

***Walter and Ingrid Trobisch and the Globalization of Modern, Christian Sexual Ethics.*** By Anneke H. Stasson. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock, 2021. vii + 130 pp. \$39.00 hardcover, \$24.00 paperback.

This short study of Walter and Ingrid Trobisch, by Anneke Stasson, serves to introduce a very large theme: how colonization functioned on the most intimate level of marriage and family. Though focused on one couple's missionary work in French speaking Cameroon in the 1950s and 1960s, Stasson's account examines the dimension of sexual ethics as a facet of the cultural impact of Protestant mission. The author makes extensive use of the personal papers of Walter and Ingrid Trobisch in the Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the records of the American Lutheran Church (1960–1988). A strength of the book lies in the author's attention to women's experience, and a critique would be that this aspect could have been brought forth even more.

Stasson places the work of both Ingrid and Walter Trobisch within the dramatic shift in post-WWII Africa to independence and freedom from colonialism. Ingrid had been raised in a missionary family, while Walter, from Germany, had endured conscription into the Hitler youth. The two met in the years after the war when Walter went to the Swedish-American and Lutheran Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Highlighting the deeply Lutheran context and connections that accompanied the Trobisch missionary work would add important context to the argument about global impact of their work. Stasson attends to the interpersonal dimension of their missionary work. As they started a family in Cameroon, the independence movements around them affected the Africans they worked with not only politically but also in their private lives. When a young man asked Walter to guide his effort to marry a woman whose father demanded an exorbitant bride-price, their exchange of letters recorded Walter's careful listening and attention to the young man's predicament.

Governed by marriage traditions that privileged kinship over individual choice of spouse, young Africans educated at mission schools encountered a different pattern of courtship and marriage. They lived away from their home villages and had internalized many aspects of modernity. They wanted to make their own choices. Stasson lifts up some of the complex challenges, and points to the Christian Home Movement that some missionaries promoted as a moral template, but young Africans also had reason to look for new models. Colonialization was not a one-way street.

The exchanges with the young man and many other counseling efforts with others formed the basis for Walter's 1962 book *J'ai Aimé Une Fille/ I Loved a Girl*. Even though it did not have a happy ending, an enthusiastic response from African young people resulted in a publishing phenomenon. Other books followed, as well as conferences. Ongoing counseling through letter writing made it necessary to hire staff in order to manage the correspondence with thousands of readers who had used the mailing address the Trobisch's printed on the back of books and pamphlets. After a decade over a million copies of *I Loved a Girl* were in print, in seventy languages.

Ingrid's views on women's lives and her own presentations on women's fertility added an essential dimension to their work. Walter, however, had the recognition of the churches and funding agencies. Stasson explores this oversight and shows that when Walter was enlisted to speak at a conference, he depended on Ingrid's presence, and she made the arrangements for their children to be cared for, so that a proper

presentation of their approach could be made. It took male initiative to bring female perspectives to the fore.

The Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation contracted with Walter Trobisch in 1968 as Western missionary influence entered life support. African Christians challenged paternalistic leadership. John Mbiti's breakthrough African theological perspective, also addressed marital reform. He supported individual choice but counseled that polygamy should not be so stoutly resisted by Christians. This important theological leadership created a changed mission environment. The Lutheran World Federation did not renew the contract with Walter Trobisch in 1970. Josiah Kibira of Tanzania asserted that this work should be done by Africans. Trobisch actively resisted, pleading with Kibira, a personal friend. Stasson describes his paternalism. He could not acknowledge the leadership of those he had himself advised. This was painful reading.

Stasson's study follows the Trobisch couple to America, where the book *I Loved a Girl* found a new readership among Evangelical Christians navigating the sexual revolution. The Trobisch family in Switzerland continued their writing and counseling and traveled when their sponsors, the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, brought them to American campuses. Ingrid's book, *The Joy of Being a Woman*, was published by Harper and Row in 1975, but their involvement in couples work would soon end. Walter died in 1979.

Entering into the American cultural scene was a kind of "reverse mission" of African ideas into the West, argues Stasson. She uses the term "Evangelical" to describe the context where this influence spread, but this could be confusing today, and does not adequately convey the theological perspective of the Lutheran Trobisch couple. "Evangelical: students, Stasson noted, shared similarities with African young people. They found the Trobisch approach more flexible than the rigid codes of their homes.

There is much more to explore in this material, and Stasson indicates at the end of the book her next project is focused on the global expansion of companionate marriage in the important context of the shift in Christian dynamism from the Global North to the Global South. For that work, a comparison among different Christian denominations would aid in identifying what factors and leadership structures made influence flow from North to South and from South to North. Whether a "Christian Sexual Ethic" exists in any recognizable way across so many cultures, and as gender norms continue to evolve, needs further explication.

Maria Erling

United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

doi:10.1017/S000964072300166X

***Exhibiting Evangelicalism: Commemoration and Religion's Presence of the Past.* By Devin C. Manzullo-Thomas. Public History in Historical Perspective. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022. xi + 222 pp. \$90.00 cloth; \$28.95 paper.**

In *Exhibiting Evangelicalism*, Devin Manzullo-Thomas brings together two disciplines that have largely remained separate, namely public history and religious studies. Public