



Sister Churches: American Congregations and Their Partners Abroad

Janel Kragt Bakker

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The growth of Christianity in the global South and the fall of colonialism in the middle of the twentieth century caused a crisis in Christian mission, as many southern Christians spoke out about indignities they had suffered and many northern Christians retreated from the global South. American Christians soon began looking for a fresh start, a path forward that was neither isolationist nor domineering. Out of this dream the "sister church" model of mission was born. Rather than western churches sending representatives into the "mission field," they established congregation-to-congregation partnerships with churches in the global South.

Janel Kragt Bakker draws on extensive fieldwork and interviews with participants in these partnerships to explore the sister church movement and in particular its effects on American churches. Because Christianity is numerically and in many ways spiritually stronger in the global South than it is in the global North--while the imbalance in material resources runs in the opposite direction--both northern and southern Christians stand to gain. Challenging prevailing notions of friction between northern and southern Christians, Bakker argues that sister church relationships are marked by interconnectivity and collaboration.

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