

# Calvinism and Missions: The Contested Relationship Revisited

— Kenneth J. Stewart —

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## 1. Forgotten Judgments of Charity

In the mid-twentieth century, one could readily find informed Protestant observers acknowledging the Calvinist tradition's major missionary contribution. For example, in 1950 N. Carr Sargant, British Methodist missionary to India, explored the subject of "Calvinists, Arminians, and Missions" and maintained that these two expressions of Protestantism had served one another well with each goading the other towards foreign missionary effort. From within his own Wesleyan-Arminian tradition, Sargant wrote,

To praise Arminianism and to reproach Calvinism is the conventional judgement. In respect of missions, however, rigid Calvinism and the warm Arminianism of the Wesleys were in substance the same.<sup>1</sup>

Was this verdict simply an example of charity run wild? One would not conclude this upon reading Sargant's patient analysis, for he maintained that the Calvinism of the period of the Great Awakening or Evangelical Revival was merely showing its true colors when it began to pursue foreign mission aggressively. The founding of the broadly Calvinist London Missionary Society (originally simply the "Missionary Society") in 1795 was in fact the linear descendent of a proposal of 1772 made at Trevecca, Wales to send missionaries to pre-revolutionary America's settlers and aboriginals.<sup>2</sup> For his own Methodist tradition in the eighteenth century, Sargant claimed not the honor of pioneering Protestant foreign mission,<sup>3</sup> but of demonstrating a pattern of domestic evangelistic activism that served as

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<sup>1</sup>N. Carr Sargant, "Calvinism, Arminianism and Missions," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 176 (1951): 340–44. From the same era, note J. Van den Berg, "Calvin's Missionary Message: Some Remarks About the Relation Between Calvinism and Missions," *EvQ* 22 (1950): 174–87; and S. M. Zwemer, "Calvinism and the Missionary Enterprise," *Theology Today* 7 (1950): 206–21.

<sup>2</sup>Sargant used the Welsh event of 1772 not to mark an utter beginning for English-speaking Protestant foreign mission but to show how natural an expression this was of the spiritual fervor of the era we call the Great Awakening or Evangelical Revival. We shall see below several instances of Protestant missionary effort long before 1772.

<sup>3</sup>A distinctly Wesleyan missionary society did not arise until 1817. Some examples of Methodist foreign mission predate the erection of a formal Mission Society, notably the efforts of Thomas Coke (1747–1814).

a stimulus to foreign mission by Calvinists.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Sargant was candid enough to acknowledge that whereas Calvinist missionaries in the early decades of that era had “gone to the heathen,” his own theological tradition, Methodism, for too long specialized in sending preachers to places in which nominal Christians were abundant and in preaching conversion and holiness to these.<sup>5</sup>

## ***2. A Recent Charge: The Reformed Tradition Has Neglected World Mission and Evangelism***

Yet more recently a different version of the story has been spread. Since the time that Sargant wrote, churches standing in the Reformed theological tradition have regularly been suspected of constituting a “weak link” in support for world missions and evangelism. More than anything, Reformed theology’s endorsement of the doctrine of predestination has been singled out as the reason for this, as it has been reckoned by non-Calvinists to provide a kind of respectable subterfuge for lethargy in missions and evangelism. “After all,” Calvinists are alleged to think, “God will see to it that the proper number of elect persons are saved—irrespective of whether we are active as His agents.” This kind of suspicion was certainly in existence in 1959 when theologian J. I. Packer gave the university talks that eventually grew into his little book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. In it, Packer states by way of preface,

The aim of the discourse is to dispel the suspicion (current it seems in some quarters) that faith in the absolute sovereignty of God hinders a full recognition and acceptance of evangelistic responsibility and to show that, on the contrary, only this faith can give Christians the strength that they need to fulfill their evangelistic task.<sup>6</sup>

Something was in the wind. In 1960, William Richey Hogg, a Methodist professor of missions and ecumenics, gave credibility to this kind of suspicion. Surveying Protestant missions since 1517, he argued that from the era of the Synod of Dordt (1619) onward, “an extreme Calvinism . . . prevailed widely and worked effectively to throttle missionary endeavor.”<sup>7</sup>

This kind of second-guessing has now become commonplace. The late William Estep, a reputable Church historian of the Reformation period, called Calvinism “logically anti-missionary.”<sup>8</sup> He viewed with alarm the late twentieth-century resurgence of Calvinistic views and spoke with apprehensiveness about the likely diminution of missionary concern that would follow if this resurgence went unchecked in his own Baptist churches. Norman Geisler, a widely-published evangelical theologian and apologist, insisted in 1999 that resurgent Calvinist views that he termed “extreme” militated “against enthusiasm

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<sup>4</sup> Carr’s thesis is an interesting one. He believed that the danger (real or imagined) that Calvinism would serve the interests of Antinomianism helped Calvinists focus on the need for missionary activism, an activism that would demonstrate that their beliefs did not result in indolence and indifference.

<sup>5</sup> Sargant, “Calvinism, Arminianism and Missions,” *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 177 (1952): 51. We will shortly return to the question of Protestant mission in the eighteenth century and earlier. The point being established initially here is simply that twentieth century judgments about Calvinism and mission have been subject to wide variation.

<sup>6</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1961), 8.

<sup>7</sup> William Richey Hogg, “The Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern, 1517–1914,” in *The Theology of Christian Mission* (ed. Gerald H. Anderson; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 101. Hogg was alluding to the robust defense of the doctrine of unconditional election in this Synod in the face of the challenge posed by Arminius and his followers. We will have reason to note below that strong advocates of foreign mission participated in the Synod of Dordt.

<sup>8</sup> William Estep, “Calvinizing Southern Baptists,” *Texas Baptist Standard*, March 26, 1997.

for missions and evangelism.”<sup>9</sup> Dave Hunt, an evangelical given to writing exposés, declared in 2002 that men and women holding to world mission “bring the gospel to the world not *because* of their Calvinism, but only *in spite* of it.”<sup>10</sup> In addition to this recent upsurge of criticism, there remains a legacy of criticisms uttered centuries earlier.

### ***3. A Much Older Charge: The Entire Reformation Movement Neglected Missions***

There is no disputing the fact that in the sixteenth century, the European pacesetter in foreign mission was Roman Catholicism. The Portuguese vessels that plied the west coast of Africa had landed missionary priests at the mouth of the Congo River by 1491. Portuguese ships in the Indian Ocean soon landed missionary priests such as Francis Xavier (1506–52) on India’s west coast. Spanish missionary priests and friars (Franciscans, Dominicans, and later Jesuits) were in Central and South America in the same decades along with waves of colonists.<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, early Protestantism would lag behind this pace for some decades; these facts and more beside have been regularly rehearsed.

