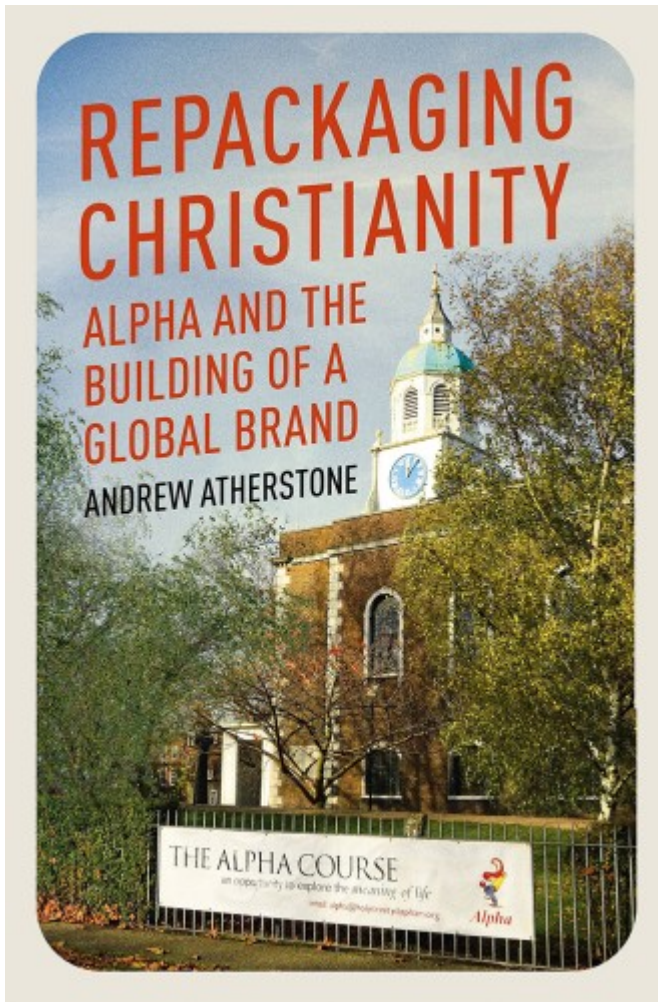


Take & Read: Global Christianity

New books in global Christianity

by [Philip Jenkins](#) in the [October 2023](#) issue

In Review



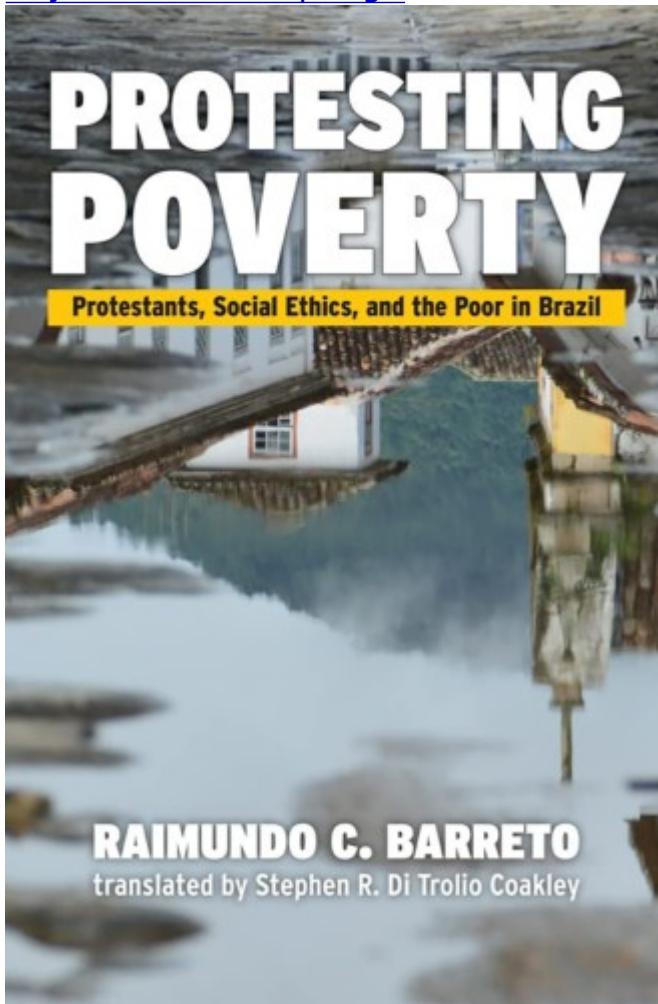
Repackaging Christianity

