

# THE MISSION OF DEVELOPMENT

RELIGION AND TECHNO-POLITICS IN ASIA

3-4 DECEMBER 2015



JOEY VELASCO'S *HAPAG NG PAG-ASA* (TABLE OF HOPE) (2005). PHILIPPINE COPYRIGHT © 2007 KENOSIS PUBLICATIONS

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**ARI**  
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
National University of Singapore

The history of development has recently become a lively and debated field. Recent monographs have begun to rethink the established storyline of development's sudden invention by American and European powers in the wake of the Second World War to consider development in the *longue durée*. As part of this new historicizing, and accompanying the reworked timeframes, a new set of actors have come into view. Of these, Christian missions are emerging as particularly important, if also contested. Some argue that development is a child of missionaries drawing direct moral and political sustenance, and also organizational patterns, from earlier extensive missionary activities in education, health, fundraising, and advocacy. Others contest this view. Regardless, it is becoming increasingly clear that an adequate understanding of the rise and operations of development must take into account a range of religious actors that have previously been ignored and sidelined.

This conference seeks to reflect on the key question of what the relationships between mission and development are and how these have changed over time. To what extent have missionaries worked alongside, within, and/or against development? This line of inquiry, however, is complicated by the fact of a porous boundary between mission and development. Varying through space and time, the drawing of the borderline is influenced by diverse social imaginaries, legal and policy mechanisms, and theological/doctrinal discourses justifying and proscribing particular patterns of interaction. Missionary work and development action may at times be subsumed into each other, but they can also be disarticulated and at times even be cast in conflict with each other.

This conference aims to interrogate the complex relationships between Christian mission and international aid and development in Asia (broadly defined). We welcome historical and/or anthropological examinations of detailed case studies involving missionaries and development actors; whether they interact in key sites of negotiation of aspirations — ranging from local projects to the World Council of Churches or the UN — or relate to communities and institutions in the course of project implementation. We encourage papers that engage with one or several of the following questions:

- How have missionary discourses, practices, and imaginations been shaped by development actors and vice-versa?
- How have missionary and development ethics, as expressed on a global scale as well as by local actors, influenced each other through time? Do development actors continue to inflect (or reject) the missionaries' moral guidelines? To what extent have missionaries adapted to the age of development, and how have the values emphasized in development discourse marked the formulation of missionary projects?
- What influence have missionary and development organizational structures had on each other? To what extent have specific organizations or projects been shaped by missionary actors? To what extent have missionaries taken on board development techno-politics or subverted/elided the imperative to render their vocation technical?
- How and in what ways have the lines between mission and development been drawn and reworked? To what extent does policy at international, national, regional, and organizational levels shape mission/development practices? What disciplinary interventions enable a division to be seen as ordinary (or contested)?
- What does attending to mission-development dynamics in Asia do for scholarly understandings of development and mission during the long twentieth century?

## CONVENORS

**Assoc Prof R. Michael Feener**

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## SECRETARIAT

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<b>3 DECEMBER 2015 (THURSDAY)</b>			
<b>09:00 – 09:15</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>		
<b>09:15 – 10:00</b>	<b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTORY REMARKS</b>		
<i>09:15</i>	<b>Michael Feener</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Catherine Scheer</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Philip Fountain</b>   National University of Singapore		
<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>KEYNOTE 1</b>		
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Michael Feener</b>   National University of Singapore		
<i>10:00</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Karel Steenbrink</b> Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands</td> <td>Projects, Not a Plan: Christian Churches and Indonesian Development, 1965-1995</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Karel Steenbrink</b> Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands	Projects, Not a Plan: Christian Churches and Indonesian Development, 1965-1995
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<i>10:40</i>	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>		
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>		
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>PANEL 1</b>		
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Eli Elinoff</b>   National University of Singapore		
<i>11:30</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Jeremy Jammes</b> Universiti Brunei Darussalam</td> <td>When Religious Development Challenges Anthropology: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Missionaries and Ethno-metric in Vietnam and Beyond</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Jeremy Jammes</b> Universiti Brunei Darussalam	When Religious Development Challenges Anthropology: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Missionaries and Ethno-metric in Vietnam and Beyond
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<i>11:50</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Gregory Vanderbilt</b> Gadjah Mada University-Yogyakarta, Indonesia</td> <td>Towards One Pre-History of Religion and Development: Missionary Social Science and Lay Expertise Consider Imperial Japan</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Gregory Vanderbilt</b> Gadjah Mada University-Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Towards One Pre-History of Religion and Development: Missionary Social Science and Lay Expertise Consider Imperial Japan
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<i>12:10</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Noëmi Rui</b> Universität Bern, Switzerland</td> <td>The Struggle for a Sustainable Development Concept: Persekutan Gereja-Gereja Di Indonesia and the Influence of the Word Council of Churches 1968-1978</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Noëmi Rui</b> Universität Bern, Switzerland	The Struggle for a Sustainable Development Concept: Persekutan Gereja-Gereja Di Indonesia and the Influence of the Word Council of Churches 1968-1978
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<i>12:30</i>	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>		
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>		

<b>14:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>PANEL 2</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Chen Lang</b>   National University of Singapore	
14:00	<b>Enyi Hu</b> University of Hong Kong	The Gospel of Intellectuality: Indoctrinating Yenching Educational Missionaries in the Progressive Era
14:20	<b>Phoebe Yee</b> World Vision <b>Ajit Hazra</b> World Vision	Christian Mission and Development: Perspectives in Community Transformation from World Vision Sri Lanka and Thailand
14:40	<b>John Roxborough</b> University of Otago, New Zealand	Disconnected Visions and Mission beyond Their Means: The Negeri Sembilan Agro-Industrial Training Project in Malaysia, 1972 to 1987
15:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>16:00 – 17:30</b>	<b>PANEL 3</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Oona Paredes</b>   National University of Singapore	
16:00	<b>Erica Larson</b> Boston University, USA	Developing Faith and Character to Develop the Nation: Perspectives From An Elite Indonesian Catholic School
16:20	<b>Kirk R. Person</b> SIL International, USA	SIL International and the Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Movement (MTB-MLE)
16:40	<b>Giuseppe Bolotta</b> National University of Singapore	From Thaification to De-thaification of Catholicism: “Development Missionaries” in the Slums of Bangkok
17:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END OF DAY 1</b>	
<b>18:00 – 20:00</b>	<b>CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons &amp; Invited Guests)</b>	

