we might also consider what the film reveals about anthropology. When Christians tell the story of an anthropologist they have known or imagined, what do they say? In the case of *Beyond the Next Mountain*, the decision to include anthropological distain for missions alongside other forms of western paternalism clearly categorizes the former as an instance of the latter. In other words, the anthropologist Dr. Montforce is no different than the imperial officer or indeed his colonial missionary counterpart in his insistence that he knew what was best for the Hmar people. This view echoes the "colonization of consciousness" arguments popular at the time the film was written, which described indigenous converts as having been "enticed, *often* *unwittingly*, into conversation with Christianity," a conversation "whose terms they *could not but* internalize" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986, 16, emphasis mine).

Of course, both *Beyond the Next Mountain* and the Comaroffs' critique of missionization are now decades old. Larsen's analysis also leaves off around the same time. In the intervening years, anthropology has changed a great deal. Most relevant for our discussion is the establishment of a robust anthropology of Christianity that includes an anthropology of Christian missions (e.g. Handman 2014; Vilaça 2016; Wintrup 2021). Alongside this more expansive study of Christian practice, anthropology has also come to reconsider its secularist assumptions, and appeals to the possibility of a post- or nonsecular anthropology as a site of political and theoretical insight are increasingly common (e.g. Fountain 2013; Oliphant 2021; McAllister and Napolitano 2021).

In the light of these developments, it is possible to argue that the experience of Christian missionization exposes anthropological paternalism with particular efficacy. Anthropologist Nathaniel Roberts has written about Pentecostalism in Chennai in the broader context of Indian anti-conversion laws, which are aimed at both outcaste Hindus and ethnic minorities like the Hmar. Through a careful discussion of the colonization of consciousness argument, Roberts (2012) has shown that anti-missionary sentiment in anthropology turns on ideas about the nature of religion and of human will that follow from the discipline's liberal and secularist underpinnings. Ironically, his analysis demonstrates that these ideas are shared by the Hindu nationalists who advocate conversion bans, but not the Christian converts he studies. In presenting this argument, Roberts makes a move that compliments Larsen's observations. Like Larsen, Roberts doesn't want to reduce anthropological critiques of mission to mere prejudice against Christians. Instead, he shows that the problem missionization presents anthropologists is a result of some of the discipline's grounding assumptions. Querying these assumptions allows Roberts to both more closely represent the experiences of his Christian informants, and to expand the theoretical boundaries of anthropology. As a piece that does similar work, Larsen's analysis represents a contribution to anthropological theory as much as to historical study of the discipline, revealing some of the background to our background assumptions and helping us to see them in new ways.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

Response to Timothy Larsen, "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century"

Brian Howell

I began my entry into the tribe of anthropology about a decade after the seminal publication that kicks off Larsen's historical account here. Graduating from my undergraduate program in 1991, I spent a couple years outside of academia before finding my way back via the School of World Mission (later the School of Intercultural Studies and finally combined into the School of Mission and Theology) at Fuller Seminary in 1995. At that time, I knew I was interested in processes of cultural/social change around Christian conversion, but I wasn't quite sure which discipline would best allow for the sorts of questions I wanted to ask. I briefly flirted with political science and sociology, but at Fuller found anthropology, represented by two dedicated faculty members in the discipline, Dan Shaw and Charles Kraft, as well as the legacy of the recently departed Paul Hiebert (who moved to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School a few years earlier). Several other influential faculty members (and faculty emeriti) such as Charles Van Engen, Arthur Glasser, and Dudley Woodbury, while not anthropologists per se, affirmed the centrality of ethnographic approaches to religious life, and the vital role of understanding cultural context for theological work. Thus, it was not difficult for me to see that anthropology was a discipline that allowed for the holistic questions I hoped to address and held a central position in the missiology of the evangelical church.

It was only a bit later, when I left Fuller and started my graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis, that I was introduced to the notion that anthropologists didn't particularly respect orthodox Christians—aka, the 'repugnant cultural other.' Wash U was a friendly place, with senior scholar Bob Canfield, a strong Christian faculty member who sat on my committee, but the wider discipline was still a place where Christian commitment was often considered at odds with anthropological rigor.

Starting in 1994, when I first attended the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, I heard stories from professionally accomplished Christian anthropologists, such as Tom Headland (SIL), Dean Arnold (Wheaton College), and Darrell Whiteman (Asbury) about the animosity they had experienced as Christians in the field of anthropology. Headland and Whiteman, in particular, who had co-founded a group meeting at the AAA each year, had several stories of snide comments or open mockery from their colleagues in anthropology. Bob Priest, who had attended graduate programs at the University of Chicago and Berkeley (two of the top anthropology programs in the United States), had even written his MA thesis on the conflict between anthropologists and missionaries, and had found his Christian background something of a conundrum (at best) among the faculty at Chicago.

At the same time, I was getting to know a generation of scholars in my cohort—such as Jenell Paris, James Huff, Vince Gil, and Diane King—and it seemed clear that we were having a different experience. It wasn't that we couldn't see some of the animosity (or, more typically, incredulity) of our secular peers toward avowed Christians working in the discipline, but the ideological opposition seemed to be of a different time. As a Christian working specifically in the anthropology of Christianity, I often found myself in settings in which Christians of many stripes were the topic of conversation, and with a few exceptions, the general attitude of my secular colleagues was one of curiosity that an avowed Christian such as me would be working in a non-mission-related approach to Christianity as an anthropological object. Prominent, or soon-to-be prominent scholars such as Joel Robbins, Simon Coleman, Omri Elisha, Jon Bialecki, and Fenella Cannell were nothing but gracious and engaged with me and my work.

This is not to refute any of the history Larsen lays bare, nor the experiences of my more senior colleagues. It was in 1991 that Susan Harding published the widely-cited "Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other," in which she enjoined anthropologists to put away their cultural biases against conservative Christianity as a topic of research, presaging the shift that I was perceiving in the 1990s (Harding 1991). But in that article, she went to some pains to make it clear that a) she perceived there to be a widespread bias against conservative Christians as worthy subjects of anthropological inquiry and b) she herself was not at all affiliated with the religion even as she urged her colleagues to be less closed-minded. In other words, she affirmed that conservative U.S./Western Christianity, and Christians, remained suspect both in terms of how anthropologists might engage them "out there," as well as a concern that they might, in fact, be "in here."

