

## Orientalism and Christian Missions: Knowledge Production and Power Relations in ABCFM Activities in Nineteenth-Century Greater Syria

Yuangga Kurnia Yahya<sup>1</sup>, M. Kharis Majid<sup>2</sup>, Dhiyaul Haq<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Comparative Study of Religions, University of Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>International Islamic University, Malaysia

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author: [yuangga4@unida.gontor.ac.id](mailto:yuangga4@unida.gontor.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This article examines the missionary activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Greater Syria during the nineteenth century through a postcolonial perspective. Existing scholarship has largely emphasised the contribution of ABCFM to education, publishing, translation, and the Arab intellectual revival (*Nahda*), while paying comparatively little attention to the ways in which these activities functioned within broader structures of power and knowledge production. Employing a historical approach and drawing upon Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, this study analyses missionary reports, official ABCFM publications, memoirs, and relevant historical literature through four analytical categories: representation, missionary legitimation, knowledge production, and power relations. The findings demonstrate that ABCFM missionaries portrayed Middle Eastern societies as communities in need of intellectual, moral, and religious reform, thereby legitimising missionary intervention. Educational institutions, medical services, translation projects, and printing activities functioned not only as instruments of evangelisation but also as mechanisms for producing knowledge and extending American Protestant intellectual and cultural influence. Through these activities, ABCFM contributed to social transformation and the development of Arab Christian communities while simultaneously establishing new forms of educational and religious authority. The study argues that Christian missions in Greater Syria should be understood as a complex arena where religion, knowledge, modernity, and power intersected and mutually shaped one another.

**Keywords:** ABCFM, Orientalism, Protestant Mission, Greater Syria, Knowledge Production

### الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الأنشطة التبشيرية التي قامت بها هيئة المفوضين الأمريكيين للبعثات الخارجية (ABCFM) في بلاد الشام الكبرى خلال القرن التاسع عشر من منظور ما بعد الاستعمار. وقد ركزت الدراسات السابقة في الغالب على إسهامات الهيئة في مجالات التعليم والنشر والترجمة والنهضة الفكرية العربية (النهضة)، في حين أولت اهتماماً محدوداً لدور هذه الأنشطة في إنتاج المعرفة وتشكيل علاقات القوة. وتعتمد هذه الدراسة المنهج التاريخي مستندةً إلى نظرية الاستشراق لإدوارد سعيد، من خلال تحليل تقارير المبشرين، والمنشورات الرسمية للهيئة، والمذكرات الشخصية، والأدبيات التاريخية ذات الصلة، وذلك عبر أربعة محاور تحليلية هي: التمثيل، وشرعنة النشاط التبشيري، وإنتاج المعرفة، وعلاقات القوة. وتُظهر النتائج أن مبشري الهيئة صوّروا مجتمعات الشرق الأوسط بوصفها مجتمعات بحاجة إلى إصلاح فكري وأخلاقي وديني، الأمر الذي أسهم في إضفاء الشرعية على التدخل التبشيري. كما تكشف الدراسة أن المؤسسات التعليمية والخدمات الصحية ومشروعات الترجمة والطباعة لم تكن مجرد أدوات للتبشير الديني، بل شكّلت أيضاً آليات لإنتاج المعرفة

وتوسيع النفوذ الفكري والثقافي للبروتستانتية الأمريكية. ومن خلال هذه الأنشطة، أسهمت الهيئة في التحولات الاجتماعية وفي تطور المجتمعات المسيحية العربية، وفي الوقت نفسه أسست أشكالاً جديدة من السلطة التعليمية والدينية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن البعثات المسيحية في بلاد الشام الكبرى تمثل فضاءً معقداً تتداخل فيه الدين والمعرفة والحداثة وعلاقات القوة، بحيث يؤثر كل منها في الآخر بصورة متبادلة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** هيئة المفوضين الأمريكيين للبعثات الخارجية، الاستشراق، البعثات البروتستانتية، بلاد الشام الكبرى، إنتاج المعرفة

Article History: Submitted: 16 June 2025 | Accepted: 9 July 2026 | Available Online: 31 July 2026

## INTRODUCTION

Most studies on American Protestant missions in Greater Syria during the nineteenth century portray missionaries as agents of modernisation who contributed to the development of education, printing, translation, and the Arab intellectual revival (*Nahda*). This perspective has generated an understanding that missionary presence primarily produced positive effects on local societies through the transfer of knowledge and social reform. However, such a view tends to treat missionary activity as a neutral process and overlooks the power relations embedded within the production of knowledge by missionaries. As Edward Said has argued, the production of knowledge about the Orient cannot be separated from processes of representation and the construction of authority that enable the West to define, explain, and ultimately influence Eastern societies (Segovia & Sugirtharajah, 2009).

This scholarly concern forms the basis of the present study. Although the educational, medical, translational, and publishing contributions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) have been widely discussed in previous scholarship (D. D. Grafton, 2015; Zeuge-Buberl, 2015), relatively few studies have critically examined these activities within the framework of Orientalism and power relations. Consequently, Christian missions are often understood merely as projects of evangelisation or modernisation, without recognising how these activities also generated particular representations of Middle Eastern societies and shaped intellectual, cultural, and religious authority within the region.

The American missionary movement led by ABCFM began its mission in Greater Syria in the early nineteenth century by dispatching missionaries to Beirut, Jerusalem, and other major cities. Their missionary strategy extended beyond Bible distribution and

direct religious instruction to include the establishment of schools, hospitals, and printing presses. Missionaries such as Pliny Fisk, Levi Parsons, and Eli Smith worked to cultivate relationships with local churches and to translate the Bible into Arabic. The mission did not proceed without obstacles, as they encountered resistance from local ecclesiastical authorities, particularly the Maronite Church, as well as political challenges from the Ottoman government. Nevertheless, they continued their educational and cultural endeavours, which later made significant contributions to the Arab intellectual revival (*Nahda*) (Hill, 2020; Makdisi, 2008).

