1. Religion, mobilisations and missions

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"The Woman Abroad:
Female Missionaries from the United Free Church of Scotland,
Presbyterian Church of Ireland and Lutheran Church of Denmark in
Manchuria"

This paper will discuss the lives of Scottish, Irish and Danish female missionaries in Manchuria from 1890 until 1951. During 60 years of their stay in this special part of China they worked as teachers and physicians. I would like to present their religious and intellectual work during the boxer uprising and Russian and Japanese occupation. Analysis of the sources such as letters and newspapers shows how the European women influenced identity and consciousness of Chinese women. However, the paper will not only concern the work of female missionaries, but also will aim to make a comparison of the aspirations and realities of the two genders in the same field and at the same time: female and male missionaries in Manchuria. The assumption is that gender roles are lived more acutely—both in the form of acceptance and rejection—within a foreign context and that such a study provides a picture of the female missionary and her life in China—its limitations and promises—as well as throws light on the gender order in Europe (the West) and, indirectly, on such an order (or perceptions of it) in a Chinese context. This work is very important also in a context of religion and gender in 21st century by means of comparison between present and past aspects.

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Witnessing the unbearable –
Swedish missionary Alma Johansson’s actions for the Armenians

In 1915, Swedish missionary Alma Johansson witnessed the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Her recounts are almost unbearable. She worked at an Armenian orphanage in the town Mush. However, she could not even save her ”own” children from the persecutions. They were trapped and locked into a house which was burned down. Johansson reported the outrages to
diplomats who published her recounts, but she found it hard to get the attention of the public opinion. However, influenced by recounts of missionaries, Swedish activists raised the Armenian question in newspapers, the parliament and at protest rallies. In 1920, Swedish Prime Minister Hjalmar Branting took stand for the Armenian case at the League of Nations, calling it a ‘genocide’. The paper focuses missionary women’s actions in civil society in a violent period. I will problemize the traditional picture of women in war as one of passive victims. Women have also been excluded from official peace negotiations, but nevertheless been active informally as non-violent advocates and builders of networks. Two lines of interpretation are emphasised: one focusing Johansson as part of Western Orientalism and spiritual imperialism, the other taking seriously the efforts of Johansson as an advocate against injustices.

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Professional, Pentecostal Women in South Africa:
How Church Affiliation Helped Some Women Negotiate Corporate Success

This research is based on 60 in-depth interviews done with a cross section of young historically disadvantaged women in professional careers in South Africa who were members of two Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in the Johannesburg area. The aim was to establish if church attendance helped women negotiate their upward mobility in the corporate world. It was found that the churches offered them a space where they could re-shape their identities as modern professional African women who were at ease both in the marble boardrooms of Sandton (Johannesburg) and the shacks of the shanty-towns from which so many of them came. By bringing Weber’s idea of religious attitudes and commerce into conversation with Bourdieu it is suggested that these churches offered their members a place to enhance their social capital and develop the cultural capital needed to be successful in the corporate world.

Barbra Mann Wall

Religion, Gender, and Power: American Catholic Sisters and Hospital Control, 1865-1925
This paper examines how gender and religion influenced power relations in a specific setting, namely, the American hospital marketplace of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, it will compare the ways in which gender and religion worked together to influence the work in Catholic hospitals founded and administered by religious women. The research questions are:

a) What gendered assumptions determined the value that women’s religious congregations gave to hospital work?

b) How did ideas about gender, religion, and equality influence power relations in Catholic hospitals?

c) How did the gendered politics of American society affect negotiations and conflicts between religious communities and physicians? Between religious communities and the church hierarchy?

From 1870 to 1920, 189 different religious congregations of women established 275 Catholic acute care hospitals in the United States. Nuns’ work as nurses and hospital administrators in the American hospital marketplace shows the interplay of religion, gender, and power. Their status as women religious gave them legitimacy and a pivotal role in hospital activities. Furthermore, sisters’ papally approved constitutions protected them from local religious leaders’ control. While compromise was the solution to most of their problems, nuns used their religious authority, based on their status as vowed, celibate women, to organize and collectively resist the authority of both physicians and clergy who tried to limit their activities.

The study is interdisciplinary in that it falls within the realm of the history of medicine, nursing, women, and religion. The chief investigator’s background as a trained historian and nurse will enrich historical perspective. The paper relies on the methods of social and cultural history and has involved seeking and evaluating evidence in primary sources that are located in the sisters’ archives, many of which have not been made public before.

Literature seldom examines women religious as entrepreneurs competing in a male hospital marketplace. This paper recovers historical links between religion, gender, and medicine that have been invisible in modern scholarship.

