

## DETAILS



### ***The Arts as Witness in Multifaith Contexts*** ***Missiological Engagements Series***

Available November 5, 2019 | \$35, 240 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5106-5

In search of holistic Christian witness, we must cultivate new approaches for integrating the arts into mission praxis. Written by missiologists, art critics, ethnodoxologists, and theologians from around the world, these essays present historical and contemporary case studies while calling Christians to understand the power of art for expressing cultural and religious identity, opening spaces for transformative encounters, and resisting injustice.

## Making Peace Through Art

**“Arts and Mission: A Complex Story of Cultural Encounter,” James R. Krabill, senior mission advocate, Mennonite Mission Network:** Krabill lays out a framework for understanding the critical issues, gaps, misunderstandings, and missiological complexity of witnessing to the goodness of God via music and the arts. He identifies central themes of importance surrounding the arts in context and points to related, critical, interconnected missiological issues in practicing witness via the arts.

**“Performing Witness: Loving Our Religious Neighbors Through Musicking,” Roberta R. King, professor of intercultural communication and ethnomusicology, Fuller Theological Seminary:** King moves readers into the realm of engaging our religious neighbors through the performing arts in a post-9/11 world. Based on recent ethnographic research conducted in southern California, King provides a set of contemporary case studies where Muslims and Christians are rubbing shoulders with each other through music making in dynamic and meaningful ways.

**“God Moves in a Mysterious Way: Christian Church Music in Multifaith Liberia, West Africa, in the Face of Crisis and Challenge,” Ruth M. Stone, professor emerita of ethnomusicology and African studies, and director of Ethnomusicology Institute, Indiana University:** Stone provides rich ethnographic gleanings from Liberia, West Africa. Her analysis points to the critical role and agency that Christian music played during the Liberian Civil War in the late twentieth century and, more recently, the Ebola crisis. She reveals how Liberian Christians and Muslims took a Western hymn, encoded it with meaning that spoke into their immediate historical context, and employed it in culturally appropriate ways, both political and religious.

**“Sounds, Languages, and Rhythms: Hybridized Popular Music and Christian-National Identity Formation in Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia,” Sooi-Ling Tan, academic dean, Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST) Alliance, and adjunct assistant professor, Fuller Theological Seminary:** Tan moves to the Southeast Asian context, where she addresses the longstanding problem of the Christian church coming across as foreign, giving off the image of a potted plant that does not move beyond its Western boundaries. She also provides a comparative study of contrasting contexts dealing with issues common to each.

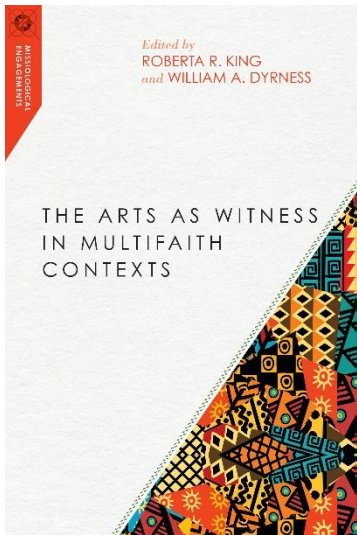
**“Art as Dialogue: Exploring Sonically Aware Spaces for Interreligious Encounters,” Ruth Illman, director of Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, and associate professor of comparative religion, Åbo Akademi University:** Illman takes readers to Germany, where peoples of the three Abrahamic faiths are practicing respectful interreligious dialogue through music. Illman argues that such practices promote intellectual, emotional, cognitive, and embodied dimensions that form sensitive and comprehensive engagement across religions. In contrast, the Kenyan gospel composer, singer, and apologist Reuben Kigame addresses multifaith issues through his inclusive approach to composition.



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**“Simba Nguruma: The Labor of Christian Song in Polycultural, Multifaith Kenya,” Jean Ngoya Kidula, professor of music (ethnomusicology) and chair of ethnomusicology, Hugh Hodgson School of Music, University of Georgia:** Kidula takes us on a musicological analysis that unearths the multilayered elements drawn from across the continent commonly associated with Arab and Indic musical styles. She also demonstrates how they are linked with lyrical worldview issues that index the Kenyan coast, an area highly populated by Muslims and peoples of Indian origin.

**“Crate-Digging Through Culture: Hip Hop and Mission in Pluralistic Southern Africa,” Megan Meyers, adjunct professor of global arts and world religions, Fuller Seminary, and lecturer of worship arts, communication, and contextualization, Bible Institute of Sofala and Baptist Bible Institute, Beira, Mozambique:** Meyers uncovers for readers the case of Mozambique, in southern Africa, where young people are exploring and asserting themselves in their globalizing urban worlds. Focusing on one facet of the burgeoning African Christian theater, Meyers explores the life of a Christian rap artist in order to understand how Mozambican Christian youth are making sense of their changing urban world—one fraught with multifaith tensions.

**“‘Let the Sacred Be Redefined by the People’: An Aesthetics of Challenge Across Religious Lines,” Michelle Voss Roberts, principal and professor of theology, Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto, and Demi Day McCoy, project coordinator at Anna Julia Cooper Center, program coordinator at School of Divinity Office of Admissions, Wake Forest University:** Roberts and McCoy take up joining people where they are by discerning the contours of the gospel in an age of militarized police forces, for-profit prisons, and systematic dehumanization of African American peoples in the United States. Drawing from *rasa* theory, a kind of Indian aesthetic flavor that generates contemplative abstraction, the authors pursue understanding transcendence in hip-hop music and the role of aesthetics in bridging diverse cultural and religious groups in resisting injustice.

**“‘Wild, Wild China’: Contemporary Art and Neocolonialism,” Joyce Yu-Jean Lee, assistant professor of digital media, Marist College:** Lee takes up the ways in which contemporary Chinese art reveals and critiques current, modern-day society with all its ills and injustices. Beginning with the controversial Guggenheim Museum exhibition “Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World,” spanning 1989 to 2008, Lee illuminates the ways in which contemporary Chinese art is meant “to provoke analysis of this political and economic relationship between the West and China.” As a Christian artist, Lee takes us into a world of asking important questions of identity—for instance, What is “Chineseness”?—of relevance to today’s world of injustice and oppression and of the relationship-cum-compartmentalization of art and religion.

**“The Poetic Formation of Interfaith Identities: The Zapatista Case,” William A. Dyrness, senior professor of theology and culture, School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary:** Dyrness focuses on the religious and aesthetic practices of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, located in southern Mexico. Recognizing that they must be investigated within their specific political and cultural context, he pays particular attention to the important role of women in negotiating change through a multiplex of local arts. Chosen from a constellation of aesthetic forms, Dyrness offers us theological and missiological gleanings that arise out of struggle and oppression among a people whose expressive life encompasses the visual and audible—storytelling and song, or oral traditions—for actively engaging societal issues as a community of believers.



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