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Introduction by Albert Wu

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Introduction by Albert Wu, the American University of Paris

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the roundtable dedicated to David Hollinger's elegant, provocative, and brilliant new book, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America*. It is an honor to introduce the book and the stimulating responses from the four participants in the forum.

In an interview included in his previous book, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American*, David Hollinger spoke about discovering the work of the intellectual historian of China, Joseph Levenson, when he was a graduate student at UC Berkeley. "It was Levenson," Hollinger explains, "who first engaged me with the tension between cosmopolitanism and provincialism, and with the questions of identity, peoplehood, and nationality that have dominated my work."¹ The dialectic of provincialism and cosmopolitanism once again takes center stage in *Protestants Abroad*, perhaps Hollinger's most 'Levensonian' book. In *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, Levenson explored the process of how Chinese intellectuals became alienated from traditional Confucian thought.² Through their encounter with the West, Chinese intellectuals realized that the traditional Chinese canon they once thought to be "universal" was "particular," one tradition among many. Similarly, in *Protestants Abroad*, Hollinger offers us a narrative of how American liberal Protestants came to question their own "universal" mission when they came in contact with the rest of the world. Hollinger employs the useful metaphor of the "missions boomerang" to characterize the shift (2). The book traces the broader ramifications that the "boomerang" had on American intellectual and cultural life.

Hollinger's historical narrative of the process is both grand and elegant. In the late nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries, driven by the Gospel's injunction to convert the world, went abroad with narrow confessional blinders—they traveled to Asia and Africa as Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and the like, hoping to convert indigenous peoples to their own confessional doctrines. Unsurprisingly, they went abroad as ethnocentric and cultural chauvinists. Missionaries, Hollinger writes, "supported imperialist projects, accepted the white supremacist ideology of the West, imposed narrow moral codes, and infantilized the peoples they imagined they were serving" (5). Yet when they arrived in foreign lands, they quickly realized the limitations of their approaches. Indigenous societies rebelled against Christianity, which they saw as an arm of Western imperialism. Converts to Christianity, drawn more to the social transformations that Christianity promised, rejected the confessional differences in Europe and America. Driven by these pressures, by the first decade of the twentieth century, missionaries began to adopt increasingly trans-confessional, non-denominational forms of Christianity, leading to the heyday of the YMCA, the YWCA, and other inter-confessional Protestant organizations. By the interwar years, the children of missionaries revolted against the more narrow and provincial outlooks of the older generation. Geo-politics also drove liberals to embrace ecumenical Protestantism, which they saw as a potential bulwark against the spread of global Catholicism and the rising tides of fascism in Germany, Italy, and Japan. In short, liberal Protestant missionaries and

¹ David Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 183.

² Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

missionary-related individuals adopted a new form of cosmopolitanism, preaching a “gospel of inclusive brotherhood” (1).

This new approach to the Christian gospel, Hollinger argues, ironically laid the seeds for liberal Protestantism’s eventual demise within the American religious landscape. Missionary cosmopolitanism created an ever-widening gap between liberals and provincial Protestant churchgoers, who felt alienated from the progressive political and social stances that liberal ecumenicals adopted. Echoing Levenson’s analysis of Chinese intellectuals, Hollinger writes, “The tension between the universal and the particular was crushing” (92). Missionary cosmopolitans had moved too far, and too quickly, for their provincial adherents. Into the vacuum swarmed evangelicals like Billy Graham, who “produced the formidable cultural and social foundation for the Religious Right” (115). Liberal Protestantism, Hollinger provocatively argues, “transformed itself virtually out of existence” (93).

While liberal Protestants lost the church, they gained the world—liberal Protestants “facilitated the migration of many of their young into post-Protestant secularism” (115). After the Second World War, decolonization made the language skills and knowledge of missionaries and missionary children valuable. Hollinger gives us the best and most comprehensive account of how missionaries and missionary-related individuals went on to influence a diverse segment of American society: they were influential members of the literary establishment; they became Ivy League professors and founded Area Studies; their works were turned into blockbuster musicals and movies; they established non-governmental aid organizations; they turned into influential members of the Foreign Service Establishment; and they marched in the Civil Rights Movement. In short, missionaries and missionary-affiliated individuals made a lasting mark on the American secular political, cultural, and social landscape.

The participants in this forum all recognize Hollinger’s work as a major contribution in the overlapping historiographies of American religious history, transnational history, cultural history, and intellectual history. Read together, the responses expound on how Hollinger’s work refracts each participant’s specific interests in the histories of American foreign relations, humanitarianism and human rights, gender relations, and Asian studies, further reflecting the breadth and depth of Hollinger’s study.

Besides praising the book as a monumental work, the participants also raise questions about Hollinger’s account. Charles Hayford agrees with Hollinger’s overall story of the influence of missionaries on the field of Asian Studies, but he wonders about Hollinger’s inclusion of John K. Fairbank firmly within the “missions boomerang.” A former graduate student of Fairbank, Hayford points out that Fairbank sought throughout his career to decouple Area Studies from Sinology, viewing the older generation of missionary-inflected scholarship as unprofessional and antiquarian. The gulf between scholars with and without a missionary background, Hayfield suggests, was larger than the picture that Hollinger paints.

In her review, Emily Rosenberg pushes Hollinger on questions of gender. Rosenberg argues that Hollinger does not challenge the conventional account that Protestant theology encouraged “passivity” among women missionaries. Rosenberg wonders if a closer look at Protestant women groups, such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, would have substantially changed Hollinger’s account. Rosenberg suggests that women missionaries offered their own strand of feminism that do not fit into our conventional categories.

John Thompson raises the important question of historical and moral judgment. As both Hayford and Thompson note, Hollinger portrays his historical subjects as complex, dynamic characters responding and

reacting to the political, social, and cultural contexts in which they were embedded. But Thompson points out that while Hollinger never writes condescendingly about his characters, he tends to judge his historical actors according to the “standards of today’s liberalism.” He wonders whether contemporary liberalism is itself a limited category.

Finally, Hugh Wilford poses two questions to Hollinger. First, he wonders if Hollinger minimizes the degree that missionary-related knowledge was weaponized to persecute dissenting voices during the Cold War. He points to the drastically different career paths between the more leftist, anti-colonial voices in the early Cold War who often suffered for their political convictions and the missionary-related individuals who were rewarded for their expertise. Second, Wilford questions Hollinger’s comparison between the Asian-focused missionary cosmopolitans and the European-facing Jewish intellectuals. While Wilford agrees that both missionary and Jewish cosmopolitans transformed the way Americans interact with foreign lands, Wilford points out that the New York-based Jewish intellectuals were often contemptuous and dismissive of the missionary cosmopolitans. “Relentlessly highbrow,” the Jewish cosmopolitans saw the missionary cosmopolitans as earnest translators for “middlebrow” audiences.

In his response, Hollinger answers the four questions with characteristic lucidity and generosity. He also offers suggestions for future directions in research, particularly into the Institute for Pacific Relations, as well as the woefully understudied career of Pearl S. Buck.

David Hollinger’s *Protestants Abroad* is the best single-volume account that explains liberal Protestantism’s early twentieth-century dominance both in American and global Protestant missions, its demise among American church-goers, and its lasting influence on American cultural and intellectual life. The book is also a model of historical scholarship, exemplary in its ability to engage the different registers of broad historical questions and in-depth portraits of individuals responding to the broader social and political changes of their time. Anyone interested in questions related to global Protestantism, twentieth-century American cultural and intellectual history, as well as broader conceptual questions that intersect with secularization, provincialism, and cosmopolitanism will learn much from Hollinger’s book. It deserves to be read and discussed widely.

Participants:

David Hollinger is Preston Hotchkis Professor of History Emeritus at UC Berkeley. He is an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is a former President of the Organization of American Historians. His books include *Protestants Abroad* (2017), *After Cloven Tongues of Fire* (Princeton University Press, 2013), *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture* (1996), and *Postethnic America* (Basic Books, 1995, 2000, and 2006).

