H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-11

Melani McAlister. ***The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals.***
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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University Northridge, Emeritus

Melani McAlister joins an increasing number of scholars who have brought religion into the field of U.S. foreign relations and the reviewers agree that *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* has made a major contribution. Andrew Preston's *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* opened the door for a comprehensive study of the role of religion and David Hollinger in *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* deepened the story with a focus on ecumenical missionaries and their interactions abroad and at home.[1] McAlister complements Hollinger's study with a focus on American evangelicals, white and black, and their global efforts from the 1950s to the present to engage in missionary activities with emphasis on the Middle East and Africa. As Emily Conroy-Krutz notes, evangelicals believed that people in these areas had physical and spiritual needs which the Americans could address but the Americans also had needs and "through communion with fellow Christians around the world … American evangelicals could find transformative spiritual experiences," what McAlister emphasizes as spiritual enchantment and Christian persecution. As the reviewers point out, the experiences and beliefs of the evangelicals reflected their views now only based on their American experiences but also what they brought back to the U.S. and how they reacted to domestic and foreign policy issues, such as the Civil Rights movement, the Cold War, and more current issues such as the Iraq War. Cara Lea Burnidge also endorses McAlister's successful effort to stay away from doctrinal disputes about what is and is not evangelism and to focus instead on evangelism as a "distinct approach to Christian living."

There is a consensus of praise from the reviewers on many aspects of *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders*. According to Doug Rossinow, McAlister's key interpretive concepts, spiritual enchantment and Christian persecution, are integrated in different ways throughout the book to bring out the desire of Americans for personal spiritual experiences and for reaffirmation of their sense of Christian persecution abroad which they also brought home. Hollinger writes that McAlister's "most striking analytic contributions are to reveal lenses through which American evangelicals have looked at the globe, and to explain the process by which these lenses were ground and put in place," as well as the way in which they worked not only in the global South but also at home against the increased secularization of American culture and the ecumenical movement of the major established Protestant religions.

The reviewers endorse how McAlister develops the issue of race in the evangelical circles. Faced with increasing criticism of Jim Crow segregation at home and abroad, a new generation of evangelicals by the 1960s had to confront racial issues and imperialism. Conroy-Krutz and Burnidge emphasize the interaction of evangelicals confronting their segregation from black and Latinx evangelists and how they "encountered racial, ethnic, and national diversity within church bodies, missionary organizations, and humanitarian networks." Rossinow sees race as the "greatest opportunity for interpretive boldness in this book and McAlister does not miss her chance." White evangelicals wanted to find a "post-racial religious identity … to get beyond race … as Christians united by faith." Hollinger, however, points out that evangelicals who advocated social justice in the 1970s found themselves "defeated again and again" by white conservative evangelical leaders.

McAlister's treatment of the evangelicals is assessed by the reviewers as being dispassionate and very fair. In addition to undertaking exhaustive research in primary and secondary sources (the book has 51 pages of notes and a bibliography of 32 pages), McAlister visited missions in South Sudan and Cairo. Burnidge concludes that McAlister's book "is a perfect book for our current moment, resisting and challenging conservative evangelicals' self-assessment while also not lending itself to convenient reductions of evangelicalism to its most vocal white male representatives." Rossinow concludes that McAlister's

[1] See Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), and the H-Diplo Roundtable at https://hdiplo.org/to/RT14-11; and David Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton 2017); see the H-Diplo roundtable at http://hdiplo.org/to/RT19-32.

"judgements are evident" but they are delivered with a kind of gentle firmness… The book's spirit of compassion and understanding makes its probing analytical explorations all the more effective."

The reviewers avoid criticism and instead ask about including South and East Asia in the study, along with a discussion of the impact of gender and male dominance, continuities between the period under study and earlier missionary activities, and how did the racial perspectives of the missionaries affect their views on the Arab world. McAlister's response addresses these and other comments in the reviews.

Participants:

Melani McAlister teaches American Studies and International Affairs at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. A scholar of the U.S. in the World, transnational religion, and cultural history, she has recently completed *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals,* an expansive study of evangelical internationalism since 1960. She is also co-editor of volume 4 of the *Cambridge History of America and the World* (expected 2020). Her other books are *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East* (University of California Press, 2005, 2001), and *Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States* (2008), co-edited with R. Marie Griffith.

Cara Lea Burnidge is assistant professor of religion in the Department of Philosophy and World Religions at the University of Northern Iowa. She received her Ph.D. in Religion from Florida State University in 2013. Her research interests include the history of American religion and foreign relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her first book, *A Peaceful Conquest: Woodrow Wilson, Religion, and the New World Order* (University of Chicago Press, 2016) examines the role of religion in shaping Woodrow Wilson's liberal internationalism from his roots in southern evangelicalism and liberal Protestantism to its legacies in the development of America's "TriFaith" culture in the 1930s and 1940s. In addition Burnidge has published two research essays synthesizing religion and U.S. foreign relations: "Religious Influences in U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History* (2016), and "U.S. Foreign Relations and American Religious Liberalism" in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Religion* (2017). Currently, Burnidge is researching and writing about the biopolitics of white liberal Protestant intervention at home and abroad.

Emily Conroy-Krutz is associate professor of history at Michigan State University. She is the author of *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Cornell University Press, 2015) and is currently at work on a study of religion and diplomacy in the long nineteenth century, tentatively titled *Foreign Missions and Foreign Relations in Nineteenth-Century America*.

David A. Hollinger is Preston Hotchkis Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, and an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a former President of the Organization of American Historians. His most recent book is *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton University Press, 2017).

Doug Rossinow is professor of history at the University of Oslo. He received his PhD in history from the Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of works including *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and *The Reagan Era: A History of the 1980s* (New York: Columbia University, 2015) and the editor of works including *Outside in: The Transnational Circuitry of U.S. History* with Andrew Preston; New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) and *The Religious Left in Modern America: Doorkeepers of A Radical Faith*(with Leilah Danielson and Marian Mollin (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). He is currently writing a transnational history of U.S. Zionism between 1948 and 1995.

Review by Cara Lea Burnidge, University of Northern Iowa

The Kingdom of God Has No Borders is an ambitious monograph reorienting conventional historical narratives about American evangelicals in an expanded, global context. By moving beyond a historical context that is limited by U.S. national borders, Melani McAlister complicates both academic and popular explanations of American evangelical identity, belief, and religious practice as it intersects with race, politics, economic globalization, and U.S. empire. McAlister offers this global history through three thematic parts: 'networks,' 'body politics,' and 'emotions.' Within these themes, each chapter presents its own focused global history, ruminating on specific places, like the Congo (part I, ch. 2), Israel (part I, ch. 4), South Africa (part II, ch. 7), and Sudan (part II, ch. 10; part III ch. 13); on specific theological ideas or religious campaigns, like "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man" (part I, ch. 1) or "The 10/40 Window" (part II, ch. 8); or on specific international concerns like international religious freedom (part II, ch. 9), Apartheid in South Africa (part II, ch. 7), and the War in Iraq (part III, ch. 12). As a whole and in each part, the chapters unfold with a loose chronology that concentrates on the latter half of the twentieth century and the opening decade of the twenty-first century. Each chapter progressively moves the book's chronology forward, ending with an epilogue reflecting upon the 2016 presidential election. When necessary or prudent within each chapter, McAlister provides further historical background on the relevant figures, events, or institutions found in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In this way, the timelines within each chapter may be nonlinear and the chronology across chapters may overlap. This organization is more difficult to explain than to understand when reading the book. In form and content, McAlister presents an accessible history of American evangelicals, prioritizing thematic synthesis of diverse and complex historical actors for a wide readership over simplifying the past to allow for linear development.

Implicitly and explicitly, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* productively disrupts traditional lines of inquiry and frames of reference within the history of evangelicalism. As McAlister notes in the introduction, "the standard story" of American evangelicalism in the last 50 years has narrated the rise of the Religious Right, a historical explainer centering on evangelical minister Billy Graham and neo-evangelicals to make sense of the political prowess animating contemporary conservative politics (2). The history McAlister provides is not intended to replace this "legend" outright nor is it meant to be a definitive history offering a completely alternative standardized narrative. Instead, as McAlister describes, "the story told in this book is one of contest and transformation, a struggle to shape US evangelicals' views of themselves, and their God, in the world" (4). Recognition of evangelical self-mythologizing as a struggle is an important clarification and contribution McAlister provides—the content revealed about evangelicals here is, as it has always has been, contested within evangelical circles (setting aside for a moment the contestations among academic observers). There is no presumption of uniformity, or even necessarily coherency, among evangelical identity, theology, or paxis.

