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## **Decolonization and Theology**

Many times, we hear about colonization, neocolonization, and decolonization without truly understanding what the scholars are discussing. These books are not intended to explain decolonization in its entirety. Instead, I created a list of books as a foundation for understanding decolonization and its crucial role for the church and society. Since colonization affects every culture's social, political, economic, and theological realms, it is essential to hear from diverse voices within and outside the church. Therefore, this list comprises both theologians and non-theologians. I am sure readers will appreciate these writers' works from various parts of the world, as they explain and propose ways to wrestle with the aftermath of colonization within and outside the church.

Understanding that authors write and think about decolonization in many ways is important. Authors such as María Lugones and Walter D. Mignolo write about decolonization as a position for change in the geopolitics of knowledge, i.e., they oppose Western epistemological dominance in knowledge and its production. On the other hand, authors like Frantz Fanon, Anibal Quijano, Kwame Nkrumah, Wa Thiong'o Ngũgĩ, Aimé Césaire, and Homi Bhabha discuss decolonization from a position for a change in the geopolitics of knowledge and decolonial thinking that affect individual thought and practice.

The listed authors belong to the second group because their works incorporate the main ideas of the first group of thinkers. Moreover, their writings reflect their geographical location (Third World countries), immensely influencing their thought, practice, and push for decolonization of the individual and society. The list is divided into three sections:

The first section sets the stage for the effects of colonization on people's psyche (mind) and the need for decolonization for the individual and the society. This section is crucial because it sets the stage for the following sections. The first section is not a repetition of books or memoirs about colonization. Rather, the authors attempt to tell readers that there is a need to decolonize even after political independence from previous colonists and colonizers. It primarily focuses on decolonization in Africa. However, the authors' work echoes other theorists and activists working to decolonize their citizens and countries outside Africa.

The second section deals with decolonization from a Canadian perspective. This section bridges the first and the last sections because the selected authors highlight how individuals and government institutions can learn to rethink what it means to live as settlers in Canada. While this section mainly deals with decolonization in Canada, the issues these authors raise apply to the Native Indians in America, Indigenous peoples in South America, Australia, New Zealand, and other regions of the world.

The third section deals with decolonization from theological perspectives. It is a fitting end to a small but foundational list that should help readers learn what Christians can do, especially in the West, who are colonizer-settlers or offspring, as they live out their Christian faith in the age of the push for decolonization within and outside the Church. It unites authors' works from various parts of the world that rethink the Church in light of Euro-American epistemological dominance within Christianity.

## Understanding the Background, Origin, History, and Expression, and Impacts of Colonialization

**Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markman. London: Pluto Press, 1952.**

It is hard to imagine an author dealing with decolonization issues without mentioning Fanon's writing influence on their lives and works. Frantz Fanon was born on July 20, 1925, in the capital city of Fort-de-France, in the French colony of Martinique. His parents belong to the middle class. Fanon studied under the famous poet and author Aimé Césaire. Césaire's vehement denunciation of colonial racism significantly influenced Fanon.<sup>1</sup> He got recruited to serve France in the French war against Nazi Germany. After the war, he won a scholarship to study medicine and psychiatry because of his heroism.<sup>2</sup> He met and married a French woman, José Dublé, who shared his convictions on racism and colonialism. Fanon's knowledge of psychoanalysis caused him to apply psychoanalysis to study the effect of racism on people, especially the self-perception of black people.<sup>3</sup> He searched for his identity in a racist society. He identified with the other African freedom fighters living in France, seeking allies to support them against French colonialism. He left for Algeria in 1953 when he was offered a job as a psychiatrist, where he would interact with poor people. He witnessed the racist treatment the Algerians received from the French. He studied and helped his patients with group therapy in Algeria.<sup>4</sup>

The book's main argument is that Fanon describes how colonialism and racism corrupt the psyche of white and black people. He writes, "the Negro enslaved by his inferiority (and) the white man enslaved by his superiority behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation."<sup>5</sup> Regarding the colonized, the destruction of their culture and language enforces the assimilation of the colonialist's language and culture.<sup>6</sup> Through the enforcement of the colonialist culture and language, the colonized people were reminded that they had no culture, language, or history. They internalize the colonialist's view of who they are.<sup>7</sup> The racist value system proclaims the superiority of one race against others, making the superiority and inferiority complexes possible.<sup>8</sup> The inferiority complex leads to a loss of identity for white and black people. The colonized want to be like the white people, compare themselves to white people, and prove their existence. However, at the same time, they cannot escape their blackness.<sup>9</sup> The inferiority complex creates a psychological pathology for black people. *Black Skin, White Masks* reads like a relation between autobiography and theory or between individuality and the collective. While Fanon tells the reader his story, he also seeks to convey that other black people have the same experience.

