

Nielssen H, Okkenhaug IM & Skeie KH 2011. *Protestant missions and local encounters in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Unto the ends of the world*. Leiden: Brill viii +337 pages. ISBN 978-90-04-20298-6. No price quoted.

It is interesting to note that the subtitle of this book is the same as the title of a book by leading Scots historian, Prof Tom Devine, published in the same year: *To the ends of the earth: Scotland's global diaspora*. Though one is history and the other mission history, and although the Scots have been intrepid emigrants, and hence, immigrants, they are not alone, certainly in the world of missionary enterprise. This particular book deals with the often overlooked aspect of trans-national mission. What is innovative is that the contributors come from a variety of disciplines. They offer an interesting range of case-studies within an developing Christian empire. But side by side with this, missionaries operated as agents of nation states and this book serves to show how the national and transnational relationships were linked. This is a departure from more traditional approaches which viewed mission from national and denominational perspectives and took little account of missionaries as emissaries of globalisation who affected social processes at home and abroad as they, organisations and movements spanned out from western Europe as Christian expressions which were central to novel World Cultures through work in health, education, ethnography and aid work. It was in such contexts that inconsistencies arose between mission, nationalism and colonisation particularly between their opposing and sometimes ambiguous concepts of Empire.

One of the emerging themes is the manner in which the 'self' and 'other' were conceptualised. Mikaelsson explores this through an analysis of missionary biographies. Ustorf analyses the paradoxes in the contrasts between these same categories, while Nielssen discusses comparisons and contrasts in the works of Lars Dahle (Norwegian) and James Sibree (British). Marten challenges the use of 'self' and 'other' by arguing that they

are tied to a colonial interpretation as he attempts to re-imagine the concepts of metropole and periphery.

Another theme is the impact of missionaries to socio-cultural transformation in the sending nations. Sandmo demonstrates the potential for conflict between discourses in missionary and medical practice and theory and how they became politicised. Okkenhaug picks up the influence of reciprocal processes in the role played by missionaries in the construction of the Armenian nation through participating in creating and strengthening of boundaries and hierarchies. The theme of indigenous socially transformative projects is reviewed in the papers by Henningsen, Murre-van den Berg and Skeie in situations where local people appropriated Christianity for their own purposes in cooperation with as well as in opposition to missionaries under the influence of the indigenous context. The role of women is reducing the boundaries between the public and private domains in mission practice. Livne demonstrates this in her study of Annie Royle Taylor. Mikaelsson and Brouwer show how women did not simply engage in women to women mission but expanded the function of women in the public sphere. Gaitskill, Possing and Ustorf employ the genre of biography to explore the work of missionaries and global mission history revealing the significant element of personal choice. This genre can perform a rallying point for interdisciplinary work and also a humanising force in historical study.

This study provides a link from mission to development through the formation of a global consciousness (despite its negative over- and undertones. It is a work of great erudition for the scholar rather than the student. However, it makes a substantial contribution to the interdisciplinary mission history.

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