Brian Stanley

Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History

Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018

480 pages, with bibliography

Review by Dr Evi Voulgaraki-Pissina

DOI: 10.57577/1-22A25

This one-volume history is an ambitious endeavour. It provides a map for many previously uncharted areas and a guide through the major developments of a much-troubled century, marked by two world wars, the rise and collapse of various ideologies and a constantly increasing speed of change at all levels, as well as the outbreak of several revolutions around the globe.

A prolific writer, Stanley is the leading expert on the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, which set in motion many developments at the beginning of the 20th century, and author of a book of that title. He has also been Professor of World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh since 2009 and in this capacity has acquired a deep and broad knowledge of all the epistemological progress in the fields of Missiology and World Christianity. Thus, the volume under discussion does a great service to both these disciplines by making a smooth transition between Missiology and World Christianity, conserving and combining the expertise of both. For the reader unfamiliar with the field, one may note that World Christianity is a recently introduced branch of theology which signifies a revolutionary change in approach, focusing particularly on the perspective of Christians from the Global South—long regarded rather as passive recipients of the missionary activities of the so-called 'countries that send missionaries,' but who since the early 20th century, and increasingly after the Great War, speak for themselves and are indeed being heard. It is the perspective of what was considered the 'margins' or the 'fringe' of theology that becomes the centre of attention, introducing a disjunction between Christianity and Western culture and putting an end to some outdated sense of ownership of Christianity by the Western world. In this regard Stanley's book is extremely valuable to scholars of Missiology, giving some indirect guidelines to methodological questions that preoccupy them in particular with regard to the contemporary need for transforming mission. While one may follow this fluctuation between "Missiology" and "World Christianity" models throughout the book, Stanley presents in particular the major paradigm shift in Missiology, leading to the concept of *Missio Dei,* in chapter 9 (193-215), and discusses the "making of World Christianity" in his last chapter on Migrant Churches (337ff).

Nevertheless, the author warns us from the start how fragile the position of World Christianity still is in British academic structures, in particular that of Christianity outside Europe and North America (xx). He is also aware of the fact that he himself is much more familiar with the modern history of Protestant than of Catholic missions—not to mention the Orthodox, let alone the Oriental Orthodox (7). Stanley also warns us against an

enthusiastic trend to see Christianity as diminishing in a secularised West, which directs scholarly orientation exclusively towards the Global South (8). It is between this disproportionate attitude of more pessimistic views of Europe as a post-Christian society and the need to still embrace the trend towards a transnational approach in Church History studies that Stanley's book is balanced.

The book contributes to contemporary historical studies and is a mine of information about Christianity everywhere in the world. As is appropriate, it is the questions of today that lead the historical quest. In fact, it is the question of self-awareness that presents the leading question for his research, namely, "to understand how the churches of the world got to be the way they were in specific geographical locations at crucial turning points in the course of the century" (4). This involves a deep understanding of historical process and societal evolution as well as anthropological insight. The subject matter of the book is not classified chronologically or spatially. Instead of a chronological order, Stanley uses a thematic, paradigmatic approach, which reflects the current development of historical methodology. His choice of themes is extremely apt and skilled. The author claims not to be engaging in history of ideas, doctrinal theology or hermeneutics. And yet, the issues he chooses to discuss represent some of the hottest topics preoccupying theology today. The thematic structure of the volume thus brings a particular quality to the view of systematic theology, philosophy and history of modern thought as well as other points of interest in Human Sciences.

In developing his thematic classification, Stanley supports each particular point of interest with two case studies on the topic from different areas, reflecting different circumstances. The combination of the two case studies may come as a surprise to the reader and constitutes indeed an original element, serving to document the subject in question from multiple perspectives. So, each chapter is structured in four well-harmonised parts: an introductory section with a broad explanation of the scope of the chapter, the reasons for the selection of the two following case studies and a guide to the broader historical and theological questions regarding the particular theme, as well as a fair presentation of select, leading scholarly research. Then the two case studies follow in separate parts, which are informative and sound, giving plenty of insight to the reader, and at last a closing part which sums up the discussion, drawing plausible and convincing conclusions.