The book's significance compared to others in similar genres and focus is that it served as an inspiration against many anticolonial and antiracist movements worldwide. Moreover, Fanon's

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markman (London: Pluto Press, 1952), vii.

<sup>2</sup> Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*, viii.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., viii-ix.

<sup>5</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Skin*, trans. Charles Markman (London: Pluto Press, 1952), 43.

<sup>6</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Skin*, 9-11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 178-179. Also see Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Groove Press, 1963), chapter 2.

psychological and psychiatric insights have been applied to other countries under colonial and imperial powers.

I recommend this book because it highlights the psychological damage of colonialism on the colonized and their children. Readers will understand how colonialism and racism corrupt the psyche of white and black people. As an important figure in decolonization, I believe readers will understand Fanon's vision, which seeks to heal past wounds and requires that "both [black and white people] must turn their backs on the inhuman voices, which were those of their respective ancestors, so that authentic communication be possible."<sup>10</sup>

**Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963.**

Fanon will be the only author on the list with two books. The book *The Wretched of the Earth* is his most-read book. It has an international audience and has been translated into sixteen languages.<sup>11</sup> He thought exposing colonialism and pushing for decolonization would help free the colonized people. However, he soon realized the newly independent nations still acted as if they were under imperial power and the forces of their former colonizers. Scholars and interpreters of Fanon's work usually consider the book *The Wretched of the Earth* as a follow-up to the first book on this list, *Black Skin, White Mask*. Readers are exposed to postwar Marxism and Existentialism because the book presents a political manifesto against French intellectuals that covers the Cold War, Stalinism, and decolonization efforts.<sup>12</sup> The book's many interpretations appeal to many international audiences. African nationalists, the Bangladesh guerrillas (1971-72), and the Palestinian commandos are among the movements that claimed to have been influenced by the book.

It is difficult to know Fanon's religious affiliation. However, the book permeates Salvationism, albeit from a secular viewpoint.<sup>13</sup> Edmund Burke III writes:

The Wretched of the Earth is a Utopian work, a mighty hymn to the advent of the new man, freed from colonialism, racism, national chauvinism, and class oppression. The book is a spiritual guide for an unspiritual age on achieving revolutionary beatitude. Like a sermon in a Southern Baptist church, The Wretched of the Earth shows us the fires of hell and the glories of the world to come, warns us of the dangers along the way, and encourages us to lend our energies to the work of the Lord. We emerge from the experience transformed, no longer the same men and women.<sup>14</sup>

Reading this book, readers will understand Fanon's urge for decolonization, which implies "an urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation"<sup>15</sup> to liberate the nation and individual psyches.<sup>16</sup> Fanon describes how the colonized population is dehumanized intellectually, morally, and emotionally by the colonizer. For liberation to happen, Fanon argues for transforming our human character and 'the colonized mind.' It is an integral part of Fanon's case for liberation and decolonization. Readers will be exposed to the role of 'violence' in achieving decolonization. While

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Burke III, "Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*," *Daedalus* 105, no. 1 (1976), 127.

<sup>12</sup> Burke III, "Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*," 128.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 233.

other authors could be included in the list, such as Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized*,<sup>17</sup> Edward Said's *Orientalism*,<sup>18</sup> and William Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*,<sup>19</sup> Fanon stands apart because of his intellectual, political, societal, and personal appeals to the readers' psyches and the urge to decolonization among black people.

Fanon's approach is autobiographical and appealing to readers unlike other authors who describe general observations on the effects of colonialism and the urge to decolonize. Fanon's understanding of decolonization includes society and the individual. I have listed only two of Fanon's books because I hope that reading them will encourage readers to delve further into other books and articles written by Fanon or about him.

