

Frank Jabini, Book Review of *Brethren and Mission: Essays in Honour of Timothy C. F. Stunt*

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Brethren and Mission: Essays in Honour of Timothy C. F. Stunt edited by Neil TR Dickson and Thomas J Marinello. *Studies in Brethren History*. Ayrshire: Brethren Archivists and Historians Network, 2016.

1. Introduction

A review of this important work requires an introduction to the Brethren and the *Studies in Brethren History* series. Plymouth Brethren are known under different names such as Brethren, the Assemblies Movement, Christian Brethren, or New Testament Churches. According to a recent survey with data from 101 countries covering mostly Open Assemblies, there are more than 30,000 assemblies worldwide, with an estimate of more than 2 million adult attendees. Whereas the movement seems to be in decline in the North, there is growth in the South. More than 70% of the attendees live in the Global South (Jabini 2018).¹

The Brethren Movement started in Europe in the second half of the 1820s, at the time of the Evangelical Awakenings in Europe. The Awakenings led to a renewal in national churches and the establishment of independent churches, free churches, and (Brethren)

1 About the Author

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The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

¹ Jabini, F. "Brethren" in Mark A. Lamport ed. *Encyclopaedia of Christianity in the Global South* New York/London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018.

assemblies. Christians participating in this renewal emphasized personal spiritual experience, the authority of the inspired word of God without dead orthodoxy, avoiding what is worldly without becoming ascetic or legalistic, the imminent return of the Lord Jesus without avoiding daily responsibilities, and Christian activities without a social gospel (Jabini 2018).

In 1848, the Brethren experienced a major split, which divided the movement into Open Assemblies and Closed Assemblies (also referred to as Exclusive Assemblies). Open Assemblies generally allow all Christians to participate in their weekly Lord's Supper. Each local church is autonomous. Closed Assemblies, on the other hand, practise a 'close table', allowing only those believers within the worldwide circle of fellowship to participate at the Lord's Supper (Ouweneel 1977–8; Grass 2012). Sadly, the Closed Assemblies experienced many splits that saw different 'exclusive' groups. One of these exclusive groups is the Taylorites. Even though most of the contributions in this book discussed issues related to the Open Assemblies, the Taylorites are also mentioned in two essays.

Brethren and Mission is the fourth volume in the series *Studies in Brethren History*.² The first volume in the series was a reprint of Tim Grass's history of the Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland in 2012.³ The second volume, *Witness in Many Lands*, was on Leadership and Outreach among the Brethren and appeared in 2013. In 2014, the third volume on *Culture, Spirituality, and the Brethren* appeared. In 2018, the fifth volume *Bible and Theology in the Brethren* appeared.⁴ All the volumes in this series were collections of papers presented at the biannual International Brethren History Conference organized by The Brethren Archivists and Historians Network (BAHN).⁵ The conference is open to anyone interested in the history of the Brethren.⁶

2. Summary of *Brethren and Mission*

Brethren and Mission consists of 20 essays divided into 4 parts: 1) Missiology and Missiologists; 2) Europe; 3) Africa; 4) North America, Asia, and Australia. Part 5 consists of a Bibliography of the works of Timothy CF Stunt, in whose honour the essays were written.

Andrew Walls and Thomas Whittaker (chapters 1 and 2) presented a background to Christianity in the period prior to the beginning of the

2 The series editors are Neil Dickson, Tim Grass and TJ Marinello.

3 *Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland*. Ayrshire: Brethren Archivists and Historians Network, 2012.

4 This volume reached the reviewer too late for a detailed review. A quick survey revealed that eight of the thirteen contributors in this new volume contributed to the volume under review.

5 The first conference was held in 2003. A collection of the papers of this conference appeared in 2006, under the title *The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences*. This volume was part of the *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought*, and was not included in *Studies in Brethren History* series.

6 Contributors to the volumes came from different countries and covered Brethren issues in Angola, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Faroes Islands, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Tanzania, USA, and Zambia. However, most contributions came from or were related to the UK.

