The story of evangelicals and mission in the Global South is one of extraordinary expansion and transformation: from a movement with origins in eighteenth-century Europe and North America to a movement of immense dynamism and global reach that, since the nineteenth century, has played a key role in establishing Christianity as the most ubiquitous and culturally diverse religion on the planet. The Christian population of the world was estimated in 2010 at around 2.2 billion people. Of these an estimated 820 million could be described as evangelicals (defined here as including Pentecostals/Neo-Pentecostals, but excluding denominational charismatics). Of those 820 million, evangelicals in Asia, Africa and Latin America alone comprise around 690 million (nearly 85 per cent). Since the eighteenth century, evangelicals have also demonstrated a profound ability to indigenize and adapt evangelical belief and practice to the diverse historical and geographical circumstances of the Global South.

The purpose of this chapter is to survey both the history and historiography of evangelicals and mission in the Global South. It is naturally impossible in a chapter of this size to assess adequately the historical development and influence of hundreds of diverse evangelical missions on a truly global stage over a span of nearly 300 years. This chapter will therefore approach the topic in two complementary ways: first, through an historical survey that follows the broader contours of the course and impact of evangelical missions in the Global South, from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries; and second, through a discussion of key themes and issues in the historiography of evangelicals and mission in the region. Attention will be given in both cases to the broader cultural, social, intellectual and political contexts that have shaped – and been shaped by – the evangelical mission project.

The use of the term ‘Global South’ warrants brief comment. In recent years, the term has come to refer to countries that used to be thought of as the ‘Third World’, located mostly in the southern hemisphere and rated as medium and low according to the UN’s human development index (‘Global North’ denotes countries rated as high according to the index). ‘Global South’ now tends to be the preferred term among political scientists, (global) policy scholars and the

1 ‘Table 8.3: Distribution of Evangelical Communities by Continent’, in Mark Hutchinson and John Woff, A Short History of Global Evangelicalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 240. See also pp. 209–43 for a helpful discussion of difficulties regarding the quantification, definition and categorization of evangelicals.
UN, in part because it lacks the hegemonic and pejorative connotations of the previously used terms, ‘Third World’ and ‘developing world’. In this chapter, ‘Global South’ is used in a broader, more general sense to refer to Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania (excepting Australia and New Zealand).

**Historical developments**

The antecedents of evangelical missionary endeavour in the Global South lie in the seventeenth century. Newly Protestant nations such as England, now free from papal authorization of Portuguese and Spanish claims to control the non-European world, cast their gaze beyond Europe for the purposes of trading and planting colonies. Nevertheless, a few of the Protestant clergy attached to Dutch, English and German trading companies and military outposts looked outward to local indigenous populations in their regions. In North America, the Congregationalist pastor John Eliot commenced preaching and Bible translation among Native Americans in 1646. The German Protestant mission movement began later in the century when August Herman Francke drew pietists together at Halle, who, in turn, inspired Luthers for mission in the Americas and India. German pietists arrived at Tranquebar, South India in 1706, under the patronage of the Danish crown, though without the consent of the Danish East India Company’s governor. British imperial overseers showed little enthusiasm for early British missionary efforts beyond European populations. The East India Company (EIC) ensured, for example, that its revised Charter (1793) did not allow access to India by Christian missionaries, despite lobbying by evangelical William Wilberforce and well-connected evangelical missionary interests. In eighteenth-century North America, Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians showed little inclination – theologically or institutionally – to evangelize beyond white settlements. Where significant missions were established during the eighteenth century, such as those of the Moravians (1730s) and Methodists (1770s) among Caribbean slaves, they struggled due to a lack of effective leadership, decentralized authority and the absence of a coherent mission theology or strategy.

After 1792, an explosion of missionary enthusiasm among evangelical Protestants issued in the creation of several voluntary lay missionary societies, few of which had close connections with established authorities in church and state: the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS; 1792); the London Missionary Society (LMS; 1795, initially non-denominational but eventually Congregational); and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS; 1799), founded and patronized by Anglican evangelicals. The Edinburgh and Glasgow societies (1796) were followed by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS; 1818). Britain dominated missionary endeavour throughout the nineteenth century, but American and European missionary efforts were also significant, beginning with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM; 1810), the German Missionary Society (1816) and the Paris...
Evangelical Missionary Society (1822). Various factors converged to launch the movement: British maritime supremacy and imperial expansion; popular awareness of overseas cultures via recent explorations such as James Cook’s epic Pacific voyages during 1768–1779; the impact of transatlantic evangelical ‘revivals’ and ‘awakenings’; and the expansion of evangelical contacts and influences (transatlantic and continental) through religious, friendship, family, humanitarian and professional networks. Underpinning the missionary impulse was a shared stock of theological, philosophical and economic ideas that were subject to intense discussion and debate. By the early nineteenth century, for example, most evangelicals were adopting a soft ‘Moderate Calvinism’ that eschewed fatalistic hyper-Calvinist excesses. A late-eighteenth-century emphasis on human agency (often denoted as ‘means’) was applied to the fulfilment of Christ’s Great Commission (Matt. 28: 16–20), perhaps most influentially articulated in the missionary manifesto of pioneer Baptist missionary to India, William Carey, entitled An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens (1792).

