

Butler tells this story with great care and with a sympathetic understanding of the different ways each of these women understood themselves and their roles in the church. Rather than trying to uncover the “real” story that lies beneath or behind the language of spirituality, she takes the spirituality of these women seriously and explores the connections between that spirituality and the broader contours that defined their lives and the contexts in which they lived. Butler has done all historians who labor in this field a great service by discovering and saving numerous COGIC publications and personal papers that otherwise would have crumbled into oblivion, something that has happened far too often with documents related to African American history. In conclusion, this is a wonderful book that significantly enhances our understanding of both the black church experience and women’s spirituality in the twentieth century.

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The Cambridge History of Christianity IX: World Christianities c. 1914–c. 2000. Edited by **Hugh McLeod**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xviii + 719 pp.
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Historians of Christianity are now paying attention to demography. In 1900, an estimated 80 percent of all Christians in the world were white. By 2000, this figure had fallen to 45 percent, and the global center of Christianity had moved to Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Such a massive demographic shift calls for a historiographic shift of corresponding proportion. The present work—the ninth and final volume in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*—seeks to expand the traditional narrative. Contributions from 37 authors, in 42 chapters or sub-chapters and three major sections, treat manifold regions and aspects of global Christianity. The section on “Institutions and Movements” addresses topics that transcend regional and temporal boundaries (for example, the papacy, pentecostalism, etc.). The section on “Narratives of Change” covers various global regions—Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. The section on “Social and Cultural Impact” includes a wide range of topics, varying from Christian practice (for example, liturgy), to Christian relations with non-Christians (for example, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and others), and the Christian interaction with various spheres of culture (for example, economics, family, gender, sexuality, science, literature, the arts, and architecture). With the

exception of chapters on the papacy and on pentecostal and charismatic movements, there is no treatment of specific traditions or denominations—for example, Western Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Reformed and Baptist churches, et cetera. Yet each of these traditions receives consideration in the regional and thematic chapters.

Because the fifth of the nine volumes in the Cambridge History treats Eastern Christianity (2), there is little material here on the churches in Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The title suggests that this work is more comprehensive than it actually is. The organization of the nine volumes, moreover, reinforces an age-old distinction (and perhaps stereotype) of “Eastern” versus “Western” Christianity. “Eastern” and “Western” Christians have grappled with many of the same issues and social trends during the last century, so why not discuss both together? Many contemporary Orthodox Christians and members of other ancient churches prefer, in any case, not to be called “Eastern Orthodox” or “Eastern Christians”—terms with little pertinence for diaspora communities situated outside the Orthodox heartlands.

The editor, Hugh McLeod, has structured this whole work around two plot lines—the declining curve of Christian presence and influence in the Western world, and the rising strength of Christianity in the non-Western world. McLeod is one of a number of historians (with Callum Brown, Olaf Blaschke, Peter van Rooden, and Patrick Pasture) who have challenged the idea that secularization has been a centuries-long process in Western Europe. Instead they hold that a time of rapid decline in British and European Christendom did not arrive prior to the 1960s and that even today Christianity continues to influence these secularizing societies in notable ways. The tendency in this volume is to view European Christianity as a formal establishment, and several chapters highlight church-state relations during the Communist and post-Communist periods. An intriguing feature of the volume is its extensive coverage of the involvement of Christian churches in World War I and World War II. Though McLeod acknowledges a discrepancy between Western Europe and the United States in their respective levels of Christian affiliation and practice (341, 344), this distinction often drops from sight in the discussion as the authors treat Europe-plus-North-America as a single cultural block. Despite the inclusion of many chapters on non-Western regions, some 21 chapters or sub-chapters (out of 42 in total) are substantially devoted to British, European, and North America Christianities (chs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 29.1, 29.2, 29.3, 30, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 31.4). The editor might have allotted more space to Asian Christianity in general and to Korea in particular (455–456, 464–466), given the volume’s focus on the twentieth century.

