Editorial
Joy Sandefur, Guest Editor

(Rev Dr) Joy Sandefur is National Researcher and Adviser on Indigenous matters for the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia. Joy has worked alongside the Indigenous people of Australia for many years. Her experience includes involvement in a Kriol Bible translation and working in the literary department and some other areas at Nungalinya College, Darwin, Northern Territory. While working with Nungalinya College, she also spent a part of her time working for the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory and has spent time as a worker in Aboriginal matters for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. Joy uses her skills to encourage Indigenous churches and Christians and those who work alongside them.

In this issue we focus on Women in mission.

Women, single or married, have always been involved in mission throughout the history of the church. At different times there have been paradigm shifts in how their role was understood. The articles and reflections in this issue cover a range of activities that include the involvement in God’s mission of Indigenous and expatriate women.

Merrill Kitchen gives a fascinating account of how the paradigm shifts in the understanding of women in mission are shown in the lives of the women of Nazareth from when the Angel appeared to the Virgin Mary in Luke’s gospel until today.

Susan Smith examines the writings of the Apostle Paul to account for the changing roles of women in the early church where they are variously described as co-workers, wives and mothers and told to learn submission in silence.

Margaret Fahey gives an insight into the challenges and difficulties faced by women religious on the isolated Kiribati Islands. She writes of their persistence and courage in difficult situations, their contribution to the mission of the church, visiting the sick and dying, teaching the Christian faith and providing education by establishing schools.

Ros Gooden writes about the role of wives and single women in mission. Wives in the Protestant missionary movement were largely invisible because the writings of the missions focused on their husbands. A huge amount of mission activity was carried out by these women. Ros also introduces us to mission societies in the USA and UK established by women and run by women that sent many single women to work overseas in the mission of the church. Single women, wherever they worked in mission, contributed much and achieved much.

Three contributions focus on Australian Aboriginal and Maori women and their contribution to mission. Archbishop Dr Philip Freier reflects on the ordination of Nancy Dick, the first Aboriginal woman ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church of Australia. He portrays how the local church and community worked together to remove any obstacles in her path to ordination. He describes her concern that Aboriginal people should live their faith as a dynamic belief grounded in Aboriginal life and not as part of the dominant European culture. Jude Long reflects on the ministry of Sandra Wangarr in Galiwinku, Elcho Island, Northern Territory, the remote community where she lives. The story describes how Sandra carries out her ministry and breaks down the preconceptions that many outsiders have of Aboriginal women in ministry. In her article, Rosemary Deweese encourages us not to think simplistically about mission history. She looks at the lives of three Maori women over the last 200 years who have in espousing the Christian faith sought to live by its principles without losing their identity as Maori women and the complex and contradictory issues that they have had to struggle with while being true to their Christian faith and to their Maori identity.

Two contributions highlight the wonderful work that women doctors and nurses have done as medical missionaries. Barbara Martin reflects on the work of the Mackenzie sisters who started two hospitals, one in China and one in Korea. Both hospitals are still functioning and remember the work of these
godly women. In his article, **William Firth-Smith** writes of the amazing medical work done by women missionaries in India. He describes the difficulties they experienced in training to be medical doctors. The women in his article were marginalised at home and ministered to women who were marginalised in India.

Book reviews included in this issue are:

**Cross-cultural mission: problems and prospects**, edited by Raymundus Sudhiasaras, SVD, is reviewed by Larry Nemer.

**Faithing the Native Soil: Dilemmas and Aspirations of Post-Colonial Buddhists and Christians in Sri Lanka**, by Shantikumar Hettiarachchi is reviewed by John May.

**Hyphenated Christians** by Gideon Goosen is reviewed by Bill Firth-Smith.

**Australia’s Religious Communities: Facts and Figures from the 2011 Australian Census and other Sources** by Philip Hughes, Margaret Fraser and Stephen Reid is reviewed by Andrew Menzies.

**The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord’s Prayer**, by John Dominic Crossan is reviewed by Darren Cronshaw.

**Crossroads: An Exploration of the Emerging Missional Conversation with a Special focus on Missional Leadership and Its Challenges for theological Education**, by John Doormenbal is reviewed by Ross Mackinnon.

**Breaking Calabashes** by Rosemary Dewerse is, reviewed by Ross Mackinon.

The issue concludes with a tribute to the late Ross Langmead who was the founding secretary of the Australian Association of Mission Studies (AAMS) and made a creative and deep contribution to the mission of the church.
Women missionaries in Nazareth from the First through to the Twenty First Centuries

Merrill Kitchen

Merrill Kitchen, as well as being the mother of three and grandmother of eight, has managed to have a successful career as a Medical Scientist and has worked overseas with the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society at the Nazareth Hospital along with her late husband Paul (a surgeon with an MA in Theology). She has also had a teaching career as a theologian, been President of the Melbourne College of Divinity, Dean of the former Evangelical Theological Association (an alliance between Baptists and Churches of Christ) and recently retired after serving for ten years as the Principal of the Churches of Christ Theological College in Victoria.

This article traces the history and stories of women in mission in Nazareth from Mary to the present time.

Introduction

Christian understandings of God’s mission in the world have undergone a number of paradigm shifts over the past two millennia. The impact of these significant changes can be seen clearly when exploring the stories of many women who have engaged in mission in Nazareth, the historical hometown of Jesus. The first woman challenged by God to engage in Christian mission, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, was a young virgin named Mary. Her own prophetic insights have been remembered and celebrated by the church over the ages as has the prophetic proclamation of God’s inclusive mission to the world by her son, Jesus, to the synagogue congregation in Nazareth.

Over the years, Nazareth communities have been caught up in cycles of hostility, invasion, oppression and dispossession and they have responded with waves of resistance, division, compliance and renewal. Jesus’ initial prophetic challenge was centred on God’s challenge for Israel to be a compassionate society who would provide an inspiring model for the benefit of all nations. Over time, the Nazareth community have demonstrated their willingness to receive God’s grace from others, and are now holding hands with women and men from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds in order to share mutually, and interdependently, in God’s mission together.

Jesus’ Mission in First-Century Nazareth

The Gospel of Luke is a first-century narrative that points to a range of factional differences that were developing between the dominant religious leaders in Jerusalem and some concerned others who were forming alternative Jewish options. In continuity with the other Gospels, Luke tells the story of God’s intervention in the lives of two women, Elizabeth and Mary, whose sons would inaugurate a new vision for humanity. It is only in the Third Gospel where the reader discovers that John and Jesus have impeccable religious credentials with their related mothers belonging to the esteemed priestly line of Aaron while Zechariah, John’s father, was a recognised priest (Luke 1:5, 36). The Jewish Jesus aligns himself with the prophetic ministry of his cousin, John the Baptist, and Luke’s Gospel emphasises the radical counter-cultural, yet parallel, nature of the ministries of them both.

From a place in the wilderness, John confronts the contemporary Jerusalem traditions as he proclaims a return to Israel’s inherited values of mutuality and interdependence with all humanity. Jesus, after being baptised by John, goes back to his home town of Nazareth and challenges the local faith community to find God’s presence amongst them in a way that they do not expect. Initially, the Nazareth synagogue community are impressed with Jesus’ reading of the Sabbath text from the prophet Isaiah. They assume he understands its meaning as one that affirms their own position of religious privilege. But Jesus’ interpretation of the Isaiah text surprises and enrages them. He reminds them that Israel’s prophetic mission in the world, the mission to which they have committed themselves as observant Jews, has always been one of indiscriminate compassion and hospitality...
toward all humanity. Jews and Gentiles, men and women, the privileged and poor have been blessed with God’s healing and restorative presence for generations (Luke 4:16-22). 

This challenge by Jesus to his own religious community was so confronting that their immediate response was to eliminate him (Luke 4:23-29). The possibility of welcoming non-Jewish strangers into their midst is likely to have been a major threat to their secure local identity. So Jesus leaves Nazareth and returns to Capernaum, a much more open centre for the mission of Jesus to proceed, probably because its geographical and political location led to a greater openness to social, cultural and therefore religious change. Women are included in Jesus’ healing ministry (Luke 7:11-17; 13:16); they welcome him into their homes (Luke 7:36-50; 10:38-42) and even follow him as disciples (Luke 8:2-3; 23:55; 24:10; Acts 1:12-14). Furthermore, Jesus reminds his followers that his mother is to be honoured because she heard and obeyed the word of God, not just because her body gave birth to a child (Luke 11:27-28).

**History of Nazareth**

Women were always important contributors to the community of Nazareth but historians mention them rarely. Archaeological finds suggest that Nazareth was “never more than a simple mountain village” It was enveloped and protected by a circle of mountains and, during the Roman era, was bypassed by the main roads that connected the major Galilean cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias with the Mediterranean seaports, as well as being a significant military route to the Parthian borders of the Roman Empire. The Nazarenes from their hilltops may have been able to watch the traffic passing beneath them, but were probably invisible to the diverse populations that travelled across the region. At the same time it is thought that the relatively small Nazareth community may have contributed their skills and resources to the marketplace of the rapidly developing city of Sepphoris, a walking distance from their village.

Little is known about Nazareth prior to the Gospel stories about Jesus. Archaeologically, there is some evidence of an increased population within the simple small village after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Literary evidence has been uncovered that indicates some priestly families found refuge in the town after the Jewish revolts. People lived in limestone “structures hollowed out of the rock rather than free-standing houses”. There was a synagogue where the early Jewish-Christian sects such as the Nazarenes and Ebionites probably met, and learning for most residents emerged from religious resources and experiential agrarian practices, while traditional folk healers and midwives provided health care. It is likely that most women were illiterate and their average life span is thought to have been less than thirty years.

It was not until the Emperor Constantine affirmed Christianity as the preferred Roman religion that Nazareth became identified as a potential place for Christian pilgrimage. It was also the beginning of a new era of socio-cultural and political diversity and conflict. The growing Christian religious identity of Nazareth became focussed on Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus and intense searches were made for the geographic locations of the annunciation story as well as the original home of the Holy Family. The words “Hail Mary” scratched into ancient clay walls have been unearthed, and a reverence for her began to develop profoundly. There is evidence of an early Jewish-Christian baptistery over which a relatively large Byzantine basilica was built in the late 4th century probably funded by Emperor Constantine. The archaeological findings are focussed on religious relics and holy sites with little interest in any domestic, educational or health care facilities that may have been constructed at the time.

The earliest pilgrim era did not last very long. In 614 CE, many Jewish and some Christian structures in Nazareth were destroyed during a Persian invasion of Palestine and it is thought that most of the largely Jewish population of Nazareth fled and sought refuge in Egypt. Over the ensuing three decades a sequence of invasions occurred. A Byzantine Christian conquest ejected the Persians in 624 CE, followed by an Arab invasion in 638 CE that overtook Nazareth en route to their occupation of Jerusalem. Then after four centuries of Arab Islamic occupation, the European Crusaders fought to regain a Christian supremacy in the region and established Nazareth as a victorious focus. It was a time when Christian “values associated with pilgrimage and martyrdom were combined with the chivalry of fighting in defence of the faith”. A century later, during an Islamic invasion “Saladin slew within the church precincts a large number of Christians but did not touch the building itself”. However, in 1263, the town of Nazareth was totally destroyed once again in a renewed Arab
insurgency. For the following five centuries, it is thought to have been “either completely deserted or sparsely inhabited by some Moslem families”.

After European colonisation of the region began in 1799, the Franciscans began reconstructing a church in Nazareth with the approval and encouragement of the Islamic overseers of the era, and the village became a city of pilgrimage once again. Eastern Orthodox as well as Latin and Greek Catholic Christian traditions began to claim their own pilgrimage sites in Nazareth, so that a new city venerated by churches and monasteries began to emerge around the site of Mary’s well and the supposed traditional home of Jesus’ family. These new developments were associated with an increasing local population, including religious women from European Catholic religious orders, and their contributions began to enhance the former simple village lifestyle. The market place expanded and the economy of the local families was enhanced as both men and women served the many of the everyday dietary and maintenance needs of the new institutions in their midst. It is thought that many converted to Christianity in order to make stronger connections with the new church and monastic communities thus protecting their own family viability. Religious diversity became more evident. The first identifiable Nazareth mosque, the White Mosque, was completed in 1808, and in 1871 the Anglicans built and consecrated Christ Church, the first Protestant church in Nazareth. A number of Catholic Orders also established religious sites in Nazareth throughout the 19th century.

A Protestant presence in Nazareth became even more obvious after the First World War when the British were mandated by the League of Nations to control the former Ottoman Empire and their soldiers were expected to attend weekly church services. The Protestant reformation had taken a relatively long time before “rather than depending on the authority of the institutional church . . . individual Christians could band together for a common cause”. Even before any Protestant churches had been built in Palestine, a range of mission initiatives were developing in the United Kingdom as secular Christians, both women and men, responded creatively to calls for medical assistance in the Levant and Palestine.

A renewed Christian mission in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Nazareth

In 1841, the same year that David Livingstone had first sailed to Africa, a public meeting in Edinburgh resolved to encourage “in every possible way the settlement of Christian medical men (sic) in foreign countries”. Two years later this new association was renamed as the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society (EMMS) and its purpose was “to encourage acceptance of the principle of Medical Missions, namely that qualified Christian medical men and women have an important role to fulfil in Christian missionary work”. It became “the first western missionary society which confined its interest to Medical Missions”. A Student Aid scheme was established in 1852, and in 1866 the EMMS invited one of its graduates, an Armenian born doctor Kaloost Vartan, to open a Dispensary in Nazareth, then part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Dr Vartan, a Turkish citizen, married Mary Anna Stewart, a Scottish nurse, and on the day of their marriage left for Nazareth where they occupied and renovated two adjoining houses adjacent to a dispensary. They provided eighteen inpatient beds to serve the medical and surgical needs of the town’s predominantly Christian and Muslim population.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the hilltops surrounding the town of Nazareth were “crowned with beautiful structures belonging to various Christian missions, including schools, orphanages, convents and hospitals”. In addition to the Protestant Nazareth Hospital, established by Dr Vartan, were two Roman Catholic medical initiatives, a French Hospital established by the Sisters of Charity, and the Hospital of the Holy Family (now known as the Italian hospital) founded by the Brothers of Saint John in 1882 and supported by the Sisters of Maria Bambina. The majority of doctors and senior nurses servicing these hospitals came from overseas and two of the nurses at the Protestant Nazareth Hospital, Edith Johncock and Jessie Croft, played a significant role in the development of new nursing education program for local women. The nursing school commenced at the Nazareth Hospital in 1912 and the first graduates were acknowledged in 1914. This helped enormously in providing for the increased medical care required after the outbreak of the First World War. However, that same year, the new hospital building was commandeered by the Turkish military and eventually left as “a shattered shell”. Jessie Croft was a much valued community contributor during this time and when she unexpectedly died in 1916 she “was buried at Nazareth with full Turkish military honours”. The provision of medical care continued in the old buildings and a new Medical Director from New Zealand, Dr William Bathgate, along with Sister Mary Parkinson, were appointed in 1920 to provided strategic missional leadership for a renewal of this medical ministry.
After the demise of the Ottoman Empire and during the period of the British Mandate that followed the First World War, "Nazareth became an important town in the Northern District of Palestine and the site of residence of the District Commissioner, the governor of the area". In mid-1948, the population of Nazareth was inundated with refugees from Galilean villages who were being evicted from their homes by military proponents for a Jewish state. It is thought that up to 60 families, found refuge on the Nazareth Hospital property alone, and chaos ensued. As one observer noted, "there were no rules and no guidelines; there seemed to be no authority and no control". In response, a group of doctors from the English, French and Italian hospitals in Nazareth, along with the local Palestine Government Medical officer of health came together and formed a "Medical Committee" to provide a combined response to the "desperate need for relief and assistance". The nursing school recruited increasing numbers of students, predominantly women, into their practical nursing program. They came from Nazareth city as well as villages throughout the Galilee region and were from both Christian and Muslim families. During their training, they lived in the hospital nursing home forming strong friendships and establishing support networks that continued throughout their lifetimes. On completion of their studies, the graduate nurses became a valuable source of wisdom and medical care to the largely isolated women in their local villages.

At the same time, a significant number of medical students were being trained through the support of the EMMS in Edinburgh and by 1940 one in five of them were women. Two significant women doctors from Edinburgh who contributed to the ministry of the Nazareth Hospital were Dr Doris Wilson, a niece of Dr Bathgate, and Dr Runa Mackay. Both of these women specialised in child and maternal health care and served the children of Nazareth and their mothers for over fifty years. After leaving the hospital, Doris Wilson continued working in a nearby Galilean village and Runa Mackay spent several years caring for Palestinian families in Lebanese refugee camps.

From the mid-1980s significant changes began to occur. No longer was there a total dependency on expatriates for senior leadership positions. In 1986, under the guidance of an American Mennonite nurse, Dr Nancy Martin, the School of Nursing at the hospital began bridging courses that facilitated the upgrading of "suitable Practical Nurses to the higher grade of Registered Nurse". In addition, medical professionals, doctors, nurses and pharmacists were emerging from the Israeli education systems and were seen to be "well equipped to take on the leadership seen today". English was no longer necessary as an imposed language of communication. The official Israeli languages of Arabic and Hebrew became the primary languages of patient care, record keeping and learning programs. This was supported by the steady accumulation of appropriate academic texts and reference material available in the significantly updated hospital library.

Since 1981, medical services throughout Israel had been regionalised and the three Christian hospitals in Nazareth were required to co-operate with each other to become a virtual District Hospital. The lure of government funding becoming available through a new national health plan was seductive. One regulation that particularly confronted the Christian hospitals in Nazareth was the requirement for all hospital department heads "to be Israeli citizens or permanent residents of Israel". The dependence on foreign staff was challenged once again and the time limitations on their Israeli visas also restricted the possibility for any long-term employment. Increasingly, local people were encouraged and enabled to achieve the training and experience required, and the need for expatriate staff decreased rapidly. In addition, the locally facilitated "Serve Nazareth" model evolved and began to replace the management of older initiatives such as the short-term "workparty" model that had enabled 260 Australian women and men to volunteer short-term professional and trade skills from 1989 to 2007.

During the late 1990s an ancient wine press was discovered in the grounds of the Nazareth Hospital. Further investigation uncovered, also, the remnants of ancient terracing and some watch towers all of which would have existed in the time of Jesus. With the support of American Mennonites, as well as formal affirmation from all of the Christian church communities in Nazareth, and under the patronage of former US President Jimmy Carter, an archaeological restoration program began on the site with the aim of reconstructing a replica first-century Nazareth Village. Apart from the opportunity to proclaim the story of Jesus to visitors in an innovative way, the possibility of assistance to the local economy by providing work for the largely unemployed local community was valued. It is now an open-air museum visited by hundreds of tourists each year. In addition, children from local Jewish, Christian, Muslim and government schools come to learn about their common heritage as children of
Abraham. Under supervision, these girls and boys dress in first century costumes, play first century games with each other and join in with staff and volunteers herding sheep, building roofs, weaving wool and baking bread.\(^{34}\)

**Mission in Nazareth today**

Globalisation is “the new context of mission” in Nazareth just as it is throughout today’s world.\(^{35}\) Almost every household in the Galilee region is informed through access to international television and other digital resources. Young women have access to higher education in a way that their mothers and grandmothers could never have imagined. Inter-faith relationships are a prime mission focus as Jews, Christians and Muslims share a common ethic of compassion and respect for each other’s differing religious requirements as they work alongside each other.\(^{36}\)

In 2011, under the auspices of the Israeli Minister of Health, representatives of the three local hospitals in Nazareth signed yet another significant co-operative document of commitment. The aims of this new agreement were reported as seeing “the French Hospital, the Italian Hospital and the Nazareth Hospital joining forces to improve co-ordination of services to prevent duplication and work towards enhancing health care in the area”.\(^{37}\) Complementing this new initiative, the first cancer research laboratory in the city opened at the Nazareth Hospital in cooperation with University of Tel Aviv and Ichilov Hospital with the aim of identifying genetic risk factors leading to breast cancer, a major problem that over two recent decades has increased by 140% amongst Arab women in the region.

The population of Nazareth today is predominantly Muslim, a complete reversal from the demographic forty years ago, but rather than adhering to the religious silos of the past, 21st century Nazareth exhibits many examples of inter-faith experiences and cooperation. On average, 170 babies are born to Jewish, Christian and Muslim families at the Nazareth Hospital every month. Most of the schools in Nazareth are co-educational and have students with a diversity of religious backgrounds, just as the hospital patients are admitted on the basis of their needs rather than their gender or religion. Each hospital has its own pastoral care team and there is a Catholic Chaplain who visits patients in all three Nazareth hospitals. The School of Nursing at the Nazareth Hospital embraces the reality of living in a Jewish State and now delivers a Bachelor of Arts in Nursing accredited by Israel’s Higher Council of Education through Haifa University.

Instead of volunteers from overseas simply being seen as one-way providers of essential resources, a change has occurred where the local community in Nazareth are seen to be enriching actively the mental, physical, social and spiritual lives of their overseas visitors rather than vice versa. A former Australian student who has now returned to live in her birth home of Nazareth notes, “When the Serve Nazareth volunteers step through the doors of the Nazareth Village, they become part of a larger family of mixed Christians and Moslems. They work, eat and laugh, side by side with their new family. Their presence kindles the motivation for all those surrounding them. Friendships are established and are long missed and remembered after the volunteer leaves”\(^{38}\). This kind of encounter stimulates an awareness of any suppressed sexist, ethnocentric or xenophobic presuppositions held by the volunteers and influence the way they think and act on return to their home countries. Sadly, they often find their new global experiences and tolerance of others is not always understood by their friends and family at home.\(^{39}\) They contribute, however, to an increasing realisation, particularly amongst youth, that sees mission primarily as the liberating and transforming business of God and not just restricted to the decisions and actions of any institutional church.\(^{40}\)

**Conclusion**

Interestingly, the socio-cultural environments in today’s world that resist tolerating religious differences bear a striking similarity to the first-century Nazareth community who attempted to eliminate Jesus and his theological perspectives, as described in the Gospel of Luke. Thankfully, however, the presence of the Body of Christ remains evident in 21st century Nazareth. Through the initiatives of ecumenical Christian mission and inter-faith cooperation, increasingly women are being given a recognised place in society, the sick are being healed, the poor are being fed, the refugee has found shelter and children are accessing quality education. Perhaps, the prophecy in Isaiah that was read by Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue is being realised at last.
From co-workers, to wives and mothers, to learning silence in full submission

The changing ministries of women in the early church

Susan Smith

Susan Smith is a Catholic Sister and a member of the Religieuses de Notre Dame des Missions (RNDM) (Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions). Apart from her native New Zealand, she has worked in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. She has lectured in New Testament Studies and Missiology at the Catholic Institute of Theology in Auckland, New Zealand, and is particularly interested in exploring the agency of the Spirit in mission. She is also the author of several books including Women in Mission: From the New Testament to Today (Orbis Books, 2007), Called to Mission (RNDM Publications, 2010), and Zeal for Mission: The Story of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions 1861-2011 (RNDM Publications, 2012).

A careful study of representative texts from the letters that contemporary scholarship attribute to Paul reveals that women had important missionary roles in the early Christian communities. These texts all indicate that the roles of women in the early church were indeed fluid. Women can be apostles, deacons, co-workers, wives, or submissive and silent. In this article, I propose to identify some of the reasons for, and implications of this fluidity for the early Christian community and for our contemporary churches. I will do this by referring to relevant passages from the letters contemporary New Testament scholarship acknowledges as genuinely Pauline. These are 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. I will next look at passages in the Deutero-Pauline letters – Ephesians and Colossians – before referring to 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. After having tried to identify some of the reasons for such marked shifts around the mission and ministry of women in the first century, we will look at what this means for women in their contemporary exercise of mission.

Introduction

Paul's writings appear to paint a number of very different pictures of the role women in the early New Testament church. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul urges two women co-workers Euodia and Syntyche “to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil 4:2-3, my italics). Paul is writing this letter from prison probably, perhaps in Ephesus, perhaps in Rome or perhaps from Caesarea, sometime between 56-60 CE, to the Christian community at Philippi, a major city in Macedonia.

In another letter, his last and theologically the most important, Paul writes from Corinth to the Christian community in Rome. Paul had not yet visited Rome but he is hoping that the community there will support him in his proposed journey to Spain (see Rom 15:23-24). In the last chapter, Paul identifies a number of women who hold important positions in the community. There is Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, Prisca and her husband Aquila who have worked with Paul, Mary who has worked hard among the people, Junia who is has been imprisoned with Paul and who is prominent among the apostles, and Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord.

But a significant departure from such affirming statements about the ministry of women occurs in Ephesians where the reader learns that women are to be subject to their husbands as they are to the Lord - “For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church” (Eph 5:23). Raymond Brown along with the majority of Pauline scholars argues that this letter is pseudonymous and was written by a disciple of Paul some fifteen or so years after the apostle's execution in Rome.

The first letter to Timothy provides a different picture of women in the early church. The reader learns that the author desires:
[!]hat in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; also that
the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair
braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who
profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to
teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and
Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be
saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty (1
Tim 2:8-1).

The majority of Pauline scholars consider this letter to be pseudonymous also, again written by a
disciple of Paul perhaps towards the end of the first century.42

These texts all indicate that the roles of women in the early church were indeed fluid. Women can be
apostles, deacons, co-workers, wives, or submissive and silent. In this article, I propose to identify
some of the reasons for, and implications of this fluidity for the early Christian community and for our
contemporary churches. I will do this by referring to relevant passages from the letters contemporary
New Testament scholarship acknowledges as genuinely Pauline. These are 1 Thessalonians,
Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. I will next look at passages in
the Deutero-Pauline letters – Ephesians and Colossians – before referring to 1 and 2 Timothy and
Titus. After having tried to identify some of reasons for such marked shifts around the mission and
ministry of women in the first century, we will look at what this means for women in their contemporary
exercise of mission. I am a Catholic, a member of a church that does not allow ordination of women.
This is not concerning for me for I see a strong lay ministry as more important at this time. What does
concern me is membership in a church that is still perceived and experienced as patriarchal, and this
is why I wish to examine more closely the roles of women in the communities with which Paul was
closely associated.

**Women in the letters Paul wrote**

A careful study of representative texts from the letters that contemporary scholarship attribute to Paul
reveals that women had important missionary roles in the early Christian communities.

Increasingly, feminists argue that Paul emerges from his letters as demonstrating a position regarding
the role and status of women that at first glance seems to differentiate him from his rabbinic
contemporaries. His teaching that in Christ there is no longer male and female (see Gal 3:27) would
have contributed to freeing Jewish Christian women from observance of the Torah, and led to the
collapse of social barriers between Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian women. This in turn would
have allowed them to renegotiate their roles in the community. However, such generous
interpretations of Paul’s teaching and by extension negative interpretations of the Torah are not
wholly justified, and the Jewish positions were much more flexible and open than certain Christian
interpretations have allowed.43

In a 1994 paper, Wendy Cotter argues that the more Romanised a city was, the more the dignity and
rights of women, particularly higher class women, were asserted. This improved social status of
women is discernible in at least six ways. First, women householders not only had responsibility for
overseeing the goods of the household, but also for guarding the lives and virtue those within the
household. Second, Roman houses, as distinct from Greek and Hellenistic homes, were not built so
as to separate women from men, and this meant that Roman women could dine with men without
appearing indecent. Third, Roman custom regarding marriage appears to have made the wife less
subordinate to her husband than was the custom in the non-Romanised parts of the empire. Fourth,
Roman women were able to go out to the theatre or visit friends unaccompanied by a male. Fifth,
Roman law permitted women to retain their own inheritance and to possess land. This could lead to
women owning and running their own businesses (see Acts 16:13-15 which recounts the story of
Lydia who owns a purple dye trade business in Philippi).44 Sixth, because they could be women of
independent means, they were better placed than their Greek counterparts to act as benefactors of
clubs and organisations.45 Cotter believes that Paul’s positive attitude toward women in the more
Romanised part of the empire was conventional rather than counter-cultural, and this explains why he
allows women to join him in the mission of the early church. Philippian women “enjoyed more
personal freedom and participation in social and economic life than women in most of the eastern
Mediterranean lands, it is therefore not surprising that women played a significant role in the early years of the Philippian church.  

Galatians

In Galatians we read that “[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ” (Gal 3:28). This text is acknowledged to be part of a baptism ritual of the early church which Paul uses to point to the radical change that baptism in Christ means for the community. There is on-going scholarly discussion as to whether or not the radical societal change attributed to this text by those who advocate a liberationist hermeneutic is what Paul intended. For example, Brown argues that “strong apocalypticism does not encourage long-range social planning”. For Paul the death and resurrection of Jesus ushered in changing times which would be brought to conclusion by the second coming of Jesus which for the apostle was not too distant. As his letter to Philemon suggests, for Paul, attitudinal change is more important than structural change. The imminent parousia of Jesus means that long term social change was not envisaged by the apostle.

But others opt for a different interpretation. The emphasis on an egalitarian ethos that Galatians 3:28 suggests, and the fact that it is part of a baptismal ritual indicates that by the middle of the first century, the early Christian communities were actively engaged in fostering relationships of equality and mutuality, and aware of the need to involve women as co-workers with men. Sheila Briggs points out that Paul’s primary focus in Galatians is to demonstrate “the incompatibility of observance of the law with faithfulness to the Christian gospel”. In other words Paul was not primarily concerned with advocating public roles for women.

Be that as it may, the reality is that contemporary women can locate in this text a pearl of great price as they seek to involve themselves as equals with their male brothers in the life of their particular church. New Testament scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes:

…relinquishment of religious male prerogatives within the Christian community was possible and that such a relinquishment included the abolition of social privileges as well. The legal-societal and cultural-religious male privileges were no longer valid for Christians. Insofar as this egalitarian Christian self-understanding did away with all male privileges of religion, class, and caste, it allowed not only gentiles and slaves but also women to exercise leadership functions within the missionary movement.