Missionary energy and optimism was further galvanized by a doctrine of providence that stressed God’s active government of the world and the historical process, whether through general providence (overall superintendence), or through particular providences (direct divine interventions in the course of events, displaying judgment or mercy). Providential thought also coloured missionary attitudes to colonialism and imperialism. Nineteenth-century Anglo-American evangelicals conceived Britain’s Protestant character, empire, maritime supremacy, commercial power, political institutions and civilization as providential gifts for which Britain was accountable to God. This was fused with Burkean principles of trusteeship and Scottish Enlightenment notions of civilizing ‘heathen’ nations. The result was a vision of the empire and its colonies as a God-given trust for the furthering of the gospel and the provision of ancillary benefits such as Christian morality and civil rights to all imperial subjects. Slavery and religious intolerance (of Christian missions), in particular, were deemed national sins likely to attract divine judgment.

Evangelical missionary effort was further fuelled by millennial beliefs, grounded in exegesis of Scripture passages that predicted a future outpouring of the Spirit in the ‘latter days’ or times near the end of world history. The mainstream postmillennialist eschatology of transatlantic Protestant missions after the seventeenth century – which envisioned Christ’s second coming after the millennium – accommodated gradualist, Enlightenment-inflected notions of improvement and benevolence (or commerce and civilization), as churches and missions worked steadily to convert Gentile and Jew to usher in an era of peace and triumph prior to Christ’s promised return. As will be seen below, a more radical premillennial eschatology gained ground after the 1830s and influenced later faith missions.

These theological developments were accompanied by structural shifts in Western society that included accelerated population growth, the onset of the economic and social transfor-

mation known as the 'Industrial Revolution', and the emergence of a commercial middle class, which further exposed the inability of traditional state churches to meet the people's spiritual needs. This created space for a transition from Christendom models to new voluntarist movements and associations, including the associational model of the joint stock company that provided a template for voluntary missionary societies. Drawing on the model of the trading company, William Carey contended that voluntary societies be founded to which individuals would subscribe for the purpose of raising money for sending missionaries to the non-Christian world. Also influential were the Anglican coteries around William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect, who sought to bring Christian moral suasion to bear on the expanding British Empire. Their various projects included slavery abolition and the creation of a free colony (Sierra Leone), missionary access to India, and the channelling of forces of civilization and commerce for Christian mission.

To the institutional Anglican Church and most élites, the evangelical missionary movement smacked initially of ‘enthusiasm’ (contemporary shorthand for fanaticism), propagated by men of relatively humble social and educational standing. Writing in the Edinburgh Review in 1808, Anglican clergyman Sydney Smith famously caricatured Baptist missionaries in Bengal as ‘little detachments of maniacs’. More worrying for Smith and the imperial government was the potential of missionary meddling with indigenous cultures that might damage overseas commercial and political interests. By the 1830s, however, missions were attracting widespread public acceptance (largely among the petit bourgeois and middle classes) and even official support. The LMS soon established a strong missionary presence in the Western Pacific (which eventually became one of the most rapidly Christianized regions in the world) and the Cape, the CMS in Sierra Leone and India, and Baptists in Bengal and the West Indies. Methodists and Presbyterians were poised for further expansion.

A key continuing debate within the missionary movement before 1850 concerned the relative weight and priority that should be given to ‘civilization’ (the civilizing instruments of the Enlightenment such as literacy and education) and ‘Christianity’ (direct gospel proclamation) in bringing the ‘heathen’ to conversion. The majority position prioritized Christianity over civilization, but in practice most Protestant missions developed a pragmatic working partnership between gospel proclamation and civilization through educational or economic improvement. This set the parameters for a new synthesis that achieved ascendancy between the 1830s and 1870s – that of ‘civilization, commerce and Christianity’, most famously articulated by evangelical humanitarian and protégé of Wilberforce, Thomas Fowell Buxton MP, and subsequently by missionary explorer David Livingstone. Such schemes sought to undercut Portuguese and Arab slave trade economies by founding African colonies that would open channels for civilization, ‘legitimate commerce’ and Christianity. In the longer term, however, Buxton and Livingstone’s earnest hopes for African uplift were frustrated as slave raiders and Portuguese officials used Livingstone’s well-publicized exploration accounts to expand their