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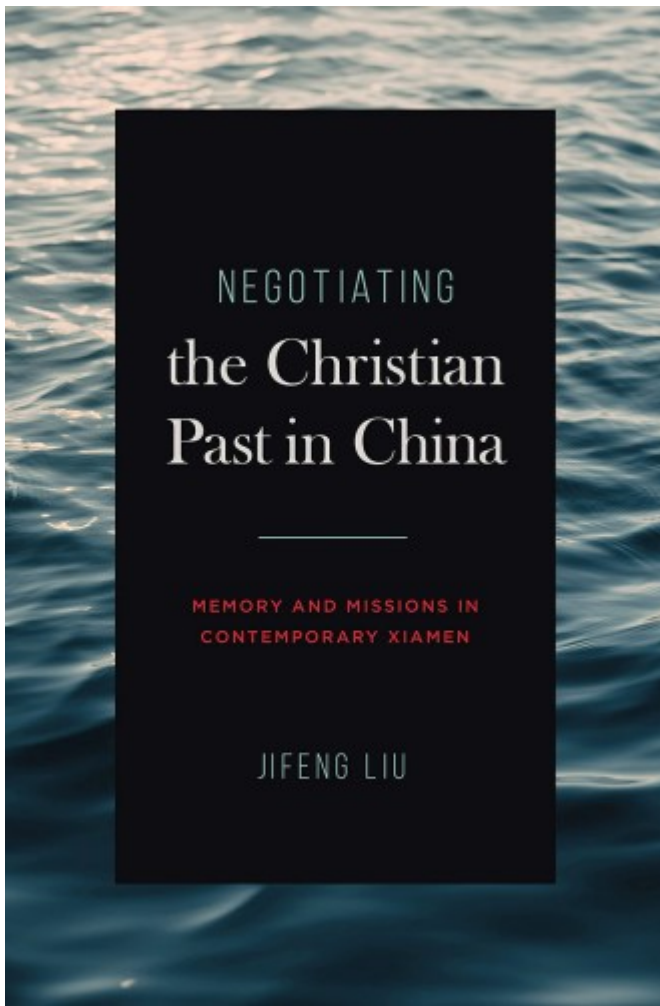
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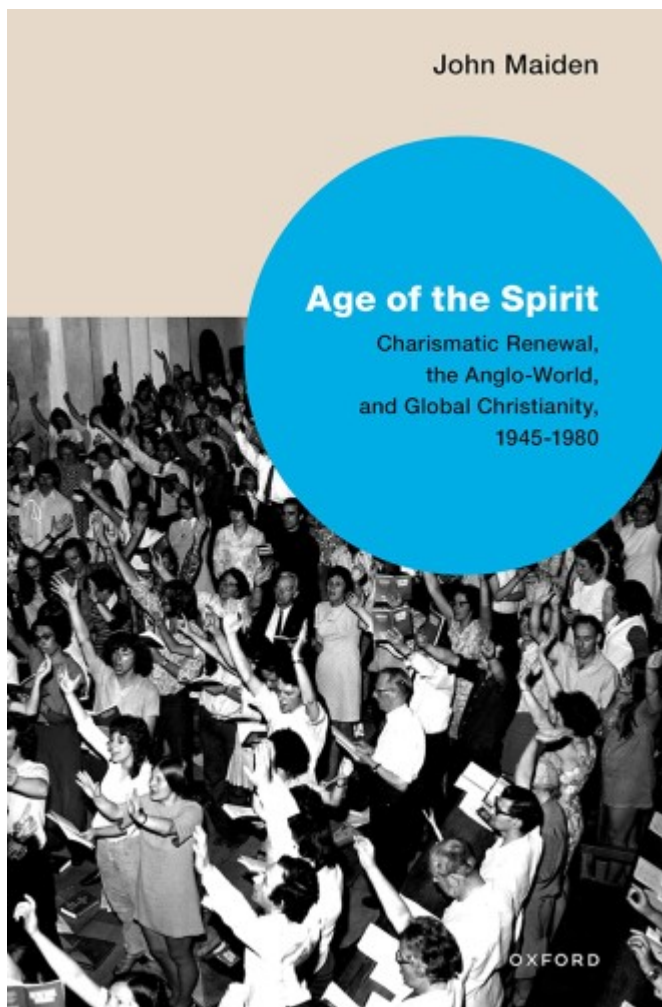
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SOUTH ASIA'S CHRISTIANS