This is a breath of fresh air. McAlister's book demonstrates that scholars need not retrofit cogency onto a religious group or set of religious actors who struggle to articulate their own connections and shared ideologies. (Why circle the square when the square is not even sure it is, in fact, a square?) Even so, McAlister wades into the definitional waters to define 'evangelical' for her readers. She does so first by recognizing that evangelicals share theological doctrines with many other Christians (belief in a Trinitarian God and the divinity of Jesus), and second by reiterating what scholarly readers will recognize as the [David] Bebbington Quadrilateral—biblicism, crucicentricism, conversionism, and activism through evangelism—and [George] Marsden addendums—such as "a transformed life," "a self-conscious interdenominational movement," or "anyone who likes Billy Graham"—without losing her general audience by identifying these terms as such (1).

This maintains the conventional position articulated by many scholars of American religion, especially confessional historians. The Bebbington Quadrilateral has received scrutiny from all sides for quite some time yet has persevered as a standard measure applied in scholarship, taught in undergraduate and graduate classrooms, and even shared on the National

Association of Evangelicals website.[2] Even though McAlister uses this definition to explore evangelical beliefs, she does not dwell on it; instead, she helpfully moves beyond this theological focus by noting the obvious problems of defining religious identities like 'evangelical' according to beliefs alone. Rather than turn to any number of theorists to explain why, say, ritual practice, lived or everyday experiences, shared affect, or communal institutions offer better categorical rubrics, McAlister shrewdly turns to Harold Ockenga, "an evangelical luminary" who founded the National Association of Evangelicals and Fuller Seminary. Using Ockenga's own statements to fellow evangelicals, McAlister notes, evangelical leaders of the period defined evangelicalism according to "practical Christian living" in addition to belief (5).

By relying upon an evangelical intellectual to pivot away from a theological center to evangelicalism, McAlister catapults an often tired and tiring definitional conversation into territory critics have long argued is more salient for understanding American evangelicalism. As a distinct approach to Christian *living*, then, McAlister asserts that evangelicalism can also be understood as "entrepreneurial and populist, with decentralized denominations and innovative independent organizations" (5) and as "structured by gender as well as race" in specific ways (7). Individual readers can decide if they read this as implying it is more legitimate to analyze American evangelicals along these lines of inquiry. McAlister does not assert such a claim, but it seems possible for readers to use this shift as an opportunity to do so while also avoiding previous debates about methodological distinctions between historians of American religion and religious (confessional) historians. In this way, McAlister not only opens up opportunities for further inquiry but does so without the conceptual shifts being presented as oppositional to evangelicals' self-identity; in fact, McAlister's rendering suggests it is *more* historically accurate to explain evangelicalism beyond belief.

Even as this work challenges the interdisciplinary body of literature that historicizes American evangelicals, it is not mere provocateur; *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* directly yet gently leads fellow scholars in new directions. Rather than concentrate on theological substance as the primary means of categorizing and examining American evangelicals, McAlister proposes two orientations: "enchanted internationalism" and "victim identification" (12).These orientations, she explains, are reflections of how American evangelicals have shaped their own image and insights into the image they have constructed of other people(s) around the world and of secular American culture. Enchanted internationalism connected evangelicals to various locations around the world through institutional networks, like missionary and humanitarian organizations, and desires to evangelize, fellowship with, and aid people around the world. This global interconnectedness occurred at times through transnational church bodies and their affiliated organizations, religious tourism or short-term missions, or political campaigns and movements. As a result, American evangelicals were (and are) more diverse and globalized than is typically acknowledged by outside observers.

McAlister draws attention to these nuances, but does not merely reiterate evangelical self-description. She notes, for example, how "diversity is genuine and prized, but race and racism remain highly charged points of contention" (6). Her treatment of race and racism within evangelicalism will help specialists and non-specialists alike because she both notes the theological and demographic segregation of white evangelicals from evangelicals of color (especially black and Latinx peers) while also demonstrating how white American evangelicals encountered racial, ethnic, and national diversity within church bodies, missionary organizations, and humanitarian networks. It is in this context that McAlister emphasizes the second orientation, victim identification. A "heart for" those experiencing persecution around the world, McAlister asserts, inspired American evangelicals to relate to ethnically and racially diverse people around the world through their support of, for example, international religious freedom laws, HIV/AIDS relief, and anti-Apartheid campaigns while also problematically encouraging powerful white American evangelicals to see themselves *in* and *through* the lens of victimization. The resulting affect and identities of American evangelicalism reverberated back home as evangelicals understood themselves more and more as victims of persecution within American culture and by the United States.

[2] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2-17; George Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism* (Waco: Eerdmans, 1991), 1-6.

Moving beyond geo-political borders in her global history, McAlister presents readers with the contours of metaphysical, metaphorical, and affective borders. These are fruitful reconsiderations of global, transnational, and international histories, especially for but not limited to religious historians who seek to map the complexities of religious groups, ideas, and institutions without falling prey to a 'nationalist' or (to use a phrase circulating in public discourse) 'globalist' binary. The move from a national to a global perspective is in some ways an expected shift in scholarship, especially among scholars writing and reading in and around the edges of 'America in the World' or American religion scholars attuned to foreign relations, empire, or 'global flows'; however, McAlister furthers these areas of scholarship by demonstrating how a 'global' study is not entirely about place, location, or geography, and that it does not entirely exclude attention to nationalism. This global history of American evangelicals is intimately tied to perceptions of 'America': its culture and cultural reach, its formal and informal sovereignty over other peoples and nations, and its awareness of the increasing political power of conservative evangelicals. McAlister cleverly and aptly shows how the tension between progressive and conservative evangelicals not only includes national politics but also extends to global and international concerns. Liberal Protestant and ecumenical Protestant ideologies and institutions, with their "worldly political positions," were "galvanizing" forces for evangelicals. Indeed, "evangelical internationalism" formed amid two global evangelical ideological camps: evangelism-first evangelicals and social concern evangelicals. In McAlister's rendering, these competing wings of evangelical internationalism trace their origins to the same event, a moment in which they debated and disagreed with each other yet both walked away feeling like the victor. McAlister complicates these political and theological duels experienced within evangelicalism by demonstrating how conservatives adopted progressive logics to their preferred political and theological ends (for example, appropriating the language of "social concern" for anti-abortion at home and abroad).

The Kingdom of God Has No Borders will find a receptive audience among H-Diplo readers, especially scholars of American religion, American foreign relations, and transnational history. Impressively, this book also intersects with a number of other inter- and trans-disciplinary interests and themes. Scholars studying consumerism, tourism, nationalism, race, affect, and empire (to name a few) will find a conversation partner in this work. McAlister expertly weaves a variety of scholars and their theoretical frameworks into her analysis. Sarah Ahmed, Talal Asad, Lauren Berlant, and James Ferguson, for example, make appearances in the text, signaling to colleagues the scaffolding behind McAlister's analysis yet not overwhelming non-specialists with jargon or pedantic reviews of literature. Graduate students reading or taking exams related to American religion(s) or 'America in the World' would especially benefit from closely reading this work, both as a generative example applying a global perspective to an "American" topic and as an opportunity for dissertation inspiration. The text is littered with careful, succinct analysis that begs further exposition from junior scholars. At times, McAlister could have gestured to or more directly connected continuities between the late twentieth century and earlier eras. For instance, the evolving contours of evangelical missiology have a more robust and lengthy history beyond the purview of this work; yet, McAlister sometimes describes "evangelical internationalism" as "emerging" or being newer than other historians would. (87, passim). More parallels could have been drawn between the gradualist and immediatist approaches of ending apartheid in South Africa and ending slavery in the United States.