A decade later, in 2003, as Joel Robbins was making his apologia for the development of an anthropology of Christianity, he too noted the persistent bias against taking Christianity seriously as an anthropological object among many in the discipline (Robbins 2003, 191). At the same time, the very appearance of his piece was a clear signal that these biases were waning, and resistance to the study of Christianity was flagging. His essay appeared in a special issue of the journal *Religion* in which a collection of anthropologists, including me, were invited to contribute pieces on the anthropology of Christianity with the expressed purpose of overcoming some of the social and cultural biases of the academy towards such topics. A few years later, Robbins' monograph, about Christianity among the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea (2004), and Fenella Cannell's edited volume entitled simply *The Anthropology of Christianity* (2006, published by Duke University Press) took the conversation about Christianity even further.

By the end of the aughts, the anthropology of Christianity was well established, and anthropologists with an expressed Christian faith were very much in the mix. A generation of Christian scholars behind me (such as Naomi Haynes, Leanne Williams Greene, and Joseph Webster) were making their mark in the discipline. It seemed clear that the hostility, and even suspicion, of Christians in anthropology had waned significantly, if not disappeared altogether. This is not to say that Christian *missionization* was celebrated in the anthropological academy, as sensitivity to inequalities of power, neo-colonialism, proselytization, patriarchy, and indigenous people's rights and autonomy were all becoming more central to anthropology's ethics. And while missionization is not simply part and parcel of these phenomena, the history of missionary entanglement and the non-Christian perspective on missionary activity would certainly pique anthropological concerns. At the same time, the ideological opposition to Christian belief (and religious belief generally) as held by anthropologists ourselves and the idea that religious conviction was antithetical to anthropological work, had shifted dramatically.

But there was another change occurring through this period as well. While it seemed that anthropologists were coming to accept the religious convictions of Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others in their midst, and largely dropped their own convictions of conducting an "unbiased" and naturalistic science, the *Christian* academy seemed to be turning against (or at least away from) their engagement with anthropology.

Robert Priest, in his presidential address to the American Society of Missiology in 2014, noted how many seminaries that previously had robust anthropology programs, such as Trinity, Fuller, and Asbury, were not replacing these scholars as they left or retired (Priest 2015). He noted both the long-standing distrust of social science among Christians, as well as the increasing willingness of contemporary missiological and theological leadership to dismiss social science as a valid way of knowing.

Priest has not, nor has anyone else to my knowledge, tried to parse out why this turn may be occurring. I cannot present a definitive argument, but I do think Larsen's account of the resistance to missionaries among anthropologists can provide some places to start.

Ideologically, Larsen notes that anthropologists held long-standing antipathy to the missionary applications of cultural knowledge, specifically religious change. He notes that in the early 20th century, anthropologists such as Malinowski and W.H.R. Rivers dismissed missionary ethnography as "biased" and "amateur." As Priest noted in his presidential address, by 2015, this rejection seems to have turned around to see the missiologists now voicing similar concerns about the anthropologists. For example, in his widely celebrated book *Understanding Christian Mission* (*Christianity Today* book award recipient and American Missiological Society Book of the Year), former dean of Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies (and current president of Gordon-Conwell Seminary) Scott Sunquist proclaimed that a central thesis of his book was that missiology should not be "taken captive" by social sciences (2017). It was, in fact, while he was dean at Fuller that the school failed to hire an anthropologist to replace the lone-remaining anthropologist on his retirement (R. Daniel Shaw). The only faculty member now at Fuller with the title of "professor of anthropology" self describes as a "practical theologian working at the intersection of social science and theology." [1] Trinity Evangelical Divinity School fared somewhat better, as they have an anthropologist trained at the University of Heidelberg who has strong research interests in cultural anthropology. But he is a lone scholar in the discipline at a program that formerly had two anthropologists trained at top anthropology programs. Asbury, too, is losing their anthropologists to retirement, and appears to either not be replacing them, or replacing them with scholars who are not trained in anthropology. It's a leap to impute common motivations in all these institutions, but it's not hard to suspect that secularly trained anthropologists may be viewed with some of the suspicion cast generally on social science, and thus have some ideological opposition.

At the same time, Larsen notes an institutional aspect to the rejection of missionaries and Christians, in which anthropologists viewed missionaries as potential rivals, and largely kept their contributions out of their institutions. The exception, Larsen notes, proves the rule, as the one missionary to have substantial institutional presence, Edwin Smith, also made "careful, lifelong efforts to reassure anthropologists that he was in no sense a professional rival" (2024, 8).

I would not argue that the missionary rejection of anthropology is quite analogous, as academic institutional life and disciplinary professional societies have profoundly changed in the decades since the anthropological community formed its disciplinary institutions in the 19th century. But there is an institutional dynamic that has contributed to the loss of anthropological influence in missiological spaces. Specifically, in the mid-1900s, Christian institutions began developing their own PhD granting programs, with one of the more popular ones being the PhD in "Intercultural Studies." This became, by the 1990s, a standard academic preparation for academic missiologists, and was often tailored to suit career missionaries who were seeking higher education (with early examples of distance learning, cohort-based programs, and other institutional innovations meant to meet the needs of diasporic student populations). These programs initially had strong representation of anthropologists on the faculty, but as those faculty retired, they were often replaced by the PhD in Intercultural Studies from other Christian institutions. Many of these scholars produced strong research and some leaned strongly into anthropology as their disciplinary foundation. (See, for example, Aminta Arrington at John Brown University, or Chris Flanders at Abilene Christian University.) But as anthropologists and other social scientists at Christian institutions retire or depart, they are frequently replaced by graduates of the PhD programs in Intercultural Studies or even biblical studies with a kind of social science emphasis. For example, Asbury Seminary, which once had four anthropologists and at least one sociologist, all with training from leading U.S. universities, will soon have no faculty whose PhD does not come from either Fuller or Asbury. This is not to suggest that these may not be excellent scholars, but interdisciplinary programs in intercultural studies do not produce the kind of deep engagement with the discipline of anthropology specifically that programs in that field can. Institutionally, Christian schools are turning toward protecting their own systems in a manner not unlike the anthropological community of 100 years ago.

We can be grateful for Dr. Larsen's account of the class of missionaries and anthropologists in the 20th century, as it can shed light on our current moment. History is a powerful mirror for understanding dynamics in the present, and this seems to be true again. Just as anthropologists turned ideologically and institutionally against missions in the mid-19th century and early 20th century, so missiology appears to be excluding anthropology from its ranks at the beginning of the 21st century. We can only hope that just as anthropologists have recovered and found their way into a stronger relationship with Christians and missionaries, so too will our missiological communities come back to their fruitful connections to the anthropological world.