7 Walls, 'Edward Irving's Critique of Mission Policy' (chapter 1) and Whittaker, 'Providence, Prophecy, and Prosperity: Rethinking the "Romantic" Premillennialism of the 1820s through the Faith Principle of Anthony Norris Groves' (chapter 2). Whittaker's contribution was a reworking of his Bachelor thesis 'Providence, Prophecy, and Prosperity: The 'Faith Principle' of Anthony Norris Groves in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain' Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012.

Brethren Movement.⁷ Walls provided the religious and Whittaker focused on the social background of 18th- and early 19th-century Europe. The ideals of the Enlightenment had an impact on the religious life of Europe. 'The notion of "common sense" developed by the British Enlightenment thinkers stressed the authority of personal experience' (23). Many European countries were Christianized, 'ruled by a Christian prince and subject to the law of Christ, within a single Church' (12). The religion of law and custom was not necessarily the religion of heart for most people. This development gave rise to radical movements such as the Puritans, Pietists and Evangelicals, who seek to distinguish 'between formal and nominal Christianity and *real* Christianity' (12). These radical Christian movements were influenced by the European Romanticism's emphasis on personal experience, as can be seen in their emphasis on a personal experience of salvation. They got rid of the 'surrender of creation to personal laws' that did not seem to leave room 'for the miraculous God of the Bible. One of the most fascinating attempts to demonstrate God's action in daily life is known as the 'faith principle' (24). The faith principle was characterized by a radical dependence on God.

Protestant churches in Europe looked for ways to Christianize European colonies in the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America). This gave birth to the Protestant missionary movement, leading to the work of the Moravians, William Carey and the establishment of voluntary and church missionary societies (pp. 14–17).

One particular person who critiqued the mission policies of the missionary societies was Edward Irving (17–19). According to him, missionaries must live by faith. He reached this conclusion based on a study of Christ's instruction to the twelve in Matthew 10:5–42, which he called 'The Missionary Charter'. This charter, also given to the Seventy, was never repealed and must serve as a model for apostles today. Apostles, that is missionaries, are to be emptied of all self-dependence, and all dependence on human resources... they must live by faith... they are to be poor and foolish in lifestyle (18–19).

One person who applied the principles advocated by Irving was Anthony Norris Groves.⁸ Groves reached similar conclusions about missions as Irving, or may have been influenced by him (p. 20). His vision of the true Christian was:

Unreserved dedication to God, excluding all provision for the future, and securing the surrender of all we possess, and of all we can

8 Two essays in the book were devoted to Anthony Groves (see chapters 2 and 3).

by diligence in our several vocations procure, for the extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth (pp. 24-25).

Christians should live a life of simplicity and give their wealth towards evangelism and missions. Groves 'tested' the 'faith life' principle empirically when he left Europe for the Middle East as a 'faith missionary', expecting God to do what he promised in his word. Groves kept a journal to record God's dealing with him in keeping his promises. This included God's financial provision, miraculous protection, and providence in the midst of severe trial, including sickness and death (36–37).

Groves' theology at times showed similarities with the Romantic movement of his day, including being 'comfortable with the mysterious and the supernatural' (39). However, he did not follow that movement slavishly. He was more a student of the British Enlightenment and used 'experiment' to prove that God was able to provide for his servant who depends on him (42). The faith principle, demonstrated in a life of poverty was also an apologetic tool, 'to convince the Christian community of its error' (43). Christians should turn away from a life of wealth and luxury and give more to mission. Groves influenced many with his 'faith principle', including George Müller and James Hudson Taylor. 'As evangelicals and Pentecostals seek to prove God's agency through miraculous but empirically demonstrable experiences, they carry on the legacy of Anthony Norris Groves and the faith principle' (48).

George Müller (1805–1898) was better known than Groves as a man of prayer and faith. He was also known for his work among orphans in England. Neil Summerton's essay (chapter 4) discussed George Müller's promotion of Mission.⁹ Müller offered himself for overseas missionary service since 1826. However, the Lord closed all the doors before him. He said:

at five different times, within the first eight years after I had been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, I offered myself to Him most solemnly for work among the heathen; but each time it was most plainly shown to me, that I should serve the Lord by remaining in Europe (81).