Rather than fault McAlister for not making *all* possible connections across multiple time periods (and risk boring a general audience), careful scholarly readers will note the doors she opens for further discovery and synthesis in American religion and its global context. For example, the reading culture McAlister identifies as being central to evangelical networks in chapter 1 has a much longer history than is outlined here (because it is beyond the scope of this book). Historians Candy Gunther Brown, John Modern, and Sonia Hazard for instance, have written about this reading and publishing culture in the nineteenth century, but *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* draws attention to the need for further analysis of a global evangelical readership network. Similarly, in chapter 9, "The Persecuted Body," McAlister describes the ways in which evangelicals "spoke the language of the secular political world" through international religious freedom campaigns in the 1990s. (161) This description echoes the way Christine Heyrman explained the lessons in translation evangelicals taught themselves in the nineteenth century when they began to "speak southern."[3] Enterprising graduate students or junior

[3] Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

scholars who study earlier periods in American history will benefit from closely reading this work even though it may be outside their chronological area of study because of easter eggs like these scattered throughout the text.

The Kingdom of God Has No Borders holds answers to many of the questions that scholars and the general public currently are asking: how can we make sense of evangelicals and their collective political and cultural actions? why is it so difficult to agree on who we are talking about when we refer to 'evangelicals'? McAlister explains that (1) we have paid too little attention to the full global machinations of evangelical Christian living, political interests, and missionary/cultural activity and (2) evangelicals struggle—and have struggled—to understand and to articulate themselves as a coherent whole. McAlister's work makes it near impossible to make sweeping claims about evangelicals and evangelical history. It is a perfect book for our current moment, resisting and challenging conservative evangelicals' self-assessment while also not lending itself to convenient reductions of evangelicalism to its most vocal white male representatives. Instead, McAlister reveals the complexities of evangelical theological, racial, and political identity, the historical and cultural contingencies contributing to this fraught taxonomy, and a way forward for scholarship on the subject. If observers want to better understand how and why white evangelicals are behaving the way they currently are or how evangelicals can seemingly abandon moral principles for political causes, McAlister provides answers that can be both shocking and historically sound: the heart of evangelicalism has consistently been hotly contested on a global scale; evangelicals have rarely shared political positions yet have also been quite effective when they do; and, the universal church body as evangelicals imagined—and currently imagine—it is broken. That brokenness fuels evangelical fire for and in the world, burning both brightly and dangerously for those in its path.

Review by Emily Conroy-Krutz, Michigan State University

For late twentieth-century American evangelicals who identified as 'World Christians,' those who were suffering on the other side of the world felt very close indeed. Whether the suffering were in Congo, South Sudan, Iraq, Egypt, or elsewhere, evangelicals understood their needs to be both physical and spiritual. They needed the prayers and the fellowship of their more privileged Christian brethren in the United States. The kind of prayer they needed, as Melani McAlister puts it, was "focused, passionate, knowledgeable prayer—the kind of prayer that required both intellect and emotion" (95). Religious engagement went hand in hand with learning about and creating affective relationships with the peoples of the world. But this was not a one-way street; those Americans needed them, too, for it was through communion with fellow Christians around the world that American evangelicals could find transformative spiritual experiences. This is one of the key insights of McAlister's *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders*, which examines twentieth-century American evangelical engagement in Africa and the Middle East with particular attention to the ways that evangelicals looked to the Global South as a space of spiritual enchantment and of Christian persecution.

This is a rich and sweeping book, organized around three thematic sections: Networks, Bodies, and Emotions. Throughout, McAlister draws our attention to diverse case studies throughout the decades from the 1950s to the present day. Individual chapters examine the independence movement in the Congo, anti-Communism, apartheid, religious freedom, the Iraq War, the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda, and more. She reveals the complex networks that made up global evangelicalism, with nods at American educational institutions like Dallas Theological Seminary and Wheaton College that instructed evangelicals from around the world into the United States. There were multiple directions of influence: at no point is this a story of Americans simply exporting their faith. Rather, as they met Christians around the world, they could be challenged and converted themselves, finding new questions to be of central importance to their faith and Christian practice. McAlister takes her readers from place to place, showing how events overseas affected life at home, even as domestic developments shaped international engagement. Questions about race and racism in the church and in world politics haunted these discussions among American evangelicals, white and black. Those who are interested in how the Civil Rights movement affected American foreign relations, in the power dynamics within humanitarianism, in the role of affect in foreign policy, or in the political and racial diversity among American evangelicals, you will find a great deal to think about in this book. And for anyone who is interested in the history of missions and American politics, this book is required reading.

Though the book is not entirely focused on missionaries, they do make up many of the actors in McAlister's story, and she usefully complicates our understandings of the missionary as white imperialist by examining the ways that American evangelicals, white and black, have struggled to come to terms with that legacy over the last several decades. Evangelicals, as McAlister shows, were insistent upon the continuing importance of their missionary work, even in the face of major questions about the imperialism and racism of traditional missionary work. The concepts of enchantment and Christian persecution that McAlister introduces help to explain the ways in which the evangelical mission movement evolved over the course of the late-twentieth century.

One aspect of foreign missions that has always fascinated me is the question of how missionaries choose where to go. These decisions have always demanded a degree of careful attention from the missionaries, who have to think about where they can gain access, be safe, and actually engage in the work of evangelism. For historians of American foreign relations, paying attention to these decisions can help us think more deeply about the economic, cultural, political, and affective networks that draw missionary attention to certain places and not others. McAlister describes the ways in which evangelicals since the Cold War have sought to bring sophisticated analysis to these processes, first through the Missions Advance Research Center's emphasis on Unreached Peoples, and then through the Joshua Project. By the 1990s, this was visualized in the 10/40 Window, a map highlighting the region in Africa and Asia between 10 degrees to 40 degrees latitude north of the equator. As McAlister explains, the map was supposed to show regions of opportunity, but also functioned as "a work of political and moral geography" (146).

In a work this wide-ranging, it is perhaps unfair to ask for more, but looking at that map does make me wonder what including South and East Asia in this discussion would reveal. These questions are at the front of my mind especially because of the recent release of David Hollinger's *Protestants Abroad*.[4] In that study of twentieth-century American Christian engagement in the world, Hollinger's focus is on ecumenical Protestants, not evangelicals, and his geographic coverage focuses more in Asia, and not at all in Africa. Reading the two books side-by-side, one almost gets the impression that the evangelicals had given up Asia to the ecumenical Protestants, and the ecumenical Protestants had given up Africa to the evangelicals. But this is not the case for either group. As the recent death of American missionary John Allen Chua in the Sentinel Islands suggests, evangelicals continue to search out the unreached peoples wherever they might be. And the response among the American public continues to be divided between those who see Chua as a martyr and those who hold him up as an example of misguided and imperialist missionary arrogance. What few discussions of Chua have mentioned, however, is how he fits into a longer story of race in American evangelicalism, and here McAlister's work is illuminating.

Across the history of American foreign missions, the racism of white American missionaries was a problem. Potential converts could be turned off by the evident racism of some missionaries. Jim Crow segregation was global news in the mid-twentieth century, and the knowledge of American racism was getting in the way of evangelization. In order to do the work they felt called to do in the world, some evangelical Christians realized they needed to find ways to confront racism. For generations, missionaries had been telling Americans stories about the rest of the world that emphasized the backwardness of non-Christians.[5] As McAlister puts it, to generate support for their work missionaries "had to 'sell' the savagery and poverty of Africa" (36). But by the 1960s there was new generation of evangelicals that was "more committed to political and social issues, and was deeply aware of the realities of racism, decolonization, war, and humanitarian disaster" (54). This commitment was evident in the earnest debates that emerged at evangelical college campuses with groups like InterVarsity that welcomed a wide range of evangelical voices, paid attention to global issues, and called on American evangelicals to stop telling the rest of the world how to live their lives. It was evident, too, in the questions that met the deaths of missionaries like Paul Carlson, who was killed in Congo in 1964. Evan as most evangelicals celebrated Carlson as a martyr, others began to ask if his death was the result of the "white arrogance" evident in so much mission work (50). Congolese Protestants certainly had questions about the imperialist style of mission work in the era of independence, and Americans, too, had their questions.