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[1] "Johnny Ramírez-Johnson | Fuller Seminary," January 9, 2018, https://www.fuller.edu/faculty/johnny-ramirez-johnson/.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

From Dim Past to Bright Future: A Response to Timothy Larsen's article, "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century"

J. Derrick Lemons

I have had the privilege of collaborating with Timothy Larsen for a decade. Rereading "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century" (2024 [2016]) brings back fond memories of our early discussions about creating a field of study where anthropologists and theologians could work together. It was fascinating to revisit the history of tensions between anthropologists and missionaries, who are applied theologians. One reason that this tension exists is because anthropologists often rely on missionaries to conduct their work.[1] Missionaries are often essential partners in learning the culture for both so-called armchair anthropologists and those who conduct field research. Sjaak Van Der Geest even referred to anthropologists and missionaries as brothers. He explains in his abstract: "Anthropologists act like missionaries in spreading the beliefs of their discipline and interpreting other religions in terms of their own faith. A further similarity gives missionaries an advantage over anthropologists: they stay longer among 'their' people, have a better command of the language and are likely to become more integrated into the communities in which they work" (Geest 1990, 588). Based on this quote, I encourage you to read Larsen's article through the lens of two feuding brothers.

Sensing the time had come for the feuding brothers to reconcile, Tim and I, with the help of Naomi Haynes, Brian Howell, Joel Robbins and many others, developed a field of study to provide a way to talk across the divide. This field was eventually named Theologically Engaged Anthropology and has become very productive. I will leave the other respondents to more directly discuss the history of the tensions brought out by Larsen's article. I want to use my words to point anthropologists and theologians to an opportunity to stop feuding and learn from each other.[2]

A growing number of anthropologists and theologians have decided that conversations with each other are worthwhile (Fountain and Yau 2013; Meneses et al. 2014; Robbins 2006). Theologians have openly utilized the tools of anthropology to aid their work, and some anthropologists, in a much less open way, have made important theoretical and ethnographic contributions by allowing theology to influence their work (Larsen 2014; Lemons 2018b). In this response, I provide a brief summary of my early interest in scholarship that simultaneously considers anthropology and theology and present two frameworks for this scholarship.

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[1] I should note that the missionaries who are particularly useful are those who have lived in the field for decades. Short-term missionaries do not have the same level of insight.

[2] I am repurposing with permission my article entitled "An Afterword: Conversations Among Theology, Anthropology, and History," found in *St Mark's Review*, no. 244 (2018): 114–23. I would like to thank Michael Gladwin, the long-term editor, for his support of the original article and this repurposed article.

My interest in theologically engaged anthropology began in an unusual way. While completing my MDiv at Asbury Theological Seminary, I learned about connections between anthropology and theology through the works of missiologists and theologians like Paul Hiebert, Eugene Nida and H. Richard Niebuhr. Also, I witnessed my anthropology and missiology professors, Darrell Whiteman and Michael Rynkiewich, seamlessly transitioning between discussions of theology and anthropology while considering the social worlds of people around the world. Through their teaching, I encountered the anthropological greats, like Tylor, Frazer, Douglas, Evans-Pritchard and the Turners and theologians like Luther, Wesley, and Barth. From my experience as an MDiv student, I knew theology had a lot to contribute to anthropology, and I never questioned the importance of this exchange for my doctoral dissertation research which focused on the ways leaders in the missional church movement created intentional cultural change. I did not realize at that time that many anthropologists view this exchange with skepticism. That realization waited until I joined the faculty ranks in 2008 and began to interact with a broader range of anthropologists. I discovered that very few anthropologists had a background in theology and those who did have this background did not openly share this information. Initially I followed my peers lead and hid my knowledge of theology too, but reading Joel Robbins 2006 article, "Anthropology and Theology: An Awkward Relationship?" and meeting other anthropologists who found theology useful for uncovering previously hidden meanings behind social behavior emboldened me. I found that theology was important enough to my ethnographic data that I could not neglect it. These factors led me to write a grant ultimately funded by The John Templeton Foundation to examine the question "How can theology contribute to cultural anthropology?"

The John Templeton Foundation project created opportunities for ongoing conversations among an international team of anthropologists and theologians. The team formed working groups of researchers in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America to discuss the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Two important outcomes resulted. First, we developed frameworks that facilitate sustained, collaborative research between anthropologists and theologians. Second, we established the Center for Theologically Engaged Anthropology (CTEA) at the University of Georgia (http://research.franklin.uga.edu/tea/) to support future research of theologians and anthropologists.

Frameworks for Research

The primary mission of the CTEA is to enrich both anthropology and theology by increasing the number and quality of conversations among scholars in these disciplines. The CTEA has done this by bringing together anthropologists and theologians at working conferences and asking them to produce research frameworks that provide structure for theologically engaged anthropology and examples of using these frameworks. The CTEA has produced two research frameworks. They are the stratified and transformational frameworks, and both assume shared research interest and mutual respect between the disciplines. You can find an extensive discussion of the stratified and transformational frameworks in the following articles and books:

Richman, N. and J. D. Lemons. 2022. "Introduction: From Rupture to Repair." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 33: 33–348. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/taja.12456.

Lemons, J. Derrick, Courtney Handman, Jon Bialecki, Simon Coleman, Naomi Haynes, Maya Mayblin, Timothy Larsen and Joel Robbins. 2022. Book forum on Joel Robbins' Theology and the Anthropology of Christian Life. *History and Anthropology* 33(4): 516-547. DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2022.2119232.

Lemons, J. Derrick. 2021. "An Introduction to Theologically Engaged Anthropology." *Ethnos* 86(3): 401-407. DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2019.1640760.

Robbins, Joel. 2020. *Theology and the Anthropology of Christian Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lemons, J. Derrick, ed. 2018. *Theologically Engaged Anthropology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stratified Framework

The stratified framework recognizes that "a complex reality, such as religion, will have multiple layers or strata, each of which demands to be investigated by a research method appropriate for that stratum" (McGrath 2018, 131). This framework focuses on maintaining traditional disciplinary boundaries so that anthropologists and theologians do not feel compromised. Scholars who use this framework refer to both anthropological and theological issues in the phenomena they are studying, but they do not intermingle the two perspectives. They keep them distinct. Roy Rappaport's book entitled *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* provides one of the best examples of this framework. In the introduction of his book Rappaport makes it clear that he speaks as an anthropologist who is considering theological issues. He is not attempting to practice theology:

> This book is not a theological treatise but a work in anthropology. As such, its ambitions are more general than those of any particular theology. As an anthropological inquiry, its assumptions are, of course, exclusively naturalistic, but it respects the concepts it seeks to understand, attempting not only to grasp what is true of all religions but what is true in all religions, that is, the special character of the truths that it is in the nature of all religions to claim. (Rappaport 1999, 2)

Rappaport was open to considering ritual from a theological perspective, but due to his Durkheimian foundation, he limited himself to speaking only about the anthropological aspects of ritual, specifically the observed and communal aspects (Peacock 2001, 208). In Larsen's article, he mentions Edwin W. Smith who became acclaimed in anthropology circles. Smith acknowledged that he was inspired by anthropologists, but was careful to maintain his role as a missionary which allowed A.C. Haddon, Max Gluckman, James Frazer, and others to respect his work as a valuable piece of information within its strata.

