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BOOK REVIEW

Ken Knight and Shirley Knight. *The Seed Holds the Tree: A Story of India and the Kingdom of God*. Kitchener, ON: GEPM Group, 2009. Pbk.

This insider history of the Canadian Baptist missionary enterprise in India is both riveting and revealing. Based on diligent primary research this account captures the hardships, suffering, challenges and successes experienced by Canadian Baptist missionaries and Indian converts and co-workers for the cause of Christ.

Shirley Knight rightly points out in the acknowledgements that “this book does not pretend to be a definitive history” and that “informed imagination” is used occasionally “to lend feeling and reality to events which took place.” This book is generally well-written, and the chapters provide brief but poignant snapshots of key figures and events that shaped the course of the Baptist mission. The impact of war and women on the mission are particularly well-documented, as is the role of Maritime and Central Canadian Baptists.

There is some political contextualization of the mission, but professional historians will lament the absence of any overarching theoretical framework, the book’s celebratory tone, and the lack of any systematic historical analysis that interacts with the available secondary literature. There is also a need to discuss in more detail the changing perspectives on the mission at home in Canada and the responses of the missionaries and the Indian church to the political, social, and spiritual challenges and effects of British imperialism and the movement for self-rule.

Still, for anyone interested in the international evangelistic endeavours of Canadian Baptists this book is essential reading. Even the most critical professional historian should value the

KNIGHT & KNIGHT *The Seed Holds the Tree*

insider insights provided here. To their credit, the authors do move beyond the traditional missionary memoir and hagiography to a more realistic and substantive historical account. On many levels *The Seed Holds the Tree* fills many gaps in our knowledge about the course, content, and consequences of the Canadian Baptist outreach among the Oriya people in the Orissa State of India. This book certainly makes a valuable and much-needed contribution to our understanding of a key initiative undertaken by Canadian Baptists over a hundred years ago, which continues until today. The book is available from lulu.com.

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