While missionaries were thinking about race and empire, they were also noticing something that seemed new: the oppression of Christians around the world. The Communist persecution of Christians was the first site of this emphasis on suffering and persecution, and McAlistesr traces similar themes in apartheid South Africa, the Islamic World, and Sudan. Over the course of these cases, she notes an important shift from a sense that persecution of Christians was the action of particular regimes (something they *"did"*) to a new sense in the 1980s that persecution of Christians had become much broader: "something that *was*" in the world, and that became an important part of evangelicals' understanding of what it meant to be a Christian (114-115, emphasis in original). The policy implications of this shift were important. The sense that Christians were being persecuted all over the world led American evangelicals to push for the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998 and the creation of the Ambassador for Religious Freedom and the new US Commission on International Religious Freedom. While it was not only evangelicals who were behind this project, they were overwhelmingly supportive, even in the face of opposition from traditional human rights groups and mainline Protestant

[4] David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[5] Christine Heyrman explores similar themes in the case of 19th-century American missions to Palestine, in which missionary fundraising concerns structured the ways that missionaries wrote (and, more importantly, published) about the world, often to the de-emphasis of any narratives that would recognize the strengths of mission-receiving cultures. Christine Heyrman, *American Apostles: When Evangelicals Entered the World of Islam* (New York: Hill and Wang: 2015).

denominations who pointed out that the emphasis on religion in these discussions missed a range of other problems. Yet the IRFA went through, with important implications for U.S. relations with Sudan, China, and Saudi Arabia.

McAlister discusses the contemporary story of missions and evangelical affective engagement in the world in two powerful and illuminating chapters that focus on her own visits to missions. In South Sudan and Cairo, we meet some of the more than a million evangelical Americans annually who are moved to participate in contemporary short-term mission projects. What stands out in McAlister's discussion here are the ways in which many of them struggle with the meaning of this work in the world today. In South Sudan, we meet a group of Christians who do not want to be seen as "a big checkbook," but who earnestly struggle with what it means to approach an impoverished country as part of a church in of the wealthiest counties in the United States (231-246). In Cairo, we listen in as participants on an InterVarsity five-week program have difficulty discussions about whether or not it is fair to be charged inflated "tourist prices" when they travel around the city, and how their own experiences in Egypt were shaped by their race and appearance. Questions of power are never far from the surface. McAlister reveals a group of Christians who know that there are big questions about the value of mission work, and about the ability of Christians to make meaningful and equitable connections across barriers of politics, geography, race, and economic power. It is worth noting that the claim that there are no borders in the kingdom of God is an aspirational one, even within this story. What McAlister ultimately shows here is a group of Christians who are struggling with their hopes for genuine connection and the difficulties of enacting that in a real political and economic world.

Review by David Hollinger, University of California, Berkeley

Melanie McAlister's *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* helps us understand how and why evangelical Protestantism influences the foreign policy of the United States. Although the role of this political force can be exaggerated, we can see it in the Trump administration's positive response to evangelical priorities concerning Israel and the welfare of Christians abroad. But every president since Ronald Reagan has been affected to some degree by evangelicals. Some have used the evangelical lobby effectively to advance their own ends. George W. Bush could not have conducted the Iraq War "with relative impunity," McAlister reminds us, were it not for the overwhelmingly pro-war opinions voiced by evangelicals (216).

McAlister's book is the most probing, far-reaching, and informative study yet written of the place of evangelicalism in the development of American perspectives on global geo-politics. A signal contribution to the "U.S. and the World" field, this book combines 1) an ethnographer's determination get inside the thoughts and feelings of historical actors with 2) an equally deep commitment to telling the truths that the relevant historical actors do not see and sometimes willfully obscure. McAlister's *Verstehen* approach is similar to that practiced by sociologist Arlie Hochschild in her now famously empathic study of a Tea Party community in Louisiana, *Strangers in their Own Land*.[6] But McAlister is much quicker than Hochschild to flag for readers the realities that elude the subjectivity of the men and women under study. Hochschild holds for an appendix a list of what her subjects fail to grasp, and how they deceive themselves, but McAlister puts the ignored facts on the page as soon as she cites the misunderstandings and self-deceits of her subjects.

This refreshing feature of McAlister's inquiry is apparent throughout the book, but is most dramatically manifest in her accounts of trips she made to Sudan and Egypt in the company of well-meaning American evangelicals. The blindness of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship students to the actual forces controlling the lives of Egyptian and Sudanese Christians is almost as extreme as the refusal of Trump-supporting working class evangelicals in Louisiana to recognize how their lives are being destroyed by the oil companies whose liberties they defend against the tyranny of 'Big Government.' The students felt uplifted spiritually by their several weeks abroad—heaven would be 'packed' with the kinds of people they met—but McAlister, while showing great sympathy for the innocent students, observes that they had no understanding of the Islamic faith other than its function as a basis for the persecution of Christians. These young people returned home enchanted by "a sense of themselves as part of a community of believers who were persecuted" (285). A group of their elders, whom McAlister accompanied to several towns in South Sudan, felt the same. These well-to-do Wisconsin evangelicals extracted the spiritual satisfaction of Christian communion from the welter of historical circumstances that damage the lives of so many South Sudanese. McAlister's chief informant on that trip felt it to have been a 'holy experience' to hear the robust, enthusiastic hymn singing of the local Christians.

McAlister's most striking analytic contributions are to reveal the precise structure of the lenses through which American evangelicals have looked at the globe, and to explain the process by which these lenses were ground and put in place. Like an effective pair of glasses dealing with the different needs of two eyes, 'enchanted internationalism' and 'victim identification' work together well. The first is a deep longing for a vibrant connection with the divine, reminiscent of the intense religious experience of the earliest Christian communities as described in the gospels. The frank supernaturalism of many Global South Christians appeals to American evangelicals as an authentic experience of the Holy Spirit. Dreams like Daniel's are not contained in ancient Mediterranean antiquity, but are experienced today in Brazil and Nigeria. Although McAlister does not use the term 'romantic primitivism,' it describes 'enchanted internationalism' very well. In the modern, industrialized, technologically and bureaucratically advanced west, even the most devoted of evangelicals are surrounded by a

[6] Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York, The New Press, 2016).

world that had become somehow 'disenchanted,' while the more simple communities of faith in Uganda and Angola seem more like the churches Paul the Apostle visited and addressed in his letters.

The second lens is a propensity to recognize and identify with Christians who are subject to persecution, especially but not exclusively by Muslims. These victims include missionaries martyred in the jungles of Ecuador, Christian believers imprisoned in Eastern Europe, and Africans mistreated and sometimes killed by neighboring Muslims. The more enchanted the Christians of the Global South appear to be, the more outrageous becomes their suffering and the more attention it demands. "Believers in the United States were invited to see themselves as part of the global Christian family," McAlister explains, "and thus to identify with the victimization they saw elsewhere" (11). They came to see the decline of Christian cultural hegemony in their own country as part of the same thing as the abuse of Christians in the developing world and in communist regimes. Secularization amounted to the victimization of Christians. Hence "by the turn of the twenty-first century," American evangelicals viewed the world as one vast domain of persecution, in which Christians were on the defensive, struggling to maintain their faith amid a virtually infinite expanse of enemies. Just as an impoverished, enslaved woman in South Sudan refuses to deny her faith when her oppressors want her to convert, so, too, will American evangelical owners of a business refuse to serve same-sex couples when civil authority tells them they must. Christians around the world stand up against persecution, in solidarity with one another.

