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Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ed., *Proselytization Revisited: Rights Talk, Free Markets, and Culture Wars*, Equinox, London, 2008. 480 pp. \$36.76. ISBN 9781845532284.

“We have shown you the mountain, and now it is up to you to climb it.” So spoke Commissioner Murray Sinclair as he and the other Commissioners made their preliminary report at the close of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) last June. There was a sense that this was an unveiling, a revealing of a mountain that had dominated the landscape for so many indigenous peoples in this land but had previously been hidden from the view of the rest of Canada. There was in the Commissioner’s invitation a sense that non-indigenous Canadians would need to practice keeping this mountain in view if we had any hope of climbing it. It is in fact this task of shifting perspective that is so critical in the work of decolonizing and pursuing just and right relationships. *Proselytization Revisited* provides an international lens through which to look at some of the Calls to Action set forth for the church by the commissioners, particularly the recommendation that asks all faith groups in Canada to formally adopt and comply with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a framework for reconciliation. For evangelical and post-evangelical faith communities, this may prove to be one of the most challenging of the recommendations. Hackett’s book helps to stretch non-indigenous paradigms for engaging this path for reconciliation and gives global context for the concerns of indigenous people here and abroad.

The focus on proselytism in this book is an examination of a method gone wrong. The authors choose to focus on proselytism, rather than conversion, in order to look at the methods that are employed “to bring about a significant change in the pre-existing religious commitments, identity, membership or lack thereof of others” (77). Proselytization is the term used in human rights conversation to delineate where sharing one’s own beliefs comes to infringe on the rights of another person or group.

The three questions I believe will serve the discussion in the church regarding the adoption of UNDRIP are: How does religious freedom play out in situations of unequal power? What are the circumstances that can cause evangelism to become coercive? And finally, what might be the markers of a decolonized and authentic evangelism?

While religious freedom has been promoted in the West as a basic tenet of democracy, it is experienced by many in other parts of the world and those on the margins in the West as an arm of Western imperialism. Jean-Francois Mayer raises the issue

that the US promotion of religious freedom, especially in South America, has been perceived as an ideological invasion aimed particularly at undermining the struggle for indigenous social justice. Religious freedom in other contexts is not seen as a pluralistic freedom so much as a privileging of Christianity and Islam over traditional or non-evangelistic spiritualities, as raised by De Roover and Claerhout in their examination of the context in India. This concern seems to be at the root of the protection of traditional spiritual practices in the UNDRIP. The issue is even more poignant when we consider the Canadian context of the churches' collusion with the state in order to erase cultural identity and ties to the land through the residential school project. These authors encourage us to ask the question of how power and privilege are playing into Christians' desire to "share the gospel."

Another aspect of power potentially corrupting evangelistic practice within Christianity is the issue of coercion. Kao and Elisha raise important questions about what those inside of Christianity would call "holistic mission," where one could argue that the gospel is preached not only with words but also (and perhaps more importantly) with actions. Kao and Elisha elucidate the potentially coercive nature of this sort of mission work where there is power inequity and the withholding of benefit based on required adherence to an ideology, set of behaviors, or participation in religious activities. Further, Elisha raises a concern that "faith-based activism has the potential to reinforce hegemonic conditions in particular social contexts." He bases this concern on observations regarding language around missionaries' work in situations of poverty. "Welfare activists talk about the 'transformed lives' and 'softened hearts' of welfare clients, evoking the conversionist language of evangelical revivalism, rather than dwelling on the systemic roots of poverty as they might do when speaking before liberal audiences" (450). His issue is not with revivalism but with a reluctance to challenge systemic oppression by spiritualizing the problem and the solution.

The longstanding history of colonization in Canada has created inequities of power and has institutionalized a deep racism that perpetuates these inequalities. Such realities then require serious work around decolonizing our attitudes and structures. Much will need to shift in terms of power and control. On this topic of shifting power, the book offers some global encouragement as well.

As Africa and India are not only decolonizing (explored by De Roover and Claerhout) but also recovering their precolonial history as birthplaces of early Christian movements (Freston), and as the site of sending missions is shifting to the global south (Freston and Kovalchuk), there seems to be a new dynamic emerging. These shifts mark a return to the early Christian reality of a message coming from the grassroots margins, which then speaks into the seats of power rather than the other way around. With the exception of Kao's chapter, in which she raises concerns about some culturally unreflective forms of Pentecostalism emerging in South America, the general sense is that this shift will serve Christianity better than its

colonial/imperial forms.

