



*Clouds of Witnesses:*  
*Christian Voices from*  
*Africa and Asia*

**Available April 2011**  
\$25, 300 pages, hardcover  
978-0-8308-3834-9

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## Surrounded by Saints

In 1900, more than four-fifths of the world's Christian population lived in Europe and North America. Today, only one-third live in those regions. Obviously, the number of Western Christians is declining while Christianity in places like Africa, Korea, China and India is growing at a record pace. It is even predicted that in a few years, churchgoers in China may outnumber churchgoers in the U.S. While many historians and missiologists have written on the current situation and how it came about, little has been written about the individuals who helped bring the faith to their respective countries, resulting in dramatic conversions and growing numbers. Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom detail true stories of these people and their witness, including the following saints:

**Bernard Mizeki**, the first Anglican African martyr, had a talent for learning languages and gardening, as well as a beautiful singing voice, which endeared him to the people of Zimbabwe. Refusing to leave his mission when warned of impending danger, he was killed with a spear by his wife's relatives. In the years following his death, other Anglicans returned to the site to start a school and hold memorial services. Today, an annual commemoration service, complete with Communion, singing, dancing and faith healing, draws almost twenty thousand pilgrims.

**Pandita Ramabai**, one of India's most influential Christians of the twentieth century, spent the first twenty years of her life as a Hindu pilgrim. Through her massive knowledge of Hindu texts, Pandita became a celebrity and used her newfound fame to seek justice for women in India. She became a Christian after a visit to England and then returned to India more determined than ever to help women and girls who were poor or mistreated, even going so far as to disguise herself and travel throughout the country to witness abuse firsthand. Today, the mission Pandita founded continues to provide housing for needy women and girls and includes a hospital, a chapel, on-site job training, a nursery, an adoption agency, Braille instruction and education from preschool through junior college.

**Wang Mingdao**, born five weeks after his father hanged himself, became a Christian at age fourteen while attending a school run by the London Missionary Society. He became a preacher and over his life preached thousands of sermons in several hundred churches of thirty denominations in twenty-eight provinces throughout China. He founded the Christian Church in Christ (CCiC) of Beijing, and later became known as the "Dean of House Churches of China." Imprisoned for refusing to join the Three Self movement, Mingdao spent over twenty years in prison, even rejecting a chance for release until the government would admit that they "wrongly arrested him, wrongly sentenced him and had wrongly imprisoned him." The small band of Christians who went underground after Mingdao's arrest went on to form quiet, small, mobile house churches, first by the hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands.