

In Others' Words

Editor's note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase.

The Art of Mission

Distinguished historian Philip Jenkins began a series of blog posts in March called “The Art of Mission.” One painting depicts an East African ambassador receiving a Bible from a young Queen Victoria, a scene based on a popular, but unfounded, anecdote. According to the National Portrait Gallery site, when asked by a diplomatic delegation for the reason for her country’s rise to power, the queen handed the ambassador a Bible and said, “This is the secret of England’s greatness.” Not the answer you would expect from a modern prime minister or president. As you glance at the other arresting images, inevitable questions surface about the confluence of Christianity and colonialism, nationalism, and even pagan religions. (See the link to “Pre-Colonial and Colonial Images of the Kongo”).

Indigenous Art Forms and the Gospel

One of IBMR’s 15 Outstanding Books of 2013 for Mission Studies in their April 2014 issue looks at art, drama, dance, music and film created by Christians in other cultures for the purpose of worship. Entitled *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, it is accompanied by a very useful manual *Creating Local Arts Together* (see ad p. 154). Contextualized worship and indigenous theology (firmly rooted in excellent Bible translations) may prove to be a great preventative against syncretism.

Cultural Encounters between Christianity and Korean Religions

If you’re interested in how cultures and religions interact with each other, don’t miss *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915*. Chosen Books and Cultures’ 2013 Book of the Year, its author, Sung-Deuk Oak, a professor of Korean Christianity at UCLA, succeeds brilliantly at giving us a historiography of the cultural exchanges between Protestant missions and Korean religions and the impact each had on the other.

One in Six Now an Urban Slum Dweller

The January 2014 issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* brings us the latest statistical update on global Christianity, “Christianity 2014: Independent Christianity and Slum Dwellers” by Todd Johnson. Of special note is the new category “urban slum dwellers” as opposed to just “urban poor.” Johnson states that the number of urban slum dwellers “is

approximately one in six people in the world.” Read on to find out how few are actually working with the poor. Speaking of slums, don’t miss Katherine Boo’s *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, winner of the National Book Award for 2012. A non-fictional exploration of the world of trash pickers in Mumbai, the book is based on three and a half years of painstaking sociological research. See the *NYTimes* Sunday Book Review.

Singles and Missions

A news brief in *Christianity Today* entitled “Matchmaker For Missionaries Tackles a Top Reason They Quit” highlights the launch this spring of a new website, *CalledTogether.us*, which is dedicated to helping singles with a global vision connect with each other (see ad p. 153). One of its founders, Gerin St. Claire, was interviewed by National Public Radio. The *CT* article quotes Rhonda Pruitt (Columbia International University) as saying that “the number of singles on the mission field has doubled in the 21st century.”

But Mike Delorenzo, in the powerful 2013 post “I Write to You, Young Men,” notes that only one of every five single missionaries is male. This upswing in single women missionaries has happened before, after the U.S. Civil War left 600,000 men dead. By 1900, over 50 Protestant mission agencies were led by women (“Women Rallied Around Missionary Cause”, *Christianity.com*). Are we approaching a similar demographic today? If so, why? Justin Long, on *The Long View*, speculates about some possible reasons in his series “Single Men in Missions.”

The Gender Gap in Missions

We have no Civil War that has recently killed off over half a million young men. But boys have increasingly come under siege over the last three decades. Take officially-diagnosed disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While 1 in 68 American children has been diagnosed with ASD—compared to 1 in 10,000 in the early 1980s—the disorder is nearly five times more common among boys than girls: 1 in 42 vs. 1 in 189! (See “Autism Statistics” CDC, March 2014.) Internet addictions have skyrocketed, with 50% of Christian men (20% of Christian women) now admitting to a pornography addiction. (Covenant Eyes 2014 Pornography Statistics).

Then there’s the puzzling loss of ambition among young men, examined in the widely reviewed 2008 book *Boys Adrift: Five Factors Driving the Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Under-achieving Young Men*. In it, family physician and psychologist Leonard Sax claims that one-third of American young men ages 22–34 live at home, don’t want to get married, don’t want to get a job, and are playing video games—a 100% increase in the past twenty years! For more, see his book on Amazon or his “What’s Happening to Boys?” on *WashingtonPost.com*. **IJFM**

Editor's Note: The careful reader will notice that this October–December 2013 issue is partly composed of material created in early 2014. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience caused by such anachronisms.