



## Dr. Jon Kirby Becomes CGCM Fellow and Teaches at BU



The Center for Global Christianity & Mission at Boston University School of Theology is pleased to welcome Dr. Jon Kirby, SVD, renown missiologist and missionary who has worked in Ghana, as our new fellow. Dr. Kirby's work includes more than thirty year of service in Ghana and he has written important works including his *Peacebuilding in Northern Ghana: Cultural Themes and Ethnic Conflict*

Dr. Kirby is teaching at BU School of Theology during Dr. Dana Robert's sabbatical year. This Spring semester he is leading a class entitled, *Mission, Culture, and Reconciliation*.

Dr. Kirby's office is located in the room 107 suite of the School of Theology building.

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**Dr. Sydney Rooy**

Dr. Sydney Rooy speaking at a meeting of the American Society of Missiology held at Maryknoll, NY.

## *'How does the church face up to its contextual situation?'*

Dr. Sidney Rooy's address to BU students and faculty on 26 October

Report and photographs by Anneke Helen Stasson

Showing his true form as a church historian, Dr. Sidney Rooy began his talk about issues in Latin American Missiology by tracing the nineteenth- and twentieth-century development of the Latin American church. He identified two basic modes of 19th century mission: Bible societies and education. He then looked at the influence the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh had on Latin American mission. Edinburgh had defined Latin America as a Christianized continent, but missionaries working there knew that there were still many issues that needed to be addressed. Thus, they held a conference in Panama in 1916.

The great change in mission in Latin America came in the twentieth century, with the conservative faith missions, which were asocial and apolitical, a veritable "refuge of the masses." By the time Rooy became a missionary in the 1960s, the context had changed yet again into what he defined as "an era of protest." Christians who felt themselves called to challenge injustice, help the poor, and confront the government found themselves being persecuted.

At this point in his lecture, Rooy asked a question that would become his refrain: "How does the church face up to its contextual situation?" If speaking out against wrong and living with the poor were acts that would get oneself killed, what should the church advise? Rooy did not advocate the apolitical approach of the conservative faith churches; he and the others at ISADET (Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos) refused to remain silent. He worked to build bridges

across ethnic divides by showing movies like "The Healer" to diverse audiences and asking them with which character they identified. Danger was a present reality in his ministry, but he and his coworkers kept at it. How does the church face up to its contextual situation? Well, for one thing, it doesn't give up. It rejoices at progress made and it mourns when tragedy strikes. Rooy shared stories that covered this spectrum.

Sometimes, noted Rooy, the church experiences growth in times of extreme social instability. This was surely the case of the growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century. Pentecostalism provided people with a sense of security and order. Church growth continues today in the pentecostalization of the Protestant church in Latin America. Rooy expressed some ambivalence about this fact. While he certainly rejoiced in church growth, he lamented the fact that Pentecostal missionaries often introduce the Protestant/Evangelical dualism, a dualism that was previously avoided by the delegates at the Panama conference of 1916, when they decided to call all Protestants in Latin America "evangelicals" (since protesting Catholics was not their goal).

Dr. Rooy provided his audience with a stimulating glimpse into Latin American history and missiology. His question, "How does the church face up to its contextual situation?" is a question that should be asked of the church in all times and places.



## *'Interdisciplinary Consultation on Missiology: Bringing History, Sociology, and Practical Theology into Conversation'*

Report and photographs by Doug Tzan

Although mission is about crossing boundaries, it is not always easy for the scholars engaged in the various missiological fields to cross their own disciplinary boundaries. In an effort to bring the disciplines of History, Sociology, and Practical Theology into conversation around the study of mission, on Friday, October 12th, the Center for Global Christianity together with the Mission and the Social Science and Religion Network hosted a day-long consultation on missiology.



The morning session was led by two sociologists from the University of Texas, Austin who have worked with historical data on religious movements, Professors Michael Young and Robert Woodberry. Young presented an argument based on his 2002 article "Confessional Protest: The Religious Birth of U.S. National Social Movements." This article challenges established sociological opinion regarding 19th-century national social movements, arguing that these movements began out of the culture of evangelical religion. Young locates the key process in the temperance and anti-slavery movements in the emotional lives of activists. Through feelings of guilt, these activists felt connected with the suffering of people distant from them leading to the development of a cosmopolitan perspective in which a person was morally responsible to all other people. Young illustrated the

continuing effects of this process with reference to recent protests against Taco Bell.

Woodberry has examined the long-term effects of missionary-sponsored institutions around the world. He has compiled and mapped data on missions from the 19th century to the present and linked it with current social and political data in order to show the links between non-state sponsored Protestant missionaries and democratic institutions. He addressed the difficulties of working across disciplinary lines, but also argued that such an approach helps one to see the big picture and to differentiate between immediate causes of events and larger historical processes. He illustrated his approach with his research on temperance movements in different countries and on the development of printing and mass publication in missions.

