One of the greatest missionaries of all time said, "Indeed, I have become everything in turn to men of every sort, so that in one way or another I may save some" (1 Cor. 9:22 NEB). Can the missionary enterprise afford to be less flexible in today’s world of unprecedented social, political, and ideological ferment? Flexibility does not of itself guarantee effectiveness, but the alternative is stagnation.

W. Richey Hogg pays tribute in this issue of the Occasional Bulletin to the great American missiologist-historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette. The world of missiology is indebted to Latourette for his masterful interpretation of mission in transition from apostolic to modern times. He succeeded in describing the impact of the cultural environment on Christianity in each part of the world, as well as the effect of Christian expansion on its ever-widening environment.

Events following the Russian Revolution of October 1917 have necessitated a radical and very abrupt change in mission strategy for some parts of the world. Johannes Althausen here delineates what has happened to the venerable Berlin Mission. Looking into the future of the missionary enterprise as it faces the challenge of socialist societies, Althausen raises the question of possible alternatives to mission agencies as such.

Are liberation for the oppressed, the development of peoples, and Christian evangelism mutually exclusive objectives in mission? That question reflects a troubling polarization in contemporary missionary thought. The title of Emilio Castro’s article was the theme of a major consultation at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in May 1978, where Dr. Castro gave the keynote address.

In the Communiqué from the Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians, we come face to face with one of the most dramatic transitions in missionary development today: "a shift from [the] hagiography of yesterdays to a more critical approach which starts from the African world-view and examines the impact of Christianity and the varieties of African responses."

Looking Ahead

The World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism proposes a renewed emphasis on the relationship between God’s kingdom and our mission. The CWME announces a widely representative conference on the theme “Your Kingdom Come” to be held at Melbourne, Australia in May 1980—exactly seventy years after the great World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910—and we are pleased to publish the initial document describing the plan and purpose of that forthcoming conference. This will be only one of several important world conferences in 1980 concerned about the Christian mission to which we plan to give attention in coming issues.
The Legacy of Kenneth Scott Latourette

William Richey Hogg

Kenneth Scott Latourette (August 8, 1884–December 26, 1968) remains the twentieth century's towering figure in American missiology, and his worldwide influence continues. His adequate assessment requires a greater distance in time than is now available to place his contribution in proper historical perspective. Yet the tenth year following his death—one only 100 feet from his Oregon home and at night when an automobile struck and killed him—provides a useful occasion for a brief and preliminary consideration of his legacy.

1. The Man

All who read these pages know Latourette’s name and have benefited from his writings. Yet who was he? To answer that question one can turn to several sources that provide useful information. Fortunately, we have his 1967 autobiography and also the Association of Professors of Missions 1960 Festschrift. The latter includes Latourette’s taped address, “My Guided Life,” E. Theodore Bachmann’s splendid chapter on him, and the Yale Librarians’ “Select Bibliography.” Many memorial articles appeared in journals shortly after his death, but here only Searle Bates’s “Christian Historian, Doer of Christian History. In Memory of Kenneth Scott Latourette 1884–1968” in the International Review of Mission can be included.

Much in what follows supplements the foregoing from personal recollection, and documentation will be kept to a minimum. Headed for China, I went to Yale (1943–1946 and 1947–1950) to study under Latourette. I lived in the same dormitory in which he did—from his arrival at Yale and as a bachelor, he had chosen to live on the campus to be near his office and the convenience of the dining hall and to provide in his suite with its living room a convenient meeting place for student groups—and our common interests provided a close bond. With the refectory closed on Sundays, for six years on that day “Uncle Ken,” as many students addressed him, and I shared in my room a simple breakfast and supper. For two years (1944–1946) I served as his secretary and for several years participated in one of his weekly student groups. I was privileged to spend parts of two summers—the first in 1947 writing Tomorrow Is Here—in his old Oregon family home. He officiated at our wedding when his niece and I were married in Oregon, and after our return from India in 1955, he visited our home annually. The foregoing suggests some of the background from which this is written, with close friendship needing to be weighed as it relates to perspective and judgment.

The Formative Years. Latourette’s early years must be sketched briefly, but their elaboration appears in Beyond the Ranges. Each of his capable parents had earned an M.A. and had taught in college before their marriage—a rather remarkable background in the Pacific Northwest in the 1880s—but his father went on to become his capable parents had earned an M.A. and had taught in college before their marriage—a rather remarkable background in the Pacific Northwest in the 1880s—but his father went on to become a lawyer and banker in the small town of Oregon City. The family was knit together in deep Christian faith, family worship, and pietistic Baptist church life. Young Ken worked for his father for two years, planned to follow in his footsteps, and was graduated as valedictorian with a B.S. in natural sciences from Linfield College (Baptist). Yet at a summer conference when he signed the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) Declaration, he took a decisive step that would shape his life.

Already holding a degree, he crossed the continent and was allowed in one year to complete a B.A. in history at Yale in 1906. Then came a second decisive turning point. Asked to join Yale-in-China, he completed his M.A. and Ph.D. in history by 1909. Meanwhile, he had organized and guided a group of Bible study classes, each with its own leader, totaling some 350 students, and had attended Moody’s Northfield Conferences each summer. In 1909–1910, at age twenty-five, he began his “missionary career” by traveling for the SVM. The following summer, just missing Edinburgh 1910 by days, he went by way of Europe and the Trans-Siberian Railway to China.

In September at Changsha, he began his responsibilities for the year, chief of which was Chinese language study, but the following summer he suffered a severe bout of amoebic dysentery. Through the fall, at the very time of Sun Yat-sen’s revolution, although the prolonged, painful treatment seemed to be successful, he had suffered—unknown to him then, but with lifelong reminders—permanent colonic damage. His strength did not return, and so in March 1912 he returned to Oregon. He had been in China for twenty months and would never return, but in 1938 the Chinese government decorated him with the Order of Jade for his contribution to China through writing.

Two years of recovery followed in Oregon. During 1914–1916, he taught part-time at Reed College in Portland, developed Far Eastern courses, and wrote The Development of China. From 1916 to 1921 he served at Denison, a Baptist college in Granville, Ohio, as professor of history with courses in Far Eastern and Russian history. There he wrote The Development of Japan, also published his dissertation, launched a course on Christianity’s missionary expansion, and began gathering materials for his History of Christian Missions in China. He declined a post in the Far Eastern section of the State Department, but was ordained in 1918 and thus also became chaplain at Denison. In 1921 at age thirty-seven and succeeding Harlan Page Beach, he became D. Willis James Professor of Missions (“and Oriental History” added in 1927) at Yale. From that university he retired in 1953.

The Latourette Era. Occasionally references appear to “the Mott Era” or “the Edinburgh [1910] Era” or “the Latourette Era.” All three are related. The termini are not sharply drawn, but usually begin with the 1886 founding of the SVM with its watchword, “The evangelization of the world in this generation.” They end usually between 1948 and 1961, or even 1962–1965, the Vatican II years, when the ecumenical reality entered upon a decisive new stage.

Those years included the rise and decline of the Student Christian Movements (SCMs) and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the peaking of the overseas sending mission of the major western Protestant churches, the Social Gospel movement, the fundamentalist/modernist controversy in the United States, the two world wars, the Russian Revolution and Maoist China, the rise of neo-orthodoxy, the West’s growing pessimism beginning in the 1920s, and the growing belief in secularization, Christianity’s decline, and the “post-Christian Age.”

W. Richey Hogg had his seminary and doctoral work under Kenneth Scott Latourette at Yale and with him wrote Tomorrow Is Here. After two years with the International Missionary Council and three years as a Methodist missionary in India at Leonard Theological College, he went in 1955 to Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, where he is Professor of World Christianity.
The era shaped Latourette, but he also left his imprint on it. From World War II onward, he sought to present a larger and, he believed, truer picture of Christianity than many westerners with an increasingly pessimistic view could see. He wrote as a major era in mission and in Western European world hegemony was ending and also amid a massive political, technological, and cultural transition among the world’s peoples. Published during World War II, his *Expansion* achieved a unique *kairos* amid the shifting dynamics of the Christian *oikoumene*.

*Time Perspectives*. To understand Latourette adequately, one needs to recall his long perspective on time. He began his study of geology at Linfield, continued it at Yale, and maintained it as a lifelong interest. As geologists do, he thought in aeons. To illustrate: if the 1250-foot-high Empire State Building (on a scale in which 1 inch equals 313,333 years) represents this planet’s geologic lifespan (ca. 4.7 billion years), then, if atop it one were to place two razor blades—one on the other—the first would represent two thousand years of Old Testament and the second two thousand years of Christian history. From such a perspective he often referred to Christianity’s youth.

He had an equivalent interest in astronomy and knew that the universe is at least twice as old as our solar system. Like the psalmist, he saw in all this the glory of God’s handiwork. It also enabled him to place human history in a magisterial perspective that most folk find difficult to comprehend. Geologic and astral time provided the time-matrix for his writing on the “brief span” of Christianity.

*Biblical Understanding*. Many have accused Latourette of naïve and uncritical—even literalistic use of the Bible. Such judgments need to be assessed within the perspective noted above and placed in context. Latourette had a first-rate collection of works on critical biblical scholarship, and he had read them. He also had studied the history of biblical scholarship and saw in it the transient fads and “schools” that seemed often to negate one another. He recognized the problems that produced this situation, the difficulty of any ultimate resolution, and the constant need for reassessment. He utilized what he understood to be the best of critical biblical studies as an aid to faith’s understanding.

He appreciated good biblical scholarship, but believed that all too frequently the use of positivistic assumptions in its methodology produced sterile answers, not nourishment for Christian life. The early church had formed the New Testament canon. Its books reflected the remembered truth, and their message had sent the church on its amazing missionary course. God’s truth inspired the Bible. In this he seems to have been rather like his great predecessor, Gustav Warneck.

Like Barth, he believed the Great Commission to be the very words of the risen Lord. He also affirmed the virgin birth and the resurrection. He would, I believe, have agreed with J. V. L. Casserley’s statement, “It is more urgent and important to be biblical about history than to be historical about the Bible.” Similarly, he would have understood and responded to the significance in Tillich’s comment that in the Bible study Barth launched for the Confessing Church in the Third Reich that body “returned to the original Christian message . . . and dismissed higher criticism not as false but as insignificant.”

### “. . . Latourette remains the twentieth century’s towering figure in American missiology, and his worldwide influence continues.”

*Prayer and Devotion*. From college days Latourette had observed the “Morning Watch.” He had a deep devotional and prayer life and at minimum set aside special time for this each morning and evening. On the bookshelf beside his favorite chair were all the classics of prayer and devotion—Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant. William Temple’s *Readings in St. John’s Gospel* was a favorite and so were the three books on Christology (1942–1947) by John Knox, professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary, New York. Several times he had gone through the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola. In his spiritual meditation, Latourette lived in the thought world of biblical reflection and reality.