Several studies have attempted to examine the role of Christian missionaries in the Middle East, particularly those associated with ABCFM. First, A. L. Tibawi, in *American Missionaries in the Levant: A Study in the Cultural Encounter*, argues that the contribution of American missionaries has been exaggerated, since their schools reached only a limited segment of society. Tibawi rejects the claim that the *Nahda* emerged as a result of American missionary influence (Coffey, 2021; Tibawi, 1969). In contrast, George Antonius, in *The Arab Awakening*, emphasises the significant role of American missionary institutions in laying the foundations of Arab nationalism. He argues that the schools and publications established by missionaries paved the way for cultural transformation within the Arab world (Antonius, 2002).

Third, David D. Grafton seeks to bridge these opposing interpretations. While acknowledging that American missionaries cannot be regarded as the sole factor behind Arab modernisation and intellectual revival, he maintains that they nonetheless served as important catalysts in these processes (D. D. Grafton, 2015). Furthermore, Stephen Sheehi explores how the presence of American missionaries contributed to the formation of modern Arab identity discourse. He highlighted the ways in which education and publishing became sites of knowledge production that reflected Western cultural hegemony and subsequently shaped Arab perceptions of modernity and progress (Sheehi, 2004).

These four studies demonstrate that ABCFM missions in Greater Syria cannot be understood merely as religious enterprises but must also be viewed as processes of knowledge exchange, identity formation, and the production of power relations. Nevertheless, most previous scholarship has focused primarily on missionary contributions to the *Nahda*, the development of modern education, or the relationship

between missionaries and Arab society. Studies that specifically examine ABCFM missions through a postcolonial lens, particularly by employing Edward Said's concept of Orientalism to identify the forms of power operating within missionary activities, remain relatively limited.

Against this background, this article aims to analyse the mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in nineteenth-century Greater Syria from a postcolonial perspective. Specifically, the study examines how ABCFM constructed representations of Middle Eastern societies, the motivations underlying its missionary enterprise, the strategies employed in carrying out its mission, and the forms of intellectual, cultural, moral, and religious power that emerged through interactions between American missionaries and local Christian communities. Drawing upon Edward Said's framework of Orientalism, this article argues that ABCFM functioned not only as a project of evangelisation but also as a vehicle for knowledge production and cultural influence that contributed to the social and intellectual transformation of Arab Christian communities during the nineteenth century.

## METHODS

This study employs a historical approach to examine the missionary activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in nineteenth-century Greater Syria. Historical research was selected because the study seeks to reconstruct and interpret past events based on documentary evidence while situating them within their broader social, religious, and cultural contexts. The primary sources used in this study include missionary reports, official ABCFM publications, memoirs, correspondence, and contemporary documents related to missionary activities in Greater Syria. These sources are complemented by secondary literature on the history of Protestant missions, Middle Eastern Christianity, and the intellectual history of the Arab world.

Data were collected through documentary research and analyzed using the standard procedures of historical inquiry, namely heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic stage involved identifying and collecting relevant primary and secondary sources. Source criticism was then conducted to assess the authenticity, credibility, and historical reliability of the collected materials. The

interpretation stage focused on examining the meanings, motivations, and implications of missionary activities within their historical context, while historiography was employed to construct a coherent narrative based on the available evidence.

To provide a more critical reading of the data, this study adopts Edward Said's theory of Orientalism as its analytical framework (Said, 1978). Rather than employing Orientalism solely as a descriptive concept, the theory is operationalised into four analytical categories. The first is representation of the Orient, referring to the ways in which missionaries portrayed Middle Eastern societies in terms of religion, education, morality, and social life. The second is justification of intervention, namely the narratives used by missionaries to explain why local communities required educational, religious, or social reform. The third is knowledge production, encompassing activities such as translation, education, publishing, and scholarly engagement through which missionaries generated and disseminated knowledge about the region. The fourth is power relations, referring to the intellectual, cultural, moral, and religious influence exercised by missionaries in their interactions with local communities.

By employing these four analytical categories, Orientalism functions not merely as a theoretical lens but also as an analytical tool for identifying how ABCFM missionary activities produced particular representations of the Middle East and contributed to the formation of power relations that shaped the educational, social, and religious development of Arab Christian communities in the nineteenth century.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Profile of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission**

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Great Awakening emerged in Europe, particularly in Great Britain, stimulated by the spread of Pietism across the continent (Aritonang, 2018). This revivalist spirit subsequently developed in America through the efforts of theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), whose sermons and writings circulated widely throughout New England and beyond. In both his preaching and writings, Edwards emphasised the necessity of proclaiming the Gospel and spreading Christianity to all nations of the world (D. D. Grafton, 2015; Tejirian & Simon, 2012).

These ideas received widespread support. The revivalist movement also inspired Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803), a colleague of Edwards, to popularise the concept of

“disinterested benevolence,” which became highly influential among American evangelicals. Hopkins encouraged devout Christians to abandon worldly interests and dedicate their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel and the conversion of the world. This conviction inspired many American evangelists to devote themselves to missionary work, extending their activities beyond domestic contexts and into foreign lands (D. D. Grafton, 2015).

Another influential figure was David Brainerd (1718–1747), who further disseminated the ideas promoted by Jonathan Edwards. One of the central themes in Brainerd’s writings was the belief that simple acts of kindness towards non-Christians possessed significant potential to encourage conversion to Christianity (Tejirian & Simon, 2012). Despite dying before the age of thirty, Brainerd achieved considerable success as a missionary under the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. In 1743, he successfully introduced Christianity to a local community known as the Kanaurneek Indians. He taught prayers in the local language, translated portions of the Psalms, and instructed converts to sing them during worship. Assisted by interpreters from the local population, he also delivered sermons conveying biblical teachings to both adults and children. Brainerd reported that these efforts contributed to moral reform within the community and encouraged the adoption of Christianity as a way of life (Tracy, 1840).

Encouraged by these results, Brainerd was reassigned to minister among the Delaware Indians in New Jersey beginning in 1745. A congregation that initially consisted of only four women and several children gradually expanded as converts were encouraged to share Christian teachings with others. By 1746, Brainerd had established a school that taught local people to read and write English, attracting approximately thirty children and between fifteen and twenty adults attending evening classes. These developments eventually led to the formation of a local church served by an Indigenous pastor before Brainerd’s death in 1747 (Pulaski, 2022).