## 4 DECEMBER 2015 (FRIDAY)

<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>PANEL 4</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Aga Zuoshi</b>   National University of Singapore	
09:00	<b>V.J. Varghese</b> University of Hyderabad, India	'For the God and For the Country': Agricultural Migrations and its Moralities in South India
09:20	<b>Laura S. Meitzner Yoder</b> Wheaton College, Illinois <b>Philip Fountain</b> National University of Singapore	Everyday Technopolitics: Mennonite Agricultural Development and Mission in Indonesia
09:40	<b>Prakash Kumar</b> Pennsylvania State University, USA	The Green Revolutionaries: American Missions and Agricultural Development in India
10:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>10:30 – 11:00</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>PANEL 5</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Philip Fountain</b>   National University of Singapore	
11:00	<b>Jacob Nerenberg</b> University of Toronto, Canada	Mission Infrastructure: Conversion, Partition and Techno-Politics in Highlands Papua (Indonesia)
11:20	<b>Fransiska Widyawati</b> Gadja Mada University, Indonesia <b>Maribeth Erb</b> National University of Singapore	Missionaries and Mining: Conflicts over Development in Eastern Indonesia
11:40	<b>Kim Hui-yeon</b> CEIFR-EHESS, France	Evangelical Missionaries as Missionaries of Korean Model of Development?
12:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	

<b>13:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>PANEL 6</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Liang Yongjia</b>   National University of Singapore	
<i>13:30</i>	<b>Sandra Hudd</b> University of Tasmania, Australia	Quiet Missionaries: Catholic Nuns as Change-agents in Colonial Singapore
<i>13:50</i>	<b>Wen Shuang</b> National University of Singapore	A Floating Life: Mediations on the Globe-Trotting Life of Ahmad Fahmi (1861-1933)
<i>14:10</i>	<b>Elena Shih</b> Brown University, Rhode Island, USA	Free Market Evangelism: Moral Economies of Abolition in the Transnational Anti-Human Trafficking Movement
<i>14:30</i>	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>15:30 – 16:45</b>	<b>CLOSING REMARKS &amp; GENERAL DISCUSSIONS</b>	
<i>15:30</i>	<b>Philip Fountain</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Catherine Scheer</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Michael Feener</b>   National University of Singapore	
<b>16:45</b>	<b>END OF CONFERENCE</b>	

**Projects, Not a Plan:  
Christian Churches and Indonesian Development, 1965-1995**

**Karel Steenbrink**

Professor Emeritus in Intercultural Theology at Utrecht University, The Netherlands  
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From the 1830s on Christian mission has worked extensively in many of the so-called 'outer islands' of Indonesia. In Minahasa, Batakland, West Papua, Flores, Timor, the Toraja regions of Sulawesi and other regions, it has gained many followers through the major medium of education. This often happened in close cooperation with the Dutch colonial administration. It not only affected religious rituals and confession, but changed all kind of social and economic life. Traditional clan houses were left for villages with nuclear family houses around a school, a church and sometimes a nursery. In this way the Christian churches were instrumental in a very fundamental change in many Indonesian societies. In the development period (after 1965) the Christian churches could spend substantial sums of money in the framework of the Western efforts of developmental work. This mechanism worked always through short term projects that never covered an overall development strategy. Somewhat patchwork, with modest, locally restricted goals. These goals and some of the results will be identified here for major regions of Indonesia. I will try to formulate some differences between Catholics, Protestants and Muslims (especially Muhammadiyah, also Nahdlatul Ulama initiatives). Development work of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had not such impact on societies as happened through the educational programmes. They were not focused upon an increase of church membership (this happened in this period automatically through the obligation of Soeharto's New Order that all citizens should adhere to one of the 'Big Five', the great religions). They were initially administered by the churches, but soon developed in many places into multifaith Non-Governmental Organizations, independent from one specific religion.

**Karel Steenbrink** studied Christianity and Islam in Nijmegen, the Netherlands and in Indonesia (Pesantren Darussalam in Gontor). He wrote his PhD dissertation on Islamic Education in Modern Indonesia (1974). Between 1981-1988 he was teaching at the State Academy of Islamic Studies (IAIN) in Jakarta and Yogyakarta and wrote a history of Islam in Indonesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He has also published some books on Qur'anic Studies, among these *The Jesus Verses in the Qur'an* (Hyderabad: Henry Martin Institute, 2011; Indonesian translation *Nabi 'Isa dalam al-Qur'an. Sebuah Interpretasi outsider atas al-Qur'an*, Yogyakarta: Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2015). Since the early 1990s he concentrated more on Christianity in Indonesia. His most recent publication is *Catholics in Independent Indonesia: 1945-2010* (Leiden: KITLV/Brill, 2015).



**When Religious Development Challenges Anthropology:  
The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Missionaries and Ethno-Metric  
in Vietnam and Beyond**

**Jeremy Jammes**

Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam  
jeremy.jammes@ubd.edu.bn

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The work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) takes place at the crossroads of evangelization and academic research, often placing the anthropologist in embarrassment when reading and quoting SIL data: ethnographic maps and statistics, language dictionaries and method, ethnic diagrams, etc. SIL's main objective is indeed to translate the Bible into all languages by collecting ethnolinguistic data – which were previously deficient – thanks to the methods of participant-observation and lexical investigation. Tracing its origins back to the mid-1930s in the United States and Central America, SIL started its missionary, linguistic and development activities in Southeast Asia in the 1950s, especially in Philippines (1953) and in Vietnam (1954). This paper analyses the nature, character, expression, and trajectories of SIL members, investigating their missionisation, their visual and metric conception of conversion and ethnographic encounter, their conception of authorities, the State and *Pax Americana* during Vietnam wartime (1954-75). Through this line of inquiry, the study attempts to answer fundamental research questions: what kind of transformation does SIL make to our conception of missionary and religious development activities? How do SIL activities challenge the discipline of anthropology itself?

**Jeremy Jammes** is a social anthropologist and has completed his PhD research on Caodaism in 2006 (Paris X Nanterre). He has published book chapters and articles on religious and ethnic issues in Vietnam and Cambodia. He has recently published a book on Vietnamese religion Cao Dai and its global networks (*Les Indes savantes*, 2014) and co-edited a special issue on “Evangelical Protestantism and South-East Asian Societies” (*Social Compass*, 2013). Between 2010 and 2014, he served in Bangkok as Deputy Director of the Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (IRASEC, Bangkok), for which he has (co-) edited three regional geopolitics outlooks. He currently serves as Associate Professor of Social Anthropology in the Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Institute of Asian Studies.