10 Hutchinson and Wolfe, Global Evangelicalism, pp. 35, 56.
reach, massacring inhabitants in the process. The emerging free markets also proved vulnerable to exploitation by powerful business, imperial and landowning interests.\(^{16}\)

A crucial development by the mid-nineteenth century was a shift in focus towards creating indigenous national churches, which by definition were self-financing, self-governing and self-propagating (the ‘three selfs’). Henry Venn (CMS secretary, 1841–1873) and Rufus Anderson (ABCFM secretary, 1826–1866) among others recalibrated the aim of missions as the development of ‘native’ pastors who could prepare the way for the missionary eventually ‘to resign all pastoral work into their hands’ – Venn’s famous notion of ‘the euthanasia of a mission’.\(^{17}\) Venn and Anderson’s stress on indigenization offered a powerful corrective to the more ethnocentric approaches of some ‘civilizing’ missions such as those of the Scottish in India led by Alexander Duff.\(^{18}\) The ‘three-self’ ideal was worked out in significant expansion of non-Western church leadership in places such as Africa, India and the South Pacific, Native Church Councils and the celebrated consecration in 1864 of Samuel Crowther as the first African Anglican bishop. From the 1860s until the late nineteenth century, the three-self theory became the stated policy of Anglo-American missions.\(^{19}\)

The same period also witnessed the rise of ‘faith mission’ approaches. They adopted the ‘indigenizing’ ideal, but supercharged it with a premillennial eschatology that stressed the paramount concern of mission as the saving of souls from the present evil order. This imbued missionary efforts with an apocalyptic urgency and fostered impatience with the cumbersome bureaucracy of missionary societies and expensive civilizing adjuncts of schools, printing presses and hospitals.\(^{20}\) A. N. Groves and George Müller pioneered primitivist mission strategies of unplanned dependence on ‘the Spirit of God’, which in turn inspired J. Hudson Taylor to establish the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1865. Taylor and his missionaries targeted areas of inland China untouched by European influence, adopting simple vernacular gospel preaching and Chinese dress and habits to aid in establishing indigenous churches on an ecumenical basis of non-denominational evangelicalism. By the 1890s, the CIM was the second-largest British missionary venture (after the CMS), inspiring similar independent evangelical faith missions in Africa such as the Livingstone Inland Mission (1878) and Sudan Interior Mission (1893).\(^{21}\)

Similarly dynamic impulses in the decades after 1875 issued from powerful transatlantic revivalist and holiness movements associated with the Keswick Conventions and North American revivalists such as Dwight L. Moody. Keswick Conventions aimed at the promotion of ‘practical holiness’ through consecration and sacrifice of one’s whole life to God, and subsequent empowerment for mission by the Holy Spirit.\(^{22}\) This holiness spirituality was cultivated in annual conventions that proved enormously popular among Anglo-American university students. Thousands were mobilized for cross-cultural missions through the Young Men’s Christian Association and Young Women’s Christian Association, the World Student...

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Christian Federation, and the interdenominational Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), founded in Massachusetts in 1888 and led by John R. Mott. The movement’s ‘watchword’ neatly captures its bold, youthful optimism: ‘the evangelization of the world in this generation’. The result was a global evangelical missionary network. Although older missionary societies continued to invest in auxiliary activities, especially medical and welfare missions, they modified both methods and missionary qualifications to harness the new enthusiasm and spirituality.

Missionary endeavour boomed across Asia, Africa and Oceania during the late nineteenth century, assisted by the British Empire’s vast trade, communication, military and transport infrastructure, which included railroads, steamships, the telegraph and naval supremacy. Equally significant, however, was the energetic evangelism of indigenous Christians.

Three-self and indigenizing aspirations nevertheless came under pressure from the expansion of colonial settlements as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, southern Africa and Kenya; and a shift from informal to formal empire in the British presence overseas after the 1870s, as Britain and other European colonies entered a ‘high imperial’ phase. The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 heralded the ‘Partition of Africa’, whereby European countries parcelled out the continent into their own spheres of influence, including a recently united German nation that now sought its place in the imperial sun. Mid-century treaties with China had opened her interior to missions. Concerns about a resurgent Islam fuelled both millennial speculation and evangelical and Roman Catholic strategies for moving against Islam from African bases.