Albert Wu is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the American University of Paris. He is author of *From Christ to Confucius: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950* (Yale University Press, 2016).

Charles W. Hayford (Independent Scholar) edited *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* (2006-2012). His publications include *To The People: James Yen and Village China* (Columbia University Press, 1990) and articles on film in trans-Pacific relations; food in Chinese and Japanese film; chop suey; English-language Chinese cookbooks; the historiography of war in modern China (forthcoming); and articles from his ongoing

book project, *America's Chinas* (1839-2008), which focuses on “China” in popular books written by Americans who lived there.

Emily S. Rosenberg is Professor Emerita at the University of California, Irvine, and author of *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870-1945* (Harvard University Press, 2014).

John A. Thompson gained his BA and Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge where he is now Emeritus Reader in American History and an Emeritus Fellow of St Catharine's College. His principal research interests have been American liberalism and U.S. debate about foreign policy. His publications include *Progressivism* (Durham, UK, 1979), *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), *Woodrow Wilson* (London: Longman, 2002), and numerous articles and book chapters. His most recent book, *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America's Global Role* (Cornell, 2015), was the subject of an H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable in 2016, <https://issforum.org/roundtables/8-15-sense-of-power>.

Hugh Wilford teaches U.S. History at California State University, Long Beach. He is author of, most recently, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Harvard University Press, 2008) and *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (Basic Books, 2013). He is currently working on two projects: a history of U.S. “Covert Empire” and an emotional history of Anglo-American relations.

Review by Charles W. Hayford, Independent Scholar

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.

Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, The New Pilgrim's Progress*¹

Protestants Abroad is not just a well-told and consequential story, it is a moral inquiry, the most recent installment of David Hollinger's grand project to understand how Americans worked to broaden community without losing cohesion of identity and widen the "circle of the we"—the "we" in "we the people."² In the late nineteenth century Anglo-Protestants, who pretty much ran the country and kept other races down or out, came to believe that their Christian gospel was universal and launched an evangelical mission to the world. In the mid-twentieth century these missionaries and their offspring "flew back like a boomerang" carrying "an awareness of the provincialism of its original construction" and an "indictment of cultural imperialism and arrogant paternalism." This boomerang (or "blowback") generation nudged America toward a genuinely universal human community (1-2; 390 n. 19). Hollinger wants readers to understand how far these "proto-multiculturalists" and "proto-world-citizens" got and what derailed them in order to help Americans to "figure out the boundaries of their community and to decide just what their role in the world can and should be" (23).

Hollinger allows these Anglo-Protestant missionaries their fair share of faults and short-comings, but no more than a fair share and no condescension. Mark Twain's "innocents abroad" were a tour-group of Anglo-Protestants just after the Civil War with attitudes of "prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness" that might represent the "before" in Hollinger's arc. When they toured Biblical Palestine, Twain observed that "many who have visited this land in years gone by were Presbyterians" and they found a "Presbyterian Palestine."³ Hollinger, like Twain, is genially skeptical, but never cynical. He concedes that missionaries viewed through Protestant lenses that kept them from understanding the world as fully as they thought they did; that they often imposed their own theology and values, forgetting that Jesus was a Palestinian, not a middle-class American; that they were protected by gunboats and motivated by ego; that the founding generation of missionaries wanted to set natives free from sin but not from the patriarchal control of American home boards; that missions too often heeded St. Paul's injunction that women are "commanded to be under obedience" (1 Corinthians 14.34) and shied away from feminism when they returned home (7); and that they often "supported imperialist projects, accepted white supremacist ideology, imposed narrow moral codes, and infantilized the peoples they imagined they were serving." Hollinger muses that it is "no wonder that many nationalist movements scorned and killed missionaries." He concludes: "All this is true" (22).

¹ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, The New Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: American Publishing Company, 1869), 521.

² David A. Hollinger, "How Wide the Circle of the 'We'? American Intellectuals and the Problem of the Ethnos since World War II," *American Historical Review* 98.2 (April 1993): 317-337.

³ *The Innocents Abroad*, 400-401.

Protestants Abroad quickly adds that other truths were often forgotten or displaced in the decades following World War II: that missions, however flawed, worked in mysterious ways to build in the United States a “sense of solidarity with other human beings”; that women had better opportunities abroad than in most American communities(7); that globally conscious missionaries worked with non-white, colonized peoples for national independence; and that the multi-cultural missionary enterprise internationalized churches, the academic world, the Foreign Service, middle-brow literature, journalism, and civil rights and reform movements (even the American Communist Party) (1-2).

The Introduction catalogues the academic neglect of the missionary enterprise and middle-brow condescension. Missionaries who left American shores left the purview of American historians, some of whom wondered why anyone not from missionary stock would study missionaries (would they have wondered why anyone who was not a woman would study women’s history?). Hollinger is right that they were “celebrated and revered for the risks they took” (3), but missionaries were also skewered as colonial and exploitative in literary accounts from Herman Melville’s *Typee* (1846) on down to Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998) and beyond (302 n. 11). The iconic cartoon of missionaries in a cannibal stewpot seems to me a nervous trope that resolves cognitive dissonance among readers who cherished the faith but chose to stay home by chuckling at missionaries who left to do the Lord’s work but got into hot water; the racist depiction of the ostensible cannibals is astounding. Hollinger notes another minor but instructive piece of urban folklore, the phrase “missionary position,” which turns out to be Alfred Kinsey’s titillated misreading of “*matrimonial* position” in an anthropological report that in any case described traders, planters, and officials, not missionaries (5).

Protestants Abroad presents these antimonies with an almost Shakespearean (Twainian?) range of empathetic, skeptical biographical cameos and solicitous readings of mission-inflected novels and travel writing. Fellow reviewers in this roundtable will surely address other regions, so I will focus on China and the boomerang’s “Asian center of gravity” and disproportionate impact (215). Latin America was America’s back yard, Europe (at least Western Europe) was a next-door neighbor, but Asia was a world that missionaries lived in longer and knew better than most diplomats or businessmen.

The Boxers of 1900 murdered hundreds and hundreds of Christians, some of them missionaries, in a virtual pogrom, because they were cosmopolitans and tools of imperialism. Numbers of educated young Chinese then swiveled to Christianity as a spiritual truth and instrument of nationalism just when the Student Volunteer Movement was inspiring American college students to march through the Open Door and educate a middle-class that would then become Christian. The Social Gospel created a Sino-American joint enterprise to modernize China. Fundamentalists charged that these ecumenicals abandoned inerrant Bible doctrine in favor of what we now see as the doctrine of modernization. The question was which came first and would lead to the other, a Christian China or a modern China.

Chapter Two, “To Make the Crooked Straight” (Isiah 40:4), portrays a trio of boomerangers who had no interest at all in following the narrow path of their evangelical parents but “inherited the sacred responsibility to make the world right” (58). Like the Jewish intellectuals Hollinger writes about elsewhere,⁴ they became immigrants, strangers in the land they called home. Henry Luce (1898-1967), the future overlord of the

⁴ David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Time, *Life*, and *Fortune* empire, was nicknamed “Chink Luce” and the classmates of Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973), she later recalled, thought her a little queer. Hollinger brings to life the split within Buck between the Evangelical absolutism of her father, Absalom Sydenstricker, and the ecumenical spirit she inherited from her mother, who at the end of her life said that she would rather have been a missionary to the United States, not China. Buck was still drawing salary as a missionary when she slyly rebuked missionary irrelevance in *The Good Earth* (1931) and in 1933 when she openly asked in Harper’s magazine “Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?,” implying that the answer was “no.” She and the Presbyterian board feuded and parted ways. Buck championed Asian nationalism and denounced Western imperialism in Asia, which she tied to her father’s evangelical patriarchy. In *Fighting Angel* (1934) her scathing memoir of Absalom, she wrote “it was a magnificent imperialism of the spirit, incredible and not to be understood except by those who have been reared in it and have grown beyond it.” In 1936, she left China and her first husband and returned home with an agenda of feminism, anti-imperialism, and racial justice to carry out her mother’s mission to America. Buck is still victim of “missionary position” condescension as a writer and disregard as a feminist. (She deserves, for instance, a volume alongside Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott, and Laura Ingalls Wilder in the *Library of America*.)