**Ngũgĩ, Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1986.**

This book seems a natural successor to the books by Frantz Fanon listed above. Wa Thiong'o Ngũgĩ, born James Ngũgĩ on January 5, 1938, is a Kenyan author and academic who studied at the University of Leeds in England. In 1967, he changed his name from James Ngũgĩ to Wa Thiong'o Ngũgĩ because he believed the name James was imposed by the colonist regime in Kenya. Consequently, he renounced writing in English to writing in his native language, Gikuyu, because he argues in the book *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* is an imposition of a foreign language on the colony. He argues that language is a vital tool to the colonizers, and the imposition of foreign language has damaged the image and mind of Africans. There is a link between Fanon and Ngũgĩ: Fanon describes how the destruction of the native language was instrumental in destroying the Africans' minds and images. Ngũgĩ presents a case study of Fanon's analysis in Kenya.

The main argument in the book is that Africans should know that Europe has not stopped stealing resources from Africa. However, now, in the neo-colonial regime, Europe is stealing African minds. He writes:

I criticise the Afro-European (or Euroafrican) choice of our linguistic praxis, it is not to take away from the talent and the genius of those who have written in English, French, or Portuguese. On the contrary, I am lamenting a neo-colonial situation which has meant the European bourgeoisie once again stealing our talents and geniuses as they have stolen our economies. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europe stole art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums; in the twentieth century Europe is stealing the treasures of the mind to enrich their languages and cultures. Africa needs its economy, politics, culture, languages and all its patriotic writers back.<sup>20</sup>

Ngũgĩ says he is ashamed to see that "African countries, as colonies and today as neo-colonies, came to be defined and to define themselves in the languages of Europe: English-speaking,

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<sup>17</sup> Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. by Howard Greenfeld (London: Earthscan Publications, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

<sup>19</sup> William Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1961).

<sup>20</sup> Wa Thiong'o Ngũgĩ, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1986), xii.

French-speaking, or Portuguese-speaking African countries.”<sup>21</sup> Besides that, Africans speak the colonizers’ language, Ngũgĩ also questions why African authors write in a foreign language instead of their local language.

Since language has always been a central topic in colonial and postcolonial studies, Ngũgĩ’s book sparks an academic debate in Kenya. The debate centered on whether the education system in Kenya should be in the colonial language, i.e., English, or if the teachers should teach about their culture and society and then broaden the scope to other East African countries, Africa, the developing world, and, lastly, the rest of the world. He wrote a play to illustrate the desire to teach children in their local language, which resulted in imprisonment. Furthermore, his belief in writing in local languages got him into trouble with Kenya’s regional and federal authorities, and he was exiled. On August 8, 2024, he returned to Kenya, but thieves broke into his high-security apartment, stole his goods, sexually assaulted his wife, and physically assaulted him.<sup>22</sup>

I added this book to the list because it enlightens readers on the importance of language, the preservation of culture (local or imposed), and how changing people’s minds, even when they know the new way of thinking, serves them better than their current frame of thought, is challenging. The book reminds readers the values of our native culture and languages and how we should strive to protect them. Slavery comes in different forms because if a man can speak all the languages in the world but cannot speak his own language, it is slavery.

### **Nkrumah, Kwame, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. New York: International Publishers, 1966**

The book’s author, Kwame Nkrumah, was born on September 21, 1909, in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and died on April 27, 1972, in Bucharest, Romania. He was the president of Ghana after its independence from Britain in 1957 until 1966, when a coup overthrew him.<sup>23</sup> His father was a goldsmith, and his mother was a retail trader. After graduating from college, he became a teacher but was drawn to politics. He went to the United States and enrolled at Lincoln University in 1935. In 1939, he received his master’s degree from Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania. He describes himself as a nondenominational Christian and a Marxist socialist. He became the president of the African Students’ Organization in the United States and Canada.<sup>24</sup> In 1947, he returned to Ghana to become the country’s general secretary. He later formed the Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP) in 1949 to encourage nonviolent protests, noncooperation with the colonial authorities, and strikes.<sup>25</sup> The British colonial authority arrested and imprisoned him for one year. The country held its first general election on February 8, 1951, and the CPP won. As a result of the victory, he was released from prison to head the government. After Ghana’s independence from Britain in March 1957, he became the country’s first prime minister.