A hardening of colonialist and racist mentalités during the high imperial period resisted the three-self logic of self-governing ‘native’ churches led by indigenous bishops and pastors. Some white settlers opposed the notion of working under non-white leaders, as did some white missionaries. Disaffection among some indigenous churches over settler racism and paternalism – most devastatingly exemplified in the de facto usurpation of Crowther’s leadership of the Niger Mission by young Europeans who imposed their own standards of Keswick holiness on a church deemed to be lax and irregular – led to a proliferation of ‘Ethiopian Churches’ espousing an independent, indigenous African spirituality and moves away from white control by the 1880s (adumbrating the African Independent Churches of the 1920s and 1930s). The National Church of India was established in Madras in 1886. Many missions faced agonizing choices regarding the separation of European and indigenous Christians (most notably in southern Africa) while they nevertheless opposed mounting injustice and racism that was taking a ‘scientific’ and ‘biological’ turn in the wake of Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau’s Essay on the inequality of human races (1855), and a late-century ‘religion of whiteness’ that was drawing a global ‘colour line’.

The sheer diversity of missions, in terms of national background and arrangements with

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25 Oceania is a case in point: Raeburn Lange, Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity (Christchurch and Canberra: University of Canterbury and ANU, 2006).
colonial governments and their dependent indigenous authorities, make it difficult to offer neat generalizations about relationships with colonialism and empire between 1870 and 1914. Alongside the massive expansion of British, American, German and French missions were those, for example, of the French, Belgian, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. Most missionaries affirmed the essential beneficence of empire, and where they agitated for colonial or imperial involvement it was primarily on grounds that were pragmatic, humanitarian and mission-oriented. Nevertheless, many insisted on separating evangelization and the essentials of the faith from empire and Western culture. They recognized the limited value of imperial and colonial involvement and, by the early 1900s, had begun to welcome a renewed separation of missions and colonialism. Not a few missions, moreover, had attracted hostility from colonial officials for their advocacy and protest on behalf of indigenous peoples, especially in troubled places such as India and China.

Colonial and imperial loyalty was further undercut among evangelicals by a powerful ideology of missionary internationalism and ecumenism – not unlike the internationalism emerging in contemporary Roman Catholicism, socialism and pan-Africanism. Missionary internationalism was fostered by regional, national and international networks of people, literature, missionary committees and conferences, which culminated in the massive World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 (which, despite its lofty title, excluded Roman Catholics and Orthodox). Delegates at Edinburgh (who were mostly European) outlined plans for world evangelization and watered the seeds of a global ecumenical movement that later bore fruit in the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1947. Ingrained paternalist attitudes proved difficult to transcend, but there was a dawning realization that the future of Christian mission would be multi-directional, rather than flowing one-way from the Global North to the Global South.

Early in the new century, a wave of simultaneous revivals in different parts of the world, coinciding with the emergence of Pentecostalism, unleashed powerful new movements in places as far afield as Korea, Brazil, India, China and East Africa. This contributed to the ‘rapid emergence of a global evangelical culture’, although there were growing divergences between Pentecostal movements and the ranks of both Keswick Conventions and conservative evangelicals. Fundamentalist missions flourished in the wake of the Fundamentalist–Modernist debates of the 1910s and 1920s, expressing deeply conservative approaches to the historic faith over against engagement with Western intellectual and cultural life. Fundamentalists found their most potent missionary outlets within the ranks of faith missions.

Global networks were maintained after the carnage of the First World War, and many mission-minded Protestants embraced internationalism as a means of forging a global community of nations, emphasizing social service (medicine, education and development) and friendship over conversion. By the mid-1920s, indigenizing priorities were once again gaining traction among both evangelicals and Roman Catholics, stressing the creation of vigorous national

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31 Gladwin, ‘Missions and Colonialism’;
churches under indigenous leadership and incorporating indigenous cultures and worldviews into Christian theology and practice. New impetus for Bible translation was provided by the establishment of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (1934) and Wycliffe Bible Translators (1942).