Schüssler Fiorenza uses an historical-critical methodology, and her social location as a Christian feminist allows her to interpret Galatians 3:28 in a way that is liberating for contemporary women. Unlike an older generation of New Testament exegetes who professed to strive for certain objectivity, contemporary biblical scholarship acknowledges that one’s social location always influences the outcome of the exegesis of a particular text. But as the author of Hebrews reminds us, “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12). Schüssler Fiorenza’s feminist hermeneutic means she is committed to empowering or liberating women from the often crippling burden of decades of androcentric interpretations. Or as Carolyn Osiek, another feminist New Testament scholar, writes:

To use a liberation hermeneutic means to interpret biblical texts with full criticism of their androcentric and patriarchal biases without rejecting their liberative message that a different, critical interpretation can reveal. Thus oppressive texts must be seen both as they functioned and were understood in their own time and place and as they continue to function in contemporary situations.

Philippians

We have seen above that Paul describes two women involved in the proclamation of gospel at Philippi as “co-workers” (Phil 4:2-3). One of Paul’s important contributions to understanding how mission should be exercised is that he certainly sees mission, to use contemporary language – as a team effort. Most of his letters begin and/or conclude with greetings or farewells from Paul and his companions – Barnabas, Timothy or Silvanus – so for Paul the proclamation of the good news is not necessarily a gendered activity. It might be two men as we see in 1 Corinthians where Paul and “our brother Sosthenes” (1 Cor 1), greet the community at Corinth; it can mean a married couple as we
read about Prisca and Aquila in Romans 16:3; or again it may refer to two women, Euodia and Syntyche (see Phil 4:2-3). Like Paul himself, the "fellow workers" or "co-workers" seem to do things that are understood as expanding the church while at the same time nurturing existing communities.

Paul’s request to Euodia and Syntyche provides evidence of disunity and dissension in the community at Philippi. As Osiek indicates, the women’s disagreement "is not some petty quarrel, as sexist commentaries sometimes want to make of it, but something that is upsetting the whole community [and] may in fact be the basis of the disunity with which Paul has been concerned throughout the letter." Paul’s affection and regard for these two co-workers is evident as he still addresses them by name, something that does not happen when he writes to those with whom he disagrees.

Paul addresses each woman in turn, using the same verb "urge" (see NRSV) which Morna Hooker believes is preferable to the NIV’s "plead with". Paul urges them to be of the same mind/to agree with each other in the Lord”; the phrase is identical with that used in 2:2. Everything about these two women suggests that they are important people in the community.

1 Corinthians

Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians also offers important insights regarding the roles of women in the Christian community at Corinth. The first one I wish to consider is somewhat problematic. Toward the end of the letter we read: “As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?” (1 Cor 14:34a). These verses seemingly contradict an image of Paul as one who wanted to involve women as partners in the early church’s missionary outreach. There are conflicting explanations as to why such verses are included. Some authors regard them as interpolations or additions.

Other Pauline scholars do not see them as an interpolation. Thus Antoinette Wire argues that Paul, concerned about women praying and prophesying in public, is aware of the adverse reaction this could mean for a struggling community in a patriarchal society. Paul has earlier indicated that women’s prayer and prophecy could be controversial (see 11:2-16). This suggests that house churches were growing and on the way to becoming the public face of the Christian community in Corinth. Ritva Williams believes that “the need for such a prescription also indicates that women felt quite comfortable speaking in that venue” [ekklesia, the assembly]. Osiek et al write that:

[Resistance to women in this magisterial position of authority [teaching] in a mixed assembly was significant...Women with the gift of teaching must certainly have been active in the earliest communities, yet they may have met with obstacles to the exercise of their gifts from the beginning.]

Whatever position people think more likely, the fact that these verses are there points the important positions women held in Christian community.

In their examination of the Greco-Roman world, scholars have traditionally thought of women as socially invisible. In recent years this position has been re-examined. The Roman paterfamilias, unlike his Greek counterpart, “conducted much if not most of his business and political activities...at home, in the front part of the house, to which Roman women, in contrast to Greek women, were not denied access.” Women and men would have come together for liturgical rituals of the Lord’s Supper. In the New Testament we can identify examples of house churches led by women (Acts 12:12; 16:14, 40; Col 4:15; 1 Cor 1:11), and there is nothing to suggest these women only provided important hospitality ministries – they were also leaders of the community. Women were also teachers, although we need to note that most teaching was probably gender specific – older men to younger men, and older women to younger women (see Titus 2:3-8).

A careful reading about house churches in the New Testament indicates women had prominent roles within them as leaders, and as ministers of hospitality. We know that homes were educational centres for Christians and for those who were to be baptised, that they provided hospitality for itinerant preachers and they were a venue for celebrations of the Lord’s Supper. Because all these different activities occurred within the home, and probably an affluent home, as it had to be big enough to...
provide a venue for significant groups, women were key players. This was to change when Constantine in 313 declared that all religions should be tolerated. Before too long the Christian religion became the official religion of the empire, which in turn meant the construction of dedicated buildings for worship, a worship led by priests. Worship became disassociated from everyday life as basilicas and churches became the place of gathering, not the home. This meant the diminishment of women’s roles as leaders. The distinctive liturgical dress worn by priests helped in the process of separating worship from life.

Romans

The prominence given to women in the concluding chapter of Romans is remarkable, and in recent years has acquired a special significance for women as Paul identifies women as deacons, as apostles, as co-workers. Before assessing the significance of this text for women we need to note that an earlier generation of Pauline scholars argued against Pauline authorship of this text. How could Paul who had not yet visited Rome identify and greet so many people? However, more recently commentators are less enthusiastic about such a position. Brendan Byrne sees “chapter 16, especially the long series of greetings to be thoroughly integral to Paul’s rhetorical purpose in writing to Rome”, namely to seek support for his proposed mission to Spain.

Paul describes Phoebe as “sister” ( adelphē), “deacon” ( diakonos), and “benefactor/patron” ( prostatis). The name Phoebe is an epithet for the goddess Artmeis, which suggests that she was a Gentile. The various titles given her by Paul are helpful for understanding the different missionary roles that women could assume in the community. “Sister” suggests that Phoebe is a member of a missionary team in the same way that Paul uses the term “brother” when speaking of men who accompanied him on his different missionary journeys (see Phil 2; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 3:2). Phoebe is also called a “deacon”, another title frequently used by Paul as the name of an office holder in the Christian community (see Phil 1:1; 1 Cor 3:5; 1 Thess 3:2). Finally Paul speaks of Phoebe as a patron or benefactor. “Patrons are elite persons who can provide benefits to others on a personal basis, due to a combination of superior power, influence, reputation, position and wealth.” Phoebe was probably the leader of a well-known house church in Cenchreae, who had perhaps journeyed from there to Rome to rally support for Paul as he planned for his mission to Spain.

Paul also greets Prisca and her husband Aquila, his co-workers who, like Paul, were tentmakers. This missionary team frequently appears in the New Testament (see Acts 18:2; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). Their association with three major cities – Corinth, Ephesus, Rome – suggests that they were important itinerant missionaries. Another important female/male team were Andronicus and Junia. Sixteenth century translations usually masculinise the name “Junia” to “Junias”, a translation which still persists in the Revised Standard Version and The New Jerusalem Bible.

In Romans 16:12, Paul refers to another missionary team, this time two women, Tryphaena and Tryphose, whom he identifies as “co-workers”.

In sum, there is little doubt that the last chapter of this great letter is helpful for women today seeking to reclaim their missionary role in churches which still sadly prioritise the role of men.

Other letters

In letters that the majority of Pauline scholars no longer attribute to Paul – Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus – there are texts that appear to support male domination and female subordination, and that appear to oppose the egalitarianism of Galatians 3:28, (Col 3:18-19; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; Titus 2:4-5).

The Pastoral Letters – 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus – pay much attention to women’s roles in the early Christian communities. The tone of the letters in respect of women is consistently negative, and contemporary women are left wondering how they can approach them in ways that renders them productive for insight rather than destructive in practice. The author’s agenda did not include fostering the advancement of women, and his point of view is consistently androcentric and extreme.

The authors of the two Deutero-Pauline letters – Colossians and Ephesians – recognise that Paul’s egalitarian vision is problematic for post-apostolic churches which are losing their eschatological and
charismatic enthusiasm, and facing the constant threat of persecution and denunciation. Such realities encouraged church leaders to call for some sort of accommodation to imperial mores. These included acceptance of the hierarchically structured household ruled over by the *paterfamilias*. The *haustafeln*, “household codes” which spelt out relationship of wives to husband, children to fathers, and slaves to masters, subverted the idea of a discipleship of equals, of women as co-workers with men in the proclamation of the good news. The adoption of the *haustafeln* meant the Christianising of patriarchal Greco-Roman ethics, but the price for this was high. It institutionalised the submission and obedience of women to men.

**Why did the early Christian communities adopt the household codes?**

A number of reasons have been offered for Christian communities adopting the household codes. Some of the more important are:

1. The minority status of Christian communities makes it unlikely that the New Testament authors were advocating a social revolution. Survival in the empire meant accepting hierarchical relationships of male domination and female/child/slave domination. But these relationships were to be transformed because through baptism all are one in Christ. Personal transformation rather than societal change was the name of the game;

2. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the Jesus Movement is best described as “a discipleship of equals”. The synoptic gospels show that Jesus does not respect biological family bonds (see Mark 3:31-35, Luke 11:27-28). The reign of God is about inclusivity, and Jesus offers a praxis of inclusive wholeness. This contradicts that patriarchal model which relegates women, children and slaves to lowly positions. But a discipleship of equals could not survive the cultural dominance of a patriarchal society;

3. Perhaps there is some kind of destabilising situation present in the communities behind the texts - e.g., the growing influence of Gnosticism which was attracting women followers, more and more slaves seeking manumission or some kind of societal equality, or perhaps just a general fear of the type of equality found in Galatians 3:28. These latter counter-cultural positions were identified by some as inimical for the growth of the community. Members of Christian households are to be instructed how to live in ordered patriarchal households;

4. A fourth reason is that Paul had a highly developed sense of apocalyptic meaning that proclamation of the good news was more important than any strategic considerations about observance of cultural mores.

**Conclusion - Why is a careful consideration of Paul’s understanding of women’s missionary roles important for contemporary Christian women?**

There is little doubt that the publication of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (1983) and in that same year, Rosemary Radford Ruether’s *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, triggered off hundreds of academic publications by Christian feminists who wanted to move beyond androcentric biblical and theological positions that minimised in subtle and not so subtle ways the contributions of women in the Christian community.

Even prior to that there had been some wonderful examples of women seeking to reclaim the egalitarian ethos found in Galatians 3:28. One example was Margaret Fell Fox (1614-1702), one of the founding members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). In 1667, concerned about Paul’s command that women should not speak in the assembly (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-12), Fox wrote:

*Those that speak against the power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a woman simply by reason of her Sex, or because She is a Woman, not regarding the Seed, the Spirit and Power that speaks in her, such speak against Christ and his Church, and are the Seed of the Serpent, wherein lodgeth enmity.*

In the late nineteenth century, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) spoke out about the discriminatory interpretations of such texts.
In the last three decades of the twentieth century the legal position of women in Australia, New Zealand and many other Pacific nations had changed dramatically in society. Many churches too have theoretically embraced the idea of the essential quality of women and men in respect of ministerial roles in their different communities. Others still favour the complementarity model of gender relationships rather than equality of relationships as the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding ordination demonstrates.

So why is Paul still so important for us today? First and foremost, traditionally some women have been less than enthusiastic about Paul given the negative position that some of the letters attributed to him suggested. If we accept that Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, letters traditionally attributable to Paul are in fact pseudonymous and most probably written by his followers two or three decades after his death in Rome, then it is possible to be much more positive about Paul. The seven letters that we know Paul wrote, the oldest of our New Testament texts, are in fact positive and affirming about the role of women.

Second, even in those churches that legally enshrine equality of women and men in their teachings, there is often enough evidence of residual discriminatory and sexist attitude towards women that Paul’s teaching insists be confronted with honesty and integrity.

Finally, and perhaps most important, in Genesis 1:28 27 teaches that “God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them”. The earliest Christian communities recognised the extraordinary power of these words when they incorporated them into their baptismal rituals (Gal 3:28). For a variety of reasons this teaching was obscured or ignored because of the changing religious, socio-economic and political situations in which Christians found themselves. In the concluding verses of the New Testament we read that the author of Revelation saw “a new heaven and new earth” (Rev 21:1). As disciples of Jesus who prioritised the faith community over the biological family, as disciples of Paul who could name women as apostles and co-workers, one of our major responsibilities is to bring about a new heaven and a new earth for those millions of women who are still oppressed and dominated in some of our churches and in our societies.
Women religious in Kiribati

The contribution of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) between 1895 and 1995 to the development of the Catholic Church in Kiribati

Margaret Fahey

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This article traces the work of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) in Kiribati from 1895 to 1995, especially their contribution to education. The article covers their difficulties and achievements and includes several excerpts from the sisters’ letters.

Background

For almost one hundred and twenty years, women from the religious congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have lived alongside the I-Kiribati people on their remote islands scattered across the equator, in the central Pacific Ocean. The thirty-three islands of the Independent Republic of Kiribati include three million square kilometres of sea with a total land mass of just 811 square kilometres. The islands are divided into three main groups – the Gilbert, Phoenix and Line Islands and the island of Banaba. Except for Banaba, which is of raised limestone, all the islands are coral atolls with the highest point, across all islands, being just three metres. Ethnically, about 98.8% of Kiribati people are Micronesians; Polynesians (mainly from Tuvalu) make up 0.5%; Europeans and people of mixed race are 0.7%. One language is spoken throughout the sixteen islands of the Gilberts group.

Kiribati came under British rule in 1892, when Captain Davis proclaimed it a British Protectorate. British colonial rule began by appointing island officials whose role it was to work with the traditional authority figures, thus ensuring that laws were obeyed and peace kept. A new generation of I-Kiribati became better educated with training experiences overseas and awareness of the political changes felt elsewhere in the Pacific. They urged a more rapid pace of political development and in 1965 the Gilbertese National Party was formed. Internal self-government was gained in 1977 and on 1 February 1978 the Kiribati people elected a Government which would take them to Independence. On 12 July 1979, independence from Britain was granted and the new nation, the Independent Republic of Kiribati, was born, with Ieremia Tabai as the first President.

The arrival of Christianity in Kiribati

The first Christian missionaries to Kiribati were Protestants from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and the British London Missionary Society (LMS). The Catholic missionaries came from France.

Missionaries from the ABCFM in Boston arrived in Hawaii in 1820 and quickly made converts to Christianity. Kiribati became a new field for missionary activity for the well-established Protestant church of Hawaii. The ABCFM in Boston sent Hiram Bingham II and his wife, Clarissa, as missionaries to Kiribati, and on 13 November 1857, together with two Hawaiian missionaries, J W Kanoa and his wife Kaholo, arrived on the northern island of Abaiang. They were the first group to bring Christianity to Kiribati and by 1873, Hawaiian pastors were on seven islands. The American Board missionaries withdrew completely from Kiribati in 1917.
Christian missionary activity by the LMS began in the South Pacific in 1797 with the arrival, in Tahiti, of thirty members. Their initial religious teaching was met with indifference. After 1815, Christianity began to flourish and when the LMS arrived in Samoa in 1830, almost immediately a Samoan Church emerged. With the support of the LMS, Eriana, a trained deacon, accompanied by two Samoans and their wives landed in Tuvalu in 1865 and began evangelising. In 1871, LMS Samoan missionaries moved into the five most southern Kiribati islands – Beru, Nikunau, Onotoa, Tamana and Arorae. Gradually more Samoan missionaries were placed in the southern islands of Kiribati, where they expanded rapidly and held considerable power and influence over converts.

Arrival of the Catholic faith in Kiribati

The Catholic evangelisation of the Kiribati islands began in an unique way – the Catholic faith was brought by two I-Kiribati men - Betero Terawati and Rataro Tiroi. From the 1860s to the 1890s labour “recruiting” was carried out in the southern islands of Kiribati. “Recruits” were mainly taken, sometimes forcibly, to Fiji, Tahiti, Samoa and Hawaii to work on plantations. During the years 1864-65, the first Kiribati labourers began arriving in Tahiti. Father Victor Latuin-Leveyue, a Picpus priest, studied the I-Kiribati language and set up a mission among the Kiribati people. The first recorded Kiribati baptism took place in 1866 and over the next ten years many were baptised. This mission was the forerunner to the future Catholic mission in Kiribati. Father Latuin-Leveyue compiled a Kiribati/French dictionary and a catechism which he gave to I-Kiribati returning to their islands. Two young men, from the island of Nonouti in southern Kiribati – Betero (Peter) Terawati and Rataro (Lazarus) Tiroi - were given the task, by Bishop Etienne Jaussen of Tahiti, of being Catholic catechists in Kiribati until the arrival of Catholic European missionaries.

After 1878, Betero and Rataro, with the support of their wives and those repatriated from Tahiti, Hawaii and Samoa, began instructing and baptising the people of Nonouti. By 1886, nearly six hundred had been baptised, six hundred were waiting for baptism, and eight chapels, made of local wood and thatch, had been built in Kiribati style, in preparation for the coming of Catholic foreign missionaries. Between 1883 and 1887, Betero and Rataro, the Kiribati catechists, together with Jean-Francois Evan, a French Catholic trader, many times petitioned Bishop Lamaze of Samoa for Catholic missionaries. Because Kiribati was part of the jurisdiction of the French Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), these requests were passed on to them.

After much deliberation in France, on 9 May 1888, three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – Father Edouard Bontemps, Father Joseph Leray and Brother Conrad Webber stepped onto the island of Nonouti – the first Catholic European missionaries to Kiribati. These missionaries to Kiribati were drawn from the French Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, founded at Issoudun in 1854, by Jules Chevalier, a diocesan priest of the rural diocese of Bourges.

Most of the inhabitants on the island of Nonouti became Catholic, and by 1889, Father Bontemps turned towards the evangelisation of other islands. Leaving Father Leary on Nonouti, Father Bontemps and Brother Conrad began evangelising the island of Nikunau, staying there six months instructing, baptising and building chapels. By the time they left, there were over two hundred Catholics. This way of evangelisation was taken to the islands of Tabiteuea, Makin and Butaritari. By 1891, Father Bontemps had completed a circuit of the Kiribati and Marshall Islands and three thousand baptisms had been administered. With the valued assistance of I-Kiribati catechists, the three missionaries laboured alone for four years, until the arrival, in 1892, of elderly Father Guillard and Brother Etienne.

Concerned about the lack of personnel, Father Bontemps travelled to Europe in 1893 to gather more missionaries and apply for more finances from the Propagation of the Faith. When he returned in 1895, he brought with him seven MSC and nine Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH): Who were they?

The Catholic pioneer women missionaries to Kiribati came from the French Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart founded at Issoudun, France, in 1874, by Jules Chevalier, founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. From the time of founding the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1854, Jules Chevalier desired to found a female Congregation, devoted to Mary,
under his new title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which was approved by ecclesiastical authority in 1857. Between 1864 and 1874 Chevalier made more than one attempt at a foundation but each failed because of lack of appropriate and experienced young women. By 1874 he had determined the particular ends of the Congregation: “To offer, in union with Mary, a special honour, love and reparation to the Heart of Jesus; and then to devote itself to education as an all-pervading influence for the permeation of society with the love of the Heart of Christ.” These ends were achieved through the works of the Congregation: daily adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist; the education and safeguarding of children and youth; the care of the sick; undertaking works of charity and, from 1883, the foreign missions.73

When founding the Congregation in 1874, Chevalier desired “that others should share with him the mission of spreading the love of Christ throughout the world”.75 For eight years the Congregation was beset by great difficulties, especially regarding whether the Congregation was to be contemplative or apostolic. Chevalier wanted an apostolic Congregation and Mother Felicite Pirinoli, the OLSH superior, a contemplative one. Many Sisters left, and the Congregation was about to collapse when Marie Louise Hartzer took over the leadership of the little group in 1882. Although the OLSH Congregation remained apostolic, an explicit contemplative aspect was retained.

Six Sisters remained and five made their profession on 9 September, 1884. The next month Chevalier told the Sisters “that Rome wanted, not only the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to leave for New Guinea, but also the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart”.76 Amazingly, from a group of only seven professed OLSH, five sisters left Marseilles, France, on 22 October, 1884, for New Guinea. They were accompanied by a group of MSC missionaries. Thus began the missionary apostolate of the OLSH sisters working alongside the MSC in Oceania. From that time on, MSC priests and bishops would approach Mother Marie Louise for OLSH sisters for their particular Missions.

**Contribution of OLSH to the Catholic Church and the people of Kiribati**

As in the venture to New Guinea, the OLSH missionaries went to Kiribati in response to a personal request of the MSC. Father Edouard Bontemps, the leader of the Kiribati Mission, arrived in Issoudun in 1894, seeking OLSH personnel for his mission founded in 1888. Mother Marie Louise was hesitant to send her young sisters to an area of great poverty and extreme isolation, knowing the suffering they could endure. However, on 25 March, 1895, seven European OLSH sisters: Sisters Isabelle Maelfeyt (Belgian), St Yves Vaillant (French), Rogatienne Grujard (French), Victor Organd (French), Irenee Onillon (French), Julie Klerks (Dutch) and Baptiste Kelhetter (Alsacian), left for Kiribati.77 Two Australian sisters: Francis Creighton and Berchmans Pemberton joined the group in Sydney. These nine sisters formed the pioneer OLSH missionary group to Kiribati, their ages ranging between twenty-one and twenty-seven years. They landed on the island of Nonouti, Kiribati, on 14 August 1895, full of hope and zeal and were greeted by Father Joseph Leray MSC and a large crowd of joyful I-Kiribati.

The nine OLSH missionaries did not have long to acclimatise to their new environment before being placed on four islands. Sisters Isabelle, Rogatienne and Julie were assigned to the island of Nonouti, just south of the Equator, the headquarters of the Mission. Sisters Francis and Victor were sent to the southern island of Tabiteuea. Sisters Baptiste and Irenee sailed to the northern island of Butaritari. Sisters St Yves and Berchmans went to the northern island of Tarawa. They were also responsible for the nearby island of Abaiang.79

Teaching girls and women, imparting the faith, visiting people in their villages, beginning schools and caring for children became the main priorities of the early OLSH missionaries. Bishop Joseph Leray, the first Bishop of Kiribati, affirmed the role and influence of these early OLSH missionaries by writing in 1913:

> These religious provide the most precious service. They conduct schools for girls and orphans … Moreover, they visit the sick in their homes … and in their visits to the dying they have recorded many baptisms… Such services are not fully appreciated until one is deprived of them …80
In addition, the Sisters sewed and cooked for the MSC missionaries as well as themselves and their girl boarders. They also cared for the church interior as well as for church linen, altar falls and vestments.

Scattered across many of the sixteen islands (the most northern island is one thousand kilometres from the most southern), the Kiribati Mission was considered one community, with Father Bontemps as Mission Leader. Each island comprised brothers and sisters, and a priest under whose leadership and authority each Mission was placed. This clerical leadership and authority role on each island continued until the late 1960s. As expected, sometimes there was conflict with the leadership as is learned from letters the Sisters wrote. Referring to the mission on the island of Tarawa, about 1900, Sister Hermelande in referring to this topic notes: “There then endured two years of hard challenges for the missionaries.”

... my heart is full of pity for you, seeing you in these difficulties, you who are so young and inexperienced... never let yourself become discouraged ... Concerning difficulties which you are having with the Fathers ... a Father Visitor is to go soon to the Gilbert Islands... and will know what is to be said and done. I am sure this visit will be helpful, since he will know our mind and that of Father General.

Much is learned about the life of the pioneer Kiribati mission and its missionaries through the correspondence of the OLSH missionaries to their Sisters in France between 1895 and 1907 - its joys and achievements, its conflicts and difficulties, its isolation and poverty.

The Sisters experienced joy in simple things and especially in the imparting of the Catholic faith. Sister Isabelle describes the warm welcome the missionaries received on their arrival: “God be praised! We have arrived safely ... and have been so well received.... The children sang us some verses especially written ... they expressed joy at the arrival of the Sisters saying they were drunk with delight and dying of happiness...” Sister Baptiste writes: “Mother Isabelle teaches the children music. Everywhere you hear them singing in various languages; French, English and their own tongue ... They even sing in Dutch which really amuses them.” Sister Hermelande expresses her joy at her early years on the island, Abaiang: “The good Lord clearly blessed this girl who was so charitable towards us. She remained loyal to us up to the day of her marriage and now is a fine mother and an excellent catechist.”

Difficulties

Conflict with Protestants, on the island of Nonouti, is first raised by Sister Julie not long after their arrival: “We always face a struggle because the Protestants wage constant war against us ... and easily deceive the locals who often seek only the good.” Conflict is raised again by Sister Rogatienné twelve months later: “... always war with the Protestants who want to dominate everywhere.” Sister Baptiste writes from the island of Butaritari: “There are many Protestants here and the poor people are afraid of the king.... The Protestants have bad-mouthed us so much that the children are frightened of us.” The Catholic people and missionaries sometimes retaliated. Sister Julienne reports an altercation between the Catholics and Protestants with the Catholics singing disparaging verses which broke into an outright physical brawl. “Mgr Leray didn’t speak to the Protestants but gathered our flock in the church, said the rosary and advised them to be much more prudent in future because the islands were governed by the Protestants and there was no reasoning with such people.

Antagonistic attitudes between Catholics and Protestants began breaking down after World War II. With the withdrawal from teaching in primary schools by the LMS, Protestant children began being educated at the Catholic schools. Bishop Pierre Guichet MSC, the fourth bishop of Kiribati (1961-1977), and his missionaries encouraged the ecumenism recommended by the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council. In a forward thinking move, Bishop Guichet convened a diocesan synod in 1976, open to missionaries and lay people, to put forward ideas, suggestions and criticisms on mission matters. Pastors from two Protestant churches were also invited and addressed the synod. The work of ecumenism continued and in 1988 the Kiribati National Council of Churches was founded. President Teburoro Tito’s government declared in 1995 that the 11 July each year would be a day of
Thanksgiving for all Christian denominations to commemorate their arrival in Kiribati. This day would be hosted by a different Church denomination each year. The first ecumenical ceremony, 11 July 1995, was prepared by both Catholics and Protestants and for the first time they publicly prayed and worshipped together. These accomplishments are due in great part to the work the OLSH did in education and ecumenical co-operation.

Living in communities of twos proved to be a lonely existence for the OLSH missionaries. Apart from Mother Isabelle, the OLSH mission superior, who visited only when a boat was available, they rarely saw other sisters and keenly felt this separation. Sister Baptiste writes from the island of Butaritari to the sisters in France: “... We were so happy to see Mother Isabelle and Sister Julie. We wish you could have seen the joy we all experienced seeing each other again, almost two years after we left Nonouti.”93 Visits by boats were rare and when they came bearing mail, the Sisters would often stay up hours into the night writing letters before the boat departed. From this letter by Sister Julie, we learn of the loneliness and isolation experienced by the missionaries: “The boat has come in and brings me a chance of contact with my beloved spiritual family. Every time this is a new joy for me. Alas, such occasions are rare: three times a year for the poor sisters on Nonouti.”94 Sister Yves, from the island of Tarawa, writes about lack of mail: “we are so happy to have a letter from you, Reverend Mother….. Alas, such a chance doesn’t often occur… It’s fifteen months already and this is the first time we’ve had your news.”95

Isolation and lack of transport continued over the years. The purchasing of mission boats alleviated some of the difficulties but often the mission could not afford the running costs. This buying and selling of boats began in 1892. The boats brought cargo several times a year, mail, took school children boarders home once a year, and carried missionaries back and forth.96 Transportation changed only in 1970 when an internal air service linked four of the islands, and by 1980 the I-Kiribati government had built airfields on all the islands of the Gilberts group.

Complete isolation and separation was experienced during World War II. With the arrival of the Japanese Army in 1941 all communication with the outside world halted. Although the missionaries were unharmed, their buildings and goods were requisitioned by the Japanese, and uncertainty and fear were constant. The occupation of Kiribati ended, in November 1943, with the terrible Battle of Tarawa in which over six thousand Americans and Japanese died.

Death and sickness were a constant part of the lives of the early missionaries. Sister Yves Vaillant speaks of the illness and death of Sister Apolline Hendriks, aged 31 years, her companion on the island of Beru. Here are snippets of her letter to France: “Her illness ran its course very quickly, taking only six or seven weeks before our dear Sister left this world... She didn’t want me to leave her even for a minute... Night and day I had to stay beside her, but this I could not do because I was exhausted... Allow me to express my anguish at being so isolated and far from my companions...”97

From the island of Tarawa, Sister Hermelande Orhan, tells of the loss of two young priests:

“Father Gasperment, whose downfall was his own zealous energy, died in December 1903, after being on Tarawa for only one year... Father Petit came in November to help ... He suffered great anguish at not being able to cure his fellow priest, and within two months had joined him in the grave. ...Such sad days and such poignant memories! There are plenty of these. I recall it as if it were yesterday.”98

Often the Sisters were debilitated through ill-health, lack of food, unsuitable heavy European clothing, in the tropical heat, and their untiring work. Father Lebeau writes to his parents on 2 May 1897, about his concern for the Sisters: “... Our two Sisters are sick and there is no one to look after them or replace them... Most times they are so tired, too much work, and they do not have the right kind of food.”99 In the face of trials and difficulties Sister Julie Klerks wrote: “In spite of the huge distances it is impossible to forget the dear community of Issoudun ... It’s not that I have any regrets. Oh no, far from it! Not for the world would I leave my dear islanders.”100

Achievements

Education in its many forms would be the greatest contribution the OLSH Sisters made to the Catholic Church of Kiribati. From the very beginning of the Mission, up until today, the education of women and girls has been a priority. As early as December, 1895, three months after the OLSH missionaries
arrived, Sister Julie Klerks had established the first school on the island of Nonouti: “We have about thirty children in our school – all girls. They are all ages even up to twenty or thirty”\(^1\) At that same time the Sisters had taken into their care two girls without parents, thus beginning the practice of caring for orphans. It was through the medium of education, the OLSH missionaries not only taught, but passed on, the Catholic faith and their own charism.