## **Towards One Pre-History of Religion and Development: Missionary Social Science and Lay Expertise Consider Imperial Japan**

**Gregory Vanderbilt**

Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Gadjah Mada University-Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
gvanderbilt@gmail.com

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Dispatched in 1930 to evaluate American Protestant missionary activities in Japan, China, and India, the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry introduced the lay (though not exactly secular) expert to challenge the then as yet largely undisputed institutions of "missionary knowledge" concerning Asian societies, including, in this paper, imperial Japan on the cusp of the Asia-Pacific War. "Fact-finders" from the Institute for Social and Religious Research and the Institute of Pacific Relations, both of which had emerged from within the YMCA in response to the question of anti-Asian racism on the West Coast of the United States, used the tools of newly professionalizing social science in conjunction with similarly-minded Japanese experts, but none acknowledged the realities of empire nor yet employed "development" as a concept, often concluding that the state had rendered such projects unnecessary (as in medicine).

Ultimately the controversy over the LFMI's report, published in 1932 as *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, was focused on the theology of relating to other religions its "Commission of Appraisal" chairman Harvard philosophy professor W. Ernest Hocking infused into its first half, turning it into a final salvo in the modernist-fundamentalist controversies of the 1920s, and not on its call to replace missionaries doing "temporary" functions of church planting with "permanent" functions of expertly "representing" a Christian way of life and "sympathetically" studying local problems. The Inquiry marked a point of divergence, coming as it did between the two pre-postwar conferences of the International Missionary Council, in Jerusalem in 1928 with its focus on research into the social context of belief and a decade later at Madras centered on "the authority of the faith" and Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.

Returning to this history as a pre-history of the discourse on religion's uneasy relationship to development as an ideology and a set of institutions and methods promises to reopen assumptions underlying how overlapping networks of proto-NGOs set out to evaluate social change in Asia ostensibly in order to improve evangelistic prospects at the same moment the breakdown in theological certainties was troubling the whole enterprise in the context of the questioning of colonialism and, perhaps, of a different dialogue that was possible through cracks that could let light in.

**Gregory Vanderbilt** is a lecturer in the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a multi- and inter-religious religious studies MA program and research center in a non-religiously affiliated state university. His position there is made possible through a relationship with a North American faith-based development and peacebuilding organization, Mennonite Central Committee. He earned his PhD (2005) in the History Department at the University of California, Los Angeles, with a dissertation examining one Christian community founded by an American missionary and his Japanese students in prewar Japan. He is the translator of Mitsuo Miyata, *Authority and Obedience: Romans 13:1-7 in Modern Japan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009) and participated in the 2007 ARI conference on Christianity and the State in Asia.

## **The Struggle for a Sustainable Development Concept: Persekutan Gereja-Gereja Di Indonesia and the Influence of the Word Council of Churches 1968-1978**

**Noëmi Rui**

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This paper deals with the adaption of the concept of sustainable Development inside church-related development agencies and how the concept was transmitted to Indonesia.

Since the 1990s, the concept of Sustainable Development (SD) has been established as a strategic paradigm designed to balance out social, ecological, and economic aspects in view of preserving the resources needed for the livelihood of future generations. This paper deals with the idea of sustainable development and asks how the concept has been developed, transmitted, and evolved in the discursive practices of various actors in Indonesia between domestic and global changes.

In 1971 SODEPAX, a cooperation between the Catholic Church and the WCC, came up with the first zero-grow-concept and thereby sharpened the development discussion with their clearly anti-capitalistic concept. In 1974 there was an important conference of the WCC in Bucharest with the title: "Science and Technology for a Human Development". One very important point of agreement was the development target of a "just, participatory and sustainable society". Since then, most of WCC-related development organisations followed the leading concept of SD.

Drawing on Corinna Unger's (2010) call that [...] it would be useful to analyze in greater detail how ideas about development and modernization circled the globe, how they were appropriated, and who transported them", the paper seeks to establish stronger links between ideas and practice.

**Noëmi Rui** finished her Master in Contemporary History and Philosophy in 2012. During her studies, Noëmi Rui consistently specialized in non-Western history, including development-related issues. For her master's thesis on the role of the student movement in Guatemala's civil war 1960s-80s she acquired experience in conducting self-reliant research outside Europe. In her philosophy minor, she studied questions of human rights, Ethic and political Philosophy. Noëmi Rui is now a PhD Researcher at the Institute of History University of Bern since November 2012. She is researching about the Concept of Sustainability and its adaption inside the WCC. The Project is titled "The World Council of Churches' Version of the Concept of Sustainability and Its Diffusion: the Case of Indonesia" and it's part of a broader Project about Sustainable Development in Indonesia in cooperation with the Institute of Social anthropology at the University of Bern.

## **The Gospel of Intellectuality: Indoctrinating Yenching Educational Missionaries in the Progressive Era**

**Enyi Hu**

School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Hong Kong  
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Scholars since Jessie Lutz and John Fairbank have investigated American Christian experiments in Asia from the perspectives of cultural imperialism and ideological accommodation in transnational interactions, yet often overlooked in the historiography is the question of missionary intentions, of what American student volunteers aimed to bring and why they came to the Far East to teach. A complement to current scholarly debates, this paper argues that American educational missionaries during the Progressive Era were unconsciously indoctrinated into a belief in disseminating the gospel of intellectuality abroad. Through a case study of Yenching University, this paper attempts to sketch out the rarely known formative years of prospective missionaries via an “ideas in context” approach. By mapping a network of transatlantic cultural and theological exchange at the turn of the twentieth century, this research unravels how America’s Third Great Awakening was intertwined with the rise of liberalism and evolutionary theory in Europe. This study thus contributes to our understanding of secularization and modernity, a key episode in European intellectual development. By comparing the historical accounts of Student Volunteer Movement in the United States with China Inland Mission founded by British missionaries, this paper further examines the distinctive shift from religious salvation to social and intellectual salvation in American Protestant discourses that paved the way for educational missionaries’ subsequent participation in Chinese national salvation. Additionally, the paper highlights the role of Rockefeller Foundation in promoting secularism among prospective Yenching educational missionaries and suggests how capitalist expansion at home informed missionary work overseas.

**Enyi Hu** is an MPhil Candidate in American Studies, School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Hong Kong. She is also a graduate research assistant in the department. Her current project examines American faculty experience at missionary-founded institutions in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. She is particularly interested in the trajectory of American missionary discourses and the extent to which Protestant enterprise overseas had repercussions for social, intellectual, and religious development at home. Her other research interests include US China relations, Americans abroad, Anglo-American rivalry in the twentieth century and social history of modern China. Ms. Hu has been awarded HKU postgraduate scholarship and the University Research Postgraduate Students Travel Grant (2014-2015). The latter supported her research trip to Yale Divinity School Library and Houghton Library at Harvard University in the summer of 2015.