The stratified framework is advantageous to anthropologists and theologians who are most comfortable maintaining disciplinary boundaries. As exemplified by Rappaport and Smith mentioned above, even when researchers maintain boundaries they can open themselves and their readers to new vistas as they consider the perspective of the partner discipline.

Transformational Framework

The transformational framework involves a deep engagement between anthropology and theology to understand a specific ethnographic topic. In contrast to the stratified framework, researchers applying the transformational framework set aside the strict boundaries between anthropology and theology to make room for a transformational encounter. In general, theologians use this framework more than anthropologists. As an applied discipline, theologians expect transformational encounters to occur because of their work. Theology seeks to shape people's beliefs and actions. However, systemic positivistic ideals remain in the anthropology of religion, even though we live in the era of post-positivism. Anthropologists of religion often do not imagine transforming others or being transformed because of their work. When Victor Turner shared with Max Gluckman that he and his wife converted to Catholicism because of transformational experiences in the field, Max proclaimed, "This is the worst news that I have ever heard!"(Kollman 2018, 83). Yet anthropologists Joel Robbins and Timothy Jenkins believe the transformational framework presents the best opportunity to make an impact in both anthropology and theology because new insights and theories are waiting to be discovered in the largely unexplored territories between the disciplines (Coakley and Robbins 2018; Lemons 2018c; Robbins 2018). It could be argued that Edwin W. Smith actually worked within a transformative framework, even though the expectations of the time required him to defer to anthropologists as the real experts. Given a transformational lens, would A.C. Haddon, Max Gluckman, and James Frazer have been able to celebrate Smith's ethnographic success as something directly connected with his role as a missionary, rather than despite it?

The transformational framework is advantageous to anthropologists and theologians who need to expand traditional disciplinary boundaries to speak to new audiences or uncover new insights. One challenge of this framework is that most scholars are not proficient in both fields. To overcome a deficit in knowledge, scholars must find a collaborative partner. Another challenge is feeling out of step with many anthropologists and theologians. As I shared previously in this article, I hid my knowledge of theology to fit in with other anthropologists.

Conclusion

I appreciate Larsen's article for plainly stating the bias of anthropologists who believed that the bias of missionaries made them unworthy colleagues. I hope that the stratified and transformational frameworks provide new lenses through which anthropologists can see new possibilities. Given the collective breadth of these frameworks, any anthropologist or theologian should be able to select an appropriate one to enhance the depth of their research.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

Pressures, Practicalities, and the Presence of God: A Response to Timothy Larsen's "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century"

Jenell Paris

Humans crave meaning: we use language to discover, invent, reflect upon, share, and negotiate meanings with one another. Some Christian anthropologists even pinpoint language as a key indicator of the *imago Dei* in Homo sapiens. Humans tell stories to one another in all available modalities—verbal, visual, digital, and print—making and sharing meanings of events, relationships, and encounters ranging from the quotidian to the eternal.

In "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries in the Twentieth Century," historian Timothy Larsen offers an interpretive frame for the history of anthropology, one that raises opportunity to reflect on the stories we tell about the professionalization of anthropology and the presence of Christians in the field. His essay reads like a mystery: things are often not what they seem. Larsen interrupts the story as commonly told, interrogating the historical accuracy of the reasons given for antipathy between anthropologists and missionaries. He shows how the stories we tell are shaped by broader pressures including university resources, funding structures, political agendas, and global forces such as colonialism and globalization. Pressures intensify when they intersect with career trajectories, job security, and stigma and prestige.

Larsen unravels a taken-for-granted story, that anthropologists have antipathy toward missionaries because missionaries engage in cultural imperialism. Larsen shows that anthropologists, too, actively colluded with colonialism and imperialism, and in the British context they even marketed themselves as especially useful to those projects. Larsen points out that anthropologists' antipathy toward missionaries is older than the reason given for it (2024, 2).

The richer story that unfolds centers on professionalization. British anthropologists distinguished themselves from clergy and from missionaries in an effort to eliminate them as competitors in the new profession of anthropology. Anthropologists relied on missionaries in the field for practical support, and at the same time, anthropologists insisted that their expertise was distinctive and superior. Discrediting "missionary-ethnographers as biased amateurs" (2024, 4) used prestige and stigma to create a symbolic boundary between missionaries and anthropologists that was useful in establishing university departments, journals, streams of students, and all the resources necessary for a new academic discipline.

Larsen concludes that "the professionalization thesis helps to explain the "love-hate" nature of the attitude of anthropologists to missionaries" (2024, 7). Professional self-interest explains how anthropologists could be at the same time dependent upon, despising of, and distinguishing themselves from missionaries, and why the expression of this complex dependency shifted over time, becoming more public and overt from the 1960s onward. Larsen perceives a "recurring temptation by British social anthropologists to define missionaries as biased amateurs in order to shore up their own place and self-perception as professionals" (2024, 9).

This masterful untangling of a myth and illumination of a more accurate narrative could invite a similar nuanced analysis of the missionary endeavor, but this is not my focus. I want to use Larsen's historical analysis to shine light on our present moment in the development of professional structures for Christian anthropology. Anthropologists of Christian faith are present in the discipline and in the economy in myriad places, as salt and light. As a professional niche recognizable by the presence of departments and majors, anthropology is diminishing in seminaries and Christian colleges and universities in response to demographics and economic pressures facing the higher education industry (Paris 2023). We face pressures similar to those of early British social anthropologists: self-definition, distinction, and the prospect of shoring up our own place and self-perception by diminishing other disciplines, departments, or colleagues.

We face our own recurring temptations to do what is expedient in order to secure enough institutional and economic security so that we can do the godly service we wish to do. Without departments and majors and jobs, we cannot offer the mentoring, research, writing, and lecturing we feel God has called us to. Practical concerns are serious, and the pressures we face are real: reductions in majors, closings of universities, non-replacements after retirements, induced retirements, and for anthropology in Christian colleges and universities, precious few junior faculty (Paris 2023).

Go-to narratives often highlight the missional value of a small discipline and the skill, faith, and wisdom of faculty members. This is set against the ignorance of administrators, the profit pressures of capitalism, the misguidance of the Internet, and the declension of the church. With courage and patience inspired by Larsen's historical analysis, we might develop a more accurate and nuanced view of the pressures, problems, temptations, and possible paths forward for our own time.