Müller became 'a major encourager, motivator and funder of, and prayer for, the mission work of many others, at home and abroad' (83). In 1834, he established the Scriptural Knowledge Institution (SKI). One of its goals was 'to aid in supplying the wants of Missionaries and Missionary Schools' (82). SKI became a channel through which many 'Faith' missionaries received financial assistance for their ministry. It supported overseas missionaries, 'and evangelists and

⁹ Summerton, George Müller and the Promotion of Mission.

itinerant teachers at home' (88). Overseas missionaries worked in India, Guyana, China, North America, Spain, Italy, the rest of Europe (Roman Catholic countries) and others (96).

SKI was not a missionary society. It encouraged the missionaries to never look up to it for supplies, but to the Lord himself (84). Support was given only to those who were not associated with any society. Most of these were Brethren missionaries. Müller, however, also supported the work of China Inland Mission (95). 'I have sought the guidance of the Lord as to *whom*, to send means, *when*, and *how much*' (90). Both Müller and the workers often testified that the money provided was the amount they needed and that it came at the right time. The amount given to missions work between 1840 and 1900, was £256,306. This amount in today's value would have been £25,000,000 or US\$ 33,270,500 (93). Müller, as 'a classical Victorian evangelical', did 'what he regarded as God's direction to him personally'. His approach to missionary funding became the model that is practised among Brethren assemblies.

10 Holden, 'Sending out Missionaries is not Scriptural at all: An Exclusive View of Missions'.

11 In chapter 6 of this book, 'The Rise and Fall of the Brethren Gospel Meeting', Tim Grass discussed the origin and practice of Gospel Meetings among the Brethren. The decline in attendance of unbelievers started in the 1890s. He concluded that they became gradually ineffective as an outreach model and yet, assemblies continue to carry them on (pp. 119–130). Other contributors also make reference to the practice of 'Gospel Meeting'.

12 Jóansson, 'William Gibson Sloan (1838-1914): Mission Strategy in the Faeroes'. This work is based on Tórður Jóansson's unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brethren in the Faeroes: An Evangelical movement, its remarkable growth and lasting impact in a remote island community. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2012.

Roger Holden's essay was on an exclusive Brethren view of missions (chapter 5).¹⁰ He started his article with a quote from a Taylorite Exclusive Brethren: 'Sending out missionaries is not scriptural at all'. This was the view of the Closed or Exclusive assemblies. Even the Open Assemblies did not become heavily involved in missions prior to 1860. The focus of the article was on the Exclusive Assemblies. One of the reasons Exclusives were not involved in missions was their dispensational theology. Matthew 28:18–20 had not taken place, it 'would be carried out in a future dispensation' (110). At this time of 'a low terrible state of Christendom' Christians must be gathered from different systems. In other words, the Brethren did not have a mission to the unconverted but were instead to gather Christians from other churches (111).

Over time, the Brethren became a closed group of people (112). There were gospel meetings, held traditionally on Sunday evenings. Prior to World War I, outsiders sometimes attended these meetings. After that, gradually only Brethren believers attended these meetings (113).¹¹ Open-air meetings near assemblies were organized to proclaim the Gospel. Their effectiveness cannot be established.

Tórður Joansson discussed the mission strategy of William Gibson Sloan in the Faeroes (chapter 7).¹² Sloan, a young Scot, took his first missionary trip to the Faeroes in 1865, at a time when Christianity was a foreign-run institution. He held open-air meetings and visited different villages (132). He gave sermons in English or broken Danish and sang songs. Sloan continued to visit the Faeroes every summer,

sharing the gospel to most of the islands, preaching in several villages and visiting the people at home, ministering to young and old (134). The rest of the year, he did his itinerant evangelistic work in ‘Scotland, Norway, Iceland, Shetland, and Orkney’ (135). When he died in 1914, there were five or six assemblies, which were all led by local people. As such, Sloan practised what Anthony Groves taught.

The assemblies that [Sloan] and his fellow British and, later Faeroese missionaries helped established did not *become* indigenous, they were always indigenous (136).