John Hersey (1914-1993), like Luce a Yale man, was a Luce favorite until he left *Time* to publish *Hiroshima* in the *New Yorker* in 1945. Hersey’s novels, *A Bell for Adano* (1944), *The Wall* (1950), and *A Single Pebble* (1956), all have protagonists whom Hollinger sees as “missionary figures,” but Hersey waited several decades to write *The Call* (1985), “the most penetrating piece of missionary fiction ever written in the English language” (56). It is an expansive, elegiac novel cast in the form of a biography, complete with footnotes, of David Treadup (nice name), who is a composite of several actual Social Gospel missionaries. Treadup fears that his Christian mission could not offer what communism did and hopes that in the end “it was not all error.” (56-57) Hollinger calls *The Call* a “critique of the do-gooders who are too sentimental to understand the world in which they try to perform their good works” (315 n. 97).⁵ Luce, on the other hand, never outgrew the “imperialism of the spirit” that propelled his creativity (58). When he looked across the ocean he saw a Presbyterian China.

Chapter 7, “Telling the Truth About the Two Chinas” is a friendly account of the wartime Foreign Service Officers who were pilloried and cashiered for “telling the truth.” John S. Service (1909-1999) and John Paton Davies, Jr. (1908-1999) were both raised in Sichuan, one in the city, one in the mountains, but neither learned to speak respectable Chinese until later. (Davies’s father was named for John Paton, “missionary to the cannibals.”) Service reported from Mao’s wartime base in Yan’an that its organization and spirit would bring Mao to power, and Paton endorsed this judgement. Were Service and Davies “innocents abroad”? Did Service find a second-order “Presbyterian Yan’an” where his liberal faith in the goodness of man kept him from perceiving Mao’s less-than-good nature? Possibly, but in the real-world outcome, Service’s Presbyterian Yan’an beat Luce’s Presbyterian China.

But boomerangers came in many political stripes. China Hands who were politically conservative and racially liberal changed America as well. Right-wing Chiang Kai-shek supporters appropriated John Birch as the first

⁵ Never mind, but on the next page Hollinger mistakenly accuses Arthur Smith’s *Chinese Characteristics* (1894) of assuming the “superiority of Western culture in every respect” because Smith did *not* sentimentalize China (59).

victim of the Cold War but Walter Judd (1898-1994), Republican Congressman from Minnesota, defended Chiang Kai-shek and attacked American “whites only” immigration provisions that dated back to 1790 (185).

Christian missions did change China, or rather, Christians in China did. Hollinger’s prime example is Y.C. James Yen (Yan Yangchu; 1890-1990), who developed a program of rural reconstruction aimed to head off Mao’s revolution (spoiler: it didn’t).⁶ Yen was known as “Jimmy” to friends and sponsors, a Christian Chinese who populated virtually every node on the trans-Pacific ecumenical network. Hollinger does not go anywhere near as far as the Chinese Communists, who charged that Yen was an American puppet, but I would tilt the balance more than Hollinger does toward Yen’s independent Chinese inspiration and support. Although he was educated in mission schools and graduated from Yale (Yale again), Yen said he was not a Christian if that meant being a member of a church dominated by foreigners but was, rather, a “follower of Christ.” He downplayed Christian undertones when writing in Chinese and emphasized them in English, cheerfully using John D. Rockefeller’s Baptist money. But his experimental programs were independent of Christian missions. By the Japanese invasion in 1937, Yen had produced a coordinated program of education, economics, health, and local government but had no power to propagate it across the nation (257-261). Still, Christianity may well have inclined Yen toward a home-grown, bottom-up, community-oriented rural modernity in contrast to the grand statist post-war developmentalism.

The chapter that intrigues me most is Chapter 9, “Against Orientalism: Universities and Modern Asia,” which expands the origin myth of Area Studies as conceived in battle-fire during World War II and raised in the cold of the Cold War. *Protestants Abroad* adds that there were broadly learned, humanistic, and culturally respectful elements in the missionary DNA of Asian Studies. Hollinger argues that by 1967 “universities of no other nation had achieved as wide a global range as those of the US” and that “missionary cosmopolitanism” had left its footprint on campus. Yet just a year later the new-born Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars charged that the Area Studies gang had been complicit in the American war on Vietnam because they were bought and owned by the government, starting with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II.⁷

The founders of Asian Studies had indeed joined the OSS but Hollinger’s story suggests that maybe the OSS had joined them. Asia boomerangers included W. Norman Brown (1892-1975), an Indologist, and the Japan historian Edwin O. Reischauer (1910-1990), an army Lieutenant Colonel during the war against the land of his birth. Presbyterian missionary Kenneth Perry Landon (1903-1993) had returned from Thailand and was teaching at Earlham College, in Indiana, when he was summoned to Washington just before Pearl Harbor. The only items he found in the intelligence file on Thailand were four articles that he himself had written (187).

⁶ Full disclosure: I was tickled by Hollinger’s generous use of my *To the People: James Yen and Village China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) and corresponded with him on this and other points. A perceptive recent study of Yen’s work is Kate Merkel-Hess, *The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016)

⁷ Fabio Lanza, *The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism, and Asian Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 23-34.

John K. Fairbank (1907-1991) has become the synecdoche of choice for China Studies in much the same convenient way that Confucius long had been for China itself, and Hollinger sweats some to place him on the mission boomerang. Fairbank was in the cohort that professionalized the study of foreign lands by enclosing it within the university as Area Studies. At the first meeting of his introductory graduate seminar in the mid-1960s, Fairbank told us that if we had been meeting fifty years earlier, we would all have been missionaries, but I would emphasize even more than Hollinger does that professionalization implicitly excluded missionaries as such, along with women such as Pearl Buck. They were “amateurs” who spoke to the public without Ph.D.’s or footnotes and did not use social science theory. Fairbank had affection and respect for Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968), still another Yale personage, but did not hold him up as a model to his graduate students. Fairbank was also not a Sinologist. Area Studies and traditional Sinology looked at each other sideways. To exaggerate only slightly, Area Studies scholars felt the Sinologists’ philological exegesis and limitation to the classical age was antiquarian—what Hollinger means by “Orientalism”—while Sinologists felt that the Area Studies focus on the modern period was journalism.⁸

The boomerang now rests on the closet shelf, covered with the dust of amnesia. After the 1960s, “never again would missionaries serve as the leading edge of American society’s engagement with the remote regions of the globe” (11). They are mis-remembered and elbowed out of view for reasons both right and wrong, but in their day they marched in the multi-cultural parade with Jewish and Asian immigrant intellectuals, cultural anthropologists, African and Asian Americans, peoples of the world who fought to represent themselves..., and Huckleberry Finn. *Protestants Abroad* brings complex mission ancestors back into view and puts them back to work pushing Americans toward what Twain called “broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things.”

⁸ Charles W. Hayford, “China by the Book: China Hands and China Stories, 1848-1948,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 16.4 (Winter 2009): 283-84, 288-289, 305-309.

Review by Emily S. Rosenberg, University of California, Irvine

Protestants Abroad examines the complexities involved in what David A. Hollinger calls “missionary cosmopolitanism.” Trying to “embrace the whole world in a cosmopolitan vision” (22), Protestant missionary-linked Americans faced the dilemma of trying to reconcile a respect for diverse cultures with the hope of encompassing this diversity within a religious or national community. In this investigation, Hollinger is returning to a theme explored in his previous scholarship: how to people define the nature of “community,” religious and national? How wide is the circle of “we”?¹

To explore this question within the context of missionary cosmopolitanism, the book focuses on specific individuals, relying on their individual histories and their writings to reveal many different paths taken. After an introductory survey of the missionary effort that peaked in the early twentieth century, dominated by mainline Protestants, Hollinger presents a chapter contrasting perhaps the three most famous missionary-linked individuals: Publisher Henry Luce and writers Pearl Buck and John Hersey. All were born to American missionaries in China. All were imbued with a “missionary imperative” to better the world. But each responded with singularity: Luce proclaiming an exuberant faith in American nationalism as a force for world change, Buck embracing anti-imperialism and feminism, and Hersey urgently focusing on the horrific potential introduced by the atomic era. The chapter neatly suggests the contours of the discussions that will follow by stressing the diverse ways in which missionary experiences blew back into attempts to affect American culture.