McAlister shows that evangelicals developed this understanding of the world while struggling to resist the liberal cultural and political orientation of mainline, ecumenical Protestants. Since so much of our scholarship has treated the evangelical story in a relative vacuum, a distinguishing feature of McAlister's analysis is the awareness she registers of the ecumenical-evangelical conflict in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. By the 1940s the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians and other major, established denominations had moved away from proselytizing and had begun to transform their own foreign missions into service organizations. The ecumenical Protestant leadership adopted a decidedly less adversarial stance toward non-Christian religions than had long been the norm. This leadership also voiced much stronger opposition than they ever had before to racial discrimination in the United States. Seminaries and colleges openly promoted theologies that renounced Biblical literalism. All this was anathema to the largely fundamentalist groups that formed the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942, founded Fuller Theological Seminar in 1947, and launched *Christianity Today* in 1956. Evangelicals emphasized an inerrant Bible, the unique saving power of Christ, and the timelessness of the Christian ideal as exemplified by the earliest of Christian communities. Moreover, this evangelical party as it was consolidated in the 1940s disparaged the anti-racist activities of the mainline liberals as 'meddling in politics.' They took their own widespread acquiescence in a racialized social order to be apolitical. Well before the 1960s, the evangelicals were processing their experience abroad in a fashion different from how their ecumenical rivals were dealing with foreign lands and peoples. Evangelicals were more resolute about converting the world's population to Christianity, and more inclined to divide that population into the saved and the unsaved. In the Congo, evangelicals decided that "the most urgent" threat to their missionary work was "not traditional religion," but the "the power of ecumenical Christianity" (46). Yet the pivotal historical moment in the ecumenical-evangelical relationship was yet to come. Nothing was "as galvanizing for evangelicals," McAlister explains, "as the unabashedly liberal worldly political positions the ecumenical movement took in the 1960s and 1970s," especially in opposing the Vietnam War, supporting a variety of anti-colonial groups in sub-Saharan Africa, calling for a Palestinian state, and strengthening alliances with secular progressive movements and institutions (9).

Hence the evangelicals brought to their encounter with alterity a highly sectarian religious outlook that militated against the development of the more capacious, inclusive perspective on the varieties of humankind that was so prominent a feature of the ecumenical engagement with peoples abroad.[7] The 'mainline' bodies associated with the Federal Council of Churches and later the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches had their own challenges, to be sure, especially defining the boundaries of their faith as they welcomed more and more diverse groups into their vast ecclesiastic tent. Inclusion, yes, but included into what? On one side of the ecumenical-evangelical divide more and more doors were

[7] How a set of liberal perspectives enabled ecumenical Protestants to open themselves to a variety of experiences abroad is a main theme of my own recent book, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), which was the subject of an H-Diplo roundtable, https://hdiplo.org/to/RT19-32.

opening, and American life was being subjected to increasing criticism as imperialist and racist. On the other side of that divide, the orthodox-affirming family of evangelicals was more preoccupied than ever with boundary maintenance and finding contemporary issues that could be addressed in Biblical terms, such as the flourishing of Israel as a fulfilment of Christian prophecy. The gathering of Jews in the Holy Land was a step toward Christ's reign.

McAlister is forthright and consistent about the magnitude and specific character of this Intra-Protestant rivalry. She traces the efforts of mini-movements for social justice within the evangelical family, especially in the 1970s, which were often favored by non-white evangelicals, but McAlister shows that these initiatives were defeated again and again by the people who controlled the Southern Baptist Convention and other evangelical bodies. While at pains to recognize the ethnoracial and class diversity of the evangelicals, she is brought back repeatedly to how one side—the most conservative—triumphed again and again. "Theologically, ecumenical Christianity was demarcated by a bright liberal line beyond which only a few evangelicals dared, or cared, to venture" (9). Fearful that they would find themselves on a slippery slope to the liberalism of the hated ecumenicals, the evangelicals ground their lenses for looking at the world ever more finely. The Kingdom of God may have had no national borders, as the aspiration is flagged by McAlister's title, but that Kingdom as understood by evangelicals had its own clear boundaries within every nation.

Just how hard to it was to see beyond the scope of the evangelical lenses was vividly revealed in 2004 when photographs of the American atrocities at Abu Ghraib became public. McAlister's account of the evangelical response is one of the most powerful sections of her book. There was "a man in a black hood standing on a cardboard box, his arms stretched out, with electrodes attached to his hands and apparently to his genitals. No one could help but notice that his posture paralleled that of Jesus on the cross." But among those administering the torture were American Christians. And for several weeks and even months, "most evangelicals had remarkably little to say" (105). Yet back in 1966, the scarred body of a Christian escapee from a communist prison, the Reverend Richard Wurmbrand, had done more than any other single image to fixate evangelicals on the victimization of Christians worldwide. While testifying before a committee of the U.S. Senate, Wurmbrand threw off his shirt so everyone could see his back. "The marks on my body are my credentials," he said, to tell you about Communism (214). In 2004 "the Vatican and mainline Protestant churches immediately spoke eloquently and angrily" about Abu Ghraib, but with the exception of the progressive journal *Sojourners*, which joined the liberals in decrying the atrocities, the evangelical community that had "supported the war seemed stunned into silence." The chief torturer allowed that "the Christian in me says its wrong," but "I love to make a grown man piss himself" (223). Eventually, more and more evangelical voices condemned the atrocities, but often with qualifications. These were isolated acts not connected to the generally sound war policy of the United States. Or, yet more evasively: these sad events were another reminder of the fallen status of humankind. These are not the terms used to discuss Wurmband's torture in 1966.

A major take-away from *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* is that the contours of American Protestantism are now being made dialectically in relation to the Global South. American evangelicals find there massive encouragement for the positions they take in the cultural wars of the United States. McAlister dutifully reminds readers of the agency of individuals and groups within Africa and the Middle East, and warns against any notion they are merely a receptacle for the religion of the North Atlantic West. But she is laser-clear on how the two-way street works from the American end. The conservative Christianity of the Global South can be a welcome resource. American evangelicals are using the Christianity of the Global South as a weapon in the struggle for control of the cultural capital of Christianity in the United States and throughout the North Atlantic West.

McAlister does not mention recent conflicts within the Seventh Day Adventist denomination over female ordination, but these conflicts illustrate a broad pattern to which her book renders us sensitive. Of the more than 16 million Adventists in the world today, fewer than 9% live in North America. The American and Canadian Adventists have been pushing the ordination of women for several decades, but the more conservative Adventists from the Global South will not hear of it, relying, as traditionalists usually have, on 1 Corinthians 14:34 (women are prohibited from speaking in churches). The polity of the global communion of Adventists is being significantly driven by the Global South.[8] There are comparable

[8] For a helpful study of the politics of the Seventh Day Adventists, see Ronald L. Lawson, "At the Eye of the Storm: Conflict

conflicts within some other denominations, including the Anglican Communion and several other ecumenical as well as evangelical groups. Christianity is a large presence in the United States. All Americans have a stake in just who controls the cultural capital of that faith. Right now, thanks in part to alliances with the Global South, that capital is increasingly in the hands of the most conservative of American Protestants.[9]

I have tried here to identify what McAlister's superb book most has to say to students of the U.S. and the world. But I am left wondering about several issues on which I would be glad to hear more from her. "Gender," she tells at the beginning of the book, "is at once silent and deafening in the evangelical world." (7) McAlister mentions male dominance from time to time, and alludes to the activities of several women, especially the Women's Missionary Boards and their progressive role within several denominations. Is there more to say about the deafening silence of gender in the story her book tells? I would also be interested in hearing more about how evangelicals have dealt with East Asia and South Asia. Is it just more of the same, the African story told over again? China does not appear in McAlister's index, but Christianity has been a huge presence in China for many generations and has been the source of conflict off and on in recent decades. What about India? Finally, while McAlister deals extensively with a series of episodes in Africa, including the South African controversy over Apartheid and the Ugandan persecution of the LGBTQ community, she says nothing about the Rwandan genocide of 1994, which falls within the chronological scope of her study. Were American evangelicals involved in any way? How did their magazine editors and institutional spokespersons deal with it?

"American evangelicals have yet to craft a politics to the measure of the world," observes McAlister in the last sentence of her book (290). The challenge of crafting such a politics confounds many of us, of course; not just evangelicals. Failure in that calling is all too common. *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* does not make a point of targeting evangelical readers, but evangelicals who do read it may have a better chance of crafting such a politics for themselves. Never snide or snarky, McAlister's patient, plain-speaking, fact-intensive analysis may well reach evangelical believers as well as specialists in the history of American foreign relations. "I was blind," wrote John Newton, the author of "Amazing Grace, "but now I see."

Concerning the Ordination of Women Within the International Seventh-day Adventist Church," https://ronaldlawson.net/2018/08/09/at-the-eye-of-the-storm-conflict-concerning-the-ordination-of-women-within-the-international-seventh-day-adventist-church/.