TJ Marinello’s essay focused on ‘New Brethren’ in Flanders (Belgium), at the end of the twentieth century (chapter 8).¹³ The study focused on the assemblies that were planted after 1971 by Canadian Brethren missionaries Herb Shindelka, Richard Haverkamp, and Henk Gelling. ‘Twenty-six churches were planted in a nineteen-year period’ (137). The founding missionaries started with home Bible studies that became churches. At first these churches were loosely connected (148–152) and later became an organized association (152–156). Under the guidance of a Flemish fulltime worker, Guido de Kegel, the churches were transformed into an organized denomination (156–159), called *Evangelische Christengemeenten Vlaanderen* (ECV). ECV remained ‘true to the theological ideals and New Testament convictions of the wider Brethren movement’ (159). However, ECV adopted forms and practices that differ from assemblies in the home country of the missionaries (160). For example, the workers did not practise the so-called ‘faith principle’, in that the needs of the workers were made known in a specific way (158).

In chapter 9, Neil Dickson studied twenty-four nineteenth-century Brethren missionary memoirs from Africa between 1883 and 2010.¹⁴ The missionaries came from the West, but all served in Africa (163). The study revealed the challenges, and anxieties associated with Brethren autobiography, as these missionaries did not want to ‘blow their own trumpet’. The missionaries regarded self-promotion as being rooted in ‘the most sinful of human appetites. Their faith advised humility’ (165). Most of the authors wrote their works in the third person (164). The purposes for the biographies were to record experiences at the request of others, to inspire others, assure them of God’s faithfulness, and love (166). These works were also intended to generate interest for missionary work and to recruit new missionaries (167).

13 Marinello, “‘New Brethren’ in Flanders at the End of the Twentieth Century”. This was the topic of his doctoral dissertation entitled *New Brethren in Flanders: The Origins and Development of the Evangelische Christengemeenten Vlaanderen, 1971-2008*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.

14 Dickson, ‘The ‘nasty nominative’. Brethren missionary memoirs from Africa, 1883–2010.’

The missionaries did use the literary autobiography method for their books. The genre was more of a memoir 'using anecdotal accounts', conversational tone, maps and pictures (168). The most prolific writer among the missionaries was according to one writer an 'unexciting writer in the cause of missions' (168).

Missionaries were often portrayed as Christian heroes, people who were set apart by obeying a unique call from God (169). They experienced God's provision and protection at their time of need and danger, during accidents and illnesses (170–171).

Some biographies portrayed Africa as the Dark Continent, with people living immorally and under the dominion of Satan. The greatest crimes were slavery, cannibalism and the burying alive of wives of tribal leaders. The traditional religion was dismissed by most as 'superstitious', and together with Islam was deceptive (172). Some Africans were 'a very simple folk' and 'should be treated like a badly brought up lot of children' (173). African believers remained nameless in the autobiographies (175).

The majority of biographies, however, were more balanced in their judgement, by arguing that Africa was not as dark as portrayed. The problem of sin was universal and in that respect, Africans were as bad as Europeans. Some deemed Africans to be superior or equal to the Europeans. They praised the beauty of African languages and the insights that they received from native doctors. 'Africans are presented as a spiritual people who can grasp the gospel and attain salvation' (175). They were the spiritual equals of the Western missionaries and at times better than they were. They were capable of managing their independent churches. Many missionaries saw Africa as their home and the Africans as their own people (176).

The plot in the memoirs followed biblical examples, such the life of Jeremiah or Jesus Christ, with hardship and suffering. All end in triumph over the difficulties and challenges (178).

Ian Burness reassessed the impact of Frederick Stanley Arnot on African Mission (chapter 10).¹⁵ Arnot was born in 1858 and came to faith in the Lord Jesus at the age of eleven. He went as missionary to the African continent and served there from 1881–1888 and 1889–1892. After returning to the UK in 1892, he made seven more trips to the African continent (184–187). He died in 1914.

