Introduction

Dorottya Nagy and Martha Frederiks

> Alice came to a fork in the road.
> "Cheshire Puss," she began, rather timidly,
> (…) "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"
> "That depends a great deal on where you want to get to?" said the Cat.
> "I don't much care where—" said Alice.
> "Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the Cat.
> "—so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.
> "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat,
> "if you only walk long enough."
>
> *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll 1865: 89–90)

Some Methodological Reflections

This four-volume anthology *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* has been long in the making. Initially, the request to compile an anthology that would introduce students, fellow researchers, and other interested readers to the academic study of the history of Christian mission seemed straightforward enough. Soon however, like Alice, we were facing forks in the road, each fork prompting the question 'where do you want to get to?' The longer we reflected, the more apparent it became that some fundamental, rather critical choices would have to be made before we could commence the actual process of selecting articles, as each decision had major implications for the type of materials we were to compile. In order to understand—and appreciate—the matrix that eventually became the basis for the current text selection, below a few paragraphs on the forks in the road and the choices we have made.

We began the process by stipulating the notion 'critical readings'. In this anthology 'critical readings' signifies texts that are the product of critical engagement with method, theory, and research data, that intend to enhance critical reflection among the readers. The materials in this anthology are therefore explicitly selected because of their thought-provoking character. These critical writings aim to stimulate discussions and entice the reader to move and think

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beyond his/her academic comfort-zone and interact with theories and methods developed across the width of the academia.

The first fork in the road materialized when we sought to stipulate the second key term of the title: 'the history of Christian mission'. Our understanding of the history of mission as the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary academic field that engages missionary sources, rather than the prerogative of a single discipline (e.g. mission studies or missiology), decided 'where to get to' at the first fork. We conceive of the history of Christian mission as an academic field of inquiry where numerous disciplines, ranging from social history to linguistics and biology, intersect and interact. This implies that in this anthology the history of mission includes, but is not confined to mission historiography. We have opted for the generic category 'mission' rather than for the plural 'missions' to underscore that as a historical reality mission comprises of more than the sum of activities of missionary societies (Bosch 1997: 391). Featuring contributions from disciplines as wide-ranging as medicine, art history, linguistics, and archaeology, *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* intends to familiarize the reader with this multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field and its concomitant discussions and theories. Therefore, while this anthology includes some 'classics' from the study of the history of mission, such as "The Colonization of Consciousness" by John and Jean Comaroff (2006: 493–510) or "Eusebius Tries Again: Reconceiving the Study of Christian History" by Andrew Walls (2000), *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* is not a collection of 'classics'. Rather, the volumes primarily seek to introduce and portray the multi- and interdisciplinarity of the field, with a predilection for recent materials that apprise the reader with current discussions, insights, and theories.

The next fork in the road concerned the question of approach. We asked ourselves: what approach would be introductory as well as thought-provoking, and could serve to familiarize the reader with the academic field of the history of mission? While answering this question was relatively simple, it also implied a rather fundamental decision. To quote Fiona Bowie (1993: 3) in the classic *Women and Missions*: "No attempt has been made in this volume to cover all geographical areas, denominations or periods of time. It should also be made clear that our focus is exclusively on Christian mission." This anthology does not intend to present a chronological overview of the history of mission nor opts for a particular linear, longitudinal or spatial approach. Rather, *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* seeks to introduce the reader to methods, approaches, perspectives, and topics relevant to the academic study of the history of Christian mission.

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The third major fork in the road emerged, when we reflected on the question of language. Any choice regarding language inevitable implies a methodological choice. After elaborate discussions we decided to select texts in English only. Whether we like it or not, English has become the *lingua franca* of the academic world and the use of English as medium of communication implies accessibility for large groups of readers. Nevertheless, the choice to restrict the selection to texts in English also occasioned some constraints. First, though historically speaking the Spanish-, Portuguese-, and French colonial empires have been of great significance for the history of mission, the number of texts in English reflecting on mission activities in and by these empires, is distinctly limited. As became patent during the process of seeking and selecting articles, there is a distinct correlation between the prevalent language of particular colonial- and mission settings and the language utilized to reflect on them, to the effect that the overwhelming majority of articles in English reflects on mission by the Anglo-Saxon world. Second, while this lop-sidedness may in actual fact be representative of the disproportionate attention for the British Empire experience in the field, the restriction to English publications inevitably further buttresses the already conspicuous Anglophone-Protestant bias in research on the history of Christian mission. Reinforced by matters such as the digital accessibility of British archival materials and the dominance of English as the vernacular of the academic world, we realize that our choice for English may further enhance the preponderance of the British Protestant empire experience in methods and theories regarding the history of mission. Having said this, we have made a concerted effort to move beyond this. We have sought to include publications that reflect on missionary sources in languages other than English, examine the modern 19th and 20th century missionary movement beyond the British Empire, or study the history of mission in the pre-modern period. The paucity of materials addressing the more recent history of mission (e.g. evangelical missions in the former Soviet Union or the contemporary Korean missionary movement) however is striking (Omenyo & Choi 2000; Pelkmans 2007, 2017). We have also endeavoured to make the volumes as polyphonic as possible, incorporating voices from a wide range of disciplines and from different parts of the world; only on rare occasions did we decide to include more than one article by a certain author. The two articles by Gavin Bailey on Jesuit art in Mughal India form a diptych, discussing complementary perspectives on the same topic (Bailey 1998, 1999).

The question how to organize the material presented a fourth fork in the road. In line with the decision that the volumes were to address methodology, approaches, perspectives, and recurring themes in the history of mission,

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we organized the volumes accordingly. Therefore, the first volume focusses on methodology in the academic study of the history of mission while the second volume discusses approaches to the history of mission; volumes three and four comprise of perspectives (thematic, disciplinary, analytic or theoretical) on recurring topics in the history of mission, such as education, politics, social change, gender issues, and art. Though neatly organized in volumes, the boundaries between methods, approaches, and perspectives are rather fluid.