A key point in Hollinger’s study involves the emergence of a missionary divide between mainline Protestant ‘ecumenicals’ and more fundamentalist ‘evangelicals.’ By the interwar period, the ecumenicals moved toward an ethic of service abroad, involving themselves in economic and political reform and developing a respect for indigenous traditions that often allied them with anti-imperialist stances. This rethinking of the fundamental purposes and approaches of missionary work, which became prominent in the interwar period, rippled through mainline Protestant churches at home and helped shape, after World War II, influential trans-denominational organizations (such as the World Council of Churches) that espoused liberal stances on social issues. The book acknowledges that missionary-linked individuals were not the only leaders of these ecumenical Protestant organizations who opposed racism, sexism, imperialism, and anti-science, but it contends that their influence was certainly significant. The study argues that, by contrast, fundamentalist missionary groups, which became increasingly dominant in the foreign missionary movement, tended to denounce the trend toward liberal, social reform and re-focused their own energies on the personal conversion of individuals both abroad and at home. The divide between liberal ecumenicals and fundamentalist evangelicals, rooted in different approaches to missionary work, continued to widen throughout the postwar era and had a profound influence on the social/cultural debates that shaped American life.

Even the missionary cosmopolitans with whom the book is most concerned, however, exemplified a variety of experiences and outlooks conditioned by the region of the world that they came to know. A series of chapters traces out mission-connected individuals who became important advocates for various sides in regional politics. In the Middle East, for example, Colonel William Eddy and other “Arabists” of missionary

¹ David A. Hollinger, “How Wide the Circle of the ‘We’? American Intellectuals and the Problem of the Ethnos since World War II,” *The American Historical Review* 98:2 (April 1993): 317–337, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/98.2.317>.

background became prominent in policymaking circles, opposed the recognition of Israel, and then strove to maintain U.S.-Arab friendship after World War II. As these “Arabists” tried to find post-colonial Arab nationalists with whom the United States might forge bonds of cooperation in the Middle East, anti-Zionism (sometimes anti-Semitism) became a significant legacy of their missionary cosmopolitanism. In Asia, missionaries often developed a cultural sympathy that generally critiqued white racism and imperialism. Such sympathy shaped, for example, the outlook and activities of the Institute of Pacific Relations during the interwar period. During World War II, missionary-connected Americans made a variety of contributions to U.S. foreign policy in Asia, from diplomacy to spying, because of their language abilities and cultural understanding. Several chapters examine how mission people inflected policies related to Japan, to the two Chinas in the postwar era, to shaping U.S. relations with Thailand, and to the development of Asian Area Studies in U.S. universities. The book’s incisively drawn vignettes of influential writers and policymakers challenge easy generalizations about specific connections between religion and political orientation, but the commitment to public service provides a common thread.

Hollinger’s book concludes with a survey of what he calls “post-missionary service” (252). The Peace Corps and many post-World War II technical assistance programs borrowed heavily from missionary heritage by trying to devise community-based strategies, raise levels of education and literacy, and improve agriculture and public health. Again, the argument is advanced by examining the roles of a few key individuals. Some continued to work internationally while others turned their energies toward various rights struggles at home. Many missionary-linked people, such as Ruth Harris, became influential anti-racist and pro-worker activists during the 1960s and 1970s.

Protestants Abroad makes a major contribution to several fields of scholarship. Although much of the early literature in missionary history focused on the beliefs, experiences, and influence of missionaries in foreign fields, Hollinger’s nuanced narrative adds significantly to more recent work, such as the important collection edited by Daniel Bays and Grant Wacker, that enlarged the focus to consider the impact of Protestant missionaries at home.² Although the field of U.S. diplomatic and international history was slow to turn attention to religious motivations and actors, Hollinger’s study augments growing interest, exemplified especially in the work Andrew Preston, in the religious dimension.³ Finally, histories of American reform movements, already keenly attuned to religious motivations as exemplified in the work of Ian Tyrrell, can welcome Hollinger’s insightful research on the missionary roots of liberal ecumenical reformers.⁴

The arguments of the book could have been enlarged and enhanced, however, by a deeper consideration of the scholarship on Protestant women missionaries whose service in foreign fields linked to their roles in trying to change America. Generally, the book argues that very few feminist activists came out of the missionary

² Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker, eds., *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003).

³ Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012) and Preston, “The Religious Turn in Diplomatic History,” in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 3rd ed., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 284-303.

⁴ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

movement (Buck being a notable exception). It appears to endorse a claim that the self-abrogation inherent in missionary gender ideology promoted a “passivity” in women (379, note 8). It also argues that the missionary movement was comprised of many single women—even single women living together—and that these women may have wished to keep their heads down on controversial social issues to avoid scrutiny of their personal lives in a culture dominated by an ethos of domesticity.

The growing scholarship on women missionaries, however, challenges the characterization of passivity and invisibility, even when it considers those women who endorsed the tenets of separate spheres and domesticity. Consider, for example, the women who were internationally active in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The WCTU was one of America’s largest social reform organizations operating abroad, often in partnership with major Protestant missionary organizations, and it certainly also constituted one of the most broadly influential Protestant reform movements at home. Many WCTU leaders embraced evangelical Christianity but, contrary to Hollinger’s general characterization of evangelical missionary work, WCTU activists did not concentrate primarily on conversion but on what they saw as their pro-woman social agenda: temperance, women’s suffrage, child labor laws, prison reform, public health, sanitation, anti-prostitution, and peace. The WCTU’s particular mix of social advocacy may have been different from the approaches of most of the “ecumenical cosmopolitans” presented in this book, but the organization was nevertheless also interdenominational, international, and influential at home.⁵

Missionary-linked women also played leading roles in attempting to improve lives in “foreign” communities in America. Although there is still much work that needs to be done on this topic, women inclined toward missionary work, but unable to locate or stay outside the country, took leadership roles in serving immigrant, Indian, and African American communities near them. If this work smacked of “Americanization” campaigns, it did so no more than did the work of missionaries abroad—and often with the same result: women who became enmeshed in a “foreign” community at home could find their cultural attitudes changed, and significantly broadened, even as they had sought to change the cultures of others.⁶

To be sure, some of the concerns of women missionaries may not map onto second-wave feminism. They also may not map onto the liberal ecumenicalism that is at the heart of the analysis in Hollinger’s book. Still, many women missionary leaders advocated reforms aimed at building women’s empowerment and pioneered an internationalism based on women’s common interests. As Jane Hunter has pointed out, “one strain of Christian moral domesticity [by the early twentieth century] had evolved as a consistently vocal and articulate voice against racism and nationalism and for international understanding and human kinship in the American

⁵ Ian Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) and Tyrrell, “Woman, Missions, and Empire: New Approaches to American Cultural Expansion,” in Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 43-66.

⁶ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) is an influential analysis that sparked additional research on missionaries at home.

political landscape.”⁷ The broad movement for temperance in the early twentieth century, often a strong part of the Protestant missionary agenda and often a special concern of women missionaries, is one example of a reformist influence that Hollinger’s book might well have analyzed. The rich line of scholarship dealing with women missionary leaders could have further deepened and complicated the book’s principal message that “missionary experience is not of a single piece” (230).