In his first seven years in Africa, Arnot served as a missionary pioneer in Central Africa (188–190). 'Today in Katanga there are around 1,500 Brethren assemblies... These run over 400 schools, nine hospitals and clinics, and at least nine training centres and

15 Burness, 'Frederick Stanley Arnot (1858-1914): Reassessing his Impact of on African Mission'. Ian Burness wrote a book, dealing in details with the life and ministry of Arnot. Besides pictures, the book contained a number of helpful maps. See Ian Burness, *From Glasgow to Garenganze: Frederick Stanley Arnot and Nineteenth-Century African Mission*. Studies in Brethren history. Lockerbie: Opal Trust, 2017

Bible schools'. During the second phase of his stay in Central Africa, he served as 'the leader of a team of workers' (190).

Arnot served as a missionary spokesman and advocate (191–192). He did this through his books, as an editor of a missionary magazine and as missionary conference speaker. Arnot served as an advisor and counsellor to many who left Europe to serve as missionary in Africa (192–193). He received them in his house and corresponded with them while they served in the field. Arnot set an example as a missiologist (193–196). He followed most of the practices of evangelical missionaries of his time. He differed from them, in applying the 'living by faith' principle (194). He also advocated and practised a simple lifestyle similar to that of the people he was serving (195). Added to this, his knowledge of African languages allowed him to open doors to missions in Central Africa (196).

Kovina Mutenda evaluated the gospel work in Zambia (chapter 12). Brethren missionary work started their ministry in what is now Zambia, in 1898.¹⁶ The missionaries did educational and medical work. Their focus, however, was on evangelism. Therefore, they encouraged their converts to become evangelists in their own areas. The converts received Bible teaching from their mentors and served under them. But, because they had limited 'secular and theological' education, 'the national church could be described as being one mile wide but one inch deep' (214). The local workers, mentored by the missionaries, struggled to respond appropriately to their own culture. On the one hand the missionaries 'tried to impart Western culture and values as if it were the gospel' (214). On the other hand, they gave the impression that everything African was pagan. An exception among the missionaries was George Suckling. Teachers trained at an institution that he established were effective evangelists, who planted many churches (212).

One problem that national evangelists who served in evangelistic ministry faced was financial support. Brethren emphasized the 'living by faith' principle for workers. The national workers were supported by the foreign missionaries. The churches that were planted were not taught to support their local workers. Most of the current national evangelists in Zambia 'are self-supporting through peasant farming or fishing' (215). In order to help support national workers, a group of local leaders established the Christian Resource Centre Trust (CRC). Most of the help received by CRC came from foreigners and foreign churches and agencies.

The local workers in Tanzania faced similar financial problems as their western neighbours in Zambia, as Detlef Kapteina

16 Mutenda, 'An Evaluation of Gospel Work in Zambia'. For a detailed history of the Brethren in Zambia, see Kovina L K Mutenda, A history of the Christian Brethren (Christian Missions in Many Lands - CML) in Zambia: one hundred years of God's faithfulness and partnership in the gospel, 1898-1998. Chingola, Zambia: Christian Resource Centre, 2002.

17 Kapteina, 'Cooperation in Mission or Foreign Mission Continuation? The KLB Church and the CMML Mission in South Tanzania'.

demonstrated in his essay (chapter 14).¹⁷ Brethren missionary work in Southern Tanzania, among a predominantly Islamic population, started in 1951, under the umbrella of Christian Mission in Many Lands (CMML). In 1960, a team of German missionaries, who arrived in 1957, baptized the first converts. The local church that was established became known as *Kanisa la Biblia* (KLB). In 2010 KLB had ninety churches with around 3,000 people participating in the church services (233). The foreign missionaries were associated with CMML and the local workers operated under KLB. However, for more than thirty years the mission paid all regional or local fulltime church workers and financed their transport to the conferences and seminars and covered the cost of lodging and feeding all the KLB meetings (235).

In 1989, KLB was 'forced' to pay the expenses of its workers. CMML continued to carry the financial burden for the medical and educational work. The decision not to continue to support fulltime workers led to half of them quitting their ministry. This is because their local churches were not able to provide for their financial needs. Some village churches 'were left alone in their villages quite discouraged and not able to develop their little church' (237). The leadership of KLB faced the challenge of developing the church into a self-supporting organization. CMML on the other hand was moving more towards a developmental social organization (238).