While neither the choice of approach, the selection of texts nor the organizational structure have been random, we readily acknowledge that other, equally valid, choices could have been made, resulting in a different composition (structure- or content-wise) of the anthology. We are also aware that many issues are left un(der)addressed, such as the relation between missionary organizations and philanthropic and reform movements, mission and slavery, Christian and other missionary movements, the self-representation of the missionary movement, mission and missionaries in literature and movies to name just a few. We have tried to address and remedy this by incorporating an extensive, though no means exhaustive, bibliography in this introduction. Also, while we have attempted to be inclusive in terms of diversity as far as authors, disciplines, and sources are concerned, we are aware that our selection has mainly come from international peer-reviewed books and journals. Relatively few articles were selected from regional or local journals and volumes published in the non-Western world. This was caused partly by accessibility, partly by copyright issues, partly by serendipity, but is in no way intended as a comment on the quality of research published in those media.

The remainder of this chapter serves to present the state of the art in the field of the history of mission, simultaneously introducing and situating the text-selection of the four volumes.

The History of Christian Mission: State of the Art

Sources and Methods

The one thing that all the disciplines working on the history of mission have in common, is that they all use missionary sources. The recognition that missionary sources (like all sources) have their own particularities and peculiarities and require critical usage is hardly new. For all their heterogeneity (e.g. letters, diaries, and journals), missionary materials form a particular genre, written for a particular audience and often with a particular purpose in mind, a genre styled to meet the expectations of its audiences (e.g. in terminology, content, and style). David Arnold and Robert Bickers (1996: 1) have called missionary

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materials "a fecund, if often frustrating, source of material to work on". Their significance however far surpasses the mere documentation of the spread of Christianity; the sources yield information on numerous issues, ranging from ornithology, botany, and architecture to language, politics, food, demography, commerce, social change, education, and medicine.

Past research has often tended to spotlight that missionary materials were biased and tainted by racism, chauvinism, and bigotry, and at times has disqualified them because of it. But as Geoffrey Oddie (1996: 204) in his perceptive article "Missionaries as Social Commentators" has noted: "… there is one clear advantage of using them that is not always present in other records, namely, that in the case of missionaries we already know something about their ultimate aims and what their biases are likely to be." He then goes on to demonstrate how missionary sources, because they detail prolonged missionary interaction with ordinary people, constitute "one of the most valuable sources for 'history from below'" (Oddie 1996: 198). When employed critically, they can be utilized to detect voices that are not typically represented in archival resources.

In the last decades scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds have recognized the value of missionary sources. Yet for all their wealth, working with missionary materials remains complex. As Arnold and Bickers (1996) have observed, in addition to the typical missionary biases, documents may reflect the personal quirks and partialities of individuals, materials (even whole collections) may have gone missing or have been destroyed, and researchers who study a topic in a particular region or period, may have to resign themselves to extensive travel, touring the various archival depots.

Studying missionary sources also requires that researchers develop a sensitivity to blind spots in the material. These blind spots could comprise of lack of information about the situatedness of certain materials (e.g. biographical or political backgrounds), of voices that are not represented or have been repressed (women, indigenous workers, children, dissenting voices) as well as of things that are left unsaid (e.g. issues related to sexuality, conflicts, setbacks). These 'gaps' in the material may be as revealing as that which is explicitly recorded and, as postcolonial and gender studies have demonstrated, retrieving them requires particular skills and techniques (Hall 2017; Grimshaw & Sherlock 2007; Maluleke 2000; Peel 1996; Sebastian 2003).

As Anders Ahlbäck's perceptive study of Christian Oldendorp's *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caraibischen Inseln* (1777) demonstrates, missionary periodicals and other published missionary texts form an even more convoluted genre than missionary archival materials (Ahlbäck 2016). Published to solicit spiritual as well as material support, fashioned to

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inform as well as influence and intended to confirm tropes about missionaries and 'the other', extensive editorial interventions and censorship add additional layers of interpretation to the sources (Barringer 2002, 2004; Jensz & Acke 2013; Miller 2012; Wild-Wood 2010). While, as Terry Barringer has observed in her discussion of missionary periodicals, problematic as sources for understanding developments 'in the field', these texts form a rich resource for "missionary self-understanding and self-representation" as well as for the political climate in a particular period (Barringer 2002: 169; Jensz & Acke 2013: 13).

In recognition of the limitations and complexities of missionary sources, and aware that these limitations and biases imply that the sources can only provide a distinct and therefore partial window into the missionary endeavour, researchers have sought to diversify their sources. On the one hand there has been a trend to supplement the traditional missionary sources such as archives and periodicals, with materials from family archives such as private letters or diaries by missionaries and their relatives (Chu 2007), oral history data (Baker Koons 1985), as well with non-missionary sources 'from the mission field' (Arnold & Bickers 1996). As Wild-Wood (2001, 2008) has shown, triangulation of such sources might yield new, fruitful perspectives.