It would restore a sense of proportion to the recounting of this tale, however, if it were admitted that there were contemporary Catholic observers who did not find these admitted mission advances to be everything that could be hoped for, given their symbiotic relationship with European conquest.<sup>12</sup> Bartolomao de las Casas (1474–1566), who reached Spanish America in 1502, became—after his own religious conversion in 1514—the foremost advocate of the rights of the aboriginal peoples of the conquered territories. These peoples were being decimated by the introduction of disease and the imposition of forced labor. De las Casas, who was made colonial bishop of Chiapas, Mexico, complained to King Philip that under Spanish colonial rule, even Indians with proof of their freedom were likely to be abused and pressed into forced labor.<sup>13</sup> The Christian humanist, Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), who died as a loyal Catholic, complained that Catholicism’s missionary commitment was neither deep nor heartfelt. In the year before his death, he penned *On the Art of Preaching*, a treatise urging gospel preaching at home and abroad in order to claim the world for Christ. He observed that many of his European contemporaries were deploring

the decay of the Christian religion (and saying) that the gospel message which once extended over the whole earth is now confined to the narrow limits of this land. Let those, then, to whom this is an unfeigned cause of grief, beseech Christ earnestly and continuously to send laborers into His harvest. . . . Everlasting God! How much ground there is in the world where the seed of the gospel has never yet been sown, or where there is a greater crop of tares than of wheat! Europe is the smallest quarter of the globe; Greece and Asia Minor the most fertile. . . . What shall I say of those who sail around unknown shores, and plunder and lay waste whole States without provocation? What name is given to such deeds? They are called victories. Even the heathen would not

<sup>9</sup> Norman Geisler, *Chosen but Free* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1999), 136.

<sup>10</sup> Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This? Calvinism’s Misrepresentation of God* (Sisters, OR: Loyal, 2002), 29.

<sup>11</sup> Justo González, *The Story of Christianity* (2 vols.; Peabody: Prince, 2001), 1:377–412; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (2nd ed.; London: Penguin, 1990), chap. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Unlike Spain, Portugal’s commercial expansion did not customarily include conquest.

<sup>13</sup> Bartolomao de las Casas, “Letter to King Philip II,” in *Classics of Christian Missions* (ed. Francis M. DuBose; repr., Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 213–19.

praise a victory over men against whom no war had been declared. . . . Christ orders us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers, because the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few. . . . But all offer various excuses. . . . There are thousands of the Franciscans who believe in Christ . . . and the Dominicans abound in equal numbers.<sup>14</sup>

Erasmus did not accept that Catholicism's missionary response adequately reflected its resources; neither did he accept that evangelization at sword-point was authentic. It would be beneficial if this more sober assessment of Catholic missions in the sixteenth century was noted at intervals.

The various expressions of early Protestantism rapidly had to face the criticism that for all their claimed zeal for the recovery of pure biblical teaching, they had very little to show in terms of conversions of non-Christian peoples. So far as we know, the first to raise the question about early Protestantism's failure to apply itself to missionary work was the Catholic theologian and controversialist Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621). Bellarmine believed that missionary activity was the only way that a church proved that it stood linked to the original missionary apostles. Since Roman Catholicism's missionary activity was indisputable at this time and thus supplied a strong support for its claim to stand in solidarity with the original missionary apostles, the question naturally arose, "Had Protestantism any such evidence of its link with the apostles?" It was a good question.

In this one century the Catholics have converted many thousands of heathens in the new world. Every year a certain number of Jews are converted and baptized at Rome by Catholics who adhere in loyalty to the Bishop of Rome. . . . The Lutherans compare themselves to the apostles and the evangelists; yet though they have among them a very large number of Jews, and in Poland and Hungary have the Turks as their near neighbors, they have hardly converted so much as a handful.<sup>15</sup>

Bellarmino must have thought he had struck a "bull's eye" with this criticism. Many Protestant writers since that time have certainly accepted that he did—and winced. Having felt the sting of Bellarmine's seventeenth century charge, they have tended to plead "no contest" and to accept it as settled that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and their followers were stay-at-homes. The Protestant Reformers have in consequence tended to be portrayed as men who, if pressed for reasons, were ready to provide contrived theological rationalizations for sending no missionaries to the horizons of their then-expanding world.<sup>16</sup> But the

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<sup>14</sup> Erasmus's treatise of 1535 was published under the Latin title of *Ecclesiastes sive Concionator Evangelicus* (*On the Art of Preaching*) in four books. Only the first book was ever translated into English. Excerpts are available in Roland Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York: Scribners, 1969), 324; and James Smith, *A Short History of Christian Missions* (8th ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 116–17. The attitudes of Erasmus and other Christian humanists towards the state of the unevangelized are helpfully explored by G. H. Williams, "Erasmus and the Reformers on Non-Christian Religions and *Salus Extra Ecclesiam*," in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Weigel; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 319–70. W. P. Stephens explores Zwingli's approach to the same question in "Zwingli and the Salvation of the Gentiles," in *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honor of James Atkinson* (ed. W. P. Stephens; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 224–44.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Bellarmine, *Controversiae*, Book IV (as quoted in Stephen Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, 189).

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Gustav Warneck, *An Outline of the History of Christian Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time* (trans. George Robson; 3rd ed.; New York: Revell, 1901), 8–12; Hogg, "Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern"; Neill, *History of Christian Mission*; David F. Wright, "The Great Commission and the Ministry of the Word: Reflections Historical and Contemporary on Relations and Priorities," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 25 (2007): 132–57. Especially in the late sixteenth century there was an appeal to the idea in keeping with Col 1:23 (i.e., the gospel has been heard by every creature under heaven) that there had already been a universal gospel proclamation. Nations now in heathen darkness *could* on this

very readiness of many Protestant writers to plead “guilty” has left unexplored various neglected factors that seriously cloud the question before us.