*Theological Perspectives*. In the strict sense of the word, Latourette was not a theologian and never thought of himself as being one. He had read the classics—Athanasius, Augustine especially, some of Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin—and also Temple, John and Donald Baillie, and some Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann. Yet his mind was that of the fact-gathering historian whose data yield patterns and enable generalizations—not that of the theologian.

Latourette wrote as a convinced Christian and spoke theoretically primarily through biblical phrases and images. In his writings on Christian themes his apologia for the faith is evident.
Indeed, in his research-findings for the Expansion, he believed that he was charting a mighty work of God expressed through human faith and obedience. Do not God's wonderful works constitute the primary data for theology? He was describing them. Implicit and explicit in his work is a theology of history informed by his own biblical understanding.

Theologically he declared himself to be Nicene and also affirmed the Chalcedonian Christology. Epistemologically, he viewed himself as Augustinian (“I believe in order to understand”), and with reference to natural and revealed theology he spoke of himself primarily as a Thomist. More than once in class again he returned to that parable to explain the problem of good and evil in history. God would deal with it in the end-time. Latourette would return to eschatology in later years but never in a fashion that fully satisfied his critics.

Latourette perceived a unitary, global history. Because the gospel is for all, one must view its outreach and impact, i.e., the history of Christianity, in the context of the whole world. Moreover, because all history exists in God's hands, at the deepest level all history is one. He recognized the problem with which Augustine had dealt in the two cities, but he rejected the contemporary dichotomy between world history and salvation history. Clearly, world history is under God's sovereign will and is what salvation is all about! Thus he wrote in 1962: “All history, could we but see it as God sees it, must be 'salvation history.'” This seems remarkably close to Pannenberg’s “universal history” and would seem to accord with Gutiérrez’s rejection of the two histories to affirm instead that “history is one” and that God’s salvific action underlies it. Yet Latourette would draw different inferences from that affirmation than does Gutiérrez.

Latourette’s biblical faith also led him to affirm a cosmic redemption. As a historian he could not be confident of history’s outcome. Yet as a Christian he believed that history would find its fulfillment in God. God “will triumph not only among human spirits but also in the entire universe.” Much with which the historian must deal is puzzling. Yet God’s action in history—his real presence—and all that flows from it may provide to Christians evidence for their hope. That evidence is not the basis for faith, but is history’s window through which God’s working may be seen. Beyond history lies the cosmic redemption.

2. His Missionary Vocation and Legacy

From the moment he signed the SVM Declaration, Latourette committed himself to mission—God’s calling for his life—and he remained the missionary evangelist. He began as an SVM secretary, went to China, and regarded his teaching and writing career in the United States as continued labor within the missionary fellowship.

The Churchman. Accepting the gospel, he gave himself to the church which grew from it and exists to make that gospel known throughout the world. He reflected often on the small minority among Christians fully committed to the gospel who, humanly speaking, have provided the church with its staying, reproductive, and outreach power among humankind. Their unheralded and unrecorded lives, the very bedrock of the church, largely elude the historian’s tools.

This may help to explain his dedication to local congregations and also, from college days onward, to the nearly continuous succession of Sunday school classes he taught—usually consisting of students. In later years he served an amazing array of boards and committees and occupied church posts of distinction, including the presidency of the American Baptist Convention (1951–1952) and for some years the presidency of the Japan International Christian University Foundation. Yet the Christian’s basic allegiance caused him to invest the congregation and its groups of concerned Christians with major importance. That focus and example constitute part of his legacy.

The Ecumenist. Latourette was committed to the ecumenical movement with its concern for Christian mission and unity throughout the world for the sake of the world. In it he discerned an emerging new reality. He pointed to inaccurate use of the word “reunion” with its erroneous assumptions and backward-looking stance. Instead, he focused on that new obedience, springing from a church newly planted among all the world’s peoples, which manifests its unity in Christ and in the growing oneness of the world Christian community. Involving the whole human family, this was a new work of God in history.

“To understand Latourette adequately, one needs to recall his long perspective on time.”
His ecumenism expressed itself in several ways. First, he served many bodies engaged in ecumenical work, and for him perhaps the most important of these was the International Missionary Council, now the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (WCC). He began attending its meetings in 1930, helped in 1934 to create, and became chairman of, its important Research Committee, and contributed to the shaping of IMC policies. Except for its editorial staff and beginning in 1918, he provided more articles by far (27) for the International Review of Mission than has any other writer.

"Perhaps he can best be described as a catholic evangelical steeped in the Bible and of evangelical conviction."

For nearly four decades, from 1928, he served as American correspondent for the IRM. He also represented the American (Northern) Baptist Convention at Utrecht in 1938 in the gathering that drafted the Constitution for the World Council of Churches.

Second, he was a bridge-builder. Especially from the 1950s he was welcomed by evangelicals, spoke in their gatherings, and taught at the Winona Lake School of Theology for two weeks each summer from 1964 until his death. Perhaps less known are his close relations with Roman Catholics, including a warm and long time friendship with John Considine, M.M. For some years he visited Maryknoll almost annually and was deeply touched that his History of Christian Missions in China was read aloud at meal-times and in its entirety to the Maryknoll students. For a time he was a member of the Catholic Historical Association, participated in several Catholic mission gatherings, and maintained contacts with Catholic leaders in Europe. He sought to bring together Christians of divergent views.

Third, an ecumenical perspective shaped all his writing. He was not the first historian to treat Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy together. Yet from the time when at Denison he began as a course what was to become his Expansion and also began preparations for his History of Missions in China, he followed a comprehensive, irenic, and worldwide treatment of the three groups. His global view and balanced appreciative openness toward each segment of the world Christian community became the hallmark of his writing. His 1953 History is the first comprehensive treatment of Christianity—as distinct from missionary expansion—written with ecumenical vision and intention. His ecumenical service and perspectives in writing constitute part of his legacy.

The Writer. Latourette's volume of writing impresses one immediately. The attached bibliography lists only his books but omits some hundreds of chapters, journal articles, and book reviews. Obviously, he disciplined his life to produce in such volume. Each day he wrote 1000 words and regularly made up any arrears. He saved book reviews for train trips to and from New York, sometimes managing one each way. He wrote whenever possible. He could stop in mid-sentence, teach a class and attend a committee, and then return and resume typing where he had ended. He penned the necessary corrections on each page—just one corrected draft—and sent it to his typist. His writing conveyed a certain refinement and was clear, smooth, and easy to read. It appeared at its best in a work such as his History of Christianity with vast coverage condensed into well-modulated sentences. Yet in the flat mosaic pattern of his more expansive works, his style produced solid but seldom inspiring prose.

Of necessity he utilized the carefully drawn bold stroke across a broad canvas, the tool for his extensive rather than intensive scholarship. Relying heavily upon the studies of others, he saw his creativity and originality residing in the conception of his work—a broad field covered in pioneering fashion. He was a "trail-blazer." Monographic specialists could amplify or qualify many of Latourette's generalizations. Yet he pioneered vast murals of scenes never before painted. The norms for such art are different from those applying, for example, to the medical artist's depiction of the eye and its muscles.

Latourette lived on the campus in quarters only one minute from his office in the superb Day Missions Library, which provided a unique setting for his research and writing. The man and the library were meant for each other. Yet Latourette was no denizen of the stacks. He lived a well-balanced life. With no car in New Haven, he walked everywhere, and at least twice weekly took friends to dinner. He especially enjoyed Yale productions of Gilbert and Sullivan.

He was prudently careful in his personal expenditures, but was generous in his giving. Unbeknown to others, he provided timely aid, sometimes substantial, to theological students who might otherwise have had to leave seminary. Indeed, he divided his salary in four parts: he lived on one-fourth; he gave away or contributed one-fourth; he saved one-fourth—fearing inflation and never wanting to be a burden on anyone in his old age; and he maintained inherited family responsibilities in Oregon with the remaining one-fourth.

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He was a bachelor, and some argued that this enabled his prolific writing. In fact, at one time there had been a long and deep affair of the heart in which his proposal was rejected—she, too, went on to a distinguished academic career—and after which he accepted the unmarried state as a vocational enablement for the most productive missionary career. He sought always to know God's will for his life and believed that it had been guided. Without responsibility for an immediate family, he could do much that would otherwise have been impossible. Yet his disciplined commitment to writing—and with two or three exceptions, he did all his own research—sprang from his conviction that God's will for him was to use his obvious gifts this way.

Latourette wrote in four distinct fields. Although most are
unaware of it, the first is Christian higher education, and in this area, from 1918 into the 1950s, he wrote only articles, no books. His initial concern related to students and the meaning of faith for their problems. With eye-catching titles, his articles appeared chiefly in the student YMCA’s *The Intercollegian*. His other and longer-range interest focused on the Christian college and university and especially on its dechristianization or secularization—a phenomenon he had already noted in Christian institutions in Asia and Africa. He argued that a university can be Christian, while his colleague-opponents vigorously contested that by definition, and to be fully representative, a university cannot be exclusively Christian.

“**He sought to bring together Christians of divergent views.**”

The other three major areas of his writing appear by section in the appended bibliography.

As Section I in the bibliography discloses, he built his reputation first as an expert on the Far East (his second area of writing). America was greatly lacking in Asian studies, and he wrote to dispel ignorance, create understanding, and enlist scholarly interest. He emphasized the cultural dimension and, unlike most European scholars, stressed the recent past, for it helped to explain the revolutionary encounter of Asia with the West. After all, he had lived through China’s revolution of 1911! His books on China and Japan went through repeated editions, and *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (1934) established his reputation as a sinologist.

His *History of Christian Missions in China* (1929) emerged from his dual interest in China and in missions, and until 1936 was his only real work in missions. Just as William Carey first established his reputation in Britain and on the Continent with his scientific botanical studies from India, so too Latourette emerged first as an expert in Asian studies.

The bibliography also indicates that he compacted his published Asian writing into two periods: the first from 1917 to 1934 (the dissertation had been written in 1909), and the second from 1946 to 1954 (*China* [1964] was basically a revised edition of its 1954 predecessor). The “sandwiching” is instructive. It left the years from 1934 to 1944 free for the *Expansion* and its related cluster of books. With that task completed, he produced his other major and best-selling Asian work (despite its title, it was a history of Asia), *A Short History of the Far East* (1946). The remaining ones were “summer books,” i.e., written in Oregon, which enabled him to give major attention to his forthcoming *History of Christianity*. Except for the YMCAs *World Service* (1957), with preliminary research work provided and sent to Oregon for summer writing, he devoted much of the 1950s to his second magnum opus, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*.

*Missions* constitute his third area of writing. Undoubtedly, he will be remembered best for his pioneering *History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 vols., 1937–1945). It stands as the first major work to trace the missionary outreach of the entire church across nearly twenty centuries and blazed a trail for others to follow and develop. Its familiar schematization is notable: the first three volumes (1400 pp.) cover the first 1800 years; the next three survey “The Great Century,” the nineteenth (1550 pp.); and the final volume examines the period 1914-1944 (550 pp.). In short, four volumes and 60 percent of the pages related to the most recent 130 years of the faith.