## **Christian Mission and Development: Perspectives in Community Transformation from World Vision Sri Lanka and Thailand**

**Phoebe Yee**

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**Ajit Hazra**

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In the field of development, faith-based engagements are increasingly recognized to have a role in bringing about positive change. At the same time, Christian organisations working with the community are moving towards a stronger development focus that meets both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor. Couple with this, often, there has been a perceived uneasiness in the development industry that faith-based engagements are primarily geared towards goals of proselytization/evangelism. This paper argues that faith-based development in practice, can be and is broader than the proselytization/evangelism mode or endeavour, and instead seeks to address the totality of development of its beneficiaries, ie, the physical, social and spiritual aspects of the community. If integrated in meaningful ways, such engagements may actually facilitate more sustainable community transformation.

This paper seeks to contribute to the conversation on the mission of development of Christian faith-based development through observations from the field practice of World Vision in Asia, specifically Thailand and Sri Lanka.

The case studies in Thailand and Sri Lanka will provide evidence that in community development, a Faith Based Development Organisation can address issues in community development through negotiating and integrating faith perspectives in a multi-faith context without the agenda of religious conversions.

**Phoebe Yee** is currently staff of a Faith in Development project at World Vision Foundation of Thailand. Prior to joining the Thailand office, she had experiences in youth engagement, marketing and Christian Commitments in both the Singapore and Asia-Pacific offices of World Vision. She holds a Master of Arts in International Development Studies (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand) and a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Geography (National University of Singapore). Phoebe is interested in faith-based development in Southeast Asia and has extensive volunteering experiences with youth and Christian organisations in the region, serving local communities in youth development, education and infrastructure improvement.

**Ajit Hazra** is a director with World Vision who oversees issues related to Faith and Development in the South Asia and Pacific Region. Key areas of focus are on integrating faith perspectives in development, and developing partnership and collaboration with the various religious communities and institutions in mutual concerns in community development. Previously he worked with people affected by leprosy and disability in Timor Leste and in training and capacity building with the community and the church in Southern Africa.

## **Disconnected Visions and Mission Beyond their Means: The Negeri Sembilan Agro-Industrial Training Project in Malaysia: 1972 to 1987**

**John Roxborough**

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In July 1972, Bishop Bertil Envall, the Swedish Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore, Datuk Mansor Othman, Chief Minister of the State of Negeri Sembilan, and P P Narayanan, Chair of the National Union of Plantation Workers in Malaysia, conceived the idea of a joint agricultural and trade-training school to provide vocational skills for Tamil and Malay boys from impoverished families. Christian, Hindu and Muslim religious differences were set aside in an ambitious scheme supported by international donors including the Church of Sweden Mission, the Lutheran World Federation and the Government of India. Despite promising beginnings and some early success, the scheme foundered through failure to ensure a viable business model, a lack of engagement from the local church itself and the difficulty of navigating religious sensitivities and developing adequate governance and management structures beyond the founders' personal involvement and tenure of positions of political and economic authority. If these factors were mostly underestimated rather than unforeseen, and some of the hazards were hardly unique, nevertheless the risks to survival of a mission without secure and sustainable economic means and based on a politically sensitive vision disconnected from its major stakeholders, have to be seen as considerable. They may also have been worth taking. This case-study outlines the story and explores the religious factors which helped make such a project feasible and contributed to its failure.

**John Roxborough** is an historian of Christian mission, currently Honorary Fellow at the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. He taught at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia from 1983 to 1990 and from 2009 to 2015 was Honorary Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia at Trinity College Singapore. He is author of *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, Singapore: Genesis Books, 2014.

**Göran Wiking** is a Church of Sweden minister and graduate of Seminari Theoloji Malaysia who was formerly on the staff of the Negeri Agro-Industrial Training Project. He is author of *Breaking the Pot: Contextual Responses to Survival Issues in Malaysian Churches*, Studia Missionalia Svecana; 96. Lund: Studia Missionalia Svecana, 2004.

## **Developing Faith and Character to Develop the Nation: Perspectives From An Elite Indonesian Catholic School**

**Erica Larson**

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This paper is a historically situated ethnographic study of a privately run Catholic boarding school in North Sulawesi, Indonesia that aims to contribute to national development by producing Christian (not exclusively Catholic) elites who can influence the future of democratic, multi-confessional Indonesia. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Minahasan area of the North Sulawesi had become the region with the highest rates of schooling in the Dutch East Indies. This development went hand in hand with the success of the Netherlands Missionary Society and the Minahasan population's large-scale conversion to Protestant Christianity. However, strong national centralization from the late 1960s-1990s that tended to focus on development in Java more than that of the outer islands (like Sulawesi) and led to a relative decline in educational prominence in the region. In response, during this current period of decentralization, some schools in North Sulawesi have taken a development-oriented stance and aim to use their position as a majority Christian province to build up a strong base to form Christian elites who can go on to contribute to national development. This ethnographic study focuses on the discourses of development prominent in one Catholic school that are projected by the school administration, and the emphasis on building faith and character as the method for achieving this goal. The school's vision also provides a lens for a broader debate about how North Sulawesi can become a model province and secure a role for itself in national development as a majority Christian province in eastern Indonesia. Missionization in this sense channels religious values through civic ones with the goal of forming a faithful and moral community to lead the region and nation towards progress.

**Erica Larson** is a PhD Candidate in Cultural Anthropology at Boston University. She is currently conducting long-term dissertation fieldwork in the majority Christian province of North Sulawesi, Indonesia on civic and religious education. Her research is focused on the process of negotiating public ethics and plural coexistence in a religiously and ethnically diverse society. In 2009, Erica studied in Bali for one semester as an undergraduate, and later returned to Indonesia in 2010 with Volunteers in Asia to teach English at an Islamic University in Central Java for one year. She then began the PhD program at Boston University in the fall of 2012, conducted preliminary dissertation fieldwork in Indonesia during the summer of 2014, and her dissertation fieldwork in January 2015.

## **SIL International and the Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Movement**

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SIL International has long been known for its linguistics, literacy and translation work in minority language settings. In recent years, the organization has been both a catalyst for and a beneficiary of a larger movement to include ethnic languages in the primary school curriculum of linguistically diverse nations in Africa and Asia-Pacific.