### 3.1. Undeniable Obstacles to Protestant World Missions

In fact, a good number of mitigating factors can be put forward to explain why transoceanic missions were not a realistic option for Protestants in the earliest decades of the Reformation era. The respected historian of missions Kenneth Latourette provided six.<sup>17</sup> None were so weighty as the fact that in the earliest decades of the Reformation no Protestant domain had access to the sea, was a maritime power, or had any immediate prospect of a seaborne empire.<sup>18</sup> Catholic Spain and Portugal, the acknowledged leaders among missionary-sending regions at this time, had all these. For lack of one or more of these, whole Catholic nations of Europe (such as Poland and Hungary) evidenced no more foreign missionary concern at that time than did Lutheran Saxony or the Zurich of Zwingli. There were also Catholic seagoing nations such as France, adjacent to Spain and Portugal, which initially failed to share the level of missionary concern shown in those neighboring nations.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it was not the case that every Catholic territory across the board uniformly recognized foreign missionary obligation and that no Protestant territory did.

### 3.2. Factors Beyond Access to the Sea

Moreover, those seagoing Catholic regions of Europe that did demonstrate missionary concern abroad did so through the combined interest of monarchs (such as Philip and Isabella of Spain), willing navigators (such as Christopher Columbus), and concerned monks within their kingdoms. It is important to acknowledge these important constituent factors rather than simply to attribute early European overseas missionary concern to Catholicism as a system. The Catholic Church, considered corporately as an institution, took steps to coordinate foreign mission only in the post-Columbus era in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV established at Rome the “Sacred Congregation for the Propaganda of the Faith.”<sup>20</sup>

When Protestant missionary concern emerged beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century (and we shall see that it made a small beginning then), it would need to proceed without the

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understanding be reckoned as having already rejected the gospel. For the advocacy of this idea by Calvin’s successor, Theodore Beza, and second-generation Lutheran theologian Johan Gerhard and the opposition to this view, led by Adrian Saravia, see Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 189–90.

<sup>17</sup> (1) Early Protestantism was preoccupied with its own consolidation. (2) Some early Protestants disavowed the application of the great commission to their age. (3) Inter-confessional religious wars encouraged a survival mentality among Protestants. (4) Protestant governments that supervised early Protestantism lacked missionary interest. (5) Protestantism lacked the monastic workforce that supported Catholic missionary effort. (6) Early Protestant territories lacked contact with non-Christian peoples—a factor that did not change until the seventeenth century (Kenneth Scott Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity* [London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1944], 3:25–30).

<sup>18</sup> Latourette here follows Warneck, *Outline*, 8. See also Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 188. Contemporary historian Glenn Sunshine has revived this significant argument in “Protestant Missions in the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin Klauber and Scott Manetsch; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 14. Andrew Walls, in “The Eighteenth Century Missionary Awakening in Its European Context,” helpfully speaks of the “new Iberian maritime consciousness”; see Brian Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 28.

<sup>19</sup> Latourette, *History*, 3:27.

<sup>20</sup> Neill helpfully describes the importance of this milestone in Catholic missions (*History of Christian Mission*, 152).

sponsorship of heads of state, to succeed in capturing the imagination of pastors and people at the parish or regional level, to find missionary workers (as monasticism had been abolished in Protestant regions), and to gather funding. There were no ocean-going navigators standing by ready to help. Yet in spite of these obstacles, most of which were completely beyond the control of the early Protestants, missionary beginnings were not so long in coming as is widely believed.

#### ***4. Protestant Mission Began in Regions Neighboring Home***

##### **4.1. Foreign vs. Regional Missions**

Looking back from this distance of time during which global mission has been now conducted on a very large scale for over five centuries, we find it easy to draw a clear distinction between long-distance “overseas” missionary efforts and mission carried out nearer to home. But why draw such a distinction? In the sixteenth century, mission nearer home customarily involved perilous circumstances and fierce opposition as might have been encountered in some remote place far from European civilization.

A closer look at early Protestant “regional” mission near to home shows how widespread this reality was.<sup>21</sup> The fact is that Reformation cities such as Geneva, Lausanne, Emden, Zurich, and Basel were like hubs. From them streamed out many hundreds of persons who—often after finding a safe haven from persecution in a particular city of the Reformation—returned to their home regions with the theological and pastoral training required to fit them for work as pastors and evangelists. They went in response to appeals from cells of evangelical believers in France, the Low Countries (today’s Belgium and the Netherlands), north Italy, and regions of the Alps. Particularly in France, there is evidence of a determination to build networks of congregations systematically across the kingdom.<sup>22</sup> From Geneva alone (by no means the only “sending” center) more than two hundred preachers were sent out during the fifteen year period 1555–70. The sober fact is that many were arrested, imprisoned, and executed before they ever reached the destinations for which they had set out.<sup>23</sup> Others served faithfully where they were called and saw Protestant congregations take root and flourish.

Detailed information about European Protestant home-mission has now been available from various historians for at least half a century. Yet by itself it has not tended to convince naysayers that this Protestant missionary work deserved to be equated with going to the jungles of Central America or the west coast of India (places where Catholic missionaries were present in numbers by the mid-sixteenth century), but it ought to have done so for multiple reasons.

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<sup>21</sup> It is fascinating to see this conception of home-mission used to describe the early effort of European Protestantism utilized by mission historian George Smith in a work originating in 1884 (*A Short History of Christian Mission* [8th ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920], 110).

<sup>22</sup> W. Stanford Reid, “Calvin’s Geneva: A Missionary Centre,” *RTR* 42 (1983): 69.

<sup>23</sup> The “big picture” of this training of refugees in Reformation cities so that they might return as missionaries is well described by William Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva* (New York: Wiley, 1967), 134–35, which speaks of 120 sent out from that city alone between 1555 and 1572, and Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe’s Reformed Churches* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 34–35. Murdock speaks of more than 200 missionary preachers returned to France from Geneva, Lausanne, and Neuchatel between the mid-1550s and 1570. Further light, especially on Geneva’s role in this, is provided by Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement 1564–1572* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 30–36; Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, “John Calvin as a Director of Missions,” in *The Heritage of John Calvin* (ed. John Bratt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 140–54; W. S. Reid, “Calvin’s Geneva: A Missionary Centre,” *RTR* 42 (1983): 65–73.

#### 4.2. The Protestant Reformers, with Other Christian Humanists, Saw Europe as Imperfectly Christianized

Much earlier than the decisive year of 1517 (when Luther nailed his “Theses” to the Wittenberg church door), advocates of reform had wished to spur European Christianity beyond its complacency, low biblical literacy, and poor appropriation of a biblical morality. Preaching in the vernacular? Scriptures in the common tongue? Rebukes of the church for its accumulation of wealth and land? One could have found all these in the ministry of the Waldensians of Piedmont in the twelfth century and among the followers of John Wyclif—the Lollards in fourteenth-century England, the Hussites of Bohemia, or the followers of Savonarola in fifteenth century Florence.