Work by the OLSH missionaries continued in the field of education in subsequent years, with the Sisters being responsible for the mission schools on the Catholic inhabited islands. Shortly after her arrival in Kiribati in 1932, Sister Dolores Dew set up the Catholic Teacher Training College on the island of Abemama at Manoku. Teachers and catechists from this College made a significant contribution to the life of the I-Kiribati people and the Catholic mission.\(^2\)

In December, 1939, Sister Helena Egan, at the request of Father Durand, took charge of the boys’ studies at St Joseph’s Boys’ secondary school, Tabwiroa, on the island of Abaiang. There were forty pupils, the youngest twelve years old and the oldest twenty-eight years, the same age as Sister Helena herself. In Kiribati custom, a man does not take orders from a woman, so there were often difficulties, but Father Durand, the Director of the school, upheld the authority of Sister Helena. The school was kept functioning, by Sister Helena, through the war years in Kiribati, 1941-1943.\(^3\) Three out of the four Presidents of Kiribati were educated at St Joseph’s Secondary College, Tabwiroa.

Reconstruction in education took place after World War II. Previously, the Sisters ran the girls’ schools; the boys’ schools were run by the priests; and the village schools conducted by the teachers-catechists. The arrival of more missionary Sisters from Australia provided increased expertise in the area of education and the OLSH became leaders in education by commencing, in 1954, the first Secondary school for girls. The Government Secondary school for girls began several years later. Sister Helena Egan, as the first Director of Catholic Education, worked with a group of Sisters on the task of establishing a common curriculum and syllabus to be taught on all islands of Kiribati. Textbooks were written for all subjects. She set and examined all test papers from all Schools, each term, thus determining a uniformity of standards.\(^4\)

Between 1958 and 1963, under the leadership of the Director of Catholic Education, V R Dwyer MSC, the amalgamation of village mission schools into central parish primary schools, took place. These new schools were conducted by the OLSH Sisters and assisted by Kiribati teachers. Through the Schools, the Sisters sought contact with parents and families, often listening to them, encouraging them and providing medical and material help when needed.\(^5\) The influence of the OLSH Sisters, both Australian and I-Kiribati, continued with the setting up and running of the Form V and Form VI Catholic College begun by Sister Nora Hanrahan in 1990.

Leadership in the field of education and co-ordination of the Catholic Education System, both primary and secondary, was continued by the OLSH Sisters. An example of leadership and dedication was Sister Berness Claxton. Arriving in Kiribati in 1956, she spent seven years teaching at St Joseph’s Secondary College, Tabwiroa. Many of her graduates completed further studies and went on to work professionally in Kiribati. In 1964, Sister Berness was appointed to the Catholic Teacher Training College and two years later was transferred to the Government Teacher Training College until 1970 when she was awarded a Research Fellowship in the United Kingdom, her thesis being “Mathematics Education in the Gilbert Islands”. On her return to Kiribati, Sister Berness and some of her former pupils were involved in the first curriculum development workshops in “new mathematics”. She was appointed Director of Catholic Education, replacing Sister John Bosco Donnelly, who with Sister Rita Skinner, had been lost at sea in early 1971. Sister Berness held this position between 1971 and 1976, assisting teachers in primary and secondary schools, planning for the future of Catholic education, and preparing for the handing over of Catholic schools to the Government. Between 1977 and 1983 Sister Berness was appointed to the OLSH Australian Leadership Team. On her return to Kiribati, in 1984, she continued her work as Director of Catholic Education until 1990 when her life was tragically ended in a car accident on the island of Tarawa.\(^6\)

Appreciation of the OLSH Sisters’ contribution to education would be expressed many times over by the leaders and people of Kiribati. At the time of the death of Sister Berness, President Jeremia Tabai noted: “Our thanks to God who sent Sister Berness to help our local church with all the talents she used for those in Kiribati.”\(^7\) The requiem mass and funeral for Sister Berness was led by Bishop Paul Mea MSC, and held at 4.30pm so that those working in government offices could attend, many of whom were her ex-students and former teacher trainees. On the occasion of the centenary of the
OLSH arrival in Kiribati, Brother Donald FMS spoke about the Sisters’ contribution to education: “The involvement of the Sisters in high quality education has had a very strong influence upon the leadership of the country as it counts itself an equal among the Pacific nations…”  

With the Government assuming responsibility for all primary education in 1977, many OLSH Sisters withdrew from teaching and moved into other ventures. Recent contributions of the OLSH Sisters to the life of women and the Catholic Church are apparent through their involvement in many different community ministries. For example, the OLSH Sisters, I-Kiribati and Australian, continued their work with women in the 1970s with the establishment of the Itoiningaina Centre for women. This Catholic Women’s Club allows groups of women to come together to be educated by guest speakers, to learn skills, and sell their craft. The role of the OLSH – Sisters Christina Clarke, Gemma Roriki, Teretia Lenimoa, Katarina Kauongo and Frances Ruatu - was to co-ordinate this Centre, liaise with other women’s groups in Kiribati and the Ministry responsible for Women’s Affairs, and form the women to lead it themselves.  

Overcrowding, especially on the island of Tarawa, caused the government to introduce Family Planning in the late 1960’s, recommending the use of contraceptives, abortion, and having no more children. In 1971, in order to counteract this movement against family life, Bishop Paul Mea MSC, requested that some sisters learn Natural Family Planning. Sister Consillo Clohesy studied in Australia and was later joined by three I-Kiribati Sisters – Ameri Tautua, Kateia Teanako, and Teruto Reo, who travelled from island to island visiting every village to teach couples the Billings’ Ovulation method. Sometimes they travelled by motor bike, truck or canoe to reach the villages. The Sisters were often mocked by the local people, including Catholics, and overseas doctors who thought natural methods were impossible for islanders.  

The St Paul’s Communication ministry was begun by Sister Teneti Bakarereua, in 1978, in her room at the convent and expanded to become a permanent and viable Centre with its own premises, in 1984. Four I-Kiribati Sisters: Benetata Ioane, Teitirua Tangata, latinta Tiare, and Anna Terabwena were involved in St Paul’s Communication Centre in 1995 which included a video lending library, developing photos for newspapers and producing a few local films. Radio Kiribati has become the main work of the Centre with regular airing of Catholic news, producing programs on prayer and Scripture, providing an on-air Eucharist once a fortnight, and broadcasting the Bishop’s Christmas and New Year messages.  

Established by Bishop Paul Mea MSC in 1984, the Kiribati Pastoral Institute offered a two year program, which provided sound religious education, basic theology and pastoral ministry. Alongside the MSC, Sister Berness Claxton was part of the initial lecturing group, with Sisters Margaret Sullivan and Veronica Hollis succeeding each other as Director of the Institute. During her time in Kiribati, 1987-1993, Sister Claudette Hiosan was a member of the staff. After being acting Director for 1992, Sister Ursula Begley became the last OLSH on the staff of the Institute.  

In 1988, the MSC and OLSH began a joint venture to assist those suffering from alcoholism, and their families. After completing some training in Darwin, Australia, two MSC and two OLSH set up an Alcohol Awareness centre on the island of Tarawa, which opened in 1989, with the first program soon following. By 1991, the program was being taken to the outer islands of Abaiang, Butaritari and Marakei.  

In addition to these community apostolates, individual Sisters were involved in providing leadership in the Religious Education Office; setting up the Maria Printing Office which produced reading materials and teaching aids; assisting in Marriage Encounter; Marriage Tribunal; Hospital and Nursing Apostolate; Jail Visitation; Ministry to Youth; initiating play groups and conducting a pre-school; maintaining a Crisis Centre. Through their ministries “the creative industry and drive of the Sisters have had a long term effect on the women of the country at whose hands the most effective change in society and in church takes place.”  

One of the outcomes of forming girls and young women through education and close association was that some wished to become religious women. Prior to 1900, several young I-Kiribati women were expressing the desire to become Sisters. Sister St Yves was placed in charge of these women on the island of Tarawa but the venture did not last long. What happened over the next forty years is unknown. Bishop Octave Terrienne MSC, the third Bishop of Kiribati (1938-1960), as early as 1938 considered the foundation of a local Order of Sisters, and after the war received the authority to
proceed. Prior to the war in Kiribati, 1941-1943, Sister Gregory Hill began training young women interested in religious life. On 3 October 1952, eight I-Kiribati novices received the habit of the Order of Santa Teretia, and were later professed. The little Congregation was placed under the care of the OLSH sisters. After 1956 there were no more novices and by 1968 all but two sisters had transferred to the OLSH Congregation. In the 1960s I-Kiribati women wanting to join the OLSH Congregation went to the Australian Novitiate at Bowral, NSW. As the move towards Kiribati Independence (1979) grew, an I-Kiribati OLSH Novitiate was established in 1977, at Manoku, on the island of Abemama, with Sister Aroita Tauti as formator of novices. At that same time Sister Damiana Kauea was appointed Regional Superior of Kiribati.

As indicated previously, the contribution by OLSH missionaries to the ongoing life and energy of the Catholic Church in Kiribati has been considerable. They achieved much in the early years, between 1895 and 1915, with only nineteen OLSH missionaries, mostly from Europe, working on nine islands. From 1915 to 1995, seventy-nine expatriate OLSH missionaries, mostly Australian, worked in Kiribati. Over a century, between 1895 and 1995, ninety-eight expatriate sisters from Europe and Australia were missioned to Kiribati. Between 1964 and 1995, sixty-four I-Kiribati women have become Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, many of them proceeding to tertiary education, not only becoming leaders in their country, but ensuring the continuation of Chevalier’s charism of love in the life of the Kiribati Church.

Conclusion

The evidence of the OLSH Sisters’ contribution to the Church and country of Kiribati, over one hundred years, is abundant. The author, John Garrett, provides an understanding of the influence of the early OLSH missionaries - their creativity, appreciation of local customs, and their dedication to the people of Kiribati:

The implanting of Catholicism in Kiribati owes as much to the daily influence of these creative women as to the priests ... Their life radiated orderliness, a feeling of welcome, an open door. The singing and the catechetical rote prayers of the classes in their schools created infectious happiness, related to growth in literacy and communication of the faith ... Under dynamic leaders, Mother Isabelle and Sister Baptiste Kelhetter, the sisters used some local musical forms ... and permitted animated I-Kiribati dances.

The Mission in Kiribati would have been entirely different, in fact may not have survived, if the OLSH missionaries had not been present. The author, George Delbos MSC, acknowledges that through the influence of the Sisters the mission on Kiribati gained a new lease of life, its “second wind”.
Facing the names

Reflections on a missiology of Protestant women in mission from an Australasian perspective

Ros Gooden

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There is an exciting history of women in mission in and from Australia which still has to be researched. Too often, these women have been ignored – the time has come to name these women and to acknowledge fully their contribution to mission. We have only scratched the surface of the potential of the data. This article provides a starting point by outlining the work of some of the first Australian Protestant women involved in mission, especially overseas. It also indicates the areas where more research needs to be undertaken.

Introduction

Good foundations have been laid for an Australian understanding of women missionaries by Janet West in her book Daughters of Freedom: A History of Women in the Australian Church. But we need to develop a wider perspective. New questions are being asked. This article is an attempt to look at possible future developments in this area.

In a recent book, Putting Names with Faces: Women’s Impact in Mission History, the editors argue for a greater depth of research into the role of women in mission. They explain the rationale of their publication by reflecting on the experience of their contributors when they met at a workshop in Bossey, France, in 2010. Most of them knew each other by name and their draft papers, not by face. So the editors write:

This experience of connecting or putting a face to the names we have come to know can be said of women in mission. We know the names of some of the women who participated in Christian mission, and on the other hand we have only faces unnamed as spouses or coworkers in mission…(T)he title [of the book] expresses the rationale and the objective…it aims to do justice to at least some of the women who have contributed tremendously to the missionary endeavour and by way of putting faces to names, and to further contribute to the continuing task of teaching on women’s impact in mission as a vital dimension of theological education and missional formation.

This is an intriguing thought. We need to be able to put names with faces on the back of the archival photographs. We need to trace the impact of changes that have impacted women’s roles over time and place. We need to have more than institutional accounts, and even they need a woman’s focus.

Women have been under-represented in the mission story. These writers are urging that there is need for the telling of far more of their stories, for registering more names. But beyond that, there must be reflection and analysis of their place within the colonial and postcolonial contexts. This includes all the implications of potentially being pawns of colonialism, destructors of culture, and economic exploiters, as some have been accused. As the editors state:

Arguably, it can be claimed that the historiography of Christian missions has contributed largely to efface the presence and tremendous contribution of women to the enlargement, consolidation and deepening of world Christianity. Historiography has for a long time been mainly interested in the public aspect of world Christianity (history of mission institutions, leadership and teaching in mission education, and written records of mission theology, control of mission power). Rarely
has historiography shed light on the female face of Christian mission past and present. Women's enterprises in mission have constantly been kept out of the picture.

Dr Cathy Ross, a New Zealander, in the concluding paper in the book, believes that if we want a perspective or face on women in mission, we should be looking at “a missiology of emptiness and healing; of comforting, consolation…; of hospitality and relationship; and of sight, embrace and flourishing.” If we follow Ross’s perspective we will be doing far more than putting names with faces. We will be facing the names, putting flesh on bones, character onendeavour, and find that living a life of faith is an integral part of preaching the gospel.

There is definitely a need for taking women as serious players in the history of missions, to be recognised for who they were. Their narrative does not begin with their arrival on assignment and does not end when they leave – rather, it includes their spiritual and theological formation, and their family and church experiences. It includes their struggles, failures, inadequacies and blind spots; their joys and achievements and above all their relationships. It is no longer adequate to leave them on the pedestals labelled “spiritual saints” of the hagiographic literature written to generate prayerful interest and financial support. They are much more than names and faces.

A tri-culture framework

The history of women in missions is a fascinating tapestry of strands interwoven from the interaction of at least three cultural contexts: the Biblical, (not that that can really be conceived as a single cultural context), the women involved in intercultural mission, and the culture to which they went. Even though this tri-culture model is a gross oversimplification of the reality of intercultural interaction or confrontation, it will at least illustrate and highlight the complexity on which the Holy Spirit guided the Church. It will prevent us from being satisfied with hagiographic records of heroines.

Protestant missionary movement

The Protestant missionary movement started in Western Christendom with its own cultural context of post Reformation rediscovery of Scripture, and the individualism of Romanticism and the Enlightenment. The concept of obedience to the biblical Great Commission (Matt 28: 19-20) was being rediscovered in the changing environment of industrialisation, urban drift and colonisation. It became a driving force, particularly in the context of colonialism within the British Empire.

The colonisation of Australia and New Zealand by the British was influenced markedly by this expanding evangelicism. The penal colony of New South Wales was established around the time of the development of the modern missionary movement (Baptist Missionary Society work in India) and the contemporaneous formation of a number of denominational missions. These influenced the evangelicals in the Sydney scene. Thus the early Australian mission scene was a conglomeration of missionaries in transit to the burgeoning work in the South Pacific, missionaries from overseas seeking to convert the Indigenous population, and settlers in the newly formed colonies who were evangelicals with a commitment to missions from “home”.

Missionary wives

Women were always part of the Protestant missionary movement, though often unrecognised as missionaries. They were the missionary wives, whose contributions were often overlooked, unacknowledged, undervalued, and taken for granted. They were always welcome as the support for their husband, bearer of his children, and shield against the temptations of pagan societies.

Perhaps the classic example is that of Hannah, wife of Joshua Marshman, the educator in the Serampore trio in India. Sunil Chatterjee, librarian at Serampore College, India, has written Hannah Marshman’s biography giving her the title the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) did not – “first woman missionary to India”. Her contribution was impressive. She educated her
own family, nurtured the family of William Carey when Carey’s wife Dorothy became deranged, introduced education for girls, ran a boarding school to earn finance for the work, and supervised the common household for a community of eighty. Taking Hannah Marshman’s contribution into account, a good case could be made for a Serampore quartet, instead of the widely acclaimed trio.

But Hannah Marshman is only one example among hundreds of women who accompanied their husbands to other cultures. They served as support to the work and as the nurturer of the home, a model of Christian womanhood lived out before society and particularly their household help.

From the Australian context, one of the most thought-provoking examples is that of the Hassall family. Rowland Hassall and his wife Elizabeth and the first two of their children sailed on the Duff in the first party of the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries for Tahiti in 1796. They fled to Sydney two years later in 1798 and settled there combining business with religious services. Little is recorded of Elizabeth’s experiences, despite the extensive collection of Hassall family correspondence in the Library of New South Wales. She was the mother of nine. Their oldest son, Thomas, became curate to New South Wales chaplain Samuel Marsden and married Marsden’s oldest daughter. Thomas Hassall is credited with beginning the first Sunday school in Australia.

Another of the Hassall’s children, Mary Cover Hassall, married Walter Lawry, who had come to Sydney as chaplain on the convict ship Lady Castlereagh in 1816. He is credited with establishing Methodism in Parramatta. The British Wesleyan Missionary Society initially appointed Lawry to New Zealand, but this was changed to Tonga where he sailed with his wife and first son. The story of this family is told by Margaret Reeson. Mary Lawry, a currency lass, must be one of the earliest of the Australian-born missionary wives, but she was not sent out by an Australian mission, nor specifically by the British Society. One of Rowland and Elizabeth’s grand-daughters, Eliza Marsden was the founder and first Principal of Marsden House (Marsden Training School for Women Missionaries) at Ashfield, Sydney.

There were also several other Australian women who married missionaries in the Pacific area. James Elder of the LMS married Mary Smith, a “free settler’s daughter in NSW”. William Henry married Ann Shepherd, after his first wife Sarah Maben died while they were on Moorea Island, Tahiti. Ann was born in Ryde, New South Wales and was a Church of England free settler’s daughter. Similarly, John Orsmond’s second marriage was to Isabella Nelson of Liverpool, New South Wales – she was a Church of England teacher-farmer’s daughter. Australia was a closer option for a new wife than Britain.

Generational contributions on missions can be established – the Hassalls and the Trudingers are two examples. (The Trudingers have served in China, among Aboriginal people and in Bengal.) The Kramers would be another. (The Kramers were linked with Aboriginal work, and their daughter Faith served in Papua New Guinea and Zambia.) Sibling contributions, sometimes even in different missions, can also be traced.

**Women’s support of overseas missions – fundraisers and prayers**

Brian Stanley, biographer of the BMS, reflects on the culture of that formative period in the home life of the Baptist Missionary Society:

*Women played an indispensable role as missionary collectors and organizers. From the early 1840s they were particularly involved in managing the fund raising activities of children in Sunday Schools and juvenile missionary associations – a new source of support which all the missionary societies began to cultivate assiduously by 1849...yet women had no representation on the Societies’ committees and no voice in public meetings, despite the fact that they probably formed the majority of the audience.*

Given that women had so little access to finance, mainly limited household budgets, it is notable that they were persuasive raisers of funds. Missionary financial accounts often record the amounts raised by different women. In the South Australian Baptist Missionary Society, the first
women included in the organising committee were added for this skill, not for their decision-making capabilities.

But the life of women in the churches was changing in the 1800s and, as Linda Wilson claims, although there was a strong “separate sphere” culture that assigned women to the domestic environment which was perceived as their rightful place, nonconformist churches were providing a third sphere outside the home in which it was acceptable for women to be actively involved. This gave them opportunities for Christian ministry, visitation of the sick, distribution of tracts, even mission work in needy areas of cities. It was seen as a safe sphere. To this, can be added the women’s missionary groups. Support of missions and prayer by these groups formed a large part of women’s mission work in Britain and America, and gradually in Australia.

So there were women in their safe third sphere at home, and a burgeoning number overseas.

**Female societies**

The formation of specifically women’s missionary societies grew out of these female societies at home with their desire to impact women and thus the nations. These societies provided women with opportunities for leadership, organisational skills, speaking opportunities and fundraising experience. They paralleled similar developments in the temperance and suffrage circles. It is interesting that a number of Australian women activists had children who became missionaries. Elizabeth Webb Nicholls was a founding member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Adelaide in 1891 and its long serving President. She had a son Arthur in China with the China Inland Mission and a grandson, who was separated from parents for five years being interred with the Cheefoo School in northern China by the Japanese. Margaret McLean, founding President of the Victorian WCTU, and mother of eleven children, had two daughters who served with the Victorian Baptist Missionary Society in Bengal. Hilda McLean was a Zenana missionary, and Dr Alice McLean was the wife of Rev Lorraine Barber – they were posted to East Bengal. Alice later practised psychotherapy, making an influential contribution to its development in Melbourne.

There do not seem to have been many women’s missions formed in Australia. Interest and support was usually given to Societies in Britain. Australian Auxiliaries were gradually formed, with control being retained overseas but support and recruitment being generated locally.

**Zenana mission movement**

In searching for the earliest single missionaries sent out from Australasia, I believe it was a group of women sent to work among the Telegus of South India. The Rev Hussey Burgh Macartney, a Melbourne Church of England clergyman, stirred by a visit to Melbourne from Madras by George Maxwell Gordon in 1867, formed a little association to collect and send money for the “little brown children in India”. He then encouraged women from St Mary’s Anglican Church, Caulfield, in Melbourne to join the work of the British Zenana Church Missionary Society. The first to go was Sarah Davies, who married the Rev John Cain and worked in India for sixty years. She was joined by Annie Slaney, whose sudden and premature death from cholera was a blow to those supporting this work. In her memory they planned to establish a hundred Christian day schools. In 1882 a further two women were farewelled from St Mary’s Church - Miss Seymour and Miss Digby. (That missionary-minded church was recognised during the River of Life Conference held in Melbourne in 2013.) Three other women, Mary Gordon and sisters Nellie and Lizzie Saunders, went to China and were martyred in the Boxer revolution of 1895. Reports from these women and other workers were published by Macartney in his paper *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*. By 1890 when the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society was formed, “Macartney’s Mission” had already sent ten women to India and China.

These so-called Zenana Missions were stimulated by the third culture of the receiving community where the local women were almost inaccessible to male preachers or evangelists, national or foreign. This became known as the Zenana Mission Movement and grew rapidly from the 1850s in India. Missionary wives, (particularly Elizabeth Sale and Marianne Lewis of
the BMS)\footnote{145} gained entrance to the women’s quarters of Hindu homes, and found themselves overwhelmed by the opportunities presented and felt unable to fulfil all the possibilities of such work. Sale and Lewis advocated the formation of a women’s mission of Baptists in Britain that recruited, funded and directed women’s work. This became known as BZM (Baptist Zenana Mission). So the vision developed to incorporate single women, widows and missionaries’ daughters with freedom to work under the direction of the wives.

I think it can be argued that the receiving culture was one of the key factors in this development. Both the Hinduism and Islam of India adhered to not only separate spheres for men and women, but also segregated spheres, where women were restricted from contact with any one they could legally marry. This development was slower in China where the culture was different, and there was greater scepticism of a single woman’s ability to remain in service, rather than go off and marry at the first opportunity. If the women of India were to hear the gospel it would have to be from the mouths of women. How effective such segregated witness could be in birthing the church was a matter of faith more often than sight. More research needs to be done on seeking evidence of the source of the growth of the church in these various cultures.

How effective single women were in other cultures also needs research. Zenana missionaries did not have the structure of Roman Catholic orders. ALOE was the \textit{nom de plume} for author Charlotte Tucker, who went to India at age fifty. She wrote a poem entitled \textit{Rules and Regulations of the Mission Bungalow}.\footnote{146} After a long list of rules for Miss Sahibs (unmarried women), it concluded:

\begin{quote}
\textit{NB. Let all Mission Miss Sahibs single remain,}
\textit{For if not, they step out of their proper domain,}
\textit{And can never be Mission Miss Sahibs again.}
\end{quote}

Here is an articulated acceptance of singleness, “a proper domain” for the sake of Christ, an articulation of an acceptable sphere.

\textbf{Australian societies}

Silas Mead, the so-called father of Australian Baptist missions, in the formation of the Furreedpore Missionary Society in South Australia in 1864, decided to form a society in its own right rather than support the BMS. Although it depended greatly on BMS advice and assistance, it was an autonomous mission, and this set the pattern for each colonial Baptist Missionary Society. Small was beautiful. It was not a female society, but women were the first staff sent overseas by each of the colonial missions – Ellen Arnold and Marie Gilbert represented South Australia, Marion Fuller and Ruth Wilkin represented Victoria, Martha Plested represented Queensland, and Rosalie Macgeorge represented New Zealand. Ellen Arnold with another South Australian, Fanny Dennes transferred from South Australia to become representatives for New South Wales.

There were eleven Australasian women in Bengal when they met in their first Australasian Conference with the first man, Arthur Summers. Later, Western Australia sent Carrie Brown, and Tasmania adopted a South Australian, Lucy Kealley, as their representative. The men came later and took over, just as at home a number of Zenana Missions were absorbed into the denominational missions.

The assumption was made that Baptist work from the colonies was following the tradition of William Carey and the BMS. However, the colonial struggle to find pastors for the early work, and the accident of history that women were gaining an education and freedom from much of domestic responsibility by the commercial manufacture of jams and vinegars by the 1880s, resulted in the offer of women for service. There was no way that younger brides, coming later, would have the supervisory role of the well-established wives in the BMS set up. But little has been studied of the relative roles or effectiveness of the work of the women. It had not been an easy decision for South Australian Baptists to send single women on their own. Writing a decade after on the events of 1882, John Price, one of the Furreedpore Missionary Society’s committee members, wrote:
It was felt that the proposal involved a new departure of great importance, and one which called for thoughtful deliberation and earnest prayer. It was not until September 19 that a decision was reached and then the vote was not unanimous. The resolution that was passed was brief but definite – ‘That this Society take up Zenana work at Furreedpore’. No step in the mission has been more momentous. It has completely revolutionized our methods, more than doubled our sphere of operations and at home it has created an opening that consecrated Christian women have gladly availed themselves of.

How tantalising! It was not a unanimous decision. We can only guess at the objections. That expatriate workers were too costly? That they could not support financially anyone other than the Bengali preachers they paid in Furreedpore under BMS supervision? Queensland recognised that women were the cheaper option – half the price of a married couple, but money was tight and the tendency to overextend was part of history. Maybe the Committee had theological objections to women preaching, evangelising or being paid by the churches? Maybe they did not believe that women should travel and live unaccompanied by men, unsupervised in a foreign land. We can only surmise and try not to jump to opinions from the 1978 ordination of women debate that argued that it amounted to racism when women were allowed to do in India what they were not allowed to do at home. This is a specious argument for Baptists actually, because the women were evangelisers and teachers, not pastors of churches. It was just that the third safe sphere was no longer possible from the domestic home base.

At the farewell to the Jubilee Five, who included Arthur Summers, the first male missionary from South Australia, John Price, Mead’s close friend and secretary of the Furreedpore Baptist Missionary Society said:

Not that there has been any mistake made in previously sending lady missionaries. In fact we have been guided by the Lord. He has decided the matter by facts. Ladies fully suited to the work have from time to time offered themselves and men have not. We were not called upon to make a choice. The Lord Himself has decided that the Zenana Mission should be a very main feature of our work and we recognize that in that line of operation lies very largely India’s hope of evangelization. Our Zenana work cannot henceforth be a secondary line. But we are at this juncture making a new departure. Mr A E Summers has not been suddenly called to the work.

However it was not a women’s mission. The work of women was an integral part of the whole. But how such team work was to be truly developed in the cultural context of India was a challenge. At least experienced women were included in field committees from their inception. By 1882 women workers had become a significant factor in “foreign” missions and their numbers had greatly increased. The first two women, Marie Gilbert and Ellen Arnold, sent out by South Australian Baptists in 1882, arrived in Calcutta in time to attend the second Decennial Missionary Conference for workers from India, Burmah [sic] and Ceylon. Of the 474 people who attended this Conference, 181 were women. The programme included special sessions to discuss woman’s work in the Indian mission field with all the papers given by women. As newly-arrived Arnold wrote in her diary on 1 January 1883:

Attended Decennial Missionary Conference at 7.30 AM. Splendid meeting. At 10 AM the ladies meeting – all lady speakers who gave first class addresses which were much to the point. We gained much knowledge as to methods of work and were especially impressed with the desirability of missionaries obtaining medical knowledge...

The four papers delivered by women covered most aspects of women’s work: the first covered medical work; the second dealt with evangelism in the Zenanas; the third and fourth papers covered the diversity of the work in various locations, with particular mention of the importance of schools for juveniles.

Miss Greenfield of the Punjab was much quoted later:
Let us in our Master’s name lay our hand on the hand that rocks the cradle and tune the lips that sing the lullabies. Let us win the mothers of India for Christ, and the day will not be long deferred when India’s sons also shall be brought to the Redeemer’s feet.\textsuperscript{151}

The rhetoric was still culturally captive to the home church and couched in terms of women, mothers and sons, but it had extended beyond the restricted woman’s sphere to a societal vision and the place women could play.

On the next evening, 2 January, there was an additional ladies’ meeting which was well reported in the official records.\textsuperscript{152} Arnold’s telling comment was: “rather flat owing to some old men getting up and holding forth without saying anything”. By the time Australian Baptist women had been sent overseas, women were an accepted part of the missionary movement.

Specialist services

Single women had found a fulfilling role in the Zenanas and it was far more than the stereotypic training of local women to be good wives and mothers – neither of which they themselves were! This entrance to Zenanas provided a foothold that became the pivot for the development of specialist services of education and women’s health, where educated women developed both service delivery and the training of local women.