According to Nkrumah, “The essence of neocolonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and political policy get directed from outside.”<sup>26</sup> It means that although the neo-

<sup>21</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Decolonizing the Mind*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Maya Jaggi, “Ngugi wa Thiong’o: ‘I Don’t Think We Were Meant to Come Out Alive,’ *The Guardian*, January 22, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/jan/28/featuresreviews.guardianreview13>.

<sup>23</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, *Britannica*, August 28, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kwame-Nkrumah>.

<sup>24</sup> Nkrumah, President of Ghana.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1966), ix.

colonial country is independent, i.e., not under foreign authority, it is nevertheless not an independent country in substance because the essence of neocolonialism is expressed and preserved through its various forms and methods, not necessarily through the collapse of the colonial system after the Second World War.

According to Nkrumah, neocolonialism has replaced colonialism and has become the “main instrument of imperialism.”<sup>27</sup> The force of neocolonialism as the main instrument of imperialism stems from the advancement of science and the market’s need for primary resources that newly independent States have in abundance. The author writes:

The outcropping of new States from colonial submergence raised the pivotal problem of how to retain these countries within the colonial relationship once open control was removed. Thus, has opened up a new phase in imperialism, that of the adaptation of colonialism to the new condition of the elimination of political overlordship of colonial powers, the phase in which colonialism is to be maintained by other means.<sup>28</sup>

This book opens the reader’s eyes. The author exposes the new form of colonialism, i.e., neo-colonialism, in multinational and international sovereignty over the former colonies. The author claims that one struggle against neocolonialism aims to curb the financial power of developed countries so that it impoverishes the less developed countries. One can only imagine the book’s impact. After publication in 1965, it caused so much uproar in the United States that the U.S. sent a letter of protest to the author, Nkrumah. As a result of the book’s publication, the \$25 million in American aid to Ghana was immediately cancelled. The book will help readers understand the principle behind neocolonialism, why former colonies were divided into small, non-viable states incapable of independent development, and why they must continually rely on the financial backing and military/defence power of their former imperial leaders and colonizers. This book exposes the imperial and colonial powers in modernity.

Fanon’s two books have shown how colonialism affects the society, history, culture, identity, and language of the colonized and provide ample evidence of its impact on the minds of colonized people. Ngũgĩ provides an example of decolonizing the mind through preserving language and culture within the Kenyan education system. Nkrumah’s book argues that while decolonization might be the aim, it warns against neocolonialism’s essence in the form of imperialism, which subjects the ex-colonies to obey. In the second book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon echoes similar concerns about the greed that bureaucrats engage in in newly independent States. Ngũgĩ provides an example of how the decolonization Fanon describes in his works might work within the education system. Nkrumah argues that decolonization projects should be aware of new forms of colonialism, i.e., neocolonialism affecting newly independent States.

### Understanding Decolonization from Canadian Perspectives

**Manuel, Arthur. *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, Publishers, 2017.**

Arthur Manuel was born on September 30, 1951, in Kamloops, BC, and died on January 11, 2017. He was a Secwépemc leader and activist advocating for Indigenous Rights in Canada and

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<sup>27</sup> Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

worldwide. He experienced discrimination when he attended the controversial residential school in Kamloops, Cranbrook, and Mission.<sup>29</sup> He served 30 days in Spy Hill Jail because he couldn't pay the \$25 fine for riding his railcar. In 1972, he led 350 young Indigenous activists as the elected president of the National Native Youth Association. He was involved in international organizations. Most importantly, he argued against the Doctrine of Discovery that colonizers and churches used as justification to occupy Indigenous land at the United Nations. It led many governments and corporations to legitimize the Indigenous Treaty Rights and Land Titles.<sup>30</sup>

He completed the book, *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy*, a few months before he died. The book's main thesis is to inform readers about what Indigenous people all over the world fight for: The Aboriginal title and rights, self-determination, and a better future for Indigenous people in Canada and worldwide. Readers will be humbled to know the shameful history of Canada, the colonization of Indigenous land and people, and the truth about government relations with Indigenous people that is not read in academic textbooks.

While the book may seem painful to read, it is nevertheless, an excellent introduction to how Canadian governments try to reconcile relations with Indigenous peoples. Manuel explains how governments work hard to reconcile the relationship with Indigenous people without touching the essential colonial structures dominating and distorting the relationship. This book exposes readers to the current state of land claims in Canada and persistent racism among non-Indigenous people and institutions toward Indigenous people. This book helps readers understand that for genuine reconciliation between the government and Indigenous people, the governments must recover the land and rebuild the economy for Indigenous people.

The author argues for nonviolent resistance to neocolonialism. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, scholars debate whether Fanon advocates for violence or not. Manuel advocates nonviolent resistance because recovering the land is an inalienable right of Indigenous people and integral to their health and well-being. The author describes the violence by the Canadian and provincial governments in quieting those who oppose the recovery of Indigenous Land.

**Datta, Ranjan, ed. *Decolonization in Practice: Reflective Learning from Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2023.**

This book is an edited collection that discusses how individuals can take responsibility for learning and practicing the meaning of decolonization from diverse, cross-cultural (Indigenous, Black, immigrant, and refugee) communities. Each chapter aims to encourage readers to engage in a lifelong learning, unlearning, and relearning process of decolonization. It is a thought-provoking and timely survey of community-based decolonization practices.

The book's authors' main questions are: "How do we understand antiracist practice as a framework for reconciliation?" "How can we identify areas of obstacle and opportunity?" and "How can we take responsibility for decolonizing our ways of knowing and acting?" These questions respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's assertion that meaningful engagement

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<sup>29</sup> John Boyko, "Arthur Manuel," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 10, 2024, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/arthur-manuel>.

<sup>30</sup> Boyko, "Arthur Manuel."

among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in advancing reconciliation through antiracist solidarity is vital.

Each chapter's authors encourage readers to think critically about their roles in decolonization, enabling them to take responsibility for reshaping the narratives and structures passed down to us by colonialism.

One difference between this book and the previous one on the list is that it offers a comprehensive approach to understanding decolonization by harmonizing common theoretical concepts from various perspectives. Readers will understand how to incorporate Indigenous community reflections on decolonization in practice (Part 1), understand what lesson we can learn from racialized immigrant women and children (Part 2), learn decolonization in practice from settler refugees and disabled community (Part 3), emerge in Black and Asian community reflections on decolonization (Part 4), and lastly, incorporate an antiracist community reflection of decolonization in practice (Part 5).

The book aims to encourage readers to incorporate a sustained commitment to a diverse range of tools to fight new forms of colonialism in bureaucratic hurdles, systemic obstacles, and resistance from established colonial structures. The book will help students, policymakers, educators, local and federal governments, and anyone interested in learning about decolonization deepen their knowledge about the need for decolonization in practice.

### **The Urge to Decolonize Christianity**

**Drexler-Dreis, Joseph. *Decolonial Theology in the North Atlantic World*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.**

The first two sections of the review focused on understanding decolonization and its practice within society. The following section deals with decolonization in practice within the church. The first author on this list is Joseph Drexler-Dreis. He is an Assistant Professor of Theology at Xavier University of Louisiana. His research focuses on liberation theology, the (in)significance of work and creativity within late capitalism, Christianity and racial capitalism, and political theology.<sup>31</sup>

The book, *Decolonial Theology in the North Atlantic World*, responds to the historical situation in the North Atlantic. The author argues on the same line of thought as previous authors on this list that coloniality refers to:

To these power relations and to indicate that they persist beyond the end of “colonialism” as a formal political system. Coloniality is the hidden underside of Western modernity, providing its material and epistemic possibilities. Referring to modernity with intellectual honesty and responsibility also requires accounting for its concealed underside of coloniality. Decolonial theorists thus use the terms “modernity/coloniality” or “colonial matrix of power” to refer to what, from a Eurocentric perspective, is generally termed “modernity.” The decolonial perspective and terminology unveil the colonial constitution of modernity.<sup>32</sup>

The author writes, “While modernity has confined itself to European thoughts and analysis, the decolonial theorists aim to unearth other options of thinking, living, and acting beyond the

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<sup>31</sup> Joseph Drexler-Dreis, Xavier University of Louisiana, September 5, 2024, <https://www.xula.edu/directory/people/jdrexler.html>

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Theology in the North Atlantic World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 2.

constraints of modernity/coloniality.”<sup>33</sup> The author aims to provide decolonial perspectives we can incorporate into our responses to modern/colonial structures and power relations. The author argues that decolonial theory offers critical perspectives aimed at ending the modern/colonial world system because, as it currently stands, European traditions do not make room for other historical reflections on God from non-European traditions. This book aims to liberate the readers from the monopoly of modern/colonial ways and encourage social transformation. Readers will constantly be exposed to the diverse aspects of liberation theology as it intersects with decolonization. Drexler-Dreis argues that the epistemic distortion decolonial theology brings resists the substitution of God for a Eurocentric idea. On the other hand, Drexler-Dreis believes decolonial theology will allow Christians to situate freedom in relation to the divine reality beyond the limitations that modern/colonial significations impose.

**Foster, Elizabeth, and Greenberg, Udi, eds. *Decolonization and the Remaking of Christianity*. 1st ed. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023.**

This is the second edited volume on the list. I included the book because it offers diverse perspectives on the role of the colonial epistemic framework within Christianity and on how Christianity is gradually shifting away from its Eurocentric model. The editors, Elizabeth Foster and Udi Greenberg, argue that until 1960, Europe and America largely dominated Christianity. Therefore, they were considered the centers of Christianity.<sup>34</sup> However, after independence, anti-colonial movements impacted how many third-world countries view their relationship with Europe and America. The colonial movement led Indigenous Christians to reinvent Christianity to better serve their people.

Unlike the previous book on the list, this edited volume links the first section, which deals with secular theorists of decolonization, like Fanon, Nkrumah, and Ngũgĩ. The edited book volume did not leave any stone unturned, as it describes the postcolonial struggles and the effects of decentering Christianity from Europe and America. For instance, one author, Justin Reynolds, argues that the Protestant ecumenical leaders in the 50s and 60s accepted secularism because of the decline of religion in the West.<sup>35</sup> Reynolds writes, “Protestants embraced secularization in response to decolonization and to co-opt the politics of self-determination to their advantage, at a moment when they could no longer depend on the support of colonial governments.”<sup>36</sup> By accepting secularism into Christianity, ecumenical leaders redefine Christianity so that it accepts and includes non-Western Christians, which is what the book’s authors mean by decolonization of Christianity. This decolonization allows for the diversity and contextualization of Christianity to meet the needs of local people. The authors omitted Pentecostalism (prayer and healing houses) and how this movement took hold of third-world Christianity. However, this book is relevant to those interested in knowing more about the efforts and movements to decolonize Christianity.

This book traces the shift from the Western imperial and colonial heritage of Christianity to the demographic change from the Global South. The book unearths the roots of decolonization across five continents and illustrates how diverse new ideas, rituals, and organizations emerged, shaping a new Christianity for a postcolonial world. The book may be challenging. However, I

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<sup>33</sup> Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Theology*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Foster and Udi Greenberg, eds, *Decolonization and the Remaking of Christianity*. 1st ed (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Justin Reynolds, “Apostles of Secularization: The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of Postcolonial Protestantism in the 1950s and 1960s,” in *Decolonization and the Remaking of Christianity*. 1st ed (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023), 13.

<sup>36</sup> Reynolds, “Apostles of Secularization,” 14.

encourage you to read it from a historical viewpoint, as it showcases colonization's influence on Christianity and how decolonization strives to undo the imperialist and colonialist ideas in historical Christianity. In addition to the book, an introductory text to decolonizing Christianity, it is helpful for interdisciplinary fields, such as postcolonial, Black, African, and religious studies, history, and anthropology.

**Enns, Elaine, and Myers, Ched. *Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2021.**

Elaine Enns is a Canadian Mennonite, educator, author, and facilitator in conflict transformation.<sup>37</sup> She completed her Doctor of Ministry degree in 2015. For over thirty years, she has focused on how restorative justice applies to historical violations, including intergenerational traumas.<sup>38</sup> She writes about trauma survivors inside and outside Canada, hoping that her personal and political efforts to bring restorative justice will bring individual and collective healing. Ched Myers is an ecumenical activist, theologian, educator, and author. For over 45 years, he has been committed to nurturing church renewal and radical discipleship, and to supporting peace and justice through faith-based movements.<sup>39</sup> He holds an M.A. in New Testament studies. As a married couple, Enns and Myers co-authored the book *Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization*.

Elaine chronicles her Mennonite family narrative by examining North America's oldest and deepest injustice. The book is partly a memoir, a historical, social, and theological analysis, and a practical handbook inviting settler Christians into decolonization discipleship. The book is a sequel to their impressive two-volume *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*. As a memoir, this book brings a personal lens to how trauma from the past, including the colonized and present systemic injustice, can affect generations if not dealt with.

The questions the authors attempt to answer are: "Does continuing Indigenous dispossession haunt our histories, landscapes, and communities? How do we transform our colonizing self-perceptions, lifeways, and structures? And how might we practice restorative solidarity with Indigenous communities today?"

Enn argues that instead of being complicit in others' trauma, we can dismantle the myths of innocence, destiny, and settlers' rights through the restorative healing journey they are currently on. They questioned the old story the Mennonites shared about how they arrived in a new land and worked hard without acknowledging the privileges they enjoyed there. Myers said the Mennonites may not have co-opted into the genocidal Canadian project, unlike the Catholics and Anglicans. However, they were nevertheless without fault in the genocide of Indigenous people in Canada. Unlike other books in this section, the authors argue that restorative healing/solidarity is key to decolonization. Restorative healing rejects the temptation to ignore history. It includes the desire for justice, which seeks the correct relationship between the Indigenous people and settlers. This book adds another layer to Manuel Arthur's quest for truth and reconciliation in Canada and worldwide. It echoes Fanon's psychoanalysis of colonialism and the new humanity Fanon seeks. The authors argue that we can all heal from wounds (inward and outward) of our personal and political lives

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<sup>37</sup> "BCM Staff," Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://www.bcm-net.org/about/bcm-staff#>.

<sup>38</sup> Elaine Enn's Life and Activism," Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://chedmyers.org/elaine-enns-life-activism/>

<sup>39</sup> "BCM Staff," Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries.

through the decolonization journey. I encourage you to read this book as it illustrates decolonization from a Mennonite perspective.

**Ezigbo, Victor. *Introducing Christian Theologies: Voices from Global Christian Communities*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2013.**

Victor Ezigbo is a Nigerian professor of Biblical and Theological Studies. He has studied on three continents (Nigeria, Africa, Scotland, Europe, and the United States of America, North America), and he has learned diverse Christian expressions. He is the founder and president of the Center for Research in Global Christianity. In the book, the key question the author attempts to answer is: “Should Christianity’s theological face remain largely European and North American in the twenty-first century in the wake of the expansion of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America?” As the church expands beyond European and North American shores, the author carefully describes the differing views within global Christianity, drawing on numerous contemporary theologians from other continents. This book adds to the growing literature on decolonizing Christianity.

Ezigbo stretches theologians with other views that challenge classical theological interpretations. He brings the voice of Black, liberation, feminist theologies, and more. He notes that other non-European voices can contribute to understanding God. Other books in this section have addressed the desire to include other non-European voices in the discourse on theology. Ezigbo writes about major issues around the nature of God, humanity, and the Bible, challenging the strengths and weaknesses of European epistemology. His writing style includes wide-ranging questions, ideas, and objectives to help readers understand theology through a conversational discourse.

The book is a useful tool for those wanting to understand theological concepts from a biblical and historical angle, and for theology to recognize the need to listen to global voices (i.e., beyond Euro-American voices). Ezigbo brings urgency to the readers. This book is an introductory textbook to understanding the need to decolonize Christianity and offers fresh insight into Christian theology by highlighting non-Western voices. I encourage readers to read both volumes to understand the works of those working to decolonize Christianity from Euro-American monopoly in the twenty-first century.

### Conclusion

There are many books to add to each section. This review is not meant to be a complete review of all the books and works on decolonization. For section one, I could have added books such as *Discourse on Colonialism, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Things Fall Apart, The Souls of Black Folk*, and *Orientalism*. For section two, I could have added books, such as *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call, Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada, Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, and *The Inconvenient Indian*. For the third section, I could have added books, such as *God of the Oppressed, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, Grace and Humanness: Theological Reflections Because of Culture*, and *The Bible and African Culture: Mapping Transactional Inroads*.

The ten books included in this review are a gateway to reading others about decolonizing the church and society, not included in this review. This review’s aim is not to review all the books and works about decolonization because that would be an enormous task beyond the review’s scope. However, the ten books reviewed represent the works of theorists, activists, and theologians regarding decolonizing the church and society. The hope is that readers will engage with the

reviewed authors' works, whose books are not included on the list as they decolonize the mind and practice.

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