In Luther’s time, these were the concerns of Erasmus and those called Christian humanists—that trans-European movement of scholars who were determined to turn the fruits of renaissance learning in the ancient languages towards the project of the purification of Christianity. Erasmus’ edition of the Greek New Testament, printed at Paris in 1516, became the foundation on which would stand vernacular translations in German, English, French, and Dutch. Erasmus, just as surely as the translators of those vernacular versions, had it as his ambition that ploughboys and milkmaids would be able to read the Holy Scriptures for themselves.

In the mind of European Christians concerned for the restoration of scriptural Christianity, the non-availability of the Bible in the language of the people had been the mother of confusion in doctrine, morals, and the wielding of ecclesiastical power. Traces of earlier pagan religion—the veneration of places, groves, annual days and feasts—had never been adequately rooted out. A good portion of Europe’s professed Christians considered Christianity to consist in merely observing set days and reverencing certain places and objects. Consequently, too much that passed for Christianity in Europe was deplorably sub-standard. The Reformation historian Scott Hendrix has described the mind of those concerned for the restoration of Christianity: “The veneration and intercession of saints contained a mixture of superstitious, folkloric, and Christian elements; the same can be said for prayers, pilgrimages, indulgences, and other types of medieval piety.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, advocates of reform genuinely expected that the recovery of a purer Christianity was the prerequisite for the expansion of Christianity within Europe as well as beyond it. This is why—from Wittenberg, Basel, Strasbourg, Lausanne, and Geneva—missionary preachers went in all directions.<sup>25</sup> That they encountered opposition (often of a brutal sort) in their advocacy of the purification of Christianity was demonstration enough that what passed for European Christendom was very often bound in thick darkness. With such a mindset in place, we should not be surprised that when given the opportunity to look beyond Europe, early Protestants (Calvinists among them) would avail themselves of opportunities to take the gospel abroad.

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<sup>24</sup> Scott Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 17.

<sup>25</sup> It is the primary purpose of this essay to demonstrate that Reformed theology was not without missionary concern. It could be argued in parallel form that the Lutheran influence of Wittenberg was expressed in the preaching of reform and the provision of vernacular Scriptures in Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Poland, Moravia, and Hungary. See Paul E. Pierson, “The Reformation and Mission,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (ed. A. Scott Moreau; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 813–14.

## ***5. Early Protestant Transoceanic Mission: Who Would Go?***

In an illuminating essay, “The Eighteenth Century Missionary Awakening in Its European Context,” Andrew Walls highlighted how the elimination of the monastic orders in Protestant territories also served to eliminate the labor force that in Catholic lands had been the first to go abroad in service of the gospel. The filling of this “gap” would require Protestants not simply of the mainstream but of the enthusiast variety.<sup>26</sup> But from where would they come?

### **5.1. The Genevan Calvinist Mission to Brazil**

For reasons outlined above, land-locked Geneva was herself unlikely to launch transoceanic mission initiatives of the kind we associate with Spain and Portugal. However, when Geneva’s neighbor France gradually grew alert to the potentialities of transoceanic navigation, that nation focused (among other sites) upon the coast of Brazil, thus opening a door of opportunity for Geneva. A colonizing expedition was led by one Nicholas de Villegagnon.<sup>27</sup> A shortage of willing colonists on the initial voyage that departed from Havre de Grace in July 1555 meant that the door would be opened also to French Protestants to join the expedition in the following year. The Genevan church was asked to provide French-speaking ministers and some colonists to join the expedition.<sup>28</sup> The missionary possibilities were clear to the leaders of the Genevan church. Contemporary chronicler (and participant in the expedition) Jean de Léry recorded, “Upon . . . hearing this news, the church of Geneva at once gave thanks to God for the extension of the reign of Jesus Christ in a country so distant and likewise so foreign and among a nation entirely without the knowledge of the true God.”<sup>29</sup>

The church was further helped in deciding to support the matter when it received correspondence from Gaspard de Coligny, who was Admiral of France and a known Protestant sympathizer.<sup>30</sup> Two ministers, Pierre Richier and Guillaume Chartier, were commissioned to go in the company of carpenters, a leatherworker, a cutler, and a tailor. As a part of a group of 300, they reached the island colony (now called Fort Coligny) in March 1557.<sup>31</sup>

Villegagnon, the colonial governor, had determined that the colony should establish itself on an island off the Brazil coast. It lacked both sources of fresh water and native inhabitants. Since interaction with the natives was the key to obtaining adequate food supplies and to any missionary possibilities, this

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew Walls, “The Eighteenth Century Missionary Awakening in Its European Context,” 24. Walls goes on to demonstrate that this “want” in Protestantism was ultimately supplied by European Christians of the Pietist variety (30–31).

<sup>27</sup> Some details about Villegagnon are provided in G. Baez-Camargo, “The Earliest Protestant Missionary Venture in Latin America,” *CH* 21 (1952): 135; and Amy Glassner Gordon, “The First Protestant Missionary Effort: Why Did it Fail?” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8 (1984):12–13.

<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that the expedition, conceived of originally as an all-Catholic enterprise, entailed the sending of no missionary priests—or priests of any kind.

<sup>29</sup> Jean de Léry, *Journal de Bord de Jean de Léry en la Terre de Brésil 1557, présenté et commenté par M.R. Mayeux* (Paris, 1957), as quoted in R. Pierce Beaver, “The Genevan Mission to Brazil,” in *The Heritage of John Calvin* (ed. John Bratt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 61. Portions of the de Léry *Journal* appeared in English dress as “Journey to the Land of Brazil, 1557,” in Joannes Boemus, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations, Collected out of the Best Writers* (1610; trans. Ed Aston; London: G. Eld, 1611), 483–502. I am indebted to Boston University and Gordon Conwell Seminary ThD student Travis Myers for pointing me to the Boemus volume, which is accessible through Early English Books Online.

<sup>30</sup> As Admiral, de Coligny was responsible for French naval and maritime ventures.

