

Char Miller, ed., *Missions and Missionaries in the Pacific*. Symposium Series, Vol. 14. New York and Toronto: E. Mellen, 1985. Pp. 125. \$19.95

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In addition to the editor's introduction and essay, James A. Boutilier and Charles W. Forman have each contributed papers first given at a

conference in San Francisco in 1983. It is valuable to have them published in this format and thus more accessible than if they were separated in journals. With only three contributors, this collection does not rank in importance with *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania* (1978). Nevertheless the stature of the authors and the quality of their articles make this a book that ought to be in libraries and on the shelves of scholars interested in Pacific history, despite a few misprints such as the gap in the quotation on p. 28. A useful bibliography completes the book.

Boutilier's article is a comparative study of the success and failure of missionary efforts in Tahiti, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Samoa, New Caledonia, Kiribati and Tuvalu, the Solomons, and New Guinea. Due recognition is given to the complexity of the variables when the process of "conversion" is examined historically, but particularity does not exclude the possibility of comparison. The article does not add substantially to our knowledge or offer fundamental new perspectives, but it is a very clear and helpful overview for students, with sufficient depth to provoke questions about the role of native evangelists and the "moment" of conversion. More work clearly is needed on the reasons that islanders adopt particular aspects of the Christian message, and the article could usefully have dealt more adequately with the dynamics of leadership.

Miller's article shows the value of reassessing material in the light of findings from other disciplines. His analysis of family life and the impact it was expected to have on the native people is very well done. Likewise he notes that there were influences the other way, especially on missionary children, which soon showed that mission was not a one-way process. The expectations laid on the missionary women proved too much for some to bear. The burdens of domestic chores left little energy for being Christian exemplars, and fatigue made women and children vulnerable to illness. Living out the antebellum restatement of the puritan tradition on women's role and agonizing about the waywardness of teenagers influenced by the islanders was a great strain. Sending children home was a painful dilemma repeated in each successive missionary generation. Miller's analysis takes the discussions of Gunson and earlier historians on missionary families into new territory. He demonstrates how study of family ideals and domestic roles can fruitfully illuminate the issues of cultural interaction.

Forman deals with quite different issues, relating to the fragile economic base of island societies. He explores the way in which some islander communities gained financial independence quite early, compared to indigenous churches in other regions. The LMS and Methodist

missionaries skillfully utilized competitiveness. Yet the institutions and expectations they created have made it almost impossible for the island churches to keep pace with developments in the churches of the sending countries. Ironically it has been the development of the ecumenical movement that has underlined this most poignantly. Developments in cooperation across the vast distances of the Pacific have been beyond the cash resources generated by the rural economies of the Pacific. Mining, industry, and tourism bring their own problems and Forman asks whether the islanders are doomed to marginalization and debt, with the not-so-subtle dependency thus created. Though remarkable progress has been made in many churches, Forman incisively explores the issue with the evocative image of playing catch-up ball. Though intended for historians, his paper also should be read by church administrators and those concerned with development strategies.

In their different ways, each author opens up important directions for further reflection. A cheaper reprint for the use of Pacific island students would be invaluable.