In the aftermath of Second World War’s orgy of destruction, the notion of a ‘world church’ and ‘world Christianity’ emerged, one in which multi-cultural expressions of Christianity would be seen to be crucial to a full expression of Christian witness. Europe’s near destruction in that war ended four centuries of European expansion in other continents, reversing migration so that it now flowed from ‘periphery’ to ‘centre’. Decolonizing nationalist movements across Asia and Africa, supported by the newly-created UN, mushroomed in former colonial possessions and achieved independence in the postwar decades. With rejection of Western rule came rejection of missionaries and churches in places such as China, India and Indonesia. Accusations of missionary paternalism and neo-colonialist hegemony were complicated by many revolutionary Marxist regimes’ Cold War allegiances. Yet an apparent paradox lay in the fact that it was mission schools who had educated and formed many nationalist leaders in post-colonial nations. European missionary agencies shifted their focus towards partnership and development aid, which they poured into the ‘Third World’ as reparation for colonialism. The growth of religious pluralism in the West after the 1960s accompanied declining church participation and the cultural marginalization of churches. A consequent climate of self-doubt led to diminishing missionary support and missionary numbers among Protestants and Catholics alike.34

Nevertheless, many evangelicals and Pentecostals rejected such uncertainties and fostered independent missionary movements focused largely on personal conversion and church planting. Returned servicemen, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (1928) and evangelical and fundamentalist seminaries across the Western world contributed to a postwar ‘missions surge’.35 In the wake of the setbacks of the 1960s, a new global mission network was formed in 1974 when 2,300 evangelical leaders from 150 countries met in Lausanne to frame the Lausanne Covenant, a common framework and faith statement which served as a basis for church-planting and conversion-oriented missions. Evangelical missiologists had previously employed terms like ‘adaptation’, ‘accommodation’ and ‘indigenization’ to describe the relationship between gospel, church and culture. Terms such as ‘contextualization’, introduced in 1971, and ‘inculturation’, which emerged in Roman Catholic literature in 1974, were adopted as more dynamic and adequate terms to describe ideal evangelical mission paradigms in the post-colonial, post-Vatican II era. Such terms described attempts:

to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people’s deepest needs and penetrates their worldview, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture.36

Evangelical social concern, which Anglican leader and Lausanne architect John Stott affirmed as a Christian duty alongside evangelism, was given institutional form through organizations such as World Vision (1950) and Samaritan’s Purse (1970), and was recognized as a priority at

34 Robert, Christian Mission, pp. 67–70. See also Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire, edited by Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).
Lausanne. Evangelical scholarly reflection on missions – which had emerged as a sub-discipline of theology in its own right during the late nineteenth century under pietist Halle professor Gustav Warneck – was given a fillip by the creation of Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission (1965). ‘Neo-evangelical’ missionary statesmen such as Max Warren, Leslie Newbigin and John Stott distanced evangelicalism from Fundamentalism while embracing cross-cultural mission imperatives and creative partnerships with non-Western churches. As historian Dana Robert argues, Christianity’s retreat under the forces of secularism and anti-colonialism was not the end of World Christianity, but rather ‘the death rattle of European Christendom’.

Lausanne had also forged awareness of powerful new growth and expressions of Christianity occurring from the ‘bottom up’ – and often despite European missionary activities and expectations – in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania and Latin America, now freed in the post-colonial era from their dependence on the West to express Christianity in indigenous cultural forms. This spectacular expansion, in concert with religious revivals, indigenous leadership and evangelism, and rapid population growth in the fifty years after 1960, led to one of the largest geographical redistributions in the history of Christianity. The demography and ‘centre of gravity’ of Christianity shifted in this period from the European Global North to the Global South, as indicated by the numbers detailed in the introduction of this chapter. Crucial to this spectacular growth was the emergence of indigenous leadership and theologizing, coupled with the longstanding dynamic of indigenous agency in evangelism and church planting.

By the twenty-first century, the structure of missions had transformed into multi-cultural, multi-centred international networks. Vernacular translation of the Bible had also led to a greater diversity in expressions of evangelicalism in the Global South, fostering generally conservative approaches to theology and moral teaching, strongly supernaturalistic and charismatic religious sensibilities centring on the work of the Holy Spirit, progressive economic views and a wariness of both radical politics and secular states as a result of persecution. Many former mission fields had by now birthed ‘reverse mission’ movements to the West (‘south–north’) and to other parts of the Global South (‘south–south’). No case is more striking than that of Korea, which by 2006 had produced a missionary force of 13,000, drawn largely from Korea’s 8.5 million evangelicals. By the early twenty-first century, evangelical missions to the Global South had come full circle.

The historiography of evangelicals and mission in the Global South

From the eighteenth century until the 1950s, the historiography of evangelical mission in the Global South consisted largely of denominational, biographical or multi-volume surveys

authored by missionary leaders and activists. The focus was either celebratory (as an adjunct to promoting or fundraising for missions), apologetic or missiological (in attempts to assess the effectiveness of missionary strategy and to forge a robust theology of mission). In their extensive publishing and fundraising efforts, missionary advocates were prone to offensive caricatures of the ‘heathen’ – the ‘defamation of the other’, as Jeffrey Cox puts it – yet they did so to highlight the capacity of the gospel to emancipate the ‘heathen’ from their barbarism, thereby uniting statements of extreme cultural difference with strong assertions of fundamental human unity.