<sup>31</sup> Beaver, “The Genevan Mission,” 62.

island location seemed very disadvantageous. Interaction with the Indian population, when it came, proved difficult; the Genevan pastors were initially taken aback at the barbarism of the people they now met. But they adopted the long-term strategy of placing boys from the colony among the Indians so that, with time, they would have the services of bilingual translators.<sup>32</sup> One of the colonists, the chronicler de Léry, spent extensive time among the onshore native population and recorded extensive observations about their manners, customs, and religious ideas. His work has been termed an attempt at missionary ethnography.<sup>33</sup>

Religious differences soon surfaced. Villegagnon seems to have been unprepared for the degree of religious diversity that the arrival of the Francophone Protestants would represent, and disputes broke out about Catholic-Protestant doctrinal differences. The governor made it his business to hinder the ability of the Genevan Calvinists to proselytize among the at-least-nominally Catholic French colonists. In the course of time, Villegagnon exiled the Genevan pastors to the mainland, where their exposure to the Indian population continued until the time when they and other Genevans were forcibly returned by the governor to France. At best, we can say that the short interlude of missionary opportunity among the natives of Brazil provided the Geneva contingent with a seedbed for further thinking and reflection about cross-cultural mission.<sup>34</sup> In fairness, we should be able to grant that the Genevans seized this modest missionary opportunity when it was offered to them.

## 5.2. John Eliot's Ministry Among Massachusetts Indians

There is no disguising that among the English interested in developing their own seaborne empire, there was more talk about missions to native peoples encountered in foreign territories than there was any systematic plan of carrying the gospel to those peoples when they were actually encountered.<sup>35</sup> More intense interest may have been generated for the cause in "old" England rather than "new."<sup>36</sup> The discrepancy between aim and actuality was obvious enough in Massachusetts. John Winthrop, the original governor of the colony, had promoted emigration there by listing first among reasons for locating there the prospective missionary opportunities:

It will be a service to the church of great consequence to carry the gospel into those parts of the world, to help on the coming of the fullness of the gentiles and to raise a bulwark against the kingdom of anti-Christ which the Jesuits labor to rear up in those parts.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon, "The First Protestant Missionary Effort," 14.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>35</sup> This is a point made most effectively by Henry M. Knapp, "The Character of Puritan Missions: The Motivation, Methodology and Effectiveness of the Puritan Evangelization of the Native Americans in New England," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 76 (1998): 113.

<sup>36</sup> This is the sober assessment of R. Pierce Beaver, "American Missionary Motivation Before the Revolution," *CH* 31 (1962): 216. The point is made with new force in the excellent essay by Jon Hinkson, "Missions Among Puritans and Pietists," in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 224–25. See also the treatment of this problem in J. A. de Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640–1810* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1970), 31–33.

<sup>37</sup> "Reasons to be considered for Justifieinge the Undertakinge of the Intended Plantation in New England," from R. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop* (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown, 1864), 1:309–11, as quoted in Lacey Baldwin Smith, ed., *The Past Speaks: Sources and Problems in English History* (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; Lexington, MA: Heath, 1993), 1:411. It is interesting to note Winthrop's awareness of Jesuit missionary activity in the New World.

Yet the settlers who responded to such reasoning were, on arrival, preoccupied with their own safety and sustenance rather than the spiritual needs of the native population. Moreover, they had no prior experience with non-countrymen to guide them in intercultural questions. The governing “General Court” of Massachusetts, however, persisted in its attempt to stir up interest in evangelization of the natives in the 1644–45 period.<sup>38</sup> This provided the context in which John Eliot (1604–90), Puritan minister at Roxbury, Massachusetts, began in 1646 prolonged efforts to evangelize them. He never left his Roxbury pastorate, but began to go every other week to preach among the natives and to catechize their children.

It was not long before his missionary work came to the attention of sympathetic persons in England. The Parliament of England sanctioned the creation of the “Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England,”<sup>39</sup> and over time £12,000 was gathered to support this ministry. By 1652, Eliot and his associates saw the first signs of faith. By 1659, eight adults were ready to make formal profession of faith. Eliot and those assisting him took seriously the need to communicate in the language of the nearby Indians. They soon gained the ability to preach in their language (variously termed Algonquian or Moheecan) and subsequently produced an Indian catechism by 1653, selected Psalms by 1658, and a complete Bible by 1663.<sup>40</sup>

Eliot’s New England ministry was not only significant in demonstrating an early Calvinist attempt to carry out the Great Commission (admittedly without extensive support from other colonists), but in its methods, which were in some ways eclectic and in other ways distinctly Protestant. Eliot’s method of gathering an eventual 3,600 persons into what were called “Praying Towns” (all-Indian Christian settlements) approximated to some degree the tendency in Catholic missions to central America and the American southwest, namely, to gather those willing to accept instruction in the Christian faith into stable communities in which they could learn trades,<sup>41</sup> cultivate crops, and receive education. These methods persisted until the terrible disruption brought about by “King Philip’s War” of 1675–77. This colonist-Indian conflict had Christian Indian converts and their communities caught in the crossfire and distrusted by both sides. Happily, a parallel ministry to Indians carried out on the Massachusetts island named Martha’s Vineyard by Thomas Mayhew (1620–1657) was untouched by these hostilities; it was a work—continued after Mayhew’s untimely death at sea—by his own father and descendants. By the early eighteenth century, some 1600 Indians professing Christianity were worshipping in their own churches on this one island.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Note the helpful discussion of the merely gradual pursuit of Indian evangelization by the Massachusetts Bay colony in Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians Before King Philip’s War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), chaps. 1–2.

<sup>39</sup>It would appear that the action of the Long Parliament in 1649 was the *first* action by a Protestant legislature to assist the carrying out of foreign missionary activity. Jon Hinkson terms it “the oldest English Protestant Missionary Society” (“Missions Among Puritans and Pietists,” 28). Surviving archival records of Eliot’s ministry were analyzed by Sidney H. Rooy, *The Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), chap. 3; and de Jong, *As the Waters*, 67–78. The seventeenth century tracts published by Eliot for the purpose of advocating mission to the Indians and progress observed there have been edited by Michael Clark as *The Eliot Tracts: With Letters to John Thorowgood and Richard Baxter* (New York: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>40</sup>These details regarding Eliot are provided by P. C-H. Lim in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (ed. Timothy T. Larsen, David W. Bebbington, and Mark A. Noll; Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 206.

<sup>41</sup>R. W. Cogley reports that members of the Roxbury congregation taught carpentry and agriculture to the Indians, as well as providing them with medical care (“John Eliot’s Puritan Ministry,” *Fides et Historia* 31 [1999]: 9).

<sup>42</sup>Hinkson, “Mission,” 29–31.