The sermons and writings of these figures circulated widely throughout the United States. Many Americans embraced their ideas as expressions of religious devotion, inspiring the formation of numerous Protestant missionary organisations. The first of these was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), founded in 1810. It was subsequently followed by the establishment of German

Evangelical and American Baptist missionary organisations in 1814 and Methodist and Episcopal missionary societies in 1821 (Conroy-Krutz, 2024). During the nineteenth century, ABCFM emerged as the most influential American missionary organisation operating in Asia and Africa, including the Middle East (Rodogno, 2025). According to Jan S. Aritonang, the establishment of these missionary organisations reflected the activist character of American Christianity during the period. The successful territorial expansion of the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific encouraged many American Christians to view themselves as God's chosen people, a "New Israel," and America itself as a "Promised Land" or "New Jerusalem." Jonathan Edwards promoted the belief that the millennial kingdom had already begun in America and that Christ would return at the end of these thousand years. Consequently, many American Christians believed that they were divinely called to bring light and salvation to other nations, a conviction that stimulated the creation of foreign missionary societies (Aritonang, 2018).

ABCFM emerged directly from this revivalist environment. One of its principal founders was Samuel J. Mills, born in Tarringford on 21 April 1783. From childhood he had been familiar with missionary work among non-Christians, as his mother had been a disciple of David Brainerd and his father was a devout Christian. On 25 June 1810, Mills and several fellow students from Williams College - Gordon Hall, Adoniram Judson Jr., Samuel Nott Jr., and Samuel Newell - met with Dr Worcester and Rev. Dr Spring and formally proposed the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The organisation was founded to facilitate missionary outreach among non-Christian populations in foreign countries. The founders subsequently organised a board consisting of ministers and evangelists from across the United States and held their first meeting on 5 September 1810 in Farmington. One of the most significant outcomes of this meeting was the articulation of the organisation's purpose: to devise, adopt, and implement methods and means for spreading the Gospel among those lacking knowledge of Christianity, inspired by the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 (Conroy-Krutz, 2024).

In 1811, ABCFM established communication with the London Missionary Society (LMS), which had been founded in 1795. Adoniram Judson was sent to England to negotiate with LMS leaders. As a result, LMS agreed to receive ABCFM missionaries as part of its mission network and to provide financial assistance until ABCFM became



self-supporting. Benefiting from this support, ABCFM developed its first missionary programme, directing its efforts towards Africa, North and South America, the Pacific Islands, and Asia (Bahar, 2019). ABCFM also publicly declared its missionary objectives to American Christians, arguing that no region had received the blessings of Christianity more visibly than New England and that Americans possessed exceptional capabilities for missionary work compared with other nations. These claims encouraged widespread support for foreign missions (Yeniucun, 2025).

This support enabled ABCFM to launch its first overseas mission. In 1812, six missionaries were sent to Calcutta, India (Rodogno, 2025). By 1818, missionary priorities began to shift towards Western Asia. The Board's 1819 report identified Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Armenia, Georgia, and Persia as regions requiring missionary attention. Although these territories were predominantly Muslim, the Board believed that their Jewish and Christian populations existed in conditions of ignorance and religious decline and therefore required spiritual renewal. To pursue this objective, Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk were dispatched to Smyrna (modern-day İzmir) to study local languages and gather information that would guide future missionary efforts in Palestine. While engaged in language study and information gathering, they also distributed copies of the Bible to local residents. However, they were instructed to avoid publicly criticising local customs and to restrict themselves to private religious instruction (Deniz, 2022).

Parsons arrived in Jerusalem on 17 February 1821 and became the first Protestant missionary to establish sustained contact with the local population. Following his death in 1822, ABCFM sent Fisk, Jonas King, and Joseph Wolff to continue the mission. In addition to Jerusalem, they surveyed Beirut, Damascus, and Aleppo as potential mission centres. By 1824, ABCFM had established a school for children in Beirut, providing free education to children from economically disadvantaged families. In 1833, the mission expanded to Nestorian communities in Persia, Kurdistan, and Mosul (Yavuz & Iskefiyeli, 2025; Yeniucun, 2025).

Alongside its missionary activities, ABCFM established a printing press in Malta. Malta was selected because printing operations could not be conducted safely in either Smyrna or Beirut. The press produced publications in English, Italian, Modern Greek, Greco-Turkish, Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, and Arabic. Among its most important achievements was the publication of the New Testament in Armeno-Turkish. It also



produced elementary educational materials containing moral and Christian instruction. The first publication, entitled *Alphabetarion*, was printed in 27,000 copies between 1829 and 1831. Key figures associated with the press included Homan Hallock, Daniel Temple, Isaac Bird, William Goodell, and Eli Smith. The printing operation remained in Malta until its relocation to Smyrna in December 1833 (R. Anderson, 2019).

The mission to Western Asia, including Palestine, Syria, Beirut, and Armenia, was conceived as an effort to rescue Christian communities living among Muslim, Jewish, and pagan populations. According to ABCFM leaders, these Christian communities were vulnerable to theological deviations, particularly among groups such as the Nestorians and other Eastern Christian denominations. The purpose of the mission was therefore to guide them towards divine truth and spiritual enlightenment. Furthermore, missionary engagement with Muslim populations in the region could not be separated from the longstanding presence of Oriental Orthodox churches. Consequently, missionary efforts were initially directed towards Oriental Christian communities as a means of ultimately reaching Muslim populations. Rufus Anderson (1796–1880), who served as Corresponding Secretary of ABCFM from 1832 to 1866, consistently maintained that the objective of American missions in Syria and the Ottoman Empire was to provide a positive Christian example through the Oriental churches to encourage Muslims to accept Christianity. For this reason, missionary work in the region was expected to involve and cooperate with local Eastern Christian communities (D. D. Grafton, 2015; Rodogno, 2025).

