

Mission and Collaboration

NORTH AMERICAN
STUDY PROCESS



CHINA HISTORICAL
CHRISTIAN DATABASE
PROJECT DIRECTOR



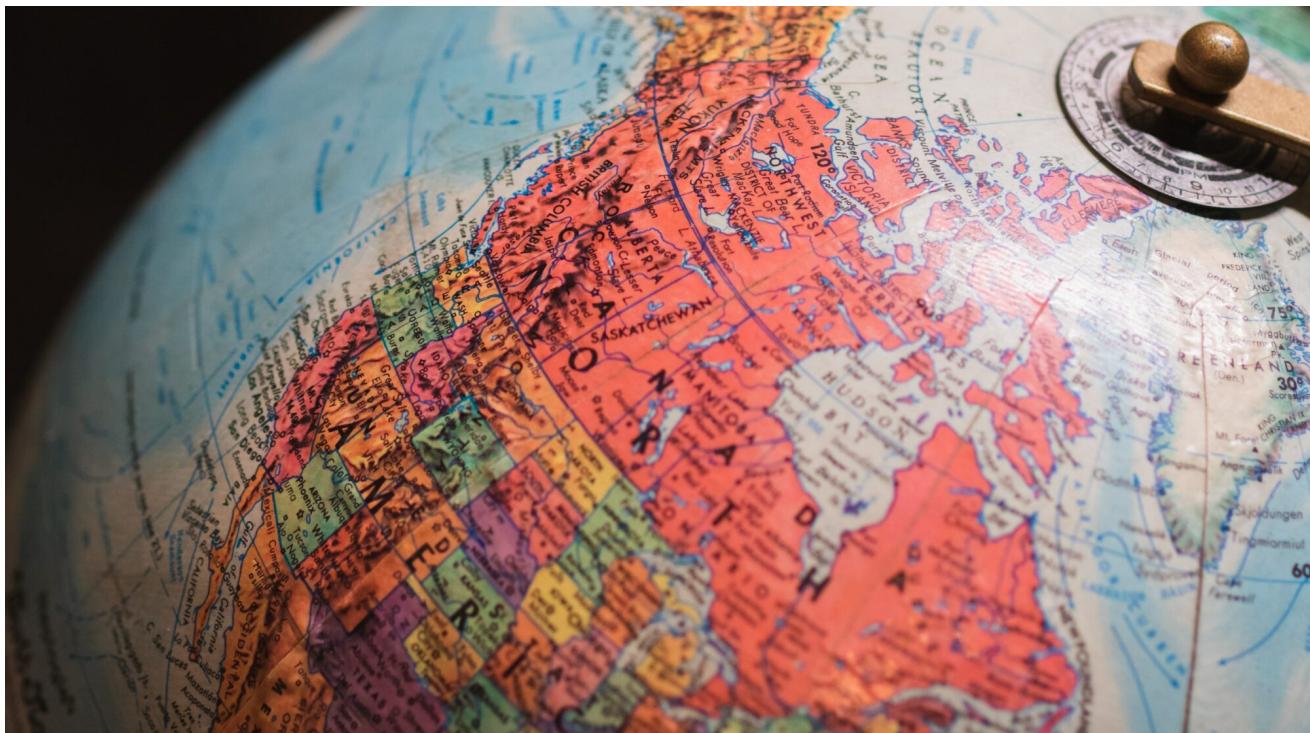
WHO IS COMING IN
THE FALL?
NEW PH.D. STUDENTS



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CGCM NEWS

Center for Global Christianity & Mission



Rethinking Missional Collaboration in N. America

In 1921, decades of informal collaboration among Protestant missionary societies culminated in the founding of the International Missionary Council. A century later, much has changed in the context for missional cooperation. What was largely a western religion in the framework of colonialism is now a multicultural worldwide faith. Mission flows to and from all inhabited continents. State churches and clergy-led mainline denominational missions dominated the scene a century ago. By the 1960s, Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox began collaborating in new ways. Now Pentecostal

and indigenous movements circle the globe. Today the increasing diversity of the Christian movement has led to almost unlimited ways of practicing missional vocations, including short-term mission trips, migratory mission movements, and multiple pathways of mission “from the margins.” Now the global context for mission is more diverse, more decentralized, more competitive, and more vibrant than ever before.