In relation to other Protestant mission efforts of the seventeenth century, we find Eliot's work setting the pace in early production of vernacular Scriptures, the training of indigenous Christian leaders in Scripture and doctrine, and the rapid elevation of native persons into positions of Christian leadership. The first native pastor was ready for ordination by 1683, less than forty years from the time Eliot had commenced his bi-weekly Indian ministry. Though rural Massachusetts would have been considered somewhat on the fringe of European civilization, the Christian world would take note of what Eliot and his successors had accomplished.

The German church historian Ernst Benz has shown how information about the late John Eliot's Indian ministry in Massachusetts was mediated by prominent Boston minister Cotton Mather (1663–1728) to his Halle (Germany) contact, the Lutheran Pietist leader August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). Through Francke, this information was communicated to the German Pietist missionaries Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719) and Heinrich Plutschau (1678–1747), who had accepted missionary appointments to south India from the King of Denmark in 1705. Mission news from south India eventually reached Mather in Massachusetts via a network extending through Halle and London.<sup>43</sup> In Tranquebar (the region of south India in which Denmark's colony was situated), the ministry led by Ziegenbalg and Plutschau produced a Tamil-language New Testament by 1714, and his successors produced an entire Bible of high quality by 1796. An Indian pastor was ordained by 1733, and fourteen in all would be set aside for ministry in the mission's first century.<sup>44</sup>

The significance of these accomplishments in New England and south India are best appreciated when comparisons are drawn. Nearly three centuries would pass between the time Catholic missions to the Americas began and the ordination of its first native clergy in 1794.<sup>45</sup> An even greater lapse of time separated the onset of Catholic missionary effort in the Americas and the availability of vernacular Scriptures in these regions. These finally were made available when James (Diego) Thomson (1788–1854), the peripatetic agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, entered Argentina in 1818 and subsequently set up Bible distribution networks in that country, Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico.<sup>46</sup> Here, we may see the natural outworking of the European Reformation (and also Calvinist) principle of re-Christianization: If vernacular proclamation, vernacular Scriptures, and vernacular liturgy were requisite in Europe because intelligent, heartfelt worship required them, why would the same principle not apply in non-European lands?<sup>47</sup>

### 5.3. Dutch Reformed Missionaries to Southeast Asia

Returning to the early decades of the seventeenth century, and concurrent with the Puritan experiment in the New World, Holland was, after 1590, gradually extending its reach into southeast Asian territories earlier reckoned as the trading domains of Portugal. This Dutch incursion had the

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<sup>43</sup> Ernst Benz, "Pietist and Puritan Sources of Early Protestant World Missions," *CH* 20 (1951): 31-33. The basic details about the Danish-Halle mission are supplied in Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 194–98. Ronald E. Davies has shown that another important purveyor of transoceanic mission news in this era was the Scot Robert Millar (1672–1752). See his "Robert Millar—An Eighteenth Century Scottish Latourette," *EvQ* 42 (1990): 143–56. Tales of John Eliot's ministry and the Tranquebar missionaries were circulated in mid-eighteenth century also by the Scottish minister John Gillies (1712–96) in his *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel* (1754; rev. Horatius Bonar; Kelso: J. Rutherford, 1845).

<sup>44</sup> Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 195–96.

<sup>45</sup> Cogley, "John Eliot's Puritan Ministry," 10n10; Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 150.

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Sywulka, "Thomson, James 'Diego,'" in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 959–60.

<sup>47</sup> Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 172–73.

double effect of curtailing further Roman Catholic missionary work and opening the door to missionary work of the Protestant and Reformed type. The trading concern that represented Holland's interest in the region, the Dutch East India Company, was obliged by concerned Dutch Reformed believers (and it was this constituency that most heavily supported the monopolistic trading company) to take some steps to prepare a missionary force for southeast Asia. A seminary was established at Leyden for the purpose of training workers who would minister to the needs of the trading company's employees and commence the presentation of the Gospel to the native population. These—when they proceeded to that region—had some success in gathering and baptizing a large number who professed the Christian faith. A vernacular New Testament was produced in Malay by 1668 along with catechetical materials.<sup>48</sup>

Mission historians such as Neill have indicated the ways in which this initial Reformed missionary effort to Southeast Asia left much to be desired. Since the missionaries, who were actually employed by the trading company, received economic incentives relative to the numbers baptized, there was a willful inflation of the numbers reckoned to be enfolded in the church.<sup>49</sup> But for our present purposes, it is sufficient to note that contrary to the kind of aspersions which have been cast in the past half-century, Dutch Calvinism—far from being hostile to foreign mission, or second-guessing the need for it (in light of acceptance of divine election), was in fact congenial towards it. Research has demonstrated the presence in the Synod of Dordt (1618–19)—a synod alleged to have restrained missionary labor because of its support for the doctrine of election<sup>50</sup>—of advocates of foreign missionary work such as Gisbertus Voetius,<sup>51</sup> and of language in the Canons of Dordt that was supportive of the missionary task.<sup>52</sup> The sizeable Protestant population of Indonesia today is a witness to Dutch missionary activity that was carried on, almost without a break, until that nation withdrew from its former colony in 1947. Comparable missionary progress had been achieved under Dutch instrumentality in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

#### 5.4. The American Mission to Indians Under David Brainerd

The era of the 1730s was one of heightened spiritual vitality in regions of Western Europe, Britain, and British territories in North America.<sup>53</sup> Christians and churches in the Reformed tradition were by no means the only branch of Christianity quickened during this period. It is certain that the surge of missionary activism associated with Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) and the Church of the United Brethren (commonly known as Moravian) was the foremost direct expression for missions of the zeal engendered in this period of spiritual awakening. Yet it was not the *only* such expression, and here, since it is our purpose to highlight chiefly the missionary activity proper to the Reformed or Calvinist tradition, we turn to focus on the most illustrious missionary career in this stream of Christianity in the first half of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>48</sup> Jan Jongeneel, "The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius: The First Comprehensive Protestant Theology of Missions," *CTJ* 26 (1991): 72. Jongeneel reports that a single gospel (Matthew) had been available in translation from 1629.

<sup>49</sup> Neill, *History of Christian Mission*, 191.

<sup>50</sup> Note the interpretation offered by Richey Hogg in 1959 (see n. 7 above) without any corroborating evidence.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. James Tanis, "Reformed Pietism and Protestant Missions" in *HTR* 67 (1974): 71–73. Jongeneel's "The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius" (56) reports that Voetius's own belief in the doctrine of election was the guiding principle of his mission theology.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Anthony Hoekema, "The Missionary Focus of the Canons of Dordt," *CTJ* 7 (1972): 209–20.