Among the author's favorite themes are the relations between church and state, the minority status of Christians in particular under Islam, and also the whole broad human rights agenda, including the question of the indigenous peoples which form the backcloth to Christian missionary expansionism and educational endeavors, e.g. the history of the residential schools in Canada (255-263). Stanley also presents the important shifts in theology during the 20th century. He discusses notions such as liberation and healing, which lead to Liberation Theology on the one side and to the shaping of significant revival movements on the other. He shows how the latter draw also from traditional ancestral cultures to form a variety of Christianities that could be seen as ways of incultura-

tion of faith, or as thorough-going syncretism. In this regard, he also discusses the development of broader Pentecostalism, which rose to become a legitimate version of Christianity, and has an appeal to many. The discussion of nationalism permeates the whole book. Stanley regrets the "repeated subversion of Christian ethics by a series of tragic compromises between Christianity and ideologies of racial supremacy" in the 20th century and warns us of the probability of "accommodat[ing] the faith to ideologies of individual enrichment" in the 21st (366).

To save space, I will refer in greater detail only to the first two chapters, and then focus on the particulars concerning the Orthodox, before coming to an overall evaluation.

In Chapter 1, Stanley charts the divergent responses of the English and American Churches to the Great War, closing the "long 19th century" and partly reversing the internationalist enthusiasm of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. The war had a deep impact on the English Churches, where different, in fact contradictory tensions such as feminism, Zionism, catholic practices and apocalypticism met on different levels. It also gave rise to a humanitarian panhumanism of the empire with regard to the subject peoples against the backdrop of colonialism. Stanley also describes the birth and rise of American fundamentalism. It is a chapter that unfolds the far-reaching significance of the First World War and leads us to an understanding of its manifold influence worldwide today.

In Chapter 2, Stanley analyses the relation of Christianity and nationalism, two "always uneasy bedfellows," as he suggests, and not only in the frame of Catholic universalism. Nevertheless, he makes clear how Christian faith acquired a particular appeal when utilised for the national liberation and fulfillment of nations. The first example here is Korean Protestantism. The discussion includes the imposition by the Japanese of Shintō shrine ceremonies in a 'sustainable' civil allegiance, officially tolerated by the churches; the underground resistance; the development of some syncretistic views with the *Tan'gun* ancient Korean mythology; the activism and radical expansionism that reached its peak in 2005; the first Korean megachurches; urbanisation and P'yŏngyang as the centre for Christian life, up to the disastrous division of Korea following the Korean war (1950–3). The second case study in the chapter is Polish Catholicism and the struggle to gain national dignity in the face of many territorial troubles, the development of (militant) Marianism, the Black Madonna and the veneration of Mary as the Queen of nation, the significance of Pope John Paul II's visit in 1979, the founding of the *Solidarność* (Solidarity) movement about a decade before the collapse of the communist regimes, the murder of the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko. In closing, Stanley critically discusses the moral implications of the link between Christianity and nationalism.

These two chapters (and many others) could be particularly interesting to Orthodox readers of a traditional Eastern origin who are mired in harsh self-criticism and a parochial way of thinking *vis à vis* the West, making them realise how *all* churches have experienced the temptation and addressed the issue of national-

ism, one way or another, with greater or lesser success. The nationalist temptation has not been exclusive to the Orthodox.

The Orthodox are visible in the volume in several cases, as the subject of particular focus as well as in chapters on broader topics.

Firstly, they are discussed in an extremely interesting, very eurocentric chapter on secularisation (Chapter 4) which presents a peculiar parallel: "The Church under siege in France and the Soviet Union." It examines the various phases of the French *laicité*, which remained an effort to shrink the social influence of Catholicism in society, and the Russian, more radical version of an effort oscillating from eradication to management of religion in the USSR (religion here including Orthodox and Protestants). It is interesting that in both cases the Church was given a partial "break," by the Vichy government in France and by Stalin in Russia in the face of the advance of the Nazi troops, where the Church was thought to be an important factor in resistance. Devotion to the Church has been resilient despite all persecution and restriction from the top down. The gender factor, inserted by Stanley in this discussion, is also very interesting. He accepts that *laicité* had some relation to rationalist and misogynist prejudices among anticlerical republicans of the Third Republic in France, a very striking point (88). Nevertheless, he also suggests that the number of women attending church decreased from the late sixties because women chose self-definition rather than submission to the authority of men, whether in church or at home, which did not correspond at all to modernity and the modern understanding of women's place in society. As the chapter is organised around the question of different forms of secularisation, despite providing a highly intelligent discussion it naturally leaves aside other questions as to the character of the Orthodox church and theology in Russia. Still, it does include in brief the aspiration of Moscow to establish preeminence in the Orthodox world, as well as the development of the idea of a 'third Rome.'