The afternoon session was led by Professor Daniel Jeyaraj of Andover Newton Theological School. Jeyaraj offered his reflections on the morning presentations. He observed that social-moral protest is a very old Christian tradition, evident in the ancient world. Christian theological beliefs have had social implications and are important to the rise of social movements. He cautioned, however, that it is important for scholars not just to look at the beliefs that are held, but the ways in which those beliefs are triggered in a particular context. Jeyaraj's reflections were followed by small group discussion of student research.



## Reverend Shirley DeWolf — ‘Women, Mission and Peace Building in Africa.’

Report and photographs by Doug Tzan

A Zimbabwean citizen by birth, Rev. Shirley DeWolf was the first woman ordained in the United Methodist Church of Zimbabwe. Educated in Zimbabwe and the United States, she returned to Zimbabwe just as the war of liberation from colonial rule was overtaking her home province and continued to work there until the war ended. She has worked with local churches in post-war reconstruction and community reintegration, ecumenical rural outreach programs in community development, and extensively with forcibly migrant peoples in 14 countries of southern Africa. Since 2001, she has taught full time at Africa University in both the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance and in the Faculty of Theology.

At Boston University on Tuesday, November 6th, DeWolf shared her reflections on “Women, Mission and Peace Building in Africa.” Recognizing that all of those are huge subjects, she opted for a narrative approach, telling stories of individuals or groups of women engaged in peace building and inviting her audience to reflect on those stories. She told about how in the mid-1990s some Liberian women decided to mobilize in order to bring peace to that country. In her second example, from Zimbabwe, she noted that despite deep political divisions, women from both the ruling party and the main opposition to meet in order to see what they have in common. Other Zimbabwean women are studying the tactics of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and exploring ways to bring nonviolence and love

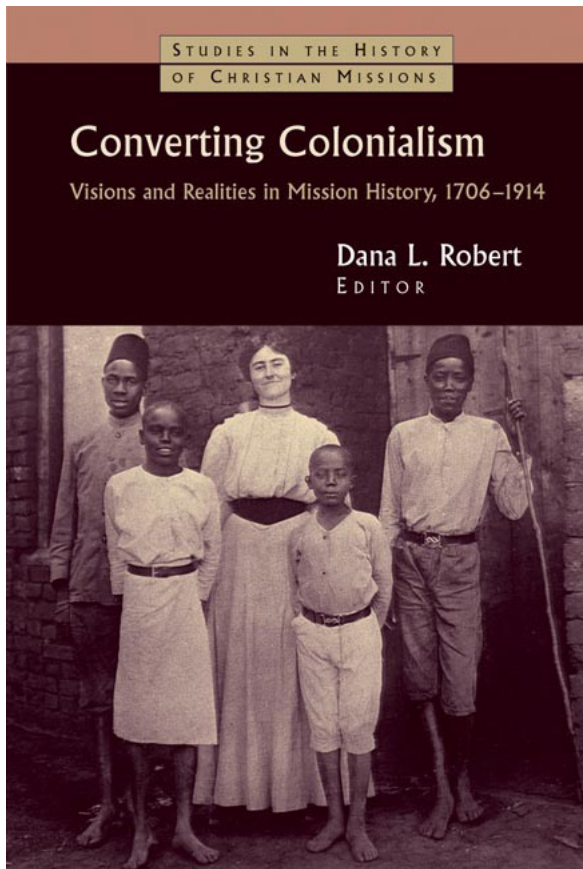


into politics. She also told about Sarah Brock, a Nama woman from Namibia whose mission is to create an oasis, recognizing that people are sustained by their relationship with their environment, and Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate for her tree planting efforts in Africa.

DeWolf suggested based on these examples that women’s experience as victims gives them an important point of view and that the experience of suffering is not a deterrent to moving forward. She noted that war is a gendered experience, and these women are taking advantage of their gendered position in society to build peace. In addition, there is strength to women working collectively for peace. Finally, for many women, peace building is more than simply claiming space for peace. There is a spiritual foundation, as well. Peace building is a spiritual task that must be approached holistically.



# New in Print!



*“This volume contains some of the most perceptive writing in recent years on the relationship between colonialism and missions in the two centuries before 1914. This is both a sad and a hopeful story, convincingly told by the nine distinguished authors, whose essays range from mission theory to compellingly interesting case studies from Africa, India, China, and the home front. The scholarship here is outstanding.”*

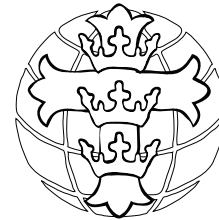
— **Daniel H. Bays**  
Calvin College

*“Dana Robert has mobilized an array of mission historians to recapture the passion, vision, and dreams behind the missionary enterprise whose force reshaped the twentieth century.... This is not a simple makeover of the missionary image; rather, the depth of research, breadth and balance of perspective, and the global coverage combine to make this an important contribution.”*

— **Ogbu Kalu**  
McCormick Theological Seminary

## *In the Next Issue:*

CGCM Welcomes Dr. Kee Yon Lee  
Launch of the History of Missiology website  
Interviews with new doctoral graduates in Mission  
... and more —



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If you have items you would like to contribute to the CGCM Newsletter, please send these along to the Center at the email address above.