SIL is not alone in this effort; other key players in this movement include United Nations organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF; funding agencies such as the World Bank and USAID; international development agencies such as Plan International, Save the Children, and CARE; and domestic non-governmental organizations such as the Foundation for Applied Linguistics (Thailand) and the 170+ Talaytayan MLE Consortium (Philippines). This cooperation has led to successful MTB MLE pilot projects in over a dozen countries, some of which subsequently enacted new national language-in-education policies that are remarkably supportive of ethnic minority languages.

This paper will chronicle the development of the MTB MLE movement over the past 15 years, highlighting the cooperation of the various actors and how SIL International has made significant structural adjustments to make its technical expertise more easily accessible to a wide variety of partners.

**Kirk R. Person** came to Thailand in 1988 and has been teaching English for a year. He holds a BA (history) from Baylor University, MA (linguistics) from Payap University (Thailand), and PhD (linguistics) from the University of Texas at Arlington. He has taught at Yonok, Payap, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat, and Mahidol Universities in Thailand. Since 1995 he has worked with SIL International, an international faith-based organization focused on minority language issues. He has conducted linguistic fieldwork throughout Southeast Asia, advised to the Patani Malay-Thai Multilingual Education Project, and served on the Royal Institute of Thailand's National Language Policy Drafting Committee. Since 2005 he has been a member of the Multilingual Education Working Group, a consortium of UN agencies, international development organizations, and academics dedicated to improving the educational of ethnic minority children through inclusion of their mother tongues in the formal school curriculum.



## **From Thaification to De-thaification of Catholicism: “Development Missionaries” in the Slums of Bangkok**

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The Little Ones’ House is a Catholic NGO assisting disabled children in the slums of Bangkok since 2002. Missionaries of the Xaverian Missionary Society of Mary lead the NGO. As an institution devoted to the promotion of children’s rights, the Little Ones’ House benefits from the support of local authorities and other “secular” NGOs. Nevertheless, the children’s rights transnational rhetoric – borrowed from development discourses – seems here to be deployed as a techno-juridical legitimizing label that hides deeper religious purposes and interventions. Structures like the Little Ones’ House represent a new organizational articulation of the missionary efforts in Bangkok and a revealing window onto how the contemporary interplay between development and religion is internally pluralizing Thai Catholicism and framing emerging strategies of proselytization in the contemporary urban, and primarily Buddhist context. This paper explores the shifting roles played by missionaries who have been heading formally secular NGOs, as the Little Ones’ House, within the historical landscape of Thai Catholicisms. It will be argued that these “development missionaries” are trying to promote a “de-thaification” of normative local Catholicism with the aim to counter-indigenize the Gospels in favor of “non-Thai” marginal groups.

**Giuseppe Bolotta** is an Italian Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He earned his PhD in Anthropology from University Bicocca of Milan, and his Master’s in Psychology from University San Raffaele of Milan. He has also worked with Thai scholars whilst being an exchange PhD student at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. His doctoral research is a multi-situated ethnography of religious, humanitarian and state institutional politics for poor children living in the slums of Bangkok (Thailand). His current research project at ARI aims at comparatively exploring the relationship between development and religion in the case of the Catholic, Christian, Buddhist, and “secular” NGOs dealing with childcare in the Thai capital’s shantytowns. He co-founded the research group “Sciences de l’Enfance. Enfants des Sciences” (SEES, <http://sciences-enfances.org>) and has worked with Psychologists Without Borders (PSF).

**For the God and For the Country:  
Agricultural Migrations and its Moralities in South India**

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My proposed paper would look at the involvement of the Syrian Christian church in the migration of peasants from the cultivated planes of rural Travancore to the 'pristine' and hardly inhabited mountain forests of Malabar in Kerala, South India (1900-1970), through which 'empty' and 'abandoned' spaces were turned into locations of human activity, agriculture and abundance. Such migrations, in search of land and mobility, were result of a new development discourse fashioned in Travancore with land and hard work as its core, which was in the making right from the colonial intervention on the native landscape for plantation agriculture. The involvement of the Christian missionaries, who as representatives of an emerging lower middle class in Europe combined a predilection for a sober and industrious life with a keen eye for economic opportunities that the native circumstances offered, has made this transition more significant by making it one of the defining features of Kerala's economic modernity. Appropriated by the Syrian Christians through a process of translation, the development model stay put hegemonic moralizing even the unlawful and enabling the 'industrious wealth-producers'/migrant settlers with claims of greater citizenship than others who do not conform to this ideal. In the making of Malabar as an agrarian and missionary frontier, the Syrian Christian church not only offered a theological rationale for land reclamation and agrarian expansion but also played an organizing role in the political struggle of its laity to protect their arduously won material world in Malabar from state interventions. The paper would complicate the pre-scribed teleologies of the modern, which prophesied the progressive disappearance of religion with the blooming of the political, and demonstrates that the church efficaciously engaged the modern by fostering novel forms of capital accumulation, apart from displaying its political acumen in taking on the state with its own peculiar contextual reasoning. Straddling between theological, nationalist, economic, ethical and humanitarian rationalities with ease and careful calibration, and maneuvering a joint front with its political other- the communists, the migrant narratives/fiction construct a devoted Syrian Christian subject yielding to the divine will and the nation against all odds in building their Canaan.

**V.J. Varghese** teaches at the Department of History, University of Hyderabad, India. He was with the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum and the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, prior to this. His areas of interest include modern South Asian history, transnational migrations from South Asia and making of regional modernities in South Asia, with a focus on Kerala in South India and Punjab in North India. He has co-authored *Dreaming Mobility and Buying Vulnerability: Overseas Recruitment Practices in India* (Routledge, 2011) and co-edited *Anjuru Varshathe Keralam: Chila Arivadayalangal* in Malayalam (Tapasam/DC Books, 1999/2011), *Migration, Mobility and Multiple Affiliations: Punjabis in a Transnational World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) apart from writing in reputed journals and contributing chapters to many edited volumes.

## **Everyday Technopolitics: Mennonite Agricultural Development and Mission in Indonesia**

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In the 1970s the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a North American Christian service agency in the Anabaptist tradition, assigned staff to actively partner with an evangelistic and church planting project in the Kapuas Hulu area of West Kalimantan. This was a significant departure from earlier MCC practice in Indonesia and it contrasted with MCC's modus operandi in most other countries. Yet this 'evangelistic turn' also drew upon significant missiological currents circulating in MCC at that time. These theological imaginations saw technical agricultural interventions (along with other forms of development assistance and academic knowledge) and evangelism engaged in complex negotiations. Drawing on archival documents, interviews and fieldwork in West Kalimantan this paper examines the everyday technopolitics carried out by the American MCCers and their Indonesian colleagues.