Protestants Abroad makes a significant contribution by linking together the often-separated arenas of ‘international’ and ‘domestic’ history. Its well-drawn and well-researched vignettes clearly illustrate the varied but significant impacts that mission-linked individuals had on American life. With their experience in foreign cultures, missionary cosmopolitans played outsized, if diverse, roles in a globalizing America—and their experiences help illuminate the contradictions and dilemmas that globalization has raised. While scholars have long examined the transnational actions of diplomats, traders, businesspeople, and entertainment figures, Hollinger’s engrossing book provides a valuable transnational framework for further scholarship focusing on people involved in religious communities of belief.

⁷ Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984) and Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman’s Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985) represent important early work, largely focused on women’s service in foreign fields. See Hunter’s expansion and reworking of this early work in ways relevant to Hollinger’s themes in, for example, Jane H. Hunter, “Women’s Mission in Historical Perspective: American Identity and Christian Internationalism,” in *Competing Kingdoms*, 19-42 [the quotation is from page 38].

Review by John A. Thompson, University of Cambridge

Despite its title, *Protestants Abroad* is not about the work of American missionaries in the field but about their impact on the United States itself. The product of prodigious research over many years by one of America's leading intellectual historians, this rich work casts light on such diverse subjects as the feminism of Pearl Buck (author of *The Good Earth*), the interrogation of Japanese Prisoners of War in World War II, the relationship of *The King and I* to its purported source, and the rise of Area Studies. But the central thesis is that missionaries and those associated with them (particularly their children) had an effect on American public life comparable to that of the Jewish immigrants from Europe about whom David Hollinger has previously written.¹ Just as "the Europe-centered cosmopolitanism of the Jewish intellectuals" challenged and broadened the inward-looking provinciality of America's dominant culture, so did "the Asia-centered cosmopolitanism of the missionary contingent." (1, 296-298). Perhaps more surprisingly, Hollinger also sees this missionary cosmopolitanism as advancing "the larger process of religious liberalization and the attendant growth of post-Protestant secularism".

As one would expect, Hollinger presents his central thesis with subtlety and nuance. He makes it clear that it was by no means all "missionary-connected Americans" who played a significant part in the nation's life. Almost exclusively, those who did so were from the "mainline" Protestant denominations represented in the Federal Council of Churches. Whereas missionaries from more evangelical or fundamentalist churches concentrated on saving souls by converting people to Christianity, those from this "ecumenical" background devoted many of their resources to the establishment of schools, hospitals, and other social services and regarded indigenous cultures with more respect. The thesis is also chronologically specific in that it concerns the half-century following World War I, and particularly the 1940s and 1950s. As Hollinger indicates, the prominence of "the missionary contingent" in American life at this time was the result both of developments in the missionary enterprise itself and of the abrupt expansion in these decades of U.S. involvement in world politics.

Hollinger analyses the more internal dynamic in a fascinating review of the many studies and reports that were produced between the 1920s and 1960s re-considering the Protestant missionary project. Many of those who entered the field in the early twentieth century were followers of the social gospel and partook of its progressive/liberal worldview. Their predisposition to recognize the equality of indigenous peoples was strengthened by World War I and the idealism of Wilsonian internationalism. As Hollinger stresses, this universalism tended to undercut the premises of the missionary project itself—that Christianity was founded on a unique truth and that western civilization, being based upon it, was superior to other societies. This re-evaluation could lead to a post-Protestant secularism, as it did for many missionary children, but among the leaders of the enterprise it fostered a broader ecumenism that was not only impatient with sectarian divisions within Protestantism but also humbly respectful of other religious traditions. However, these new directions were not popular with many churchgoers for whom, Hollinger archly observes, "the point of Protestant missions ... was to make foreign people as similar as possible to the kinds of Christians already found in the United States" (91). This became one aspect of a wider gulf between the liberal leadership of mainline

¹ David A. Hollinger, *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1985), especially chapter 4; *Science, Jews, And Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

denominations and their congregations that produced the haemorrhage of membership and resources to the evangelical churches which Hollinger has written about elsewhere.² The personnel of ecumenical mission agencies decreased dramatically as one missionary society after another defected to the evangelicals until by 1980 ninety per cent of “career foreign missionaries” were in their employ (86-88, 113-116).

Externally, it was the thrust of American power into Asia during and after World War II that brought several missionary-connected people into prominence as Hollinger illustrates in some of the individual studies that constitute the main body of the book. The most striking example is that of Kenneth Landon who had been a missionary in Thailand in his twenties but who was teaching at a Quaker college in Indiana when he was summoned to Washington in 1941 by William J. Donovan, head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), who was desperately seeking someone who knew about Thailand. This was the start of a distinguished career in government in which Landon ended up as a senior staffer for the National Security Council under President John F. Kennedy. William A. Eddy, born in Lebanon to missionary parents, was similarly in the academic world before he re-enlisted in the Marine Corps in World War II and was quickly also brought onto Donovan’s staff from which he progressed to be the envoy to Saudi Arabia who arranged the meeting between King Ibn Saud and President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1945. In these instances, and that of the “China Hands” John Paton Davies, Jr. and John S. Service who were also missionary sons, first-hand experience of other parts of the world and proficiency in foreign languages was clearly the basis of their rise to influence, and Hollinger points out that in the 1930s and 1940s few Americans from non-missionary backgrounds possessed such qualifications. Similarly, when the extension of American involvement in the world stimulated a demand for wider and deeper knowledge of foreign nations, missionary sons played leading roles in developing programs and institutions for the study of China, India, and Japan in particular.

The participation of missionaries and those connected with them in public affairs did not begin with World War II, however. Well before then, they had acted in various ways that served to encourage greater U.S. engagement with world affairs. Hollinger reminds us of the role of missionaries in bringing the Armenian genocide of 1915 to the attention of the American public and in organizing Near East Relief, the largest humanitarian relief effort in history at that point. One of the major donors was Cleveland H. Dodge, a former classmate and close friend of President Woodrow Wilson, who provided a channel through which missionary concerns could be conveyed to the White House. Hollinger may be going too far in saying that Wilson’s decision not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire in World War I was “driven by missionary-connected Americans” but they certainly had an influence. And when in 1919, Wilson established the King-Crane Commission to make recommendations about a possible American mandate in the former Ottoman lands, four of the five members had some missionary connection and three were ordained Protestant clergymen. (119-122). China was much the largest of the mission fields and so it is not surprising that it was particularly in respect to that country that missionary-connected people influenced American opinion. The Institute for Pacific Relations (IPR), which did much to promote both scholarship and international contact, emerged directly out of the YMCA, whose charismatic head John R. Mott is described by Hollinger as “the undisputed spiritual and organizational leader of the Protestant missionary project.” Most of those involved in the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, a lobby group created in 1938, were missionary-connected. (142-148, 69). A much broader public was reached by two of the writers with whom Hollinger opens the book—*Time-Life* publisher Henry Luce and Pearl Buck. Hollinger provides penetrating

² Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

analyses of the thought of each, emphasizing in particular Buck's advanced feminism and fearless radicalism – and in both cases identifying the ways in which their thinking was shaped by the missionary milieu in which they had grown up.

Luce and Buck dramatically illustrate the fact that people with missionary-connections could hold very different political views. While recognizing this and noting that “missionary experience is not of a single piece” (230), Hollinger does see the great majority of his subjects as sharing certain attitudes and values. Opposition to discriminatory racism was common ground; it was the conservative Republican Congressman and former missionary Walter Judd who secured the elimination in the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act of the “whites only” limitation on naturalization that dated back to 1790. It is not surprising that missionary-connected people were active in the civil rights movement as well as the origins of the Peace Corps. Antagonism to European colonialism was also, it seems, a central commitment of American missionaries, and Hollinger persuasively argues that it was because they saw the Zionist project as a by-product and aspect of such imperialism that those concerned with the Middle East were hostile to it (none more so than Eddy). Yet until the Vietnam War the extension of U.S. power in the world was, it seems, generally regarded in a positive light (289-90).