The second reference is in the broader context of ecumenism. Here is the first critical observation that one might raise, namely, that despite some hesitation or denial on the part of some Orthodox Churches, based mainly on the incompatibility of Orthodox ecclesiology with a Protestant-type branch theory, an initiative to overcome obstacles and reservations was undertaken by all sides. Significant Orthodox theologians would merit some recognition here for their theological suggestions, at once creative and truthful to the Orthodox tradition, the most important of all being Fr Georges Florovsky. Stanley is aware of differences between Orthodox local churches in attitudes to the ecumenical movement and he notes the early participation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece, but in my opinion, he underplays the leading role of the Patriarchate and the significance of this for the gradual participation of all Orthodox churches.

A sub-section in chapter 8 is dedicated to Coptic Christianity in Egypt in the framework of the minority status of Christians under Islam. Here, Stanley raises significant criticism of the stance of the British administration and their overall policy of favoring the Muslim majority, disre-

garding the voices of anguish from Coptic Christianity. The statement that the Copts are left with emigration to the USA as their principal option is indeed heartbreaking, but fair enough taking also into consideration that Stanley would consider it 'cheap' "either to revert to spiritual introversion or to choose indefinite exile in the West" (192). The author as a historian has done his part. It is up to international organisations, such as the UN, or the WCC, and international awareness to shape a different future by placing a much stronger emphasis on the human rights agenda in the region and minority rights in particular. What is also very important in this context is that Stanley explicitly discusses the issue of religious freedom, including the right of free choice of religion, which is directly opposed to the ban on apostasy in Muslim law and is thus quite commonly muted in human rights declarations for reasons of diplomacy.

Particular mention is made of Orthodox leaders, quite rightly, in the context of Palestinian Christianity and in the framework of the quest for liberation (235). In the overall context of Liberation Theology and the ecumenical movement there is more than one significant mention of Metropolitan George (Khodr) of Mount Lebanon.

The whole of chapter 14 is dedicated to Orthodox Christianity in the face of the Modern World. The first of the four structural parts is dedicated to the "Westward diffusion of Orthodoxy." The author understands the appeal and significance of Orthodoxy for the Western world, reaching far beyond some small ethnic diaspora communities. The appeal of the Russian intelligentsia, of hesychasm as developed in Mount Athos, and the growth of Orthodoxy in the West also through conversion are discussed. Important names are here referred to, such as Nicolas Zernov or Lev Gillet, but there are others who would also deserve mention, such as Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, or Olivier Clément, just to mention two of a younger generation, both converts and important theologians. The second part relates to the Greek Church, against the backdrop of the 'deleterious' (320) effects of the separation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to form churches bounded by the newly established states. The chapter is very interesting and fair. But as to the ban on foreign (mission) schools by Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, the issue cannot be discussed only in terms of the right of propagation of faith. One should see it also from another angle, namely that of the local people, which has perhaps been better represented in scholarly bibliography in similar situations in other parts of the world [cf. the next chapter, on African Orthodoxy, or the one on the Residential Schools in Canada (Ch. 11, III)]. In the Greek case, there has been ample discussion and scholarly literature in Greek, even if an inadequate amount of the material has been translated into English or other Western languages. The question here is whether it is legitimate to consider Greece a mission field, to regard Greeks as heathen the way some Western travelers of the 19th century and other theologians (such as A. Harnack) saw them. It would also be useful to discuss the accuracy of Papadopoulos's claim as to the ties of such schools not only with foreign governments but also with the administration of king Otto, which was imposed

on the newly established protectorate of Greece; to examine the question of mission schools in the overall frame of dependence, and finally to acknowledge the fact that the ban on these schools led eventually to a national public educational system. (Similar questions, by the way, could be raised as to some very targeted missionary endeavors in Russia after the collapse of the USSR in 1991). The following part is dedicated to the shaping of new Orthodox churches, against the background of colonialism. Here Stanley explains the decision of some African Independent Churches to join the Orthodox Church, mainly in Kenya and all East Africa. This part can be read with an eye to other references to African particularities (such as the prophetic movements in West Africa, 63-70, or the ethnic cleansing and conflict in Rwanda, 163–169, or Apartheid in South Africa, 245–255). These would allow the Orthodox reader to understand the context more broadly and appreciate also the intrinsic reasons for the choice of Christianity despite political disaffection and unrest all over Africa. Then one could hopefully better understand the intrinsic reasons for the choice of Orthodoxy, too.

Stanley's references to the issue of nationalism with regard to the Orthodox Churches are fair and well documented. The effort of the author to include Orthodox Christianity in many chapters and subchapters, from different angles, is discernible and highly laudable. And yet, the Orthodox world still looks somewhat static and two-dimensional, without much inner life or movement, theological trends or further inner developments. The discussion of women's role in the Church, taking place rather at the margins, remains in the shadows. The variety of theologies within Orthodoxy engaging in a dialogue with the modern world and with one another are not made sufficiently explicit. Orthodoxy is seen primarily through the prism of what appeals to the West: as a source of immanent spirituality, with Hesychasm and Mount Athos, music and iconic art, or as a rather immobile tradition and rite.

And yet, Stanley does see the dynamics of the Orthodox Church, by his selected case-studies and by some comments that one could consider out of the ordinary and genuinely original. He acknowledges, for instance, that "the Orthodox Church, perhaps more clearly than any other Christian tradition, sets its face against the claims of totalizing ideologies and nation-states in the twentieth century to command the ultimate allegiance of citizens" (334).

And in doing all of the above, Stanley does more than many Orthodox historians. His confessed, 'unashamed' (335) selectiveness and his particular choices bring considerable vitality to the discussion of the Orthodox. Yet while recognising Stanley's honest and honorable effort, more generally one must say that there is insufficient scholarly work focusing on the Orthodox. There is no equivalent History of the Orthodox in the 20th Century that one could draw on, or a more systematic survey of the history of Orthodox thought; a body of research that would be appropriately varied and inclusive, reaching far beyond a caricature of the conflict between "traditionalists" and "liberals" or a discussion of spirituality in an essentialist manner alienated from history. And this is a good reason why, generally

speaking, it is not only African or non-European Church History that is insufficiently integrated into World History or World Christianity; the same applies to Orthodox Church History.

In conclusion, and as an overall evaluation, one has to stress that the book is readable; it is well structured, informative, interesting and full of insight. Its language is fluent, often humorous and gracious. It is a true treasury of the 20th century history of World Christianity, and one can enjoy reading it from cover to cover. ■

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Stefan Paas

Pilgrims and Priests: Christian Mission in a Post-Christian Society

London: SCM Press, 2019
384 pages, with bibliography

Review by Dr Alison Kolosova

DOI: 10.57577/1-22A26

In his highly readable and thought-provoking book *Pilgrims and Priests: Christian Mission in a Post-Christian Society*, Stefan Paas, Professor of Missiology at universities in Amsterdam and Kampen in the Netherlands, focuses on the challenge of what it means for Christian communities to have a missionary identity amidst the deeply secularized societies of the West. The book aims to renew missionary vision among Christians who feel themselves to be shrinking, irrelevant minorities, or are haunted by the connotations of the word 'mission' and its associations with colonialism and violence.

My concern in reading the book was whether it has anything relevant to say to Orthodox Christian communities concerned about the shape witness and evangelism could take for them in contemporary secular Western contexts. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that Paas' critique of the missionary models that have motivated many in Western confessions over the last century leads him to present an alternative vision which draws on themes close to the heart of Orthodox theology, anthropology and ecclesiology. The book therefore deserves careful reading and reflection by Orthodox Christians concerned that their communities and the wider Church should rediscover a stronger missional dimension. While the book focuses on the challenges of mission in the secular West, I became increasingly convinced as I read the book that its analysis of how Western churches have arrived at their current dilemmas, also has something to say to the contemporary dilemmas of the churches in the traditional Orthodox heartlands of east and south-east Europe as they respond to post-communist secularization.

The author begins with a helpful analysis of ways that Protestant and Catholic churches in the West have expressed their missional identity amidst secularization. He assesses the impact of the shift from