18 Critchlow, 'Too hard for God? A Survey of some Brethren Missionary Work in Algeria, 1920-1990'.

Anne-Louise Critchlow's contribution was on some Brethren missionary work in Algeria from 1920 to 1990 (chapter 13).¹⁸ Algeria had a rich early Christian history until the conquest by Islam in the seventh century (220). The first Brethren missionary arrived in Algeria in 1883. Brethren missionaries did personal and literature evangelism, radio ministry, translated the Bible, and served in medical work (228–9). They and their converts faced hardship and persecution. The expatriate missionaries were expelled from the country in the 1960s and 1970s. A convert from Islam for example was accused by his mother of betraying his country, family, and mother (230). When the missionaries left the country, the small churches they left, 'started to grow and be established independently' (224). They transformed from a group of 'guarded and sometimes fearful' witnesses to an 'exuberant and powerful witness of Christians' (224). The current church retained much of the Brethren ecclesiology, but it 'is more charismatic in its theology..., more tolerant of the Roman Catholic Church and willing to acknowledge the faith and sacrifice of the monastic orders' (230–231). The Lord used the Algerians to continue to build on the foundation laid by the early Brethren missionaries.

Mark Stevenson wrote on Canadian opposition to Brethren evangelists (chapter 15).¹⁹ The Scottish Brethren evangelists Donald Munro and John Carnie were the pioneers of the Brethren in Canada in the 1870s (241). Their message caused a controversy and they received criticism from a Presbyterian (244) and a Methodist minister (245). The criticism of the evangelists had to do with their rejection of clergy and churches and their doctrine of assurance (247–248). Based on their experience with traditional churches in Scotland, the missionaries regarded the churches in Canada as dead and the ministers as ‘unconverted men’ (249). The Brethren movement in Canada started in the midst of this controversy.

Peter Lineham contributed an essay on ‘James Kirk and the New Zealand Brethren Missionary Tradition’ (chapter 16).²⁰ The Brethren movement established a presence in New Zealand in the 1850s and commended twenty-three-years-old James Kirk as missionary to Argentina in 1896 (251). Kirk served for more than 50 years in his mission field (254). Due to the lack of financial support from his home assembly, in 1909, he ‘took a job on the railways and remained in their employ for the next thirty years’ (255). Other Brethren missionaries to Argentina faced similar financial challenges and followed Kirk’s example of becoming ‘tent-makers.’ The Brethren, however, did not recognize ‘part-time’ service in ministry as a missionary call, because it lacked the devotion and self-denial of true Christianity (261). New Zealand Assemblies had since the days of their pioneer overseas missionary grown in their interaction with missionaries.

Ken Newton wrote about Brethren missionary enterprise to Malavalli in South India (chapter 17).²¹ He divided his contribution following the era of four leading missionary couples. Brethren work in Malavalli was established by William and Annie Redwood in 1886.²² Soon other missionaries followed (265). The beginning of the evangelistic work in that part of India met with hostility (264). At Malavilli the people ‘believed that God had sent the missionaries among them to be their protectors’ (266). A mission school was established in 1887. The missionaries also provided medical services (267). However, the major focus of their work was evangelistic (268). They used every opportunity to share the gospel in the villages of these Hindu people. They reached out to children and in 1893, a home for poor children was established (269).

When William Redwood died in 1895, Thomas and Fanny Patient became the leaders of the Malavilli missions (270). One of the challenges that the Patients had to deal with was a famine that

19 Stevenson, ‘Canadian Opposition to Brethren Evangelists: ‘The Great ‘Plymouth Brethren’ Controversy in South-Western Ontario, 1872–1873.’

20 Lineham, ‘James Kirk and the New Zealand Brethren Missionary Tradition’. See also his *There We Found Them: A History of the Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: G.P.H. Society Ltd., 1977

21 Newton, ‘The Brethren Missionary Enterprise to Malavalli’. See his *Glimpses of Indian Church History*. Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1975 and his doctoral thesis *The Plymouth Brethren in India from 1833 to 1970*. Melbourne: Melbourne College of Divinity, 1978.