Many still debate Latourette’s unique advance/recession pattern of missionary pulsations in the *Expansion*, with each advance, like the waves of the incoming tide, moving further ahead, and each recession becoming a shorter decline. Some have scorned it and profess to see in it the optimism of evolutionary progress. They dismiss it as naive and point to Latourette’s inadequate reckoning with New Testament eschatology. He allows, as he must, for a reversal of the pattern and its collapse, but acknowledgment of this more sober New Testament eschatology hardly counterbalances the emphasis placed on the long-term pattern he discerns. On this his critics concentrate their fire.

Latourette proved that the Great Century had been unprecedented in Christianity’s expansion. In this, and in all the vast panorama that lay behind it, he gave the history of missions, so long ignored in church history and the history of doctrine, status as an essential dimension of and indeed matrix for both. All else that he did was an outgrowth of the implications, themes, or issues present within the *Expansion*.

The fourth area of Latourette’s writing relates to the history of Christianity—as distinct from missions. In it his *History of Christianity* represents his most notable work. It does not condense the *Expansion*, but is indeed a new work—a departure from anything he had ever done before. In partial preparation for it he audited Robert L. Calhoun’s Yale course in the history of doctrine and did enormous supplementary reading, including the doctrinal histories of Seeberg and Harnack.

Its unique contribution is to set the history of Christianity within the context of mission and of universal history. Accordingly, it follows the *Expansion’s* periodization. Within the original 1500 pages, some 200 only are allocated to missionary outreach, but the gospel is set within the *oikoumenê*. Moreover, its proportions differ from those of the *Expansion*. The first fifteen centuries claim 45 percent and the period from 1500 to the present receives 55 percent of the text. Christianity’s impact on the whole world since the sixteenth century becomes clear, including the emergence of the world Christian community. In coverage for the past two centuries, Latourette also introduces a subtle but powerful shift of emphasis. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America he focuses not upon the missionary incursion, but upon the growth of Christianity in those areas. Christians in the Third World have warmly welcomed this work, but its price militates against its wider use.

One confronts here another of Latourette’s pioneering efforts. It emphasizes the universality of the gospel and the unique world Christian community that has emerged from it. The latter now embraces the gifts, cultural treasures, and needs of all humankind. It also becomes the agent for religious and ideological encounter and for theological development in the period ahead. Latourette offers a post-Christendom, ecumenical, and global perspective. The writing of Christianity’s history dare never again revert to provincialism. The gospel’s universality, once proclaimed in Palestine, appears here as a living reality.

*The History of Christianity in a Revolutionary Age* (5 vols., 1958–1962) chronicles the history of the church in the past 150 years. Ecumenical perspective, clarity of organization, and detailed coverage are all present, but interpretation is minimal, repeats that set forth earlier, and is not probing. Sustained reading becomes tedious, but brief reference use is helpful. Packed with factual detail and probably the outstanding instance of Latourette’s effort to be comprehensive and objective, it will long serve as a reference to the period and to other resources. This is its strength.

In short, Latourette’s legacy in writing is vast and includes several notable pioneering works of enduring worth.

*The Professor.* Latourette acknowledged that his classroom presentations were only average. He lectured as he wrote, with clarity and in factual detail. Students responded in proportion to their interest in the subject. He trusted the power and the sweeping...
Far more important was his role as teacher-pastor to students, who were his chief interest. He managed time for student groups and for conversations with the lonely, the confused, and the seeking. Daily in prayer he remembered his former students around the world and also maintained a correspondence with them that amazed and pleased all, even when only three penned sentences filled a full page. Moreover, in the morning of each class day he reviewed the rolls of those he would meet in class that day and remembered each in prayer. He was no scintillating lecturer, but the students who had him knew that he loved and cared for them, and they responded to him.

Some of his colleagues smiled patronizingly at Latourette’s missionary evangelism, but they regarded him as a responsible and dependable member of the teaching guild. In the late 1930s when he was involved in his heaviest work in producing the Expansion, they asked him to become director of Graduate Studies in Religion. He agreed, and under the dean of the Graduate School coordinated all doctoral programs in religion at Yale. He assumed this administrative task in addition to all his other responsibilities and held it until retirement.

On occasion through bestowing one of its several Sterling Professorships, Yale University grants signal honor to its outstanding faculty persons. Only one ever had been given to the Divinity School faculty, and it was held by Dean Luther A. Weigle. On Weigle’s retirement in 1949, Yale’s president made Latourette a Sterling Professor of the University, and as such he retired in 1953. His legacy was that of edifying colleague, pastor to students, and the scholar-teacher-administrator.

The Scholar. Latourette was a productive, publishing scholar. The academic world first knew him as a sinologist and expert on the Far East. He sought always to encourage young academics to enter and develop the field and before 1920 had persuaded the AHA to provide the Far East a place in its annual programs. He steadily pushed development of the discipline. Yet he had early determined that his chief field would be mission. Thus as younger and better-trained scholars emerged, he gave less and less writing time to Asia, but with continuing keen interest produced scholarly articles into the 1960s. In tribute to his contribution, colleagues in the field elected him president for 1954–1955 of the Far Eastern Association (Association for Asian Studies, 1955ff.). Concern for a universal view of history and especially Asian studies was part of his legacy.

Second, in missions or missiology—a word he uttered with a tilt of the head and a wry smile—he was unique. His widely acclaimed writings alone greatly enhanced the field. Yet his worldwide reputation as sinologist, historian of Christianity, and ecumenical churchman gave the discipline a recognized stature it had never before enjoyed. Clearly the Expansion was his great contribution. It shaped all else that he did and will be a landmark for generations. Perhaps its greatest impact is yet to be in helping the church to understand its missional nature when, in an age of universal history and as a worldwide minority, it enters into dynamic engagement with all humankind and becomes, at least in part, a sacramental leaven for the whole. Dedicated scholarship in mission also constitutes part of his legacy.

Third, the guild of historians twice honored him: first, the American Society of Church History elected him president in 1945; and second, the American Historical Association elected him president in 1949. As a historian of Christianity, he used God’s concern for the nations and his outreach to them through his covenant people (cf. Gen. 10–12) as the context within which the history of Christianity and the church must be seen. That work began with Abraham’s call, focused in the incarnation, and continues in encounter with cultures and faiths—and indeed with the very nature of man—until history’s consummation. What lies beyond is not within the historian’s province, but the historical record traced by Latourette of the gospel’s impact and spread cannot be dismissed. Its interpretation may be debated, but its documented reality also becomes part of his legacy.

From Europe came criticism of his theology. Yet also from Europe came response to the decisive importance of his contribution. Professor Ernst Benz of Marburg in 1961 in his Kirchengeschichte in Okumenischer Sicht [“Christianity in Ecumenical Perspective”] probes Latourette carefully, notes his placing of church history within world history, and contrasts this with the usual provincial and narrow style of German and Continental church history. Latourette, he claims, frees church history from its previous regional blinders and offers it a new era. Indeed, in his comprehensiveness he provides an “Ecumenical Baedeker Guide” for the universal church. Benz’s key chapter on Latourette is entitled “Weltgeschichte-Kirchengeschichte-Missionsgeschichte” [“World History-Church History-Missions History”].

Can one then see a prophetic fulfillment in a new multivolume work from Germany still in progress? Entitled Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte [“Church History as Missions History”], its first volume appeared in 1974. Done in the grand style, with a specialist producing each chapter, it proceeds on the conviction that the history of the church is rooted in its mission and in its conveying the gospel to new peoples and cultures. The introductory chapter affirms what surely Latourette would have believed to be the substance of his conviction and intention for the proper presentation of church history. Perhaps in its own way this new work may also be seen as part of the legacy of Kenneth Scott Latourette.

Thus are the lineaments of an unusual and rich legacy drawn—one created by faith and dedicated to the furtherance in life and understanding of God’s mission.

Notes


A Latourette Bibliography

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What Comes after Mission Agencies?  
A Reflection on Four Decades in the History of the Berlin Mission

Johannes Althausen

The history of Christian missions in the twentieth century reflects those emancipatory developments by which the peoples of the southern hemisphere have broken away from the North and the West. The conflicts and difficulties of mission organizations must be understood in the light of this context. All generations of missions have known that the gospel is transmitted through the submission of the transmitting persons. The goal of mission is to make itself superfluous. However, the question remains as to whether this justifies the current decline in some quarters of the missionary enterprise. There is no easy answer to this. Nevertheless, we must try to evaluate our experiences, and the following is an attempt to do this.

Since 1949 the location of the Berlin Mission Society has been in a socialist country, that is, the German Democratic Republic. The experiences of it and the other missions located there—the largest are the Leipzig Mission and the Gosner Mission—cannot be found anywhere else. The socialist October Revolution of 1917 determined there both societal life and power relationships. From the perspective of world developments this is a challenge that is relevant to mission history, since the liberation movements of the southern continents must give a large measure of the credit for their successes to the political situation created by the existence of the socialist states. A review of forty years of the Berlin Mission will show that incorrect assessments were inevitable. However, the mission also had to experience the consequences of "submission." I should like to account for this. Let us begin with a report.

Stages of the Development of the Berlin Mission over Forty Years

1. Before 1933

The years between 1870 and 1914 were a period of comprehensive expansion for the Berlin Mission, which had been founded in 1824. The development of relationships to parishes was optimal, owing to good parish "publicity" and clear, focused, generally accepted goals. There was a good relationship to church leadership, although the Berlin Mission was an autonomous organization, unrelated to the state church. In the parishes in the mission field, the first careful steps toward independence were encouraged (1885—first ordination of a native pastor; 1912—church and parish constitution in South Africa). However, the mission was most interested in expanding its work, especially in the areas of German colonial rule.

After World War I, the economic bases of the parishes decreased. The union between state and church was dissolved, and the leadership of the Berlin Mission had to reorient itself. It aligned itself clearly with the church. The strongly church-oriented consciousness expressed in such books as Otto Dibelius's *Century of the Church* also appeared in mission work. Overseas, after the painful wartime separation from home, the work of the missionaries continued without any basic change in orientation. The movement toward independence for the young churches grew slowly.

2. The Berlin Mission and the Church Struggle

In the years after 1933 the mission had to make decisions of widespread significance. At first these pertained only to the situation at home. However, soon the whole mission was subject to stresses of basic import. The mission had to deal with the idolization of nationalistic and cultural traditions, as well as imperialistic intentions, although this was only partially recognizable in its written and oral statements. Its reflections on the biblical foundations of world mission were profound. These reflections proved most important in dealing with the tasks that developed after 1945.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the financial problems of mission agencies were especially large. The parishes at home survived the depression of the 1930s, but they also experienced the first noticeable tendencies toward secularization in a financial crisis. Legal measures of the National Socialist government made mission collections even more difficult. The mission leadership called this an existential threat and required stringent frugality among its workers overseas. Because of this, a basic reevaluation became necessary. It was essentially concerned with the relationship between church and world mission. This was inevitable after the theological discussions of preceding years, but it was also the only way to find a suitable organizational solution for the emergency facing the Berlin Mission.