A number of Australian women graduates worked overseas. Laura [Fowler] Hope, the first female medical graduate of the University of Adelaide, went to work with husband Charles in Pabna, Bengal, alongside the South Australian BMS missionaries.\textsuperscript{153} Although not belonging to the mission, they shared its work. And that raises the question as to what is the definition of a missionary – an employee of a mission or a person with a Christian/missionary calling? Dr Ethel Ambrose, grand-daughter of William and Helen Finlayson,\textsuperscript{154} went to India with the Poona Indian Village Mission (PIVM). Her biography conforms to my hope that there will be a much wider picture of these women than just their overseas service. Both of these doctors did village medical work but other women developed hospitals and training schools. The role of educationalists must also be included in our ongoing study.

Interdenominational and nondenominational missions

Ralph Winter writes of another wave of missionary activity in the push inland, illustrated by Hudson Taylor who founded the China Inland Mission (CIM) on principles of George Muller, who ran orphanages in Bristol on “faith principles”. He advocated praying to God and not soliciting gifts from people. (A number of single women working with Australasian Baptist colonial societies were greatly attracted by the faith principles of depending on God and not a Society for their financial needs.) Taylor determined to move beyond the safety of Western help and locate staff in the interior of China. His impact on Australia was dramatic, and he welcomed women missionaries, allowing them more of a pastoral/sacramental role. Phil Brotchie\textsuperscript{155} has looked at the contribution of Australian women to the CIM. This builds on the contribution of Marcus Loane\textsuperscript{156}. The women included in these records must also be an important part of our Australian understanding and research.

Charles Reeves formed and named the Poona and Indian Village Mission – this was another interdenominational mission. Amy Parsons\textsuperscript{157} from South Australia transferred from Bengal to this mission.

Founding of missions

Finally there is important work to be done on women who moved from one assignment to another. For example, Florence Young began with the CIM, founded the work among Kanaks on Queensland farms and then established the South Seas Evangelical Mission in the Solomon Islands. Retta Long, whose application for service in India with the New South Wales BMS was refused on health grounds, founded Aboriginal Missions. Kate Allenby founded the Mayurbhanj Mission in India\textsuperscript{158} but underlying her contribution is the determination of a Zenana missionary Agnes [Pearce] Kiddell who stepped out of her “proper domain” and married an English Private
Secretary to the Maharajah of Mayurbhanj, and got to work to persuade her missionary friends of her vision for work there.

Conclusion

There is an exciting history of women in mission in and from Australia. We have only scratched the surface of the potential of the data. Our knowledge of God’s dealings in the past will contribute to the challenges of mission in a very changed world. Let us follow Cathy Ross’s perspectives and not only put names with more faces but also face more names.
There is a long story of the mismatch between Aboriginal aspiration and what actually occurred under missionary control. Despite the Christian message being advocated as a means of liberation from spiritual bondage or even the captivity of a pre-Western culture, individual Aborigines struggled to make headway in the terms of their missionising churches own polity of leadership. The landmark work of Djiniyini Gondarra, Let my people go (1986), plainly states the case for Christianity lived as a dynamic belief by Aborigines, not just as an aspect of European cultural dominance and Aboriginal dependency. This was something dear to the heart of the Reverend Nancy Dick, the first Aboriginal woman ever ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church of Australia. She grew up in Kowanyama, a place earlier known as Mitchell River Mission, a mission of the Anglican Church in western Cape York Peninsula in Queensland that commenced operation in 1905. Her summary of the history of Kowanyama was brief but conveyed powerfully the lived experience of a woman who became a highly respected Christian leader.

What follows here is a brief explication of her call to ordained Anglican ministry in the context of this history of a Christian mission. Nancy Dick raised a range of issues: the impact of the transition to residence on a mission station, the experience of missionary dominance and the missionaries’ attempts at social engineering, the austerity of the missionary regime, and the journey made by Aborigines to become Christians.

Gender and race posed a double impediment in the missionary mind for the opportunity of Aboriginal people from Kowanyama to be ordained and serve their own people. It would take more than sixty years for the Church to ordain an Aboriginal member of the Kowanyama community. Given these dual concerns it is remarkable that Nancy Dick, a Kunjen woman, became a deacon in 1987. Even though hopes in the 1950s rested on Aboriginal men as possible Anglican ordained leaders, there had been a long history of significant women leaders at Kowanyama. Leah Minyalk was remembered as a formative influence by her students and younger family members and as the only Aboriginal who led prayers in the mission school. Winifred Coglin explained that when children looked at the night sky and asked, “Has that star got [a] boss?”, Leah would answer “Yeah, higher than you and me. Big boss.” Her answers, in simple terms like this, impressed a Christian piety on several generations of enquirers.

This background made the ordination of Nancy Dick as a deacon in the Anglican Church at Kowanyama on 29 November 1987 even more remarkable in the life of the people of this, by then, former mission. It also provided a window into the way in which these people had blended Christian faith with their traditional worldview. Kowanyama people were conscious that this ordination was groundbreaking; it was the first time in their eighty year history as Christians that one of their number had become an ordained minister in the Anglican Church and the first occasion when an Aboriginal woman was so ordained in Australia.

Nancy Dick’s own journey to ordination started with her response to a call for commitment issued by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander church members from the Weipa South Aboriginal Community when they paid a visit to Kowanyama in 1983. She completed a Women’s Studies course at Nungalinya College, Darwin, followed by a Nungalinya Certificate of Theology. These periods of study in Darwin exposed her to the Aboriginal Christian revival in Arnhem Land and gave her the opportunity to visit the Galiwin’ku community on Elcho Island where the revival had started. An essay she wrote in the course of these studies entitled “Mission and culture contact and change”, is a poignant expression of her own perception of where she stood as a product of missionary formation:
In the early days Aboriginal people didn’t know about white Europeans. The Aboriginals were scared and feared the white people because they saw that their skins were different. The Aboriginal people had a strong tradition and culture. It’s very hard for white and black. The Aboriginals find it hard living by the European’s way.

When they lived by traditional ways the people had free lives. So the Aboriginals are like the plant, a pot of seed [sic]. During those times people lived in the community for years until the missionaries came.

Missionaries came and taught the Aboriginals how to work, build, farming, carpentry and some many more things. The early missionaries brought the gospel message of good news to the people because they didn’t know about God. But they knew that there was a true God but yet they didn’t quite really understand.

All of those Aboriginal people didn’t speak English, they only speak languages because there wasn’t any school. Also there weren’t any religious [practices] at all in the past days. When the missionaries arrived and lived on the mission they began to build houses, a church and dormitories. It was a hard time for the Aboriginals.

The missionaries started teaching the Aboriginal to read and write when the school and church came up and were built, the missionaries began to put the children in school and dormitories. But it was a very strict [time] and hard to earn money for their families. Then the Aboriginal people became Christians and their Christianly grew more and more. The gospel and the good news were in the hearts of the Christian, or people, they began to know God and believed in Jesus Christ.

So Jesus is like the plant and the Aboriginal like the soil. We as an Aboriginal Christian could plant Jesus word in the lives of Aboriginal soil or heart or lives.

The period between Nancy Dick’s renewed Christian commitment in 1983 and her ordination in 1987 saw a vigorous debate in the Anglican Church over the issue of the ordination of women. Church members at Kowanyama were conscious of the need to change the church laws in the Diocese of Carpentaria if Nancy Dick, the most promising candidate for ordination raised from their community, were to be ordained. Alma Luke, Kowanyama’s synod representative, gave influential speeches to the 1985 and 1986 synods of the diocese in favour of the ordination of women as deacons. The synod of August 1986 decided to permit women to be ordained as deacon, even though strong reservations on cultural grounds were expressed by leading Torres Strait Islanders. This set the stage for Nancy Dick’s ordination the following year.

At an even more significant level, as far as relationships between people at Kowanyama were concerned, traditional leaders decided to release Nancy Dick from customary restrictions which would limit her free contact with some kin with whom she was in an avoidance relationship. This happened in a ceremonial introduction to kin with whom she could not have contact on account of a recent death and with her “poison cousins”, men with whom she had been in an avoidance relationship throughout her life. Even the future possibility of her needing to take on mourning responsibilities was considered: “The people told me there’s no need for me to join now, just leave it”. All of this was intended to “make it easy” for her to go about her ministry work which she believed would be assisted by a group of ordained people representing the tribal affiliations of Kowanyama people.

These initiatives were not a rejection of culture but a straightforward recognition of the freedom that would be needed for an Aboriginal person to minister in Kowanyama. Nancy was brought as a candidate to the ordination ceremony by her tribal grandmother, Doris Lawrence. At the presentation to the bishop, before her vesting in the white deacon’s robe, she wore a tabela, or women’s dilly bag on her head and carried a kachal or yam stick in her hand. Nancy Dick’s ordination and ministry offered the people of Kowanyama an opportunity to work through the meaning of Christianity in a new way from the perspective that one of their own in the symbolically important ordained ministry offered. Sadly, this opportunity was cut short with Nancy Dick’s death, at the age of 51 years, on 30 September 1990, whilst she was attending a church conference in Papua New Guinea.

Religion had been at the centre of the Mission’s reason for existence but, apart from its formal adherence, was often relegated to the periphery of mission life. Certainly an engagement of minds
and hearts at the level of religion itself, whatever this might have meant individually for those involved, does not seem to have characterised the relationship between missionaries and Aborigines. Racial and cultural stereotypes so powerfully informed the thinking of missionaries that they had great difficulty in valuing the religious experience of Aborigines. Even the attempts to integrate the missionary into the moral world of Aboriginal life were not welcomed by them, rather they were counted as more evidence of intransigent “superstition”. Undoubtedly there were those amongst both Aborigines and missionaries who fervently believed in Christianity and recognised both a common faith and common humanity in each other. Equally there were others for whom belief was less significant than the formal role of religion and its cultural structures in the life of the Mission. The succession of white, male chaplains as the custodians of official Christianity on the mission did little to engage, at a theological level, the traditional belief system of Aborigines themselves. Even the presence of a Torres Strait Islander in this role seemed to conclude with ambiguity.

The evidence from the brief period when Nancy Dick filled a central leadership role, as the missionaries had defined it, points to a vigour in the response of Aborigines to Christianity that the missionaries did not, or perhaps would not, see. Even if what happened in the 1980s was an entirely new phenomenon there was a process of integration of Christian and Aboriginal identity that led to that point. Alma Wason and those who have followed Nancy Dick as church leaders at Kowanyama recognise something that is both authentic and familiar in the Christian gospel which does not compromise their Aboriginal identity. Despite their experiences of rapid social change, and memories of the worst side of mission institutionalisation, there are those who would agree with Reggie Victor: “[The] Church is the main mother to this place here, Kowanyama.” Others remember a Christian heritage that was passed to them by Aboriginal elders in words such as these that Nancy Dick recalled, and have resolved to be part of this same process themselves:

*God been make this world, God created you and me too, God been make us. He been make everything and he big boss belong to us. “You see all these things?” old people used to say, “that all belongs to him. You and me wouldn’t be in this world today, or in this place only from him, and that’s why we want to bring you children up too, to come and listen [to the] good news, to come on Sunday for school, to come for prayer, sing Sunday School songs or Christian songs.” That’s what older people used to talk to us.*

What others had seen as syncretism or even a “thin veneer” of Christianity is better understood as a necessary part of the process of encounter between two belief systems. Freed from the coercion of the mission era the hope emerged that the dynamic force of Christianity would find its deeper engagement in the life of the people of Kowanyama especially as it had experienced, even for a brief time, leadership in the ordained ministry of the Anglican Church by one of its own.
REFLECTION

Aboriginal women in mission

Jude Long

Dr Jude Long is the Principal of Nungalinya College, Darwin, Northern Territory. Nungalinya College is a combined churches adult education college for Indigenous Australians providing theological training and literacy programmes. Jude has been the Dean of Students and a lecturer in theology, church history, mission and discipleship, at the Bible College of Victoria (now Melbourne School of Theology). She is married to Allan and they have two grown up daughters.

When we think about mission we often focus exclusively on cross-cultural mission – usually Western missionaries crossing cultural boundaries to share the gospel with people from another culture. This is often how mission to Aboriginal Australians is still thought of today. However, there is also a strong mission movement within Aboriginal communities, with Aboriginal Christians keen to share the gospel with the members of their communities. At the forefront of this mission force are Aboriginal women. Many are coming to study at Nungalinya College, Darwin, in the Northern Territory, and it is wonderful to hear their stories, to share their joys and sorrows, to pray with them and for them, and to seek to encourage and empower them in their mission.

Nungalinya College - forty years of training Indigenous Christians

For the church to grow and develop, it is essential that there are well-trained leaders, who understand the gospel and can communicate it clearly to others. It was with this in mind that forty years ago, Nungalinya College in Darwin was founded. Originally envisaged as a training centre for missionaries to Indigenous people, it was decided instead to open a training centre for Indigenous Christians. This in itself was a great step forward, particularly when you consider this was only a few years after Australia had reached the point of actually recognising Aboriginal people as citizens.

In the early days of Nungalinya College, the focus of ministry was primarily on men. They would come with their families and be trained in theology. Many went on to be ministers and leaders in their churches and communities. However, over the years many women have also studied at the College and also gone on to ordained ministry in their churches. Graduates such as Rev Gloria Shipp and Rev Yulki Nunggumajbarr were groundbreakers in opening up opportunities for Aboriginal women in ministry.

Alongside these more prominent figures are many women who have studied at the College and are quietly engaged in the business of mission in their communities. Women such as Veronica who had a vision from God that she needed to read her Kriol bible and pray for her community, and now there are a number of people in that small community who have become Christians; or Matjarra, who encourages and empowers younger women in her community to study and lead; or Yurrinydjil, who has been appointed as a theology teacher to work among her people; or Nandama, who has worked for thirty years in Bible translation and is passionate about working with children. The list could go on and on.

Wangarr’s story

I’d like to share just one story with you. I have chosen this story because it breaks down our preconceptions of what Aboriginal women in ministry look like. This is the story about Sandra Wangarr, one of the Media Studies students at Nungalinya College. She is happy for her story to be shared to encourage others in their ministry.

Wangarr lives in the remote community of Galiwink’u on Elcho Island. She is responsible for nine children including her own three children and her younger sister’s six children. Four of the boys have significant problems with mental illness and are in and out of hospital in Darwin. She lives with her daughter and her mother-in-law, while her husband lives out on an outstation to look after the boys. Wangarr says, “I have lots of worries about my children, particularly the boys.”
Wangarr speaks five languages of which English is probably her least preferred. She has been working in the Bible Translation Centre in Galiwink'u for a number of years and produces CDs of music, posters in Yolngu language with scriptures on them, banners for churches and does administrative work. She has been encouraged by Western women like Margaret Miller and Mary Skidmore who have worked for over thirty years in Bible translation, and other Yolngu women who have encouraged her to explore how she can use her abilities in mission.

Apart from this work in the translation centre, what she is really passionate about is her mission out in the community. She packs up her laptop, digital projector and booklets and visits different families around the community. There she shows a PowerPoint presentation that she has prepared in her own language that explains the nature of God. Different families throughout the community hear about her work and invite her to come and share. She wants everyone to hear about God and this is her way of sharing the good news throughout the community. Because it is in their own language and culturally appropriate, many people are keen to hear. She says, “We need to understand God first, how the whole creation works together… People focus on their problems and don’t see how great God is.”

At present, Wangarr has only completed her first Bible Study, but is planning fifteen more. Along with the PowerPoint presentation, she is planning to record the text so that the Bible studies can be produced on DVD and shown anywhere.

This is where her studies at Nungalinya College come in. This year Wangarr was one of a group of twenty eight students studying a Certificate II in Media and Discipleship. Through their studies they learn how to make short films, resources for worship, and will produce a short film of their own faith journey by the end of the year. All of this on an iPod! It is vital that whatever we teach at the College can be reproduced out in communities so we have ensured that the technology is cheap and transportable.

Wangarr found the course very helpful in learning how to use and care for equipment and the issue of copyright, and also seeing new ways to use media in the service of the gospel. She has excelled in the course. In fact, we have asked her to return as an Assistant Teacher next year because she was already providing such great leadership in the class.

This opportunity to develop as a teacher fits well with Wangarr’s long-term mission vision. Her goal is to teach young people how to present the gospel in their own language. Wangarr’s community of Galiwink’u is divided into five sections or camps. She has a strategic plan to identify a young couple from each camp. Then she intends to run her own intensives by taking them out to an outstation where they can learn together without interruptions. They will learn how to run a Bible Study, share the gospel, and use the technology. Then when they are trained they can continue the work in their own parts of the community.

This plan demonstrates a well thought-through and strategic approach to mission. Wangarr is not content just to run her own Bible Studies, she wants the work to multiply both within her own community, and her vision even includes extending to other communities.

**Mission for the future**

I said at the beginning that I would like to share Wangarr’s story because it challenges our preconceptions about what Aboriginal women in mission look like. Women like Wangarr are embracing the opportunities for mission that new technologies bring. They are recording clips and songs on their phones and then using them to lead worship. They are creative, resourceful and passionate about sharing with their own people.

There is no doubt that Aboriginal people will be the best ones to share the good news about Jesus with their own people. However, there are many challenges in the way of this happening. There are issues of health, violence, substance abuse and cultural politics that make the task hard. Many Aboriginal people live in fear and the overwhelming tragedy of premature death permeates everything in communities.

At Nungalinya College we are privileged to see many women demonstrate great resilience in the face of these challenges. One woman whose husband was struggling with faith and had gone off on a drinking binge said to me, “Why is it the women who always have to be strong?” Aboriginal women
are strong. While they may not always appear to be the leaders of their communities, particularly when the media film a political meeting, they provide the strong and faithful backbone that keeps things going.

Aboriginal women in mission are passionately concerned that their children come to know Jesus and live a better life. It is only through the transforming work of the gospel that the challenges of life in community will ever be changed, so they quietly go about their mission using their creativity, their culture and their connections.
Hearing the challenge to Christian mission from the lives of three Maori women of faith
Rosemary Dewerse

Dr Rosemary Dewerse, a Kiwi, lives with her husband and two children in Adelaide. She has been involved in theological education work in the UK and Central Asia, and for Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand, in face-to-face, distance, online, and blended learning settings, teaching spiritual formation, contextual theologising, worship and mission. She is currently working as the Director of Missiology and Coordinator of Post Graduate Studies at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, Adelaide College of Divinity.

“Christian mission” in Aotearoa New Zealand came hand-in-glove with colonization. Such a partnership has made the ensuing 200 years a complex, contradictory and at times deeply ironic story for those Maori espousing and seeking to live out the Christian faith. Their focus has necessarily been on word and deed at home, addressing the trauma of colonization. The stories of three women whose lives span the 200 years of Christianity’s presence in Aotearoa illustrate these elements well: Heni Te Kiri Karamu (1837-1933); Whina Cooper (1895-1994); and Natasha Koia (1973-). They also challenge us to a greater humility and level of perception.

Introduction

The story of Christian mission and the Maori people is riven with ambiguity, particularly for those who in espousing Christian belief have sought to live in line with Christian principles, following a sense of call, and all without losing who they are as Maori. As people on the receiving end of a package that tangled Christianity with colonization, Maori have had to grapple with issues so complex, contradictory and full of irony that it has been necessary for them to focus their energies on negotiating their way at home along a far-from-simple path.

In this article we will hone in on the stories of three Maori women of faith and explore the challenge to Christian mission that their stories bring. Their lives span the 200 year history of Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand: Heni Te Kiri Karamu, an Anglican from the Te Arawa tribe based around Rotorua who lived from 1837-1933; Whina Cooper, a Catholic of Te Rarawa from Pangaru in the far north who lived from 1895-1994; and Natasha Koia from Ngati Porou, born in 1973 to a family with Anglican and Pentecostal connections. Together they warn us to be wary of treating mission history too simplistically and challenge us to walk into the future more humbly and perceptively.

A Christian-colonial history

The first Christian sermon was preached in Aotearoa New Zealand at Rangihoua by Rev. Samuel Marsden, on the invitation of Chief Ruatara, on Christmas Day 1814. Marsden’s missional strategy from there on combined the activities of civilising and converting, a strategy that aided and abetted colonization.

For the first twenty years Maori proved to be more interested in the skills, implements, knowledge and weapons of the bid to civilise them than in efforts to convert them. A significant shift towards an interest in Christianity occurred, however, from 1833 onwards with the printing of the first Bibles, or segments thereof, in the Maori language. As West African missiologist, Lamin Sanneh, has pointed out, a true gift of early missionaries caught up in the colonial enterprise was their passion to provide the Bible in the languages of the local people. The very act of translation ironically created an opportunity for the word of God to grow a life of its own, loosened somewhat from its colonial shackles. This was certainly true in Aotearoa. Suddenly Christianity had a voice that was not entirely British. This biblical voice in te reo (the [Maori] language) resonated deeply with much of their worldview, even while critiquing it. Maori took the gospel to other Maori and it was their work in interpreting, contextualising and applying the message that ensured Christianity took root despite increasing domination, discrimination and injustice being meted out by a “Christian” British government.
From this point in history onwards, those Maori choosing to espouse the Christian faith and live out its principles have had to grapple with a range of significant issues bringing a host of twists and turns.

Heni Te Kiri Karamu (1837-1933)

A particular incident from the life of Heni Te Kiri Karamu starkly illustrates the contradictions that Maori Christians in the 1800s faced and the far from simple milieu into which their choices took them. In the 1860s the central regions of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand were being devastated by war. The cause of the conflict was land. Initially the government was buying land but selling it on to Pakeha settlers at a great profit, an injustice that angered Maori. Submissions were made to the government to protest at what was happening. Key in the crafting and translating of some of these was a young woman called Heni Te Kiri Karamu. Brought up in the Christian faith that her mother, a descendant of two chiefly Te Arawa bloodlines, had adopted, Heni’s sense of justice propelled her. As the conflict erupted into full-scale war she moved her small family south into the Waikato region, from Auckland where they had been living, in order to take up arms.

A wahine toa (frontline woman fighter) Heni became a crack shot but, as her grandson later recorded, war created a deep and contradictory tension for her. “Her devout Christian upbringing refused to accept or justify the taking of a human life whether it be friend or deadly enemy” but the taking and then the confiscation of land that for centuries had belonged to Maori was an injustice Heni was not prepared to accept lying down.

Into this tension was added a different kind of contradiction and irony. The warriors Heni belonged to had an Anglican Maori chaplain. The government forces meanwhile also had an Anglican chaplain. The Maori chaplain was Henare Wiremu Taratoa, who had been trained at St John’s Theological College in Auckland. Taratoa was responsible for crafting a strict code of conduct that was different to the way Maori had traditionally fought. It looked rather like an early version of the Geneva Convention. Taratoa insisted that warriors were not to strike down those of the enemy already wounded in battle but instead were to show compassion to those who had fallen. The words of Romans 12:20 he often quoted: “If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink” (NRSV). Whether such a code was observed by the government troops is not recorded. Their conduct elsewhere suggests perhaps not. In February 1864 an unarmed Maori settlement, Rangiaowhia had been attacked and twelve men, women and children burned alive in a whare (house) where they were sheltering.

By April 1864 a significant battle was set to take place at Gate Pa near Tauranga. On the morning of 29 April both sides were led by their Anglican chaplains in devotions and in prayers for success before taking up their weapons. Former Archbishop David Moxon has called this one of the most shameful moments in the history of the Anglican church in Aotearoa. It certainly leant another level to the contradictions of life or land, compassion or destruction already present for Heni.

Unbeknown to the government troops, the Maori warriors had dug trenches inside the palisades of the pa, carefully calculating how deep they might need to go to protect the warriors sheltering in them from the canon fire of their attackers. After a heavy pounding of the pa from the artillery, the soldiers, presuming the pa had been overwhelmed, charged over the top only to be cut down by the guns of the many surviving Maori. Many officers were wounded and killed. In the midst of the carnage, Heni described what happened next:

Towards evening I heard a wounded man calling for water several times, and his repeated call aroused my compassion. I slung my gun in front of me…I said to my brother, ‘I am going to give that pakeha water.’ He wondered at me. I sprang up from the trench, ran quickly in the direction of our hangi, where we had left water in small tins, but found them gone. I then crossed to another direction where I knew a larger vessel was, an old nail can, with the top knocked in and no handle. It was full of water; I seized it, poured out about half of the water, and with a silent prayer as I turned, ran towards the wounded man, the bullets were coming thick and fast. I soon reached him. He was rolling on his back and then on his side. I said, ‘Here is water; will you drink?’ He said, ‘Oh yes.’ I lifted his head on my knees and gave him
drink. He drank twice, saying to me, ‘God bless you.’ This was Colonel Booth, as I judged from his uniform and appearance...While I was giving him the water, I heard another wounded man begging of me to give him water also. I took the water to him and gave him drink, and another wounded man close by tried to crawl over for a drink, I gave him drink, took the can and placed it by Colonel Booth’s side, and I sprang back to my brother, feeling thankful indeed at being again at his side.167

Heni’s act in this moment may have been in many ways a simple response to a deeply embedded Christian principle, but both her fighting of what she saw as a profound injustice and this act of compassion were conducted in the midst of a fraught and complex, and because of that dangerous, situation. Ironically, in history and in a stained glass window Bishop Selwyn the first Anglican Bishop in Aotearoa commissioned for a chapel in Lichfield Cathedral, UK, Pakeha memory chooses to emphasise the compassionate moment over the bigger and more significant issue of land injustice. (To add to the irony, Selwyn credited the act to a man).

Such complexity and contradiction, a passion for justice and a heart of compassion remained true for Heni for the rest of her life. She never ceased to be involved in the fight for land rights, writing submissions to the Maori Land Court on behalf of her people until her death. Meanwhile, in 1885, she became a founding member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and a suffragette in the wake of personal experiences with the alcoholism of her second husband and subsequent domestic violence. She stayed with him and brought him to a measure of healing but was determined that no man would have ascendency over her or her family again.

For Heni, Christianity provided the inspiration and bedrock of her approach to and activities in life but it was not a simple choice. So often those on the other side of the causes she fought for were Christians also.

**Whina Cooper (1895-1994)**168

In 1895 a child was born to Heremia Te Wake, a leading Te Rarawa chief and prominent Catholic catechist and layman, and his second wife. Because it was feared the child might not live, Heremia baptised it immediately, naming it Joseph. It turned out that the child was, however, a girl so her name was changed to Josephine, shortened to Whina.

Heremia recognised in his daughter chiefly gifts and trained her himself. He also passed on his Catholic faith to her. Once, when she was ill, Whina met Jesus in a dream. When Jesus asked, ―What do you want?‖ Whina replied “Lord I want to come to you.” Jesus responded, “Oh I know. You have much more to do.”169 This double commissioning from Jesus and from her father remained with Whina for the rest of her life, giving her a sense of call that led her both into important deeds on behalf of her people, but also into conflict with Pakeha and Maori alike.

When she was 18 years old, Whina fought her first land battle, and she chose to fight it via passive resistance. A Pakeha farmer had obtained a lease for land from the marine department that was traditionally a food source for Whina’s people. She led a group of men from Pangaru, getting them to fill in the trenches the farmer dug each day. The farmer got frustrated and people were arrested but the tactic created enough time for the local MPs to get the lease reversed.

Around the same time she was working as the housekeeper for a local Catholic priest, Father Carl Kreyemborg whose missional activity – building schools and churches – impressed her so much she considered becoming a nun. She ended up marrying, however, but with Father Kreyemborg’s financial support and mentoring became a leader of a collective in Pangaru. Catching the attention in the 1920s of the Minister of Native Affairs, Apirana Ngata, Whina established the Hokianga Land Scheme with government land development money, which ran successfully until the depression when it was forced to close.

Whina’s relationship with the church and her community went through some rocky periods – her second husband was married when she met and then lived with him – but she never lost her sense of call. Eventually this would see her moving after his death to Auckland with the express desire to serve urban Maori in voluntary welfare work. “She patrolled hotels, looking especially for Maori parents who were not coping with alcohol or who were neglecting their families.”170 This work brought her to the
attention of the nascent Maori Women's Welfare League who voted her their first president in 1951. Her emphasis was on better parenting and child care for Maori children, she was an advocate of breastfeeding, and she was concerned about the impact of alcohol on mothers. She also spearheaded a large survey of slums in Auckland city which demonstrated the exploitation of Maori families by Pakeha landlords, and led a campaign for more state housing for Maori families. Under her leadership the Maori Women's Welfare League became a significant pressure group on the government.

Whina travelled the country, visiting marae (tribal meeting places) and women everywhere seeking to raise their self-esteem and thus the care they offered their families. Meremere Penfold recalled Whina's approach: “You stand in awe of the Ministry of Finance. You stand in awe of me? But you are the Ministers all wrapped up in one! You are the Minister of Education in your home. You are the Minister of Health. You are...That's what you are!”

Straight-speaking, though often laced with humour, Whina's style was not always welcomed. She expected to know everything and command everyone and so came across as autocratic and domineering. Intertribal rivalry also meant that she was not always listened to. Some men on the marae challenged her right to speak at all. To one she once famously lifted up her skirts and told him that all men come out of a woman, which, in her words “shut him up.” In 1956, after having been awarded an MBE, Whina resigned as President.

Returning to Auckland she noted the lack of focus amongst rural migrants, caught a dream for an urban centre and marae that would be pan-tribal, and began fundraising in earnest. In 1964 Te Unga Waka marae opened offering, among other things, social services (since 1990 in partnership with the Catholic Community and Family Service).

According to Pa Henare Tate, her nephew and a Catholic priest and a significant figure in Maori theological work, Whina was a woman ahead of her time, able to see the long-term social consequences of loss of land, migration to the cities, and loss of cultural identity and focus. Being ahead inevitably brought her into conflict with others.