The combination of opposition to European colonialism with confidence that the United States by contrast played a beneficent role in the world was a fairly standard position for American liberals in these years, which raises the question of how far the attitudes of missionary-connected people were distinctive and reflective of their experience in the field. Hollinger opens the book by quoting Congregationalist leader Buell G. Gallagher's image of the missionary project as a boomerang that had “come back to smite the imperialism of white nations” but glosses it by saying that the returning boomerang was “immersed in alterity” (1-2). Elsewhere, however, he observes that the religious orientation of missionaries upon arrival was “a good predictor” of their readiness to identify with the aspirations of indigenous peoples and concludes that “causal direction is not easy to measure” and that “there is no need to put a fine point on the relative muscle exercised by experience in the field and by prior disposition” (13, 298-299). Another variable, not explicitly considered by Hollinger, is the influence of living or growing up in another country, independent of any missionary commitment. A statistical study cited in a footnote found that a dramatically higher proportion of *all* American children reared abroad graduated from college than of their home-grown contemporaries, though admittedly the children of missionaries were more likely than others to obtain post-graduate degrees, especially in medicine (307).

It is a measure of the depth and breadth of the research on which this book is based that it provides the material with which one might ask questions about some of its generalizations. Quite apart from the general argument upon which this review has focused, *Protestants Abroad* is full of enlightening and penetrating discussions of a variety of particular topics. As might be expected of a work by an intellectual historian, the treatment of texts, whether they be the novels of John Hersey or *Anna and the King of Siam* by Kenneth Landon's wife, Margaret, is particularly fresh and insightful. As a whole, the book constitutes a wide-ranging and illuminating portrayal of an important segment of America's own history that was a real influence on its relations with the non-European world in the period when these relations were becoming more significant and momentous. At the same time, it probes issues in these relations that remain of continuing relevance. In several places, Hollinger refers to the fundamental “tension between inclusion and identity, between an impulse to bring everyone together and a need to make a community viable by defining it in some particular set of terms.” (23, also 81-82, 92, 112, 299). As he points out, this tension, which has been a theme in his writings for many years, creates a dilemma for “the national project of the United States” as well as for

Christianity, and for both is heightened by “the world’s prodigious diversity”³ Throughout the book, and particularly in the conclusion, Hollinger tends to judge how well each of his subjects resolved this issue by the standards of today’s advanced liberalism. He defines those standards as “an authentic, noninvidious egalitarianism in which every people and every culture might receive the respect it deserves” (292). But who is to say how much respect a particular culture deserves, and by what criteria? Hollinger would surely agree that there are no clear, let alone easy, answers to these questions.

³ The salience of this issue in various different context has been discussed by Hollinger in a number of writings since 1975, most recently in *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

Review by Hugh Wilford, California State University, Long Beach

It is an honor to be commenting on such a distinguished and important book. *Protestants Abroad* is a *tour de force* of deep research and beautiful writing. It marries the history of religion and U.S. intellectual history with new currents in the history of American foreign relations in marvelously productive ways. By tracing the varied domestic trajectories of liberal Protestant missionaries as they returned home, it deepens and extends our understanding of a diverse range of topics in post-World War II U.S. history, including, but not limited to, fiction-writing, the Civil Rights Movements, and the rise of Area Studies as an academic discipline. And it is constantly compelling at a human level, providing rich biographical insight into the lives of a huge cast of fascinating figures, some familiar and others previously lost to historical view.

Reading *Protestants Abroad* as a historian of American foreign relations, I was particularly struck by the importance of its contribution to our knowledge about a topic of recent interest to a large number of practitioners in the field: the relationship between U.S. civil society and the causes and consequences of the Cold War.

On the one hand, *Protestants Abroad* significantly enhances our appreciation of how non-state, transnational actors, bringing with them long and complex organizational and ideological prehistories, drove and shaped the U.S. government effort in the early Cold War. The ideas that private American citizens bore with them, in this instance liberal Protestant notions of service and species-wide solidarity, were not just instrumental in this moment; they were formative. To some extent, the private sphere even colonized the apparatus of government during the 1940s, as new agencies such as the CIA searched hurriedly for area expertise about regions of the world in which the United States previously had little or no official interest, and found it among groups like businessmen, scholars – and, above all, missionaries. A similar effect, Hollinger argues, was observable in the realm of academic knowledge about the Third World. Yes, the rise of Area Studies was clearly related to the needs of the Cold War national security state; but the emerging discipline also reflected the particular values and commitments of the missionary-associated scholars who actually built it (see Chapter 9). These non-government groups and individuals broadened the geographical, institutional, intellectual, and emotional range of the U.S. campaign in the Cold War, making it much more powerful and resonant than a simple strategic effort to contain Communism. This is one factor that explains the extraordinary strength and durability of the Cold War consensus that governed American society prior to the late 1960s.

On the other hand, Hollinger also shows how the pressures of waging the Cold War could constrain and even distort the ideas and values of the non-state actors who signed up to the cause. In the case of the missionaries, the experience of living embedded in colonial or post-colonial societies had typically engendered a sympathy for Third World anti-imperialism and nationalism. Often, though, the exigencies of the Cold War brought these commitments into conflict with the requirements of the U.S. national security state, especially when the anti-communist imperative seemed to demand strategic support for a colonial European ally, as happened, for example, in the Iran of the nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq. In such instances, the ideal of a transnational, universal community of ‘we’ could not be reconciled with the particular realities of Cold War international relations. As for numerous other groups of American citizens, it was the Vietnam War that eventually made it impossible for liberal, missionary-connected Protestants to carry on living with this contradiction, and many renounced their support for the U.S. Cold War effort in the late 1960s. By this point, earlier efforts to identify global American power with the anti-colonial cause had gone down to crushing defeat in all the other Asian theaters of the Cold War in which the missionaries had a presence.

There are one or two points in this masterful work where I think Hollinger could have done still more to convey the pressurizing and distorting effects of the Cold War. While the missionaries might have to some extent set the terms of the U.S. government's post-World War II approach to Asia, there were times when the equation was reversed and official agencies did instrumentalize, even weaponize, the missionary tradition. For example, in 1951 the CIA created a front organization, the American Friends of the Middle East, with a strongly missionary complexion. Although originally intended to carry a pro-Arab nationalist (and anti-Zionist) message to the American public, it increasingly functioned simply as a tool of Cold War U.S. cultural diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Another CIA front aimed at East rather than West Asia, the Asia Foundation, also had some missionary antecedents. According to Osamah Khalil's recent history of Middle East expertise in the U.S., CIA money might even have found its way to the archetypal missionary institution in the Arab world, the American University of Beirut.¹

Cold War U.S. diplomacy was, arguably, motivated to make use of non-state traditions of foreign engagement by U.S. citizen groups for strategic reasons: to showcase the contrast between American democracy and total state power in the Communist bloc; also to make intrusions of U.S. power more palatable to Third World populations in an era of decolonization and rising nationalism. In any case, it is striking in Hollinger's account how generously early Cold War America rewarded the missionary-descended Asian experts who chose to make their knowledge available to their fellow Americans, whether in the shape of senior government posts, university positions, or literary celebrity. Their professional success contrasted sharply with the fate of the several individuals featured in *Protestants Abroad* who emphasized the anti-colonial elements of their ideological heritage at the expense of their support for Cold War U.S. foreign policy—for example, critics of the Chinese Nationalist government among the so-called 'China Hands'—and suffered loyalty investigations and worse as a result. The starkly positive or negative career possibilities facing the Asia experts of the era point not only to the strategic importance of missionary-descended knowledge to the national security state but also to the state's overwhelming ability to determine the fate of the missionaries.