[9] I have addressed at greater length the relation of North American Christianity to that of the Global South in "The Global South, Christianity, and Secularization: Insider and Outsider Perspectives," *Modern Intellectual History* (October 2018), https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244318000458 .

Review by Doug Rossinow, University of Oslo

The Kingdom of God Has No Borders is a massively learned, almost impossibly informative work by one of the field's smartest, most thoughtful historians. Without question this book will constitute a major point of reference for historians (and other scholars) of numerous fields for many years. Those who study American evangelicalism, those who wish to make generalizations about the 'religious right' in the post-1945 (or post-9/11) United States, those working in international history who take the 'transnational turn' seriously, those who wish to understand race relations and racial ideology in the United States and around the world, and those who are concerned with grasping contemporary North–South relations overall at a human scale will want to contend with this book, to take the measure of its interpretations and the challenges it poses to those who speak from a number of different viewpoints. There is a lot to say about this book, and much of it will be said far better by others with deeper knowledge than I possess of missionary history or evangelical Protestant theology. I can fairly call this a widely anticipated work, due to the inklings we have had already, in pieces of this book that have come to light previously in article or chapter form, of Melani McAlister's impressive interpretive power and of the distinctive voice she brings to her subject. Or I should say her subjects, with an emphasis on plurality, because there are lots of folks peopling this text who come from very different places. Not only diversity, but also encounter, are clearly burning concerns for McAlister, as they are among people whose stories she tells here.

Before diving deeper into McAlister's interpretive innovations, I want to pause to consider some of the writerly features of this book. It is rather stunning to note that the main text itself clocks in at under 300 pages. The scope and ambition of *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* easily could have yielded a book half again as long. This is, after all, a work that sets out to tell the story of U.S. evangelicalism's globalization—or, one might say, a major new phase in its global history—over the course of more than half a century. McAlister also favors a broad definition of evangelicalism—one that makes sense to me—which makes her challenge that much bigger. Really, how did she pull it off? Various technologies of concision are at work here. She tells large stories through the intimate narratives of individuals, and mixes broad-gauge sections describing large themes and major organizations with a series of local or regional studies that powerfully advance her argument. In many sections this book truly reads like a novel, and I would have happily stayed with some of these characters quite a while longer. McAlister, like a host who knows just when to remove one course and serve another at a dinner party, shows terrific restraint and discipline in deciding how far she will take these stories. She keeps the action moving at a rather brisk pace, generally stressing action by her players: going, meeting, telling, and (sometimes) listening. This is a book about people, not about theology. Her prose is a marvel of clear, precise, and unpretentious expression.

The key interpretive concepts in *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* are "enchanted internationalism" and "victim identification" (12). McAlister uses these two concepts to establish the complex and somewhat divided consciousness that emerged among U.S. evangelicals (of diverse racial backgrounds, as she emphasizes) during the period she covers, when those evangelicals developed an acute awareness of the shifting balance of worldwide Christianity toward the South. U.S. evangelicals looked to their fellow Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as sources of spiritual authenticity, and McAlister makes very clear in her account that the missionaries on whom she focuses were often quite consciously propelled outward and around the globe by their ideas of what they, as believers from the wealthy North, could get out of the experience, in addition to their altruistic motives. These North American Christians also asserted their identification with bodily suffering Christians elsewhere, whether behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War or (later) on the front lines of what many perceived as a war of civilizations between Christianity and Islam. This 'victim identification' had a recursive effect inside the United States, underwriting the escalating claims by conservative Christians there that they were objects of discrimination, even persecution, in their homeland (claims that their neighbors often found hard to credit).

These interpretive concepts are altogether persuasive as descriptions of palpably real themes in the words and acts of McAlister's North American subjects. Even as she works these concepts in new ways throughout her book, they point repeatedly to underlying historiographic and substantive themes that are more familiar. These are, first, the thematics of race, and, second, the interpretation of missionary history.

Race plays a central role in this book. While McAlister writes about race in relational terms (for example, in relation to gender and social class), it is analytically front-and-center for her understanding of what North–South Christian relations are about. Race also is the meditative heart of this text and of her work as an author, thinker, and doer. Here is, perhaps, the greatest opportunity for interpretive boldness in this book, and McAlister does not miss her chance. She presents U.S. evangelicals—especially white U.S. evangelicals—in the period of 'southern' Christianity's global ascendancy as aspiring to a post-racial religious identity. They wanted to get beyond race and racial division in some meaningful sense, as Christians united by faith. This, it seems, in the subjectivity of McAlister's North American subjects, was more the meaning and the challenge of Christianity's southernization than was class or capitalism or culture.

Many readers today may find such hopes highly suspect—white people asking why can't we just ignore race? Talk about "cheap grace" (to use the expression from Dietrich Bonhoeffer that does not go unmentioned in *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders*).[10] We have all heard that before. McAlister does not take such desires at face value; she takes the full measure of North American racism. Nor, however, does she simply dismiss such rhetoric as an effort to rehabilitate and mask white supremacy. She accepts her subjects' sincerity, notwithstanding the weak intellectual and moral grasp of power and history that they sometimes betray. At other moments they show a true depth of understanding of such things—but they appear caught between such comprehension and the conservative social tenets they hold dear. Aside from the deeply flawed but, in McAlister's telling, earnest aspirations to a post-racial future, she also shows in case after case that, again notwithstanding the truncated reach of her North American subjects' efforts, they really did want to see the humanity of Christian 'others,' at a face-to-face level.

To repeat, there is much to critique here. But McAlister also maintains, I think, at least by implication, that there is something to respect as well. No matter how one values the post-racial dreams of white evangelicals, whether derisively or poignantly, I believe McAlister has put her finger on something that was (and is) real and central for them. I was a little surprised not to see more overt consideration from McAlister of how exactly she conceives of the meaning of race in this historical and cultural context. The concept stays rather untheorized, perhaps as a result of a conscious choice. Whether for McAlister's U.S. subjects the entire Global South appeared as generically nonwhite, whether distinct racial categories obtained for them in different world regions and what implications this might have had, for example, is something I wondered about. How did they project their racial thinking onto the Arab world? Did this complicate or reinforce their deep commitment to the State of Israel, or was it simply irrelevant, overridden by other concerns?

Closely linked to the question of race, particularly in McAlister's synthetic interpretive position, is that of how to view Christian missionaries in the Global South. When I say synthetic I mean that regarding both North American racial consciousness (and I am thinking basically of the white evangelicals here, since I do not feel that McAlister's argument dramatically complicates our view of African American evangelicals' racial subjectivity) and missionary historiography, McAlister seeks to move past the alternatives of affirmation and negation and to climb to a higher plane of understanding. I almost see this is as a kind of Hegelian *aufhebung*, in which a thesis and antithesis are truly transcended, incorporated, and transformed into something much beyond a simple midway compromise. The affirmative, rehabilitative reaction against the anti-imperialist indictment of missionary work has been notable in recent years.[11] However, McAlister neither joins that positive chorus nor reverts to harsh leftist critique. Instead she describes missionary work as a field of complex encounters between subjects implicated in larger structures, social and cultural. She denies no one's agency, but does not refrain from judgments.

[10] See Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic work, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995 [1959]).

[11] For sophisticated examples see Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41:3 (October 2002): 301-325, and Ian Tyrrell, "American Protestant Missionaries, Moral Reformers, and the Reinterpretation of American 'Expansion' in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Andrew Preston and Doug Rossinow, eds., *Outside In: The Transnational Circuitry of US History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 96-122.