The director of the Berlin Mission, Dr. Siegfried Knak, acted as representative of the German mission societies to the government and the churches in the 1930s, in part because of his residence in Berlin, but also because he was trusted by all concerned. The basic decisions of the Berlin Mission took place in light of this role played by its director in the context of the concerns and actions of the Mission Council, which the German missions formed in October 1933. The needs of the missions at first caused the Mission Council to take the initiative to join the official church. But as Nazi influence in the church leadership became apparent, the council clearly sided with the Confessing Church. In June 1934 the council formulated a confession that included the Theological Declaration of Barmen. In November 1934 the council declared itself estranged from the Reichsbishop and took a clear stand against the "Führer Principle" in the church. Careful reflection on the missionary essence of the church based on the long years of experience of the German missions had to lead to clear spiritual decisions. From the beginning, Knak was a member of the Pastors’ Emergency League, a central group in the Confessing Church. His thoughts on mission and the church were founded in

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This article was translated by Barbara Green, a Presbyterian minister residing in West Berlin and studying church life in the German Democratic Republic under the auspices of the NCCCIUSA in cooperation with the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR.
his confession of Jesus Christ. For Knak, in confessing Christ the missionary task in the whole world and in his own people were united. For him, to differentiate between his own people and the rest of the world was to deny his confession.

Externally the Berlin Mission participated in the general collapse of the 1930s and 1940s. During the war, communication with the overseas districts broke off almost completely. In 1941 the seminary had to be closed, and the seminarians became soldiers. Gifts for mission work decreased. Like most other segments of life in the nation, the Berlin Mission experienced a low ebb in 1945.

3. International Support

The experiences of the years 1933–1945 have not been fully described, however, without mention of the new international relationships. The support of the ecumenical community, which Christians of other countries extended to the Confessing Church, included the missions. At first this took the form of financial aid for the overseas work. Shortly before the beginning of the war in 1939, agreements were reached which regulated the administration of leadership responsibilities in case contact between the continents broke off. When put into practice, these plans were fraught with difficulties. However, developments toward the internationalization of mission work were introduced, which later neither could nor should be reversed.

4. A New Beginning

After the end of the Nazi regime and the end of the war in 1945, when the Berlin Mission was able to resume functioning, it was clear to all those responsible that they could not simply pick up where they had left off in the 1930s. First of all, the external circumstances were completely changed. The supportive community at home had become much smaller because neighboring countries had acquired the eastern provinces. The economic structures had to be completely rebuilt. In China cooperation with Europeans came to an end. Churches in East Africa, with partners from America, Sweden, and Denmark, continued their development toward autonomy, and were able to relate to the Berlin Mission with new maturity. The leadership of the Berlin Mission retained genuine influence overseas solely in South Africa. However, there the apartheid policy of the white population had reached a new stage.

In 1949 Gerhard Brennecke was called to assume leadership of the Berlin Mission. In him the mission found a man who was young enough to make an energetic new beginning, but who could also bring to this work his experiences as a student and a mission candidate in the Confessing Church. His efforts were characterized by a deliberate attachment to the church, by the ecumenical orientation of his mission activity, and by his assistance toward the independence of the younger churches.

5. The Church and Mission

Brennecke quickly became well known in the church. Like his predecessor, Knak, he became involved in synods, committees, and church leadership. He made decisive contributions during the integration of the diaconal institutions into the church in the late 1950s. From 1949 on, he edited the most important church monthly journal in the German Democratic Republic, Zeichen der Zeit ("Signs of the Times"). After complicated negotiations, in 1960 he was able to found an Ecumenical Mission Office, through which a line of direct responsibility for mission was institutionalized in church leadership. In contrast to American churches, this did not achieve full integration of mission into the church. However, it did create a foundation for the next steps.

Because of his literary talent, the director had considerable influence orally and in writing on the development of consciousness in the parishes, even though this work met with much resistance, the causes of which were very complex.

6. Ecumenical Mission

Based on his personal relationships, language skills, and great gifts of leadership, beginning in 1948 Brennecke participated in all of the important ecumenical meetings of the World Council of Churches and cooperated with the Lutheran World Federation. From 1961 to 1968 he was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. These experiences were formative for his concept of ecumenical mission. "This concept means precisely that which was already present at the time of the first Christians. It means that the church then and now is more closely related and has grown more toward unity as an essentially missionary church in its witness to the world and for the world than could be guessed from the external constellation of divisions and schism" (World Mission in an Ecumenical Age, Stuttgart, 1961, p. 312). Ecumenical mission includes unity between diakonia and mission, as well as that between church and mission and a worldwide task at home and abroad. The Ecumenical Mission Office tried to put this concept into practice. Unfortunately, other forces came into play, which hindered the success of this attempt. Integrating the various branches of church work proved, in practice, not so easy as integrating their tasks in theory. This work, begun in 1960, is not yet completed.

"... liberation movements of the southern continents must give a large measure of the credit for their successes to the political situation created by the existence of the socialist states."

7. Independent Younger Churches

With respect to the development of the younger churches, Brennecke was able to take action during two trips to South Africa in 1950–1951 and in 1958. In a relatively short time independence was achieved. As a result of the first trip, the Lutheran Council of Churches in South Africa was founded in 1953. In 1960–1963 the Lutheran regional churches in South Africa became independent. At the same time the Evangelical Church of the Union (Evangelische Kirche der Union), the home church of the Berlin Mission, assumed most of the responsibility for a partnership with the new churches, including large financial obligations. After the organizational separation of the Berlin Mission from its branches in the Federal Republic of Germany and in West Berlin, partnership from the German Democratic Republic was essentially limited to friendly contacts. The remaining leadership responsibilities were taken over by the Berlin Mission's western counterparts. Between 1973 and 1976 it was possible in the German Democratic Republic to create legal relationships that completed the churches' independence proclaimed in 1963, for example, through transfer of mission property to the churches, etc.

8. Mission in a Socialist Society

It is not clear from this description of developments within the Berlin Mission that they were, in fact, a response to the challenge of a socialist society. The political situation, as well as the growing difficulties in communication between anticomunist South Africa and the German Democratic Republic, caused decisions to be made that would have to be made anyway under other social conditions. But in recognizing this,
have we completely accepted the situation? As a person involved in this concern, I must say that to our own detriment we have not succeeded in accepting it. That which we have experienced and continue to experience can be expressed only in questions.

In review we are now able to recognize more clearly than twenty years ago that the Berlin Mission's orientation toward the church was also problematic. Only with great difficulty was the mission able to open itself to the challenge of determining a position with respect to societal realities. This was the result of a conservative pattern of thought in the church, but also resulted from the fact that mission as such was regarded as having no business in a socialist society. From the outset, mission work was judged to be an opponent of the liberation movement in the Third World, and it was strictly rejected. Only gradually did a certain differentiation become recognizable in both points of view.

... it was clear to all those responsible that they could not simply pick up where they had left off in the 1930s."

The new structural organization of the relationship between the church and the mission could be successful only if it were supported by a new understanding of mission at the parish level. This process was made more difficult both by isolationist tendencies and by the difficulties mentioned above in maintaining contact with the situation overseas. In addition, in a socialist society there is a monopoly on information, which increases the difficulties of missions in developing possibilities for a Christian interpretation of the liberation history of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The only effective alternative to date has been the western mass media, which can be received in the German Democratic Republic. However, they do not offer what is needed to reorient Christians responsibly in their attitude toward the liberation movements in the southern hemisphere.

During the Berlin Mission's efforts in support of independence for the younger churches, it became necessary to find new partners in the northern hemisphere. Without their help, independence would have been a separation without renewal. The churches in the German Democratic Republic were only partially able to do what was needed, as they did not have the necessary financial, personnel, and structural resources. Part of the problem was rooted in the political situation. The intentions of the Berlin Mission toward its daughter churches could be realized only very slowly. This "moratorium" was imposed involuntarily; thus there was not much discussion about it.

In 1969 the Berlin Mission in the German Democratic Republic was relieved of all legal responsibilities of the past toward the younger churches. Nonetheless the relationship of prayer has continued to be strong. Programs of material aid have developed from it, but they have a different status from formerly. Unfortunately, many parishes have let the relationship fade away, intensifying the question as to whether and how they are doing justice to the missionary task of the church. Answers to this vary widely. The Berlin Mission and other mission organizations continue to offer stimulation, inspiration, and ideas. Indeed, this is the task remaining to them.

Thus it seems that the story of a mission society in a socialist country is one of degeneration. This confirms the fears or suspicions of some Christians in other countries, but it is not yet the end of the story. Through the experiences of recent years, the eyes and ears of many Christians have been opened for God's mission. The following exposition will attempt to reflect some of this. We may not assume that the necessary conclusions have been drawn everywhere. It is more important that people in other social orders and horizons of experience ask themselves whether or not such guidelines might be important for them. In each numbered section below, I shall begin with a general question, which will then be applied to our experience.

Evaluation

1. Is the missionary task fully realized in the simple symbolic presence of Christians, or must it explicitly seek conversion in every case?

This much is sure: in our situation we have discovered anew how clearly an authentic Christian life speaks for itself. Religious influence is undesirable to a consistently secular world, and eagerness to convert is a suspicious element in it. This sensitivity is present also in our situation—especially because, on the basis of historical experience, longings for power among Christians may be suspected behind the desire to evangelize. By contrast, discrete Christians and a quiet Christian presence may be a much clearer witness to Christ. When this observation is applied to the question of justification for the existence of a missionary society, the inevitable conclusion is that the organizational independence of a mission is not necessary if the congregations live authentically. Similarly, the younger churches do not need a mission organization to relate to. We reflected on this a great deal in the leadership of the Berlin Mission in the 1950s and 1960s. At the 1967 annual meeting of the Berlin Mission, a dispute emerged over the question of the relationship between "presence" and "conversion."

Ten years later we are able to say that it was right that we did not then decide to dissolve the Berlin Mission. We are recognizing more and more clearly that the institution of the church has a missionary character only when there is an organization for mission in it. Of course, the missionary organization's perception of its task must be different from the former perception of the Berlin Mission. It now collects or develops forces for church renewal, which make mission preaching possible, wherever and however that is needed. In our situation, we must pay much more attention than formerly to helping people toward an authentic life. Conversion is possible only where the light of faith is already shining. The quality of discipleship is crucial.

"Is the missionary task fully realized in the simple symbolic presence of Christians, or must it explicitly seek conversion in every case?"

2. Mission brought about the ecumenical church. The recent ecumenical movement has its historical roots in mission. Today, in reverse direction, how can the ecumenical movement be fully realized in mission?