In 1975 Whina formed Matakite, a land rights organisation. That year she led a Land Rights March from the far north to the steps of Parliament building. On the way she and those who marched with her collected over 60,000 signatures on a memorial of rights, including those of the leaders of twenty-five marae the march visited on its way south. She insisted that each day open with karakia (prayers) and that the marchers be on their best behaviour, banning hotel visits and alcohol. An iconic photo taken of her, aged 80, leaning on a stick and leading the march with her then three year old granddaughter has gone down in the Aotearoa history books.

The greatest contribution of the march was that it conscientised people who had lost their story to the history and effect of colonization on the Maori people nationally, helping set in motion a movement that would result in the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal to effect restitution for Maori land loss and growing awareness and ownership nationally of Maori culture and language.

Again, however, her leadership style created conflict, clashing with a consensus model preferred by some. She also clashed with a younger rebel faction when she disassociated herself from their protests beyond the march in the gardens of Parliament House. Her “If you can’t fight the Pakeha, marry them” approach seemed to them a sell-out. Courting politicians, trying for a humbler way, ran her the risk of losing her mana (integrity) amongst her own people.

Whina was searching for unity but “she had seen ‘that path to harmony [as] one along which Maori rights were acknowledged and restored.” As she spoke more and more in her old age of the need to become one people (the extent to which this was influenced by her Christian faith can be imagined but is not documented), Pakeha media coverage made her the pin-up girl for biculturalism, especially as the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi approached in 1990. Conveniently they forgot that an emphasis on the restoration of Maori rights had always underpinned her talk of unity. The label “Mother of the Nation” coined by journalists offered symbolic reassurance while stripping away a call Whina had obeyed across her long life. Ironically, as a result, she became a divisive figure amongst her own people.
Whina’s story speaks of the possibilities and dangers inherent in following a call and commission to leadership of and service in regards to the rights of tangata whenua (first peoples) while imagining reconciliation with their colonizers: hope of improved living, political and cultural conscientization, and a mutually empowering unity; along with misunderstanding on all sides, blind tenacity, and the manipulation of one’s message by others.

**Natasha Koia (1973 –)**\(^{176}\)

Nearly eighty years separate the birth dates of Whina and Natasha and much happened to Maori in the intervening years. One of the most significant was the loss of language, and thus an eroding of culture and identity.

While Whina grew up a fluent speaker of te reo, most Maori from approximately the 1920s onward were banned from speaking their language. Most significantly children were punished – strapped or caned – for speaking it in school.

Interestingly, Ngati Porou, the iwi (tribe) Natasha comes from managed to escape this initially. Apirana Ngata, the Maori Affairs Minister whom Whina had known personally, was Ngati Porou and by leading their cooperation with the government he bought them time. Ngata in fact helped to spearhead something of a cultural renaissance by collecting and teaching waiata (songs) and other cultural forms.

Natasha’s grandparents, born in the late 1920s, grew up with te reo Maori as their mother tongue. They taught this to their older children as pre-schoolers but when they went to school they were expected to learn English and so the process of assimilation began, a process that grew stronger as the years went by. The result of this for their children was a loosening of ties with cultural heritage and the beginnings of a struggle with identity.

Natasha, the oldest grandchild, was, according to custom, brought up by her grandparents who were living in a rural setting at the time. As a result she absorbed te reo Maori, tikanga (culture), and wairuatanga (spirituality) by listening and by following particularly her kuia (grandmother) on trips to her home marae. Due to being raised by her grandparents who were native speakers and who encouraged her in her learning, Natasha had positive and loving experiences of her language and culture. This was very different from the racist abuse and discrimination her aunties and uncles were experiencing in the cities where they worked at the time.

When Natasha was eight years old she was baptised by an Anglican priest on her home marae. At eleven her mother, newly converted to Pentecostalism, returned to live with the family who were now in Gisbourne and insisted on them attending church with her. Eventually they all did, but while Natasha was happy enough to go along, an increasing point of discomfort was a regular teaching that culture is evil. The phrase “We’ll pray the Maori out of you” is one that lingers, along with her mother discouraging her from doing kapa haka (cultural performance) – a skill strong in the family’s maternal line. In the words of Natasha, such instruction amounted to “spiritual violence” from the Pakeha Pentecostal church on her identity.

At university in Christchurch Natasha joined an interdenominational Christian student group and says that there she was taught to think about her faith. She was also taught in her Maori studies to analyse and critique the colonial legacy and to appreciate her Maori heritage. These discoveries and an oral history project she did recounting her grandfather’s story occasioned an epiphany for Natasha: all she had learned from her grandparents, she realised, was good; something to be proud of. It also sowed a seed of longing to go home.

As part of Natasha’s journey home, she worked for a while in Wellington for the national organization of whom the Christian group she was part of belonged. There she met some Christians who were deeply committed to living out their faith, and doing so amongst the poor. Choosing to join a mission group and being part of providing a safe home for struggling teenage girls was a significantly formational time. And for the first time Natasha felt that the parts of her identity that she valued – her Maoritanga (Maori understanding), her faith, and her intelligent wrestling with issues – had space to be. In her words, she found that she didn’t “have to change. I found I could be who I am. I did not have to pretend I was someone else.”
The two or so years supporting and then helping lead a safe home were life-giving. But, like Whina and Heni before her, Natasha was a questioner, in her case asking why there had to be hierarchy in decision-making, and why, when the opportunity came for the organisation to showcase its work to the wider church, she and her girls had to be part of the “zoo.” In fact she was deeply embarrassed when Pakeha came to view her girls, who asked her, “Tarsh, why are they coming into our home? Why are they staring at us?” An incident for Natasha the next day was “the nail in the coffin.” She was walking with the tour group when they came across a group of mothers whose babies Natasha each day cared for in the local kohanga reo. When the leader pointed out their homes as part of a “project” the organization was involved with, Natasha again was embarrassed and suddenly realised she did not identify with “us” but with “them.” She told her husband Manu, “This is not my place. It’s not me. If I want to be Maori to my fullest then I can’t continue to be in this place.” They packed up and shifted to Gisborne.

In Gisborne, the journey for Natasha has continued and has been one of increasingly placing her feet in Maoridom. She has worked in and for social welfare, being exposed to the traumatic extent of child abuse in the wider community; worked as a social worker in local, particularly Maori language schools; taught in a school for teenage mothers; and rediscovered a passion for teaching Maori as a first language, partly inspired by the birth of her daughter. She helped out as a Mum in her daughter’s kohanga reo (language nest for young children) and decided to retrain and establish a puna, a Maori language pre-school led by trained early childhood teachers. She and her husband also joined the committee of her Nanny’s marae.

Natasha’s Christian journey has been a challenging one. The Pentecostal church has resonated very little with her, though the Maori Anglican Church’s openness to Atuatanga, or [Maori] knowing of God, has offered potential space for conversation. Many of her good friends in the wider community are urban Maori with quite a different story and journey to her own. Meanwhile over the years Natasha has realised that she is Maori, first and last. Christianity she sees is intrinsic to her Maori-ness, grafted as it was onto her whakapapa, or genealogy. She appreciates the good and acknowledges the bad in Christian history and thought, accepting it all as an embedded part of her Maori identity, the Atuatanga part, or a knowing of G/god that is interconnected with tangata (people) and whenua (land) and which is integral to Te Ao Maori (the Maori worldview). This demands of her that she be a good kaitiaki, or guardian, of the knowledge gifted to her – of faith, spirituality, language and culture – and of her land.

The next part of Natasha’s journey is to take the last physical step toward home and move her family to live on the marae, on her turangawaewae (the spiritual and physical place to which she connects and on which, in that sense she “stands”), submit themselves to tikanga, and sit at the feet of the last surviving first-language Maori speakers. Plans for this are already in motion.

What lies in Natasha’s story? A priority for people not to subsume their identity in search of a grand, independent narrative, but to find themselves and in doing so discover the woven-in God-story. Of course, precisely where and how Jesus and his call to follow fits in, along with who we will say he is still needs grappling with, but the answer will not lie in a denial of our identity.

Hearing the challenge

Each of these stories presents its own complexity for Maori because of the significant ambiguities created by the Christian-colonial relationship: land wars initiated by and fought between Christians; social and cultural injustices meted out by a “Christian” government; and assaults on language and identity preached and promoted by, among others, church leaders. None of this provides a straightforward or a simple mission history. In fact, in such a setting traditional mission is deeply problematic, confronted as it is by its own humanly-created contradictions and ironies.

Mindful of all this, these stories as we listen call us – those with ears to hear – to greater humility and a higher level of perception. Heni’s life teaches us that there is never only one side to a story, that every choice carries loss and gain, and that courage is action under fire. From Whina we learn that God calls all, that we and others can always distort God-given visions by our words and deeds, and that passion and determination make possible new realities. In Natasha’s reflection we see that identity is to be owned and celebrated, human dignity is undermined when we objectify others in the
interests of political or ecclesiological gain, and that peace with God, with others, and with ourselves is finding our way home.

Ma te Atua matou, e arahi.
May God guide us all.
Barbara Martin was friend and colleague of Helen and Catherine Mackenzie, serving as a medical missionary at Il Sin Hospital, Korea, from 1964 to 1995. She was born in Melbourne, attended Strathcona Baptist Girls School and then University of Melbourne Medical School from 1952-1957. She specialised in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and assisted in the teaching of both Nurse Midwives and Trainee Specialists at Il Sin Hospital. On return to Australia she obtained further experience in Palliative Care and then worked as a specialist in that field until her retirement in 2012.

Helen and Catherine Mackenzie were two of the most remarkable women that I have ever met and I feel privileged to have worked with them and to have been one of their friends. Not many women have been involved with commencing two hospitals, one in Yunnan, China in 1945, and the other in Pusan, Korea in 1952. Both hospitals are continuing to serve their respective communities today.

Helen and Catherine (usually known as Cath although she would have preferred her full name) were the eldest two daughters of missionary parents, Rev J Noble Mackenzie and Mrs Mary Mackenzie. They were born in Pusan, Korea and from an early age always wanted to work as missionaries in their country of birth, Korea. I had the great blessing of working with them in the hospital that they eventually established in Pusan.

Helen was born on October 6th 1913 and was named after her mother’s best friend who was also a missionary in Korea. She was given the second name of Pearl, this being the English meaning of Chinju, the place where her mother started work in Korea. Cath was born on November 21st 1915 and there were three younger siblings, one brother and two sisters. Sadly their brother, the only son, died from diphtheria at the age of two. Helen and Cath both went to school at the International School in Pyongyang now the capital of North Korea, Helen at the age of seven and Cath at the age of nine.

In 1931 at the time of their parents’ furlough, all four sisters went to the same school, Presbyterian Ladies College, Melbourne. Although Helen had graduated from High school in Pyongyang she had to attend PLC for one year in order to obtain her matriculation certificate. When their parents returned to Korea, Helen and Cath stayed in Melbourne, Helen starting her medical course at Melbourne University and Cath commencing her nursing training at the Royal Children’s Hospital. Later Cath went on to complete her triple certificate in nursing. They both wanted to go back to Korea as medical missionaries as they had seen their parents’ struggle with the medical needs of the people they were serving. Their father had had some minimal medical training in Scotland before first going to New Hebrides [now Vanuatu] and then Korea but did an amazing work with the people affected by leprosy. The death rate decreased markedly in the leprosarium while he was in charge, and Helen and Cath told of seeing their father boiling up the chalmoogra oil for injections, the only treatment for leprosy at that time. Their mother was frequently asked by the Korean women for advice and help with their children’s illnesses or their own problems. With this experience, both Helen and Cath felt that they needed to be fully trained before returning. However their plans, hopes and prayers were all disrupted by the event of the Second World War.

Cath had completed her training earlier than Helen and in 1940 left for Korea with the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions. However, on reaching Japan, Cath and the returning missionary with whom she was travelling were strongly advised not to go to Korea. It was felt by many that Japan was going to enter the war and they were told that if they were to go to Korea that would only be two extra people to evacuate. Greatly disappointed, Cath returned to Australia, but in many ways this proved to be a time when God was preparing both Helen and Cath for their future work. Cath became Nurse Midwifery Tutor at Queen Victoria Hospital and Helen Assistant Medical Superintendent there. This was invaluable experience, both for their future teaching roles and hospital administration.
At the end of the War, they were both ready to go to Korea but still couldn’t get in. Then an invitation came from the Church of Christ in China, Yunnan Mission, so they, along with two deaconesses of the Presbyterian Church, accepted the call. In January 1946, they flew from India to Kunming, China, in an old DC3. Crossing the mountain range, the pilot had to fly so high in order to avoid the updraughts that they all became blue with anoxia but recovered. Under the direction of the Chinese Church they were sent to the walled city of Jianshui in the southern area of Yunnan province.

Mr Ling, the Chair of the Yunnan Mission Committee negotiated the lease of a large Taoist Temple to be used as a hospital. Helen and Cath told of the smaller gods being sent off to other temples but the largest god had to be surrounded by a wooden partition. Later, during times of fighting between Nationalists and Communists, they hid their money in the lap of that god. The Yunnan committee had long seen the need for a hospital in Jianshui as there were no modern medical facilities and also no other mission working there. Wards, operating room, laboratory and storerooms all had to be built in the temple grounds and Helen became chief architect for these buildings. Although the superintendent of the hospital was a Chinese doctor and the hospital was the only place giving modern/Western medicine within three days journey, it took some time before help from the Westerners was accepted. However, once they were accepted there was always a shortage of beds. Apart from a period of language study in Beijing the Mackenzie sisters remained in Jianshui. Helen did a great variety of surgery and Cath began the training of nurses - a difficult job as nurses were not highly regarded by the local people.

From 1949 onwards, the fighting between the Nationalists and the Communists became more frequent with one group and then the other taking over Jianshui. Many were admitted to the hospital due to war wounds and the situation in the hospital became very difficult. Eventually, the Communists took over and although there was an initial honeymoon period of acceptance this gradually changed, and after 7 months, in June 1950, the Yunnan Mission Committee told the missionaries that they should leave - both for their own safety and for the safety of the local Christians. The decision was precipitated by the Red Army accusing the missionaries of firing a gun from the Temple building and it was a very threatening situation. As they got onto the train to go to Kunming, they were met by Mr Li who had kept a seat for them and travelled with them for eight hours to the next major city – a custom of farewelling an honoured guest. Mr Li had been the first man baptised in the church in Jianshui and had remained a faithful and supportive friend.

They left Jianshui with heavy hearts thinking that all that they had established would be destroyed but also thinking that now they could possibly go to Korea. However, on the day they arrived in Kunming they heard that “South Korea had invaded the North” – later corrected by BBC news that the reverse was the case. This was the start of the Korean War and yet once again their hopes were dashed. They then travelled to Burma over the Burma Road, a dangerous and difficult journey and from there they returned to Australia to recuperate.

In 2007 on a trip to China, I was able to travel to Jianshui with two friends working in Kunming and with their help we were able to find the temple hospital. It was a great thrill to find that the hospital had actually continued, had changed from the Church Hospital to the Peoples Hospital and had been on the same site until earlier that year. It had combined with another hospital and was now a large multi-storeyed modern building and had become the Provincial Hospital. The staff were very welcoming and with great pride showed us their early archival collection, and there were the photos of Helen and Cath, acknowledged as the founders of the hospital. In great excitement I rang Helen’s sister with the news and she reported that Helen couldn’t stop smiling for days - all their work had not been lost.

After their return home, at the end of 1950 they again enquired about working in Korea and by mid 1951 plans were in place to go. The Armistice still had not been signed but they left in November 1951 having obtained permission to enter Korea as the need for medical personnel was so great. They eventually returned to their home town – Pusan - in February 1952. Pusan was crowded with refugees living in very difficult conditions. Some in cardboard shacks, others in railway sheds or under bridges and, if in a house, there would be many families, each family having just one room of the house. Sometime after they started their work in Pusan, Cath was called to a home delivery and found that it was to their old home, but the family was living in one room only - the bathroom.

Although Helen and Cath were sent out by the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions (APBM), they were sent with one major proviso – they were not to start another hospital. The hospital that the Mission had run prior to the Korean War had been destroyed by bombing, all the schools had been
handed over to the Korean Church, and APBM did not want to start another institution again. Although Cath and Helen tried working with already established undertakings, it was not satisfactory and they consulted the Ministry of Health, United Nations Agency Advisors and other missionaries. The advice they received was all the same - the greatest need was in maternal and child health, work for which Helen and Cath were eminently suitable. There were three main needs:

1) A safe place for delivery of the babies. As many of the refugee women were living in very difficult circumstances this was very important.

2) Education of nurse midwives. Prior to the Second World War when Korea was under Japanese rule nurses were trained either as a general nurse or as a midwife. Post-war nursing education followed the USA system and on graduation nurses were given both general and midwifery certificates. This was despite being only given 3 months of lectures on midwifery and, as only the complicated cases went to hospital, they could graduate without even seeing a normal delivery much less doing the delivery themselves.

3) Education of women doctors in obstetrics. As with the nurses, medical students only saw those women needing operative delivery or those with severe complications and had no training in prenatal care and normal delivery. In addition, although women were accepted into medical schools, they found it difficult to get a good postgraduate training position.

On 17th September 1952 Il Sin Women’s Hospital opened its doors. The name Il Sin was chosen as it was the name of Mission Schools prior to the Korean War and therefore people would recognise it as belonging to the Australian Mission. It was also an appropriate name for an Obstetric Hospital as it means “Daily New”. However early on the name caused some confusion and I was told that letters were addressed to the No1 Sin Hospital and Ill Sin Hospital. A group of Christian people had formed a Board and the Australian Mission had agreed to provide a small budget so that women coming to the hospital could be treated irrespective of their ability to pay. The hospital was commenced in the kindergarten hall of the Pusan Jin Church - the church to which the Mackenzie family had belonged - and most of the equipment suitable for the 15 beds was supplied by United Nations agencies and the American Army. Baby cots however, suitable for changing the posture of the babies, were designed by Helen and made from wood. They had flywire covers, to protect the babies not only from flies but also from rats.

The work of the hospital was deliberately limited to women and newborn babies so that effective work could be done. There were six main objectives which were “Following Christ’s command and in his spirit to carry out the following medical work:

1) Obstetric and Gynaecological treatment,

2) Infant paediatrics,

3) Training of doctors in Obstetrics and Gynaecology,

4) Training of nurses in Midwifery,

5) Maternal and Child health, and

6) Other work related to the above”.

The hospital opened with a staff of five - Helen and Cath, Miss K S Yu (a nurse who had also been helping Helen and Cath with their Korean language which they had mainly forgotten), Miss P S Pang (a deacon of Pusan Jin Church who worked as hospital evangelist and office manager) and Ms K C Kim who was cook and cleaner. From that small start, the objectives were wonderfully accomplished and the hospital celebrated its 60th Anniversary in September 2012.

The hospital grew both in numbers and in physical size. In 1956, a 75 bed hospital was erected close by on a part of the mission compound. Funds came from various sources but the major part came from materials and services donated by the 8th US Army. In 1968, more space was needed for sick and premature babies and another floor was built on a wing of the hospital. At that time there were 8 incubators but many more could have been used. A visitor described the ward for premature babies as one big incubator - so many small babies had to be nursed outside incubators. Numbers grew,
more space and better facilities were needed, and Helen again used her administrative, business and planning skills. In December 1973, building was commenced with a grant from the Protestant Central Agency for Development Aid (EZE) of the West German Government. The bed numbers increased to 155 and the improved facilities meant that the hospital was able to fulfil the requirements of the Korean Government to be recognised as a teaching Hospital. It became the largest obstetric unit in Korea having about 6000 deliveries per year by the time Helen and Cath retired in January 1976 and December 1978 respectively.

Teaching was a major passion of both Helen and Cath, and although they started immediately with the nurses and doctors on staff, Government recognition took some time. The Nurse Midwifery course was the first to be recognised. Nurses themselves knew that they were inadequately trained to act as midwives and were eager to receive further training. Initially a 6 month postgraduate course was offered. This was then lengthened to 9 months and in 1963 the Government made it obligatory to do a postgraduate course in order to receive a midwifery certificate. Many of the nurses who had pushed for this change were graduates from Il Sin. Il Sin was one of the 19 schools recognised as a Training Institution and the course was lengthened to 12 months and three groups were accepted each year. A place at Il Sin was highly sought after and most times there were more applicants than places. The nurses received a full series of lectures in normal and abnormal obstetrics and much practical experience delivering 60-100 babies each during their training. Cath was an excellent teacher and prior to her retirement in December 1978 she wrote a textbook on Nurse Midwifery especially relating the teaching to the situation in Korea. She had been involved in both theoretical and practical teaching of 1046 nurse midwives. In recognition of her contribution to the health of mothers and babies and her teaching of nurse midwives, she was awarded the Florence Nightingale medal in 1978, the highest award in the nursing profession worldwide. Cath was especially thrilled with the fact that it was the Korean Nursing Association that had recommended her for the award.

Recognition of training of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists took somewhat longer. To become a Specialist the doctors had to do a four-year course and as they were all women, marriage and pregnancy often meant that they did not complete the course (in Korean society it was almost impossible for a man to train under a woman’s leadership). In 1963, the hospital formally combined as a training institution with Severance hospital, the teaching hospital of Yonsei University in Seoul, and received Government recognition. Then in 1965 Helen and I did the Korean Obstetric and Gynaecology Board examinations and the hospital was recognised as a training institution in its own right. Nevertheless, it was a continual battle to keep up with Government requirements as they became more and more stringent. Other faculties had to be added, bed numbers increased, research experience widened. As with the nurse midwives, the doctors had excellent practical experience but it was difficult for them to get the time to do the required study. Despite all this, 12 women doctors had received their Specialty Board qualifications and about 70 had received shorter periods of training before Helen retired in January 1976. Intern training was commenced in 1975 and Paediatric training 1976.

Helen was an excellent surgeon including repairing vesico-vaginal fistulae, and many patients came from long distances to receive treatment from her. For many years she did all the complicated surgery and at times spent long hours on just one patient. Perhaps related to this she was very committed to prevention of complications by promoting antenatal care. In the early years of the hospital, staff conducted clinics in some of the very poor refugee areas and then in 1973 when there were more senior staff in the hospital, Helen was freer to research and plan some country clinics. With the help and direction of the Provincial health department, two country clinics were established. Nurse midwives visited weekly and the doctor once a month and these clinics were greatly appreciated.

In the 1960s antenatal care was not well recognised and 67% of the women admitted in labour had not attended the hospital prior to that time. By the 1970s this had decreased to 42% with 47% receiving fair to good antenatal care. As a result neonatal and maternal mortality decreased markedly. Numbers attending for obstetric, gynaecology, infant paediatric and well baby clinics continued to rise and Helen in an annual report asked "How do you stop a snowball growing?" On 19th July 1979, the 75,000th baby was born at the hospital.

Although Helen and Cath were the leaders, they led staff into senior roles rapidly and Il Sin was always very much a Korean hospital. From 1958, a senior nurse had major administrative responsibilities, freeing Cath to concentrate on teaching. In 1972, at the 20th anniversary of the
hospital, Dr Y S Kim was inducted as the second medical superintendent. From the beginning of the hospital, the Advisory Board played an essential role in including the local church and community in the development of the hospital and making Il Sin a Korean hospital, not just a mission hospital.

There was a major difference, however, as to how some considered the role of a Christian hospital. Some church leaders thought a Christian hospital should be run to benefit the Christian community with free or reduced costs, but Helen and Cath felt it should be run for the benefit of all. Those with money and those with no money, those with a Christian faith, those with other faiths and those with no faith - all should all be treated equally. At times, this put Helen in conflict with the church ministers. But Helen and Cath were convinced that through the healing ministry it should be shown that God's love was to all. The principle that no one who needed treatment should be turned away because of lack of money was completely different to most other hospitals where it was money down first and then treatment. This was only possible through the support of the APBM and the faithful prayer and financial support of many in Australia, especially the Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union (PWMU).

Another difference to some Christian hospitals was that not all staff were Christian. It was felt that there was a great danger of people obtaining false certificates of baptism, of causing people to commit perjury and, on the other hand, there was the positive aspect of the opportunity to hear the Christian message while they were in training or on the staff. Many did come to know Christ during their time at Il Sin either as a patient, trainee or staff member.

Both Helen and Cath received the MBE in 1962 and the Korean Government also gave them awards for their contribution to their care of women and children. In 2012 Helen was given a posthumous award of Mugoona (Rose of Sharon – Korean national Flower) medal - the highest award that can be given to a private citizen. Perhaps the highest recognition however is that the work of the hospital has continued although there have been changes, and the hospital is now very much more a general hospital. Training has continued and 2599 nurses have been trained as midwives and a total of 141 women doctors have obtained their Obstetric and Gynaecology Specialty Board’s accreditation. The 290,000th baby was born on 23rd September 2013, 6 days after the 61st anniversary of the hospital.

On retirement, Helen was unable to use her skill in Obstetrics and Gynaecology as she did not have the essential bit of paper to satisfy Australian medical requirements, so she put her considerable energy into theological studies, learning to play the organ, and writing a book about her father – Mackenzie: Man of Mission. Her medical skills were eventually recognised in 2002 when she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, not only for her expertise in that field but also for all that she did in the training of women in the specialty.

In her retirement speech in February 1975, Helen said:

When I started this hospital with my sister we had nothing, all we had was our four hands. However we believed that if this was God's work, He would supply all that was necessary and that has proved to be true. He has used many people and many organisations to supply all that we lacked. To date no patient has been turned away because of lack of funds for treatment. In the future if you continue to trust in God's power, this special characteristic will continue.

Today Korea is in a different financial place, but the fruit of the Mackenzie sisters continues. John 15:4 states: “No branch can near fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me”. Helen and Cath Mackenzie were deeply rooted in the vine and their lives brought forth much fruit.

Cath died in February 2005 in her 90th year. Helen died in September 2009, just short of her 96th birthday.

Further information and reading

IL SIN CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL, Il Sin Christian Hospital 40 Years History, (Private Print, 1992)

Visit the Il Sin Christian Hospital website – www.eng.ilsin.or.kr
A time of missionary transition

Medical women missionaries in India in the half-century — 1875-1925

William Firth-Smith

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This article traces the history of medical women missionaries in India from 1875-1925 and is divided into three parts. Part I gives an overview of Indian society and culture which confronted Western medical women missionaries when they arrived in the sub-continent. Part II covers the specific difficulties facing the medical women missionaries, especially training and acceptance as equals to male medical missionaries. Part III deals with the valuable mission work done by medical women missionaries in the zenana tradition in India whereby Hindu women were sheltered in their homes. The article concludes that great changes were made in medical missionary activity in India during the period studied and many of these changes were due to the work of women.

Part I - The soil
The situation confronting women on arrival in India

The determined persona of medical women missionaries represented a hinge that foreshadowed a new missionary ethos. These women survived in India within a scenario of conflict. This was a period of great socio-political turbulence, with many natural disasters, famine due to crop failure and epidemics. Worldwide civil strife existed and India was burdened by an oppressive British hegemony under George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925). Apart from malnutrition, many other diseases, including tropical diseases and parasites, were a serious cause of morbidity and death in India. It is during this time frame that the leprosy bacillus was identified in 1873, the tuberculosis bacillus in 1882, the cholera bacillus in 1883, the diphtheria bacillus in 1884, the plague bacillus in 1895 and the malaria protozoan in 1897. The infant and child mortality in India was high and puerperal sepsis was common. In 1847 Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis (1818-1865) demonstrated that by merely washing the hands puerperal mortality could be reduced to one percent of births. The need for medical care and instruction in hygiene was overwhelming.

India is “so diverse, so complex, so exhilarating that it is possible to only make broad generalisations about its socio-political [and] religio-cultural contexts.” The reality of a caste-ridden Hindu society presented missionaries with unresolved difficulties. Missionaries, many from working-class backgrounds, bore natural repugnance to the caste system because of their antipathy to hereditary privilege within their British class society. By 1850 most Protestant missionaries had declared that caste discrimination in India represented an “unmitigated evil.”

Famine, a recurrent feature of life in India, reached its peak in this era (1871-1921). There appears to have been a cyclical pattern of famines occurring approximately every forty years. Famines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in colonial India were severe enough to have an impact on the long-term population growth of the country.

During 1888 Frederick Hamilton-Temple Dufferin (Viceroy 1884-1888) published his Report on the Conditions of the Lower Classes of Population in Bengal, in which he sought to glorify the British administration’s role in providing sustenance during the famine. The report became a document for the Swaraj (nationalists) to challenge the claim that conditions for ordinary Indian people had improved under the British hegemony. Queen Victoria in 1885 encouraged Dufferin's wife Hariot (1843-1935) to establish a charitable fund to promote medical care for Indian women through the founding of several hospitals.
The Plague pandemic had begun in Yunnan province of China in 1855, spreading to all continents ultimately killing more than twelve million people in India and China alone. Plague arrived in India in 1896 via Hong Kong where the epidemic had been smoldering since 1894. Over the next thirty years more than twelve million people died of plague in India alone. The disease was initially seen in western port cities, mainly Mumbai, but appeared later in Pune, Bengal and Sindh, spreading to rural areas and smaller villages throughout India by 1899. The plague epidemics were catastrophic in western and northern India.

The British measures to control plague included quarantine, isolation camps, travel restrictions and the banning of ayurveda (traditional medicine). The Administration imposed population control in coastal cities enforced by the British army. Indians found these measures culturally insensitive, repressive and tyrannical. Government strategies underwent significant revision during 1898–1899 but it became obvious that forceful implementation of plague regulations was counter-productive as plague had spread to rural areas. As vaccines had become available, the British health officials undertook widespread vaccination. Repressive measures of plague control further provoked the Swaraj to criticise the administration’s policies.