22 The chapter sometimes referred to William Redwood as William Redford (264).

resulted from a 'drought on a national scale' (271). Brethren missionaries responded to this challenge by rescuing and taking care of children who were affected by the famine (272). Soon the Brethren were taking care of over 400 children (273–7). The evangelistic work continued besides the work among the children. The missionaries sometimes faced 'mass conversions', where a group of people would ask to be accepted as Christians. This was a challenge for the missionaries who wanted to lead people individually to Christ (278). The converts who broke ties with Hinduism to follow Christ alone faced opposition and persecution from their tribesmen (279).

Three years after Thomas Patient passed away in 1940, John Evans took over the leadership of the missionary work. Evans had been in Malavilli since 1910 (282). The work continued under his leadership under challenging situations. The 1940s in India were characterized by strong nationalistic sentiments, leading to threats to expatriates and their converts (281). The school continued to function, but the number of children in the orphanages and boarding schools declined sharply. John Evans died in 1957.

In 1950, Bert and Elma Overton arrived in Malavilli from Tasmania. 'They came from rural backgrounds and proved to be the right people for the mission at this stage of its history' (283). The number of children in the orphanage grew from fourteen boys in 1950 to fifty-nine in 1957. The boys learned new skills after primary school and were able to cultivate rice and build bricks (283). Overton transferred the leadership of the children home to Indian nationals in 1972. He also transferred leadership of the missions in 1977. Sadly, he was murdered in 1981. At the celebration of the centenary of the mission in 1986, most of the more than a thousand people that attended, 'had been old boys from the home' (285).

Crawford Gribben's contribution was a biographical sketch of Lizzie Crawford Gillan in China from 1901 to 1945 (chapter 18).²³ Lizzie arrived in the north of the Jiangxi province, in southeast China in 1901. She worked in education and evangelism (288). Her work and legacy is often ignored by Brethren mission historiographers (298). In 1915, she married William Gillan and enjoyed ten years of marriage with him. The couple did evangelistic and medical work. Two years after her husband passed away, she returned to the UK, but went back to China the next year in 1928 to continue her work. Letters written by Lizzy from 1929-1932, and from 1940-1950, provided further information about her work (289). Her letters followed the pattern of acknowledgement of recent gifts, basic information about recent missionary work, and a 'human interest' story (290). The 1930s saw the rise of communism, which posed dangers to

23 Gribben, 'Lizzie Crawford Gillan and the Brethren in China, 1901-45: A Biographical Sketch'.

missionary work in China. And yet, Lizzy was able to report that 'the work is expanding despite the effect of military upheaval and political insecurity' (292). One of her 1941 letters indicated that she and other missionaries were living in uncertain times (294). The Japanese interned her in 1943. At the end of the war in 1945, she left China for the United Kingdom where she died in 1950, one year after missionaries were expelled from China (298). The 'bamboo curtain' kept expatriate missionaries out of China but did not prevent the seed sown by missionaries like Lizzy from growing. The work done 'had indeed borne fruit' (299).

David Woodbridge studied Watchman Nee and the Brethren in China (chapter 19).²⁴ Watchman Nee was an influential Chinese leader of the 20th century, who was influenced by Brethren ideas (301). He was born in 1903 and grew up on the south-east coast of China. In 1920, he came to faith in the Lord Jesus through the evangelistic activities of the female evangelist Yu Cidu and was baptized in 1921. He was further discipled by the English missionary Margaret Barber (303). 'Under Barber's direction, Nee pursued a path that in many ways paralleled that of Darby and others in the early years of the Brethren movement' (304). He severed his ties with the Methodist church and met with other Chinese believers to remember the Lord. Nee went further and did not want to work alongside Western missionaries. This happened at a time when China experienced anti-foreign and anti-Christian protests (305). He established a community of believers that became known as the Little Flock. The Taylorite wing of the Brethren movement accepted the Little Flock into their fellowship in 1932. Nee faced opposition from different sides. He was excommunicated from the fellowship, because he broke bread with non-Taylorite believers when he visited Europe and North America (306). His encouragement to Chinese Christians in other churches to join the Little Flock, led to tension with other churches. Missionaries accused him of 'poaching their converts' (307). Brethren organizations such as *Echoes of Service* were also critical of Nee (309). Nee, however, had his defenders among the Brethren. According to these supporters Nee practised Brethren principles which Brethren in Britain 'had largely surrendered' (308). Before his imprisonment by the Communists in 1952, Nee saw the ministry growing to over 700 meetings with around seventy thousand believers (301). The growth came about because of their so-called 'evangelism by migration' programme, in which Little Flock members relocated to various parts of China to establish churches (311). After twenty years in prison Nee died in 1972 (312). His ministry impacted China and the Brethren movement in the West, and through his writings he impacted many believers in the rest of the world.

24 Woodbridge, "Finding that more in according with what they saw in the Word": Watchman Nee and the Brethren in China'. See also his doctoral dissertation, *Missionary Primitivism and Chinese Modernity: the Brethren in Twentieth-Century China*. Manchester: The University of Manchester; 2012.

25 Wilson, "Richly rewarding the labourer for his work": Brethren Evangelism in the Australian Colonies, 1860s-1880s'.

Elisabeth Wilson's concluding essay dealt with Brethren Evangelism in the Australian Colonies from the 1860s to the 1880s.²⁵ The work of some well-known and some lesser known Brethren evangelists, led to the establishment of many assemblies (315–330). These evangelists were influenced by the British revivals of 1859–60. Through their ministry they 'kept the priority of evangelism at the forefront, challenged denominational barriers, and encouraged the latent stirrings of Christian unity' (330). The methods they used besides the 'regular gospel meetings', included open-air meetings, meetings in gospel halls, ladies' meetings, and rural outreach (331). The evangelists travelled from place to place, preached the gospel, 'establishing assemblies and then moving on' (332). Some settled in one place for a number of years to do evangelism and church planting. The work of the evangelists led to many conversions and baptisms, growth of existing assemblies and the establishing of new assemblies. Evangelism, as a result of these two decades, became the DNA of Australian assemblies.

3. Evaluation of the Book

The *Studies in Brethren History* series provided scholars with various historical issues from the Brethren movement. *Brethren and Mission* continued with the high level of scholarship demonstrated in previous volumes. The foundational articles, dealing with Anthony Norris Groves and George Müller provided insight into the specific historical and cultural context of the origin of mission practices still prevalent among brethren, for example, the 'faith principle'. The subsequent articles demonstrated how Brethren assemblies in different continents applied these principles, showing diversity and unity.

The seed planted by these historians requires interaction from missiologists. In line with a soccer (football) analogy suggested by the South African missiologist Prof. 'Klippiers' Kritzinger, the missiologists will have to respond to these findings as a player, spectator, coach and referee. Should Brethren missionaries be coached to continue to 'play' according to the principles of old? Should there be a serious review of the 'faith principle' as it relates to the support of fulltime workers, based on what happened in Argentina, Zambia and Tanzania for example? Should a referee use a yellow or red card for this principle? Which model of local church evangelism should be followed, since the historical study demonstrated that the 'gospel-meeting' did not work in many countries? Should assemblies be cheered to use the Faeroes or Australian example? Is there a need

to refrain from ‘sheep-stealing’? Is the model of the Belgians and Watchman Nee’s ‘apostle’ transferable to other contexts, to have better relationships among Brethren assemblies in a country?

For Holden’s essay specifically, there are a few questions. Should there not be a more careful distinction between the different ‘wings’ of Exclusive Assemblies? The Taylorite experience may not be true of others Exclusive Assemblies. Was successful Brethren involvement in missions—in its early years—limited to the activities of Groves? Leonard Strong did effective conversion missions among descendants of Africans and Meyer among the natives in Guyana.

I would recommend the editors of the series to seriously consider adding indexes to the volumes. Furthermore, it would be helpful to make the series available through different distribution channels, including electronic media (e.g. Kindle or Logos). I recommend this work to mission scholars and people interested in Brethren history and missions.