On the other hand, recent years have also seen a pronounced shift in scholarly attention from written materials to material culture as a source for the history of mission, ranging from photographs, illustrations, cartography, and the magic lantern to art, indigenous artefacts, cloth, and plant specimen (Bailey 1998, 1999, 2013; De Almeida 2003; Fromont 2011, 2014; Jolly 2014; Golvers 2000; Kuo 2016; Simpson 1997; Thompson 2013). The most pronounced example of this 'material turn' has been the growing interest in missionary photography. Spearheaded by Paul Jenkins (1993, 1996; 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2009), the 21st century has seen a rise in publications on missionary photography (Long 2003; Maxwell 2011; Thompson 2002, 2012). As studies by Jenkins (1996; 2001), Choi (2010), and Reynolds (2010) convincingly demonstrate, missionary photographs are not merely reflections of staged, imperial representations of 'the other', but the product of intricate processes of negotiation and cooperation. Therefore, missionary photographs offer another window into the complexities and relationality of the missionary endeavour and may shed new light on matters described (or omitted) in written sources. In a perceptive article on the role of photography in American evangelical missions, Kathryn Long (2003) for example investigates the role of photographs 'at the home front'. She argues that photographs of missionized as well as missionaries served both promotional and devotional purposes and functioned as "a window through which supporters could view the object of prayer a half a world away" and "sustained a sense of relationship with missionaries, the closest Protestants

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came to having saints of their own" (Long 2003: 826, 835). A different type of pictorial representation that has received scholarly attention concerns missionary cartography (Kark 1993; Altic 2014; Vasquez 2015; Korte & Onnekink 2020). Pellervo Kokkonen (1993) has for example argued that by inscribing the distribution of mission stations, schools, and churches on the landscape, missionaries were not merely producing 'religious geography', but contributed to the creation and demarcation of what were deemed to be distinct ethnolinguistic groups.

Informed by an anthropological preoccupation with social change, scholars like Margaret Jolly (2014), Latu Latai (2014), Birgit Meyer (1997; 2010), and Jean Mitchell (2013) have followed another line of inquiry. Identifying transformations in indigenous material culture as sites of investigation, their work draws attention to the impact of the twin forces of mission and modernity on issues such as architecture, bodily practices, agriculture, landscaping, and music. In contrast, the work by Gülen Cevik (2011) showcases how missionary encounter with different styles of clothing and furniture influenced trends in fashion and interior design in the home countries.

Both a method to generate data and to interpret them, mission archaeology has also drawn attention to the significance of material culture for the history of mission. Used to engender new data as well as to supplement or validate existent data and theory, mission archaeology is vital when relevant textual materials are absent (Evans, Sørensen & Richter 2014; King & McGranaghan 2018; Martínez D'Alós-Moner 2015). As the research of scholars like Elizabeth Graham (1998), Mark Lycett (2004) and Lee Panich and Tsim Schneider (2015) on early modern America has evidenced, mission archaeology can challenge prevailing narratives about colonisation and mission, uncovering tangible evidence that attests to the creative ways in which local converts "have come to terms with, and possibly eluded and subverted Western domination" (Meyer 1999: xix). And as the publications of Ian Smith and his team (2012, 2014a, 2014b) on 19th century New Zealand have shown, intersecting excavation data with textual materials can be a productive way of mapping the "long conversation" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991: 11) between missionized and missionaries.

By discussing archaeology, which serves both as a source of and a method for mission history, we have already begun discussing methods in the history of mission. As versatile as the sources, are the methods utilized to investigate the sources. In the paragraphs below we merely spotlight some of the more prevalent methods from the disciplines of history, linguistics, theology-missiology, and the social sciences, used in the study of missionary sources.

Historical methods unquestionably spearhead the research into missionary sources. Mission historiography is perhaps as old as the missionary movement

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itself, though as an academic discipline it only emerged in the 19th century, typically as a branch of church history. In the 20th century mission history also became part of the subdisciplines of imperial- and world history. Trends in mission historiography have included foci on gender, indigenous agency, contextualisation, mission and colonialism, while current publications tend to focus on the connectivities and interchange between 'metropole' and 'colony' (Becker & Stanley 2013; Becker 2015; Midgley 2000; Price 2008), or remonstrate against tendencies that prolong the dichotomy of Western and non-Western world and subsume the history of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and the Americas under a mission history paradigm, rather than as a part of the diverse history of Christianity worldwide (Cox 2015; Dussel 1981; González 2002).

There is a growing interest in oral history as a method in mission historiography. Oral history has been widely employed to supplement existing data with voices that are typically omitted from the mission archives; in general, the focus has been on silenced voices of people within the Christian fold, such as indigenous workers, women in mission or missionary women and children (Benson 2015; Morrison 2017; Phiri 2000; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982). Oral history however could prove a valuable tool in documenting the reception (or rejection) of Christian mission. Oral history methods are also vital for the burgeoning fields of memory and heritage studies. Methods and insights from memory and heritage studies about which things are remembered and how and why they are remembered might yield fertile new ground for the study of mission history (Albert, Bernecker & Rudolff 2013; Erll, Nünning & Young 2008; Sørensen & Carman 2009; Tota & Hagen 2015).

Intersecting historical and linguistic perspectives, missionary linguistics has emerged as an independent academic area of inquiry within the wider field of linguistics. Until the recent past, missionary contributions to linguistics were largely ignored; currently there is, in the words of Marcus Tomalin (2011a: 1), a growing recognition that the "analytical frameworks they [missionaries, the editors] used were often intriguingly heterogeneous, being composed of different approaches derived from a range of distinct grammatical traditions." Tomalin writes:

> While there is a lingering belief that missionary linguists simply adopted some kind of Graeco-Roman grammatical framework, and mindlessly attempted to fit the indigenous languages they encountered into this preexisting format, this view is largely inaccurate, as many recent studies have demonstrated.