**Laura S. Meitzner Yoder** is a political ecologist who works with international development studies at Wheaton College, IL, USA, where she is also Director of the Human Needs and Global Resources (HNGR) Program and Associate Professor of Environmental Studies. Her background spans plant sciences, international agriculture and rural development, and forestry and environmental studies (Cornell, Yale). She has taught university students and conducted research on the intersection of customary land and forest authorities with state governance in West Papua and Aceh, Indonesia; Timor-Leste; Thailand; and Bhutan. She is interested in the role that local environmental understanding plays in mission and development efforts.

**Philip Fountain** is Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He received his doctorate in anthropology from the Australian National University. His research focuses on engagements between religion and international aid and development. He edited *Religion and the Politics of Development* (with Robin Bush and Michael Feener). He is in the final stages of completing a manuscript on the work of the Mennonite Central Committee in the context of Indonesia.

## **The Green Revolutionaries: American Missions and Agricultural Development in India**

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This paper offers a history of agricultural modernization at the behest of missionary experts at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute in the United Provinces of India from the colonial times to the era of resource-intensive, high-yield oriented “green revolution” agriculture. American missions set up the institute in 1912 and continued to run the institution even after India’s independence in 1947. The institute subsequently formed linkages with the efforts by the U.S. state department and American foundations at launching the program of community development in villages and of agricultural extension service. Scholars have located the antecedents of postcolonial agricultural modernization projects in India in the colonial initiatives of “improvement.” On the other hand, historians and social scientists studying India’s green revolution in the 1960s have dwelled on the role of the U.S. state department and foundations. A focus on Allahabad complicates the pre-history of development by noting the “externalities” of colonial initiatives and the preceding efforts by missions at agricultural intensification as a counterpart to the statist efforts by the Indian and American governments. This paper utilizes the archives of Presbyterian missions, of the founder of Allahabad Institute, Sam Higginbottom, and of Mason Vaugh, agricultural engineer at Allahabad, available at separate repositories in Virginia and Missouri. Such recourse complicates the monolithic narratives of development and modernization woven around the nation and the state by inviting attention to the engagement of missions with rural questions. The paper will illuminate the intersection of “Christian empathy” with projects of colonial improvement and postcolonial development.

**Prakash Kumar** is an Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. His interest lies in the agricultural history of colonial and postcolonial South Asia. Cambridge University Press published his first book on the colonial and global history of indigo plantations in Bengal in 2012 (*Indigo Plantations and Science in Colonial India*). He is currently working on two book projects. One book is a history of hunger in India that argues against the grain of the accepted narrative that the “green revolution” agriculture, with its focus on aggregate yield increase, mitigated the problem of hunger. The larger project looks at the role of American missions, social scientists, technical experts, extension specialists, university faculty, and USDA agronomists in pushing for “modernization” in India’s agricultural arena, and on the Indian state’s postcolonial projects of citizenship, development, and equity that intersected with the former. His second book project is a history of social movements against GM crops in India, which locates communitarian knowledge in the Gandhian logic of the Indian activists, and is due for publication by Indiana University Press in 2017.

**Mission Infrastructure:  
Conversion, Partition, and Techno-Politics in Highlands Papua (Indonesia)**

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Improved infrastructures are increasingly promoted as a key to achieving development and overcoming political instability in the Global South. This paper interrogates that prescription by examining missionary involvement in infrastructure projects in Indonesia's easternmost province of Papua. In response to the region's persistent violent conflict, international agencies have sponsored Special Autonomy programs that focus on extending infrastructures. I contextualize Autonomy's well-documented turbulent outcomes — such as localized conflicts over new state resources — by moving from an early moment in regional mission history to a contemporary case study. In the 1950s, Catholic and Protestant missions partitioned Papua's Central Highlands region into zones of denominational influence. Processes of religious conversion re-organized labour, trade, and mobilities — territorializing new patterns of circulation, livelihood, belonging, and distinction. Missions thus laid the foundations for contemporary administrative partition (*pemekaran*) campaigns, which articulate local identities with aspirations to revive historical infrastructure nodes. Today, missionaries and frontier entrepreneurs collaborate to install new small-scale telecommunications projects. Local leaders, aspiring to convey the 'voice of the region', welcome new wireless networks. Missionary telecommunication projects gain legitimacy by seizing on partition's valorization of infrastructure as a means to raise the status of peripheral places. Interpreting the current moment in historical context shows how an arc of mutual relays binds shifting modes of missionary development to transitions in regional politics. Intersecting religious and logistical projects generate ambiguous formations of futurism and memory, enabling the opening of new frontiers of extraction even as they promise to overcome historically produced disconnection.

**Jacob Nerenberg** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at University of Toronto, Canada. His doctoral research examines contemporary and historical forms of power and aspiration organized around transportation terminals on the outskirts of the town of Wamena in the highlands of Papua (Indonesia). In 2014, he was awarded a Doctoral Research Award by the International Development Research Centre, to support his dissertation fieldwork. He is a co-coordinator of the Development Seminar at University of Toronto's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He is also a member of the Infrastructures Research Group at the Ethnography Lab at University of Toronto. He has worked as a research consultant for the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences and the Center for Effective Global Action at University of California at Berkeley. In 2014, he co-founded the Wamena Economic Observation Project in collaboration with a network of scholars and NGOs in Papua.

## **Missionaries and Mining: Conflicts over Development in Eastern Indonesia**

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The population of eastern Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur has been since the time of the Dutch colonial regime, predominantly Christian. Christian missionaries, of both the Catholic and Protestant religions have been for over a hundred years intensely involved in development projects of health, education, road and other infrastructure building, in this otherwise neglected province. This was the case even after the independence of Indonesia from the Dutch and even several decades later with the rise of a “developmentalist state” under the long reigning President Suharto. The commitment of various church denominations to “development” never seemed in doubt, until the recent controversies over the spread of mining concessions in this poor province. Mining has been promoted as a means for creating jobs, for raising the revenue of the districts, and thus as a means for development in Nusa Tenggara Timur since 2006. However in 2007, the Catholic Church began a movement to resist the proliferation of mining concessions, often given out on community lands by local governments, without full understanding or disclosure of possible detrimental impacts to the resident communities. Supporters of mining have constructed very different narratives of the church's role in development in recent years, accusing them of being elitist as well as afraid of losing traditional authority and influence, if communities prosper through mining. This paper will explore this shift in the discourse about the Church role in development in recent years, in this eastern Indonesian province.