The encounter between American missionaries and established local churches was not always harmonious. The arrival of Isaac Bird and William Goodell, together with their families, in Beirut in 1823 was marked by the distribution of Protestant Bibles and attempts to cultivate positive relations with the Maronite Church. However, these efforts were rejected by Maronite authorities, who were in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Maronite leaders openly opposed the Protestant Bibles being distributed and ordered them to be burned because they did not contain the Apocryphal books (Tejirian & Simon, 2012). The Apocrypha refers to seven books of the Old Testament that are accepted as canonical by the Catholic and Orthodox churches but rejected by Protestant churches and Judaism (Penelas, 2021). Relations deteriorated further following the conversion of a Beirut resident, As'ad Shidyaq, to Protestantism around 1825. His

decision provoked severe persecution from his church authorities, who regarded his conversion as a violation of religious orthodoxy and loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. Shidyaq was imprisoned and subjected to harsh treatment until his death in 1830. Maronite authorities labelled him *Rab Shayul* (“Lord of Hell”) and stripped him of his Christian identity. Protestant circles, by contrast, commemorated him as the “Martyr of Lebanon” in recognition of his steadfast faith. This incident intensified communal tensions between missionaries and local populations. These tensions persisted because the Vatican continued to support the Maronite community, while Ottoman authorities imposed restrictions on the propagation of Christianity within their territories (Issa, 2022). Conditions changed only after the promulgation of the Tanzimat reforms in 1839 and 1856, which proclaimed legal equality for all religious communities within the Ottoman Empire. These reforms effectively weakened the traditional superiority of Muslims over other *dhimmi* groups and created a more favourable environment for missionary activities throughout Ottoman lands (Sharkey, 2017).

Missionary strategies employed by ABCFM evolved over time in response to changing circumstances and challenges. Initially, the primary methods consisted of public preaching and Bible distribution. Missionaries also established schools and churches in mission areas to support the education and spiritual development of local communities. In time, they founded institutions of higher education that offered instruction in the liberal arts and medical sciences, most notably the Syrian Protestant College, now known as the American University of Beirut (Yildiz, 2019). These various initiatives were intended to proclaim the Gospel, provide spiritual enlightenment to local Christian communities, and ultimately facilitate the conversion of Muslims and Jews to Christianity (D. D. Grafton, 2015). Nevertheless, missionary activities were frequently disrupted by political instability. Periods of military conflict involving British forces in Beirut occasionally compelled American missionaries to leave the city temporarily. In addition, the outbreak of the American Civil War severely affected financial support from the United States. As a result, Rufus Anderson advised missionaries in Beirut and Jerusalem to close many of their schools and concentrate primarily on preaching and evangelistic work (Rodogno, 2025; Yenicun, 2025).

Anderson himself was widely recognised for his strong commitment to a distinct philosophy of missions. He argued that missionary organisations existed primarily to

promote biblical Christianity. Accordingly, missionary work should focus on four objectives: (1) the conversion of those who were spiritually lost; (2) their organisation into local church communities; (3) the development of indigenous leadership capable of governing and serving the church; and (4) the achievement of self-sufficiency and continued church growth (R. Anderson, 2019). Consequently, during his tenure, activities not directly related to evangelisation were often minimised.

At the time of its establishment, ABCFM consisted of members from several Protestant denominations, including Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and the Dutch and German Reformed Churches. The Board refused membership to Episcopalians/Anglicans because they did not recognise Congregational and Presbyterian ordinations, and it also declined to appoint Baptist missionaries because of difficulties in accommodating Baptist ecclesiastical positions (Conroy-Krutz, 2024; Rodogno, 2025). Both the Congregational and Presbyterian traditions belonged to the broader Calvinist movement. In England, they were commonly classified by the established Anglican Church as “Dissenters” or “Nonconformists” because of their refusal to conform to the episcopal structure of the state church (Aritonang, 2018). The principal difference between the two traditions lay in church governance. Presbyterian churches were governed through a presbyterial-synodal system, with authority exercised by presbyteries composed of elders and ministers and, ultimately, by synods representing the wider church. Congregational churches, by contrast, emphasised the autonomy of the local congregation and the equal rights and authority of all church members. This approach reflected the Congregationalist commitment to the principle of the “priesthood of all believers” (Aritonang, 2018).

However, at its annual meeting in 1870, ABCFM formally separated from its Presbyterian members because many had become increasingly supportive of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, established in 1862. Consequently, several Presbyterian leaders resigned from ABCFM and joined the new missionary organization. Thereafter, ABCFM leadership became exclusively Congregationalist. Following Rufus Anderson’s retirement and the broader challenges created by the American Civil War, responsibility for mission work in Syria and Lebanon was gradually transferred to Presbyterian missionary agencies. These organisations subsequently expanded missionary activity in Egypt by establishing schools, medical facilities, and public libraries aimed at reducing the spread of infectious diseases and promoting literacy,

particularly for the purpose of enhancing biblical understanding (Carpenter, 2019).

The foregoing discussion illustrates the motivations, institutional background, and historical dynamics that shaped the missionary activities of ABCFM in Greater Syria. It demonstrates that the organisation emerged from the revivalist culture of nineteenth-century American Protestantism and developed into one of the most influential missionary agencies in the Middle East, combining evangelisation with educational, literary, and social initiatives that profoundly affected local Christian communities.

### **Education and Healthcare as Mission Strategies of ABCFM in Greater Syria**

Before establishing institutions of higher education, ABCFM missionaries first developed a network of primary and secondary schools across various regions of Greater Syria. According to missionary reports and Tibawi's study, by the mid-nineteenth century schools managed directly by, or operating under the influence of, American missionaries had been established in at least seventeen locations and served approximately five hundred students, including around one hundred and fifty female pupils (Yildiz, 2019). The existence of these schools demonstrates that education had become one of the principal instruments of missionary activity long before the establishment of the Syrian Protestant College. Their curriculum extended beyond Christian religious instruction and Bible reading to include literacy, arithmetic, Arabic, English, and a range of subjects considered essential for cultivating an educated Christian community capable of assuming leadership roles within local society.

In addition to primary and secondary education, ABCFM established several institutions that exerted a profound influence on local communities. Among these were Abeih Seminary, founded in 1846 as a boarding school for boys; a girls' boarding school in Beirut, which later evolved into the American Junior College for Women; and the Syrian Protestant College, established in 1866 and subsequently known as the American University of Beirut (B. S. Anderson, 2011). These institutions became important centres of modern education, introducing Western scientific knowledge, foreign languages, and modern pedagogical methods to Arab society.