In recognition of the pioneering work of missionaries in linguistics, scholars have begun to analyse how non-native missionaries conceived and described

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indigenous languages and what these missionary conceptualisations of orthography, lexicology, grammar, and syntax contribute to the field of linguistics (Stolz & Warnke 2015; Zimmermann & Kellermeier-Rehbein 2015; Zwartjes 2011). Missionary linguistics also examines the broader contexts in which language description occurs, studying the dynamics between native speakers and non-native speakers (often missionaries) in language description (Irvine 2008; Samson 2010; Schieffelin 2014) or the standardisation of language brought about by the combined forces of language description and Bible translation (Fulford 2002; Mojola 2001). Also language policy has become a field of inquiry. Clara Mortamet and Céline Amourette (2015: 37) have for example shown how Protestant and Roman Catholic missionary organisations cooperated in adopting and propagating the Latin alphabet for Swahili, in an effort to curb the advance of Arabization and Islamisation in Eastern Africa.

Related to missionary linguistics is the field of translation studies. As Birgit Meyer (1999: xxv) has pointed out: "Translation has to be examined as a 'process of power' (Asad 1986: 148) (…) a creative process, which does not aim for the correct representation of the Other, but which is instead a product of intersubjective and intercultural dialogue (Fabian 1971b)." Derek Peterson's comparison of two contemporary 19th century Kikuyu dictionaries evidences this. Peterson's research reveals that the main differences between the two lexicons concern words about religion and authority. Using a postcolonial analysis Peterson argues that these dissimilarities are not 'mistakes' but rather the outcome of the distinct decisions made in the negotiation processes of each of the dictionaries (Peterson 1999). Marcus Tomalin's appraisal of 19th century Haida New Testament translations discloses comparable findings, possibly indicative of the fact that words pertaining to religion and hierarchy were considered most delicate and therefore most contested (Tomalin 2011b). In a persuasive article on autochthonous medical auxiliaries in Zambia, Walima Kalusa (2007) illustrates how translation could become an instrument of subversion. He argues that by acting as translators for medical personnel and using vernacular categories representing indigenous views on health and healing, medical auxiliaries positioned Western medical healthcare in a continuum with local healing practices rather than as its 'other'; thus, Kalusa maintains, they advertently or inadvertently undermined the project of Christianization through bio-medical healing.

As Jane Samson's work (2010, 2017) displays, translation was rarely the work of individuals but rather a team effort, with translation teams typically consisting of both native and non-native speakers. Samson describes how key decisions were usually preceded by elaborate deliberations, weighing the pros and cons of certain choices. Isabel Hofmeyr's work on Bunyan translations in Africa cogently argues that such hermeneutical negotiations were not

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restricted to textual translations. Her research evidenced how performances, depictions, partial translations, oral traditions, and other forms of appropriation (wittingly or unwittingly) carry on these hermeneutical processes (Hofmeyr 2001, 2004).

Also theology, and more in particular missiology, has contributed significantly to the study of mission history. In the 19th and early 20th centuries teleological and ecclesiological paradigms of mission history prevailed, but also more recent works such as Lamin Sanneh's *Translating the Message* can be comprehended as teleological projects. Crucial to Sanneh's argumentation is "that all cultures have cast upon them the breath of God's favour, thus cleansing them of all stigma of inferiority and untouchability" (Sanneh 1989: 47) and "that the God whom the missionary came to serve had actually preceded him or her in the field" (Sanneh 1983: 167).

Following the decolonisation and subsequent critical assessment of the missionary movement, the focus in mission history shifted from a mission-centred approach to the reception of Christianity, with special attention for local agency and local manifestations of Christianity (Cox 2015: 28). Theoretically, this move was legitimized by concepts like 'the indigenizing principle' (Walls 2004: 7), 'vernacularization' and 'translation' (Sanneh 1989), and incarnation, inculturation, and contextualisation (Bosch 1991: 430–468). This preoccupation with local expressions of Christianity gave rise to a number of prolegomena questions, such as the relation between church history and mission history (often resulting in the relegation of the term 'mission history'), and the Western normativity in terms of analytical concepts and periodisation and has spurred on a revisionist project that in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty aims to 'provincialize Europe' in the history of Christianity (Chakrabarty 2000; Dussel 1981, 1992, 1993; González 2002; Hock 2014; Koschorke 2013; Walls 2000). This enterprise, by Paul Kollman (2014) called "the World-Christian turn" in the history of Christianity, acknowledges and at times even lauds Christianity's inherent plurality. World Christianity scholars foreground Christianity's diversity in past and present (Irvin 2008), its multiple centres through time and space (coined 'polycentric structures' by Koschorke & Hermann 2014) and its translocal connectivities.

Recently, some scholars (Cabrita & Maxwell 2017: 21–22) have begun to critique World Christianity scholarship for its fixation on particularity and its disregard for globalizing and integrative forces within the Christian tradition, such as ecumenical organizations, Bible societies, and missionary societies. Others, such as Arun Jones (2014) have pointed out that much 'World Christianity' research continues to work along bipolar lines of thinking, that

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find their origin in the colonial period, continually producing and reproducing binaries such as 'missionary' versus 'indigenous', 'the West' versus 'the Rest', 'North' versus 'South'. Again others, such as Chandra Mallampalli (2017: 164), have drawn attention to the conceptual entanglement of 'World Christianity' as a field of study with the history of Christianity in Africa and query its usefulness for the academic study of Christianity elsewhere. The impact of these debates surrounding 'World Christianity' scholarship on the study of history of Christian mission and of Christianity more generally is patent; when Stanley Skreslet (2007) reflects on the theological *proprium* in the study of Christian mission, he identifies the concurrent attention for Christian diversity and for local-global dynamics within Christianity as characteristic of a theological-missiological approach to the study of mission history. In view however of these and kindred discussions, Dorottya Nagy (2017) and Nagy & Frederiks (2020) have argued to employ the concept 'World Christianity' solely as the epithet for a particular approach of studying Christianity in past and present.

