

Prominence is rightly given to the Yeap family's business and marriage alliances with Oei Tiong Ham and his family, and Daryl Yeap is currently writing the biography of the latter, whom she refers to as "the Sugar King of Asia", and that of his daughters. I wish her well and hope that the forthcoming book will be edited more carefully.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj36-3i

*Christian Circulations: Global Christianity and the Local Church in Penang and Singapore, 1819–2000*. By Jean DeBernardi. Singapore: NUS Press, 2020. xx+430 pp.

In *Christian Circulations*, Jean DeBernardi offers a meticulous take on the "history of the globalization of Christianity and the local church" (p. 358). She does this by paying attention to the Brethren movement in Singapore and Penang, which is remarkable for two reasons. The first is that in Singapore and Malaysia the Brethren, alongside other denominations, is a religion "of heritage for many" (p. 2). And yet scholarship about them has been limited. The second is that her work foregrounds the significant role of the Brethren in the globalization of Christianity, whose contemporary narrative is predisposed to Pentecostalism. In many parts of Asia, Christianity has a much longer tradition.

Although focused on Singapore and Penang, *Christian Circulations* is a decidedly transregional history of the Brethren movement. What made this expansion possible was the mobility of European missionaries and their Asian counterparts in China and around Southeast Asia. For example, in the first chapter, one is introduced to Alexander Grant (1833–1914), a Scots Presbyterian missionary who worked in China, Singapore and Indonesia. He eventually joined the Brethren movement in Penang and became a resident missionary at the Bethesda Free Meeting House in Singapore in 1867. He reappears in chapter 8 as the Alexander Grant of Singapore, where he has a photo that depicts him as the “Discoverer of the Church” (p. 175). Indeed, Grant travelled around the region with Gan Kui, a Chinese missionary. Gan, originally from Amoy, worked in Java, where he helped establish the Patekoan Church. Eventually, he moved to Singapore, where he first worked for Saint Andrew’s Church Mission before becoming a Brethren in 1867. In light of narratives like this, DeBernardi concludes that “long before 1900, Chinese Christians had formed independent churches in Batavia, the Malay States, and Southern Thailand that Brethren workers visited from time to time, including some that still exist today” (p. 18). Through accounts like this (and there are many others in her book), DeBernardi clearly highlights the transregional history of Brethren expansion.

But the expansion was never smooth. In part one, DeBernardi corrects the assumption that Chinese Brethren were followers of John Nelson Darby, the most famous among the movement’s founders in the early nineteenth century. In reality, the Brethren split into two in 1848: The Exclusive Brethren embraced Darby and his premillennial dispensational theology, while the Open Brethren were led by George Müller (who then visited Singapore, Penang, China and Ceylon) and Anthony Groves (who became a missionary in Baghdad and India). Chapters 1 and 2 are dedicated to the endeavours of these two. Throughout the twentieth century, many schisms emerged too among Brethren assemblies in Singapore and Malaysia over contentious matters, not least of which was the legitimacy of charismatic worship (chapters 14 and 15).

Abundantly rich in historical material, the book expects its readers to be mindful of the details. Although the introduction provides an overview, the book might leave at a loss those unacquainted with Christianity's key figures in Southeast Asia. But somehow the details are necessary to argue DeBernardi's case: "The individuals ... in this monograph moved from place to place, from one religious organization to another, sometimes joining new social networks and adopting new projects. Their stories are a colloquy of differences rather than a simple narrative history" (p. 359).

It is in this light that the book may also be read relative to the wider literature on world Christianity. Understandably, the book has chosen to engage other mission histories in Asia (and frame its general approach according to the writings of Bourdieu and Simmel about agency and change). In my view, however, the book is equally relevant to scholars and observers of world Christianity. Some discussion would have enriched the book. There are two reasons.

The first is the transregional angle of the book, which is a gap in the very study of world Christianity. In fact, DeBernardi does have a case to make. She rightly notes that "encyclopedic studies of world Christianity remain committed to ... boundaries, typically offering parallel histories of Protestant and Catholic missions in major world regions like South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, without exploring their interconnections" (p. 4).

The second is that the growth of Christianity in many parts of Asia—and arguably the Global South—is a result of the work of independent churches, many of which remain unrecognized. This is the main gap that *Christian Circulations* addresses. To be sure, such traditional denominations as Anglicanism and Methodism prevail. But there are also new emerging churches from the Global South that carry out global missions as independent churches. In many cases, they are far more influential. In this sense, they continue the spirit of the Brethren: independent and "led by lay people with no priestly mediators" (p. 18).

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DOI: 10.1355/sj36-3j

*One or Two Words: Language and Politics in the Toraja Highlands of Indonesia.* By Aurora Donzelli. Singapore: NUS Press, 2020. xv+298 pp.

*One or Two Words* is an engrossing presentation of ethnographic accounts on the Toraja highlanders of Indonesia in the post-Suharto, or the *Reformasi* (reform), period. The book offers a highly original perspective on the transformation processes in the Toraja politico-ideological landscape following the downfall of Suharto's authoritarian regime towards the end of the twentieth century. Whereas most previous studies have taken a socio-economic or political stance, Donzelli details the discursive implications for Toraja of the radical decentralization and democratization policies of the Indonesian 'reformation' government from a sociolinguistic and cultural perspective.

Donzelli, trained in both anthropology and linguistics, weaves together ethnographic data on language—as concrete and situated practices—in shaping modes of power, collective belonging and political imagination. In this, she aims to go beyond the specifics of the local and contribute to wider anthropological theories by reflecting on the complex connections between the micro-cultural worlds of the Toraja language and discourse and the macrosocial forces taking place in Indonesia.

Based on fieldwork in Toraja spread over two decades and blending more conventional ethnographic research practices with those used by linguistic-oriented fieldworkers, Donzelli reconfigures how to think about and question Torajan place and space as well as identity politics. She pushes her readers to go beyond cultural and aesthetic boundaries and explore "crossovers" (p. 220)—the interconnections between the sociocultural transformations that have taken place in