Medical work likewise formed an integral component of ABCFM's missionary strategy. Cornelius Van Dyck, originally commissioned as a missionary physician, not only provided medical services to local communities but also introduced modern medical

education through the Syrian Protestant College. The institution inaugurated medical training in 1867, followed by programmes in pharmacy in 1871, nursing in 1905, and dentistry in 1910. Beyond their practical healthcare functions, these institutions served as vehicles for establishing social relationships with local populations while simultaneously extending American Protestant intellectual and cultural influence throughout Greater Syria (Rock, 2024).

The arrival of American Protestant missionaries in Beirut was therefore closely associated with the establishment of Christian educational institutions. On 4 November 1846, ABCFM founded Abeih Seminary under the leadership of Van Dyck as a boarding school for boys. At the same time, De Forest and his family were appointed to oversee a boarding school for girls in Beirut. Abeih Seminary later came under the leadership of Rev. Simeon Calhoun in 1849 and was subsequently transformed into the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut in 1865. In recognition of his contributions, Calhoun became known as “the Saint of Lebanon”. The girls’ seminary in Beirut was eventually reorganised as the American Junior College for Women in 1927 (Yildiz, 2019).

Abeih Seminary constituted the institutional foundation from which the Syrian Protestant College, later the American University of Beirut, emerged. The establishment of a university represented the logical extension of missionary efforts that had already created a substantial network of primary and secondary schools among local Christian communities. By the mid-nineteenth century, American missionary schools enrolled approximately five hundred students, including one hundred and fifty girls, distributed across seventeen schools in different provinces. Nevertheless, relatively few graduates pursued higher education. This concern was expressed by Henry Jessup in a letter addressed to Rev. D. Stuart Dodge on 5 December 1870, in which he called for prayers that the Holy Spirit would inspire Syrian Christian youth to pursue advanced studies and become theologically educated leaders within their communities. Consequently, the establishment of higher education was regarded by American missionary circles not merely as a form of social service but also as a means of cultivating moral character and civic responsibility (Rock, 2024).

The Syrian Protestant College was not the only institution of higher learning established by American missionaries in the region. Earlier, American missionaries had founded Robert College in Istanbul in 1863. Likewise, American Presbyterian

missionaries in Egypt later established a comparable institution in Cairo. Charles R. Watson (1871–1948), who successfully supervised 171 Christian schools serving more than 15,000 students throughout Egypt, played a central role in the development of what became the American University in Cairo. Officially inaugurated on 11 July 1919 in Washington, D.C., the institution was founded in response to the growing tendency of Egyptian students to pursue higher education abroad in search of advanced Western-style training. Existing institutions such as al-Azhar and Cairo University were perceived as insufficiently oriented towards modern secular knowledge, while Cairo University employed a large number of French Catholic instructors. American missionaries therefore considered it necessary to establish a third institution rooted in Protestant educational ideals and inspired by American values (Rock, 2024; Yenzi, 2025).

Although these educational institutions were initially intended primarily for Arab Christian communities, they gradually became more inclusive and accommodated Muslim students as well. As a result, an educated Christian middle class emerged rapidly in Syria. This development was supported by qualified teaching staff, translated textbooks from Europe and America, and extensive printing activities. Students also acquired proficiency in European languages alongside Arabic, facilitating the transmission of European and American intellectual currents into Arab society (Kramer, 2026). From these educational environments emerged influential Arab Christian intellectuals such as Ya'qub Sarruf (1852–1927), Faris Nimr (1855–1951), and Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914). These figures later established major journals and newspapers, including *al-Muqtataf*, *al-Hilal*, and *al-Muqattam*, which introduced discussions of science, technology, and Western culture to Middle Eastern audiences (Kassab, 2025). Likewise, the Taqla family from Lebanon founded *al-Ahram* in 1875, which subsequently became one of the most influential newspapers in the Arab world. The spirit carried by these various newspapers continued the various ideas also brought by Khalil al-Khuri in the bulletin *Hadīqāt al-Akhhār* (first published 1857) and Faris al-Shidyaq in *al-Jawāib* (first published 1860) which were first published and circulated in Syria (Hill, 2020; Kassab, 2025).

These intellectual developments were reinforced by advances in translation and printing technology introduced by American missionaries. The missionary press, initially located in Malta and later transferred to Beirut, facilitated the dissemination of translated European and American works while simultaneously spreading the ideas contained within

them. The press did not limit itself to school textbooks and biblical literature but also popularised newspapers and periodicals published on a regular basis. Such publications occupied a central position in the circulation of ideas associated with modernisation throughout Arab society (McKee, 2023). Although printing presses existed in Beirut before the arrival of American missionaries, the technologies introduced by the missionaries significantly enhanced both economic development and the efficiency of information dissemination. Al-Samarra has argued, education and mass media represent some of the clearest manifestations of Arab–European interaction and contributed substantially to the adoption of Western intellectual and cultural values (Samarra, 2015, 2023).

### **Education, Translation, and Knowledge Production**

Education and teaching constituted one of the broadest fields of missionary activity. The educational initiatives undertaken by missionaries functioned primarily as instruments for achieving their central objective: leading individuals and communities to accept Christianity and ultimately fostering the emergence of a Christian society. Although these institutions provided instruction in a wide range of secular subjects, their educational philosophy remained firmly rooted in Christian spiritual formation. Missionaries believed that schools and educational institutions possessed exceptional power to instil Christian values and Western cultural norms among local populations. In their view, the influence exerted through education extended far beyond that achieved through other forms of social or political power (Rodogno, 2025; Yenzi, 2025). This conviction was clearly articulated by Stephen B. L. Penrose during his tenure as president of the American University of Beirut. In a public address delivered in 1948, Penrose described education as the most valuable and successful instrument employed by American missionaries in proclaiming the Gospel to the peoples of Syria and Lebanon (Yildiz, 2019). Such statements reveal the extent to which educational institutions were understood not merely as centres of learning but also as strategic vehicles for religious and cultural influence.

