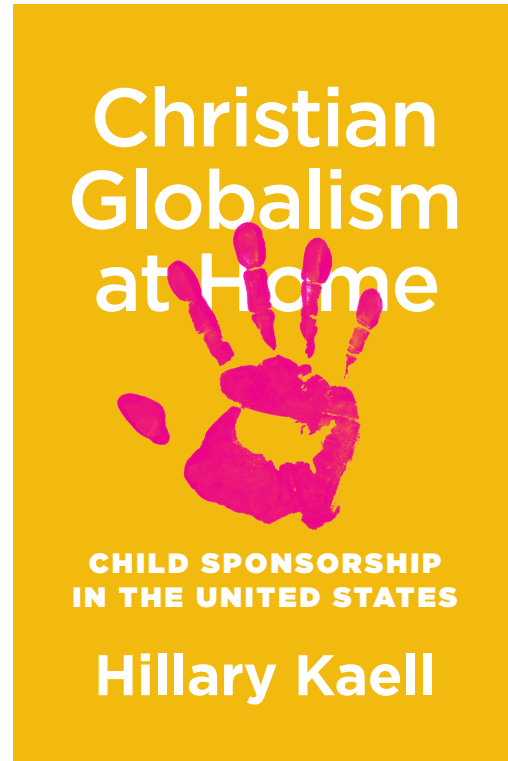


Christian Globalism at Home: Child Sponsorship in the United States

Quick Guide: Syllabus Ideas

It can be difficult to incorporate new material into a syllabus. To make the task a little easier, I have prepared this brief guide to teaching *Christian Globalism at Home*. Professors could pull out one topic and slot it into a pre-existing course or choose a few topics and cluster them to assign the book as a whole. *Christian Globalism at Home* lends itself well to courses on religion and culture in North America, especially in units related to humanitarianism and NGOs, race and missionary work, global connections, para-church organizing, or capitalism and consumption. It would also make a good North American case study for a course on any of the more specific topics listed below, such as Religion & the Body, Global Movements, or Religion & Politics. I have organized this document so that each topic includes a suggestion for which parts of the book are most relevant, along with a “Key idea” section that highlights major themes and questions. Each topic ends by linking it to others in this document, which offer more potential frameworks to consider, along with suggestions for between 3 and 5 companion

pieces to assign. I have limited these sources to some of those found in the book’s bibliography (of course, there are many other excellent possibilities well beyond what is cited). For the purpose of this guide, I have generally included only the most relevant monograph from each author. Articles or online pieces may be better suited to teaching, and many of the authors listed have published their ideas in a more succinct form (some of which are also in the book’s bibliography). I have also included each source just once, though it may suit multiple topics. The “supplementary” pieces are shorter articles I have published on material not found in the book.



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1/ Global Movements

Sections of the book: Throughout, especially Introduction, chapters 2 and 7

Key ideas:

This topic connects to the primary theme in the book: U.S. Christian sponsors, like many other globally-minded people, work to produce and re-produce a global subjectivity. One way to approach the topic might be for students to compare how anthropologists and other scholars have tracked a variety of “oneness” ideologies, in religions (e.g. Christianity or Islam), but also in contexts such as ecological activism or the United Nations. Ask students to consider what are these particular forms of “oneness,” how they are mobilized, and why they are powerful. The discussion could then turn to the level of individual self-making: how does the book show the process of “being global” in sponsors’ everyday lives? Why does the book talk about this process as wavering in intensity? A good way to approach this topic with undergraduates might include discussing the role of technology (chapter 7), and more particularly social media. The book’s case study is also an entry point for courses more explicitly designed around Protestant global connections and commitments. One might also use this material as a jumping off point to compare the approach of Protestants and Catholics to “oneness” at theological and institutional levels, using certain aspects of the book (e.g. sections of chapters 5, 6, and 7). *This topic connects to “Religion and the Body” and “Gift and Exchange.”*

Companion Pieces:

- Harri Englund, “Universal Africa,” *CODESRIA Bulletin* 33 (2005): 2–15.
- Liisa Malkki, “Citizens of Humanity: Internationalism and the Imagined Community of Nations.” *Diaspora* 3, 1 (1994): 41–68.
- Martijn Oosterbaan, “Virtually Global: Online Evangelical Cartography.” *Social Anthropology* 19, 1 (2011): 56–73.
- Anna L. Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, 2005.
- Robert Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*. California, 2009.

2/ Humanitarianism, Charity, NGOs

Sections of the book: Throughout, especially Chapters 3 and 6

Key ideas:

What are “NGOs” and “humanitarians”? When did these categories arise and how do they interact with “charity” and “philanthropy”? There are many points of entry into this topic. One is to focus on the 1910s-1920s and the first major turn to humanitarian relief work (Chapter 3). Students might consider how liberal/progressive Christians in this period participated in relief work and self-defined vis-à-vis missions and other people/religions in the world. Another way to approach the topic is from a contemporary standpoint. Ask students to consider what defines NGO work. How is it portrayed to donors? How does it operate on the ground? A key debate in this respect is whether humanitarian work is “political” and ultimately a Western invention and imposition on people elsewhere. Another important issue in scholarship on humanitarian fundraising, and child sponsorship in particular, is whether it is justified to use poverty imagery (sometimes called “poverty porn”) to attract donors. For students, this topic can lead to an important and lively ethical debate about whether the end justifies the means. *This topic connects to “Capitalism,” “Gift & Exchange,” “Religion & Politics” and “Child Sponsorship.”*

Companion pieces:

- Heather Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid*. Harvard, 2018.
- Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. California, 2011.
- Britt Halvorson, *Conversionary Sites: Transforming Medical Aid and Global Christianity from Madagascar to Minnesota*. Chicago, 2018.
- Liisa Malkki, *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism*. Duke, 2015.
- Peter Redfield, "Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis." *Cultural Anth.* 20, 3 (2005): 328–61.

3/ Gifts & Exchange

Sections of the book: Chapters 4 (sections), 5, 6 and Interlude 2

Key ideas:

Gifts and exchange are classic topics in anthropology, and can be used to explore contemporary forms of charity and humanitarianism. An interesting possibility is to discuss the concept of a "free gift" and then ask students to consider whether sponsorship is promoted to home audiences as such (the book argues that it is not: it is promoted as a "relationship"). From there, one might encourage students to dig into how sponsors view the possibilities their actions promote and foreclose. How do they define 'relationship' in the context of sponsorship? Are they aware of the limits of global relationship building? An added theme could be the role of prayer: how do Christian sponsors and organizations understand prayer as a gift to others in need? Is it integral to Christian 'exchange' globally? A further theme on the topic relates to the cultural burden placed on U.S. women to be the primary vectors for gift exchange, relationship building, and religious adherence. *This topic connects to "Capitalism" or "Religion and Gender."*

Companion pieces:

- Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*. Cambridge, 2000.
- Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* [1925]. Translated by W. D. Halls. London: Norton, 2000.
- Joseph Webster, "Praying for Salvation: A Map of Relatedness." *Religion* 47, 1 (2017): 19–34.

4/ Capitalism, Economy, Consumerism

Sections of the book: Chapters 2, 5, 6

Key ideas:

How are religion/morality and capitalism intermeshed? The book opens possibilities for thinking about this question at the level of individual practice and in institutions. Using the first chapters, guide students towards understanding how charitable "systematic giving" arose out of early capitalism and was connected to the emergence of a bourgeois class (Chapter 2). They might also consider how charity abroad was linked to colonization (which was also linked to the development of capitalism). At the level of individual self-making, a productive method of engaging students is to ask them how they perceive consumerism and then to unpack how Christian sponsors have conceived of themselves and their country as susceptible to the 'sin' of materialism (Chapter 5). Gendered dimensions form a key

sub-theme with respect to how middle-class women's charity was often seen to "cleanse" the money that men made outside the home. At the level of institutions, students can explore what anthropologists mean by 'audit culture,' and why it comes about. Using sponsorship as a case study, examine how contemporary Christian organizations create particular cultures of audit and trust within their own organization and with their supporters (Chapter 6). *This topic connects to "Humanitarianism" or "Gifts & Exchange."*

Companion pieces:

- Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*. Alcuin, 2005.
- James G. Carrier and Peter G. Luetchford, eds. *Ethical Consumption: Social Value and Economic Practice*. Berghahn, 2012.
- Andrea Muehlebach, *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, 2012.
- Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* [1907]. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. Routledge, 1978.
- Marilyn Strathern, ed. *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*. Routledge, 2000.
- Caitlin Zaloom, "The Evangelical Financial Ethic: Doubled Forms and the Search for God in the Economic World." *American Ethnologist* 43, 2 (2016): 325–38.

5/ Race & Pluralism

Sections of book: Chapters 1, 2, 4 (sections of chapters 3 and 7)

Key ideas:

The entanglement of religion and race is crucial in the United States and this topic offers students an opportunity to connect domestic and global trends in a fundamental way. This topic is set up to be more historical, but it could easily provide a jumping off point for contemporary discussions. A way to begin might be to ask students to trace changing definitions of "race" in the book and clarify its role in how Christian sponsors imagine the possibilities or limitations of global relationships. Students might be encouraged to discuss the book's terminology, such as "kin-like relations" and "racialized": why are these terms used and what do they clarify or occlude? Within the structure of the book, this topic is easily divided into the nineteenth century (Chapters 1-2) and the mid-twentieth century (Chapter 4). If a course could accommodate it, comparing both periods (and later chapters) would help students identify change over time. In the early chapters, students might consider how religious categories can be racialized, such as the nineteenth-century use of the term "heathen." How do these racial/religious categories come to feel real for sponsors at home through what the book calls "bodily techniques"? What assumptions do sponsorship promoters and donors have about their own society (related to sin, civility, etc.) and how did they use these ideas to make sense of other people? If instructors focus on a comparison over time or on the later period, students might also weigh how "race" connects to the conception of a single Creator. In Chapter 4, students can carefully consider "happy diversity" images, which are undoubtedly familiar to them and ask how Christians connect such imagery to an ideal of differently 'raced' people under one God. The discussion may turn to a big ethical question: do such images create harm or good? Students will likely vary significantly in their responses. Using chapter 4, instructors can also push students to consider how "white" people are racialized, though it is rarely announced as such. How did white sponsors in the mid-century United States make themselves into people with "capacity" (as per Jasbir Puar)? How does this connect to individual identities and to a "national" identity for mid-century "America"? *This topic connects to "Humanitarianism," "Religion & Politics," "Cold War" or "Religion & the Body."*

Companion Pieces:

- Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth A. McAlister, eds. *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, Oxford, 2004.
- Eric Lott, *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Oxford, 2013.
- Kathryn Gin Lum, "The Historyless Heathen, the Stagnating Pagan, and the Worship of Change Over Time," *Religion and American Culture*, 28, 1 (2018): 52-91.
- Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Duke, 2007.
- Amit Rai, *The Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race, and Power, 1750–1850*. Palgrave, 2002.

6/ Cold War Morality

Sections of the book: Chapters 4 and 5

Key ideas:

Donors' experience of Cold War sponsorship was defined by the intimate configurations of home and family. The main idea students explore through this topic concerns how a moral framework was superimposed on the Cold War. They might be prompted to explore how this conception of a moral America helped fuel relief and rescue work abroad (including 'child rescue' and transnational adoption). What were some critiques of America's role abroad and image as a moral nation, from people within and outside of U.S. Christianity? How did these critiques take up the two major issues of racism and consumerism? *This topic connects to "Capitalism," "Para-church," "Gender" or "Religion & Politics."*

Companion Pieces:

- Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century*. Harvard, 2015.
- Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War*. Oxford, 2011.
- Sarah Miller-Davenport, "'Their Blood Shall Not Be Shed in Vain': American Evangelical Missionaries and the Search for God and Country in Post-World War II Asia." *Journal of American History* 9, no. 4 (2013): 1109–32.
- Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption*. Stanford, 2015.

7/ "Para-church" Christianity

Sections of the book: Introduction, chapters 3, 4, 6

Key ideas:

Since the 1950s, Christians in the U.S. have developed innovative organizational models, notably in the creation of ecumenical "para-church" organizations that work across traditional denominations. Child sponsorship organizations, such as World Vision or Christian Children's Fund, are a good example of this trend. Students of U.S. Christianity can use sponsorship as a case study through which to explore who was driving this trend and identify some of its early characteristics. Why was para-church fundraising so attractive to organizations? What were the difficulties involved for promoters like J. Calvitt Clarke at CCF? Students might also be encouraged to discuss terminology in the book, such as "non-denominational," "interdenominational" and "non-sectarian." In what era did Christians use these terms and why? *This topic connects to "Capitalism" and "Cold War."*

Companion Pieces:

- David P. King, *God's Internationalists: World Vision and the Age of Evangelical Humanitarianism*. Pennsylvania, 2019.
- Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals*. Oxford, 2018.
- David R. Swartz, "Embodying the Global Soul: Internationalism and the American Evangelical Left." *Religions* 3 (2012): 887–901.
- Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II*. Princeton, 1990.
- Supplementary: Hillary Kaell, "On the Genesis of a Billion-Dollar Idea: Child Sponsorship in Missionary and Humanitarian Fundraising." Please email for a copy.