Professionalization requires risk and success, and once achieved, ongoing maintenance and growth; in essence, never-ending pressure for never-ending practical outputs according to the markers of success defined at a given time. Another pressure bears down before, alongside, within, and from beyond these earthly pressures: the presence of God. British Christian writer and contemplative Evelyn Underhill offered a series of broadcast talks in 1936, within the time period of some of the British social anthropologists discussed in Larsen's essay. In the first broadcast, "What is the Spiritual Life?", she directs a powerful question to the individual, one that we can extend to our reflections about anthropology as a discipline. "What function must this life fulfil in the great and secret economy of God? How directly and fully [this] principle admits us into the glorious liberty of the children of God; where we move with such ease and suppleness, because the whole is greater than any of its parts and in that whole we have forgotten ourselves" (Underhill 2013, 35).

Ethnographic research does not reveal the dynamics of the economy of God, and it ushers neither the ethnographer nor the research participants into a life of ease and suppleness. Ethnographic research portrays the world as it presents to our sight, hearing, taste, and touch, though we never get it perfectly or completely right. The presence of God helps us see—though never perfectly or complexly—how individual lives and cultures fit with God's economy, that is, what is valuable, good, worthy, and profitable in light of eternity.

Underhill invites us to consider the meaning of our careers as individuals, and also the meaning of anthropology in Christian institutions, with a spiritual question: what function does this fulfil in the great and secret economy of God? In this light, value does not accrue only to those who earn it with their strength and competitiveness. In God's economy, value is rooted not in competition but in creation, with a full measure of esteem and belovedness bestowed on every person as a birthright. God's love bestows value and worth, not profit or growth. God's mercy sustains us, not our own risks and successes. God's time holds us from before our births and into eternity, not the timeline of an annual budget.

Departments, disciplines, and institutions do not bear God's image as persons do, and they do not have the same special gift of belovedness. But persons labor within these socially constructed artifacts, and it is reasonable to extend a merciful understanding to the structures and persons who experience upheaval and diminishment in the creative destruction processes triggered by economies. Looking at both persons and institutions in a theological light may support our understanding of what we are really doing as Christian anthropologists in both the earthly economy and in God's economy.

Underhill suggests that we may intensify our difficulties by trying to deal with the spiritual and practical elements of life as separate. Instead, she recommends we cultivate an "amphibious life" (2013, 36), learning to breath and to move easily across and between the practical and the spiritual, eventually realizing these parts of life that we have separated symbolically with our words and stories are, in fact, parts of the whole.

Larsen's essay describes pressures that are palpable to the reader's own context today: the need for professional esteem, the desire for self-definition and prestige, the possibility of failure, the need to constantly undergird one's efforts with money and to anticipate the money needed in the future. Underhill describes a different pressure, "a hidden directive power, personal, living, free, working through circumstances and often against our intention or desire; pressing us in a certain direction, and moulding us to a certain design" (2013, 21). Alongside the pressures of practicalities, this force is also present in the world, the movement of "being drawn, at His pace and in His way, to the place where He wants us to be; not the place we fancied for ourselves" (2013, 39).

The reality of death reminds us that the pressures of temporality are always with us, different as they may be for British social anthropologists and missionaries from decades ago, and for us today. Our time is limited and will unfold, and end, in ways we do not choose. We are often tempted to assert agency in ways that stigmatize or scapegoat others, for reasons we may tell ourselves are worth the lapse in virtue. The more beautiful invitation is to tell more truthful stories, and to listen to those who expose the self-interest and delusion in our stories, so we can more clearly see our value and our place in God's economy, even as we struggle and strive for security in earthly economies.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

On Social Anthropologists and Missionary Ethnographers: Timothy Larsen Revisited

Dana L. Robert

Timothy Larsen's classic article "British Social Anthropologists and Missionaries" lays out the seemingly intractable hostility directed toward missionaries by British social anthropologists in roughly the first half of the twentieth century. His concluding sentence summarizes a convincing explanation for the repeated dismissal by anthropologists of missionary ethnographers, despite the missionaries' often superior language skills, long term relationships with locals, and material assistance rendered by missionaries to young anthropological field workers: "one constant across the twentieth century was the recurring temptation by British social anthropologists to define missionaries as biased amateurs in order to shore up their own place and self-perception as professionals" (Larsen 2024, 9).

Although I am a mission historian and not an anthropologist, my own interest in this topic feels personal. In Yale graduate school I attended a riveting course of lectures offered by the British Roman Catholic anthropologist Mary Douglas, who repeatedly reminded us that inside each person is a mystical space into which the scholar cannot go (Douglas 1966). The essential mystery at the heart of individual identity makes room for the sacred. In the early 1990s at Boston University, I participated as commentator on anthropology conference papers that resulted in the groundbreaking book in the anthropology of Christianity edited by Robert Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity* (Hefner 1993). Another aspect of my own social location that influenced my reading of Larsen's article is the work of my husband, missiologist M.L. Daneel, who spent decades living among the Shona people of central Zimbabwe, and wrote what is still the most comprehensive ethnological and theological study of one group of African Initiated Churches (Daneel 1971, 1974, 1988). Daneel was mentored by ethnographer Johan Holleman and was the first theologian sponsored for field work by the African Studies Centre in Leiden (Holleman 1969). I note from personal observation, then, that the stereotypes Larsen documented by envious academics against missionary scholars were still present in the late 20th century—including the tendency to plagiarize them and dismiss their ethnographic work as mere "chronicle" rather than analysis. Another aspect of the liminal space occupied by missionary scholars that Larsen did not discuss were the accusations of heresy or dereliction of duty they often faced from more traditional missionaries—but that is another subject entirely.

With regard to Larsen's fine article, it is first worth noting that many things have changed since the golden age of ethnography. For one thing, British scholars are not the dominant force in social anthropology that they were when abetted by the global reach of the former British empire. The rise of the anthropology of Christianity by the end of the century—a natural result of the rapid growth of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—opened secular anthropologists to the importance of studying social change amid Christianization rather than expressing knee-jerk hostility to indigenous Christian movements. The postmodern context of the present age has made it clear that the social location of the anthropologist is never that of a pure neutral observer—one of the chief conceits of the professionalizing academic class that Larsen documents. And the fulltime, missionary scholar, embedded for a lifetime amidst a particular group of nonwestern people, is now a rarity compared both to a century ago and to the short-term missionary mentality of the present age.

