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## A MISSION BEYOND CONVERSION: REVISITING THE LEGACY OF CECIL TYNDALE-BISCOE

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Tyndale-Biscoe, H. (2019). *The Missionary and the Maharajas: Cecil Tyndale-Biscoe and the Making of Modern Kashmir*. New Delhi: I. B. Tauris. xviii + [2] + 340 pp. Paperback, Rs. 768.

### ABSTRACT

*This essay offers a critical reading of *The Missionary and the Maharajahs*, Hugh Tyndale-Biscoe's biography of his grandfather, Cecil Tyndale-Biscoe—the Anglican missionary who occupied a singular, if uneasy, position in the social and educational landscape of colonial Kashmir between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Rather than conforming to the conventional image of the missionary as a proselytizer, Biscoe emerges here as a reformer whose self-declared goal was to 'make men, not Christians.' Yet such a declaration, far from signalling a departure from imperial ideology, reveals its own embeddedness in the moral certitudes of Victorian England—discipline, civic obedience, and masculine virtue—which Biscoe sought to implant in a society he considered lacking these qualities. The biography traces Biscoe's intricate negotiations with the structures of Dogra monarchy and British suzerainty, and his simultaneous discomfort with the region's political awakening during the 1930s—moment when demands for justice and representation disrupted the apolitical moral universe he envisioned. While the narrative draws fruitfully on family archives and institutional records to animate Biscoe's personal world, it stops short of interrogating the larger architecture of colonial power within which his mission unfolded. The Kashmiri voices—Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh—that formed the lifeworld of this educational experiment remain curiously muted, their reception of and resistance to Biscoe's interventions left unexplored. This review situates the biography within the broader scholarship on Christian missionary activity and colonial pedagogy in South Asia, underscoring the necessity of re-examining such 'reformist' projects not merely as benign alternatives to conversion, but as instruments of cultural discipline woven into the fabric of imperial governance. The question, ultimately, is not simply what Biscoe intended, but how the society he sought to reform perceived and contested this project of moral reconstruction.*

**Keywords:** Christian Missions, Colonial Kashmir, Cecil Tyndale-Biscoe, Educational Reform, Moral Imperialism