Between Hindu and Muslim



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Pastoral Power, Clerical State



PENTECOSTALISM, GENDER, AND
SEXUALITY IN NIGERIA

Ebenezer Obadare

FOREWORD BY JACOB K. OLUPONA

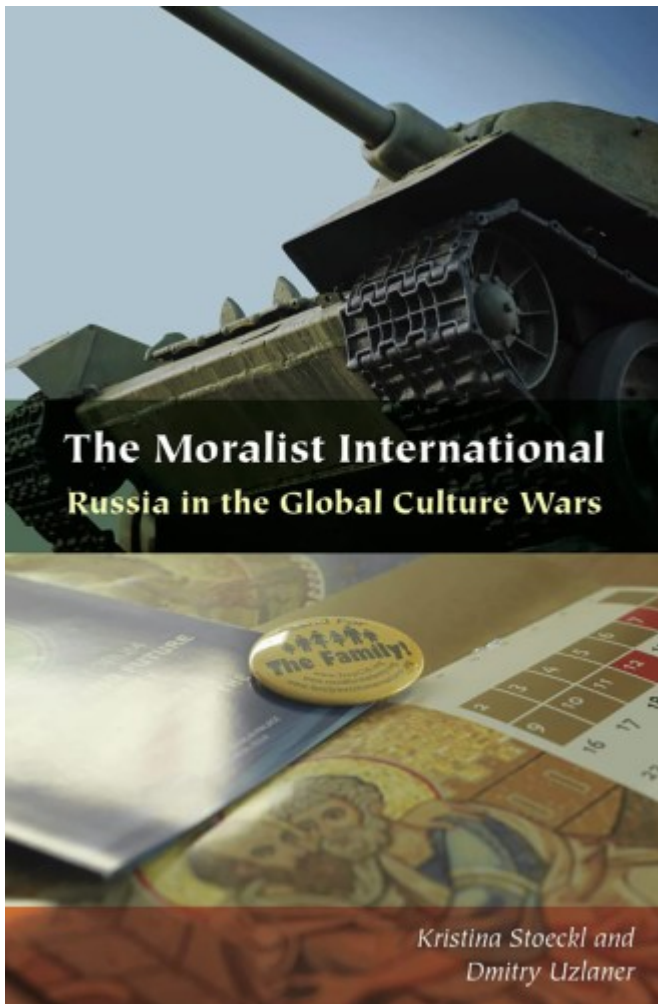
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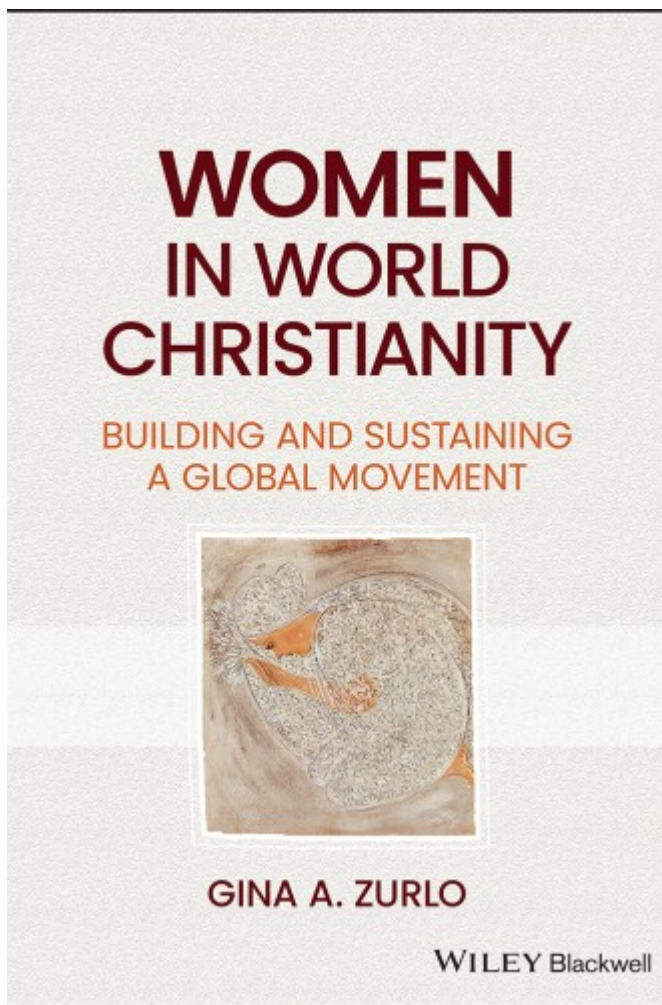
The Moralist International