So how were missionaries and anthropologists entangled, during the period of high British colonialism? Relative to the period and group of scholars and missionaries under Larsen's consideration, the similarities between missionary-scholars and social anthropologists were broader than what the claims of professionals like Malinowski reveal: both were westerners who studied people unlike themselves, both had uneven but sometimes close relationships with colonial functionaries, and both accessed foreign goods. Both inhabited a third cultural space between the metropole and the colony, and between western organizations and indigenous communities. Both missionaries and anthropologists were capable of cultural ethnocentrism and racism. Thus the anthropological discourse of a century ago that posited a strict binary between the professional academic and the amateur missionary ethnographer now seems exaggerated.

In addition to key interconnections explored in Larsen's article, leading social anthropologists, especially those with creative insights about religious practices, were themselves embedded in religious communities and had close relationships with practicing Christians, if not missionaries. The father of E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973), author of the groundbreaking *Theories of Primitive Religion*, and *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande,* was an Anglican priest (Evans-Pritchard 1965; 1972). Evans-Pritchard was professor of social anthropology at Oxford for nearly a quarter century. His work on religion argued for the internal logic and integrity of indigenous religious systems. He converted to Catholicism while an adult. Cambridge-educated social anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982) was professor at major universities in South Africa for a quarter century. Her parents were missionaries and she grew up attending the Lovedale mission school and speaking Xhosa. Her specialty was religion, and she perceived the integrated relationship between witchcraft and religious rituals (Wilson 1954). In the case of Evans-Pritchard and Wilson, one can posit a generative relationship between their own embeddedness in Christianity and their ability to understand and to conceptualize the structures and practices of religious meaning in traditional societies.

Eric Mourier-Genoud argues that transnational approaches to mission history reveal intersections between missionaries and anthropologists that extended beyond the formative pre-history of the field. One of the subjects of his investigation, anthropologist Henri-Philippe Jounod (1897-1987), was the son of the great Swiss missionary ethnographer Henri-Alexandre Jounod mentioned by Larsen. Henri-Philippe Jounod was also an ethnologist, and he studied anthropology in order to follow in his father's footsteps—though in Mozambique rather than in Lesotho (Mourier-Genoud 2011, 197). Although the professionalization of anthropology pushed Jounod out of the guild, and he identified himself as a missionary, he was elected a member of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1949.

Edwin Smith (1876-1957), the great missionary ethnographer mentioned in Larsen's article, was also the son of missionaries in South Africa and so grew up with indigenous cultural and linguistic sensitivity. Smith became president of the British Royal Anthropological Institute in 1934, and for eight years he edited the journal *Africa.* Reference to Smith uncovers other kinds of entanglement between missionaries and anthropologists, namely their joint interest in bringing the logic of traditional cultural symbols into productive dialogue with modernity—including to resist its challenges to traditional cultures. Smith's book *The Golden Stool* (whose title echoed the classic *The Golden Bough* by James Frazer), is in my opinion the most convincing argument for the importance of anthropology in the context of western colonialism. Not only did Smith demonstrate the importance of anthropology to British colonial understanding of Nigeria, he paradoxically criticized the combination of western modernity and colonial exploitation that was dispossessing Africans of their traditional cultures (Smith 1927). Additionally, Smith's focus on linguistics was part of the wider missionary project to preserve indigenous cultures, something he undertook with other missionaries including German ethnologist and linguist Prof. Diedrich Westermann (1875-1956) of Berlin University. Westermann was an internationally known founder of African linguistics, and for three years he led the Berlin Society of Anthropology, Ethnology and Early History, as well as co-founded what is now called the International African Institute (Stine, Kokot).

I think that one of the most significant places of synergy between the missionary scholar and the anthropologist was in defining as "real" religion indigenous practices and belief systems. Nineteenth century proto anthropologists and missionaries alike believed that "primitives" lacked written religious texts and therefore had no religion. By the 1920s, though, ethnological missionaries like Edwin Smith were arguing for the logic of African belief systems as religion (Smith 1926). In other words, respect for the indigenous sacred grew from immersion in local cultures. This kind of argument was important for combatting the racist evolutionist mindset that saw local, primal practices in Africa, the South Pacific, and elsewhere as illogical subhuman superstitions. While from a contemporary perspective, defining something as "religion" can be an example of western imposition, in the context of a century ago, to lack true religion was to be seen as backward or part of "childlike races" needing constant western tutelage. Although their purposes did not necessarily align, missionary scholars and Christian anthropologists both contributed to the growing understanding of primal religions qua religion.

Finally, looking beyond the British colonial context provides additional important examples of the entanglement between missionary ethnographers and anthropologists. The most prominent example that comes to mind is the remarkable missionary scholar Maurice Leenhardt (1878-1954), whose extensive ethnographic observations of the Kanaks of New Caledonia demonstrate how the missionary concern for linguistic and cultural indigeneity could be combined with anthropological insights to defend the integrity of a group of people hard pressed by French colonialism (Clifford 1982). As a Protestant, Leenhardt's linguistic service to the Kanaks contributed substantially to their own sense of peoplehood, and organization for independence, vis-à-vis French settler colonialism and its default Roman Catholicism: Kanak nationalism was early expressed through a largely Protestant political movement. After his missionary service, assisted both by sociologist Marcel Mauss (nephew of Emile Durkheim) and philosopher/anthropologist Lucien Levy-Bruhl, Leenhardt obtained a professorship in anthropology in France. His combination of pastoral concern for the Kanaks with his contributions to anthropology on the relational meaning of myths reveals the synergy between the activistic missionary scholar and the supposedly neutral anthropologist.

In conclusion, Timothy Larsen's article stands the test of time. The last word, however, does not lie in the hostility of the anthropologist toward missionary scholars, but in the myriad ways in which practicing religious scholars—whether self-styled missionaries or not—have contributed essential insights into the deep meaning of the sacred in communities and cultures around the world.

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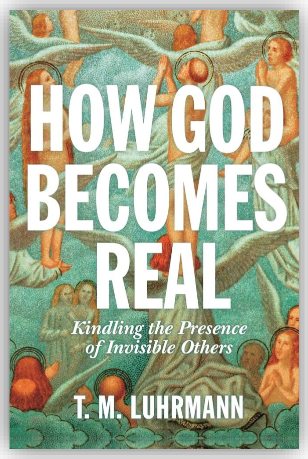
BOOK REVIEW

How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others

By Tanya Luhrmann

Reviewed by Christopher Valencia



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2020

In *How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others,* Tanya Luhrmann explores the concept that individuals must work, and specifically *work hard*, in order for God to become real to them in their experience. Luhrmann possesses a background in both anthropology and psychology, thus, her analysis consists of approaches that involve the mind, human emotion, affect theory, and phenomenology (xi). This work is very useful for those studying the anthropology of Christianity, and religious experience broadly.