Postcolonial theologians like Joerg Rieger (2004), Pui-lan Kwok (2005), Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah (2001, 2005), and Musa Dube (2000) have written about the implications of missionary complicity with colonialism for theology and Biblical studies; they maintain that even after the decolonialisation, "colonial intellectual attitudes" still dominate the field of theology (Rieger 2004: 209). Working from the premise that the missionary transmission of Christianity and Christian theology was intertwined with notions of cultural and racial superiority, scholars like Rieger and Kwok have embarked on a project to deconstruct theology and to disentangle it from hegemonic ideas, allowing for the formulation of new, more inclusive theologies; the work by Sugirtharajah and Dube spotlights the imbrication of Bible translations and interpretations in the missionary-cum-colonial project.

Several theologians-missiologists work at the intersection of missiology and the social sciences. As early as 1948 Bengt Sundkler in his *Bantu Prophets* used sociological analysis to examine the political, racial, and religious factors that led Zulu prophets to break with mainline missions and establish independent churches. Paul Kollman's *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in East Africa* (2005) employs sociological and political theories—E. P. Thompson's concept of moral economy and Albert Hirschman's threefold typology of exit, voice, and loyalty—to map African agency in Christian villages of formerly enslaved while Martin Petzke's work (2016, 2018) investigates the sociological and theological presuppositions that undergird the rise of practices of quantification in mission history (e.g. religious statistics) and points to the usefulness of

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quantitative methods in the study of mission history. Robert Montgomery's *Introduction to the Sociology of Missions* (1999) provides a more generic overview of relevant sociological methods and theory germane to missiologists studying mission history.

Also anthropologists and sociologists have researched missionary sources. The best-known example is John and Jean Comaroff's influential *Of Revelation and Revolution* (2 vols, 1991, 1997); the work analyses the impact of the dual forces of mission and modernity on the South African Tswana (for a discussion of the Comaroffs see below). Anthropological interest in missionary sources has mainly focussed on processes of social change (Jolly 2014; Lankina & Getachew 2012; Meyer 1997, 1999) with the anthropology of Christianity, a recent strand within anthropology that critically engages with anthropology's past entanglement with Christianity (and Protestantism in particular), specifically spotlighting issues of discontinuity, rupture, and deviance in modern mission history (Angrosino 1994; Cannell 2006; Robbins 2014). Also social sciences other than cultural anthropology have engaged mission history. Victoria Burbank's research on health challenges among Aborigines in Australia (2012) is an example of the use of mission archives for medical anthropology, while Richard Schram (2016) discusses semantic and cultural innovations springing from Australian mission work in British New Guinea. Judy Katzenellenbogen, Derek Yach, and Rob Dorrington (1993), working at the intersection of demography and epidemiology, have examined Moravian missionary records to investigate mortality rates and life-expectancy of men and women in the 19th century Western Cape in South Africa.

Approaches and Perspectives

Depending on their interests researchers have chosen different approaches to study missionary sources. Julia Cagé and Valeria Rueda (2017) for example have studied missionary archives to map the correlation between improved colonial infrastructures and the spread of HIV, Paul Smith (2007) and Henry McGhie (2017) to investigate the history of ornithology, William Dunmire (2004) to study patterns of change in horticulture and foodstuffs in New Spain, Gaston Demarée, Astrid Ogilvie, and David Kusman (2019) to investigate historical seismological data, while musicologists like David Dargie (2010) and Anna Celenza and Anthony DelDonna (2014), have utilized missionary sources to detect transformations of musical repertoires. The work of art historian Gauvin Bailey (1998, 1999, 2013) investigates Jesuit utilization of visual art in missionary settings, while musicologist Jutta Toelle (2013) has studied Jesuit missionary use of music. The versatility of missionary sources is such that the list of possible approaches and perspectives is well-nigh endless. We

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therefore (again) opt to merely highlight some of more prevalent approaches and perspectives.

Postcolonial scholars and anthropologists have tended to study the sources through a lens of social change and rupture, engendered by the onset of mission and modernity (Cannell 2006; Hunt 1999; Maluleke 2000; Robbins 2004, 2014); most of their work therefore concentrates on the 19th and early 20th centuries. Both postcolonial and anthropological research in the history of mission has been profoundly influenced by Jean and John Comaroff's seminal work *Of Revelation and Revolution* (1991, 1997). The Comaroffs (and scholars working in their tradition) have emphasized the missionary complicity in the colonial project, positing mission and colonialism as twin projects aimed at the colonization (soul, mind, and body) of the subjects of empire.

Missionary schools as well as missionary hospitals as localities where Western cultural values were transmitted, are attributed a pivotal role in this colonization project. There is trail of literature that explores this entanglement of missionary education and medical work with imperial agendas. Modupe Labode (1993: 26) for example writes that missionary education of African women on the 19th century Eastern Cape centred on the creation of Christian homes:

> Simply converting Africans to Christianity was not enough; the missionaries' goal was nothing less than restructuring African society. 'Restructure' suggested physical changes in the household, such as favouring square houses over round huts; these physical changes corresponded to the spiritual changes which took place in the convert.

The education of African girls therefore formed a key strategy in simultaneously Christianizing and civilizing (read 'restructuring') the Cape society. In a similar vein, Chantel Verdeil (2014) has pointed to the profound impact of missionary schools on Ottoman perceptions of time.