Lise Paulsen Galal

CV:
Lise Paulsen Galal holds a degree as mag.art. in Ethnography and Social Anthropology from Aarhus University. In March 2006 she took up a position as assistant professor at Section of Cultural Encounters, Department of Language and Culture, Roskilde University. Previously she was employed at Minority Studies, Copenhagen University, in a period from 1996-2006. During the same period she had different freelance jobs as an independent consultant and researcher especially in relation with social work for ethnic minorities. Her research has been divided between the Coptic minority in Egypt and ethnic minorities in Denmark. She is doing research on the Coptic minority and their religious identity politics focusing at the role and strategy of the Coptic Orthodox Church in enrolling the youth in the work and activities of the church. Her other research areas are Muslims in Denmark, political participation of the ethnic minority in Denmark and the cultural encounter between the ethnic minority and the social and health worker in Denmark.

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New gender role, but still Christian - Guardian of contested borders

In Egypt the Christian minority, the Copts, has experienced a religious revival since the nineteen fifties. The Coptic Orthodox Church has been the main agent in promoting a religious identity and offering the space, a counter-public, for negotiation and practising the Coptic identity. The revival has especially promoted new youth identities closely related to new gender roles in spheres of education, employment and family. The question of this paper is what it means for the negotiation of a new Coptic woman role and identity that the Church plays a central role of the revival. The paper will put focus at the religious institution as an agent in defining, legitimating, and authorizing the gender-specific religious identity at the same time as the position of the Copts as a minority will be explored having consequences for the position of the woman. The paper will start from the discourse about the threat of forced conversion of Coptic women into Islam. The discourse is analyzed as part of a strategy in keeping up the borders between religions, which is supported further by specific social strategies of the church, which includes the Coptic women as an active member of the church.

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS
2004-Present   Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Studies, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
2002-2004  Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities, Religion Department, Barnard College, New York, NY

PUBLICATIONS- select
Books:
Disciplining Bodies and Souls: Imprisonment, Evangelicalism and Faith-based Politics (book manuscript, in progress)
Co-editor, with Andrea McArdle, Zero Tolerance: Quality of Life and the New Police Brutality in New York City (New York University Press, 2001)

Sexual, Gender, and Religious Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement
This paper examines the relationship between gender, sexuality, and evangelical Christianity through a discussion of the ex-gay movement. The ex-gay movement combines scientific, therapeutic and biblical approaches in an effort to ‘change and convert’ gay men and lesbians to non-homosexual Christian lives. By explicitly linking sexual and religious conversion, the ex-gay movement places sexuality at the center of religious identity. The paper discusses how the ex-gay movement’s ideas about gender and sexuality have become critical to policy debates and enabled organizations of the Christian Right to oppose civil rights for gay people and to challenge the legitimacy and construction of a gay identity. Ex-gay programs for men and women use therapy, public testimony, biblical study, homosocial group living and the recuperation of appropriate gender behaviors to change sexuality. Ex-gay men and women learn and perform proper masculine and feminine behaviors in order to cure their original “gender deficits,” yet ex-gay identities, sexual behaviors and desires are often at odds. Most ex-gays emerge from programs with unstable sexual identities. While adamantly opposing genetic arguments for the basis of homosexuality, the ex-gay movement unwittingly presents a queer model of sexuality that emphasizes the ongoing process of religious, gender, and sexual conversion.

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CV:
I have been a PhD Student at the Faculty of History, University of Lund, Sweden since September 2005, working on a research project of the Church of Sweden Mission in South India 1900-1950. I have previously studied in Lund and London, where I received a Fil.Mag in History at Lund University (2004) and an MA in Social Anthropology at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2005). I have also studied at Religious Studies at CTR, University of Lund. My dissertations have concerned travel writing, missionary writing and food culture.

“So much work, so little time”: Letters from a Swedish Missionary Hospital, 1900-1950

Health care have played an important role in many Christian missionary projects and both male and female missionaries have worked with this as a means to fulfil their vision of an ideal society. In South India part of the work of the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM) was formed through the Swedish Mission Hospital in Tirupattur. Within the hospital there were hierarchies and power relations originating in ideas of for example gender and race. Understandings of gender also contributed to forming the attitudes towards and relations between missionary workers and the people treated at the hospital. In letters to parents and missionary friends in Sweden, the colleagues Doctor Kugelberg and Nurse Kerstin Wilcke shared thoughts and experiences of everyday life and work at the hospital in the first part of the 20th century. These letters form a starting point for my discussion of gender and religion within the mission. The paper explores complexities and contradictions of gender practices and ideals within the missionary project of CSM at the hospital and relates them to a general discussion of the social and religious motives of the missionary work.