In the beginning of this book, Luhrmann summarizes the goal and intention of her work: "I argue here that the puzzle of religion is not the problem of false belief, but the question of how gods and spirits become and remain real to people and what this real-making does for humans" (x). In another fashion, she describes her argument as shifting the general focus on questions of belief. Luhrmann contends that rather than assuming "people worship because they believe, we ask instead whether people believe because they worship" (x). Recalling Durkheimian elements of religion, she states this is accomplished through the myths and rituals people adopt and practice (x).

In the introduction, Luhrmann explains seven points that summarize the basic claims of her book. The fundamental claim, she writes, is "that god or spirit—the invisible other—must be made real for people, and that this real-making changes those who do it" (xii). This involves analyzing practices and sets of behaviors that change the way people feel. In relation to her first point, she suggests, "people don't (easily) have faith in gods or spirits" (xii). While belief is perceived as a way to define the mysterious and at times abrupt, fearful uncertainties, belief is also a matter of "sustained commitment" (xii). Luhrmann argues that in order for this sustained commitment to exist, one needs to adopt a "faith frame" (xii-xiii). The second point of her argument is that "detailed stories help to make gods and spirits feel real. Detailed stories make the faith frame more accessible and help people to experience invisible others as more real" (xiii).

Moving on to *practices*, for Luhrmann's third point, she suggests, "Talent and training matter" (xiii). She elaborates, "What people do and what they bring to what they do affect the way they experience gods and spirits. People who are able to become absorbed in what they imagine are more likely to have powerful experiences of an invisible other" (xiii). In her fourth point, expanding on the psychological dimension of her study, she states. "The way people think about their minds also matters" (xiii). Since the mind is a space between the inner and outer world—or "betwixt a person's inner awareness and the sensible world," it becomes important to consider how particular "people in a particular social world represent the mind itself" (xiii). Thus, considering people in their own social context becomes important.

For the fifth point, Luhrmann expands upon the term "kindled." Here, Luhrmann explains by what exactly spiritual presence is kindled and how? (xiv). The sixth point involves the practice of prayer: "Prayer changes the way people attend to their thoughts" (xiv). And lastly, the seventh point covers how people create relationships with these gods and spirits (xiv).

In Luhrmann's book, some useful concepts for those studying lived religion include her ideas of kindling, frames, and the blurring of boundaries. However, Luhrmann's strong connections between psychology and anthropology in relation to religious experience can be read as attempting to systematize religious practices and understandings as psychological "microprocesses." Luhrmann's concepts are useful and academically brilliant, however, this strong reading of psychology and religion can create readings of religion that overemphasize mental and sensual experiences. In my view, scholars of religion should allow their subject's voices to be heard. Often scientific readings can create deterministic accounts. Scholars should also explore the agentic capacities of practitioners that capture both the personal accounts and communal identities that religion fosters. Describing how God becomes real should not cloud the subject's voice, nor remove their personhood. Nonetheless, Luhrmann's concepts also move beyond determinism and afford useful analytic concepts that demonstrate the power of religion and its sensorial influences.

The concept of "faith frames" strikes a useful balance between the invisible world and the visible or *sensible* world. Rather than suggesting that certain groups have ontologies that make no distinction between the invisible and visible, Luhrmann explains: "I suspect that all humans have flexible ontologies, and that they hold [together] ideas about gods and spirits (on the one hand) and everyday world (on the other) in different ways" (5). In these opposing states, humans can nonetheless possess and sustain a measure of faith. Moving beyond deterministic readings of religion, Luhrmann describes why she uses the term faith versus belief:

> I use the word "faith" here, because belief is a promiscuous word. "Belief" refers to any kind of claim, intuitive or deliberative, that there might be an invisible spirit. By "faith" I mean a sustained, intentional, deliberative commitment to the idea that there are invisible beings who are involved in human lives in helpful ways. To operate in the real, everyday world while maintaining the idea that there is an invisible other who takes an active, loving interest in your life, people of faith adopt a mode of thinking and interpreting, a set of expectations and memories, in which gods and spirits matter. (22)

Faith in this reading reminds us of the phrase "faith commitment," that suggests one's personal choice to actively—not passively—accept and engage a religious cosmology. Again, Luhrmann's usage of this term "frame" is very useful for students of religion, and creates further ways to understand notions of "worldviews," and reminds us of the importance of acknowledging and recognizing our subjects' passageways from one world to the other; worlds that scholars cannot always see, yet must attempt to see.

Another concept that stood out to me was in the section on "Blurring the Boundary" in Chapter 3 (76). Strongly connected with earlier ideas on faith frames and narratives (or "Micro Paracosms" in Chapter 2), *blurring boundaries* involves the process of absorption—another key psychological concept explored in this book. Luhrmann explains that the religious impulse involves "the capacity to hold in abeyance the matter-of-fact expectation that the world of the senses is all there is. That is why absorption and inner sense cultivation are central to religion . . . [T]hose who practice experiencing the narrative with their inner sense, are more likely to be and become comfortable with blurring the boundary between that which is within and that which is without, between an image held in the mind and an object that stands on its own in external space" (76). Luhrmann refers to this experience through practice—or hard work—as "sensual blurring" which allows the invisible other to feel more real in the process. This concept of *blurring* reminds us of the mysterious qualities of religious experience. In this case blurred "senses" are not always reliable. Yet, for religious experience do they always need to be? Due to terms like this—which can become interpretive frameworks for religion—I find this text very useful and would highly recommend it to students studying experiential dimensions of contemporary religion and Christianity.

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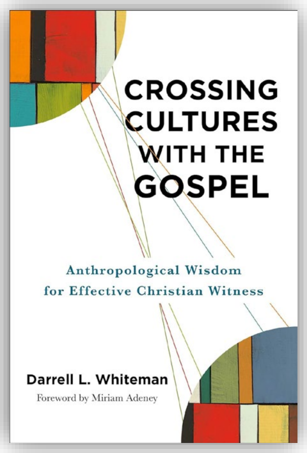
BOOK REVIEW

Crossing Cultures with the Gospel: Anthropological Wisdom for Effective Christian Witness

By Darrell L. Whiteman

Reviewed by Robert Canfield[1]



Ada, MI: Baker Academic
2024

In an important new book, missiologist Darrell Whiteman tells a revealing story about a missionary who had been preaching in a particular community. Without realizing it, the missionary gave offense by wearing expensive shoes in a place where people couldn't afford shoes of any type. For Whiteman, this anecdote illustrates how much missionaries need to learn—and how many presumptions they might need to abandon—in order to bring the gospel to people in other cultures.