To commemorate the legacy of the International Missionary Council, its successor organization, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, has commissioned a study process. This process is being guided by regional mission research centers led by scholars in mission studies. The purpose is to research contemporary collaborative movements that, while not echoing the era of the IMC, follow its spirit of creative experimentation.

The Center for Global Christianity and Mission, under the leadership of Director Dr. Dana L. Robert and Associate Director Dr. Daryl R. Ireland, is coordinating the study process for the North American Region. The study process is guided and shaped by an Executive Committee composed of over 20 senior professors of mission studies and mission leaders from across North America. The process consists of three major pieces, all designed to feed into reports to share with other regions of the world. First, the CGCM will construct a free, open database of self-reported examples of missional collaboration. Second, the Center will hold online discussion groups with common questions about missional collaboration. And third, the CGCM will collect survey data from people involved in collaborative mission. The fruits of the research will become preparatory materials for the 11th Assembly World Council of Churches, 2022 Karlsruhe, the theme of which is “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”



Get Involved in the Study Process

Mission is happening all over North America. Christians are working together across all sorts of boundaries to reflect Christ, serve their neighbors, and be salt and light in their homes, towns, cities, regions and countries in the most creative and common of ways. But so often the good news of missional collaboration remains hidden, unseen, and underappreciated. To paint a picture of the variety of mission work taking place today, the Center for Global Christianity and Mission needs your assistance! Here are three critical ways you can participate in this study process:

- 1. Report an Example of Collaboration in Mission.**
- 2. Participate in a Conversation about Missional Collaboration**
- 3. Complete a Missional Collaborations Survey**

To get involved in one or both ways, please visit:
www.bu.edu/cgcm/imc

CGCM Expands Its Leadership Team

On June 1, 2021, Dr. Alex Mayfield was hired as the Project Director for the *China Historical Christian Database* (CHCD). In the last seven months, the CHCD project has grown exponentially. It moved from one collaborative agreement to over two dozen that are now in the works. It expanded from two Boston University students entering data to thirty-three, who are located on four continents and in eight universities. The successful launch of the CHCD's pilot project in November inspired a \$50,000 challenge grant from an anonymous donor. The Center for Global Christianity and Mission is now working with other donors to match that gift, so that the first iteration of the CHCD can be publicly available at the beginning of 2022.



Such rapid growth was invigorating, but also threatened to undermine the project. Unless the CHCD could stay up with the requests from institutions and scholars that wanted to get involved, it risked losing momentum. Therefore, it is with great satisfaction that the CGCM was able to hire Alex Mayfield to oversee that project. He is the ideal hire. Mayfield has been a pivotal part of the CHCD since its inception. In fact, what became his dissertation on pentecostals in Hong Kong was an inspirational first step in the creation of the CHCD. He brings his historical and technical expertise to his leadership position, which will require him to oversee the development of all data collection processes, technological development, and the partnerships which are essential for the CHCD.

New PhD Students at the CGCM

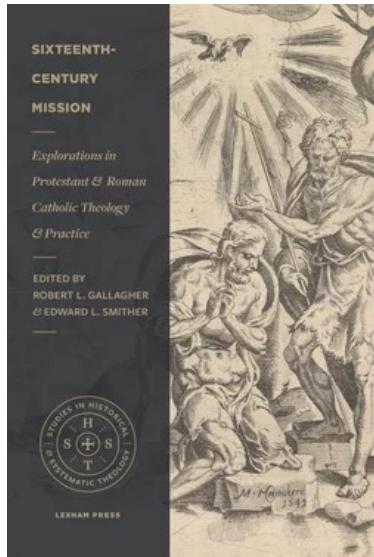


Abhishek John grew up amid diverse Christian traditions in north India. He had the opportunity to 'experience church' in Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian contexts. In his late teens, he entered seminary, and over the next two decades served in various roles - minister, seminary teacher, and missionary - in various parts of India. These ecumenical and multi-cultural experiences were enhanced by a Master's degree from the University of Geneva/Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. John's studies have been at the intersection of the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Council of Churches. He plans to research the socio-cultural and political interactions of American Protestant missionary societies with pre-independent India.