Russia in the Global Culture Wars

By Kristina Stoeckl and Dmitry Uzlaner

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Women in World Christianity

Building and Sustaining a Global Movement

By Gina A. Zurlo

John Wiley and Sons

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Repackaging Christianity: Alpha and the Building of a Global Brand

By Andrew Atherstone

Hodder and Stoughton

At the start of this century, the archbishop of Paris at the time, Jean-Marie Lustiger, cited the two gifts of modern Protestantism to his own Roman Catholic Church. One

was the Pentecostal movement; the other, more surprisingly, was the Alpha course. This innovative tool for evangelism originated in 1977 at Holy Trinity Brompton, a London Anglican parish that is a de facto megachurch. Curious inquirers are recruited through friends and informal contacts, who invite them to meet for dinner, a lecture, and a discussion, with the goal of leading participants to a decision for Christ. The global influence has been phenomenal, and the organizers claim some 25 million course alumni worldwide. Andrew Atherstone explains the phenomenon sympathetically but not uncritically in this useful volume.

Protesting Poverty: Protestants, Social Ethics, and the Poor in Brazil

By Raimundo C. Barreto

Baylor University Press

Brazil has become a major player in global Protestantism. Despite its growing number of nones and secularists, the country also has more than 60 million Protestants, mainly in Pentecostal and charismatic traditions. Brazil's churches are very diverse, and some have attracted great controversy by forming alliances with rightist politicians such as former president Jair Bolsonaro. Some popular prosperity churches have also been criticized, and scandals have occurred. Raimundo Barreto provides a valuable service in reminding us of the breadth of Brazil's Protestant world and the significance of its progressive and activist wings. This book will interest anyone who wonders what happened to the older styles of liberation theology that were such a pronounced feature of Brazilian Catholic faith.

Negotiating the Christian Past in China: Memory and Missions in Contemporary Xiamen

By Jifeng Liu

Pennsylvania State University Press

The southern Chinese city of Xiamen (formerly called Amoy) was opened to European trade in the 1840s, and that link also laid the foundation for Christian missions. Over time, the Christian presence had an outsized influence on the local community. The city's quest for the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the turn of this century generated fervent interest in its history, much of which focused on that Christian dimension. Jifeng Liu does an exemplary job of integrating various

kinds of study—documentary and ethnographic—to show how local people create histories that are useful and relevant to them. Particularly interesting in view of recent trends is the sometimes fraught interaction between official and unofficial histories and between approved and unapproved churches. Sadly, any study of Xiamen (or a comparable city) in the 2020s would find a cultural climate much less hospitable to such benevolent, even fond Christian memories.