Whiteman's book, *Crossing Cultures with the Gospel: Anthropological Wisdom for Effective Christian Witness*, challenges his readers—and missionaries in particular—to recognize the possible ethnocentrism in their perspective, which can distort and impede their ability to communicate well across cultural boundaries. As he explains, each culture has its own ways of understanding and coping with the problems of life. All of us understand biblical truths in ways that seem natural to us in our own cultures but not to people who have grown up in other cultures.

In each community, traditions of communication and interaction develop over time, resulting in distinct customs. Every community has its own sense of the past, its own traditions of loyalty and obligation, its own rules of courtesy, and its own conceptions of virtue and honor. If missionaries are to communicate with people who have grown up in other cultures, argues Whiteman, they must lay aside their own presuppositions and cultural conventions and commit to acquiring knowledge of unfamiliar customs and ways of thought.

Watching, Listening, and Asking Questions

The missionary project, as Whiteman reminds us, is to insert the universal message of the gospel "within the very heart of a culture." As he observes, "Unless the gospel connects deeply with the culture of the people, there will be very little transformation."

Furthermore, if the gospel makes no sense within a particular community, the people might well distort it to fit their own presuppositions. Whiteman recalls a community in Madang Province of Papua New Guinea, whose members heard the gospel from missionaries and turned it into the claim that after being baptized, blessed by a pastor, and living good lives, their spirits would leave their bodies and go up to heaven three days after dying. Even leaving aside such extreme misinterpretations, it's likely that a poorly understood message will be regarded as irrelevant, boring, or unimportant. Unfortunately, says Whiteman, "seldom is [the gospel] heard and seen as good news."

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[1] First appeared in the April 19, 2024 issue of *Christianity Today*. Reproduced here with permission.

It was firsthand experience that brought Whiteman to the conviction that missionaries need better instruction on communicating within other cultures. After living for two years with missionaries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he realized that they had little awareness of how the gospel was reaching the local community. It seemed evident to him that preparation for missionary service ought to include training in cross-cultural communication.

Some people, he notes, spend years taking courses in Bible and theology, but these studies leave them only partially equipped to transmit the gospel to another people. They learn how to interpret biblical passages, but they are unprepared to interpret the situations they will encounter in a strange community.

Before going with his wife to the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, Whiteman completed a PhD in anthropology. After serving abroad several years, he joined the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary, eventually becoming dean of its E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Ministry, where he served for 21 years. Along with his seminary duties, Whiteman worked with many organizations to help aspiring missionaries learn to communicate to people in other cultures. He has traveled broadly, visiting as many as 78 countries to teach missionaries and churches about delivering the gospel across cultural boundaries.

Anyone who wants to do this well, Whiteman says, should be aware of the messages we inevitably convey even without uttering a word. As he writes, "The lions' share of evangelism is what is spoken nonverbally. The tone of our voice, our lifestyle and our behavior are all communicating volumes of information." Indeed, what local people see and hear in the behavior of visitors can influence whether they will want to know them or learn from them.

How, then, is the deeply felt sense of God's love to be brought across the boundary between missionaries and the people they wish to reach? Whiteman recommends a practical method that involves watching, listening, and asking questions.

As an example, he describes one way he came to know some of the beliefs about spirits held by people in his Solomon Islands community. A friend had stopped by for a visit, and after staying a while, he said as he left, "I think it's safe for me to go home now." Asked why, the friend explained that he had come from the bush, where malign spirits had attached to him. He had stopped by to allow the spirits to dissipate before going home, where he had a newborn child he wanted to protect from their attacks.

Fundamentally, the cross-cultural project requires following the example of Christ, who allowed himself, as he took on human flesh, to acquire the cultural conventions of a first-century Jewish community. "The Incarnation," writes Whiteman, "is more than an important theological doctrine about God becoming a human being. It is also a model for cross-cultural ministry. Being incarnational means we empty ourselves of our pride, prejudices, personal agendas, ambitions and lifestyle in order to enter deeply into the world of another culture. Incarnation frequently means downward mobility."

Some missionaries, Whiteman regrets, never make that transition. He points to a missionary who disliked the food of the people he was supposed to reach, which gave him little chance of being effective. Missionaries can unknowingly offend their host communities by violating their conceptions of correct behavior. For instance, one missionary offended his neighbors by talking to his dog. They believed that humans only talk to other humans, and they wondered what kind of relationship this man had with the dog.

A Second Conversion

In fact, argues Whiteman, the commitment to incarnational outreach requires a "second conversion." Beyond their conversion to Christ, missionaries need to experience a "cleansing of unnecessary assumptions about the gospel and the way that it is to be communicated."

That takes work and time. Whiteman relates the story of one missionary who lived in a Bangladesh community for 18 years before feeling like he understood it well enough to make the gospel appealing to its people.

Whiteman explains the ideal of a "second conversion" like this:

> We take our understanding of the gospel, as culturally conditioned as it is, and we develop a relationship with people who are different from us in their culture. We attempt to read the Bible through their eyes and to understand and interpret it from the perspective of their worldview, not our worldview. When this begins to happen, there will no longer be just a one-way arrow pointing from the missionary communicator to the non-Christian receptor. Now arrows will go both directions because the missionary

will learn many new things about God when they view life through the lens of their host culture.

Essential to the second conversion, says Whiteman, is humility. Missionaries can come to appreciate the experience and perspective of others by entering into dialogue with them. As they develop friendships, they can become conversant with new ways of thinking and, notably, discover how other people see God in their worlds. As Paul declared, God has not left himself without witness in any society (Acts 14:17).

Whiteman describes the career of a German missionary who saw "the image of God in the Tamil people" of southern India and sought "to lead them to a fuller knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus." The way that an imprint of God already exists among a people can be a starting point for explaining the gospel. Paul, in his speech on Mars Hill, presented Christ as the unknown God that the Athenians had already been worshipping (Acts 17:22–31).

The book also mentions a missionary in Nigeria who learned an important lesson from a local elder on how his service was perceived. When the missionary exulted in having been sent to these people by God, the elder responded, "We are glad you have come, but it is our Igbo god Chukwu who sent you to us so we could learn more about God, now that you have told us about Jesus." Whiteman writes that God already has a witness in every culture "at every period of human history." This makes the missionary project exciting and encouraging; as we see how the gospel becomes meaningful to another people, we "learn more about what God is doing in the world."

Whiteman stresses that, in the end, the fundamental means of crossing boundaries is friendship. Miscommunication is inevitable when people come together from different cultures, but as Peter says, "love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). Miscues, blunders, and misunderstandings need not derail a relationship if people like each other and enjoy each other's company. There is no substitute, concludes Whiteman, for kindness, respect, and love—qualities of the Savior who commissioned the missionary enterprise.

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