After the post-1945 dismemberment of European empires, but most obviously in the wake of massive decolonization worldwide after the 1960s, Christian missions were increasingly identified with Western oppression and the legacies of colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalization. This is not surprising, given that European colonial and capitalist expansion, beginning in the fifteenth century and reaching its apogee by 1914, provided the context for most evangelical missions. European powers’ control of the earth’s landmass grew from 35 per cent in 1800 to 85 per cent in 1914. Since the beginning of the post-colonial era in the 1960s, therefore, few historical issues have been debated with as much fervour as the relationship of Christian missions to Western colonialism. This is partly because the concept of colonialism – derived from the Latin colonus for farmer – goes beyond the settling of territory and economic exploitation to processes of cultural and religious transformation. Evangelical missions became the object of strident scholarly critiques, largely from those working within nationalist, Marxist, secularist, post-structuralist and post-colonial intellectual frameworks. These literatures gave rise to popular and scholarly caricatures of missionaries as cultural imperialists, racist patriarchal colonizers or agents of a hegemonic globalizing capitalism. The work of John and Jean Comaroff on missions to the nineteenth-century South Africa has constituted one of the more influential recent critiques of evangelical missionaries as hegemonic ‘colonizers of the consciousness’ and midwives in the construction of colonial and neocolonial mentalités. A significant ‘Orientalist’ literature has also implicated evangelical missionaries among Western creators of discourses that maintained Western hegemony through representations that essentialized and objectified the non-Western ‘Other’. Interdisciplinary lines of interpretation in anthropology, literary criticism and social and cultural history – as part of the so-called ‘linguistic’ and ‘cultural’ turns

42 See numerous nineteenth- and early twentieth-century histories (often published for anniversaries) of the CMS, BMS, LMS and USPG. The first scholarly survey of Christian missions from antiquity to the twentieth century was Kenneth Latourette’s magisterial A History of the Expansion of Christianity (7 vols, New York: Harper, 1937–45).
Michael Gladwin

– have more recently converged in the ‘new imperial history’. Here, evangelical missionaries have been scrutinized – often with a ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’ – through the conceptual lenses of race, class, gender and identity. To some extent, this tradition of critical scholarship has reflected contemporary anxieties – accentuated by the 9/11 attacks in New York and 7/7 attacks in London – regarding national identity, immigration and social cohesion, imperial legacies and critiques of US ‘imperialism’.

As a result of decolonization and an increasingly critical scholarship, missionaries and church leaders of the 1960s were forced to re-evaluate their posture in relation to indigenous states, churches and societies. Stephen Neill and Max Warren (both ordained missionary statesmen) provided the first modern assessments of these issues. All were even-handed in their criticism of missionary endeavour and acknowledged the wounds of colonial contact, yet they also stressed positive results of missionary work such as the development of social institutions, amelioration of imperial and capitalist excesses, and missionaries’ ambivalence regarding imperial authority, while recognizing the patchiness of research. Not until the late 1980s did there emerge a rigorous scholarly attempt to bring mission studies into dialogue with imperial and post-colonial history, principally in the work of Brian Stanley and Andrew Porter. Several scholars have consolidated this early work, most notably through the ‘Studies in the History of Christian Mission’ monograph series. These revisionist accounts of modern missionary history have challenged neo-Marxist, post-colonialist and post-structuralist accounts on both empirical and intellectual grounds. Numerous case studies have cast serious doubt on the ‘cultural imperialist’ thesis, highlighting the crucial role of indigenous agency in evangelical missions. The vast majority of Christian evangelists were indigenous – and hardly passive recipients – who selectively rejected, utilized or retranslated Christianity for their own ends and needs.

over, driven significantly by missionary–humanitarian campaigns against slavery and is more reflective of modern development theory than merely an attempt to impose economic dependency.\(^\text{54}\) Other research has questioned the correlation between missions and the economic peak of British imperialism, or any simple correlation between missions and colonial reach.\(^\text{55}\) The modern missionary emphasis on literacy, education and vernacular translation of the Christian message helped preserve indigenous languages and cultures, and created nurseries for nationalist leaders and movements – what Horst Grünander has termed the ‘dialectic of Christianisation’\(^\text{56}\).