8/ Religion & Politics

Sections of the book: Throughout, especially chapter 3

Key ideas:

The book examines how people at home become convinced of certain priorities for overseas engagement. Within a course on politics, students might be asked to consider how this kind of ground-up study can enhance our understanding of people's political commitments. What might it add to larger survey data about attitudes or voting patterns? A lively class debate could also center on whether humanitarianism is a type of politics, though child sponsorship organizations consider their activities "not political"? For undergraduates in particular, instructors might ask students to discuss if the imagery in child sponsorship is political, though they might not have initially seen it as such. These debates raise questions about whether humanitarian work ultimately a Western invention and an imposition on people elsewhere. There is no clear answer, of course, but students will benefit from considering the question. *This topic connects to "Global Movements," "Humanitarianism," "Race & Pluralism" and "Cold War."*

Companion pieces:

- Erica Bornstein, *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe*. Routledge, 2003.
- James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minnesota, 1994.
- David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World But Changed America*. Princeton, 2017.
- Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights*. Pennsylvania, 2015.

9/ Missions, Colonialism, U.S. Empire

Sections of the book: chapters 1 and 2, Interlude 1, chapter 7 (sections)

Key ideas:

Nineteenth-century foreign missionaries transmitted significant information to audiences at home. This topic can help students better understand aspects of this communication. Encourage students to discuss what assumptions sponsorship promoters and donors had about their own society (related to

sin, civility, etc.) and how they used these ideas to make sense of other people. What kinds of emotions were missionary writers trying to stoke in home audiences? This discussion would benefit from the inclusion of readings that discuss how missionaries expressed similar concepts and ideas to foreign people. Students could compare how missionary actions and ideas in the field resembled or differed from what was being transmitted to sponsors at home. They might further ask how the concept of “America” was being transmitted at home and abroad. Another theme flips the script on missions, moving away from a focus on missionaries as the primary actors to consider how people at home—notably women—advocated for increased involvement and control of missions. Encourage students to consider the interactions between missionaries, missionary boards, and donors as a dynamic conversation, from the perspective of people at home. *This topic connects to “Global Movements,” “Race & Pluralism,” and “Gender.” For anthropological approaches, I have included Stoler and the Comaroffs, which could be paired with more recent work on missions.*

Companion Pieces:

- John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago, 1991.
- Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic*. Cornell, 2015.
- Ussama S. Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*. Cornell, 2008.
- Claire McLisky, Daniel Midena, and Karen Vallgarda, eds. *Emotions and Christian Missions: Historical Perspectives*. Palgrave, 2015.
- Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. California, 2002.

10/ Religion & Gender

Sections of the book: Introduction, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 (sections), and Interlude 1

Key ideas:

Women have been the primary target market for child sponsorship since its inception two centuries ago. Ask students to reflect on how and why this particular kind of overseas outreach was considered necessary and attractive for women. Has this conception changed over time and, if so, how? In what ways did sponsorship promoters construct ideas about ‘moral motherhood’ in the United States and abroad? How was this tied to what the book calls Love/love? Do similar ideas about family structure and family love continue to inflect child sponsorship today? In the contemporary period, instructors can guide students to reflect on subtle differences between Catholic and evangelical sponsors in this respect. The book does not explicitly tackle gender as category, although it plays a role throughout. As a result, it might be useful to assign companion pieces that are more firmly grounded in gender and sexuality studies. *This topic connects to “Religion & the Body” or aspects of “Cold War.”*

Companion Pieces:

- Todd M. Brenneman, *Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism*. Oxford, 2014.
- Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity” in *Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

- Supplementary: Hillary Kaell, “A Touch of Love: The Global Aspirations of U.S. Catholics.” Please email for a copy.

11/ Religion & the Body

Sections of the book: Introduction, chapters 2, 3, 6, 7 (sections), Interlude 2.

