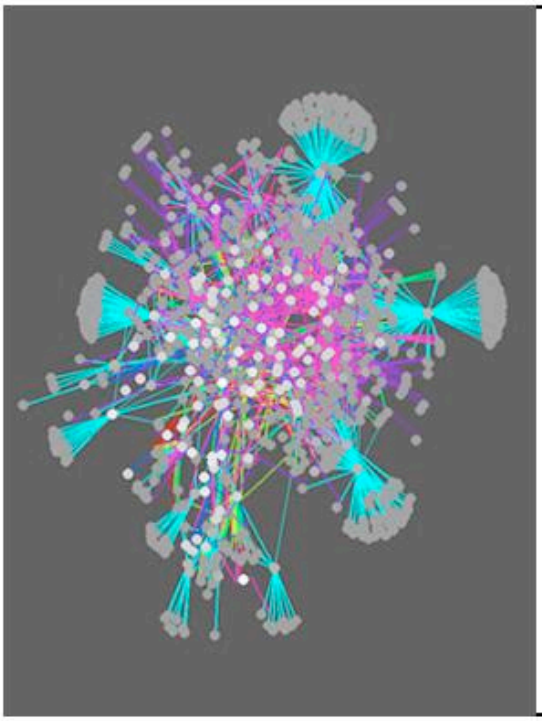

Journal of Postcolonial Theory and Theology

Review of

Amos Yong and Barbara Brown Zikmund, editors,
Remembering Jamestown: Hard Questions about Christian Mission
(Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Books, 2010).

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This volume comprises papers from a 2008 consultation at Regent University, "The Missiology of Jamestown 1607 and Its Implications." It responds to a dialogue that had been taking place between the National Council of Churches of Christ, conservative Evangelical churches, the Virginia Council of Churches, Native American tribal leaders, and Regent University.

Using the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the authors ask whether Christian missions can be ethical in the aftermath of Jamestown and the violence that marked the colonial era. While the consultation itself explored both African American and Native American responses to Jamestown, this volume limited itself to Native American encounters.

There are four sections in the book, each of which contains two chapters. The first section gives voice to Native American religious perspectives; the second looks at the ideological assumptions of the European settlers of Jamestown; the third examines missions after Jamestown; and the fourth explores ways to re-conceptualize missions in light of Jamestown.

Tink Tinker writes the first essay, which focuses on the way that "euroamericans" have constructed American history as romance while Native Americans construct it as tragedy. He asks a tantalizing question: "How would it change our understanding of the past to tell the narrative of American colonial history as tragedy rather than romance?" (16). He reflects on the genre of tragedy—a genre that laments and repents. Only when euroamericans consider their history through this genre, notes Tinker, "is salvation a real possibility" (27).

Barbara Alice Mann contributes an essay in which she challenges the logic of western monolithic constructions of identity. She describes tendencies of non-Indians to construct Indian spiritualities according to their own logic and social and political hierarchies. Thus the "one-thinking" logic of European tradition (37), she argues, cannot co-exist with the balanced, correlative logic of Native American tradition, which she calls "two-thinking" (40). While the discussion of contrasting logics is an important one, Mann is unable to avoid essentializing in making her claims, which, ultimately, undermines an otherwise strong argument.

Part 2 begins with an essay by Robert J. Miller, which explores the ideology underlying the fifteenth century European "Doctrine of Discovery" (51). The ideological assumptions of the doctrine, he points out, were inscribed in Vatican, British, and American law. Miller maps the

network of religious, legal, colonial, and ethnocentric assertions that, woven together, justified land appropriation, violence, and commercial exploitation. His essay ends with the Episcopal Church's call for the United States and Great Britain to publicly repudiate Discovery and the existing laws that perpetuate its ideological claims.

The next essay, by Edward L. Bond, focuses on the ideological roots of the specific missions to the Indians as well as to African slaves in colonial Virginia. Ultimately, the missionaries' convictions about civilization vs. "the savage/heathen" as Other resulted in an inability of the White settlers to welcome either group into their churches and in the perpetuation of slavery. Those ideologies continue to legitimate paternalistic attitudes to this day.

Richard Twiss launches Part 3 by relating the ways that his own Indian culture was constructed by other Christians to represent that which was unregenerate and heathen. In a move that Barbara Alice Mann, above, challenges, Twiss argues that Indian shamans had already been prepared by visions to receive Christ in a type of "prevenient work of God" (99). By using a new lexicon, Twiss and fellow Indians are constructing new bases for Christian identity and theology. He then suggests some ways to challenge the orthodoxy of Christian binary "us/them" thinking but does not offer any critical challenge to the elements within orthodoxy that gave rise to such thinking.

Part 3 ends with an article by Richard E. Waldrop and J. L. Corky Alexander Jr. Like Twiss and *contra* Mann, they share the notion of the Christian God's presence among the Indians prior to missionary engagement. They argue most strongly for "redeeming" the word "mission," but they also are the most wedded to using classical conceptual tools to reconfigure mission, including arguing for a supersessionist understanding of ancient Israelite history (118, 120). Nevertheless, they decry colonial mindsets and call for significant changes that enfranchise Native American Christians.

In Part 4, Shanta Premawardhana argues for a re-thinking of mission based on the Jewish notion of "mending of the world," as narrated by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Premawardhana, too, briefly recounts the violence of colonialism and suggests a way forward that allows representatives of multiple religious traditions to work toward a common goal. The author discusses similarities between Christian and Buddhist "call" narratives and, in contrast to other essays in the book, recommends moving beyond *Missio* Dei because it limits such interreligious cooperation. Premawardhana finds Heschel's approach most fruitful in that it presupposes and demands such cooperation based on the shared value of healing and mending the world.

Part 4 ends with William R. Burrows' article in which he asks whether the universalist claims of Pope Benedict XVI can find common ground with the contingent claims of Native American theologian, George "Tink" Tinker. He recognizes that Benedict's universalizing claims do not adequately account for the moral ambiguity of the missions narratives. Burrows sees in Tinker not an effort to merely contextualize the universal gospel using Indian cultural artifacts but a recognition that the gospel itself is transformed when articulated out of Indian social/cultural and, most importantly, *geographic*, space. He hopes for a theology that develops out of a conversation between Benedict and Tinker.

Finally, Amos Yong explores a postcolonial theology that uniquely addresses Native American missions. He enshrines the values of multiple voices, the expectation and embrace of hybridity in the encounter with the Other, and a theology of hospitality.

This volume is enriching in its insistence on giving voice to those from radically different perspectives. A greater interaction between the voices would have been invigorating. Nevertheless, the volume itself is an extremely helpful vehicle for encouraging those kinds of interactions to proceed outside of the consultation itself.