This symposium, which has emerged from an October 2011 meeting held at the Catholic Theological Union (Chicago), brings together thirty-five contributors (fifteen of them members of the Maryknoll Society) to commemorate and reflect on a century of mission work carried out by Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Sisters, and lay missionaries in more than forty countries. Frontier missions, often in out-of-the-way places, shaped the Maryknoll ethos and identity. The contributors include such well known church leaders and writers as Stephen Bevans, Cardinal Francis George, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Peter Phan, Barbara Reid, and Robert Schreiter. A good deal of explicit interaction between the chapters enlivens the book.

Over the last one hundred years, the church and the world have changed greatly. The Maryknoll story falls into two almost equal parts, the first leading up to Vatican II (1962–65) and the second following the council. We could also divide this century-long story politically and economically, with reference to the colonial and the post-colonial world. The Maryknoll enterprise rejoices in its martyrs (in Guatemala, El Salvador, Korea, and elsewhere). It now copes with fresh thinking about how to follow a missionary vocation in continents where it has long been active: Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and beyond. The contributors face the new challenges thrown up by millions of migrants and refugees, the scourge of human trafficking, the need for peacemaking in countries torn apart by war and injustice, the hostility of some radical forms of Islam, the peremptory call to care for the planet earth, the inculturation of the gospel, and the proclamation and dialogue that characterize much contemporary evangelization.

What enhances the value of this work in collaboration is its persistent experiential quality. Too often reflection on the church's missionary vocation has come from theologians and other scholars who operate ‘from above.’ The Gift of Mission remains largely a study ‘from below,’ enriched by the experience and first-hand knowledge of those who have lived through achievements and failures and now from a variety of cultural and religious perspectives probe the present and future meaning, nature, and function of missionary activity.

Phan is particularly good at portraying the changes that have shaped the Catholic and Christian mission under Communist-socialist regimes in China, Myanmar, North Korea, and Vietnam. Others provide vivid insights into missionary activity in Latin America and Africa. Sally Ninham's very recent Ten
African Cardinals (Gracewing, 2013) adds to that picture through her probing interviews with church leaders across sub-Saharan Africa.

Here and there qualifications are called for. First, to claim that in the institutional church ‘until 1900 the only accepted form of religious life was monastic or cloistered’ (p. 23; emphasis added) ignores the active apostolic vocation of various institutes: for instance, the Sisters of St Joseph in Australia. Their educational mission sometimes took them, even in groups of two or three, to children in the outback and other marginalized groups. Second, major commentaries on Mark’s Gospel (e.g. by Joel Markus) and other gospel studies (including my own Jesus: A Portrait [Darton, Longman, and Todd]) would modify the claim that Jesus was simply ‘certain’ that ‘his mission was only for the Israelites’ (p. 57). Third, apropos of the appearances of the risen Christ, in some places Mary Magdalene is named as the first to see him (Matthew 28:9–10; Mark 16:9; John 20:11–18) and in other places Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34; and by implication Mark 16:7). Here the New Testament preserves ‘two strands of tradition’, rather than implies ‘struggles’ over primacy in proclaiming the Gospel (p. 148). Fourth, to comment that in Luke 24:9–11 women speak only ‘to be disbelieved’ (ibid.) slides over the fact that Luke obviously intends readers to grasp that ‘the eleven and all the others’ were hopelessly wrong in not accepting the women’s testimony to the resurrection. Fifth, Romans 16:7 can be translated as Junia (and one should add, Andronicus, presumably her husband) being ‘notable among the apostles’ (pp. 147–48). But the phrase may also be rendered as ‘notable in the eyes of the apostles.’

Several non-controversial positions emerge in the course of the book. First, the entire Christian church and every local church has a missionary vocation. Dana Robert, in the spirit of ‘if it’s not local, it’s not real,’ emphasises building ‘a new generation of missioners from the ground up,’ by focusing ‘on parish level, lay mission formation’ (p. 101). Second, the new communications media offer unprecedented possibilities for proclamation to and dialogue with ‘the others’. These possibilities should be acted on, even more than what currently happens. Third, whatever form it takes, Christian mission must be grounded in prayer; missionary activity should be integrated with contemplation. Fourth, while it includes evangelization, mission remains a more extensive reality and responsibility.

Robert fears that the Catholic Church and other traditional Western churches have ‘downplayed conversion’ in favour of other ‘mission practices’. In the book under review we hear much of these practices, often collaborative projects aimed at creating a just and compassionate world. More than ever authentic human development remains unquestionably a missionary task for all Christians. Nevertheless, as Robert points out, downplaying the