Influential sociological studies have also correlated the expansion of evangelicalism (defined as ‘conversionary Protestantism’) with the rise and spread of stable democracy around the world, demonstrating that conversionary Protestants were a ‘crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organizations, and colonial reforms, thereby creating the conditions that made stable democracy more likely’.\(^\text{57}\)

Some post-colonialist scholarship has drawn criticism for being in danger of becoming ‘yet another totalising method and theory’ like the colonialist and neo-colonialist discourses it critiques.\(^\text{58}\) Saidian orientalist critiques have been accused of a tendency to utilize the same Enlightenment ‘malpractices’ which Said criticized with regard to ‘the East’, namely representing European culture (and evangelical mission as a subset of that) in ways which ‘essentialise, objectify, demean, de-rationalise, and de-historicise it’ – an ‘occidentalist’ representation of ‘the West’.\(^\text{59}\) A concomitant weakness of many ‘missionary as colonialist’ critiques has been a tendency to de-historicize and essentialize missionary visions and endeavours.

Recent models of intercultural ‘dialogue’, ‘hybridity’ and missions ‘from below’ have recognized the importance of indigenous agency and have offered more nuanced ways of understanding the complex creation of identities and worldviews in the encounter between missionary and convert, as have conceptual frameworks of ‘translation’ and ‘constructive conversation’.\(^\text{60}\)

A recurrent theme in critical modern studies of evangelical missions, therefore, has been a tendency to overlook the fundamental ambiguity and multiformity of evangelical missionary attitudes towards colonial and imperial endeavour, as well as evangelicals’ insistence on fundamental human unity and racial egalitarianism, grounded in the imago dei and a belief in fallen humanity; belief in the universalizing logic of the Christian gospel; notions of colonial and


\(^{55}\) See, for example, Stanley, Bible and the Flag; Porter, Religion Versus Empire?; Cox, British Missionary Enterprise.


imperial influence as a providentially bestowed trust; and an internationalist character which fostered a mentalité that subordinated and relativized all other allegiances, whether national, colonial or imperial. Like most of their contemporaries, few missionary leaders and thinkers before the 1960s opposed colonial rule on principle, but they did seek to civilize it.61 But perhaps more fundamentally, as Dana Robert suggests, they sought to convert it.62

Beyond the question of complicity with imperial and colonial projects, the ‘cultural turn’ in historiography has yielded rich insights into evangelical mission in the Global South. In addition to the familiar questions of whether some southern churches’ emphases reflect syncretism rather than pristine New Testaments beliefs and practices, themes relating to gender, family and sexuality in mission history have generated significant scholarly interest since the 1980s, particularly where they have intersected with social fault-lines of class, race and ethnicity. After all, late nineteenth-century women constituted the majority of evangelical foreign mission personnel. Initially scholars focused on nineteenth-century European evangelical missionaries, particularly their ‘civilizing’ and ‘modernizing’ influence on indigenous peoples, and their work in the ‘feminine’ domestic sphere as doctors and teachers among women and children. The latter reflected Victorian notions of ‘separate spheres’ for men and women’s work, as well as evangelistic strategy within patriarchal societies. Increasing professionalism of women missionaries in medicine, education and social work fostered new outlets beyond domestic life and a renegotiation of their typically subordinate roles in metropolitan churches and missionary societies, in contrast with their more dominant positions among indigenous women and children. More recent work has considered gender and family dynamics among both indigenous missionaries and indigenous peoples themselves, where gender roles, identities and sexual practices were being re-evaluated and negotiated in complex ways.63 Scholars have only recently turned attention to the issue of evangelical missionaries and masculinity, in contrast with a large literature on the ‘muscular Christianity’ that gained prominence after the mid-nineteenth century.64

Cultural historians have begun to explore the interplay between the ‘textuality’ and ‘materiality’ of missions. Here the focus has been on ways in which missionaries carried, performed and translated their messages in the material clothing of bodies, medicine and architecture; the semiotic role of material items; and corresponding ways in which this materiality shaped cultural interactions and the practices of lived religion, while providing an index of the processes of indigenization.65 Related avenues of research have focused on the interplay between evangelical

61 Gladwin, ‘Missions and Colonialism’.
65 For a helpful introduction see Mixed Messages: Materiality, Textuality, Missions, edited by James S. Scott and Gareth Griffiths (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Chs 1–7, 12; David Morgan, The Sacred
missions and medicine, both at home and on the mission field.66 Likewise the extensive interests of evangelical missionaries in anthropology and science have attracted growing scholarly attention.67 In keeping with the prominence of ‘conversionism’ within evangelical belief and practice, a large literature has examined the importance of missionaries as agents of religious and cultural change, and the varying patterns and processes of conversion that are further shaped by cultural and historical contexts.68