These, though, are minor elaborations. Overall, it seems to me that Hollinger gets the balance between the power of the missionary project on the one hand and that of the Cold War state on the other—between, if you like, religious/intellectual and diplomatic history—exactly right. Take, for example, his superb portrait of the most important missionary-associated figure in the Cold War Middle East, the scholar, spy, and oil industry advisor William A. Eddy. Hollinger devotes several passages to a sympathetic portrayal of Eddy's intellectual development as a missionary-descended 'Arabist' and the important role he performed during the 1940s in establishing U.S. government relations with Arab leaders. However, he also pays considerable attention to the damage to Eddy's Protestant moral values and pro-Arab sympathies that resulted from his World War II and Cold War service to the U.S. state. Throughout the book, Hollinger displays remarkable judiciousness and sensitivity as he describes the often difficult personal choices facing fiercely principled individuals living within the force fields of powerful institutions and world-historical events.

In the space remaining, I want to explore one other, lesser theme of *Protestants Abroad*. Hollinger states several times throughout the book that his "missionary cosmopolitans" were the Protestant counterparts of cosmopolitan Jewish-American intellectuals who had a similarly de-provincializing influence on mid-

¹ Osamah Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), chap. 4.

twentieth-century American intellectual life (p. 3). However, he does not develop this claim, presumably because he has written at length about the Jewish intellectuals in previous books.² This suggestion intrigued me as it spoke to an old scholarly interest of mine—in the literary segment of the Cold War-era Jewish intelligentsia known as the ‘New York Intellectuals’—and I would like to end by briefly putting *Protestants Abroad* into explicit conversation with Hollinger’s earlier work in intellectual history.

I can see why Hollinger makes this comparison. Both the Protestant and Jewish intellectuals were conduits of foreign influences into America, the former because of their missionary work in Asia and the latter due to their recent immigration from Europe; both had an influence on U.S. intellectual life out of proportion to their numbers and contributed in important ways to Cold War culture in America (like the missionary Arabists in the American Friends of the Middle East, the New York Intellectuals received covert CIA financial support through the American Committee for Cultural Freedom); and both were haunted by tensions in their identities between the particular and the universal (in the case of the New York group, between their self-perception as cosmopolitan intellectuals and the increasingly inescapable fact in the 1940s of their Jewishness).

For all the similarities, however, there was surprisingly little interaction between these cosmopolitan communities. Indeed, if anything, there was more mutual incomprehension and mistrust. Hollinger mentions the obvious conflict between the Jewish intellectuals and missionary Arabists over Zionism. However, although he hints at it once or twice, he does not go into another major area of contention: the New York Intellectuals’ disdain for the fiction produced by missionary-associated writers like Pearl Buck and John Hersey. He notes in passing that Alfred Kazin omitted Buck from his survey of the contemporary American literary scene, *On Native Grounds* (38), and also that Leslie Fielder and Dwight Macdonald dismissed Hersey as “middlebrow” (315).

This difference is potentially significant. Reflecting their 1930s background as anti-Stalinist, literary Modernists, the New York Intellectuals were relentlessly highbrow cosmopolitans, celebrating the values of detachment, alienation, and aesthetic difficulty. The missionary writers, in contrast, were middlebrow in the sense brilliantly described by Christina Klein in her 2003 analysis of mid-twentieth-century American cultural representations of Asia, *Cold War Orientalism*: that is, sentimental, populist, and educational.³ The publishing venues of the two communities summed it up: whereas the New York Intellectuals favored low-circulation ‘little magazines’ such as *Partisan Review*, the missionary-middlebrows preferred commercial publications with big audiences like the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Reader’s Digest*.

I bring all this up not so much to dispute Hollinger’s linking of Protestant and Jewish cosmopolitanism as to suggest that he could usefully have enlisted the concept of middlebrow in his discussion of the domestic cultural institutions and audiences associated with missionary cosmopolitanism. A more sustained engagement with Christina Klein’s work would, I think, have been particularly beneficial here.

² See, especially, David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³ Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 64-67.

This, though, is a very small quibble. In this book, David Hollinger has produced a profound yet wonderfully engaging account of an insufficiently understood topic that also serves as a model for historians wishing to synthesize the concerns and methods of disparate historical sub-fields in clear, supple, erudite prose.

Protestants Abroad is a magisterial work by a scholar writing at the height of his craft.

Author's Response by David A. Hollinger, UC Berkeley

To begin with, I just want say “Wow.” Such generous and detailed comments, and from four such discerning discussants. And I want to thank Albert Wu for an equally generous introduction, and for emphasizing my debt to Joseph R. Levenson’s work on China. Thanks also to Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins for organizing this roundtable.

All four reviewers understand that a central argument of the book is that the missionary project inserted a stronger voice in favor of greater solidarity with non-white, decolonizing peoples than would otherwise have existed in debates over American foreign policy. Instead of dwelling here on that point, which is stated with great clarity by John Thompson, especially, I will focus on four of the questions raised by my discussants. I hope that future scholars carry out research casting more light on these questions than I am able to do. But here I will do what I can to advance the conversation.

One question is this: what is the relation between the Asia-centered cosmopolitanism of the missionary contingent and the Europe-centered cosmopolitanism of the Jewish contingent? Second, what is the place of gender in the missionary project at home and abroad? Third, just how and why do ‘we’ offer moral judgments about my cast of characters? And finally, what place does my book have in any larger analysis of the problem of solidarity, the problem, that is, of reconciling a drive to include and a drive to define?

No book before *Protestants Abroad*, so far as I know, has suggested a parallel between missionary-connected Americans and Jewish immigrants. Hugh Wilford correctly surmises that I would have said more about it had I not been writing books and articles about Jewish cosmopolitanism since 1975. But in this book I erred by not doing more with it. The point deserves a bolder exposition than I gave it.

Wilford is also correct to observe, as I failed to do, that the cultural domain of missionary cosmopolitanism was decidedly middlebrow while the ethos of Jewish cosmopolitans tended toward the avant-garde. The most famous of the missionary-connected writers— Pearl Buck, John Hersey, and the author of *Anna and the King of Siam*, Margaret Landon—did indeed have more *Saturday Evening Post* than *Partisan Review* readers. Hersey is closest to an exception, but the New York Jewish intelligentsia was often condescending toward him. Whether in the arts or in policy debates, missionary-connected Americans rarely spoke in an ironic voice. In keeping with the classic ‘straight’ style associated with Protestantism, many were relentlessly earnest, and none more so than Hersey. If the Jewish cosmopolitans valued ‘authenticity,’ in a distinction made famous by Lionel Trilling, the missionary cosmopolitans valued ‘sincerity.’ These differences in style help to explain why the two groups paid so little attention to one another even as both rendered American culture less provincial.¹

But intellectual content, not style, was the chief basis for the fact that the two groups largely ignored one another. The Jewish cosmopolitans were Eurocentric to a degree I failed to emphasize. The missionary crowd was slow to appreciate the significance of the Holocaust, as I do observe in *Protestants Abroad*, but the Jewish cosmopolitans could rarely take their minds off Europe (and, in some cases, Palestine as an extension of

¹ Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). For my further elaboration of the relationship between missionary cosmopolitanism and Jewish cosmopolitanism, see <http://www.publicseminar.org/2017/12/protestant-missionaries-and-immigrant-jews/>

Europe). Even as the Jewish intellectuals dramatically broadened and deepened American engagement with modern European civilization, they knew little about Asia and appeared to care about it even less.

The missionary contingent traded in cultural commodities considerably more exotic than those offered by Jewish cosmopolitans, and they extracted these commodities from languages less familiar than French and German. Prominent among these precious goods was the understanding of modern Asian societies and cultures brought into American universities and colleges following World War II under the sign of 'Area Studies.' Charles Hayford catches me in an outsider's use of "Sinology"—a term that properly refers to an antiquarian and largely amateur tradition of scholarship—to embrace the more professional 'Chinese Area Studies,' but I sometimes called my late colleague Fred Wakeman a 'Sinologist' to his face and he did not flinch. Hayford is right about how professionalization marginalized some of the older missionary scholars like Kenneth Scott Latourette, but missionary cosmopolitans like Edwin Reischauer and Lucian Pye were conspicuous in the professionalized leadership of Area Studies.

Women were not conspicuous in those circles. Hayford is correct that gender bias affected Area Studies, as it did the rest of academia, and much more than today. Hayford's point brings me to my second question: what about women in the story I tell?