McAlister takes her readers on a *tour d'horizon* of U.S. evangelical interventions and encounters in the Global South, generating a strong sense of globality. Yet, perhaps inevitably, some world regions play a far more prominent role than others. Out of fifteen chapters total, six focus on Africa, really on sub-Saharan Africa (the final full chapter, on U.S. Christians in Cairo, is primarily about their work with South Sudanese refugees and only secondarily, although importantly, about their interactions with Muslim Cairenes). Congo, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda: McAlister 'has a heart' for Africa. No other mission field receives this kind of intensive attention. I hasten to add, because some might read this as a criticism, that it truly is not. McAlister has good reason to focus on Africa. Here, more than anywhere else, the question of race was inescapable for the book's subjects, as for its readers. McAlister's North American protagonists seem to have been drawn to Africa not only because here the starkness of poverty and the troubling contrast with their own relative wealth was most dramatic and demanded action the most urgently, but also, I believe she suggests, because Africa represents, specifically for white U.S. evangelicals but perhaps for others too, the ground where they might negotiate their passage to a post-racist and post-racial identity most efficiently. As a narrative strategy, this emphasis on Africa works quite successfully. McAlister's reconstruction of numerous encounters in multiple settings there creates a cumulative momentum and prevents her account from becoming overly dispersed or messy. It also makes it impossible for her readers to turn away from questions of racism, both personal and structural, poverty, and power. Needless to say, these issues are present in other world regions as well. Yet McAlister's choices prove forceful.[12]

Moreover, the specific stories McAlister tells about different African states and societies are gripping. The dramas of struggle against apartheid in South Africa moved me particularly in her telling, and the complex, tragic conflicts over HIV/AIDS in Uganda yields a bravura account, one where McAlister's sophisticated and knowing outlook, her almost uncanny comprehension of diverse viewpoints, is superbly displayed. A different historian, telling these same stories, even with sympathies basically identical to McAlister's, might have yielded to the temptations and satisfactions of self-righteousness. However, this author's grasp of complexity is too firm to allow this. I have absolutely no doubt that she is appalled by the Ugandan anti-gay legislation she discusses, a public health disaster as well as a human rights atrocity. But that is not the kind of rhetoric she employs in *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders*. This book expresses keen sensitivity, indeed a sense of humility, regarding factors like the Ugandan resentment of NGOs and their personnel as cultural-imperialist agents. The text appears cleansed of any trace of condescension or air of superiority when interpreting events around the world, and bravely faces the interpretive and narrative consequences of truly believing in the concept of agency among all historical subjects. When people, Christians or not, in the Global South talked back to U.S. Christians, the Americans did not always hear what they would have wished. Historians may not always hear what they wish either. Voices from the South may critique the North from either the left or the right, McAlister shows, and in neither case can one assert that people just do not mean what they say or have been programmed by outsiders. McAlister sometimes allows terrible facts to speak for themselves, and they do so powerfully.

While McAlister's judgments are evident, they are delivered with a kind of gentle firmness. Her own personal encounters with U.S. missionaries in South Sudan and Cairo, in episodes where she shifts to the role of anthropologist in striking and affecting interludes, no doubt made it less likely that she would write about them and those like them scornfully. This book's spirit of compassion and understanding makes its probing analytical explorations all the more effective. This is a book that should be widely read, both inside and outside the academy.

[12] McAlister states (4) that she focuses mainly on the Middle East and Africa. However, Africa clearly comes first in her account. She does not directly problematize the concept of 'Africa' as some kind of whole, and the meaning of 'Africa' in her work seems to go beyond a mere reference to a geographic outline (it surely does for her U.S. subjects). Yet the diversity of her study's African locales, geographic and otherwise, surely does much of that work (of disaggregating 'Africa') at a practical level. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), and V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

Author's Response by Melani McAlister, George Washington University

I am pleased and honored to have this conversation about my work in H-Diplo. It is truly humbling to have these scholars engage the book so carefully, especially as I have admired and learned a great deal from each of them over the years. I cannot do justice to all of the careful and generous points they each have made, but I will try to explore a few key comments and concerns.

First, let me comment on the book's title. As some members of the roundtable noted, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders* is *not* a book about a world without borders. Just the opposite. It is about how an aspirational ideology and theology engages, and helps to construct, the reality of a global context that, as I say in the introduction, is "deeply divided by national borders, inhabited by refugees and migrants, riven by dramatically uneven distributions of wealth and power, and dominated by the United States as the most powerful state the world has ever known" (13). It is this tension—a history of American evangelicals who were defined by their transnational ties even as they were profoundly implicated in their own nation and state—that shapes the book. And it is the problem that also ends the book, when, evoking Martinican poet and anticolonial theorist Aimé Césaire, I argue that "evangelicals have yet to craft a politics made to the measure of the world."[13]

The research for the book began, more than fifteen years ago now, with a paradox: white American evangelicals broadly supported the 2003 launch of the war in Iraq, but theologically conservative black Protestants in the U.S., and most evangelicals globally, strongly opposed it. Having studied the white, conservative, prophecy-oriented wing of the movement, I was curious about the forces that had shaped these political differences.[14] Beyond that, I wondered about what then led a certain number of mostly white U.S. evangelical leaders to challenge the dominant voices in their community by drafting "An Evangelical Declaration against Torture," published in 2007.[15] These were questions about how evangelicals viewed foreign policy, but they were also questions about the divisions within a social movement. I soon came to realize that they were also linked to the politics of affect and the language of the suffering body that had shaped evangelical culture for several decades.

As the respondents in this forum all point out, the book highlight two affective modalities: enchanted internationalism, a form of longing for connection and a belief in the spiritual richness of the global South, and victim identification, which focuses on the suffering and persecution of Christians globally. I was pleased to see the attention to victim identification in this discussion. In other venues, respondents have highlighted the importance of enchanted internationalism, but relatively fewer have picked up how central this framework of victimization is to the logic of the book. Victim identification is indeed a double-edged sword, since, on the one hand, it is surely a salutary development for notoriously self-regarding Americans to focus on the suffering and persecution of others. On the other hand, this attention to victimization also has undergirded some of the most intense Islamophobia among evangelicals, both outside and inside the U.S., and it has led to a kind of appropriation, in which American believers can use the realities of Christian-Muslim tensions in other parts of the world (along with their own fears about secularism) to position themselves as potential victims of religious persecution. Thus the organizing against mosque building in Tennessee or New York, or the activism against the supposed threat of shari'a law in

[13] Cesaire's argument in *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001) is with humanism: "[A]t the very time when it most often mouths the word, the West has never been further from being able to live a true humanism—a humanism made to the measure of the world" (73).

[14] Melani McAlister, "Prophecy, Politics, and the Popular: The Left Behind Series and Christian Fundamentalism's New World Order," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102:4 (September 2003): 773-798.

[15] "An Evangelical Declaration against Torture," April 2007, at https://www.nae.net/an-evangelical-declaration-against-torture/. See also Peter Steinfels, "An Evangelical Call on Torture and the US," New York Times, July 21, 2007 at https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/21/us/21beliefs.html.

Kansas. (Sam Brownback, the former senator from Kansas and current U.S. ambassador for religious freedom, was, for example, one of the anti-shari'a activists in the early 2000s. He is a former evangelical, now converted to Catholicism, who still regularly attends an evangelical church back home in Topeka.)

My investment in unpacking this anti-Muslim sentiment goes some way toward explaining some of the choices I made in the book, which focuses largely on how American evangelicals have engaged the Middle East and Africa, and less on Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, or Europe. But those regions, too, have mattered greatly to evangelicals, as Emily Conroy-Krutz reminds us. And a focus on China or Vietnam would have brought in just as many stories of Christians who suffered for their faith and were idealized by Americans as a result. But I had a particular interest in the ways in which Islam has been figured and refigured in evangelical life (built partly from my previous work), and that led me to focus more on those regions where Islam is more centrally a feature. Eventually, the stories from those regions also expanded to include many issues that have little to do with Islam, such as apartheid in South Africa or the anti-homosexuality law in Uganda. In addition, evangelical views of the USSR, Latin America, and other parts of the world are discussed at various points in *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders*. Still, there is much more to say on issues of encounter, victimization, and missionary work globally, and recent and forthcoming books by Marla Frederick, David King, David Kirkpatrick, Lauren Turek, and David Swartz, among others, usefully trace more of this rich and complex history.[16]

Two additional forms of encounter and self-definition shaped the book. First is the encounter between evangelicals and ecumenical Protestants, in the U.S. and beyond. As David Hollinger argues, and as his own work so importantly shows, evangelicals and ecumenical Protestants have often understood themselves both in relation to, and as distinct from, each other.[17] American evangelical leaders have consistently, anxiously, and self-consciously defined their own community in contrast to ecumenical Protestantism.