**Fransiska Widyawati** received her PhD in Inter-religious and Cultural Studies from Gadjadara University in Indonesia, on the development of Catholicism in Flores, eastern Indonesia, in 2003. She teaches at the St. Paul's Teacher Training College in Flores, and has been involved in a number of new projects looking at the role of the Catholic Church in education in Flores, and the how various developments including tourism and mining, have affected religious and cultural transformations on Flores Island.

**Maribeth Erb** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore and does research on tourism, ritual, political change, and environmental politics in eastern Indonesia. Her recent research project is on the effect of regional autonomy on mining in the eastern province of Nusa Tenggara Timur.

## Evangelical Missionaries as Missionaries of Korean Model of Development?

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This paper will examine the ways in which some Korean churches act like development actors in South-East Asia. In several contexts across the region, these religious institutions play crucial roles in engagement with both Korean development agencies and Korean private companies. Korean Protestant churches have undertaken active missionary work since the late of 1990s. In South-East Asia, they have recently used the image of South Korea as a developed country in order to foster their own agenda. In doing so, some Korean missionaries try to embody the “success story” of Korea and present it as a protestant model of development for South-east Asians. This has included indirect participation in the organization of labour migrations between South Korea and several countries in the region. The international role of Korean missionaries has thus to be studied as part of this social, economic and cultural process. My first study of the Full Gospel Church in South-East Asia, especially in Cambodia, confirms the importance of these hopes of migration but the relative success of this evangelization of some poor Cambodians cannot be reduced to the potential organization of migrations. The structure of this church is based on a specific role given to local associations of poor people, with a focus on education and a valuation of social and cultural initiatives sometimes funded by the Church. The “exteriority” of Protestantism and the appeal of South Korea in this region can also serve to empower church members within the society to which they belong – which can inform decisions about migration, but may also play a role in the education of local people.

**Hui-Yeon Kim** is Associate Professor and Director of the Department of Korean Studies at INALCO Paris. Her PhD in sociology, which she obtained from EHESS, Paris, focuses on the transnationalization of a Korean Pentecostal church and aims to thereby contribute to a better understanding of the development of Pentecostal movements on a global scale. It won the prize for the best thesis in religious studies attributed by the French Association of Social Sciences of Religions in 2012 and is going to be published in 2016. Dr Kim developed her research on the South-Korean influence in Southeast Asia with the support of a research grant by IRASEC (2013). Besides publishing the results of this research in the form of a monograph, she has also authored several chapters in edited books focused on religion in contemporary Asia.

**Quiet Missionaries:  
Catholic Nuns as Change-agents in Colonial Singapore**

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Recent scholarship on the role of female missionaries has led to a greater appreciation and acknowledgement of their active contributions. In a Southeast Asian context, much of this interest, however, has been on women in Protestant missions – Catholic women, particularly nuns, have attracted less scholarly attention, especially those working within British colonial settings. Taking a Singaporean example, this paper focuses on the women who established the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus in Singapore in 1854: French in a British settlement, female in an overwhelmingly male society, and religious Sisters in a teaching Order. The girls' schools, orphanage and women's refuge they established were forerunners of modern educational and social services in Singapore. Their success demonstrated an ability to navigate the porous borders between Christian evangelism and social development. We can understand the order as operating as an early Non-Government Organization – providing services, raising funds, and responding to government requirements and goals. From within the convent walls, they actively contributed to what in today's context we would define as the development goals of universal education, reduction in child mortality, and the empowerment of women. Including Catholic religious Sisters in the ambit of development serves to position the education and social work of the Sisters in a broader context and adds a useful nuance to our understanding of development in Southeast Asia and to the role of women in mission.

**Sandra Hudd** has recently completed her doctorate, with a thesis entitled "From Orphanage to Entertainment Venue: Colonial and Post-colonial Singapore Reflected in the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus." In 2014 she published an article, 'What are the rosary and nun's habit if not Catholic? The Chapel Party Controversy in Singapore' in *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*. She is currently working on a book based on her dissertation for Lexington Press. Sandra is a social worker and manager who has worked in a number of humanitarian aid situations in Cambodia, Kosovo, Indonesia and Thailand. This has included working for the United Nations, AusAID and non-government agencies.



**A Floating Life:  
Mediations on the Globe-Trotting Life of Ahmad Fahmi (1861-1933)**

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Ahmad Fahmi (1861-1933) was one of the rare cultural hybrids who moved between Egypt, Great Britain, and China at the turn of the twentieth century. Fahmi was born in Alexandria in a locally well-off Muslim family. He converted to Christianity while teaching Arabic to the missionaries of the American Presbyterian Church. After that he left Egypt to study medicine at Edinburgh University. Upon graduation, he was hired by the London Missionary Society to work in Zhangzhou of Fujian province in southern China as a missionary doctor for more than thirty years (1887-1919). He encountered great difficulties at the beginning. However, after a cholera epidemic in 1902 when he saved many lives but lost his own wife, he earned the respect of local villagers. During his long sojourn in China, he established clinics and mentored Chinese disciples in local dialect. Few people in China, however, knew that he was originally an Arab. Most assumed that he was English because he worked for the British missionary, believed in Christianity, and practiced western medicine. Paradoxically, when he needed protection from the British consulate in China during the Boxers Rebellion, his request was rejected because he did not hold a British passport. How can we make sense of the extraordinary life experiences of such an individual?

This paper seeks to explore the mediating roles of language, religion, and institution in enhancing the mobility of people and knowledge during the high tide of global imperialism. The innate agency of Fahmi to acquire linguistic and medical skills as well as the networks of Christian missionary organisations around the world made his globetrotting possible. The contingent event of cholera outbreak provided Fahmi an opportunity to deliver medical service and empathic consoling to the emotional needs of patients with gospel messages. With these factors combined, Fahmi eventually dispelled hostility and suspicion of local Chinese people towards western medicine and Christianity at in the early twentieth century.

**Wen Shuang** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore. She holds an MA degree in Chinese-English Simultaneous Interpreting and Translation from Beijing Foreign Studies University, an MA degree in Middle East Studies from the American University in Cairo, and most recently a PhD in History from Georgetown University. Prior to pursuing her academic training, she worked as a broadcast journalist in Hong Kong.