To the extent to which peoples and churches of the southern continents became independent after 1945, a serious question grew among Christians and church workers as to whether ecumenism should completely replace mission. This challenge is correct when it expresses the desire to adjust the relationships between old and new churches to a basis of partnership and equality, which usually calls into question the intermediary function of the mission agency. The challenge is wrong, when it replaces the commission to preach with interchurch relationships. Since socialists are very sensitive toward patronizing tendencies, a correct criticism from Christians can often be so strong that it verges on becoming wrong.
Based on western church history and mission experience, the answer to this in the German Democratic Republic cannot be couched in the framework of the existing structures of church and mission. We must find new examples of ecumenical mission work and the corresponding life models and institutions. In them, there should be a unity formed within preaching or missionary endeavor as an expression of our knowledge of worldwide unity in Christ. Several beginnings toward this may be found within the Ecumenical Mission Office founded in 1960 through Brennecke’s efforts, today called the Ecumenical Mission Center (EMC). Two of these are noteworthy here. There is a group in the EMC that works for mission renewal in the German Democratic Republic from within the worldwide network of relationships of Urban and Industrial Mission. Parish seminars of missionary orientation have only a loose relationship to the Berlin Mission or its successor; in 1973–1975 their topic was the theme of the World Mission Conference in Bangkok, “Salvation Today.” Both activities are organized internationally and interdenominationally. They take place with conscious missionary intention. Other examples could be mentioned. I shall not extensively discuss the organizational questions that arise here.

It does seem important to point out that the question of unity and mission has acquired a secular counterpart in the German Democratic Republic. Growing out of the workers’ movement, it is concealed behind the catchword “solidarity.” “Solidarity forms a relationship between the workers’ movement and all of the progressive forces of recent liberation history, especially in the Third World. Christians must ask themselves whether their efforts for unity and witness can receive new impetus from this context. When they confess their freedom in Christ, then their ministry to others will take place in solidarity with them. Of course, by faith in him who is our peace (Eph. 2:14), Christians know that love and unity in Christ are more than just solidarity.

3. There is a deep, internal, inseparable relationship between mission and renewal in the church. To what extent is an organized mission enterprise indispensable if internal and external renewal of the church are to be guaranteed?

Those persons who followed the story of the Berlin Mission, as described above, may be asking themselves about the relationship between mission and renewal, since to them it may seem that the end of the history of mission societies is approaching. And what comes after that? Will renewal of the church and its essential commission to witness in the world still be possible?

The Awakening at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a vital expression of that reforming spirit which the Word of God brings to faith. By means of such institutional fruits as the mission societies, it contributed to keeping that tradition alive. The tension between a national church and a free church became the model for renewal of the church in a national church tradition. Mission and renewal merged into each other.

“The challenge is wrong when it replaces the commission to preach with interchurch relationships.”

Today we are at the end of the national-church situation, in which church and society were interwoven. What model of church can we now use to remodel the life forms of the church? The fate of the missions raises the question whether or not the model of a free church is of any use in a national church. Was not the vitality of this model defused along with the end of the national church? The Word of God creates faith. But the historically developed model of renewal in mission seems to be no longer adequate.

Perhaps ecumenical experiences can help us further. We have had new encounters with Orthodox church traditions. Also the charismatic movement has brought new emphases with its pentecostal experiences. We are not afraid of the future. But the theological congruence of mission and renewal is clearly under question.

4. How can the gospel be passed from culture to culture in a way that allows it to be independently accepted anew each time?

Historical studies of missions by Marxist scholars have created a picture of the work of the missions in the Third World that has shocked many Christians. Some of these publications have a general or a deliberate anti-Christian tendency. However, in many ways they also give us a useful picture of ourselves. They remind us that mission often played a very questionable role in the context of cultural and political expansionism. The conclusion of this era shows that acceptance of the gospel is indeed a miracle of the Holy Spirit, which sometimes happens through mission, sometimes in spite of it, and more often than expected without any intervention from mission. We are only at the beginning of understanding this relationship between mission and culture, but it is being discussed everywhere. The challenges of Black Theology and similar currents are being attentively followed in our country. We hope to participate, unrestricted, in that task which has always been the true task of mission: responding to the presence of God in the world, and following the way of the gospel.

I have sketched above a broad horizon of mission history. Based on the liberation history of the peoples of our century, the course of developments of the Berlin Mission appears to be correct, although also often painful. We accept what is assigned to us, and look forward to the future, confident that God will personally effect the salvation of the world.
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Liberation, Development, and Evangelism: Must We Choose in Mission?

Emilio Castro

A s can be seen from many formal statements made at international meetings and from documents issued by ecclesiastical authorities, there is a growing consensus among Christians on the reciprocity between evangelism and Christian service, between proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and participation in human liberation. According to the Lausanne Covenant:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is the kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the Gospel invitation, we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church, and responsible service in the world (Lausanne Covenant, 4).

Or again, in Lausanne Covenant, 5, we find the following paragraph: “Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. . . . We affirm that evangelism and sociopolitical involvement are both part of our Christian duty.” Orthodox theologians meeting in Bucharest in 1974 expressed similar views in a statement entitled “The Evangelistic Witness of Orthodoxy Today”:

The evangelical witness is a call to salvation, which means the restoration of the relationship of God and man as understood in the Orthodox Christian teaching of theosis. This message has its source in the Scriptures, which witness the redemption of mankind in Jesus Christ, yet it also includes a worldview that locates man vis-à-vis God and vis-à-vis his fellow man as individual and society, as well as his own personhood and destiny.

It includes both the God and man (vertical) relationship and the human being to fellow human being (horizontal) relationship.

One could quote from many other documents, such as those issued from the Bangkok and Nairobi assemblies, besides the Evangelium Nuntiandi encyclical. All such documents acknowledge the close connection between these different dimensions of our lives as Christians.

Nevertheless, questions of a theoretical and practical nature do arise about the way in which the various aspects of Christian obedience are related to one another within the whole mission assigned by God to his church. The various theological explanations put forward differ considerably. Some refer to evangelism and justice; others refer to evangelism in the struggle for justice; still others pose the issue in practical terms. Should we, in planning our church’s mission, opt for participation in liberation, in development, or in the “proclamation” of the gospel? In entering this debate, we are fully aware of the importance of such questions, but, at the same time, they must be seen as relative from the outset, for we give thanks to God that his liberty is greater than all our theological forms. Thus, in everyday life, we may come across Christians who are committed to the same path of obedience but who explain it in different theological terms. In the long run, the real proof is in a life of obedience. Nevertheless, theological reflection is a vital element in Christian action and should help to strengthen and purify it. Also, when we consider our missionary priorities, it is essential to have criteria based on deep convictions to guide our choices.

Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life. We are Christians because we have been called upon by God to work with him in the fulfillment of his purposes for humanity as a whole. Our life in this world is life in mission. Life has a purpose only to the extent that it has a missionary dimension. Moreover, life begins anew every day if it is seen as part of God’s purpose which we help to fulfill, either individually and/or as a community. Vicariousness as a dimension of mission is also present in the church’s own internal life. A community worships God not for its own edification only, but as the priestly people of God praying for the good of all humankind.

“As my Father sent me, I now send you.” Throughout his whole life, Jesus Christ showed this element of being a messenger, an envoy or ambassador for God the Father. Even in Jesus’ childhood, the missionary dimension showed itself. “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). Moreover, even as he hung on the cross at the supreme moment of abandon, Jesus was concerned for everyone around him. “Mother, there is your son”; “Father, forgive them”; “Today you shall be with me in Paradise.” He also sought to explain the missionary purpose of his own death. “Why hast Thou forsaken me?” In the same way, any Christian and follower of Jesus Christ in this world is invited to regard his entire life and eventual death as missionary service, as a dimension of obedience and participation in the mission of God the Father. The question arises, however: In what way does everything we do serve God’s purpose?

One central emphasis of Christ’s mission is revelation. “My task is to bear witness to the truth. For this I was born; for this I came into the world” (John 18:37). “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). The life and ministry of Jesus Christ provide the supreme example of God’s love invading the world.
By observing the activities of Jesus and listening to his words, men were not only confronted with the specific problems besetting them but challenged to see beyond such problems to the supreme revelation of God's love manifested in Christ. Jesus did not come into the world merely to proclaim a message of revelation; he himself was that revelation. At times, his activities were of a practical kind, such as healing the sick; at other times, they involved highly polemical questions, such as the forgiveness of sins. "Where are they?" he said of those who were about to condemn a woman. "Has no one condemned you? Nor do I condemn you. You may go; do not sin again" (John 7:53 to 8:10-11).

"There can be no evangelism outside the divine mission in its totality."

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus is given complete freedom to deal with situations according to specific needs, demonstrating the love of God the Father through words of love, reproach, explanation, or through acts of healing. His whole life and ministry were devoted to announcing the Kingdom of God. In the oft-quoted passage from Luke (4:17-21), Jesus not only described the various facets of his ministry, but also proclaimed that the promise of the Old Testament—the dawn of the acceptable year of the Lord—was fulfilled in him. And although each of the activities mentioned in John 18 could have been entirely secular, they are, as a whole, linked to the person of Jesus and to the essential purpose of his life, that is, to fulfill the will of God and usher in the year of salvation.

Dr. Paul Löfler, in a background paper on evangelism presented to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in 1977, puts it in this way:

*Evangelism, mission, conversion, and dialogue:* Evangelism represents the core of Christian mission in the world. Inseparable from it are all the other expressions of Christian service and solidarity which make up the totality of mission. But it is equally true that the struggles for liberation, service among the poor, identification with the oppressed, all centre in the witness to Christ who is the liberator, the servant, and the suffering. Whichever the sensitivities to be observed towards people of other faiths and convictions, whatever the modes of witness in the modern world, a living confession of Christ is the heart of the missionary calling in which we participate under God.  

Thus, as with Jesus Christ, mission leaves the church and every individual Christian completely free to choose options; it leaves us free to use our own judgment as to the words or deeds best suited to the circumstances at a given time, provided they are always aligned on Jesus Christ. "Who is this man?" his contemporaries asked on seeing his miracles. "Who are these people who have turned the world upside down?"

"Be always ready with your defense whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15). Similarly, when the announcement emphasizes the revelation, when proclamation or the symbol is a call to faith, to decision, to conversion or to new birth, this call invariably has a social dimension that is inherent in it, not superimposed. In Christ, we encounter God made man. "If anyone says 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20). This means that mission and evangelism are intimately bound up. Mission is God's action, summoning people to participate in his purpose of peace and love; but this mission reveals and points to "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" and, in doing so, it is always an invitation to participate in the totality of God's mission.

When referring to its theological meaning, "evangelism" is practically identical to "mission." When referring to the evangelistic witness, "evangelism" more specifically means "the communication of Christ to those who do not consider themselves Christians." Thus, evangelism is sufficiently distinct and yet not separate from mission.  

In other words, although a distinction may be drawn, the two concepts are wholly inseparable. There can be no proclamation of the gospel without commitment to God’s mission, which includes justice, liberation, and service. No Christian can participate in God’s liberating mission or in different forms of service to the community unless his life and witness are focused on the hidden reason for his participation, as well as on the ultimate secret of the liberation process within himself. There can be no evangelism outside the divine mission in its totality, and no conscious participation in the mission of God without awareness of the revelation involved.

The report of the Nairobi Assembly puts it as follows:

The Gospel is good news from God, our Creator and Redeemer. . . . The Gospel always includes the announcement of God's Kingdom and love through Jesus Christ, the offer of grace and forgiveness of sins, the invitation to repentance and faith in Him, the summons to fellowship in God's Church, and command to witness God's saving words and deeds, the responsibility to participate in the struggle for justice and human dignity, the obligation to denounce all that hinders human wholeness, and a commitment to risk life itself.  

