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*Mission as Globalization: Methodists in Southeast Asia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.* By DAVID W. SCOTT. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016. 207 pp. \$90.00 (hardcover).

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David W. Scott has produced an insightful study that interest scholars in a number of fields. This is a historical work that focuses on early Methodist missions in Southeast Asia; however, it is not a straightforward historical account. Scott brings a fresh perspective to his subject by analyzing the “Malaysia Mission” (as it was known in Methodist sources) from the perspective of globalization, a framework normally applied to later historical periods. He convincingly argues that many of the features of mid to late-twentieth century globalization were already present in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Southeast Asian missions. His argument thus offers fresh light on the global history of Methodism and pushes against the boundaries of contemporary work on globalization.

The book is organized into seven chapters. The first is a brief survey of the history of the Methodist Mission to Malaysia during the period under investigation. In addition to orienting the reader to Methodist structures and key players, Scott places the mission in the context of Southeast Asian history, noting the way the region was shaped by colonialism, capitalism, immigration, and new communication technologies. As Scott demonstrates, Southeast Asia was, at this time, already marked by the kind of migratory and multicultural interaction that we now associate with globalization.

Chapters two through seven proceed thematically, rather than chronologically, each examining the Methodist mission in light of a trend normally associated with globalization. The second chapter discusses Methodist Mission as “global vision,” and identifies ways Methodist missionary activity expanded geographic awareness and fostered a sense of the world as one global space. Within Southeast Asia, Methodist missions transgressed imperial boundaries, operating across colonial regimes. Missionary publications also shaped a view of “Malaysia” as a vaguely-defined region, and shared information about its culture with Western readers. All of this combined with the common bond of faith across cultural and geographic distance to create a sense of global unity. As Scott nicely summarizes, “Minnesota and Malaysia were bound together by migration, relationships, communication, money, organizational ties, and geographic awareness,” and therefore the “we cannot tell the full history of Methodism in Malaysia without talking about Minnesota, nor the full history of Methodism in Minnesota without talking about Malaysia” (p. 47).

Chapter three analyzes the dialectic interplay of the global Methodist culture and the local cultures of Southeast Asia. Scott seeks to avoid a one-sided view of globalization as the imposition of Western culture, arguing that it is better to view the interchange as a hybridization of cultures. For example, the Methodist Mission was heavily involved in education based on Western educational models, but Western values of autonomy, self-determination and socioeconomic ambition were adapted actively and selectively by local students, particularly as they went on to become teachers in the schools. Female education was highly valued by the missionaries, and while this in itself was counter-cultural for Southeast Asia, the female

curriculum was focused on “feminine” skills and was conducted in the native tongue, which helped to preserve local culture. Common moral reform causes from the West were also imported (temperance, anti-prostitution work) but these were not able to make an impact beyond Methodist circles.

The fourth chapter is entitled “Methodism as a Media Conglomerate,” and examines Methodist publishing efforts using categories normally applied to late twentieth century media organizations. While Methodist media activity of the time was limited to print, it nevertheless represented a global enterprise that communicated using a number of types of print publications (periodicals, books, tracts, leaflets, reports). The “conglomerate” was not centrally controlled by one organization, but was controlled largely by a small group of white, Western men, who all shared a similar outlook, thus providing consistency of editorial and theological perspective across the array of Methodist publications.

Scott then compares Methodist mission agencies to multinational corporations. Although the mission agencies were non-profit, he argues that one can view them as international organizations in the “business” of mission. Scott notes that several emerging multinational corporations of the time (Coca Cola, Proctor and Gamble, Woolworth, and Welch’s Grape Juice) were run by Methodists. He then draws parallels between the two types of organization in terms of corporate structure, finances, human resources, and supply-chain management.

Along similar lines, chapter six compares some of the operations of the Malaysia Mission to a franchise system. In particular, Scott argues that the indigenous-run outposts of the Mission resembled a franchise, where the local people raised their own support and submitted to certain standards of practice in order to use the Methodist “brand.” Western missionaries, by contrast, were paid by the mission agencies and reflected more of the corporate structure and identity. The indigenous church ministries contextualized the Methodist message in local culture and dialect, thus expanding the missionary work in ways that were beyond the capacity of Western missionaries. The franchise model is particularly illuminating in the case of Methodist schools, which became one of the most important aspects of the Malaysia Mission. Methodism’s positive reputation for education made the Methodist “brand” a valuable asset to the local educational franchise.

The final chapter focuses on Methodism as a social network that facilitated international immigration. The Methodist structure, known as “connectionalism,” provided a variety of processes that cultivated personal relationships across geographical boundaries – relationships which were drawn upon in the process of immigration. Methodists were also involved in cases of “group migration” where communities of migrants were settled in order to work plantations. Missionary recruitment, of course, facilitated international migration, and to a limited extent, the Mission fostered travel by Western donors, in order to provide first-hand knowledge and experience of the region.

*Mission as Globalization* is well-written and based upon meticulous research and analysis. Some theological issues might have been discussed more carefully. For example, Scott suggested that Methodists argued against predestination (p. 101), whereas it would be better to say that they favoured a conditional view of predestination as opposed to the absolute predestination taught by

Calvinists. Likewise his claim that the holiness movement taught that entirely sanctified believers no longer sin (p. 102) requires more nuance. However, these were passing references to theological debates, with no significant bearing on Scott's overall argument.

This is a fine study that sheds new light on a neglected aspect of Methodist history. Scott is to be commended for the interdisciplinary nature of this work, which offers a nuanced treatment of the subject and suggests that further examination of the relationship between Christian mission and globalization may be in order.