<sup>53</sup> The literature on this era is vast. The one major work bridging all geographic regions is that of W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

David Brainerd (1718–47), himself a convert of the Great Awakening,<sup>54</sup> was appointed, with his brother John to work among the Indians of western Massachusetts under the auspices of a society that was a kind of successor to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England. This was the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which existed to evangelize the Highlands of Scotland and to send ministers among Scottish emigrant communities abroad as well as among unevangelized native peoples.<sup>55</sup>

Brainerd's initial years in western Massachusetts preaching among the Housatonic people were not especially heartening. But when, in August 1745, he preached among the Delaware Indians of New Jersey, he saw something entirely different: assembled crowds of native people visibly affected by his preaching about the love of God shown in the suffering of Jesus Christ. Brainerd was observing developments highly analogous to events unfolding under the preaching ministry of the Moravians, namely, that ordinary hearers were enabled to respond to the simply proclaimed message of the cross. The traditional apologetic method was to clear the ground for the preaching of the gospel by defending theism, miracles, and revelation. Now Brainerd believed that he witnessed such methodology being made unnecessary by an almost immediate working of the Holy Spirit by employing only the essentials of the gospel message.

As surely as Eliot's labors had been reported in London, Halle, and Tranquebar (India), the reputation of Brainerd spread abroad, primarily through the posthumous publication of his diary and Jonathan Edwards's *An Account of the Life of the late Reverend David Brainerd* in 1749.<sup>56</sup>

### 5.5. William Carey, Father of Modern Missions

We began this inquiry by noting that a dispassionate Methodist researcher, Norman Carr Sargant, had found special significance in a conference regarding world mission held by Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in 1772. Here there was evidence of the quickening of missionary interest four decades into that era of evangelical awakening. The transatlantic circulation of literature such as the *Life of David Brainerd* was certainly part of the blend of influences that helped this quickening of interest forward. William Carey, an English Calvinistic Baptist who first helped promote the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792,<sup>57</sup> is reported to have been able to quote sections of that work from memory.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Timothy George, "The Evangelical Revival and the Missionary Awakening," in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin Klauber and Scott Manetsch; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 47.

<sup>55</sup> The Society had origins in Edinburgh extending back to 1709 when it was founded by royal charter. Details are supplied in D. E. Meek, "Scottish S.P.C.K.," in *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology* (ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron; Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 761–62. An English counterpart, the S.P.C.K. had existed since 1698. Important details about the Scottish S.P.C.K. have been provided by Donald MacLean in "Scottish Calvinism and Foreign Missions," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 6 (1938): 5–7.

<sup>56</sup> Hinkson, "Mission," 32–33. Edwards, who would have become father-in-law to Brainerd had not premature death from tuberculosis intervened first for Brainerd and then for his own daughter Jerusha, himself served the mission to the Indians of western Massachusetts when he fell from favor with his Northampton congregation. See George Marsden, "Jonathan Edwards as Missionary," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 81 (2003): 5–17.

<sup>57</sup> Brian Stanley indicates that the society was originally designated "The Particular-Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen" ("Baptist Missionary Society," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 110). The term "particular" indicated that these Baptists held to the concept of "definite" or "particular" atonement; this is a Calvinist distinction.

<sup>58</sup> Timothy George, "Evangelical Revival," 47. George similarly demonstrates that Henry Martyn, the young Church of England chaplain to India influenced so much by Carey's example, was just as definitely influenced by Brainerd's life and example.

As Carey first promoted the need for a missionary society (only later volunteering to go himself), he encountered opposition. On hearing Carey advocate a mission to the heathen, a Baptist minister named John Ryland Sr. (1723–92) is reported to have reminded Carey, “When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without you.”<sup>59</sup> Here was a recurrence of an idea, at least as old as Hulderych Zwingli (1484–1531), that God—in considering the fallen heathen—was at liberty to bestow mercy on them irrespective of their inability to hear and respond to the claims of Christ and the gospel.<sup>60</sup> But in spite of what polemical writers have tried to “wring” from the episode (e.g., that opposition from such a quarter as Ryland’s requires us to accept that Carey held a position antithetical to that of the avowedly-Calvinist Ryland),<sup>61</sup> it is difficult to shirk the conclusion that Carey, as surely as Brainerd, Mayhew, and Eliot before him, was a Calvinist convinced that God uses means.<sup>62</sup>

The outline and the significance of Carey’s mission to India has often been described. Here three issues can be highlighted. First, we must grasp how—given the rise in missionary zeal across Britain in that century of spiritual awakening—Carey and his cause were taken up and endorsed by evangelical Calvinists of all stripes. His contemporary Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), who travelled on behalf of the nascent mission society after its launch (and after Carey’s departure for India), recorded the almost-universal welcome extended to him in a wide range of churches across denominational boundaries. Believers within the broadly Calvinist tradition and beyond it gladly contributed their gifts to a cause that was now dear to their hearts also.<sup>63</sup> Carey was both a symbol of and focus for the surge in missionary zeal as the evangelical Protestant public took up the cause of world mission to a degree not previously found.

Second, the record of Carey’s ministry in India sounds some now familiar notes of post-Reformation Protestant missions that we have already observed in New England and Southeast Asia: preaching in the vernacular, Scriptures in the vernacular, and an indigenous ministry trained with urgency. To stress this takes nothing away from Carey’s extraordinary abilities as a self-taught linguist and translator; it is merely to note that the priorities and strategies he pursued were very often those identified also by Protestant missionaries before him.

Third, we can note that Carey—and the mission society whose creation he advocated—was a part of what Andrew Walls has aptly called “the fortunate subversion of the church.”<sup>64</sup> Having acknowledged earlier that Protestantism would be as reliant on a type of “enthusiast” to prosecute the actual task of world mission as Catholicism had been in relying on members of the monastic orders, we must now acknowledge that as the broadly Calvinist Protestant world more actively embraced the cause of world mission, the societies that stood at the vanguard of this movement were not (with the exception of the Moravian movement) the direct instruments of the churches of the Reformation; they

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<sup>59</sup> The account is provided in George, “Evangelical Revival” (50).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Stephens, “Zwingli and the Salvation of the Gentiles,” 224–44. Stephens shows that Zwingli’s attitude was reasonably common among sixteenth century Christian humanists, who were excessively deferential to the great minds of classical antiquity and who were willing to assume their inclusion among the elect on the basis of their close approximation to revealed truth.

<sup>61</sup> This is the very line of reasoning followed by a polemicist such as William Estep (see n. 9 above).