Evangelistic proclamation can—and must—have a point of emphasis, such as the cross, the forgiveness of sins, or the healing of the sick. But it will be "evangel" only to the extent that it points to the wholeness of God's love breaking through in the world, and that it looks forward to the reign of his peace in all human relations. There are a number of things to be said in connection with this dialectical relationship between mission and evangelism.

Mission: The Whole Is only Equal to Its Parts

In carrying out God's mission, we cannot opt permanently for one aspect of mission or another, be it liberation, development, humanization, or evangelization. These are all essential, integral parts of the mission entrusted to us and cannot be set against one another without becoming, simply, caricatures of what they really are. Indeed, they exist as parts only, and can only be discovered or recognized separately within the framework of their interrelatedness. For example, as citizens, we may take part, along with others who may or may not be Christians, in the struggle against underdevelopment or against anything that threatens human freedom. Our participation in this process implies a spirit of self-criticism based on eschatological thinking. Since all human effort is ultimately subject to God's judgment, if we participate faithfully in the process of liberation, if we are disciplined participants in the struggles it involves, we bring to it a capacity for critical appraisal which we consider to be constructive and salutary for the whole process, and which questions it in various respects. Our critical approach will be credible only if it is clearly seen to be closely linked to a declaration of our faith in Jesus Christ, if it does not stem from any connection with competing ideologies or rival power groups. As Christians participating in a political liberation struggle, it is absolutely essential that we never lose sight of our commitment to the Christian community as a whole and to the deepest roots of our faith. But, at the same time, our evangelism can be credible only when its message is seen to be valid in relation to the often cruel facts of real, everyday situations. As Bishop Manas Buthelezi of South Africa puts it:

The future of the Christian faith in this country will largely depend on how the Gospel proves itself relevant to the existential problems of
New Waves of a Vital Evangelism

Options and priorities to suit the circumstances are, at all times, possible; sometimes they are necessary. The church believes in a living God who has accompanied humankind throughout its history and who is at work within it. God always summons us to obedience, to militant action, to participation in his mission here and now; as we see from the life of Jesus Christ, who had complete freedom to respond to the requirements of different situations and different people, we too are called to provide different responses to different situations. For example, in Latin America the call to missionary obedience and participation in the struggle against oppression has been heard by large sections of the Christian community, especially in the Catholic Church. Their response may take the form of conscientization work, which enables people to discover their vocation as children of God and calls on them to organize themselves and take their own destiny in hand. Or it may involve making representations to oppressive state authorities, demanding respect for basic human rights. Some talk of the "theology of liberation"; others prefer to call it a "theology of exile." Whatever term is chosen, it serves to underline the priorities required by the situation, at a time when the Christian community discovers that one particular aspect of the gospel is required by the dynamics of history in order to make God's redeeming power present in that particular time and place in history.

In such theological efforts and renewal movements, the Christian churches of Latin America are frequently accused of distorting the gospel for political purposes. In point of fact, those who accuse the churches in this way are allowing their own ideological judgments to prevent them from seeing the work of their fellow Christians as a practical demonstration of their missionary obedience. Now that the Catholic Church in Latin America has convened its next Bishops' Synod to study the question of evangelism, we are discovering how such prophetic and persistent, and courageous witnessing, many people have been able to see something of the glory of Jesus Christ. Generations of Christians in these countries have hoped for divine intervention to open the door to greater participation in the gospel. For the time being, they are doing what they can, in the name of the God of love, by carrying out acts of human rights and service which point toward God's future and which are possible even in such situations.

I refer also to the present situation in socialist countries, particularly those where the Orthodox churches were to some extent the focal point of everyone's life in the secular community. Such churches have now been marginalized and have no recognized place in the system. They must struggle to maintain their identity as churches and to preserve the faith, not only for future generations but for the people of today, to give them the chance to discover that the community of faith is a reality enriching the whole of life, even within a socialist system. Prevented by the new organization of society from carrying out their traditional forms of diaconal service, the Orthodox churches have concentrated on a humanizing liturgy, and, with the spiritual dimension and the mysticism of their liturgy, they are helping to preserve a human dimension within a system based on a rationalism that overlooks fundamental elements of human nature.

I refer also to the evangelistic work being done in Hong Kong to prepare the Christian church in the China of the future.
strategies must be seen as a point of entry into the whole of God’s mission. The Bangkok Conference put it this way:

These points of entry differ from situation to situation in which we work and suffer. We should know that such anticipations are not the whole of salvation, and must keep in mind the other dimensions while we work. Forgetting this denies the wholeness of salvation. Nobody can do in any particular situation everything at the same time. There are various gifts and tasks, but there is one spirit and one goal. In this sense, it can be said, for example, that salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and release from the captivity of power in the North Atlantic community, or personal conversion in the release of a submerged society into hope, or of new lifestyles amid corporate self-interest and lovelessness.7

This does not mean that such a definition of salvation in a given place limits the content of the message and the reality of salvation, or the content of our mission there or for the whole world. It means that in such-and-such a place the message of salvation is relevant when it is linked to this or that priority or urgent need to which God calls his people. In a paper entitled “A Theological Reflection on the Work of Evangelism” (1959) we find:

There is no single way to witness to Jesus Christ. The Church has borne witness in different times and places in different ways. This is important. There are occasions when dynamic action in society is called for; there are others when a word must be spoken; others when the behavior of Christians one to another is the telling witness. On still other occasions, the simple presence of a worshipping community or man is the witness. These different dimensions of witness to the one Lord are always a matter of concrete obedience. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel. They are inextricably bound together, and together give the true dimension of evangelism. The important thing is that God’s redeeming Word be proclaimed and heard.8

Toward a Greater Whole

The whole life of a Christian community in a given place, including its international relations, provides the framework that integrates and explains the diversity of gifts and vocations. The message proclaimed is understood by those who hear it in light of the image of the community proclaiming it. Even an act which, objectively speaking, is the same everywhere (the distribution of the Bible, for example) may become a vehicle for transmitting different messages, depending on the person or the community distributing the texts. Similarly, an action which in itself may seem to be entirely secular, such as feeding the hungry, may likewise become a sign of God’s love if the hand that does it is visibly related to a community which considers that it worships God. Because of this, we can accept the fact that within the Christian community there is room for personal gifts and a diversity of vocations, and that it is rather unrealistic to proclaim such slogans as “Every Methodist is an evangelist” or “Every Christian is an evangelist.”

It is likewise unrealistic when, in stressing the inescapable political dimension in the life of every individual, we go a step further: and demand that every Christian should be actively militant in the political affairs of his country. It is the whole Christian community which is evangelistic and which must adopt clear positions toward liberation movements and struggles against oppression in the secular community. The conviction as to the important role a Christian community must play in this respect is what authenticates the vocation of individuals and different voluntary groups, but, at the same time, it sets clear limits to what they can do. The religious orders committed to an ideal of service to the poor, to education or medical work, to the preaching of the Word, or to contemplation and prayer fulfill a very important function when they are part of the whole. If, however, they attempt to reduce the whole to what they are doing as their specific vocation, then they are obviously distorting and restricting the reality of the love of God which embraces a greater whole. Similarly, the missionary groups specializing in student work, or in the problems of the ghettos in large cities, or in organizing the rural communities, or in preaching the Word across geographical or cultural barriers are all valid and necessary, provided they see themselves as part and servants of a whole. Years ago, I put it as follows:

The Christian community that evangelizes can only do it genuinely to the extent in which its life shows the signs of the encounter with the one whom it announces. Therefore, every genuinely Christian act is part of the evangelizing process. Words or silence, the discovering of signs of the presence of Jesus Christ or the planting of those signs, worship or social action, the religious activity or the secular activity of believers, all that is done in the name of Christ. It is evangelism if it forms part of the total being of a community that is linked historically through the presence of the Bible to the Master of Nazareth and is living in an eschatological perspective. While we can organize activities that we can call specifically evangelistic and that have as a conscious goal communication with “the world,” what makes them genuinely evangelistic is the form in which the existing Christian communities will become living samples of the Gospel of the God who lives for others. Evangelism only exists where there is social concern. Without it there may be propaganda, proselytism, but hardly good news.9

The liturgy of the church therefore assumes fundamental importance, since it is here that, symbolically and representatively, we find the Body of Christ praying for the whole situation of the world. It is the place and the moment when the meeting of heaven and earth is represented by the members of the body being consecrated for vicarious service, and the world as it is being presented in prayers of intercession seeking its salvation.

Let me end with a sentence from the Nairobi report. It is from Section I, “Confessing Christ Today,” and I think it sums up our understanding well:

Confessing Christ today means that the Spirit makes us struggle with all the issues this Assembly has talked about: sin and forgiveness, power and powerlessness, exploitation and misery, the universal search for identity, the widespread loss of Christian motivation, and the spiritual longings of those who have not heard Christ’s name.10

Notes

1. Full text of the Lausanne Covenant is given in International Congress of World Evangelization, Let the Earth Hear His Voice (Minneapolis, Minn.: World Wide Publications, 1975), pp. 3-9.


4. Ibid.


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Communique of the Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians

**Introduction**

We African Christians who met in Accra, Ghana from the 17th to the 23rd of December, 1977, in the context of the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians and for the purpose of discussing the Emerging Themes in African Theology, address ourselves and the rest of the Christian Community in Africa and in other parts of the world in this Statement.

The purpose which brought us together in Accra is our own depth of concern for the faith in Jesus Christ in Africa. It is this faith in the Lord of history which speaks to us concretely today in the context of our joy in praising the saving Lord, in sharing our problems among ourselves and with the awareness of the very real presence of the incarnate Jesus with us to comfort us and to give us hope.

Our meeting here was filled with the experiences of a new life which was manifested in such characteristics as being together beyond the denominational barriers and even beyond the usual rules of formal representation. Among us were Protestants, Orthodox and Roman Catholics who have shared each other’s voice freely out of our concerns rather than in the limitations of officiality. We have also experienced living together as a community of God’s people with our brothers and sisters from the Black American world, from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. In this experience we have felt the warmth of togetherness as a people who share similar concerns as captives in the world full of oppression and injustices which are more than often, not of our own making; but above all as peoples who share equal hope.

The saving Word of the Lord which provides freedom to the captives has been our guiding stick. This was not only manifested through our daily worship and singing, but also in drama, in plenary presentations and group discussions. We affirm emphatically that it is the message of the Old and the New Testaments which demonstrate the boldness and power of our dialogue as African Christians with the Third World Theologians.

**The African Reality**

The examination of the living Word of the Lord has led us to consider the living realities of Africa today.

We thank God for the dynamism and vitality of African Christian communities and churches. The rapid growth of the people of God in Africa, the uniqueness of the African experience of Christian life through worship, original African liturgy, Bible reading and community life, are for all of us a matter of hope and confidence.