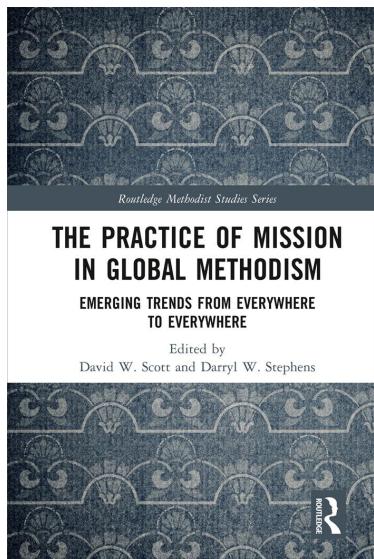
Aixin Yi is a PhD student at the Department of History working under Dr. Eugenio Menegon, focusing on Protestant missionary movements in late imperial China. Her research interests also concern the development of Christianity in modern East Asia and the global history of science and medicine. Yi holds a BA in sociology from Beijing Tsinghua University and an MA in East Asian Studies from Duke University. For her master's project, which focused on the religious experience of rural-to-urban migrant workers in contemporary China, Yi conducted fieldwork in churches and Christian migrant communities in southeast China.

World Christianity: Connections and Conflicts



The new book, *Sixteenth-Century Mission* (Lexham Press) asks, “Did the Reformers lack a vision for mission?” In the Foreword, CGCM Director, Dana L. Robert, explains that has often been the assumption. “From the vantage point of nineteenth-century missions, the Protestant Reformation lacked missionary societies, mission agents, and mission theologies. Earlier generations of scholars thus criticized the sixteenth-century Reformers for the perceived lack of a fully developed missionary dynamic.” This new volume, in which five CGCM-affiliated scholars contributed material, challenges that perception. It reexamines the sixteenth century, keeping three key factors in mind. First, it assumes that both Protestant and Catholic movements were global and local, and those dynamics were not divorced from one another. Transnational migrations of preachers from Geneva to the Low Countries and Scotland, for example, were not unrelated to the emergence of new national churches. Second, the

definition of mission is expanded to include re-evangelization and not just the conversion of non-Christian populations. That broader view allows readers to see the connection between such things as the internal spiritual reorganization of the Discalced Franciscans in Europe and the Order’s expansion in Asia. Third, the volume is interdisciplinary. It is not just that different disciplines are represented in the book, but that authors work with more than one discipline. The book demonstrates that “Solid historical research ... [is] foundational for understanding mission practices. Conversely, appreciation for mission theory and practice illuminate the meaning of history.” For those curious to see how World Christianity is reshaping our understanding of the past, even making the sixteenth-century one of the most exciting periods of mission history, then *Sixteenth-Century Mission* may be the next book for you to read.



The bicentennial celebration of Methodist missions gave rise to a volume that explores “the tensions between affirming cultural identities and being transformed together into one community.” Co-Edited by CGCM Visiting Scholar, David Scott, *The Practice of Mission in Global Methodism* addresses several of the big issues Methodists struggle with, including economic and other forms of inequality among the people called Methodist, a division between the scholarship and practice of mission, and the difficulty of becoming more global without breaking into cultural or theological enclaves. In addition to Scott’s editorial work and chapter on “Methodist Mission in an era of World Christianity,” Dana L. Robert wrote the Foreword, and Boston University alumna, Andrea Rocha Soares, contributed a chapter on “*Sororidad de Gracia* as mission by, with, and for women in Latin America.”