No single volume on twentieth-century Christianity could cover everything. Yet some omissions are conspicuous, and they show a systematic pattern. The

thematic chapters focus on issues that are generally of interest in liberal Protestant denominations in the West that have had battles since the 1960s over feminism, same-sex marriage, and ordination. Other issues of vital importance to Christians in Africa, Latin America, and Asia (for example, the AIDS crisis, persecution of Christians, and the impact of globalization) receive less attention. The only mention of “mission[s]” in the chapter rubrics occurs in a chapter on mission and colonialism. This coupling of mission with colonialism in the only chapter specifically allocated to mission might give the impression that missionary endeavor took place through Euro-American rather than local initiative (for example, African village catechists, lay Chinese evangelists, et cetera).

Remarkably, Christian radio and television receive only a sentence or two of comment, and the recent impact of the Internet evokes less than a page of discussion (13–14). Media ministries, though passé to Europeans and North Americans, were booming in many global regions in the late twentieth century. Indeed, in nations such as Nigeria, the great era of Christian radio and television may be happening right now. McLeod states that “the revolution in communication” during the last century is a “part of the essential background to most of the chapters” (6). Yet the global phenomena of Christian radio (since the 1920s), Christian television (since the 1950s), and Christian uses of the Internet (since the 1990s) could well have received explicit treatment. On the whole, one detects a Western orientation and highbrow tone in the volume’s whole approach to Christianity and culture. Such developments as Christian cassette tape ministries, Christian magazine and tract distribution, and contemporary Christian worship music are not mentioned. The brief discussion of music centers largely on classical and symphonic styles (592–599). Andrew Wilson-Dickson’s patronizing statement about “missionaries bringing the gospel to the unsaved millions” with their “European hymnbook” (592) is out of date and ignores the indigenization of musical styles taking place in Christian worship all around the world in recent decades. The book offers no treatment of Christian youth movements or the ecclesial and cultural impact of Bible translation (mentioned 108).

The persecution and martyrdom of Christians around the world goes largely unnoticed in this volume. Nowhere is there a mention of the mass killing of up to 1.5 million Armenian Christians by Turkish troops in 1915–1917. (The segregation of “Eastern Christianity” into a separate volume may be one reason that so little is said about persecution.) McLeod’s comments regarding Christianity as something “dangerous” come almost as an afterthought at the end of the work (636–639). Yet the twentieth century may have produced more Christian martyrs—estimated by David Barrett at 45 million—than all previous centuries combined. McLeod is unduly optimistic in stating that, “by the end of the twentieth century, the attempts

to suppress Christianity by force . . . had largely been abandoned” (639). This assertion ignores the substantial persecution of Christians up to the present time in the Central Asian Republics, China, Cuba, Indonesia, East Timor, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, the Sudan, northern Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

Some chapters or sub-chapters have broad titles (“Marriage and the Family,” “Church Architecture”) though their content is largely limited to Europe or North America. The chapter on architecture is almost wholly devoted to European, and indeed British, church architecture. The three illustrations in the chapter on architecture—the only three in the volume—are all interior shots of British churches. The set of sub-chapters on marriage, gender relations, the family, and sexuality are mostly confined to a discussion of changes in Western societies. No explanation for this limitation is given, and one would like to know more about men, women, sexuality, and families in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Adrian Thatcher’s statement that the idea of premarital abstinence from sex is now “generally abandoned” (534) may apply to Britain but hardly to the whole of global Christianity.

The strength of this volume lies in its parts rather than in the whole. The majority of the chapters and sub-chapters are excellent treatments of their assigned topics. Yet when one views the volume as a whole, the structure is Eurocentric. This is a Cambridge History in a sometimes unfortunate way. The chapter organization—with the first five chapters substantially devoted to British and European developments—might suggest to the reader that European Christianity is a norm against which non-European forms may be gauged. On the first page McLeod makes a revealing statement: “Power within international Christianity was still at the end of the twentieth century mainly concentrated in Europe and North America” (1). What sort of “power” is he talking about? Economic? Institutional? Intellectual? Spiritual? If one defines power as a capacity to influence one’s society or to mobilize people for concerted action, then arguably the power is now centered outside Europe and perhaps North America as well. The editor’s sense of Euro-American power, priority, or normativity seems to have shaped the layout, themes, and chapter assignments in this volume. A sober, chastened attitude with regard to Euro-American Christianity might have altered the emphasis and coverage in this volume in numerous ways. With regard to the historiographic shift needed to treat Christianity as a global phenomenon, *World Christianities c. 1914–c. 2000* is only a half step.

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