

D. Dennis Hudson (2000) *Protestant Origins in India: Tamil Evangelical Christians 1706–1835*. This Curzon Press/Wm Eerdmans volume is a much more expensive work, but a lifetime's Tamil scholarship lies in it. Muthuraj never mentions it, nor other key texts. It illustrates the thesis I have long argued, that the success of a mission depends on how quickly through it Christianity is indigenized and spread in Indian voices. Hudson illustrates this through the work of dynasties of Tamil poets, originally influenced by Tranquebar missionaries. Another 'missing person' is John Devasahayam, first South Indian Anglican clergyman and independent district missionary (d. 1864) who was educated by Lutheran missionaries in Thanjavur and worked for C.H.E. Rhenius who sparked the schism between Anglicans and Lutherans in 1833. It is clear from George Pettit's *The History of the CMS Tinnevely Mission* (1851) and A.S. Appasamy's centenary history (1925) just how important Indian co-workers were. More also could have been said of the very rich literary and spiritual tradition, both Tamil and Sanskrit, into which the Gospel was planted and which shaped emerging Indian theology, and conversely in Europe, of the challenge of the Enlightenment. Finally there is a dearth of in-depth analysis as to causes and effect. Nevertheless, this is a useful work about a seminal period which K.S. Latourette and others omitted altogether. One just hopes the next volume will be more rigorously edited.

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worked in Madurai 1979–82 and is the author of 'Glimpses of a Prominent Indian Christian Family of Tirunelveli and Madras 1863–1906: Perspectives on Caste, Culture and Conversion' in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Christians and Missionaries: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003)*

Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union: Women, Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876–2008* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 316. ISBN 9781843835134 (hbk). doi:10.1017/S1740355311000015

This well-researched and well-constructed book records a movement which began in the drawing room of a Hampshire rectory in 1876 and now has four million members worldwide. For too much of its life it reflected the conservatism and colonialism of its origins, but today it may be demonstrating where a more hopeful future for the Anglican Communion could lie.

The story begins within the Victorian cult of maternalism, at a time when the evangelical revival reinforced the dualism of 'separate spheres' – motherhood as a sacred vocation but the man as 'ruler of the home'. This elevated the moral and spiritual role of the woman, but restricted where she – and therefore the Mothers' Union (MU) itself – should be involved. The MU may have been woman-centred, but it was never feminist. How could it be if gender roles were divinely ordained? It only engaged politically on issues which could be seen as religious – birth control, religious education in schools and most of all divorce.

For nearly a century the concept of 'purity' underlay the MU's stance on divorce, as they resisted not only the UK government but also liberalizing tendencies within the Church of England. They campaigned against changes in divorce law which they claimed turned it into a contract, alongside their opposition to working mothers, women's political rights, and even 'socialist' government intervention which risked reducing the family's own responsibility. Similarly, when the attitude to birth control was almost reversed between the 1920 and 1930 Lambeth Conferences, the MU continued to reject what they saw as an attack on the sanctity of marriage.

All this changed in the 1970s, with three new emphases. The first was *autonomy*. Around the world the MU had been growing, and moving on from that earlier identification of the *missio Dei* with the *missio Britannica*, it was to become a much more global movement. In 1967 the London-based leadership had disaffiliated Canada for admitting divorced women into membership. Now they recognized that each province must make such decisions for itself, especially if its own bishops were taking the lead.

Second, there was *inclusivity*. In the movement as a whole 'Purity' ceased to be the major criterion, as the emphasis moved from the institution of marriage to the quality of family relationships. Somehow the newly autonomous national bodies held together, despite an increasing diversity seen, for example, in Australia's rejection of the MU's classic representation of domestic Christianity and, in Ghana, an even more conservative approach in which membership was restricted to the 'duly wedded', that is, those married just once and in church.

The third new emphasis was on *service*. While the vital role of the woman in home and family remained, the organization set its sights on wider social and political issues which affected family life. They became people who 'write menus not peel potatoes'. Their very public commitment to justice, anti-poverty, and literacy is now to be found from the local branch to the United Nations. But they risk, says Moyse, becoming another development agency – just one more non-governmental organization. She points to the lack of any distinct Christian language of sin and redemption in their campaigns.

These changes did not reverse the decline in UK membership, which halved in the final quarter of the last century, but they did allow the MU to continue as a major force within the Anglican Communion. They may also provide some pointers for the future of the Communion as a whole. In 2008 the MU invited its diverse membership to discuss 'our identity and our relationships', including marriage and divorce, gay and lesbian relationships, 'using our minds, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and each other'. The fact that this was not seen as a threat to the unity of the organization was, says Moyse, because its basis was now about relationships and a commitment to work together rather than any agreement about marriage and family. As she goes on to say: 'At a time when the future of the Anglican Communion is uncertain, the depth of communion within the MU, rooted in shared servanthood, commends itself all the more as both parable and paradigm.'

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