Hindu patriot Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) as editor of the Kesari newspaper (in 1897) was charged with writing seditious articles criticising the administrative plague strategy. For this offence he was sentenced to twelve months jail.180 Fonseca describes the political ferment in Bengal that had the centre of Swaraj activity.181 Curzon, much resented by Indians, resigned as Viceroy in 1905 after presiding over the partition of Bengal. Lamin Sanneh (b.1942) describes Curzon as the “catalyst for modern Indian nationalism”.182

In 1819 Bengal, the Duke of York (son of George III) Commander-in-Chief of the sixty-sixth regiment encouraged soldiers to develop semi-permanent liaisons with Indian or Eurasian women. Soldiers married Indian women but subsequently passage and entry to Britain was denied them and their children. These abandoned women and children occupied a racial no-man’s-land. Pastoral care of these women and orphans became a priority for the Maynooth Mission.

Historian Edwin Lawrence James (b.1943) describes India in 1836 “as offering young British soldiers an opportunity to indulge their passions freely... the native population providing raw material for unlimited debauchery or conversion to Christianity”.183 Youthful promiscuity of British soldiers in India was blamed for the high incidence of syphilis — said to be higher, at that time, than for troops stationed in the West Indies. It was documented that twelve to thirty-three percent of British soldiers in India were infected with syphilis every year. During such times of deprivation Indian women resorted to prostitution to support their families.

The Western world was becoming increasingly interested in Hindu philosophy, Sanskrit philology and Indian culture.184 This period coincided with the World Parliament of Religions (1893) and the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference (1910). Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945) and many other Indians became elevated into world prominence. The period 1871-1921 was the zenith of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi’s (1869-1948) political activity.185 This time was marked not only by world strife but also by the surreptitious European Modernist crisis in the church.186 Scholars of all types have disregarded vast archives of accumulated information from Christian missionaries in favour of official sources. Missionary correspondence was created by missionaries who preceded or followed in the wake of Western imperialism in India.187 It follows that nationalist historians would have disregarded missionary resources because they considered they represented the tools of their foreign masters. Brahmabandhab Upadhyay’s (1861-1907) aphorism scandalised the perceived collusion between missionaries and India’s colonial masters as “first comes the missionary, then comes the resident and lastly comes the regiment”.188 This expression of anti-colonialism became a catchword that was censured by Catholic hierarchy and colonial administration alike.

There had been some remarkable and gifted Western missionaries who were sensitive to the cultural aspects of Indian society, such as Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940), who realised quite early the important role women were to play in India. Much was achieved despite the cultural dissonance of the times. Mission history is replete with the friction between missionaries and imperialists. The East India Company placed obstacles in the way of mission because they considered missionaries threatened their interests. Indian Christian theologies have continued to evolve distinctively.189 As Raimundo Panikkar (1918-2010) has so elegantly written, “Christians do not possess a monopoly of goodness,
of truth or of salvation”¹⁹⁰ Intra-religious dialogue implies “walking in the shoes” of the Hindu or Muslim believer, seeing ourselves as “guests and strangers” within our mutual personhood.¹⁹¹

During 1875-1925 and earlier, some missionaries perhaps regarded India as a tabula rasa on which the first words of faith were still to be written. More often it was nothing of the kind, as Alexander Duff (1806-1878) had discovered in 1833. The Christian missionary was to face not a people apparently without religion, but legions of learned Brahmins whose faith was as fully explicit as that of the missionary himself.¹⁹²
Part II - The seed

Difficulties facing women medical missionaries at home and abroad: their difficulties becoming qualified and some of their ultimate achievements.

Vatican II peritus, Josef Neuner (1908-2009), likened the hidden “essence” of Christ to the biblical image of a seed, which “sprouts in different soils, in different climates in new forms and still retains the identity of its origin and nature”.  

Women’s missions and medical missions should be considered conjointly as these two strands are inextricably interrelated. Medical missions are considered a late growth in the missionary movement during the nineteenth century, as they required much explanation and apology although Christoffer Grundmann insists that medical missions have existed from the very earliest times. Medical women’s mission represents a broad worldwide movement encompassing numerous dedicated women, many of who remain forgotten. Anyone having the temerity to write about women should realise that generalisations about them are speculative. A writer or speaker discussing any group of women must note the diversities among them because women have always differed from each other in many ways.

In the “sending countries” there was generally a poor status of women despite their obvious spiritual and caring attributes. There was great need for unmarried women medical missionaries for the obvious reason that missionary wives bore children that required mothering. Maternal duties over a period of time would take precedence over the most dedicated of missionary ideals. In describing the pivotal altruistic role of women missionaries Grundmann states:

The ministry of healing needs the proclamation of the revelation of salvation in order to express its true identity: and the proclamation of salvation needs the actual concrete experience of healing, as it also seeks to make the ministry of healing possible, in order to give expression to its own intention.

The truism expressed by Allan Becher in 1883 is irrefutable: “... we know that home is the centre and foundation of social life; and woman is the centre of the home. Such as the women are, such are their homes, and such the civilization and the Christianity of society”. Victorian women nevertheless had few rights, as acknowledged by Anne de Courcy. They could not vote, sue, take charge of their own money or have a job — they had been sheltered in these matters as they were thought incapable of managing such things. In contrast, life for the single female missionary was often dangerous — for example Annie Royle Taylor (1855-1922) a China Inland Mission nurse who worked in Tibet and Sikkim (India) had twice survived attempts to kill her.

Scottish physician Agnes McLaren (1837–1913) is historically significant. Because medical training was denied her in Scotland she graduated at Montpellier France. She was converted to Catholicism at the age of sixty through the mentorship of Monsignor Dominic Wagenaar (d. 1942) of the Mill Hill Missionaries. He was the founder of a small hospital for women and children in Kashmir, which had become the nucleus of twentieth century Catholic medical mission. In 1904 Wagenaar wrote, “During my twenty-six years of work in the north of India, I have never seen the face of a Mohammedan woman”. The reason for this was that Muslim culture excluded contact with all males — except those of their own household — depriving Muslim women of medical treatment.

McLaren’s focus became missionary oriented and in 1910 she founded the St. Catherine’s Women’s Hospital in Rawalpindi. Frustrated by canon law, she travelled to Rome five times to eventually plead her case successfully. Her goal was realised through Austrian Anna Dengel, whom McLaren sponsored for medical training at University College in Cork, Ireland, graduating in 1919. Dengel worked in Rawalpindi to eventually become founder of the Medical Mission Sisters, a community of Catholic women founded in 1925 formerly known as the Society of the Catholic Medical Missions. The rule for the Community of four sisters was “to live for God...to dedicate themselves to the service of the sick for the love of God and ...to be properly trained according to the knowledge and standards of the time in order to practice medicine in its full scope”. Dengel in 1928 wrote Medicine and Catholic Missions. Permission was denied them to profess religious vows as the Church banned participation in medical work — although they lived together as a community. Not until 1935 did the Curia change canon law allowing the religious to participate in medical work. The Medical Mission Sisters then proceeded to establish overseas communities. In India they evolved into the Ayusha
Centre for Healing and Integration, offering medical care for poor people without distinction of creed or caste. They sought to be firmly community oriented in promoting basic health care and facilitating natural remedies.

The Irish Church did not wish to be further involved in missionary work in India, apart from seeking a pastoral commitment to Irish soldiers in order to prevent orphans being lost to Catholicism. The Maynooth Mission in Kolkata, after the 1870s, was the only lasting nineteenth century Catholic contribution. The Presentation Sisters were able to expand their educational work beyond the Catholic community. The Loreto Sisters were abruptly withdrawn from India by the Propaganda Fide in 1844 when they were prevented from running their hospital. This Irish failure of missions in India was deeply felt. It was believed pastoral care of the Irish diaspora in America and Australia was more important.

**Medical training for women**

Elizabeth Blackwell (1821—1910) was the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States and in 1859 was the first woman on the United Kingdom Medical Register. She had attempted to enrol in many medical schools. In America and England she was a social reformer and advocate of women’s medical education. Blackwell made several trips to England to raise funds and lobbied for women’s participation in medical practice. England in 1873 had only two qualified women medical practitioners despite European women having become the mainstay of medical care in India. Blackwell established the London School of Medicine for Women in 1874. She became mentor to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836 -1917) — the first woman medical graduate in England. Anderson had unsuccessfully applied to many medical schools. She ultimately graduated as Licentiate of Society of Apothecaries but subsequently the Society of Apothecaries amended their by-laws to exclude women training. Mary Scharlieb DBE (1845-1930) was one of the first women medical graduates of the Madras Medical College. In 1879 Anderson enabled her to enter the London School of Medicine where she excelled. On returning to Madras she lectured in obstetrics and gynaecology. Although Anderson has been recognised as the first woman to become medically qualified in England, Margaret Ann Bulkley (also known as James Barry) was curiously born a woman but spent most of her life as a man. She graduated in 1812 from the University of Edinburgh becoming a military surgeon serving in many countries including India.

Ellen Margaret Farrer (1865-1959) was a graduate of the London School of Medicine and the Royal Free Hospital arriving in India in 1891. Offended by the widespread prejudice against women physicians she wrote (in 1891):

*For a woman to be doctor [in England] she must be unwomanly but [English people] are willing for women to train to be shipped off to India or China either as medical missionaries or as secular practitioners.*

Most Christian people are now [in 1891] prepared to acknowledge that there is a wide field for women as medical missionaries in foreign lands, especially in India, where many of our less fortunate sisters must suffer and even die for want of medical aid worthy [of] the name unless they can be attended by a doctor of their own sex, but it is not yet so generally recognised that there is an opening for women in a similar capacity at home. There is an old objection, still so frequently raised against the study of medicine by women that I cannot pass on without a word upon it — viz., that this study must destroy the finer qualities, which constitute true womanliness.

**Women missionaries**

During the nineteenth century many Protestant missionary societies were founded. Wives and daughters accompanied missionaries who then in turn became participants in mission. Their achievements were invariably credited to their missionary husbands and fathers. It was only during the latter part of the nineteenth century that single women became missionaries in their own right. Missionary wives at that time must have possessed a deep sense of religious vocation to choose to become missionary marriage partners. There was reluctance to paying stipends to both husband and wife — despite wives fulfilling authentic roles in teaching or nursing.
Mary Anne Wilson (née Cooke) (1784 – 1868) was recruited by the Church Mission Society (CMS) in Kolkata after the Ladies’ Female Education Society floundered. Widowed after five years of marriage she became the first “single” woman missionary. Wilson worked with women and children establishing an orphanage from which evolved a Christian Girls’ Boarding School, Kolkata. In 1837 she was instrumental in initiating a much-needed training course in midwifery at the Kolkata Medical College. Nurse Elizabeth Bielby in 1897 petitioned Queen Victoria to endow various medical missionary projects including the Lady Kinnaird Memorial Hospital in Lucknow.

The Society for Promoting Female Education in the East (1834) and the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society (1854) were the first missionary organisations for single women. In 1875 the CMS first accepted women at Keswick — 388 women were recruited 1891-1900. Women represented fifty-one percent of the total missionary intake — although the majority served in Persia and not India.

Isabella Thoburn (1840 – 1901) established the Lucknow Women’s College in 1886, which become integrated with Lucknow University. The American Episcopal Methodist Missionary Society accepted her for India, as their first single woman appointment, after her rejection by other mission organisations. Physician Clara A Swain (1834 – 1910) who graduated in 1869 accompanied Thoburn to India in 1870. Swain started a hospital and dispensary at Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh in 1873 and later established a training school for nurses. Swain is considered the earliest woman medical missionary. Collaborating with Lady Dufferin in 1885 she established both the National Medical Association for Supplying Female Aid and the Hardinge Medical College for Women in Delhi. Through Swain’s influence Maharashtrian Brahmin Anandabai Joshee (1865-1887) became the first Indian woman to attend a Western medical school at the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania where she graduated in 1886.

In Protestant missions the traditional distinction between laity and clergy was often blurred. Missionary societies had become a “free association” not necessarily linked to traditional churches operating independently of them and financed by voluntary contributions.

The pattern of mission work gradually changed in the twentieth century whereby indigenisation was vigorously promoted and the Western missionaries were needed for special skills such as medicine, teaching and development. The letters written by missionaries are revealing despite inconsistencies. Some letters convey a celebratory tone seeking financial help, and perhaps not always a true description. The normal personal feelings of loneliness, alienation, feelings of personal failure and inadequacy remained hidden — Dorothy Carey, aristocratic wife of pioneer self-educated visionary William Carey (1761-1834), had died in 1807 suffering from clinical depression.

Nepal remained closed to missionaries until 1951. Henry Gratton Guinness (1835 – 1910), founder of Harley Missionary Training College in London in 1889 established a mission that later became known as Regions Beyond Missionary Union. They established mission hospitals along the Nepali–Indian border where Gurkhas were met by colporteurs. This region had been a Church of Scotland medical missionary field since 1873. At the Raxaul railhead in Bihar a major mission hospital was established 1899. Gurkhas having served as mercenaries for the East India Company since 1817 continued in this role under the British Army following India’s First War of Independence in 1857.

Andrew Walls describes Scottish missionaries as being usually highly educated, with university degrees in arts and divinity — contrasted to English missionaries whose training was often minimal. The Church of Scotland first engaged in missions in 1824 although many prominent individual missionaries had been Scottish. Exemplary Church of Scotland medical missionary Mary Scott (1859-1913) was acclaimed for her work in the Eastern Himalayan Mission of Darjeeling and was the only missionary ever permitted to live in Gangtok, Sikkim. This unique place represented a strategic “wedge” into the “closed lands” of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.

The first two women members of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (founded in 1864) were Marie Gilbert and Ellen Arnold who served in Faridpur near Bareilly Uttar Pradesh in 1882. Sarah Coleman describes the important contributions by well-educated independent New Zealand women missionaries in India between 1875 and 1925. The necessary questioning of gender boundaries, she argues, was made more respectable because it was undertaken in a theological sphere struggling with the prevailing ideas of femininity.
Establishments of hospitals for women

Agnes Henderson began medical work in Nagpur central India in the 1880’s where she established the Mure Memorial Hospital assisted by Scottish endowments. Walls considers her medical work “touched more people than any other aspect of mission”. In 1884 Letitia Bernard worked in Pune as a Church of Scotland medical missionary. The Scottish Free Church appointed medical missionaries Matilda MacPhail in Chennai (1888) and subsequently Jean Grant in Ajmer. Martha Rose and Kay Greenfield, Church of Scotland missionaries, commenced work in Ludhiana, Punjab in 1881.

English medical graduate Edith Mary Brown DBE (1864 – 1956) initially worked in India as the first medical missionary of the Baptist Zenana Mission in Ludhiana. Her North Indian School of Medicine for Christian Women started in 1894 and was later affiliated with Punjab University in Chandigarh. In 1952 the name changed to Christian Medical College Ludhiana when men were first admitted. This medical school, the first medical training school for women in Asia, prioritised care for rural and unreached communities. Edith Brown gained an international reputation as a delegate at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910.

Ida Scudder (1870 – 1960) the Indian born daughter of Tamil Nadu medical missionary John Scudder was a member of the American Dutch Reformed Church. Ida Scudder graduated from Cornell Medical College in 1899 in the first intake that accepted women. She combined specialist training in obstetrics and gynaecology with studying theology at Northfield Seminary. Her motivation was the deplorable conditions women experienced during childbirth as a result of their refusal to allow male doctors to care for them. In 1901 with a gift of $US10,000 raised in America she established the Mary Taber Schell Memorial Hospital at Vellore, which is now an ophthalmic institute. Her nursing school commenced in 1913 and for medical training in 1918. This school materialised into the Christian Medical College Vellore fifteen years later — after much politicisation their Licentiate Diploma in Medicine was recognised by the Surgeon General. Early graduates included Hilda Lazarus, Scudder’s successor as Director of the College and Kamala Vytilingam, who became the first professor. The medical school is supported by fifty mission organisations of many denominations that now administer 225 hospitals and other facilities. The hospital prioritised care for remote villages using “roadside clinics” — for the treatment of leprosy, tuberculosis and eye and ear diseases. In 1947 when ninety-five percent of all nurses in India were Christian the initial intake of male students at Christian Medical College Vellore took place. This medical school, considered to be among the ten most prestigious medical schools worldwide, allows admission only through sponsorship by the various Indian Christian missionary bodies.

India, with a population of 1.27 billion, is said to possess the largest number of medical practitioners of any nation worldwide. Statistics reveal approximately two thousand Christian hospitals in India possessing forty percent of all hospital beds. Leprosaria and tuberculosis sanatoria are also predominantly Christian institutions. These figures reveal an amazing legacy of the early women medical missionaries who established medical colleges and nursing schools. Subsequently a crisis arose in the 1950s with a large-scale exodus of foreign medical missionaries as a consequence of refused visa applications. This fortuitously resulted in strengthened indigenisation of Christian medical mission societies.

Work among lepers

The leprosy mission in India represented a distinctive fusion of medical, colonial and mission histories. Christians came to regard work with lepers as a peculiarly Christian vocation offering a unique opportunity for compassion. Church historians have quite wrongly ignored Leprosy mission history by following an accepted practice of distinguishing between “medical” and “philanthropic” work. Leprosy is not an uncommon disease in India where approximately four million people are infected — of which only one million receive treatment. In India more than one thousand leper colonies exist. This disease is endemic in regions of poverty and overcrowding and where ignorance concerning leprosy is widespread.

The description of the plight of lepers in Mumbai by Wellesley Bailey (1846-1937) and his physician wife Alice Grahame motivated Charlotte Pim and her sisters Isabella and Jan to write pamphlets in 1874 promoting the establishment of Mission to Lepers. Alice Grahame wrote, “If there was ever a Christ-like work in the world, it is to go amongst these poor sufferers and bring them the consolation of the Gospel.” Many Catholic religious orders have supported this mission including the Maryknoll...
Society situated near Kumaon in the Himalayan foothills. Women missionaries have always been leaders in leprosy missions, which resulted in many leper colonies becoming strongly Christian. American Methodist Mary Reed (1854-1943) arrived in India in 1884 through the World Foreign Women's Missionary Society. After contracting leprosy through working in zenanas she devoted her life to lepers, which she interpreted as a divine calling. She became the supervisor of the Chandag leprosarium in Uttar Pradesh in 1891. Six years later it was reported that sixty-eight of Reed's eighty-five patients had converted to Christianity. She continued her supervisory role at Chandag until 1938.

Prejudice against women missionaries

American mission administrator, Rufus Anderson (1796 – 1880), strongly objected to the presence of women missionaries at conferences. He also sought to deny single women missionaries their own homes. During this time women were beginning to outnumber men in some missionary societies. They became a significant force at the 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference New York when women presented papers, participated in decision-making and held ten women's sessional meetings. At the 1860 Liverpool Missionary Conference — only forty years previously — not a single woman had participated.

Part III - The zenana phenomenon

Scottish Christian pioneer Alexander Duff had insight into the unique role women were about to play in mission when in 1886 he wrote:

*If a female missionary knew something of medical science and practice, readily would she find access, and while applying medical skills to the healing of the body, would have precious opportunities of applying the balm of spiritual healing to the worst diseases of the soul. Would to God we had such an agency ready for work! Soon might India be moved in its innermost recesses.*

The *zenana* situation in India effectively sequestered women from society. The *zenanas* were those parts of high-caste Hindu dwellings from which all males outside the immediate family were excluded. Male missionaries were therefore not permitted access to high-caste Hindu or Muslim women who were also excluded from schools and places of worship. It became realised that only half of India's population could be reached for evangelisation. Female medical missionaries were usually well supported by evangelists who were often converts from the *zenana* itself. It was requisite for *zenana* missionaries to become conversant with local vernacular.

In India the work within *zenanas* became a distinctive form of women's mission representing a spontaneous and multi-centric movement that overcame denominational boundaries and facilitated intra-religious dialogue. The *Zenana* Bible and Medical Mission, established in Kolkata by the Church of England in 1852, changed its name to The Bible and Missionary Fellowship continuing as an entirely separate body from CMS until 1957, to eventually become known as Interserve in 1987. It became an international and inter-denominational mission association with the participation of missionaries from twelve countries. It was only as late as 1950 that men were accepted by Interserve. The Church of Scotland Association in Pune in 1855 were also *zenana* pioneers. Mennonite women participated in *Zenana* mission, having been long recognised as pastors, deacons, elders and evangelists. Mennonites consider that everyone should participate in mission — either at home or abroad.

Elizabeth Sale was accepted into a *zenana* in 1854. Marianne Lewis was influenced by Sale to write a pamphlet in 1866 entitled: “Ladies Association for the Support of *Zenana* Work and Bible Women of India, in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society” that led to foundation of the Baptist *Zenana* Mission in the following year. Although initially administered by Edward Bean Underhill (1813-1901) the Baptist *Zenana* Mission was run entirely by women until 1914 when it amalgamated with the Baptist Missionary Society.

As a result of the Hindu renaissance, lives of Indian women began to improve significantly during the late nineteenth century. Indian reformers such as Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) and others had drawn attention to the problems associated with child marriage, the plight of child widows and the lack of female education. Bent on reforming their own society, some Hindus agreed that women should be educated and allowed to be active participants in public life. At the end
of the nineteenth century some Indian women were attending schools and colleges, becoming teachers and doctors and participating in public life.

Women missionaries were successful in contacting Indian women within *zenanas* — not only through healing and teaching but also through befriending these women. Some Indian women educated in *zenana* became leaders and had influential roles in Indian society — they became familiar with Western “ideas” but also gained an understanding of Christianity. Some of these women would have become “crypto-Christians” or “dual belongers.” Because of serious conflict, loss of patrimony and ostracism by family and society resulted from conversion it would have taken exceptional courage to publicly become Christian. Kumaradoss describes this quandary as “how to retain the respectability of their social identity in the traditional order lost in the process of conversion [and] how to counter the accusation of denationalization due to their conversion.”

Despite an undoubted decline of autonomous women’s missionary societies following the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910, the insights gained through *zenanas* had by then indelibly influenced mission attitudes.

**Conclusion**

*To bring the dead to life Is no great magic, Few are wholly dead: Blow on a dead man’s embers And a live flame will start.*

(Robert Graves)

The 1875-1925 era inaugurated a new direction in the history of medical missions in India. Medical work has had important evangelistic overtones in an environment where proselytism was unacceptable to Hindu people. Evangelisation needed to be achieved by way of compassionate ministry. The evangelistic role women played was serendipitous because they were often excluded from working as physicians in their home countries. The aim of these women was altruistic. The caring role of women grew out of other missionary activity that included the education of children and adults, and instruction in horticulture, sewing and hygiene. My choice of mainly Protestant women medical missionaries from northern India is accidental. In 1875-1925 missionary churches were slow to indigenise their structures although some women physicians themselves had achieved certain autonomy and progress was made towards the reunion of the Churches. The Serempore National Missionary Society of India’s grand objective was to unite all Christian denominations into “one great society” to facilitate the evangelisation of South Asia by eliminating inter-denominational disputation and competitiveness. The Indian Christian community was striving to overcome illiteracy and poverty that was forced upon Indian women.

The unique role for women physicians and nurses arose out of the *Zenana* situation despite considerable opposition to *Zenana* work from male missionaries as well as from male Hindus and Muslims. Inertia existed from lack of financial sponsorship and lack of medications and other facilities. Inimical male criticism of the *Zenana* medical missionary movement at the time argued that this form of mission offered nothing “new” that had not been previously achieved by male missionaries or their wives.

Missionary medicine has long been neglected in emergent colonial history. The benefit of medical missions, recognised by J Herbert Kane (1910-1992), is aimed at achieving a holistic missiology that makes possible the allaying of prejudice by creating goodwill through compassionate involvement and showing “the way” by example — rather than through proselytism. Kane rather unfairly identifies several weaknesses of medical missions, namely logistical difficulties disadvantaging rural dwellers whilst favouring the urban middle and upper castes. He also criticises what he perceives as a lack of follow-up of patients and the inevitable unavailability of medications and facilities in remote villages. He acclaims the more recent medical contribution made by short-term medical workers in providing rural care. Stanley Hauerwas (b. 1940) opines:
To avoid error, physicians become increasingly specialized in the hope that by knowing more and more about less and less they will be prone to commit fewer errors. Which, of course, ironically results in more error, precisely because the patient happens to be more than the sum of his or her parts; however, unfortunately, he or she is increasingly cared for by a medicine that is something less than the [holistic] sum of its specializations.238

A fatalistic truism where the “patient is in one country, the expertise on the bacilli in another, the biochemist in a third, the immunologist in a fourth, the pharmacist in a fifth and the epidemiologist somewhere else” provokes inanition and hopelessness.239 For an isolated female rural medical missionary in India empiricism was supremely important in order to achieve what was “possible” under impossible circumstances. “[She] is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. [She] is with them in sun and shower, and her garment is covered with dust.”240 It becomes necessary to accept difficulties and circumvent them. Female missionaries in India became equal partners in preaching and missionary work, which was unheard of in Europe. They assumed the heritage of their distant predecessors — the women preachers from very early times — whose existence is barely visible in the sources. Many spectacular contributions have continued to be made by long-term women missionaries in South Asia.

Dana Lee Robert has observed that following the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh the attitude of many leading Christian women has become diverted away from mission towards women’s rights.241 Feminist theology represents a global theology, or rather a family of contextual theologies, committed to the struggle for justice for women and societal transformation.242 Women’s liberation has come to represent a different way of “doing” theology. Women through their work in zenanas recognised their own captivity and began to speak out against it. Antoinette Burton establishes a link between women physicians in India and the contemporaneous British Suffragette movement by quoting words of Mary Scharlieb written at the end of the nineteenth century:

Medical mission work indeed constitutes the most attractive exposition of the work and aims of the Good Physician, but it is also the foundation of the truly educative and statesmanlike endeavours which are meant to draw into one state ancient, spiritually-minded India, and the modern, materialistic West. Indeed it is in the humble mission compound, with its narrow means and its want of earthly prestige, that we find the nearest approximation to the spiritual gladness of the early Christian Church, of those days when all things were held in common, when the poverty of the state was the clearest deed to the wealth of heaven.243
Vale – Ross Langmead

All members of the Australian Association of Mission Studies (AAMS) were deeply saddened by the sudden death of Ross Langmead on 29 June this year following a massive heart attack.

Ross was instrumental in founding AAMS and was its Secretary from its beginning in 2006 until his death. Committee members of AAMS and members of the Editorial Board of the Australian Journal of Mission Studies (AJMS) remember with gratitude Ross’ deep faith, friendship, good humour, encouragement, pastoral care, creativity, wisdom, welcoming manner, ability to think laterally, efficiency, attention to detail and exceptional organisational skills. Not only did he prepare the Agenda for Committee meetings and keep the Minutes and Membership records, but he was also a peer Reviewer for the Journal, convenor of the Melbourne Mission Studies Network, editor of the AAMS newsletter, overseer of the AAMS biennial Conferences and a keen supporter of the Mission Studies Networks in other States.

He had a wide network of contacts and was able to use these to the Association’s advantage, especially when we were looking for Conference keynote speakers. He was a respected missiologist and ecumenist and was well-known and highly-regarded for his scholarship in Australia and internationally. There are many scholars who are grateful for having had Ross to supervise their research for master and doctoral degrees. Above all, he was a true follower of The Way.

He is sorely missed by us all, and our heartfelt condolences go especially to his wife Alison, children Benjamin and Kia, and his extended family.

A service to celebrate Ross’s life was held at the Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, on 5 July 2013. Fittingly, the church was packed.

There was, of course, more to Ross than his work for AAMS. To give the bigger picture, here are three important pieces pertinent to Ross’s life. First, the narrative of Ross’s life which was prepared by Rev Bruce Tudball, Dean of Whitley College Melbourne, and printed on the back of the order of service for Ross’s funeral on 5 July. (For those who were unable to attend this service, a copy of the Order of Service and an audio recording are available from the Whitley College website - http://whitley.unimelb.edu.au/shalom-rosslangmead) Second, the personal tribute given by Rev Alan Marr, Chair of Whitley College Council, at that service. Third, part of one of Ross’s articles which appeared in Ministry, Society and Theology No 18, 2004 - this gives us a good idea of his theological thinking and his scholarship.

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Narrative of Ross Langmead’s life (Bruce Tudball, 5 July 2013)

Ross Oliver Langmead was born on 13 August 1949 in Albury, New South Wales, to Oliver and Jean Langmead. As part of their calling as Salvation Army Officers, the family moved to Hong Kong in 1952, where they lived and served in a post-war orphanage for Chinese children. Young Ross became fluent in Cantonese. In 1956, the family returned to Australia, serving in various communities around Melbourne during Ross’ youth. Ross had one older sister, Jeanette, and four younger siblings – Les, Howard, Peter and Grace.

Ross married Alison Joy Wright in 1973, beginning nearly 40 years of loving relationship and teamwork. Ross and Alison welcomed Benjamin in 1978, and Kia in 1980. Parenting was one of Ross’s greatest joys (and challenges!). He was a VERY proud grandfather to Zara (3), and step-grandfather to Sage (13). It was a delight to observe Ross with children, where he applied pure love-in-action. How fitting that Ross spent his final [pre-heart attack] day with Zara, at the swimming pool and playground. Her final words before sleep, on the night of his heart attack were: “He’s okay, he has his new skin on now.”

Ross was a committed and integral member of Westgate Baptist Community in Yarraville, Melbourne, since its formation in 1982. His home-based small group enriched his life with honest working-class faith and he felt further enriched by a large and growing group of friends from around the world, especially Karin and Chin refugees.
As a follower of Jesus, Ross “sat loosely to religious structures”, an Australian Baptist influenced by the Anabaptist tradition, the radical discipleship movement and the ecumenical movement. Some of his passions were justice, peacemaking, care for creation and exploring intentional missional community.

Ross was a talented musician who wrote songs for worship and social justice, and published a collection of songs called On the Road (1988). His music expressed the passion and struggle of his journey to live authentically, touching many around the world, and will be an important part of his legacy. He was a keen environmentalist, who rode his bike or caught public transport to work most days, and introduced many to the link between faith and the environment.