The historical span and scope of evangelical mission historiography has also expanded dramatically in recent decades. Evangelicals’ prominence within global humanitarian networks has garnered significant attention.69 Likewise regional (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania) and national histories have offered important avenues through which to explore the place of evangelicals and mission in the Global South. Increasingly these histories are being written by scholars with origins in the Global South, rather than by Western historians.70 Since the late 1990s, historians have been writing the history of modern Christianity – including evangelicalism and Pentecostalism as some of its key components – with a scope that has been global and a chronological span that may be described as a longue durée. Histories of ‘world Christianity’ and ‘global Christianity’ have proliferated in monographs, academic journals and seminar course offerings, in part due to an increasing awareness among scholars of the seismic shift of Christianity’s ‘centre of gravity’ from the Global North to the Global South, and in part due to a broader interest among academic historians in globalization and corresponding conceptual frameworks of ‘world history’ and ‘global history’.71 An adjunct to these broader histories of

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71 Key histories of ‘world’ or ‘global’ Christianity include Walls, Missionary Movement; A World History of Christianity, edited by Adrian Hastings (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999); The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World, edited by Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter (Oxford:
Christianity has been scholarly study of evangelicalism (often including Pentecostalism) as a global movement, profoundly shaped by – and shaping – converging forces of urbanization and globalization. Perhaps the most provocative study within this emerging genre has been Philip Jenkins’ *The Next Christendom* (2002), now in its third edition. Jenkins charted the shifting centre of gravity of Christianity towards Latin America, Africa and Asia, suggesting the challenges that conservative, non-Western forms of Christianity pose to Western liberal values, Enlightenment ideas and liberal theologies (on issues such as homosexuality in the Anglican Church, for example). More controversially, Jenkins invoked political scientist Samuel Huntington’s contested ‘clash of civilizations’ theory to posit the potential for religio-cultural conflict between Islam and ‘a new Christendom, based in Africa, Asia and Latin America’.

A striking theme in all of these literatures is the importance of Christianity – and evangelicalism as one of its most dynamic manifestations – for the future of the Global South.

**Conclusions**

In many ways the historiography of evangelicals and mission in the Global South has followed the contours of the movement’s historical trajectory. The southward shift in Christianity’s ‘centre of gravity’ and its decoupling from empires during the twentieth century has paralleled southward emphases and post-colonial reassessments in its history writing. The recent efflorescence of global histories of evangelicism, in the context of non-Western and global histories of Christianity, reflects the changing reality on the ground in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania. This historiography also reflects wider shifts in the Western academy towards understanding the forces of globalization in harness with post-colonial, transnational (rather than merely national) and world histories. In a globalized world, church historians, religious historians and secular historians alike are finding it increasingly difficult to write credible modern histories of Christianity without reference to the global context generally, and evangelicism specifically. Profound interest in Christianity has also reflected scholarly recognition of the utter inadequacy of the post-1960s ‘secularization thesis’ and the enduring importance of religious

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faith (including its fundamentalist manifestations) for the vast majority of the world’s population, both historically and in the context of a post-Cold War, post-9/11 global order.

As we have seen, modern histories of evangelicalism and mission in the Global South since the 1960s have produced two recognizable (but sometimes overlapping) literatures. The first literature, grounded in nationalist, Marxist, post-colonial and post-structuralist modes of analysis (including the ‘new imperial history’), has produced stridently critical assessments, sometimes at the expense of intellectual and empirical nuance. A second literature, which might be labelled ‘modern missionary history’, has revised longstanding caricatures of Western missionaries as political or cultural imperialists. Not a few of the latter group of scholars have espoused evangelical beliefs or at least sympathies. In turn, their scholarship has reflected two aspects of Western evangelicals’ experience since the 1960s: first, a need for post-colonial introspection and consequent recalibration of mission approaches and priorities; and second, a growing maturity and confidence among neo-evangelicals in engaging both culture and the secular academy. A ‘renaissance’ in evangelical theology, philosophy and history writing has ensured that evangelical scholars – not least historians – now routinely write for two audiences: the church and the academy, rather than the church alone. Universities and educational resources for evangelicals are still located disproportionately in the Global North. Nevertheless, just as southern evangelical Christianities are emerging and evolving at a prodigious rate, so they are beginning to write their own histories.

Another striking feature of the historiography of evangelicalism and missions has been its interdisciplinary character. Anthropology, sociology and the ‘cultural’ and ‘imperial’ turns in history have produced richly textured insights and accounts of the movement. The most nuanced, methodologically sophisticated and enlightening studies have been those that have drawn critically from many of these various literatures and approaches. This should not be surprising, given the historical complexity, diversity and dynamism of evangelicals and mission in the Global South.