Age of the Spirit: Charismatic Renewal, the Anglo-World, and Global Christianity, 1945-1980

By John Maiden

Oxford University Press

Anyone interested in modern US Christian history knows about the dramatic rise of Pentecostal and charismatic forms of faith since the mid-20th century. John Maiden's thoroughly researched account of the transnational dimension of this growth prevents us from trying to explain the phenomenon in exclusively US terms. Roaming widely through the Anglosphere—Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa—he shows how local initiatives fed into a larger global phenomenon, which then spilled over into the Global South. Maiden has listened to countless hours of recorded sermons from those lands, and he makes admirable use of the movement's music to illustrate its spirituality. For all its scholarly credentials, the book is also clearly and effectively written.

South Asia's Christians: Between Hindu and Muslim

By Chandra Mallampalli

Oxford University Press

Christians constitute only a minuscule proportion of South Asia's vast population, perhaps 3 percent of the total. Still, they number around 50 million, and many face severe obstacles to the free exercise of their faith. Particularly in southern India, some of the churches are ancient, tracing their origins to the first few centuries after Christ. Chandra Mallampalli offers a chronological overview of the Christian faith in this region, beginning with an evocative section on the Thomas Christians. He is excellent on the multiple kinds of religious dialogue in which Indian Christians have had to engage—not only with Muslims and Hindus, but also, often troublingly, with

European Catholics. Mallampalli carries the story into modern times, which include significant conversions among Dalits (so-called Untouchables) and tribal peoples as well as the savage maltreatment of Christians and other minorities by Hindu supremacists.

Pastoral Power, Clerical State: Pentecostalism, Gender, and Sexuality in Nigeria

By Ebenezer Obadare

University of Notre Dame Press

Although Nigeria is one of the most important African nations, it has long suffered from dreadful problems of governance, political instability, religious polarization, and terrorist violence. State weakness has opened the door to power for Christian clergy, who occupy critical political, economic, and social roles in a way that would startle their Global North counterparts. This is true for Catholics and Anglicans as well as Pentecostals and other Christians. One consequence of this clerical influence is the remarkable importance of moral and sexual politics in national debate, reflected, for instance, in debates over homosexuality. Strikingly, pastoral influence in Nigeria is increasing. In his study of the Pentecostal side of the phenomenon, Ebenezer Obadare offers some fascinating case studies, showing how pastors must combine political savvy with supernatural claims and, yes, with sexual charisma. Obadare places his findings firmly in the context of wider African realities and concepts of leadership.

The Moralist International: Russia in the Global Culture Wars

By Kristina Stoeckl and Dmitry Uzlaner

Fordham University Press

In a study that is both illuminating and infuriating, Kristina Stoeckl and Dmitry Uzlaner show how Russia's Orthodox Church—historically, the heart of one of the world's great religious communions—has wholeheartedly committed itself to an intimate alliance with an evil state and its deeply reactionary social positions. For instance, they quote Moscow's patriarch seeking in 2022 to justify the invasion of Ukraine as resisting the influence of the satanic West, best exemplified by pride parades. A similar condemnation extends to any intrusion into traditional gender

roles, even a proposed law to reduce domestic violence. Crucially, the authors see these campaigns as radical innovations fueled by a panicked response to modernity, or what they term a “conservative aggiornamento.” The book tells us much about the globalization of culture war themes and rhetoric, many of which (notably concerning abortion and anti-feminism) originated in the late 20th-century United States. The more anti-Western Putin’s Russia became, the more the Russian church listened to those American mentors.

Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement

By Gina A. Zurlo

John Wiley and Sons

If ever a book could be said to fulfill a long-standing need, it is this one! Since scholars began paying attention to the expansion of Christianity into the Global South, they have acknowledged the pivotal role of women at every stage of that process. Gina Zurlo offers a broad survey of that story in both old and new Christian worlds, firmly rooted in innovative quantitative research. Her book pays attention to significant women theologians, but it also ranges freely across women’s roles in other church functions, including mission, education, and health care. Some chapters offer breakdowns by geographical region, while other sections offer rewarding vignettes organized by denominational traditions. Select topics include women’s responses to gender-based violence, the role of women in ecological justice, and women as peacebuilders. This is avowedly a textbook, but it is both approachable and valuable for scholars as well as students.