Also in medical work, the various agendas were interlocked (Anderson 2017; Kalusa 2007; Gao 2014). Thomas Anderson (2017), discussing British medical work on Madagascar argues that the introduction of the hospital played a central role in missionary strategies. Because missionaries believed traditional medicine to be either superstition or witchcraft and because the hospital was clearly controlled "space of western civilization" (Anderson 2017: 545), missionary clinics and hospitals according to Anderson, could underscore Western superiority and via medical supremacy could debilitate traditional beliefs and thus lay the groundwork for effective evangelization. Or in the words of Walima Kalusa (2007: 61–62):

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> As conceptualised by the surgeon and other missionary healers, medical evangelism therefore entailed that African patients would follow a teleological progression from embracing the Christian variety of scientific medicine to abandoning their 'heathen' culture, along with its underlying belief system (…) '[T]he gospel of the syringe' was an integral ingredient of the wider Western 'civilizing mission', which construed all pre-Christian forms of medical knowledge and religion as its 'primitive Other', in dire need of reconstructing in European image.

While an ubiquitous missionary strategy, it often proved to be an ineffective one (Hardiman 2006).

Though hugely influential, the Comaroffs' work has been critiqued for its monolithic conceptualizations of mission and colonialism as well as for the lack of agency accorded to indigenous populations (Dunch 2002; Lankina & Getachew 2012; Meyer 1995; Peel 1995; Peterson 1997, 1999, 2012; Wyss 2012). Based on a study of educational institutions for girls run by the German Kaiserwerth deaconesses in late Ottoman Beirut, Julia Hauser (2016: 475) for example queries "the cultural imperialist thesis" that frames "the civilizing mission" as a unilateral hegemonic project. Her archival work evidences that the deaconesses' educational policy was the product of constant processes of negotiation with their clientele and of adjustments to changing political realities and Roman Catholic competition; a process that according to Hauser (2016: 473) is "starkly at odds with the idea of a unidirectional civilizing mission." Similarly, Kalusa's work on Zambian medical auxiliaries disavows representations of local workers as "mere cogs in the wheels of the 'civilising mission' of their European employers" (Kalusa 2007: 74). Rather, Kalusa's research shows them to be independent actors who functioned as cultural brokers between traditional and western medicine and who by their persistent adherence to indigenous medical cosmologies subverted the project of Christianization through bio-medical healing.

In order to capture these dynamic and reciprocal processes of encounter and interaction, scholars have begun to use the lenses of cultural exchange and transculturation, describing "gradual transformation, mutual appropriation and redefinitions of cultural elements within the colonial encounter" (Schultze 2004: 324). Building on linguistic theory, Mary Louise Pratt (2008: 7–8) has coined the notions 'contact zone' and 'anti-conquest' to describe these encounters. Contact zones, according to Pratt, are "spaces of imperial encounters, the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict." However, as Cécile Fromont (2011, 2014) has remarked with reference

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to the early modern world, subsuming all Europe's cross-cultural interactions under the paradigm of colonialism, does not do justice to people in Africa, Asia, and the Americas as "independent influential actors" (Fromont 2014: 9, 15). Therefore Fromont, who studies Christian visual culture in the Kingdom of Kongo in the early modern period, has proposed the notion of "spaces of correlation" (Fromont 2014: 15) as an alternative to Pratt's contact zone.

Despite the critiques on the work of the Comaroffs, there remains a school of researchers that holds on to one-dimensional, rather stereotypical representations of "missionaries as spiritual rapists of the local population, epitomes of intolerance, destroyers of indigenous culture and religion" (Schultze 2004: 324). Most scholars nowadays however agree with the assessment of colonial historian Norman Etherington (1996: 201, 209) "that Christianity was a two-edged sword that could undercut as well as sustain domination" and that "missionaries, who aimed to replace African cultures with European 'civilisation' and who frequently allied themselves with colonial governments, nevertheless transmitted a religion which Africans turned to suit their own purposes: spiritual, economic and political."

Karen Fields' work on British colonial Africa evidences this multifarious relationship between mission and colonialism. She demonstrated for example that attitudes towards chieftaincy were a bone of contestation between missionaries and colonial officers and has argued that missionaries and their indigenous co-workers, in their resistance against African custom, undermined the authority of the chiefs on whom indirect rule depended. Fields (1982: 106) writes: "To the missions custom was a stumbling block, to the regime a prop. Attacking custom, therefore, missionaries attacked indirect rule at its foundation." Fields has been one among many who have pointed to the multi-layered, equivocal relations between mission and colonialism, varying from overt cooperation to outright subversion. Since the 1960s scholars have for example investigated the correlation between mission and the rise of nationalism (Coleman 1965; Moyo 2015; Walshe 1982). James Coleman (1965) and Peter Walshe (1982) identified missionary education as a source of nationalism, while Lamin Sanneh (1989, 1995) has made a case that nationalism was a corollary of the missionary vernacular project. For the Indian subcontinent, scholars like Geoffrey Oddie (1999) and Chandra Mallampalli (2003) have argued that missionary vilification of Hindu practices inadvertently produced Hindu reform movements and Hindu nationalism.

While one line of research has explored the compound relationships between mission and the colonial project (e.g. Blackburn 2000; Hall 2002; Porter 2003, 2004, 2010; Robert 2008; Stanley 1990), another line of inquiry has focussed on heterogeneity in the missionary movement. Part of this research is an attempt to deconstruct the monolithic conceptualization of missionaries,

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foregrounding the variety in ecclesial and national backgrounds and the differences in attitudes, gender, education, and experience between individual missionaries. As Richard Fox Young (2002: 37) has observed:

> Christian missionaries, far from being cut from the same cloth, ecclesiastical or otherwise, are nowadays regarded as comprising an internally complex, self-differentiated cohort of individuals with little in common except an uncompromising faith in Jesus Christ as the one Lord and a collateral conviction that the gospel's salvific implications are universalistic.

Still, Young hastens to add, this is an insider's perceptive; 'outsiders' who were object of mission were less attuned to these diversities and often conceived missionaries as one homogenous group (Young 2002: 39).