## Free Market Evangelism: Moral Economies of Abolition in the Transnational Anti-Human Trafficking Movement

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The global concern around human trafficking has provoked a transnational justice movement allying diverse actors including nation states, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and various communities of faith. Since 2007, American evangelical Christian missionary organizations in Beijing and Bangkok have recruited sex workers to work as jewelry-makers, and sell this jewelry through the bustling anti-trafficking movement in the U.S. Drawing on 30 months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork with American evangelical Christian anti-trafficking organizations in China, Thailand, and the United States, my paper contextualizes contemporary missionary efforts to rescue Chinese and Thai victims of sex trafficking within the global politics of sexual humanitarianism (Mai 2013), and rehabilitation through labor.

Arguing that jewelry represents a proxy commodity for freedom from enslavement and a virtuous wage, these programs create a *transnational moral economy of low wage women's work*, where traditional exchanges of wage for labor are replaced with affective and religious commitments between First World missionary rescuers and their purported victims in the Global South. Reflective of contemporary trends in humanitarian action through the market, this paper identifies the ways in which circuits of commerce, religion, morality, and labor sustain these new humanitarian manifestations of global capitalism. Such programs envision a world in which "redemptive labor" (Bernstein 2015) is uniquely melded with Christian conversion and faith, ultimately creating new dependencies on American rescue, aid, and intervention.

**Elena Shih** is an Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University, and Faculty Fellow in charge of the Human Trafficking research cluster through the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. She is a former Postdoctoral Fellow in International Studies at Brown's Watson Institute for International Studies. Shih's first book, *The Price of Freedom: Moral and Political Economies of Global Human Trafficking Rescue*, is based on 40 months of ethnographic participant observation on the transnational movement to combat human trafficking in China, Thailand, and the U.S. This research has received funding from the *Ford Foundation*, *Social Science Research Council*, *American Sociological Association*, and *Fulbright Program*. Her work has been published in numerous edited volumes and in journals including: *The Anti-Trafficking Review*, *Contexts*, *Social Politics*, and *Sociological Perspectives*. Shih received her PhD in Sociology from UCLA, and a BA in Asian Studies from Pomona College. For a recent op-ed about her research, see: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/elena-shih/antitrafficking-rehabilitation-complex-commodity-activism-and-slavefree-goo>

## ABOUT THE ORGANISERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

**Aga Zuoshi** is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts Cluster in Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore. She received her PhD and MA in Anthropology from Minzu University of China. She was an Assistant Professor at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. She is interested in indigenous religion, vernacular development experiences, and the social construction of money. Her geographical area is southwest China, particularly the Yi. She completed a number of fellowships and grants, including British Academy/ESRC visiting fellowship at the University of Cambridge. She is also pursuing a second Doctoral degree in development studies at the University of Oxford.

**Catherine Scheer** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD and MA in Anthropology from Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. Her previous work focused on Cambodia's "indigenous minorities", specifically the Bunong, and their interactions with Protestant development actors. In her doctoral thesis on the dynamics of Christianisation in a highland commune, she examined the links between local worldviews and ritual practices and missionary teachings that have changed over time, affecting the Bunong's claimed identity and moral logic. She thereby attempts to contribute to the anthropology of Christianity in continental Southeast Asia. Her current research – in the context of the Religion and NGOs in Asia project - concerns the production of knowledge about languages in education by Southeast Asia-based international organisations, including Christian NGOs.

**Chen Lang** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She obtained her PhD in Religious Studies from Yale University, where she has been studying religious moral discourses and their modern transformation. Her dissertation, using both Indic and Chinese sources, examines how and why immoral (mostly violent) deeds are excused, tolerated or sometimes even praised in Buddhist narrative literature. She is currently researching on the interaction between nation-building and the religious – especially the Buddhist – understandings of evil/violence in early 20th century Asia.

**Eli Elinoff** is currently a joint Postdoctoral Fellow in Asian Urbanisms in the National University of Singapore's Department of Sociology and the Asia Research Institute. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, San Diego. He is currently working on a book manuscript that explores questions of democracy, citizenship, and urban sustainability through an ethnographic examination of new forms of participatory planning and historical struggles over land rights in Khon Kaen, Thailand. He has publications in *South East Asia Research*, *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, and *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. He has also begun new research on urban ecologies and concrete in contemporary Thailand.

**Liang Yongjia** is currently a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at ARI. Prof Liang received his PhD in Anthropology from Peking University and is a Professor of Anthropology at China Agricultural University. His research interests include the popular religion, religious policy and regulation, nationalism and ethnicity, and kingship in the geographic area of southwest China and its connection with Southeast Asia. He is currently working on a paper tentatively titled "Constructing Religion against Development: Controversy over Tomb-leveling Campaign in Central China" and on a monograph on the religious and ethnic revival in southwest China.

**Michael Feener** is Research Leader of the Religion and Globalization Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, and Associate Professor of History at the National University of Singapore. Previously he taught at Reed College, and the University of California, Riverside. He has also held visiting professor positions and research fellowships at Harvard, Kyoto University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Copenhagen, The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (Honolulu), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden. Born in Salem, Massachusetts, he was trained in Islamic Studies and foreign languages at Boston University as well as in Indonesia, Egypt, and the Yemen. His books include *Shari`a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh*, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*, *Proselytizing and the Limits of Pluralism in Contemporary Asia* (with Juliana Finucane), *From the Ground Up: Perspectives on Post-Tsunami and Post-Conflict Aceh* (with Patrick Daly & Anthony Reid), *Mapping the Acehese Past* (with Patrick Daly & Anthony Reid), *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies of South and Southeast Asia* (with Terenjit Sevea), *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions* (with Mark Cammack), and *Islam in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*.

**Oona Paredes** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore, where she has taught since 2011. She completed her PhD in Anthropology at Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change. A specialist on the indigenous Lumad peoples of Mindanao (Philippines), to date she has studied and written about evangelical converts amongst the Higaunon and Manobo Lumad, land tenure issues, ethnohistory colonial contact, the politics of traditional authority and customary law amongst Higaunon Lumads, and the challenges faced by Lumads as second-order minorities in the Bangsamoro homeland. She is author of *A Mountain of Difference: The Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao* (Ithaca NY: Cornell SEAP Publications, 2013).

**Philip Fountain** is Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the Australian National University, and MSc (Geography) and BA (Geography and History) from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His research interests centre around emerging engagements between 'religion' and international aid and development. He is currently working on a number of projects, including the intersections between religion and disaster relief, religion and the politics of development (or, also, politics and the religion of development), logics of conversionary development, and the awkward relationship between anthropology and theology. He is also finishing off a monograph manuscript on the service work of the North American Mennonite Central Committee in the context of Indonesia. Recent published papers include 'Development Things: A Case of Canned Meat' and 'The Myth of Religious NGOs: Development Studies and the Return of Religion'.