

ready to assist other family members in their frequent adversities, was a prolonged family quarrel over a parcel of Indian Muslims from a brother in Calcutta that severed relations between mother and daughter, resulting in Betty's leaving home for two years before admitting she had been in the wrong.

The clarity of this complex yet thoroughly engaging study is partly achieved at the expense of relegating to 150 pages of endnotes much necessary detail that would usually be found in the body of a text. All the archival and secondary sources are embedded, meticulously, in these endnotes, along with much additional useful comment. It is difficult, however, for the reader to retrieve a particular source reference once the relevant page has passed, for there is no consolidated list of either archival or secondary literature. Absent too (except on a dustcover that most libraries prefer to jettison) are any of the family portraits by Gainsborough, Romney, and Raeburn, whose inclusion would surely further elucidate the 'inner' and 'outer' identities that are at the heart of this study. That said, this is a path-breaking, highly original study of empire through the lives of an 'extraordinary', yet in many respects 'ordinary', family, which the author perceives, in spite of some spasmodic economic successes, to have had a 'tendency to be on the losing side of the history of the British empire' (p. 141).

### **Die missionarische Gesellschaft: Mikrostrukturen einer kolonialen Globalisierung**

*By Helge Wendt. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011. Pp. 321. €52.00/£48.65, ISBN 978-3-515-09864-9.*

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This interesting study offers a broad, thematic account of Catholic and Protestant missionary activities in eight major regions of the world between roughly 1700 and 1900. Drawing on a host of primary and secondary sources in various European languages, Wendt sheds light on missionary work in the Spanish Americas and the Philippines, French and British Canada, India, and Sri Lanka, as well as in different parts of Africa. He works neither comparatively nor chronologically. Instead, he tackles these diverse materials and settings by focusing on the

so-called 'missionary society', a term that he borrows from Robert Strayer's work on Kenya but reformulates for broader application across time and space. 'Missionary society' here refers to the locally distinct social and spatial order that emerged in colonial settings as Christian missionaries advanced the conversion of indigenous populations. According to Wendt, this social and spatial formation was inseparable from the European colonial project yet only partially overlapped with and participated in the colonial order. In some respects, 'missionary society', he argues, proved itself inclusive of groups of people who were categorically excluded from the colonial order. Wendt contends that scholarship on colonialism has yet to explore fully the small but significant social space of the 'missionary society'. He aligns his own work with newer mission histories that concern themselves centrally with the social and cultural processes that accompanied Christian evangelization and less so with the religious and doctrinal underpinnings of missionary activities.

Wendt identifies four primary issues or structural challenges that all missionaries in these otherwise very different areas confronted in their effort to establish a Christian 'missionary society'. Following an introductory literature review, he devotes a substantive chapter to discussing how missionaries approached each one of these issues: first, the need to gain sufficient control over a suitable geographical space where social development could take place; second, how to develop social structures conducive to missionary work within this space by relying on practices of segregation and/or integration of diverse native populations; third, the goal of transforming both social life and individual subjectivities through educational undertakings that included but were not limited to formal schooling; fourth, the thorny question of indigenous clerics and lay assistants as missionaries faced the contradiction between European discourses of racial differences, on the one hand, and the de facto dependency of the missionary enterprise's success on sustained indigenous support, on the other.

Wendt's main contribution lies in his innovative transnational, trans-confessional, and diachronic approach to the subject matter. In analysing how Protestant and Catholic missionaries reacted to a fixed set of challenges in eight different areas of the world across the span of centuries, he maps out a wide range of possible responses and outcomes. He thus eschews the presentation of one portrait of Christian missionary activity in favour of a long series of miniatures whose combined effect serves to challenge the common view of a singular, world-spanning

Christian missionary enterprise. While the religious civilizing mission displayed elements of unity on the macro-historical level, such as a global missionary information network or shared discourses of racial difference, Wendt's micro-historical framework renders compelling evidence for the fractured and multifaceted nature of evangelization on the ground. The same European racial thought that proved stable across time and place, for example, could result in practices of either segregation or integration (or both) in different social contexts.

Wendt suggestively uses the term '*mestizaje*' to describe how the power of the local and the agency of indigenous peoples routinely transformed the global European missionary enterprise into a place-specific, socially situated undertaking. His ability to gauge the reach of these transformations, however, is somewhat hampered by his exclusive reliance on European sources (albeit in seven languages), a limitation that he readily acknowledges and seeks to counter by reading his sources against the grain whenever possible. In so doing, he certainly succeeds in showing that Christian global evangelization led to a multiplicity of local outcomes and did not simply flow from a European centre but rather traversed networks and nodes that at times bypassed Europe altogether. Wendt further highlights the influence that different missionary locales outside Europe could impose on each other across time and space. Missionary experiences in one part of the world or, more accurately, the imagination and remembrance of these experiences by missionaries elsewhere could shape an emerging 'missionary society' in another part of the world at a much later time.

Wendt sees it as an advantage of his unconventional approach to the topic that it makes room for the most fragmentary pieces of evidence. He has a point here: as he moves his global history along slices of partial stories, focuses on structural problems of missionary work, and discards straight-forward chronology, he is able to integrate examples and cases that are not sufficiently documented to be part of other consecutive historical narratives. These inclusions often make his story richer. At the same time, however, the book's core chapters are already rich in detail and some of the examples could usefully have been cut to bring the main analytical points into starker relief for the reader. More generally speaking, the book's readability also suffers from the genre conventions for German dissertations, which demand a lengthy, parsing literature review and theoretical positioning. While the most specialist readers may appreciate this level of detail, it is less palatable for the broader readership of even a scholarly book. In addition, a good round of copy-editing would have been desirable, since various typographical errors and stylistic infelicities detract from the quality and importance of the author's larger arguments in places. Questions of style and presentation aside, however, Wendt has produced a substantive and significant study of the social forms of colonial Christian missionary activities. Its wide geographical reach, coupled with its thought-provoking micro-historical approach to a global phenomenon, makes this relevant reading for scholars of Christian missions, colonialism, and globalization more broadly.