Emily Rosenberg rightly flags some of the complexities of this question. Missions were a distinctive domain for women's creativity and enterprise. This has been appreciated only within a relatively small circle of scholars, led by Dana Robert of the Boston School of Theology.² The work of these scholars is read by few historians outside the field of 'missiology,' as church history specialists denote the study of missions. Yet the actions of women abroad as missionaries should be recognized as part of American history. That is the standard understanding of what men do abroad as business executives, journalists, military officers, and diplomats. Since women constituted two-thirds of American missionary personnel, the failure of U.S. history scholarship to embrace missionary history has a disproportionate effect on the scope of the study of American women. What literature we do have on women missionaries, moreover, focuses largely on the period before 1920, before women exercised the leadership they did in later decades. I was much affected by reading the letters and memoirs of many missionary women who lived American lives in Japan, Syria, China, and all over the world. *Protestants Abroad* does mention Minnie Vautrin, Alice Browne Frame, and Mary Schaufler Platt as examples of extraordinary leadership and courage in the mission field, but my attention was on the United States.

And there, even as I wrote about missionary-connected women in domestic reform movements, I saw almost no traces of something I had expected to find: leadership in advancing the cause of women's rights. I did see this leadership on governance issues within churches and in trans-denominational institutions, but otherwise

² Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997); Ruth A. Tucker, "Women in Missions: Reaching Sisters in 'Heathens Darkness,'" in Joel A. Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk, eds., *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 251-280; Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985); Karen K. Seat, *'Providence Has Freed Our Hands': Women's Missions and the American Encounter with Japan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

not much in period after 1920. Rosenberg properly acknowledges my major point: that the women's activism to which she calls attention did not 'map on' to second wave feminism. That movement was overwhelmingly led by secular Jewish women.

I am glad Rosenberg engaged what I suggest was the relative 'passivity' of ecumenical Protestant women. Perhaps other scholars will prove me mistaken about this? Perhaps my speculation that Biblically inspired and church-reinforced self-abnegation was a social-psychological disposition militating against the development of a stronger style of feminism is simply incorrect? Some historians, including Margaret Bendroth of the Congregational Library, are now working on this question.³ While I await the results of these inquiries, I remain impressed by how often missionary women displayed a sensibility of extreme humility. There is an old saw to the effect that one can accomplish a great deal if you allow someone else to get credit for it. Both Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan liked to say this, and the admirers of each have wrongly claimed their hero originated this bit of droll wisdom. That both of these presidential products of Middle America popularized the thought indicates how common the sentiment was in the Protestant circles in which Truman and Reagan grew up. As males, Truman and Reagan were more easily forgiven for paying it only lip service.

On to my third question: how do 'we' judge the men and women whose lives I discuss in *Protestants Abroad*? Thompson notes that I ponder this question in my Conclusion. Even if I show the missionary cosmopolitans to have been, as a rule, less racist, less imperialist, and less Orientalist than most of their American contemporaries, today's progressive culture invites us to stake our moral distance from the missionary cosmopolitans. In so doing, I believe we should keep in mind a rarely made distinction that I state in the Conclusion. I voice the hope that we can shift our attention "from a) the morally structural question of just how racist, sexist, imperialist, xenophobic, or otherwise deficient a given cohort was, to b) the morally developmental question of just what conditions have promoted and enabled the diminution of those evils" (298).

Scholarship on countless historical episodes is quick to pronounce on the morally structural issue—so-and-so was a racist, or an Orientalist, etc.—which is surely easy for most of us, simply applying our own sense of values. The morally developmental issue is more challenging, and ideally requires an empirical answer. Just what historical conditions have pushed societies in a direction 'we' now think morally superior to rival directions? Yes, there is the old danger of 'Whig history,' according to which the past is uncritically organized as a series of steps toward the proud subjectivities of any given present. But *Protestants Abroad* is, among other things, an effort to show that experience with the varieties of humankind can produce substantial cultural change, especially if processed by minds looking for the most comprehensive possible understanding of the human species. That is why I describe as episodes in "demographic diversification" (297) both the missionary project and immigration: both confronted the empowered Anglo-Protestant population with something different, and with striking results.

All episodes in demographic diversification generate versions of the tension between the drive to define a community firmly enough to facilitate intimacy and belonging, and the drive to include diverse peoples into whose company one is thrown by the contingencies of history. Hayford understands this book as another installment in my "grand project to understand how Americans worked to broaden community without

³ Margaret Bendroth, "Those Ecumenical Women," paper presented at "Workshop on Ecumenical Protestantism and Post-Protestant Secularism, 1917-2017," at University of California, Berkeley, 13 October 2017.

losing cohesion of identity.” My fourth question is what *Protestants Abroad* has to do with that project? Everything.

Deeply embedded in the missionary project from the start was the idea that the whole world should be brought into Christianity, but the diverse circumstances of foreign lands led the missionaries to pull back and back and back, discovering that their sense of what Christianity was had to be revised in order to render it remotely workable for most people who did not share the basic culture of the historically Christian North Atlantic West. Chapter Three of *Protestants Abroad* is an interpretive history of this process as registered in the churches, where the conflict between the more highly educated, ecumenical (often called ‘mainline’) Protestants and the less educated, fundamentalist-evangelical Protestants was dramatically sharpened by the challenge of diversity. The rest of the book runs variations on this theme, especially as registered in American domestic politics and foreign policy debates: on what specific terms might the national community organize itself, and in what specific causes should the power of the United States be mobilized in the world as a whole? The aspiration for ‘the Christian Century’ was followed by the aspiration for ‘the American Century.’ Neither aspiration was fulfilled. I offer the saga of missionaries as a case study in the problem of solidarity in an age of accelerating global interaction. The missionary cosmopolitans were more ‘globalized’ than most of their American contemporaries.

Before I close I want to add that while writing this book, I became aware of several topics on which more research is very much needed. I would be pushing dissertation students in these directions right now had I not retired from active service at Berkeley.

The Institute for Pacific Relations is an ideal dissertation topic. I kept coming across IPR in multiple contexts, and was frustrated that I could not turn to a single, comprehensive book that would enable me to understand the connections between the many individuals and enterprises that flourished side by side in IPR for two decades after its founding in 1925. A second dissertation candidate is the Student Volunteer Movement, but I worry that the topic is so ‘churchy’ that it would be death for any doctoral student unless he or she planned a career in Protestant-affiliated institutions. That restriction is a shame, because SVM was without doubt the largest and most historically consequential campus-based movement in all American history before Students for a Democratic Society. A case could be made that SVM was more important even than SDS as measured by the number lives it directly touched and by the importance of the locations of those lives in adulthood.

Beyond these two institutions, there are host of individuals on whose careers I expected to find a more robust scholarly literature. John Hersey is one, although I am pleased that the accomplished British writer Jeremy Treglown is well along on a biography of Hersey. I also looked for more than I could find on T. A. Bisson, Buell Gallagher, Kenneth Landon, Frank Laubach, and Edmund Soper. The most astounding gap in the literature is Pearl Buck’s almost total absence in studies of the history of American women. A Nobel laureate, one of the most radical feminists of her generation, the most famous female author in American history, the individual credited with having greater influence on western attitudes toward China than anyone since Marco Polo—is not counted as even a minor figure in the field of American Women’s History? Fortunately,

biographical studies by literary scholars Peter Conn and Hilary Spurling help compensate for the lack of more work by historians.⁴

Finally, I want to thank again my discussants for such intensely engaged and generous comments. They invoke many things I wish I had have included in my book, and my own favorite of the items I wish I had thought to include was Hayford's quotation from Mark Twain. I managed to cite Twain's great contemporary, Charles Peirce, on the transformative potential of social contact, but Twain said it better: "Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."⁵ As my missionaries would have said, 'Amen.'

⁴ Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: Cultural Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hilary Spurling, *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to The Good Earth* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

⁵ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, The New Pilgrim's Progress* (New York, American Publishing Company, 1869), 521.