Those boundaries can sometimes be messy—ask Methodist ministers in a small town in the South if their congregations are 'mainline' and see what happens—but it is still very much the case that evangelical leaders in the U.S. have often set themselves apart from the liberal stances of their Protestant brethren, on issues of race and gender, certainly, but also on debates over decolonization, Palestine, apartheid, etc. The distinction between mainline and evangelical has been far less clear in the global South, at least until recently, and it has never held with the same force among evangelicals of color. But it is true, as Hollinger argues, that many of the most liberalizing moves among US evangelicals in recent decades actually happened earlier, and with far greater force, among liberal Protestants.

Race is the other primary form of boundary and encounter that I highlight in the book, as Doug Rossinow points out.[18] From early on, I wanted this book to be about something other than the usual 'white evangelicals'—in part because of my own research experience, visiting Egypt, for example, with a racially mixed group of students from Intervarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), and then interviewing a group of African American ministers who had traveled to southern Sudan with

[16] Marla Frederick, *Colored Television: American Religion Gone Global* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); David P. King, *God's Internationalists: World Vision and the Age of Evangelical Humanitarianism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); David C. Kirkpatrick, *A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); Lauren Turek, *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelicals, Human Rights, and U.S. Foreign Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming, May 2020); David Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2020).

[17] David A Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World But Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); David A. Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[18] See Rossinow's fine discussion of race and affect in *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

a major evangelical organization. I very much believe in the value of this inclusion, since people of color overall are something between 25 and 35 percent of American evangelicals, depending on one's definitions.[19] As I argue in the book, and have argued elsewhere, it has become increasingly impossible to talk about American evangelicalism as 'white evangelicalism,' even as racial tensions abound.[20] But my choices in this regard admit several issues into debate. First, there is the reality that I focus primarily on black and white American evangelicals, and not generally on Americans of Latino, Asian, Native American, Arab, or other background. This is particularly noticeably in regard to Latinos, for example, who are now, according to some estimates, as much as 20% of the U.S. evangelical community. My particular focus on black and white evangelicals made some sense given my interest in evangelical engagements with Africa and the Middle East, but it is very much a partial picture, and I imagine that future work will increasingly talk about evangelicalism, like the rest of U.S. life, as being not (only) a dominant culture highway but more like a series of intersections and crossroads.[21] Beyond that, race is not just about the identities of the Americans, and, as Rossinow argues, I might have done more to unpack the racial categories that Americans were using when they went abroad—how they understood Arabs and Africans and Latin Americans in multiple ways. And also there is the reality—here I can only sadly acknowledge what a couple of the respondents noted—that race is a more central category than gender in this book. Gender and sexuality matter in my story, as my focus on Uganda's anti-homosexuality campaign was designed to highlight, but gender/sexuality is less vibrantly engaged than I ideally would have liked.

The racially diverse, transnational, and multi-dimensional nature of evangelical identity only complicates the fraught issue of how I defined evangelicals in the first place. As Cara Burnidge indicates, this is a major issue for historians of religion, most of whom, as I discuss in the book, have long moved beyond the theological definitions I start with. I struggled with this, but I simply did not have another way of at least beginning to describe who I should include or exclude in my various explorations of key historical events. Who was an 'evangelical' when it came to looking at missionaries in Congo? Which people counted for my purposes when talking about apartheid? Or Iraq? I did not want to engage in mere nominalism—you're an evangelical if you say you are—in part because I wanted to include and analyze people who would not necessarily have defined themselves as evangelical. (For example, up until the late 1970s, many Southern Baptists eschewed the term.) Yet I did not simply want to say that evangelicals are those who believe x or y statements of faith, because this does not begin to do justice to the complexity of institutions, schools, conferences, and media in shaping a 'look and feel' for evangelical life.

Indeed, the capacious work of both parachurch organizations and of media culture in the late twentieth century is fundamental to the definitional problems that scholars have been struggling with for decades. In the 1960s, for example, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship was a self-defined evangelical organization that included young people from many different faith backgrounds. The fact was (and is) that nobody could fully police the ways in which Christian students talked their lives when they met at a given campus, what practices they engaged in, or why. Thus IVCF was riven by the rise of charismatic culture in the decade, in large part because people from different theological backgrounds had come together at different campuses and influenced each other's religious practice and expression. Similarly, today, many people have been influenced by major religious media figures—people like TD Jakes, Beth Moore, Juanita Bynum, Samuel Rodriguez, or Joel Osteen (just to mention a few Americans)—without necessarily knowing the finer points of their theologies. Or caring. This means that, if anything, the boundaries of what constitutes 'evangelical' are even messier than my already capacious approach

[19] Janelle S. Wong, *Immigrants, Evangelicals, and Politics in an Era of Demographic Change*, 1st ed. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2018); Daniel Cox and Robert P. Jones, "America's Changing Religious Identity," (PRRI (Public Religion Research Institute), 6 September 2017), https://www.prri.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian-religiously-unaffiliated/; Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," (Washington, D.C.: Religion and Public Life, 12 May 2015), http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

[20] Melani McAlister, "A Kind of Homelessness: Evangelicals of Color in the Trump Era," *Religion & Politics*, 7 August 2018, https://religionandpolitics.org/2018/08/07/a-kind-of-homelessness-evangelicals-of-color-in-the-trump-era/.

[21] This model has undergirded a great deal of American Studies scholarship, and was instantiated early on with George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1997).

accounts for. I don't know if there is an entirely satisfying way to make these determinations, but I tried for an analysis that accounted for affect, media, and ritual practice, while also attending to the issue of belief as a real-if-not-final determinant.

Let me end with a few notes on things I might do differently if I could. First, as Burnidge discusses, I could have done more to connect my narrative to earlier histories, including histories of missionary work. That would do more justice to reality, and would also help show the long durée of the stories I trace. A great deal of important work is being done on nineteenth- and early twentieth- century religious culture, for example, which both revisits and revises familiar accounts of the relationship between nationalism, empire, and exceptionalist Protestantism.[22] Second, I might have said more explicitly and more often that the religious Right remained strong and significant throughout the period I trace, not only in the debates about apartheid or Iraq, but also in terms of fighting for control of institutions. There was more political vibrancy among evangelicals than many histories have acknowledged, but there is also the reality that, despite challenge after challenge, "conservative white American evangelicalism" is still a very powerful political force, at home and abroad. I think the *Kingdom of God* does explain some of that history, for example in my discussion of the impact of Frances Schaeffer in the 1970s or the debates over apartheid in the 1980s, but I might have unpacked the ongoing power of the Right more fully. Third, like many other authors, I suppose, I regret losing some of the material I left on the cutting room floor. The 'final' manuscript I originally turned into Oxford was 50 percent longer than the book that emerged. Of that, I wish I had kept more discussion of popular culture, televangelism, and the role of the internet in shaping imagery and practice. I also left out a series of 'interludes' about key thinkers and critical debates—from German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's legacy to the debates over missionaries and the Central Intelligence Agency to the impact of Campus Crusade's *Jesus* film.[23] If those interludes remained, they would have made a somewhat sprawling book even messier—but no messier than evangelical life and politics itself.

In ways that I did not imagine when I was completing the first full draft of the manuscript in 2015, the *Kingdom of God* was published in the context of white evangelical support for President Donald Trump, including his Muslim ban, horrific border policies, and promotion of 'religious freedom'—both globally and in terms of the anti-LGBTQ+ agenda at home. It can sometimes be hard, in that context, to make an argument for the ambidexterity of evangelical life and politics, both nationally and transnationally. But understanding the complexities of evangelical history—its many legacies, as well as its dangers, possibilities, and potential futures–is more urgent than ever.

[22] The number of good works make it impossible to do justice to it here, but among the important books that attend to empire and/or have a transnational lens are Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Heather D. Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Sylvester A. Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500-2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Also forthcoming by Katherine Moran, *Imperial Church: Catholic Founding Fathers and America's Civilizing Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming, May 2020). And Burnidge's own work on Woodrow Wilson is an excellent example of the important new work on diplomatic history in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Cara Lea Burnidge, *A Peaceful Conquest: Woodrow Wilson, Religion, and the New World Order*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). See also Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012). This list could go on.

[23] Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ International in the U.S.), "Jesus Film Project," https://www.cru.org/us/en/communities/ministries/the-jesus-film-project.html