As noted above, the expansion of missionary education was supported by two closely related developments: translation and printing. Large numbers of books originating in Europe and North America were translated into Arabic in order to support modern educational programmes. Similar translation movements were already taking



place elsewhere in the Arab world. In Egypt, for example, Muhammad Ali supported the translation of Western works on history, philosophy, logic, geography, travel literature, politics, literature, and law from the 1830s onwards. Al-Tahtawi further advanced this movement by establishing the School of Languages in 1836 to train professional translators (Kassab, 2025; Yoyo, 2017). American missionaries in Syria pursued comparable efforts by translating works on science, history, drama, and fiction into Arabic. In addition, the translators responsible for the Smith-Van Dyck Bible prepared numerous educational texts in Arabic to support instruction within missionary schools (Issa, 2022; Kassab, 2025). Through these activities, missionary institutions became important centres for the circulation of modern knowledge and the transmission of new intellectual paradigms to Arab readers.

Alongside education, medical institutions occupied a prominent place within the missionary enterprise. In his report on the state of medical practice in Syria, published in 1849, Cornelius Van Dyck provided a detailed assessment of healthcare conditions in the region. He observed that although Arab civilisation had once produced influential physicians and scholars who contributed significantly to medicine and related sciences, contemporary Syrian society was experiencing intellectual stagnation and scientific decline. Fields such as medicine, physics, alchemy, and botany, which had flourished during earlier centuries, had, in his view, entered a period of deterioration (Van Dyck, 1849). Van Dyck regarded this decline as particularly striking given Syria's rich natural environment and its abundance of medicinal plants that could be utilised in the treatment of diseases such as hernia, leprosy, and tumours. Yet he argued that medical progress was hindered by the persistence of traditional healing practices and widespread reliance on practitioners of metaphysical or supernatural remedies. These observations helped shape the missionary conviction that modern medical education was urgently needed in the region.

Such concerns contributed directly to the establishment of medical training at the Syrian Protestant College. The institution inaugurated medical education in 1867 and subsequently expanded its programmes to include pharmacy in 1871, nursing in 1905, and dentistry in 1910 (Yildiz, 2019). These developments not only improved healthcare services but also contributed to broader processes of institutional reform, cultural transformation, and social modernisation

Van Dyck himself played a central role in these developments. During his years at Abeih Seminary, he authored numerous textbooks covering subjects such as geography, algebra, geometry, prosody, logarithms, trigonometry, navigation, and natural philosophy. His intellectual interests extended across a remarkably broad range of disciplines, including chemistry, botany, geology, history, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy (Kassab, 2025; Zeuge-Buberl, 2015). Written in Arabic and often produced in collaboration with Butrus al-Bustani, these works were designed to support modern education and make scientific knowledge accessible to Arab readers (Yahya, 2024; Zeuge-Buberl, 2015). Originally appointed as a missionary physician, Van Dyck also became widely known for his medical service throughout Syria. Following the completion of the Smith-Van Dyck Bible translation project, he pursued specialised training in ophthalmology after recognising the widespread prevalence of eye diseases in the region. Upon returning to Syria, he resumed teaching at the Syrian Protestant College and was appointed Professor of Pathology. During sixteen years of service at the institution, he published numerous works on pathology, astronomy, chemistry, internal medicine, physical diagnosis, and trigonometry (Yahya, 2024). Even after his retirement from the university in 1882, Van Dyck continued his medical vocation by accepting a position at the Greek St George Hospital in Beirut. His contributions to both education and healthcare ensured that he was remembered not merely as a Bible translator but also as a physician characterised by integrity, generosity, intellectual openness, and perseverance. Contemporary Syrian communities affectionately referred to him as *al-hakim* (“the wise man”), reflecting the esteem in which he was held by many local residents (Zeuge-Buberl, 2015). Such perceptions help explain why segments of Syrian society welcomed ABCFM missionaries with considerable goodwill and enthusiasm.

### **ABCFM, the *Nahda*, and Competing Historical Interpretations**

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that ABCFM played a significant role in the emergence of intellectual reform movements and contributed to the interaction between missionary institutions and the Arab *Nahda*. Albert Hourani and George Antonius are among the scholars who regard American missionary institutions as important actors in the development of the *Nahda*. Their interpretations differ, however, in the degree of influence they attribute to missionary activity. Antonius argues that American missionary institutions were instrumental in initiating the Arab awakening,

whereas Hourani regards them as one important factor among several others that contributed to the movement's emergence (Grafton, 2015). According to Antonius, without the schools and publications established by American missionaries, Syrian society would not have acquired the intellectual foundations necessary for modernisation (Antonius, 2002). He further contends that missionary education elevated Syrian society to a higher cultural and intellectual standard, making the region one of the most advanced parts of the Arab world at the time. The ideas introduced by American missionaries, in his view, were subsequently transmitted and developed by graduates of missionary schools, thereby contributing to broader social transformation (Antonius, 2002).

This interpretation, however, has been challenged by A. L. Tibawi. Tibawi argues that the educational and publishing activities of American missionaries remained relatively limited in scale and influence. Consequently, he rejects the notion that the *Nahda* was primarily the result of missionary intervention. His criticism rests largely on the observation that many prominent *Nahda* figures, including Butrus al-Bustani, Nasif al-Yaziji, and Ya'qub Sarruf, were not simply products of American missionary institutions but emerged from broader local intellectual traditions. For Tibawi, there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that foreign missionary organisations, particularly American ones, served as the principal driving force behind the Arab renaissance (Tibawi, 1969).

David Grafton attempts to reconcile these competing interpretations by suggesting that Tibawi's critique reflects concerns regarding American cultural influence, while simultaneously acknowledging that American missionary institutions played a meaningful role in shaping a new Beirut identity and acted as catalysts for intellectual developments associated with the *Nahda* between 1830 and 1880 (D. Grafton, 2014). From this perspective, the presence of American missionary institutions and their translation projects cannot be separated from broader processes of cultural and intellectual renewal. The central question, therefore, is not whether missionary institutions contributed to the *Nahda*, but rather whether they should be regarded as its sole cause, its primary catalyst, or merely one factor among many.

Beyond their contribution to intellectual life, American missionary institutions also exerted a lasting influence on the development of educational structures throughout the region. The establishment of schools and the production of educational literature

enabled Syrian society to encounter new forms of knowledge and to engage with modernity in unprecedented ways. Educational institutions not only raised levels of literacy and learning but also transmitted new intellectual frameworks, social values, and cultural orientations to successive generations of students (Bahar, 2019).