We realize that African unity is the unity of spirit and soul, an indivisible unity in terms of historical reality which may even transcend geographical differences. Our unity is one which participates actively in the total community of God without fading away in the wind of unspecified universalism. We also realize that there are elements which threaten this unity of our people and we deplore all such elements which seek to shake the solidness of our deep-rooted unity, be they in the form of economic isolation, of power manipulation or even of the styles of life.

Colonialism has hampered our unity throughout the history of our relations with the Western world. Despite our contemporary experience of the post-colonial era in most of Africa, colonialism continues to be perpetuated in Southern Africa. The white regimes in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa are nothing but disguised colonial occupations. This is characterized in the white minority’s domination of the African majority through military force. In South Africa, the colonial domination is perpetuated through the Bantustans. Therefore, the minority regime’s program of independence for the so-called Homelands is nothing but a fraud aimed at vitiating the forces of liberation from white colonialism and thereby deceive the world at large into thinking that the black majority people of South Africa have accepted white domination. The ends of this colonial occupation are served by institutionalized white racism in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Racism is not an African creation but a white making. Africans deplore the fact that white racists from Zimbabwe and South Africa are now being exported to Latin American countries with the material support of and international manipulation by these powers.

Ethnicity in Africa, as anywhere in the world, must not be confused with racism. Ethnicity is a positive element in any human society. It can, however, also be misused by outside powers to serve the ends of racism and cause disunity, wars and human suffering.

We have no intention of under-rating the internal misuse of power and injustices in relation to ethnicity or despotism, but we also realize that more than often such structures of internal oppression are perpetuated by questionable alliances under the disguise of friendship treaties or development aid. We affirm that our history is both sacred and secular. We see God’s movement in our hope for a free and just society in Africa. Any destruction of this hope, be it in the misuse of power and authority, in the exploitation of man’s resources by national institutions or by multinational corporations is a direct and damnable violation of the destiny of God’s people. God’s demand of all creation is that human beings be subordinate to God’s will for the total human community and thereby make true Christ’s command to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The African reality lays claim on the inseparability of the understanding of love and its practical expression. Therefore, love for us signifies that communal act of obedience by the whole human community to God who is eternal with us. In Africa today this understanding of love is not only being destroyed by the ill effects of some national institu-
tions and multinational corporations, but the ill effects inherent in these institutions and corporations also cause great disunity, often perpetuated through militarism. The resultant suffering in this situation has led to thousands of deaths, including detentions and painful refugee situations. It is our belief that God’s demand of the churches in Africa is that they not only oppose any form of oppression and suffering but also sever any alliances, directly or indirectly, with the forces of oppression, e.g. by reviewing their stockholding portfolios in multinational corporations which facilitate the systematic militarization of governments where the struggle for survival, the suppression of human rights and the violation of human dignity are so rampant today.

The Presence of Christianity in Africa

We see that the methodology of studying the presence of Christianity in Africa must shift from hagiography of yesterdays to a more critical approach which starts from the African world-view and examines the impact of Christianity and the varieties of African responses. We note that the old strategies in mission are no longer relevant for proclamation. The tendency nowadays is largely confined to the maintenance of the inherited church structures. Moreover, there is a gap between the rhetoric of church officials, administrators and theologians with the reality in the villages. We observe that this has made the African masses passive, so that the problems of limited funds to run these institutions and the confused concept of stewardship make it impossible to realize the call for self-reliance and moratorium.

The missionary church in Africa has used education as a means of domestication which has also led to misunderstandings with our colleagues in the wider dialogue as was evident during the Christian-Muslim conference in Chambesy, 1976. This education has also produced the elite class in our various countries.

We are therefore impelled to rethink the relevant strategies for the future of God’s people in Africa. However we take a serious note of the fact that efforts are being taken to contextualize the gospel and to take full responsibility for the maintenance of the church. We proclaim that the basis of the church in Africa is in the vitality of the African Christian communities. Beyond the missionary structures and power, our Christian communities in poverty, humility and faith, continue to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, creating their own Christian way of life, and their own language to express the originality of their Christian experience.

In the traditional setting there was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. On the contrary, the sacred was experienced in the context of the secular. This healthy way of understanding our African society must be taken seriously by the church.

The Emergence of African Theologies

When we consider the emergence of new theologies in Africa, it is important for us to state a few words about the context of the theological situation, to present the theological trends today and finally to identify the sources of African theology.

(a) Context of African Theology

Despite the colonial experience of depersonalization and cultural invasion, the African cultures have kept their vitality. This vitality is expressed in the revival of African language, dances, music and literature and in its contribution to human sciences and to the human experience. This cultural vitality is the support of the African people in their struggle for the complete liberation and for the construction of a human society. Despite this, it is necessary to recognize the persistence of the situation of domination which resulted from colonialism.

This situation of domination also exists in the churches. The organization model imported from the West is still proposed and accepted. This is particularly true in theology. The life of our churches has been dominated by a theology developed with a methodology, a world-view and a conception of humanity using Western categories.

(b) Present Trends in Theology

African theology has already emerged and is alive. Among the various approaches in African theology are:

1. A theological approach which while admitting the inherent values in the traditional religions, sees in them a preparation for the gospel.

2. A critical theology which comes from the contact with the Bible, the openness to the African realities and the dialogue with non-African theologies.

3. Black theology in South Africa takes into consideration the experiences of oppression and the struggle for liberation, and gets its inspiration from the biblical faith as expressed in African language and categories as well as from the experience and reflections of Black North Americans.

These three approaches are not exhaustive, but they reveal the dynamism of the theological movement on the continent.

(c) Sources of Theology

1. The Bible and the Christian Heritage: The bible is the basic source of African theology, because it is the primary witness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. No theology can retain its Christian identity apart from the Scripture. For the Bible is not simply a historical book about the people of Israel. Through a re-reading of this Scripture in the social context of our people struggling for the realization of their humanity, God speaks to us in the midst of our troublesome situation. This divine Word is not an abstract proposition but an event in our lives, empowering us to continue in the fight for our full humanity.

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The Christian heritage is also important for African theology. This is the heritage that springs out of the life and history of the church since the time of our Lord, with long tradition of scholarship, liturgies, experiences, etc. African Christianity is a part of world-wide Christianity.

2. African Anthropology: The destiny of the human person and the context of life are basic assumptions in the life of the African people. Human destiny is the dramatic conflict between life and death which finds its meaning in the victory of life over death. There is unity and continuity between the destiny of human persons and the destiny of the cosmos. The victory of life in the human person is also the victory of life in the cosmos. The African anthropology and cosmology are optimistic. The salvation of the human person in African theology is the salvation of the Universe, and in the mystery of Incarnation, Christ assumes the totality of the human and the totality of the cosmos.

3. African Traditional Religions: The God of history speaks to all peoples in particular ways. In Africa the Traditional Religions are a major source for the study of the African experience of God. The beliefs and practices of the Traditional Religions in
Africa can enrich Christian theology and spirituality.

4. African Independent Churches: The experience of the independent churches have developed through their long history a type of worship, organization and community life rooted in African culture and touching the daily life of the people.

5. Other African Realities: The experiences of cultural forms of life and arts, extended family, hospitality and communal life are the expression of deep feelings of love and care. The struggles for the transformation of socio-economic systems, the struggles against racism, sexism and other forms of economic, political, social and cultural oppressions, all these are to be taken seriously as sources for theology.

Perspectives for the Future

We believe that African theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture and the creative attempt of African peoples to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and the neo-colonial present. The African situation requires a new theological methodology that is different from the dominant theologies of the West. African theology must reject, therefore, the prefabricated ideas of North Atlantic theology by defining itself according to the struggles of the people in their resistance against the structures of domination. Our task as theologians is to create a theology that arises out of and is accountable to African people.

The joint annual meeting of the Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Missions and the Eastern Section of the American Society of Missiology will be held November 3-4, 1978, at the Gilmor Sloane Center, Stony Point, New York.

In the depths of our theological reflection we encounter God in the poor of today. In this we feel called to proclaim the love of God for all people within the dynamics of a conflictual history. Because of our commitment to the struggles of our people to be free, we believe that the theology that arises from that commitment will have three characteristics.

(a) African theology must be contextual theology. African theology will not be able to be a theology of African life and culture unless it is accountable to the context in which the people live. Also in drama, novels and poetry, Africans demonstrate the importance of the contextual expression of theology. The theme of contextualization in theology is clearly the liberation of our people from a form of cultural captivity.

(b) Because oppression is not only found in culture but also in political and economic structures and the dominant mass media, African theology must also be liberation theology. The focus on liberation in African theology connects it with other third world theologies. Like Black theology in North America, we cannot ignore racism as a distortion of the human person. Like Latin American and Asian theologies there is the need to be liberated from socio-economic exploitation. A related but different form of oppression is often found in the roles set aside for women in the churches. There is also oppression in the exploitation of the people through national and multinational institutions. In all these instances of captivity we need to be liberated. We recognize that there are many forms of oppression. There is the oppression of Africans by white colonialism, but there is also the oppression of Blacks by Blacks. We stand against oppression in any form because the gospel of Jesus Christ demands our participation in the struggle to free people from all forms of dehumanization. Therefore African theology concerns itself with bringing about the solidarity of Africans with Black Americans, Asians and Latin Americans who are also struggling for the realization of human communities in which the men and women of our time become the architects of their own destiny.

(c) Throughout this document, we have referred to the need to struggle against sexism. If that struggle is to be taken seriously by the church, then our seriousness will be reflected in the way we do theology. We recognize that African women have taken an active role in the church and in the shaping of our history. They have shown themselves to be a coherent part of the liberation struggle. But we cannot ignore their exclusion from our past theological endeavors. Therefore the future of African theology must take seriously the role of women in the church as equals in the doing of theology.

Conclusion

In post-Independent and in Southern Africa, theology confronts new challenges, hopes and opportunities. The vigor of the traditional African religions and cultures and the renewal of the churches, thanks principally to a return to the Scriptures, present us the resources for our tasks.

Our belief in Jesus Christ, liberator, convinces us that there is a noble future for our countries, if the processes of nation building are geared to providing the urgent basic needs of all instead of the privileges of a few. We are confident that the creative vitality of our own traditional religions and cultures can provide the inspiration for a free and just form of community organization and national development.

In order to serve the people, the Gospel and the churches in these tasks we pledge to renew ourselves according to the needs of today discerned by us under the light of the Spirit of God present among us. For this we need an interdisciplinary methodology of social analysis, biblical reflection and active commitment to be with the peoples in their endeavors to build a better society. Towards this end we have formed today an Ecumenical Association of African Theologians. Conscious of our deficiencies and weaknesses, yet encouraged by the nobility of the task before us, we undertake this journey of service through theology so that all the women, men and children of our lands may be able "to have life and live abundantly."
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JOHN CHAO
China Graduate School of Theology
Hong Kong
"Your Kingdom Come"—An Invitation to Christians

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches

Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to pray for the coming of God's kingdom. In the power of the Holy Spirit each generation is invited to seek first the kingdom and its righteousness, believing that all else that is necessary for human existence will be added.