This book triggers important questions that we need to consider in Canada: What would fully contextualized indigenous forms of following the Jesus Way look like? What if Indian Country finally was the sending site of Christian mission rather than the perpetual mission field? What might the non-indigenous church in Canada have to learn from loving our indigenous neighbors as those neighbors are asking us to love them rather than how we think they should be loved? The mountain is ours to climb.

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Qwo-Li Driskill, *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 2016. 224 pp. \$29.95. ISBN: 9780816530489.

Teaching a course at Bible college, I asked a class what the historical context of Creation was. There was some murmuring and a bit of nervous laughter. When speaking of origin stories, either the beginning comes later or the beginning is a pure event untainted by the messiness of life.

This tension between the newness of creation and the flow of history surfaced as I read Qwo-Li Driskill's *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory*. The subtitle is suggestive. Queer is a broad and somewhat fluid term addressing anything from variant sexual practices to political stances. Two-Spirit remains enigmatic to many non-indigenous (as well as indigenous) people and is here used to "describe someone whose gender exists outside of colonial logic" (5).

I was hopeful and curious about whether the author's *memory* would include neglected or lost texts and stories recounting expressions of Cherokee gender and sexuality prior to colonial contact. Unconsciously I wanted a *pure event*, a literal creation account of how the Cherokee people expressed themselves. There is no such account. Driskill, perhaps a little like the Jews in exile crafting their origin story, is attempting to weave a story for hir¹⁰ people that is true to their past and empowering in the present. But as with the Jewish exiles in Babylon, much of the materials have passed through the language and influence of colonizers. The result is that the creation account is both indebted to and in conflict with the accounts of the colonizer.

¹⁰ It is my understanding that in identifying as Two-Spirit the author uses the pronouns "s/he" and "hir" respectively. I have employed these terms in the review. See author bio at <http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/users/qwo-li-driskill>.

The term *asegi* carries the connotation of strange or *queer*—that which deviates from or is unaccountable to and unassimilated by dominant forms. These *asegi* forms must be drawn out as fragments or threads from the dominant expressions that appropriated them into their own logic. These extracted threads then can be “woven” (the author’s guiding metaphor) creatively to imagine possible pasts and consider different futures. What this means for Driskill is that every aspect of his work—from critical methodology to choice of sources—must be attentive to and reflect an *asegi* style. For instance, “scientific objectivity” is discarded in the way it objectifies lives, cutting up and classifying them by dominant logics. “This book does not attempt to argue for cultural ‘truths,’ but, rather, argues for radical disruption of master narratives.... This is a political and activist project” (7).

Because there is no documentation of gender or sexuality (the terms themselves being anachronistic) among Cherokee people prior to colonial contact, Driskill begins after contact. It is clear from these sources that Europeans “thought that *all* of our genders were ‘variant,’” as seen in their criticisms of overly “feminine” men or “masculine” women as well as differing forms of commitment and kinship models (19, see also 41). Driskill spends time picking up the threads within these accounts that both suggest *asegi* forms, and then uses them to imagine what might have been and what could still be.

The bulk of Driskill’s historical work traces two broad trajectories. First is the early historical accounts of contact between Europeans and those in traditional Cherokee territory. As mentioned, these accounts reflect broad criticism of how Cherokee people expressed gender and sexuality. Cherokee sexuality as a whole was encountered as deviant. Some of the criticisms included matriarchal authority, mutual “divorce” among couples, instances of cross-dressing, and gender roles in conflict with colonial norms. The second trajectory traces how colonizers implemented policy and laws that would bring Cherokee forms in line with colonial aims. This included attempts at having Cherokees incorporate chattel slavery as an economic practice as well as sending missionaries to enculturate Cherokees in colonial languages and values. All of these economic and religious reforms had the effect of molding Cherokee gender expressions along colonial lines.

Driskill does not consider historical accounts as the most “accurate” understanding of past expressions. For instance, early accounts of the Cherokee ritual of “perpetual friendship” (which could be performed between members of the same or opposite gender) are passed through colonial values and terms leaving the reader unclear as to the meaning of this ritual (see 140–47). Driskill’s methodology can prove frustrating for the reader formed by modern standards of historical criticism. S/he concludes each chapter by *imagining* how *asegi* and Two-Spirit expressions *may* have existed in those accounts. In a reflective response to doubts over his chosen approach, s/he concludes one chapter, “No doubt, this doesn’t just have to be imagining. We survived. Look at our hands: we are reweaving” (136).