### **Orientalist Analysis: Representation, Knowledge Production, and Power Relations**

When viewed through Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, the missionary activities of ABCFM in Greater Syria can be understood as more than a programme of religious evangelisation. They also constituted a process of knowledge production that shaped how Middle Eastern societies were represented, interpreted, and understood by Western actors. Missionary reports consistently portrayed local populations as communities characterised by educational decline, intellectual stagnation, and moral deterioration resulting from religious traditions perceived as having deviated from authentic Christianity (McKee, 2023). Such representations served to legitimise the presence of American missionaries and their reforming activities. Within Said's framework, this process exemplifies the construction of the Orient as an "object of improvement" requiring Western intervention (Said, 1978).

These representations subsequently informed a range of practical interventions, particularly in the fields of education, publishing, and healthcare. The establishment of mission schools, Abeih Seminary, and the Syrian Protestant College was intended not only to improve educational standards but also to introduce systems of knowledge derived from Western intellectual traditions. Through their curricula, textbooks, and languages of instruction, missionaries implicitly positioned Western knowledge as a model of progress to be adopted by Middle Eastern societies. In this context, education functioned as a mechanism of knowledge production through which Protestant values and Western modernity were disseminated among local populations (Abu-Uksa, 2019).

A similar pattern can be observed in translation and publishing activities. The translation of the Bible into Arabic, the publication of religious literature, and the expansion of missionary printing presses demonstrate that ABCFM was not merely disseminating Protestant doctrine but was also establishing new forms of religious authority. Through these activities, missionaries assumed the role of producers and distributors of knowledge, acquiring legitimacy to shape religious understanding and define acceptable forms of Christian interpretation (Yahya, 2025; Yahya et al., 2024).

Translation and publication, therefore, cannot be separated from the construction of intellectual authority within Arab Christian communities.

The power relations generated through ABCFM missionary activities did not necessarily take the form of direct political domination. Rather, they operated through intellectual, moral, and cultural influence. Modern education, healthcare services, and printed literature created opportunities for the reception of ideas originating in the West. Although local communities were not passive recipients and frequently negotiated, adapted, or resisted these ideas, missionaries possessed significant authority due to their access to educational resources, medical expertise, financial support, and international networks (Yavuz & Iskefiyeli, 2025). This position enabled them to exert considerable influence over the development of Arab Christian communities.

From the perspective of modernity and Western supremacy, the dominance of these institutions reflected broader assumptions embedded within modern Western thought. As Bessis argues, modernity was frequently accompanied by notions of Western racial and civilisational superiority (Bessis, 2003). Within this framework, America and Europe occupied the position of the “centre,” while other regions were relegated to the “periphery” (Marginson & Xu, 2023). This centre–periphery relationship involved not merely economic exchange but also asymmetrical structures of power in which the centre functioned as a producer and distributor of knowledge, while the periphery assumed the role of consumer (Sumandiyar et al., 2020). Such unequal relationships became normalised and institutionalised within the social order of modernity (Abu-Uksa, 2019).

Consequently, non-Western societies were often perceived as “free spaces” requiring development, education, and civilisation in order to overcome conditions characterised as backward, uncivilised, or underdeveloped. Within the mythology of Western supremacy, the West acquired the moral legitimacy to guide and reform other societies (Bessis, 2003). These assumptions are evident in the missionary rationale underlying American Protestant engagement with Christian communities in the Middle East.

ABCFM’s mission in Greater Syria should therefore be understood as a complex interaction between evangelisation, knowledge production, and power relations. Educational, medical, and publishing initiatives undoubtedly contributed to the development of local society; yet they also reflected Orientalist mechanisms that

positioned the West as the bearer of knowledge and progress, while casting the East as an object requiring guidance and reform. This finding demonstrates that nineteenth-century Christian missions were not concerned solely with the spread of religion but also with the formation of discourses and structures of authority that shaped relations between the West and the Middle East.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the missionary activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in nineteenth-century Greater Syria functioned not only as a project of evangelisation but also as a mechanism for knowledge production and cultural influence. Through educational institutions, healthcare services, Bible translation, and publishing activities, missionaries introduced forms of knowledge and social practices closely associated with Protestant theology and Western modernity. Employing Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, this study finds that Middle Eastern societies were frequently represented as communities in need of intellectual, moral, and religious reform, thereby legitimising missionary intervention. The principal finding of this study is that ABCFM missions contributed not only to religious evangelisation but also to the formation of religious authority, intellectual discourse, and social transformation among Arab Christian communities.

Theoretically, this article contributes to the fields of church history and mission studies by demonstrating that Orientalism is relevant not only to the analysis of colonial and political projects but also to the study of Christian missionary enterprises in the Middle East. In contrast to previous scholarship, which has primarily emphasised missionary contributions to education, language, and social development, this study argues that such contributions cannot be separated from the processes of representation, knowledge production, and power relations that accompanied them. Consequently, the article offers a perspective that understands Christian missions as a complex arena in which religion, knowledge, culture, and power intersect and interact.

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the sources employed are largely derived from missionary reports, mission publications, and historical literature written from Western perspectives, resulting in the limited representation of the voices and experiences of local Arab Christian communities. Second, the study focuses exclusively

on ABCFM activities in Greater Syria and does not provide a comparative analysis with other Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox missionary organisations operating during the same period. Future research should therefore incorporate Arabic-language sources, local correspondence, and comparative approaches in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between missions, knowledge production, and power relations in the modern Middle East.