Over the last three decades an important strand within this line of research has sought to remedy past disregard for the contribution of women to the missionary movement. In his seminal essay "God and Nature Intended You for a Missionary's Wife", Valentine Cunningham (1993: 89) evocatively summarized (and critiqued) past conceptualizations of mission and missionaries with the words: "… missionary was a male word"; it denoted "male actors, male actions and male spheres of service." To address this male-biased perspective, Cunningham and others have spotlighted the role of women in mission, such as female missionaries, missionary wives, and the women's support of missionary movement as well as the gendered dimension of the missionary venture (Bowie, Kirkwood & Ardener 1993; Busschers 2015; Choi 2009; Grimshaw 1989; Reeves-Ellington, Sklar & Shemo 2010; Twells 2009; Whiteley 2005).

Research on women and mission began in the 1990s with a surge of publications on women missionaries. While there has been a long, but somewhat under-studied tradition of Catholic female congregations working in missionary settings (Bruno-Jofré 2005; Burke 2001; Chowning 2008; Cowan 2018; Stornig 2015; Thurman 2002), most research has tended to spotlight Protestant women missionaries. Protestant women were not considered missionaries in their own right until the mid-19th century, when spurred on by the slogan 'women's work for women', British and American missions began to send out single female missionaries. It is this group that has drawn most scholarly attention (Beaver 1980; Bowie, Kirkwood & Ardener 1993; Okkenhaug 2002; Robert 1997, 2002; Sasaki 2016). More recent research has focussed on the gendered dimensions of mission, detailing how missionary women (and men) were promoting and imposing Victorian ideals about marriage, domesticity, and propriety (Choi, 2009; Choi & Jolly 2014; Grimshaw & Sherlock 2007; Huber &

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Lutkehaus 1999). Elizabeth Prevost (2008: 797) has drawn attention to the irony of the women's work for women project, pointing to the paradox that single women (spinsters) were included in the missionary movement to address "the gendered needs of 'heathen women'", while their lifestyle contradicted the very values they propagated. She writes (2008: 797–798): "[M]issionaries needed to be 'women' for metropolitan purposes of professionalizing women's mission work but not in carrying out that work in the mission field."

Researchers such as Claire Midgley (2000), Anna Johnson (2003), and Patricia Grimshaw and John Sherlock (2007) have drawn attention to the correlation between missionary and imperial projects regarding women on the one hand and the position of women in the metropole on the other. In a thought-provoking article on the practice of *sati*, Claire Midgley (2000) demonstrates how the British campaign against *sati* was simultaneously used to legitimate colonial rule (Spivak's white men saving brown women from brown men) and to enhance political participation of women in the UK. Similarly, Katharina Stornig (2015) shows how the involvement of German nuns of the Servants of the Holy Spirit in obstetric care in New Guinea impacted both Papuan childbirth practices and effectuated shifts in Roman Catholic perceptions of purity and sexuality.

A derivative from approaches centring women and gender, there is a strand of research that focusses on the missionary family as a form of performative mission, embodying the nuclear modern family, and "demonstrating exemplary domestic Christianity to missionary subjects" (Morrison 2017: 431). As part of this approach, research has been conducted into missionary children (Hillel 2011; Manktelow 2016, 2017; Miller 2012; Morrison 2017) as well as in cases of deviance that permeate the clear-cut boundaries between missionary and 'the other' (Manktelow 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017).

Disavowed by apparent missionary complicity in the imperial project and past hagiographic and triumphalist tendencies, missionaries are nowadays rarely a subject matter in their own right, except as perpetrators of vilification and exploitation. While understandable, there are still blind spots in the study of cross-cultural mission, such as how missionaries coped with health and cultural challenges, the omnipresence of death, and new food regimes, how missionaries negotiated expectations from 'back home' when their mission proved uphill work or how missionaries functioned as cultural brokers in the sending countries. Also the relation between mission and science merits further research, as missionary engagement with 'the other' was an important factor in shaping Western intellectual history. Apart from the widely acknowledged missionary contributions to linguistics and ethnography,

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missionaries functioned as auxiliaries to science by collecting plant specimen for biologists, made ornithological observations, contributed to cartography and medicine and so on (e.g. Bell 2014; Frey Näf 2013; Harries 2012; Kokkonen 1993). But so far little research has been conducted into this aspect of the missionary movement.

More common has been the shift in focus away from Western missionaries to the study of indigenous agency; despite racial, cultural, and religious biases in the sources, the lives and contributions of large numbers of local men and women have been (re)constructed (e.g. Azamede 2010; Brock 2003; Chojnacki 2010; Davis 2018; Grimshaw & May 2010; Tiedeman 1997; Van Valen 2013). Current research, such as Emma Wild-Wood's work on Apolo Kivebulaya makes clear, that many of these local men and women were far more than mere auxiliaries to missionaries; often they were cross-cultural missionaries in their own right, working among neighboring groups (Andrews 2013; Brock 2014; Charles 2010; Chojnacki 2010; Cruickshank 2010; Wild-Wood 2008). There is also a growing body of research on translocal missionaries who did not originate from the centres of empire, so far mainly spotlighting the Black Atlantic missionary work in West Africa, such as 19th century Jamaican Baptist missionaries in Cameroon or 19th century West Indians in the Gold Coast (Kwakye 2018; Killingray 2003; Russell 2000; Wariboko 2004). Possibly with the exception of studies about Bible women (Chang 2006; Kent 1999; Strawn 2012, Yun 2018) and work on indigenous Catholic sisters (Burke 2001; Chu 2016), there is little research on female indigenous agents.