Key ideas:

The book focuses on how embodied practices and sensations produce global subjectivities. Many Christian sponsors are attuned to what their bodies seem to tell them about people far away, including through specific types of performativity. Drawing on ideas in the “Global Movements” topic, ask students to consider how bodies are used to reify “oneness” and hoped for connections through a single Creator. Using sponsorship as a case study, students can historicize how the body has been used as a tool for making global connections, paying careful attention to the role of Western Protestant conceptions of self, which then inform commitments abroad. A different approach to this topic would ask students to explore how anthropologists and other scholars incorporate emotions, sensations, and embodiment into their research. This topic connects to “Religion and Gender” or “Race and Pluralism.”

Companion Pieces:

- Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*. Duke, 2008.
- Thomas J. Csordas, “Somatic Modes of Attention.” *Cultural Anthropology* 8, 2 (1993): 135–56.
- Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, 2001.
- Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body [1935].” In *Techniques, Technology, and Civilization*, ed. Nathan Schlanger, 77–96. Berghahn Books, 2009.
- Melani McAlister, “What Is Your Heart For?: Affect and Internationalism in the Evangelical Public Sphere.” *American Literary History* 20, 4 (2008): 870–95.
- James Bielo, “Replication as Religious Practice, Temporality as Religious Problem.” *History and Anthropology* 28, 2 (2017): 131–48.

12/ Research Methods

Sections of book: Introduction, Methodology, Interludes

Key ideas:

As an interdisciplinary project that tackles a topic where sources are not always evident, this book offers a good opportunity for upper-level students to think critically about how research gets done. The topic might begin by asking students to consider the organization of interdisciplinary projects. In this case, the book takes a loosely chronological approach to major themes. Would students organize it differently? What do particular organizational models highlight or obscure? Another key question to consider is how available sources shape scholarly research. Which archives are preserved and easily accessible to the majority of researchers who live in Europe or North America? How are archives categorized so that certain information is less easily found? Discussing the interludes, students might consider the possibilities and limitations of writing ‘imaginative reconstructions.’ Instructors who are particularly keen might even have students experiment with writing their own. For courses in

anthropology and sociology, instructors can push students to consider how a reliance on ‘key informants’ or interviews shapes research. They might consider the challenges that face fieldworkers who are trying to examine activities that are personal and periodic, like sponsorship. What is ‘peripatetic’ fieldwork? How do classic fieldwork models change when research takes place in the offices of organizations like NGOs? Using the book’s Methodology section, students might also reflect on the possibilities and limitations of interdisciplinary research in general. Instructors could use this opportunity to bring their own research (or failed research plans) into the classroom for discussion.

Supplementary: TBA

13/ Child Sponsorship

Sections of the book: Throughout

Key ideas:

Child sponsorship is a multi-billion dollar fundraising tool, which has significant implications for studies of humanitarianism and fundraising. The book lends itself well to considering the specifics of this kind of fundraising, discussing humanitarian projects more broadly, or introducing questions about global commitments into a broader syllabus on U.S. Christianity, Evangelicalism, or U.S. religion. For instructors who are delving into sponsorship in specific terms, some key debates concern the role of religion (how “Christian” is sponsorship, when so many NGOs that use it are no longer Christian?), whether sponsorship “works” and if so what that means, and whether it is justified to use poverty imagery to attract donors. All of the contemporary organizations in the book maintain websites with significant information and learning materials, which provide excellent primary source material for class discussion.

Companion Pieces:

- Erica Bornstein, “Child Sponsorship, Evangelism, and Belonging in the Work of World Vision Zimbabwe.” *American Ethnologist* 28, 3 (2001): 595–622.
- Kevin L. O’Neill, “Left Behind: Security, Salvation, and the Subject of Prevention.” *Cultural Anthropology* 28, 2 (2013): 204–226.
- Bruce Wydick, Paul Glewwe, and Laine Rutledge. “Does International Child Sponsorship Work? A Six-Country Study of Impacts on Adult Life Outcomes.” *Journal of Political Economy* 121, 2 (2013): 393–436.

On sponsorship imagery:

- Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, 1999.
- Lisa Cartwright, *Moral Spectatorship: Technologies of Voice and Affect in Postwar Representations of the Child*. North Carolina, 2008.
- Marta Zarzycka, “Save the Child: Photographed Faces and Affective Transactions in NGO Child Sponsoring Programs.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 23, 1 (2016): 28–42.