Ross also had a distinguished academic and professional record as a teacher and scholar. He trained as a school teacher, then did further study in philosophy (at the University of Melbourne), religious studies (at Lancaster, UK), theology (at Whitley College) and missiology (through the Melbourne College of Divinity. He researched ways churches could respond to their context, published in the Western Suburbs Conference Report (Baptist Union of Victoria, 1978). From 1980 to 1972 he was on the pastoral team at Westgate Baptist Community.

He was appointed Whitley College’s first lecturer in mission studies in 1993 and then Professor in 1998. He was director of the School of World Mission from 2000 to 2006 and served as Dean of the Theological School from 2009 to 2012.

Ross’s doctoral study was on incarnational mission and was published as The Word Made Flesh (2007). He also edited Re-imagining God and Mission (2007), on contextual mission in Australia, and published numerous articles and reviews, particularly on mission theology, reconciliation, ecotheology and multiculturalism. He was the founding secretary of the Australian Association of Mission Studies and convenor of the Melbourne-based Mission Studies Network.

Over several decades, Ross contributed to the work of the MCD University of Divinity as a diligent and wise committee member, highly distinguished supervisor of doctoral and master’s students, and warm professional colleague across the entire academic community. His passion for the marginalised and less fortunate saw him regularly teaching in Burma, India and Thailand, as well as engaging in numerous activities in support of refugees, multiculturalism, ecotheology and reconciliation with Indigenous Australians.

**Tribute to Ross Langmead (Alan Marr, 5th July 2013)**

I first met Ross on the Tidal River Beach Mission team at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria, in 1968. Our first big gig together, along with Bruce Tudball, was to be a pirate crew who had landed at the Prom in search of buried treasure. Our task was to goose step across the foot bridge singing “Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of jungle juice”. I am not sure if this was Ross’ first foray into songwriting, but it is certainly not his most memorable. He never invited me to join him again in any form of musical performance.

For the next few years our paths crossed intermittently, until he produced the Western Suburbs Conference Report in 1978. It was then that we began to forge the relationship that has been life-giving and life-changing for me. As Jenny and I heard him present the Report to the Baptist Union, we knew that God was calling us into a grand adventure and that Langers was going to be an important part of making that happen.

The Baptist church has not always been kind to the artists in our ranks. We operate so much in our heads where most of us feel safe that we leave little room for the heart and the imagination. The creative leaders we do have, are often loaded with unfair expectations and a heap of stuff to do, which is outside their comfort zones. These things take so much time and energy that creativity is sidelined and sometimes lost.

This was not so with Ross. Although there were times when he might have felt the pressure to conform he never did.
He was probably the most gifted person I have known – teacher, musician, poet, cartoonist, preacher, prophetic leader - but he was also heaps of fun. Just when I began to see him as an austere, uncompromising, prophet-type, he would have me rolling with laughter.

He could be pedantic at times. One day, driving home from a pastoral team retreat, we were behind a truck with a mission statement slogan printed across the rear. Ross said, “That statement is not grammatically correct...” It really annoyed him and he went on about it. Someone commented that we were about to pass the head office of the transport company whose motto it was. If he felt so strongly about it why not drop in and tell them about it?

So we did. He went up to the reception desk and politely said words to the effect, “We noticed that the motto on your trucks is grammatically incorrect. You may wish to inform those responsible for it so that that may fix it”, and then proceeded to explain how it could be fixed. We laughed all the way home.

Ross was the prophet of the Westgate team. He articulated the vision. He wrote the Westgate papers. He recorded things. He was our troubadour. Wherever we went - peace marches, camps, picnics, his guitar went with us (along with the ubiquitous song sheets). He provided the songs for us to sing our own story.

He loved the children of the community and they loved him, and, apart from his own family, there were no more important people for him than the members of the Kernot Street group, whoever they happened to be at the time.

Unlike other so-called prophetic leaders I have known, he did not leave the dirty work to others. He also did the hard yards and there were many hard yards to do.

In recent years we have worked together at Whitley, I as a Council member and he as Dean of the Theological School. His integrity, thoroughness, commitment and love for the students and for the study and application of theology had not changed.

He was the finest example of earthed spirituality I have ever known.

He wrote: “The central Christian affirmation is that in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has reached out in forgiving empowering and reconciling love to the world.”

He was absorbed by the notion of Incarnational mission outlined by John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” It formed the title of his book. It was the topic of his Doctoral Thesis and of myriad papers, articles and lectures. But it wasn’t an academic exercise for him. He lived it.

In a lecture he delivered a few years back, he described his broadening understanding of what incarnational mission is. He saw three dimensions to it and they are all important. Without any one of these facets, the notion becomes distorted.

Firstly, to engage in incarnational mission is to follow Jesus in daily life, endeavoring as disciples to be the hands, feet and heart of Jesus for the world – Ross said:

I don’t know what other way of being church can take seriously the fact that its mission - like God’s own mission and that of God in Christ Jesus - is to put truth where there are lies; freedom where there is oppression; justice where there is inhuman poverty; community where there is indignity; mercy love justice, life where there is suffering, torture murder, disappeared persons in a word, death.

Secondly it consists of participating in the risen Christ, allowing Christ to take shape in us. In the words of Paul to “let Christ make his home in our hearts”.

Thirdly, he discovered that incarnational mission consists of joining God’s self-embodiment in creation. Creation is the self-expression of God and we should treasure the created world and be faithful stewards of it. This journey is outlined beautifully in his song Taking Shape which was written about this time:

Taking shape in your creation
Loving God, your beauty shines,
In the waves that sweep the shore,
the mountains soaring high,
The creatures of the earth,
the colours of the sky,
So fragile in their power, exploited.
And yet you live.
Help us take the shape of holy beauty:
Our future’s in your love.

Taking shape as human person,
Saving God, you show the way.
In his body grace and truth,
compassion setting free,
Incarnate Word of God,
he opens eyes to see,
Though evil, so it seems, destroys him.
And yet you live.
Help us follow Jesus into freedom:
Our future’s in your love.

Ross discovered along the way that the radical discipleship approach alone to mission was not enough for him. If pursued without the other dimensions, it led to a driven, almost legalistic approach to faith that was not him. I remember when he first read Matthew Fox’s Original Blessing. It was a watershed moment for him. But it wasn’t easy.

There was something very NT [personality-type] about Ross. If he was challenged by anything he would like to read a book or article about it, gain an understanding of it and conquer it…. He did this often…..Until diabetes came along. In the early days of diabetes, he was determined to beat it but he found that he couldn’t. He began to bear it as Paul bore his thorn in the flesh. He never complained about it and although it was extremely difficult for him, he believed that it helped him experience grace and mystery. The illness opened a new doorway to insight about himself and the work of God.

It was revealed in the words we sang earlier in this service:

When we’ve given in and had our fill,
When the air we breathe is stale and still,
We feel the gentle breeze: living grace,
We tackle obstacles we could not face,
We are loved, you stir within,
We take the road again
Recently Ross had begun to think of the next stage of life for him. He told me that he had been reading Richard Rohr lately about the second half of life. Rohr writes:

One of the major blocks against the second journey is what we call the "collective", the crowd, our society, or our extended family. Some call it the crab bucket syndrome - you try to get out, but the other crabs just keep pulling you back in. What passes for morality or spirituality in a vast majority of peoples' lives is the way everybody they grew up with thinks. Some would call it conditioning or even imprinting. Without very real inner work, most folks never move beyond it. You might get beyond it in a negative sense by rebelling against it, but it is much less common to get out of the crab bucket in a positive way. [Richard Rohr - Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life, p83]

Ross has been as committed as any person I know to that very real inner work to get him out of the crab bucket. He was on a journey towards wholeness.

I have just finished re-reading To Kill a Mockingbird. Miss Maudie says about Atticus Finch:

*We're the safest folks in the world. We're so rarely called on to be Christians, but when we are, we've got men like Atticus to go for us.*

That's how I feel about Ross. When called upon to be Christian, I had Ross Langmead to go for me. Many of us did. He was always there – doing the right thing. Now we have to grow up a bit more.

My life will be very different without him:

I will miss his self-deprecating humour. The last time we spoke I told him that St Kilda was about to take on an Economic Sharing scheme similar to the one he designed for Westgate in 1983-84. He said with a smile, "I knew it would catch on"…

I will miss his genuine interest in me and my hopes and dreams as well as my struggles. He always said he wasn’t much of a pastor but over the years he has been a very good pastor to me.

I will miss his clarity of thought and his ability to communicate complex concepts in simple language. I recently heard him give a lecture on the Anabaptist approach to mission. It was totally inspiring.

I will miss seeing him with children, unable to discern who was having more fun – Ross or the kids.

I grieve for the songs he hasn’t written yet.

I will miss his servant heart and his generous spirit.

I will miss his gracious greeting. I will miss so much more ….but I will not miss him as much as you will - Alison, Ben and Kia. I want to thank you for sharing him with us.

I am grateful to God for his life and especially grateful that he had room to fit me in to it.

I have kept a quote from a sermon Ross preached at Westgate in the 80s:

*Entry to the kingdom of God is free. It just costs a fair bit to live there. But we live eternally on credit in God's kingdom. We are forgiven before we enter and we are forgiven every day we live there.*

Rest in peace, Langers.
Factors in my theological reflection style

As a result of being specific, contextual and personal, rather than general, universal and impersonal, our style of theological reflection will reflect our individuality and will vary greatly from person to person. With this in mind, I’d like to give some examples of ways in which I find myself reflecting theologically, in the hope that readers may resonate with some of them, on the one hand, and realise that my ways need not be their ways, on the other hand. This more personal style of writing flows from the very nature of theological reflection, which takes a particular situation and tries to relate it to the liberating and transforming presence of God as it is experienced (or perhaps not experienced) in our lives. I will choose four factors in my theological reflection style: my background, metaphorical theology, mission and community.

Autobiography

I am the eldest son of fundamentalist Salvation Army officers and missionaries who embodied deep integrity and passion for the gospel. I gained many of my ideals and values from my parents. It is also true, however, that their tradition also cramped my style with its holiness theology, authoritarianism, high expectations and low view of human nature. Most of us are a complex combination of taking after our parents and reacting to them. It is no wonder, then, that my natural tendencies are to be serious, idealistic and mission-oriented at the same time as fiercely independent, sceptical, liberal-to-radical, and skilled at hiding my feelings if I so choose.

My family context makes it unsurprising that my theological reflection style until recent decades has been one of feeling inadequate and unspiritual and yet tentatively exploring new territory with a strong desire for integrity. I am also a baby-boomer, a teenager of the protest generation and part of the education boom of the 1970s. My generational background makes it unsurprising that I expect Christians to be engaged in social questions to actually make a difference. I came under the influence of the radical discipleship movement, the Protestant evangelical version of liberation theology, and I expect to be challenged by the poor and to carry out my ministry and mission in solidarity with them, as Jesus did.

I feel completely at home when I read liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo’s suggestion that we need to approach old truths with hermeneutical suspicion. He suggests that we ask new questions from a new location, coming up with new understandings and proceeding in a hermeneutic cycle (or, as I prefer to say, a hermeneutical spiral).29

As well as my own family story and that of my generation, I have come to appreciate that my personality type affects my theological reflection style. I tend to be introverted, intuitive, a thinker, and the type who seeks closure (in Myers-Briggs Type Indicator jargon, an INTJ).30 My natural style leads to many traits, such as always wanting to understand more before pronouncing my view; finishing whatever I start, even if it nearly kills me; forgetting where I read or hear things (unless they are in my elaborate records and lists!); trying to be scrupulously fair and tolerant, while underneath facing the temptation to be rather judgemental and sure I’m right; dwelling on the abstract and general things while struggling to remember the concrete and the particular. I know that I can translate complicated ideas simply for others. On the other hand I can sit for hours trying to insert illustrations into my sermons and lectures.

I don’t allow personality theory to box me in, but I have found that it’s good to acknowledge where I start from when I do the work of developing my less preferred ways of operating. I watch in amazement as others with different personalities think, feel and act so differently from me. I have learnt to value my friends and colleagues deeply.

Metaphor
Talk of God is all metaphorical, it seems to me. Trying to contain the infinite within finite words stretches and strains them almost to laughing point. Rather than this being a limitation, I see it as liberating. Poetry, art, music, creation, silence, wordless action—these all enter the theological circle, and "reflection" becomes a concept much wider than discursive thinking. Maybe we should call it "theological musing" or "theological exploration". Paul Tillich reminded us that the classical concept of "reason" encompassed not only the cognitive aspects of grasping truth but also the aesthetic, practical and even emotional dimensions of intuiting reality. This "logos" comes from God and invites us to respond to God in life, creativity and joy. Much of the time I spend preaching or writing songs is spent in finding fresh metaphors or oblique ways of expressing truth. I confess that being a teacher of theology doesn't always encourage me to do this, and I easily slip back into propositional, linear and systematic ways of thinking and speaking.

In the family of metaphor, model and simile I also include imagination, creativity, play, story, the movies, humour, subversion and iconoclasm. I find addressing children to be a good way of indirectly sneaking through the defences of adults. In doing things with children we often allow our inner-child a small chance to surface, as long as "we're doing it for the kids (smile)".

I also operate contemplatively, without tying my reflection to words. I'm a keen environmentalist and, like many people, find it easy to commune with God in God's creation. When I go on retreat I only have to walk or jog in the bush or on the beach to be deeply aware of God's presence.

Music deserves an extra word here. I do some of my most distilled theological reflection in congregational song writing. It allows a confluence of lyrics and musical mood. I am aware of the privilege and responsibility of other people singing my songs; the results of my solitary struggle may one day become grist to the mill for someone else. I usually submit my draft songs to those who commission them. Their beauty is central for me, and at times songs seem as much discovered as sculpted. Song writing is far more disciplined and challenging than writing lectures or articles, and the pain of creating a song can seem like giving birth (as far as we males can imagine it, at least!). Several of my songs mark spiritual breakthroughs for me. A song called Lord, you stand among us is a clear example of productive theological reflection, enabling me to resolve an experience of near burnout through a fresh sense of the Spirit of God. It was written for the opening of a skills centre for the unemployed, and I had no idea what to write "for them". So I wrote "for myself". At the time, I was feeling spiritually dry and wrung out. I was drowning in the task of teaching my very first course in theology, realising how words can block out the Spirit and academic theology can lead you down some dead ends. In the writing of the song, unexpectedly I was deeply renewed. It eventually expressed my new understanding about ministry and mission: Doing ministry tasks you can't face (even lecturing, preaching or writing songs) can just about sink us, but God is mysteriously present to take us beyond. In the way of theological reflection, it drew on the insights of process theology, liberation theology, the biblical metaphor of God's Spirit as life giving breeze and so on, but it brought them to bear on my own experience of near exhaustion.

Chorus:

Lord, you stand among us, you stir within us; You draw us on beyond what we can do, what we can be, Revealing your freedom and mystery. When we search for you and find a void, When our sense of God has been destroyed, We need reminding: Jesus came And stood amongst the poor, the blind, the lame. Felt our pain, and stretched his hand. The sky is tinged with dawn.

When we've given in and had our fill, When the air we breathe is stale and still, We feel the gentle breeze: living grace. We tackle obstacles we could not face. We are loved; you stir within. We take the road again.
When we say that’s all we want to do,
When we shut the door and say we’re through,
We feel the song of love draw us on:
Magnetic mystery, now here, now gone.
Sets us free and makes us whole.
We plunge into the sea.\(^{33}\)

For me theological reflection often takes place in the context of struggle and even near despair. But God’s grace, in my experience, has always been underlying and irresistible.

Mission

Earlier I suggested that theological reflection for ministry is well developed but that it is equally suited for the praxis of mission. Of course ministry and mission are almost inseparable. A balanced approach to ministry always opens out to the world in mission. Conversely, a holistic approach to mission is for the most “ministerial” in style, that is, incarnational and servant-like. When it comes to personal evangelism, a good deal of faith-sharing consists simply of sensitive theological reflection in the natural context of a conversation with a seeker. I am deeply mission-oriented because the gap between what is and what could be under God’s liberating reign is an ever-present existential reality.

To love with a large heart is to feel the pain of the world. I find myself reflecting theologically at nearly every moment of engagement — as I read the newspaper or as I listen on the phone to a friend in distress who finds God absent. In a single day I can feel the suffering of the people of Iraq, my mother’s chronic pain, my friend’s alcoholism, Australia’s loss of moral direction and the inability of settler-Australians to say sorry to indigenous Australians. I sometimes wonder if I’m hooked on pain. But I’m equally blessed with hope and a sense of God’s mysterious presence. In a single day I can also see God in creation, sense the holy in several people, get excited by some poetry or music, and enjoy watching a theological student grapple with important questions. I see both sides. I am driven by the deep need for transformation. As Snoopy the dog (in Charles Schultz’s Charlie Brown cartoons) says, lying on top of his kennel, “Underneath this calm and collected surface lies a heart in raging turmoil”!

Mission is the commitment to join God’s on-going work to transform the world. It is inescapably political, given that the Good News is essentially about the possibility of peace, justice and love. So theological reflection takes us into all the difficult areas of life, endeavouring to discern what policies are just and workable, and how we should treat the earth.

Mission seeps into all of life as we live out the good news, just as pastoral ministry seeps into all of life as we potentially express care in all relationships. If mission were all action, with no reflection, we would go off the rails. We would “hard sell” the gospel, organise our way to being an international brand name, manage the church and cram every living moment with mission activity. But it’s mission with mystery, and waiting is as important as outreach, listening as speaking, responding as pro-active planning.\(^{34}\) The reflective and meditative dimension of mission is central.

This is parallel to theological reflection in ministry. The pastoral challenges of life seem to pop up and hit us unannounced. People hurt at inconvenient times. My pastoral style is to feel quite inadequate, to say so, to pray for calm and wisdom, and then to try to “be there”. It is fairly unsophisticated, really. Paradoxically, exercising pastoral care has been harder since becoming a theological teacher, because I feel I ought to know better; but I don’t. I have to trust the mystery even more. I need to remind myself that there is a role for wounded healers, those who know pain and limitation and yet, in being healed by God, may share that healing with others.\(^{35}\)

Community

I can’t imagine theological reflection occurring other than in the context of Christian community. While there are many ways to pursue community, my experience of it is local and intentional. Apart from the first year of married life, I have lived in an extended family by choice all my adult life. For more than
twenty-five years I’ve been in a weekly home-based small group that consciously pursues Christian community.

Most of my fellow group members don’t have much formal education. Some are so shy they pass when we read, share or pray. Some are psychiatrically disabled or unemployed. For most of the time we’ve had children in the group. Sometimes “associate members”, who are not Christians but who come for the meal, are present as we wrestle with our pastoral problems or biblical interpretation, and as we share where we find God in the events of the week, or weep with a member whose daughter committed suicide or a member who has had throat cancer diagnosed. Our Bible studies on forgiveness at one time were very relevant, given two members of the group weren’t speaking to each other; this was a classic instance of group theological reflection with inescapable consequences.

At times group life has been an enormous discipline, but most of the time, I learn a great deal from honest working class theological brilliance. I’m amazed that over the years we’ve grappled in depth with metaphors for God, with the problem of suffering, with who Jesus was and even with process theology as a way of understanding how God is at work in the world. It is in my small group that I do much of my theological reflection. We love to sing, and often after singing a song, we stop and talk about what we gained from it.

I’m very fortunate to be part of both my small group and the college community where I teach. It is generally the grace of God in my friends, more than my belief system, that enables me “to wait actively, to remember gratefully, to hope realistically, and to ‘trust courageously’”. It is the patience of fellow pilgrims that helps me to overcome my stubborn independence and taste God’s new commonwealth in which all relationships are transformed.

Conclusion

In discussing four factors in my own theological reflection style — autobiography, metaphor, mission and community — I hope I have shown how specific, contextual and personal theological reflection is. By extension, I trust that readers will be encouraged to value their own specific context and style.
BOOK REVIEW

CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

IV Symposium of Asia-Pacific Association of Mission Researchers (ASPAMIR)

Edited by
Raymundus Sudhiaras, SVD

Published by: Bayumedia Publishing, Anggota IKAPI Jatim, Islan Bukit Barisan No. 23, Malang, Indonesia, 2012. The book can be ordered directly from the publisher (Aditya Wacana Pusat Pengkajian Agama dan Kebudayaan, Malang) or via the editor’s email (derai2013@gmail.com). The price is $50 per copy including posting/airmail.

Reviewed by Larry Nemer, SVD, “Lector Emeritus” in Church History and Mission Studies at Yarra Theological Union. He has taught in Chicago, London, Melbourne, Tagaytay City, Nha Trang, and Goroka. He was the Founding President of the Australian Association for Mission Studies and has been Chair of the Editorial Board of the Australian Journal of Mission Studies since its inception.

ASPAMIR is an organisation in the Asia-Pacific Zone of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) that was established in 1997. At that time there were more than forty SVDs who were mission theologians, historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, linguistic specialists, and comparative religion specialists committed to doing research in the field of mission studies. The organisation had as its aims: to make one another known to each other, to communicate with each other about their research projects, to encourage one another in their research and perhaps even collaborate, and to come together every four years for a Symposium to discuss a theme relevant to the Asia-Pacific Zone. These papers come from the IV Symposium that was held September 27-October 2, 2010 at the SVD Family Centre in Ledug-Prigen, East Java, Indonesia. Twenty-five researchers attended the symposium coming from India, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Indonesia. This collection represents some of the papers that were delivered at the symposium whose theme was: Cross-Cultural Mission: Problems and Prospects.

The first three papers focus on an issue of concern to the SVDs: why do SVD missionaries from the Asia Pacific Zone return early from their missionary assignment? The papers address this issue, based on statistical evidence that comes from Indonesia and the Philippines. The statistics will be of particular interest to other SVDs, however some of their conclusions might be of value to others who prepare people for going to the missions or orientate them on their arrival. The first conclusion (which surprised me) was that the percentage of Early Returned Missionaries (ERM) has not changed over the years. It is just that more missionaries are being sent, so although the percentage remains the same there are more of them returning. A second conclusion was that there is no pattern to the reasons why people returned early. Sometimes it was because they had been sent there purposefully for only a few years, and sometimes it was because the Superiors needed them again for a special ministry in their home country. But only in a few instances was lack of preparation or poor orientation on arrival given as a reason for an early return. Unfortunately these papers could have been better edited than they were; at times the English is very poor.

There are two papers on cross-cultural formation. The content of the paper by Franco Zocca who has been working at the Melanesian Mission Institute in Goroka, PNG, for many years will not be new to anyone who has been concerned with the formation of missionaries. However, it might be a very handy summary of some of the anthropological issues that missionaries need to be aware of that can be handed out to people preparing for mission work in another culture. The paper by K Jose focuses on the special issues that apply to cross-cultural mission in India.

The book is worth reading for the last three papers alone. Gnanapragasm Lazar, one of the leading Indian missiologists, offers an analysis of one of the major issues facing the mission in India: fundamentalism. He puts his analysis of religious fundamentalism in the broader context of the
varieties of fundamentalism that exist in society. A paper by Dominic Emmanuel who serves the bishops of India on the questions of interreligious dialogue addresses dialogue as a mission methodology in Asia. He begins his paper by summarizing the contributions that four philosophers of the 20th century (Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhatin, Hans Georg Gadamer, Jurgen Habermas) have made to an understanding of and necessity for dialogue in general. He then illustrates why dialogue between people of different religious traditions is necessary in India in particular and in today's world in general. The paper by Yulius Yasinto on “religious traditions of Indonesia in the midst of globalization” is one of the most comprehensive treatments that this reviewer has ever seen about the importance of the religious traditions in the Indonesian society and its identity. There are competing ideologies about whether one religion should be imposed on the country, but he argues that the majority of Indonesians, based on their history of the last fifty years, are not in favour of an Islamic State but who nevertheless see religion as an important part of their Indonesian identity. It is a scholarly study of a complex issue.

The papers all have bibliographies attached to them, but unfortunately there is no index at the end of the book.
BOOK REVIEW

FAITHING THE NATIVE SOIL

Dilemmas and Aspirations of Post-Colonial Buddhists and Christians in Sri Lanka

by Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi

Published by: Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo 2012. (xxi + 396pp)

Reviewed by John D’Arcy May, former Director of the Irish School of Ecumenics and Associate Professor of Interfaith Dialogue in Trinity College Dublin. Since returning to his native Melbourne he has taken up honorary affiliations with Australian Catholic University’s Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, Monash University’s Centre for Studies in Theology and Religion, and MCD University through the Yarra Institute for Religion and Social Policy.

Formerly known as Ceylon, Sri Lanka became the focus of international attention as its civil war reached a bloody climax in 2009 with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers. What is little appreciated is the complex multi-religious environment in which all this took place. Sri Lankan scholar Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi fills this gap by reconstructing the religious developments that have shaped the island’s society and politics from ancient times up to the present. But he offers more: a delineation of the missionary challenge posed to the churches and other Christian groups by their interactions with Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims.

Sri Lanka underwent three phases of colonisation, by the Catholic Portuguese, the Calvinist Dutch and the Anglican and Methodist British. Resultant tensions have now been exacerbated by the activities of Evangelical groups for whom the aforementioned churches are not genuinely Christian and the indigenous Buddhists are targets for conversion. It is not surprising then that the Buddhists, humiliated by centuries of subjugation under colonial masters of various Christian persuasions, have been further radicalised since independence in 1948 by what they call the “unethical conversions” carried out by Christians. They have managed to alienate both the churches, by taking control of their schools, and the Tamils, by insisting on “Sinhala only” in education and public life. Buddhist resistance and resentment have spawned not only the militant Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement but a political party which has had monks elected to parliament. In Hettiarachchi’s sobering summary:

Sri Lanka remains a classic example of competitive partisan politics that has had recourse to both extra parliamentary agitation linked to political victimisation of the opposition and whoever poses a political threat to those in power (p22).

This bare outline gives no impression of the extensively documented and detailed account offered by Hettiarachchi. He traces the path to Buddhist fundamentalism. Though the bhikkhus (monks) were traditionally conciliatory towards the Tamils and hospitable towards the British missionaries, many were eventually consumed by anti-Christian and anti-Western resentment to the point where they frustrated an incipient federalism that would have included the Tamils, implacably opposing dialogue with Christians as well. The resulting ecumenical context was not promising, either for intra-Christian or inter-religious dialogue. Here, Hettiarachchi sketches the ecumenical advances achieved by the Vatican II Council, the World Council of Churches and the opening of the world Evangelical movement towards more social involvement. But his main focus is on the kinds of indigenous theology that will be necessary if a genuine dialogue is to be developed. He correctly identifies the lack of a convincing theology of religions as the main deficit in the missionary approach of virtually all the churches.

He presents a wide range of Sri Lankan theologians who strive to make good this deficit. He draws repeatedly on the pioneering work of Aloysius Pieris and Tissa Balasuriya, but also consults the new generation of theologians, such as Jude Lal Fernando, and he gives valuable accounts of movements and communities founded by ecumenical innovators like the Anglican Yohan Devananda. In contrast are the complications caused by Evangelical Christians who aim to make the Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim “other” the same as “us”, preaching a gospel of prosperity and provoking angry responses by the radical bhikkhus.
Matters came to a head in 2003 when the charismatic Buddhist preacher and media personality Bhikkhu Gangodawila Soma died mysteriously in St Petersburg, where he had gone to receive an award. This unleashed a furious reaction and gave the radical monks’ party JHU an electoral boost and generated conflict with the churches which Jude Lal Fernando describes as being between “neo-liberal capitalist Christian institutions and the feudal nationalistic Buddhist elements” (p187). The Buddhists have to re-learn their role as a majority while the Christians need to come to terms with being a marginalised minority. Each must learn to see the other; not as a monolithic enemy, but as a diverse community in a pluralistic situation.

Hettiarachchi sets out the central challenges of a “mission to mission” by which the churches can learn to be prophetic and ecumenical as well as evangelical. He advocates an “ecclesiological unlearning” which will enable Christians to see their “others” as religious persons rather than objects of conversion; a “Christological honesty” modelled on Pieris’ “covenant Christology” highlighting identification with the poor as the basis of witness; and a “missiological imperative” which would mean doing theology alongside one’s co-religionists. Notwithstanding these significant contributions to missionary thinking Hettiarachchi tends to argue in broad generalisations; the concrete detail is hidden away in extensive endnotes which become tedious to consult. The accounts of the wider ecumenical movement are sketchy. The author’s English is not quite up to the task of exposition and analysis, so that one sometimes has to guess what a given sentence actually means, and there is much repetition. Further, the multi-religious Tamil community fades from view as the book progresses. These are minor flaws, however, compared with the wealth of information which backs up the author’s case for a radical renewal of missionary theology. Many of his observations are just as relevant to quite different situations in the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America, but they also give Christians (and Buddhists!) in Western countries much food for thought. A revised and shortened version of this important book would amplify its impact even further.
BOOK REVIEW

HYPHENATED CHRISTIANS
Towards a Better Understanding of Dual Religious Belonging
(Studies in Theology, Society and Culture Vol 6)

by

Gideon Goosen

Published by: Peter Lang; Bern, Switzerland. 2011 — 172 pages (paperback)

Reviewed by William Firth-Smith MA MTheol, an independent scholar, church historian, Indologist, biologist and ophthalmic surgeon. He has participated in numerous visits to District of Champaran, Bihar providing medical help to those with eye diseases. His interests include social justice, displacement and liberation — including the plight of Karen refugees on the Thai-Burma border. Continued mission involvement is through International Nepal Fellowship.

Gideon Goosen has written a cogent and useful book on the controversial topic of dual religious identity. “Multiple religious belonging” is a vexatious subject. For many Christians this idea seems preposterous. Despite the dictum “there is no salvation outside the church” there have been numerous theologians, mostly Catholic, who have embraced the idea of “multiple religious belonging”. In chapter two Goosen asks us: “To what extent do we know ourselves?” and “Is there some part of ourselves that we will never know?” Our lives are yoked to community and the Godhead — therefore it is only through compassionate relationships that we can aspire to be truly human.

Goosen is an Australian academic and author of many books, with doctorates in theology and philosophy, affiliated with the Sydney Campus of the Australian Catholic University. This book was launched in Melbourne in November 2011. Peter Phan, in the foreword, acknowledges Goosen’s lucidity and accessible style. The conclusions reached in this book are derived from empirical studies undertaken ten years ago. The book, which focuses upon South Asia in discussing Buddhists and Hindus, comprises eight chapters, a glossary of terms, an index of names and a short bibliography. There is no subject index.

“Multiple religious belonging” is nevertheless a real and growing phenomenon and has become a topic engendering considerable academic debate. The introductory chapter in Goosen’s book engages with the quandary by asking if it is feasible to belong to two religions simultaneously. Goosen also enquires into the nature of this belonging. Since he has previously researched Australian Aboriginality, it is disappointing to note that he does not discuss this interface involving “multiple religious belonging”.

Goosen suggests that a tentative definition of “multiple religious belonging” is that it is a faith-stance, in which Christians embrace another faith tradition whilst still remaining fully Christian. This situation arises out of inculturation and the experience of intra-religious dialogue where individuals attempt to walk in the shoes of someone from a different religion. “Multiple religious belonging” involves “positive syncretism” in which differences within a common field of unity become ultimately shared. This encounter adds a depth of understanding to our shared humanity, which foreshadows the mystery of the ultimate reality. Goosen attempts to differentiate “syncretism” from “multiple religious belonging”.

In my view Christians should be firmly grounded in their faith before venturing into “multiple religious belonging”. This phenomenon should not be regarded as the rejection of Christian dogma but rather an addition to it. Needless to say this process is usually a gradual one. In those families where the parents profess faith in different religions the children often grow up in a milieu where they become naturally enculturated with two religions. As a result of my childhood in South East Asia, where I was exposed to a multitude of religious beliefs, I was fortunate by osmosis in acquiring a natural sensitivity to other religious beliefs. Goosen says that individuals become religiously enculturated only once in a
lifetime — usually in childhood. Subsequent attempts at enculturation are usually less successful (p143).

It is highly probable that “multiple religious belonging” has always existed, particularly in South Asia, although the notion is sometimes wrongly considered to be a postmodern concept. Through a long process of social evolution not only has humankind changed but also there is realisation that the Triune God of love is also changing through interaction with this changing world. There is also a realisation that God’s truth exists in more than just one world religion.

In specific instances the question arises as to “which Hinduism”, “which Islam” or “which Buddhism” are we considering — or for that matter “which Christianity”? Obviously fundamentalism and/or triumphalism in any religion would obviate the likelihood of “multiple religious belonging”. Goosen’s methodology elucidates three criteria for examining “multiple religious belonging” — they are doctrine, praxis and actions (p19). Abhishiktananda (1910-1973) envisaged two religions existing side by side whereas Jacques Dupuis (1923-2004) saw both faiths becoming integrated and combined as Shekinah. Goosen has postulated a spectrum of dominance existing within “multiple religious belonging”. The majority of individuals, he considers, tend to be adherents of one main religion whilst having a second religion on which they draw.

Chapter five discusses symbolism — including Carl Jung’s (1875-1961) “collective unconsciousness”, which Goosen considers integral to “the transcendent”. He concludes this chapter by stating: “seeing religious language as being symbolic is at the core of the understanding of dual belonging and religious symbols can be used across religions and, therefore, taken from a second religion to enrich the first” (p113).

This book is engagingly written and is logically organised. It is recommended to scholars and for general readership — particularly those wishing to further their understanding of the faith-culture debate. This book will obviously strike a chord with many missiologists to whom inculturation is important. Goosen concludes: “Dual belonging may not only help individual Christians grow in their relationship with God but [this will] also reveal to them the true mission of a Christian” (p155).
BOOK REVIEW

AUSTRALIA’S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Facts and Figures from the 2011 Australian Census and other Sources

by

Philip Hughes, Margaret Fraser and Stephen Reid


Reviewed by Andrew Menzies, Principal of Stirling Theological College: MCD University of Divinity, and also actively involved with the executives of Urban Neighbors of Hope and the International Society for Urban Mission.

Australia’s Religious Communities: Facts and Figures from the 2011 Australian Census and other Sources is a thorough analysis of the 2011 Australian National Census. It is an important document for Australian missiologists, denominational executives, church leaders and those who seek to understand the shifts underway in religious attendance and affiliation. It is forensic in nature and usefully integrates data from other publications to provide context and background.

In sitting down and reading through this publication, the reader gains a useful understanding of the trends for religious organisations in Australia like no other currently available volume. Through the many facts and distillations of information three clear trends and warnings emerge.

1. Migration and religious Communities

Most of the growth occurring in religious communities, whatever the religion or denomination, is related to migration. The more “Anglo” the context, the less adherents seem to stick. Conversely, the closer the religion or tradition is to new migrants, the greater the adherence and growth. Australia’s Religious Communities argues (reasonably) that the motives for growing religious, migrant communities includes factors like desire for a sense of connection and community in Australia; shared language; shared values; and confirmation of identity through ethno-religious association combined with a sense of duty to attend. These patterns have continued in Australian immigration since 1788.

The data demonstrates that religious groups do better among new Australians and “immigrant-friendly” denominations are more likely to grow. Denominations that are growing have all received high proportions of immigrants (Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists and oriental Christians). Denominations, which have declined, have received small numbers of immigrants (Salvation Army, Churches of Christ and Brethren).

2. A big back door

One of the prevailing messages from this research is that Australia’s religious communities have big back doors. If a front door is where people come into the community and are welcomed, back doors are were they slip out and are lost. Data presented in Australia’s Religious Communities suggests that religious organisations that are concerned with and perhaps have a reputation for growth are not in fact growing. There is a widespread plateau across many religious organisations assumed to be growing while others are in well-established decline. There are no substantial areas of growth in
religious communities except where migration is the primary factor. But it gets worse! Across all of this, we should be concerned about what is the biggest back-door issue for religious communities in Australia in the demographic data revealed - 300,000 to 500,000 people of those missing from participation in Australian religious life are aged 10-34.

3. The conversion of “no religion”

Australia’s Religious Communities also shows movement towards the “no religion” category in the National Census. The statistical research shows that the emerging church conversation, methods and programs of evangelism, church growth and Pentecostalism have not really made a discernable difference upon the growth of Australian religious life. It is a not unreasonable observation to make that if religious organisations had simply been a little better at holding onto their own flock they might have done a little better.

There is some tough medicine inside this book, however like medicine it is necessary. Christian Research Association have again provided very useful distillation of data many of us might not otherwise easily get to. It is sober but important news.
BOOK REVIEW
THE GREATEST PRAYER
Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord’s Prayer
by
John Dominic Crossan


Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw, pastor of AuburnLife, Mission Catalyst, researcher with Baptist Union of Victoria, Honorary Research Associate of Whitley College (MCD University of Divinity) and Associate Professor in Missiology with Australian College of Ministries (Sydney College of Divinity).

An ongoing need in missiology today is the formation of spirituality for mission. Sometimes spiritual practices are divorced from missional application – seen as useful meditative moments to help believers escape from the world but not practices that attune them to what God is doing in the world. Yet missional activism can equally lose its connection with a spiritual wellspring that sustains and focuses it in the midst of everyday life and mission. How is mission and spirituality best held together? This is a huge topic. One simple and yet profound place to start is the Lord’s Prayer.

Mission workers can learn a lot from a fresh reading and practice of the Lord’s Prayer for a distinctively missional spirituality. And missiology as a discipline can welcome the socio-cultural background and literary analysis of the Lord’s Prayer offered by Catholic New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan. One of the most influential writers on Jesus and his context, Crossan has been researching Jesus’ first-century world for forty years and wanted to test his conclusions against Jesus’ prayer. Crossan unpacks the poetic structure, prophetic background and justice-focused themes that make the Lord’s Prayer far more significant than simply something to recite religiously in church worship.

Crossan reminds his readers that to pray the Lord’s Prayer is to take an active interest in asking God to help the world be more in line with God’s purposes. Its essence is “a prayer from the heart of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world … a radical manifesto and a hymn of hope for all humanity in language addressed to all the earth” (p2). He describes it as revolutionary because of its vision of distributive justice for the world. He reads “our Father” in a way that is beyond patriarchy and that appeals to God as householder of Earth who wants to provide for all. To pray for God’s holiness evokes the holiness codes and Sabbath and Jubilee rhythms and their advocacy for those on the margins. To pray for God’s kingdom and will is to invite a “great divine clean-up” of peace, equality and banquet-like provision for all. Even the prayers that have apparently personal focus – provision of daily bread, forgiveness and protection from temptation – should also be prayed for those who do not have enough bread, who suffer from crippling debt, and who are tempted towards escalatory violence in an unforgiving world. Crossan describes it as the greatest prayer because it is so world-embracing in its scope and interest.

A valuable lesson which Crossan develops is that prayer is not divorced from action. He frames prayer as “empowerment by participation in and collaboration with God” (p10). It is not just about request and gratitude, or saying “please” and “thanks”, but also participating and collaborating with God in action for justice. Moving through prayers of request and thanksgiving to prayers of
empowerment is a healthy sign of maturity. Although not using the explicit term, Crossan encourages participating and collaborating in *missio Dei*, the mission of God. Crossan writes:

*We owe it to God to run God’s world responsibly. We owe the divine Householder the conservation of the world house; we owe the divine Homemaker the consecration of the earth home. We owe God adequate care of all God’s creation. We owe God collaboration in hallowing God’s name, in establishing God’s kingdom, and in doing God’s will “as in heaven so also on earth”. We owe it to God to cease focusing on heaven, especially in order to avoid focusing on earth. We owe it to God to ensure that there is enough food and not too much debt in God’s well-run Household (p155).*

This is an accessible book suitable for thoughtful Christians or church study groups looking for inspiration in the background and themes of the Lord’s Prayer. It has inspired this reviewer to freshly pray and teach through the radically revolutionary themes of the Lord’s Prayer. But it also has a depth of analysis that will interest readers in Crossan’s field of expertise – New Testament biblical studies – as well as students of spirituality and missiology.
BOOK REVIEW

CROSSROADS

An exploration of the emerging-missional conversation with a special focus on ‘missional leadership’ and its challenges for theological education.

by

Robert Doornenbal

Published by: Eburon Academic Publisher: Delft, The Netherlands, 2012

Reviewed by Ross Mackinnon, retired teacher, technical school inspector and education consultant, active member of his local Uniting Church congregation and sometime casual lecturer at Yarra Theological Union, Box Hill, Victoria. He is former Editor of Australian Journal of Mission Studies.

Robert Doornenbal lectures in Theology and Culture at Christelijke Hogeschool Ede in The Netherlands. Crossroads is his PhD thesis awarded by Vrije University Amsterdam. In it, he explores the Emerging-Missional movement which is relatively new to the Low Countries. He calls this movement “the Emerging-Missional Conversation” (EMC). Because of its newness in his part of the world, he chose to research this aspect of church life and mission and to assess its relevance to churches in The Low Countries. He is particularly interested in the training needed for leaders of Emerging-Missional congregations. He asks, “When the church is seen as essentially missional, what are the consequences for its structures and leadership?” (p118)

How is a PhD thesis from The Netherlands relevant to mission in Australia? There are three answers to this – the Emerging-Missional movement is universal; the book makes many references to Australia (e.g., Michael Frost, Alan Hirsch, Darren Cronshaw, Olivia Moffat, Gayle Avery, Michael Leunig, Australian College of Ministries, Forge Mission Training Network and Solace Emerging Christian Church Melbourne); the author’s research on leadership training is relevant to theological training in Australia, as elsewhere.

Part A of the book covers the EMC’s characteristics, especially its history, theology and ecclesiology. This section also covers the concept of “Paradigm” in the EMC; EMC’s post-modern and post-Christendom context; EMC metaphors; complexity theory and the EMC. I found the chapter on metaphors particularly interesting, not only for the discussion and analysis of metaphors used by EMC writers, but also for the reminder that metaphors are an important part of post-modern culture. Some metaphors are strikingly humorous – e.g., the description of traditional church people as “pew-sitting toads”. (p142)

Part B deals with concepts of leadership within the EMC and explores definitions of leadership; church structures; authority and power; decision making; leadership styles, roles and tasks; and the importance of all these for mission. Doornenbal notes, “Speaking of missional leadership directs the attention to the focus on mission and the Triune God of mission, which we have found to be especially emphasized within the EMC.” (p199) Church community structures must “… keep the focus on the mission and vision of the community.” (p213) “If the structures stand in the way of mission, they should be changed.” (p214)

Part C considers leader education in EMC communities. The author conducted extensive interviews with staff and students from three Protestant theological colleges in the Low Countries and concludes that the EMC approach to training leaders has much to offer, and that current theological training in the theological colleges he studied concentrates on producing scholars and theologians rather than leaders. (p315) He found that “During the interviews, it was suggested that in terms of character and temperament most theology students are not suited to be missional leaders, since they do not opt for deep change, are not entrepreneurs, and prefer to work within given bounds.” (p292) At the beginning of the book Doornenbal comments that “…in my observation, the focus of many pastors
appears to be on individuals and groups inside the church, rather than on the way the congregation can serve the surrounding community.” (p19)

The final chapter (chapter 12) provides a valuable summary of Doornenbal’s main findings, concluding reflections and suggestions for further research. One of his key conclusions is that in theological education “a focus on missional theology is important.” (p363)

In format, the book is the PhD thesis as presented for examination. Doornenbal sets out his methodology clearly so that the reader knows what he is going to do and the direction in which he is heading. Throughout, he provides clear introductions and concluding remarks to each chapter and section. The work includes extensive footnotes and a 52-page bibliography. I found myself referring constantly to the footnotes to see who Doornenbal was citing. The book has no index.

I found Crossroads absorbing. The research is thorough and extensive. The writer looks at the emerging-missional movement from the outside in and is able to be objective in his observations. Those immersed in the emerging-missional movement will find these observations helpful. The book will appeal to anyone interested in the emerging-missional movement, and anyone involved in theological teaching. The observations on theological training needed for leaders in emerging-missional congregations are directed at the situation in the Low Countries, but they are pertinent to other countries also. Traditional theological colleges would learn much from this research.
BOOK REVIEW

BREAKING CALABASHES
Becoming an intercultural community
by
Rosemary Dewerse

Published by: MediaCom Education Inc: Unley, Australia. 2013. (148pp)

Reviewed by Ross Mackinnon, retired teacher, technical school inspector and education consultant, active member of his local Uniting Church congregation and sometime casual lecturer at Yarra Theological Union, Box Hill, Victoria. He is former Editor of Australian Journal of Mission Studies.

“Breaking Calabashes” – what does that mean? A calabash is a gourd used in some communities for carrying water. This book takes its title from a moving Maori story in which some calabashes are broken, symbolising the breaking down of cultural barriers. The book begins with this Maori story which is profound in its meaning and symbolism.

Rosemary Dewerse is of Kiwi background. She has lived in many different cultures and is currently lecturing in theology and missiology at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology and the Adelaide College of Divinity, and in the Theology Department of Flinders University, South Australia. In the Preface to the book she sets out her purpose:

This book is written for those who would like to help themselves and their communities to become better at engaging genuinely with those who are different from them; people of other ethnicities, abilities, persuasions, traditions and ages. It seeks to challenge some of the common assumptions we operate with and to offer helpful ways forward so that our engagement with all people might be deep, wide, loving and just. It draws on stories and wisdom from the Bible, material from interviews and from other writers, and anecdotes gathered from my own life as well as from the lives of others. It is reflective. It is formational. It is practical (p).

That is the book in a nutshell. Dewerse’s main thesis is that mission means intercultural engagement, when we move out of our comfort zones and meet and greet others, especially those different from us. She suggests that there are four “calabashes” or assumptions that we must break for this engagement to be fulfilling for all involved in it. The calabashes to be broken are:

1. The assumption that stereotypes are useful for understanding people (p15). One practical way to break this calabash is to ask of others “Who are you?” and to listen to their stories. We will be surprised and illuminated when we do this. In doing this, we respect the identity of the other person.
2. The assumption that my voice is most worthy (p44). We need to listen, really listen, to the voices of those who have been silenced. All voices should be heard, not just Western voices. A good starting point here is to ask people to tell you the meaning of their names. Our names are an important part of our stories and their meanings need to be heard and appreciated. Dewerse also discusses several attitudes and actions we might take in breaking this calabash – giving priority to building relationships; practising mission-in-reverse; practising invitation; exploring different kinds of leadership; listening beyond speech; learning another language. She recommends Eric Law’s Mutual Invitation Method (from his book The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community) as a useful tool in running discussion groups as this allows everyone to speak, not just the dominant people (p64).
3. The assumption that cultural ignorance is bliss (p81). If we wish to engage with other cultures, we cannot remain safely within our own culture. Coming to grips with other cultures is not easy and involves stepping out of our comfort zones and this can lead to rupture, wrenching and tearing in what we have always held and believed.
4. The assumption that our kind are better than your kind (p113). If we are to engage meaningfully with others, we have to ignore the “them and “us” syndrome. Breaking this calabash requires us to deal in justice. Dewerse points out that the early church leaders had to break this calabash before gentiles could be accepted as followers of Christ.

This book is engrossing and engaging. The author illustrates her points with valuable insights from the Bible; her own life experiences (often bravely revealed); the experiences of “calabash breakers” from a variety of cultures, including many references to Maori and Australian Aboriginal cultures and experiences; poems; writers and theologians. The text is interspersed with questions for the reader to ponder. I found these valuable and arresting.

Rosemary Dewerse writes clearly with passion and vision. The book is set out clearly and has an extensive Bibliography. It would appeal to anyone interested in mission and would be especially useful for Church Councils and Church members to read, digest and act upon. It is a book of wisdom and sound missiology, but is also full of practical ideas. It would be an excellent book for group discussion. A Leader’s Guide is available for download at www.mediacom.org.au/calabashes. The author invites readers to visit and post thoughts or questions on her blog www.breakingcalabashes.com to enable the conversation to be more than one-sided.

4 HAVILAND, William, *Anthropology*, 5th ed, (Orlando: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1989), p250. This is more likely to occur where “‘populations are circumscribed by environmental barriers or other societies” – characteristics clearly evident in a town such as Capernaum.
6 For an extensive discussion on Sepphoris see NAGY, Rebecca, MEYERS, Carol, MEYERS, Eric and WEISS, Zeev [eds], *Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996)
8 LOFFREDA, Nazareth in Jesus’ time, p6
9 MANNNS Frederick *The Jewish Christians of Nazareth*, in *Nazareth in Le Monde de la Bible*, pp10-18
SROUJI, Cyclamens from Galilee, pp5-7. For example, the Sisters of Nazareth, a French order, built a house in 1863 and the Poor Sisters of St Clare in the Holy Land built a convent in Nazareth in 1884.

BOSCH, Transforming Mission, p4


Ibid, pp3-4, 21

Ibid, p43

SROUJI, Cyclamens from Galilee, p6

http://www.hospitalnazareth.org/Home. The Holy Family Hospital closed in 1893 due to financial and personnel difficulties, but reopened 6 years later and was used as a military hospital during both world wars.

WILKINSON, The Coogate Doctors, p47

Ibid, p46

SROUJI, Cyclamens from Galilee, p8

PAPPE, Ilan, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, (Oxford: One World, 2006), p52, notes that “today sixty percent of Nazareth's residents are internal refugees”.

SROUJI, Cyclamens from Galilee, p140

Ibid, p138

Calculated from a photo of the 1937 student cohort published in WILKINSON, The Coogate Doctors, p72

For further details, see MACKAY, Runa, Exile in Israel: A Personal journey with the Palestinians, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1995)

WILKINSON, The Coogate Doctors, p53


WILKINSON, The Coogate Doctors, p51


GAILEY, Charles R and GILBERTSON, Howard, Discovering Missions, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2007), p17

A large mosaic depicting the parable of the Good Samaritan confronts every visitor as they enter the Nazareth Hospital.

History in the Making in The Nazareth Hospital Christmas 2011 Report, p10

KARAM, Gosayna, Ministry Partner – Nazareth Village in The Nazareth Hospital Christmas 2011 Report, p.20


BEVANS and SCHRODER, Constants in context, pp32-72, 212. See also KINNAMON, Michael, The Challenge of Mission-Shaped Ecumenism, an address to the Eighth National Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia delivered on 6 July 2013.

Unless otherwise indicated all biblical references and quotes are from METZGER, Bruce M and MURPHY, Roland E, The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Third ed, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)

The story of Paul's visit to Philippi is told in told in Acts 16:9-40, and Luke has high praise for Lydia's leadership. There is no reference to Lydia in Philippians, but her presence in Acts confirms that leadership in Philippi was not restricted to men.

OSIEK, Carolyn, Philippians, in SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, Searching the Scriptures, p238

BROWN, Raymond E, An Introduction to the New Testament, p506

See BRIGGS, Galatians, p220


OSIEK, Philippians, p237

OSIEK, Carolyn MacDonald, Margaret Y and TULLOCH, Janet H, A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity, (Minneapolis Fortress Press, 2006), p226

OSIEK, Philippians, p437


The NRSV brackets these verses thereby hinting at their problematic nature.

Two New Testament scholars argue in favour of these verses being added to the original text. See Metzger and Murphy who say that these verses "may be a marginal gloss later interpolated into the text", METZGER and MURPHY, NRSV, p288. MUNRO, Winsome, Women, Text and the Canon: The Strange Case of the 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, in Biblical Theological Bulletin Vol 18, 1988

See WIRE, Antoinette, 1 Corinthians, in SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, Searching the Scriptures, pp185-189


OSIEK, A Woman’s Place, p162

OSIEK, A Woman’s Place, p3


BYRNE, Brendan, Romans, Sacra Pagina Series, (Collegeville : Liturgical Press, 1996), p29


SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, In Memory of Her, p118

YOUNG, Susan M, A Tale of Three Women: A Conversation with Anne Conway and Margaret Fell Fox, in Religious Studies and Theology, Vol 26, 2007, p51

Kiribati is the place and I-Kiribati is the people.

The word Kiribati is a translation of the English word “Gilberts”. Except when referring to the Gilbert Islands group, I will call the Gilbert Islands Kiribati.


WALDERSEE, James, Neither Eagles Nor Saints: MSC Missions in Oceania 1881-1975, (Sydney: Chevalier Press, 1995), p378

GARRETT, John, To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania, (Fiji: Oceania Printers Ltd, 1982), pp121-126,153

WALDERSEE, Neither Eagles Nor Saints, pp385-393

VENARD, Mary, The Designs of His Heart, (Cork: Mercier Press,1966), p72
The first group of OLSH missionaries bound for New Guinea stopped first in Sydney in 1885. Some Sisters stayed in Sydney and the same year a young woman, Margaret Sweeney, desired to become an OLSH. Several other young women soon followed.


WALDERSEE, *Neither Eagles Nor Saints,* p445. There were seventy-eight in attendance at the synod, and thirty OLSH sisters, including I-Kiribati and Australians, made up the largest group.

TALU, *Go Forth,* pp94-95

SULLIVAN, *Selected Letters of Pioneer Sisters,* p37. (Letter 26 April, 1898)

Ibid, p24. (Letter 20 August, 1897)

Ibid, 27. (Letter 30 October, 1897)

Conversation with Sr Nora Hanrahan, June 2013 – OLSH missionary in Kiribati for over thirty years.
Today, June 2013, there are more than eighty I-Kiribati Sisters.

ROSS, Cathy, ‘Without Faces’: Women’s Perspectives on Contextual Missiology, in LIENEMANN-PERRIN, Christine, LONGKUMER, Atola and JOYE, Afrie S [eds], Putting Names with Faces, pp361-381


The Serampore trio were the English missionaries William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward

CHATTERJEE, Sunil K, Hannah Marshman: The First Woman Missionary in India, (Hooghly: Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, 1987)


Hassall Family – Correspondence, 1793c – 1900, Library of New South Wales – Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures Catalogue, State Library of New South Wales


REESON, Margaret, Currency Lass, (Sutherland: Albatross, 1985)

“Currency Lads and Lasses” was a term popularised in the 1820s to describe the first generation of Australian-born, mostly the children of convicts or emancipists.


In a brief comment on women in mission in the USA Norman Thomas writes: Before 1800, Protestant mission societies were composed exclusively of men. Then on Oct 9 of that year Mary Webb gathered together fourteen Baptist and Congregational women and organized the Boston Female Society of Missionary Purposes. So began “the first feminist movement in North America.” The women’s missionary movement grew rapidly following the Civil War. The societies were organized and directed by women for the purpose of sending women to the foreign field to evangelize women. By 1894 there were thirty three such societies that had sponsored some 1,000 women teachers, doctors, evangelists and relief workers. THOMAS, Norman [ed.], Readings in World Mission, (London: SPCK, 1995), p71. See also BEAVER, R Pierce, All Loves Excelling: American Women in World Mission, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p3. I presume these are American Societies.


“Lorraine” is his correct name.

Departure of Missionaries for India, in The Argus, Tuesday 15 August 1882, p6

BROLLY, Mark, Melbourne Anglican Missionaries and Evangelists Honoured, in The Melbourne Anglican, July 2013, p6

A number of missionary wives in India were starting this type of work about the same time, drawing on the resources of the praying and supporting groups at home. There would seem to have been a network of groups in India who drew inspiration from each other, while often unrecognised by the missions to which their husbands belonged
Interestingly, while Marsden was a controversial figure in Sydney, where he was based, he tends to be remembered more positively in Aotearoa.

For the first Bible produced (which was not a complete text) the British and Foreign Bible Society in London donated paper, while the Bible Society, Wesleyans and CMS contributed to the production costs. Rev. William Yate supervised the project. NEWMAN, Keith. *Bible and Treaty: Missionaries Among the Māori, a New Perspective* (North Shore: Penguin, 2010), pp88-89.


To read more about this resonance, as well as critique, see DEWERSE, Rosemary "Atuatanga: A Maori Knowing of God," *Australian Journal of Mission Studies* 7.1 (June 2013)

For stories illustrating this, see DEWERSE, Rosemary, *Nga Kai-Rui i Te Rongopai: Seven Early Maori Christians* (Rotorua: Te Hui Amorangi Ki Te Manawa O Te Whake, 2013). It is important to say that a number of Maori (male) prophets created variant forms of Christianity as their response to the contradictions and complexities they were facing. A recent television series has explored their stories: [http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/prophets/S01E001/prophets-series-1-episode-1](http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/prophets/S01E001/prophets-series-1-episode-1)

There are some varying details available about Heni Te Kiri Karamu. The choice here has been made to sit with those published in a biography of Heni by her grandson. FOLEY, Alfred D., *Jane's Story: Biography of Heeni Te Kirikaramu/Pore (Jane Foley). Woman of Profound Purpose* (Whangaparaoa, 2003). The presentation of her name, meanwhile, is following the latest conventions.

Comment made in a video recorded for Te Hui Amorangi Ki Te Manawa O Te Whake in November 2011.


Whina Cooper was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire for services to Maori welfare and culture in 1981.

Told by Whina in “Whina: Te Whaea o Te Motu, Mother of the Nation” a Television One Documentary, 1992.


Meremere Penfold recalling Whina in “Whina”, a Television One Documentary.
173 Speaking in “Whina,” Television One Documentary.
176 The material for this section was obtained via a phone interview on 28 July 2013.
177 For recent work explaining the Atua-Tangata-Whenua matrix and its significance for Maori knowing of God see TATE, Henare, He Puna Iti i te Ao Mārama: A Little Spring in the World of Light (Auckland: Libro International, 2012).
180 MEHRA, Parshotam, A Dictionary of Modern Indian History 1707-1947, (Delhi: OUP, 1987), p725
181 FONSECA, C, Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: The Political Years in Indian Church History Review 18, 1981, pp18-29
182 SANNEH Lamin, Disciples of all Nations: Pillars of World Christianity, (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p134
189 BAAGØ Kaj, Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity, Confessing the Faith in India, (Chennai: CLS, 1969)


PRITCHARD, Elizabeth, For Such a Time: God’s Faithfulness through Regions Beyond Missionary Union for a Hundred Years, (Eastbourne: Victory Press, 1973)


WALLS, Andrew Finlay, Missions: South Asia, in CAMERON, Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology

FRENCH Francesca, Miss Brown’s Hospital — The Story of Dame Edith Brown and the Ludhiana Medical College, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986)


GRUNDMANN, Medical Missions, pp154-156 — There is no reliable information concerning the numbers of women who trained as medical missionaries prior to 1925.

GRUNDMANN, Medical Missions, pxiv.


BEAVER, R Pierce, Rufus Anderson 1795-1880: To Evangelize, not Civilize, in ANDERSON, Mission Legacies, pp548-553

Beaver, American Protestant Women in World Mission, pp61-62

229 STANLEY, Brian, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), p228

230 SMITH, Women in Cultural Captivity, p107.

231 POLLOCK, Shadows Fall Apart

232 STANLEY, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, p151


234 KUMARADOSS, Y Vincent, Creation of Alternative Public Spheres and Church Indigenisation in Nineteenth Century Colonial Tamil Nadu: The Hindu-Christian Church of Lord Jesus and the National Church of India, in HEDLUND, Roger E [ed], Christianity is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Community, (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), p14

235 BEAVER, American Protestant Women in World Mission, p117

236 KANE, J Herbert, Understanding Christian Missions, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), pp308-318


238 HAUERWAS, Stanley, Practicing Patience: How Christians Should be Sick, in REGAN, Hilary et al [eds], Beyond Mere Health: Theology and Health Care in a Secular Society, (Melbourne: Australian Theological Forum, 1996), p87

239 GOODFIELD, The Last Outcasts, p181

240 TAGORE, Rabindranath, Gitanjali XI, (1912)