<sup>62</sup> On the contested nature of the Rylands-Carey exchange, see Thomas J. Nettles, “Baptists and World Missions,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin Klauber and Scott Manetsch; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 90–91.

<sup>63</sup> J. W. Morris, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Andrew Fuller* (London: T. Hamilton, 1816), 145–47.

<sup>64</sup> See Andrew Walls, “Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church,” *EvQ* 60 (1988): 141–55.

were *voluntary* societies made up of likeminded persons drawn from those churches and united for a common purpose. It was true of Carey's sponsoring Baptist society; it would be even more the case for the Missionary Society founded at London in 1795 (later known as the London Missionary Society), which provided a vehicle for the missionary aspirations of the zealous found in Anglican, Presbyterian, and Congregational-Independent churches. The one who takes the time to sample the biographies of the earliest leaders of the LMS assembled by John Morison will be struck again and again at their combined zeal for Calvinism and mission.<sup>65</sup>

In emulation of these British developments, similar voluntary mission societies were begun in short order by concerned believers within Scotland at Glasgow and Edinburgh (1796) and in connection with the Reformation churches of the Continent in Amsterdam (1797), Basel (1815), and Paris (1822). Though the London society had welcomed Church of England involvement, by 1812 a similar voluntary society serving but not controlled by the Church of England was begun as the Church Missionary Society. The example of Carey and the Baptist Mission extended across the Atlantic for another voluntary society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (Congregationalist), which began in 1812 in support of mission effort in India. The element of "subversion" of which Walls spoke would require a leavening work over time, for it was only decades later that the various denominations from which the early enthusiastic supporters of mission were drawn committed themselves corporately to the ecclesiastical support of the missionary cause.<sup>66</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This essay has not attempted to rewrite the history of Protestant mission, but only to draw attention to under-represented parts of that story. This requires a fresh acknowledgment of both the temporal priority of Catholic transoceanic mission in the age of the European voyages of discovery begun a half-millennium ago and the unfortunate combination of military conquest and colonial domination with those early missionary efforts. Also required is an acknowledging that there are not lacking early and regular examples of Protestant missionary effort (with Calvinists very prominent in them) as Protestant regions of Europe gradually gained oceanic access in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. That oceanic access brought first Geneva, then the Netherlands, and in turn the New England Puritans to embrace missionary opportunity.

In the eighteenth century, Lutheran Pietists as well as German Moravians joined this Protestant world mission effort. All this effort preceded the epoch marked by the departure of William Carey for India in 1793; the reader who has devoured Carey's seminal booklet *An Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792) will know that Carey had made it his business to devour all the previous Protestant mission history (including that of Calvinists) he could obtain.<sup>67</sup> In light of this pre-history, we may only with qualification go on describing Carey as "the

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<sup>65</sup> John Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society: A Jubilee Memorial Including a Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Institution* (London: Fisher, 1844). Ten of the thirty-six leading ministers involved in the origination of the LMS were Scottish Presbyterians serving expatriate Scots in England, while others served Congregational/Independent or Calvinistic Methodist churches in London and the south of England. The evangelical Calvinism of the early LMS is also helpfully detailed by Johannes Van den Berg, *Constrained by Jesus' Love* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1956).

<sup>66</sup> In broad terms, the 1820s witnessed denominations in the Reformed tradition, on both sides of the Atlantic, authorizing the setting up of foreign mission agencies as expressions of their corporate life.

<sup>67</sup> A facsimile edition of Carey's *Inquiry* was published in 1961 (London: Carey Kingsgate). It is also accessible in Daniel Webber, *William Carey and the Missionary Vision* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2005).

Father of Modern Missions.”<sup>68</sup> The fervor for mission work that was laid bare by the transdenominational outpouring of support for Carey and the Baptist Mission Society clearly brought much nearer the founding of the London Missionary Society; this differed from the Baptist Society not over Calvinism (with which both were in harmony) but only the administration of the baptismal ordinance given by Christ. The passing of this missionary “torch” to new, like-minded societies on the Continent and in America fills out this under-told story of how evangelical zeal when combined with Calvinist theology provided the underpinnings of a vast proportion (never the whole, of course) of Protestant missionary expansion in “the great century” of missionary expansion.

It seemed so obvious at the end of the nineteenth century that Calvinism and missions had been good partners that few felt pressed to document the full extent of it. One who did (from within the Presbyterian and Reformed constituency) claimed at the century’s end that of the world’s Protestant missionary force, a full 25% were recruited from that family of churches.<sup>69</sup> His figure took no account of the many Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Baptists whose convictions substantially overlapped. It is good to be reminded just how many “household names” from that great era of missionary expansion were both sent out by agencies upholding and served within a Calvinistic framework. A dictionary of biography would rapidly make this plain regarding Robert Morrison (1782–1834) who translated the Bible into Chinese by 1818; Robert Moffat (1795–1883) and his son-in-law David Livingstone (1813–73), who gave themselves to South and Central Africa; and a host of others.<sup>70</sup>

Late twentieth century prognosticators about an assumed dampening effect of Calvinism upon missions have therefore made their pronouncements rashly. Apprehensive statements made in these last decades in the face of the current resurgence of interest in Reformed theology surely ought to give way to more careful assessments if mission history is to be trusted. If it is true that *all* branches of the Christian family might have done more for missions, it is also true that this branch has been “in harness” as long as any expression of Protestantism.

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. A. Morgan Derham, “Carey, William,” in *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (ed. J. D. Douglas; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 192.

<sup>69</sup> The claim was made by Scottish Church historian T. M. Lindsay (1843–1914) in the Glasgow 1896 General Council Meeting of the Reformed and Presbyterian Alliance, as quoted by Zwemer, “Calvinism and Missionary Enterprise,” 215.

<sup>70</sup> A search of a biographical dictionary for the following figures illustrates just how widespread has been the missionary contribution of men and women drawn from a broadly Reformed constituency:

*19th century:* Alexander Duff, Donald Fraser, John Geddie, Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth, Adoniram Judson, David Livingstone, Robert Moffat, Samuel A. Moffett, Robert Morrison, John L. Nevius, John G. Paton, John Philip, A. T. Pierson, John Scudder, Mary Slessor, Johannes Van der Kemp, John Williams.

*20th century:* J. H. Bavinck, William Borden, David Bosch, Hendrik Kraemer, Samuel Hugh Moffett, Lesslie Newbigin, J. H. Oldham, Ida Scudder, Robert E. Speer, Johanna Veenstra, Johannes Verkuyl, Samuel Zwemer.