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## Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914

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theology are at the forefront along with a special geographical emphasis on the situation in North/South Korea.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of the work is its diverse contributions by scholars who each write under the theme of 'a shared identity.' Represented within the book are articles that discuss the various post-conflict situations in Germany, India, East Asia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and North/South Korea. Each of these authors, being experts in their respective fields, is able to offer comprehensive historical views of the conflicts that plagued their countries of interest. From a religious perspective they explain the church's role in reconciliation in their respective areas of interest as well as theological insights into themes such as peace, reconciliation, justice, unity, and forgiveness. Because of the various locations represented in the book, the sections often offer different accounts concerning the common theme of creating a shared identity. The discussions in this work range from warnings of creating hasty reunification, as in the case of Germany as described by Gerhard Sauter, to the desire to start reunification as soon as possible in North/South Korea as explained by In Soo Kim.

Certainly a common criticism of works on reconciliation and peace is the lack of clarity that occurs when it comes to defining what these complex words mean. Although speaking from definite cultural perspectives, many of the authors have tendencies to use words such as forgiveness and reconciliation interchangeably and without a defined meaning for either. Another criticism would be that some of the articles, specifically those on North Korea, stray so far into political criticism that their theme of reconciliation and peace is lost. This should not, however, sway any student interested in the theme of peace, reconciliation, or identity from looking to this book for perspectives on some of the most complex political situations in the modern world. It highlights what is often forgotten amidst the violence of war: what do those who have been separated do once the fighting is over and they are expected to come together as one unified people?

Leah Robinson  
University of Edinburgh

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**Dana L. Robert (ed.). 2008.** *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, pp. x & 304, Pb £26.99. ISBN-13: 978-0802817631.

In this collection, eleven leading historians develop new perspectives into the history of Christian missions since 1700. In a series of thoroughly researched case studies, the authors explore the tensions between missions and colonialism, the interactions of European and North American missions with the cultures of Asia and Africa, and the vital role played by Asians and Africans in the spread of Christianity. The essays have been ably edited by Dana Robert, whose introduction places the essays within their historiographical context.

The contributions are varied in theme and cultural context. Daniel Jeraraj demonstrates how the new understanding of Tamil culture of South India promoted by agents of the Danish-Halle mission contributed to the cultural relativism that helped shape the European Enlightenment. Andrew Porter explores the complex relationships between British millenarian thought, Christian missions, and Islam in the later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British Empire. In her contribution, Dana Robert considers a neglected aspect of missions; that is, the emphasis on shaping Christian families and providing training in domestic arts. As she demonstrates, the concern was not so much to impose Western cultural norms, as to promote child welfare through better hygiene and nutrition, and to promote women's rights through more companionable marriage. Both Eleanor Jackson and R. G. Tiedemann analyse (respectively) the crucial role of Indian and Chinese evangelists, especially women, in the spread of Christianity within their cultures, and the crucial role of Indian and Chinese communities in preserving Christian influences, while C. Peter Williams considers the resistance to indigenous Christian leadership within the English Church Missionary Society. The distinguished African historian J. F. A. Ajayi calls for a reconsideration of the options open to the mission-educated African elite as the failure of the older mission ideal of Christian, commerce, and civilisation became apparent at the end of the nineteenth century. Together the essays contribute to a new historiography of missions, a historiography that is moving beyond the older model of a metropolitan Western Christendom expanding outwards into Asian and African peripheries—or the older view of missionaries as agents of cultural imperialism—and that emphasises instead the growth and diversification of Christianity within a number of cultural contexts.

Stewart J. Brown  
University of Edinburgh