## REFERENCES

- Abu-Uksa, W. (2019). Imagining modernity: The language and genealogy of modernity in nineteenth-century Arabic. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55(5), 671–682. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48543882>
- Anderson, B. S. (2011). *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education*. Texas: University of Texas Press
- Anderson, R. (2019). *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches: Volume II*. Canada: Typer Publishing House Inc
- Antoniou, G. (2002). *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the National Arab Movement*. London: Routledge
- Aritonang, J. S. (2018). *Berbagai Aliran di Dalam dan di Sekitar Gereja* (16th ed.). Jakarta: Gunung Mulia
- Bahar, H. (2019). *From Empire to Republic: The Role of American Missionaries in US-Ottoman Empire Relations and their Educational Legacy*. Berlin: Peter Lang Group
- Bessis, S. (2003). *Western Supremacy: The Triumph of an Idea?*, Trans. Patrick Camiller. New York: Zed Books
- Carpenter, K. M. (2019). *Presbyterianism in the Middle East*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press
- Coffey, J. (2021). “The Jesuits Have Shed Much Blood for Christ”: Early Modern Protestants and the Problem of Catholic Overseas Missions. In S. Maghenzani & S. Villani (Eds.), *British Protestant Missions and the Conversion of Europe, 1600–1900*. London: Routledge
- Conroy-Krutz, E. (2024). *Missionary diplomacy: Religion and nineteenth-century American foreign relations*. New York: Cornell University Press
- Deniz, M. (2022). *The Making of an American Saint: Autohagiographies of Levi Parsons*



- and Pliny Fisk, the First American Missionaries to the Middle East. *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, 58, 9-28. <https://izlik.org/JA87LR49UT>
- Grafton, D. (2014). The identity and witness of Arab pre-Islamic Arab Christianity: The Arabic language and the Bible. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 70(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2726>
- Grafton, D. D. (2015). *The Contested Origins of the 1865 Arabic Bible*. Dutch: BRILL
- Hill, P. (2020). *Utopia and Civilisation in the Arab Nahda*. London: Cambridge University Press
- Issa, R. (2022). *Modern Arabic Bible: Translation, Dissemination and Literary Impact*. Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd
- Kassab, E. S. (2025). *Contemporary Arab thought: Cultural critique in comparative perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Kramer, M. (2026). The “Dreary World” Of Christian Arabs. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2026.2628964>
- Makdisi, U. (2008). *Artillery of Heaven*. New York: Cornell University Press
- Marginson, S., & Xu, X. (2023). Hegemony and inequality in global science: Problems of the center-periphery model. *Comparative Education Review*, 67(1), 31–52. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/722760>
- McKee, S. D. (2023). *Indigenous Enlightenment: Printing and Education in Evangelical Colonialism, 1790-1850*. Chicago: University of Nebraska Press
- Penelas, M. (2021). Canonical and non-canonical sources for biblical history in two Arabic universal histories written by christians in al-Andalus. *Medieval Encounters*, 26(4), 415–442. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12340081>
- Pulaski, T. (2022). Brainerd had established a school that taught local people to read and write English. *Kentucky Philological Review*, 37, 32–39. [https://thekpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/KPR-Manuscript-Vol-37\\_draftA.pdf](https://thekpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/KPR-Manuscript-Vol-37_draftA.pdf)
- Rock, J. (2024). *The American University of Beirut: A source of American soft power in Lebanon*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Rodogno, D. (2025). The Near East Relief and the American Board Commissions for foreign missions. Humanitarian partnership and divorce in the Near East (1918–1929). *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 52(1), 75–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2023.2233216>
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books
- Samarra, K. A. (2015). The Rise of Modern Urbanity (Tamaddun) in the Arab World Education, Journalism, and Enlightenment. PhD Thesis. University of Adelaide

- Samarra, K. A. (2023). Seeing Cairo Through Paris: Nineteenth- Century Literary Observations by Egyptian Intellectuals. In *Routledge Handbook on Cairo: Histories, Representations, and Discourses* (pp. 205–216). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003019992>
- Segovia, F. F., & Sugirtharajah, R. S. (2009). A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings. In F. F. Segovia & R. S. Sugirtharajah (Eds.), *The Bible and Postcolonialism Series*. T&T Clark. <https://doi.org/10.2307/26423708>
- Sharkey, H. J. (2017). *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Middle East*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press
- Sheehi, S. (2004). *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida
- Sumandiyar, A., et al. (2020). *Sosiologi Perkotaan: Kapitalisasi Ruang dan Marginalisasi Sosial* (A. Upe, Ed.). Kendari: Literacy Institute
- Tejirian, E. H., & Simon, R. S. (2012). *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in The Middle East*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Tibawi, A. L. (1969). *A Modern History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine*. Macmillan and Co., Limited
- Tracy, J. (1840). *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*. New York: Spooner & Howland
- Van Dyck, C. (1849). On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1(4), 559–591. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3217606>
- Yahya, Y. K. (2024). Mengurai The Myth of Western Supremacy: Analisis Diskursif Kritis Ayat Tritunggal, Inkarnasi Yesus, dan Otoritas Alkitab Dalam Alkitab Terjemahan Bahasa Arab Smith-Van Dyck 1865. Dissertation. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
- Yahya, Y. K. (2025). Implikasi Teologis Pandangan Dunia Kristen Barat pada Gereja Timur Tengah melalui Penerjemahan Alkitab Smith-Van Dyck 1865 (Pt. 311-338). *SANCTUM DOMINE: JURNAL TEOLOGI*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.46495/sdjt.v14i2.304>
- Yahya, Y. K., et al. (2024). Paying Off Debt or Forgiving Debt? Semantic and Intertextual Analysis on Lord's Prayer in Smith-Van Dyck Arabic Bible Translation. *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 22(1), 73–94. <https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v22i1.12447>
- Yavuz, F., & Iskefiyeli, Z. (2025). Transnational Evangelical Collaboration: Cuthbert G. Young, the Turkish Missions Aid Society and the American Board of

- Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the Ottoman Empire. *History* (Pt. 606-623). *History*, 110(392). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.70025>
- Yeniucun, S. H. (2025). A Great Debate of American Missionary Activities on The Palestine: Zionism or Arab-Awakening. *Akademik Hassasiyetler*, 12(27), 726–747. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/akademik-hassasiyetler/article/1621094>
- Yildiz, Ö. (2019). Syrian protestant college in American missionary archives (1887-1902). *History of Education and Children's Literature: HECL*, XIV(1), 397–419. <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12809/1201>
- Yoyo. (2017). *Pemikiran Arab: Dinamika Intelektual, Ideologi, dan Gerakan*. Yogyakarta: Sociality
- Zeuge-Buberl, U. (2015). "I Have Left My Heart in Syria": Cornelius Van Dyck and the American Syria Mission. *Cairo Journal of Theology*, 2, 20–28. <https://journal.etsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Cairo-Journal-of-Theology-2-2015-Zeuge-Buberl.pdf>