



Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia

By Mark A. Noll, Carolyn Nystrom

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As Africa and Asia take their place as the new Christian heartlands, a new and robust company of saints is coming into view.

In seventeen inspiring narratives Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom introduce pivotal Christian leaders in Africa and Asia who had tenacious faith in the midst of deprivation, suffering and conflict. Spanning a century, from the 1880s to the 1980s, their stories demonstrate the vitality of the Christian faith in a diversity of contexts.

This kaleidoscopic witness to the power of the gospel will both inspire and educate. Whether for a class in global Christianity or for a personal journey to other times and places of faith, *Clouds of Witnesses* is a book that tugs at our curiosity and resists being laid down. An engaging traveling companion to Mark Noll's award-winning book *The New Shape of World Christianity*.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Because Euro-Americans are largely unaware of Christian history in Africa and Asia, the authors set out to tell stories of Christian leaders from Korea, China, Africa, and India. These narratives from the 19th and 20th centuries stand on their own rather than filling the pages with assessment and evaluation, because "it is important first simply to know before trying to judge," the authors write. Profiles of influential Christian voices and activists range from Archbishop Janani Luwum, a martyr in Uganda murdered by Idi Amin's regime in 1977, to Dora Yu, a woman considered the foremost Chinese evangelist during the early 1900s. The otherwise brilliant book suffers from uninspiring front matter, and while one strength is the incredible detail harvested from missionary journals, biographies, and autobiographies, the first chapter immediately bogs down in minutiae of church politics surrounding its subject, Anglican martyr Bernard Mizeki. The value of this book is the window it opens to a diverse world. The authors maintain that these stories show indelibly that the Holy Spirit has been active across the world and across time. (Apr.)

Review

"Although *Clouds of Witnesses* represents serious historiography, these essays challenge any reader to faith, self-evaluation, and commitment. This book would be a wonderful study guide for any Bible class that desires to learn more about the shape of faith of those in other parts of the world. . . . A book such as this belongs on every believer's bookshelf. I commend it highly." (Chris Flanders, *Restoration Quarterly*, 56:1 (2014))

"This book is invaluable for Western Christians to become acquainted with the non-Western church. As the Western church has had its moments of peril and confusion as well as triumph and encouragement, so *Clouds of Witnesses* presents the non-Western church. When lack of sources has prevented full investigation, Noll and Nystrom adroitly present what can be discerned. Powerful stories of persecution and suffering by men and women of faith encourage readers to persevere in the face of adversity for the sake of the glory of God." (Sean Dougherty with D. Jeffrey Bingham, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December 2013)

"*Clouds of Witnesses* is recommended as a rich source of illustrative historical material on a wide variety of current missiological issues and for anyone asking the question, 'What in the world is God doing?'" (David K. Strong, *Missiology*, January 2012)

"This is the sort of book that forces us to rethink how we teach the story of Christianity worldwide." (Christian Century, October 18, 2011)

"Straight-forward brief biographies of remarkable figures of faith in non-Western Christianity, perfect for church groups, parish libraries, and seminary libraries." (Graham Christian, *Library Journal*, May 1, 2011)

"A remarkable book helping us, through the lives of seventeen Christians from outside Europe and North America, to understand how the "center of gravity" in world Christianity has shifted from North to South; and from West to East. A novel way to help us change perspective." (Gerald J. Pillay, Vice-Chancellor & Rector, Liverpool Hope University)

"Most of us have heard of Christianity's monumental shift from global north to global south. But shifts are impersonal things. They don't breathe, evangelize, repent, worship or die for their faith. Only people do that.

These seventeen snapshots of global Christian luminaries put a much-needed face on the rise of world Christianity. Each carefully drawn portrait brims with the insight, eloquence and deep learning which we have come to expect from Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom. Highly recommended." (Mark Shaw, director of the Center for World Christianity, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, and author of *Global Awakening*)

"The book of Revelation reminds us that the company of the saints encompasses those from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, but too many volumes of modern Christian biography appear to restrict the saints to those of European descent. This rich collection of pen portraits corrects the imbalance and reminds us of the wonderful variety of the worldwide people of God--prophets, mystics, evangelists, political agitators, revivalists and martyrs are all here. This book will expand your horizons, instruct your mind and challenge the level of your spiritual commitment." (Brian Stanley, professor of world Christianity, University of Edinburgh)

"Clouds of Witnesses powerfully portrays the lives, ministries and contributions of leading non-Western Christians in a diversity of contexts and Christian traditions. This unique collection provides a timely reminder that non-Western Christianities, now the dominant form of the faith, were forged in historical situations that are far removed from the purview of most Western Christians. It is compiled with keen sensitivity to the complex nuances of the historical record. The pivotal role of indigenous agency in the extraordinary expansion of Christianity in the non-Western world is fleshed out, but with ample reminders that the vital spark in many remarkable events was often ignited in the encounter between Western missionary agent and indigenous believer. Thus, the voices that speak in this volume speak to the whole church." (Jehu J. Hanciles, associate professor, History of Christianity and Globalization, and director, Center for Missiological Research, Fuller Graduate School of Intercultural Studies)

"The authors have shown again and again through the stories of these heroes that, with a few exceptions like Y. T. Wu (and they are indeed the exceptions), the old, old Story is still very much alive in ways that have long been forgotten by a beleaguered Christianity in the West. My hope is that their effort will help to rekindle confidence in the gospel as the power of God unto salvation." (Simon Chan, Trinity Theological College, Singapore)

"Here are seventeen disciples from Asia and Africa with hearts for their people and heads that grasp the big picture. Hear their voices." (Miriam Adeney, professor, Seattle Pacific University, and author of *Kingdom Without Borders*)

"Few are unaware of Christianity's decline across old Christendom, its stasis in neo-Christendom and its astonishing post-colonial growth across much of the non-Western world. Nevertheless, the 'streetlight effect' evident in standard church histories means that we know scarcely anything about those men and women chiefly responsible for the most remarkable demographic surge in the history of the church. As a happy exception to that rule, this book reminds us that Christianity is a *world* religion, and provides Christians everywhere with cause to celebrate." (Jonathan J. Bonk, Ph.D., executive director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center and project director of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*)

About the Author

Mark A. Noll (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University) is Francis McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is advisory editor for *Books & Culture* and subeditor for the new *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Noll's main academic interests concern the interaction of Christianity and culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglo-American societies. He has published articles and reviews on a wide variety of subjects involving Christianity in

modern history. Some of his many books include *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, *Is the Reformation Over?*, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* and *The Old Religion in a New World*.

Carolyn Nystrom (MA, Wheaton College) has written more than eighty books, Bible study guides and children's titles. She served as general editor for the Christian Classics series and she co-authored *Guard Us, Guide Us* and *Praying* with theologian J. I. Packer, and *Before I Was Born (God's Design for Sex)* with Sandra Speidel. In addition to actively serving in her church and community, she has been a foster parent, an elementary schoolteacher and a book editor. Carolyn lives in the Chicago area with her husband and they have four grown children.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Sinters:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book entitled *Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia*? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have other opinion?

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