Another trend in the research on indigenous agency seems to move research beyond studies of 19th century missionary sources. Linda Heywood and John Thornton (2007), Edward Andrews (2013), John Charles (2010) for example have focussed on early modern period, with Heywood and Thornton (2007) reconstructing the contribution of Central West Africans to the evangelization of enslaved in the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries, John Charles (2010) investigating 16th and 17th centuries Andean indigenous agents, and Andrews (2013) studying 18th century native American evangelists, working on the east coast of America.

In recent years also several critical editions of materials written by indigenous agents have been published. Vincent Carretta and Ty Reese (2010) have for example made the letters of Philip Quaque, an 18th century Fante minister who for more than fifty years worked on behalf of Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Cape Coast Castle (present-day Ghana), accessible for a wider audience, while Peggy Brock (2014) painstakingly transcribed the diaries of the Tsimshian evangelist Arthur Clah. Joanne Brooks' work spotlights the collected writings of the 18th century Mohegan minister Samson Occom (Occom & Brooks 2006), while Ji Li (2015) published a unique set of letters, written by

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Chinese Catholic women in 19th century Manchuria to their former missionary, Father Dominique Maurice Pourquié, in France.

In a way, mission history has always been a history of encountering the religious other. Studies that discuss missionary perceptions of and engagement with other religious traditions abound. One strand of current research focusses on the interdependence of theological convictions, political regimes, and missionary representations of the religious other (Botta 2013; Frederiks 2003, 2009; Meyer 1999; Nehring 2003, 2015; Oddie 2006; Porter 2008; Ryad 2015). Sergio Botta (2013) for example demonstrates how in early modern Spain theology rather than phenomenology determined the classifications and representations of newly encountered religious traditions in Latin America. Botta (2013: 12) argues that the classification of indigenous religions in early modern Spain as idolatry served a dual purpose; it theologically positioned the newly discovered religious traditions in relation to Christianity and simultaneously legitimized social control over the conquered cultures. He also demonstrates that by the early 17th century, views gradually began to change and the first notions of polytheism began to be formulated, that formed the foundation for what eventually became a religious studies approach to religion.

Similarly, Geoffrey Oddie's *Imagined Hinduism* (2006) shows how 19th century British missionary conceptualizations of Hinduism were rooted in Enlightenment ideas, Christian understandings of the concept 'religion', and the colonial reality; this resulted in a representation of Hinduism as a unitary, brahman-controlled, ritualistic tradition that embodied 'the other' of British Protestant Evangelicalism. Oddie also contends that by the late 19th century prolonged missionary encounter with Hindus had prompted a more nuanced, mild, and pluriform representation of Hinduism(s). Andrew Porter (2008) points out how the expansion of the British Empire into predominantly Muslim regions occurred at a time of Protestant evangelical millennialism, which ascribed to Islam the role of the antichrist at the end of time, resulting in a resurgence of Protestant missionary work among Muslims. Like Oddie, Porter observes that by the end of the 19th century, due to a changed political climate and experiences on the mission field, more accommodative attitudes towards Islam began to prevail among mainstream missionary societies.

Another strand of research investigates responses to Christian mission. An example of this is a volume edited by Peggy Brock (2005) that investigates the responses of indigenous people (USA, Australia, and New Zealand) to Christian mission. Richard Fox Young (2002) has examined how Hindu elite, who were drawn into the encounter with Christianity and Christian missionaries, demonstrated a surprisingly diverse range of attitudes towards Christian mission, that varied from polemics, to intellectual engagement, appreciation,

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and conversion. Whereas the 19th century renaissance of Hinduism in response to Christian polemics has received much scholarly attention (e.g. Neufeldt 1993; Śarmā 1988), Andreas Nehring (2003, 2015) has shown that also in 19th century Theravada Buddhism in Burma reforms occurred as a result of encounters with Christian mission. Martha Frederiks (2009) researched the persistent rebuffs of Christian mission by Muslims in 19th and early 20th century Gambia, which eventually led Methodist missionaries to modify their mission strategies, redirecting their efforts to traditional religionists only. Shobana Shankar's study of Muslim responses to Christian mission in Northern Nigeria argues, among other things, that Muslim authorities in Northern Nigeria used the work of medical missionaries to advance their own causes (Shankar 2007, 2014).

Finally

As stated at the beginning of this introduction, *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* presents a selection of texts that intends to introduce students, researchers, and other interested readers to the multi- and interdisciplinary field of mission history by apprising them with current discussions, insights, and theories and by addressing the complexities involved in studying mission history. We designed the volumes in such a way that *Critical Readings in the History of Christian Mission* can serve as basis for course-work and teaching purposes; jointly, the volumes on methods, approaches, and perspectives on topics will give students a comprehensive introduction to the study of mission history.

Throughout the process of compiling this anthology, we ourselves have read and learned a great deal, thereby only increasing our passion for the history of mission. We sincerely hope that the text-selection will be as thought-provoking, stimulating, and inspiring for the readers.

Acknowledgements

This project was initiated some years ago at the invitation of Inge Klompmakers. Since, it has gone through many stages, eventually producing the current text selection. Most of the ideas on how to fashion this anthology were not conceived behind a desk, but rather during long walks through the fields near Ermelo (the Netherlands). However, as Valentina Napolitano (2016: ix) so perceptively writes: "Many voices, people, ideas, and stories, percolate through writings. (…) Ideas are co-created. They emerge in small and big talks, through shared silences, in front of midmorning and late-night coffees. They come through us, more than they are by us." We would therefore like to acknowledge the input of colleagues (cognisant or unaware) in conceiving this anthology.

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Inge, Wendy Logeman, Gera van Bedaf, and others of the editorial and production staff at Brill have been patient, encouraging, and helpful throughout the long process of selecting the materials, obtaining permissions, and preparing the materials for this collection. On behalf of Brill, we would also like to thank all the authors and publishers who allowed their work (be it text or image) to be reproduced for this series.

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