As we pray for the coming of God's kingdom we affirm our trust in, and dependence upon, the God who is Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour, Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We pray confidently, for the kingdom is already in our midst, yet we pray expectantly, for the kingdom in all its fullness is still to come.

In this spirit of confident and expectant prayer the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches invites the world Christian community to participate in a personal and collective search for the contemporary meaning and fulfillment of the prayer for the coming of the kingdom.

In our search for the relationship between God's kingdom and our mission, we can together:

- celebrate what God is doing among his people in the world, the evidences of the kingdom now in our midst;
- better understand the implications of the coming of the kingdom for our day;
- sharpen our expectation of the fullness of the kingdom yet to come.

In May 1980 a widely representative body of the world Christian community will gather in a conference in Melbourne, Australia, to consider the insights gained from our preliminary study in order to express our collective understanding for this day of our oft-repeated prayer, "Your kingdom come," and to lead us into more faithful obedience under God's reign. This conference follows in an honored line of gatherings focused on mission and unity that began at Edinburgh in 1910, and included more recently the 1963 Mexico City assembly which introduced the theme of "Mission to Six Continents," and the 1972 Bangkok conference on "Salvation Today."

Is a world conference of this nature appropriate or needed at this time? We believe it is. The world Christian community must periodically reexamine its mission under God; the Gospel compels us to do so. Various sectors of the world community need to enter into close relationship with each other to hear what each is saying, all open to mutual correction and witness. The almost apocalyptic threats to the very survival of the world make it imperative that Christians together strive to know the contemporary obedience demanded by the kingdom in our midst and the kingdom yet to come.

As we issue this invitation we would be aware of (1) the context within which we speak and act, (2) the richness of the kingdom theme, and (3) possible misinterpretations of the theme.

The Context

The world is desperately in need of the love, joy, peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation promised in the kingdom. As we look at our contemporary world we see many evidences of sin and disruption:

- sin, personal and collective, openly flouting God's holy will,
- meaninglessness in personal and group life,
- denial of bread and denial of abundant life,
- oppression of the poor and powerless,
- violation of elemental human rights,
- potential destruction by weapons of incalculable power.

Though tempted to pessimism and despair, we take hope when, as we pray for the coming of God's reign, we find multiple evidences of the reality of his kingdom in our midst:

- persons and communities committing and recommitting their lives to Jesus Christ,
- people of the kingdom suffering courageously in situations of great trial out of loyalty to Jesus Christ,
- Christians and others valiantly challenging powers and principalities that oppress and destroy,
- communities seeking out new ways to care for their members and others,
- the life and death of many who, in humble simplicity remain faithful to our Lord, witnesses to the abiding kingdom.

We believe that God cannot be defeated by human sin; God's coming reign will not be destroyed by human disobedience.

As we are preparing ourselves for the conference on "Your kingdom come" we want to look deeply into our contemporary reality, seeing God's hand in our present situation, and believing that our prayer for the coming of the kingdom and our expectation of the reign of God must also be informed by an honest realism about a world in anguish. Faithfulness in mission demands nothing less.

The Richness of the Kingdom Theme

We do not dare try to encompass in words the richness in the theme of God's kingdom, but we can point to some aspects of it which seem promising as we begin our study of God's reign.

The kingdom as suffering power: At the heart of the kingdom is our Lord Jesus Christ, who came in meekness as the Suffering Servant, the Messiah despised and rejected by his own, the person for others nailed to the cross who overturns human calculations of power and lordship. The suffering God comes to us with a suffering power enables us to find strength amid struggle, courage in the face of despair.

The kingdom as judgment and mercy: The kingdom holds all human societies and achievements under God's judgment. All persons and communities are subject to his judgment and recipients of his mercy, but we particularly note that the church which claims the name of Jesus Christ is under God's judgment in a special way. We trust that out of this judgment and mercy may emerge a purified people that proclaims and embraces the kingdom.
The kingdom as task and challenge: The prayer for a coming kingdom is a prayer of responsibility. It challenges us to give ourselves in service to the God for whose kingdom we pray, not counting the cost but pledging all. Our mission is to proclaim the Word of God, to name the Name of Jesus Christ, that all humanity may respond to the call our Lord presents and turn to Him. Our mission is also to offer good news to the poor, to heal the sick, to proclaim liberty to the captive, to provide sight to the blind, to announce the acceptable time of the Lord.

The kingdom as hope: The kingdom is in our midst offering us strength for the daily struggle; yet we pray for God’s reign to come in fullness. The presence and work of the Holy Spirit give us great hope. The despair to which we are tempted can never be a final despair, for God is already victorious over the forces of sin and death.

Possible Misinterpretations of the Kingdom Theme

As we invite the world Christian community to discover the meaning and richness of the theme “Your Kingdom Come” we are aware of certain interpretations that we regard as inadequate:

“Since God will bring the kingdom, we need do nothing.” The announcement of the kingdom is not a call to passivity and inaction. It is characteristic of those who most trust in God’s action that they work most untiringly in God’s mission. The prayer for the coming of the kingdom offers no exemption from responsible work for righteousness and justice.

“Since the kingdom is not of this world, we need only to pray for a heavenly kingdom beyond this world.” Our Lord clearly indicated that the kingdom is already in our midst. Promised the kingdom of heaven, we are nevertheless under an imperative to live joyfully in the world as pilgrims and participate in God’s mission. As we pray “Your kingdom come” we look to the future with hope, but we are not allowed any exemption from present involvement in the issues and concerns of this world. The heavenly reign is in a very real sense here in our midst, and to it we must commit our best effort.

“The kingdom and a just human society are one and the same.” In our emphasis upon the present reality of God’s reign, and its coming fulfillment, we may at times appear to identify a particular human society with the kingdom, but we recognize that this is ultimately false. All human societies stand under the judgment of God, a fact we must never forget.

Even as we work in the kingdom and seek its righteousness, we acknowledge our partial understanding of the full nature of the kingdom ahead, a kingdom whose dimensions and significance mere human arrangements cannot describe.

“The kingdom and the church are one and the same.” The church and the kingdom are related, but never can be equated as one and the same. In worship, liturgy and sacraments we have a foretaste of the kingdom, a celebration of the glory of the Lord. God calls the church into being for kingdom purposes. The church is called to seek the kingdom, to commit itself to the kingdom, to pray for the kingdom, and to live in obedience to the kingdom under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The historic institutional church is itself always under the judgment of God’s reign.

This is an invitation to join in a process of prayer, reflection, search and obedience under the conference theme “Your Kingdom Come.” We see the task as urgent, and we look forward expectantly to the response all Christians may offer to this invitation, as together we seek the understanding and obedience we now only see in part. May we, under God, learn more of the fulfillment of God’s promises for us and for the world, as we pray, “Your kingdom come.”

The 1978 annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held in conjunction with the meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies at Maryknoll Seminary in Maryknoll, New York, August 21-26, 1978. The theme of the meeting will be “Credibility and Spirituality in Mission.” Details about the program have been published in IAMS Newsletter, No. 11. Attendance will be limited to 200 participants. For further information, write to: Dr. Frans J. Verstraelen, General Secretary of the IAMS; Department of Missiology, I.I.M.E., Boerhaavelaan 43, Leiden, Netherlands.

The 1978 annual meeting of the Association of Professors of Mission will convene at Maryknoll Seminary for two days immediately prior to the IAMS Conference. Sessions will be held on current theological developments in the Third World, and developments in the theory of mission on the Continent. On Sunday evening, Professor J. Aagaard of Aarhus will speak on “The Theory and Praxis of Missiology in a Modern Secularized European University.” Speakers will be largely from the Continent and the Third World. For further information write to Professor J. Walter Cason, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois 60201.
Encountering Marx: Bonds and Barriers between Christians and Marxists.


This book does not originate in a merely academic concern with Marxism. Lochman belongs to the group of Czech theologians who, under the leadership and inspiration of the late Josef Hromadka, adopted from the beginning an open attitude toward the socialist society that emerged in their country after World War II, and engaged in a constructive conversation with Marxist thinkers about the problems and opportunities that this change presented in the search for a fuller human life.

This concrete historical dialogue provides the background and suggests the themes of the book. The information about the progress and setbacks (up to the brutal crisis of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, which nevertheless does not close, for Lochman, the need or the possibility of the dialogue) of this pioneer attempt is not the least merit of the book. It gives also the background of the work of Marxists like Machovec, Gardavsky, Farner, and others, which is now available for the western reader.

The dominant concern in the conversation that Lochman carries on with Marx centers around the quality of human life. This leads naturally to a consideration of Marx's anthropology as expressed in his concept of alienation and work. Only then does Lochman introduce the Marxist criticism of religion. This is very appropriate, because it avoids a superficial discussion of Marx's atheism and probes the deeper questions of his criticism of religious alienation. Finally, Lochman carries the discussion to the very heart of the Marxist philosophy by grappling, in discussion with Bloch, with the question of transcendence. Is it possible to deal adequately with the reality of human transcendence by absolutizing human existence ("A being is independent when it has itself to thank for its existence" Marx had said)? Or is "grace" the possibility of real human transcendence.

José Míguez Bonino, a minister of The Methodist Church in Argentina, is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Higher Institute for Theological Studies (ISEDET) in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity.


"If you only get one book on church history, this should be it," is the widely quoted statement of Donald Tinder, book review editor of Christianity Today. I confess I have not been happy with that assessment. I had already seen the book, looked it over fairly carefully, and had been deeply disappointed that it was so typically and conventionally weak on the great middle years of the Christian movement—the period between the early church and the Protestant Reformation. Edited in England with perhaps an Anglo-Saxon perspective, it did not properly reflect the mass of recent scholarly studies on the Celtic movement and its vital intellectual and spiritual contribution to the conversion of England and Western and Central Europe.

But now, being asked to review the book, I must look at it from more than my own point of view. Tinder is probably right. Latourette's thousands of unillustrated pages can hardly be the single best book on church history for a television generation. Lion Publishing in England, with its earlier triumphs in photojournalism, has clearly scored an impressive first in grappling with the Christian story in a thoroughly modern, smashingly illustrated format. The book is structured by its organizing editor, Tim Dowley (a church history Ph.D.) in eight periods with the basic text written by twenty-three different scholars and brief "insert digressions" written by almost fifty others. Four multicolored "time charts" cover the years 0–300, 325–600, 600–1500, 1500–1975.

This is a book written with a definitely evangelical perspective. For readers of the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, the recent periods covered by Andrew Walls and René Padilla are especially good. Contributors come from ten countries and this is good also. North Americans will find no special emphasis on their part of the world. Ideally, Christians of every nation deserve a book that defines their own situation in much greater detail than the relatively skimpy treatment of American Christianity given here.

Yes, Tinder is right. All things considered, a book that is readable with the overall quality of this one despite its seventy authors and inevitable weak spots here and there is in a class by itself. No future introductory text of the Christian story can avoid comparison to this one. You do, however, pay for what you get. A four-color textbook costs more—this one, $19.95 for 680 pages.

—Ralph D. Winter

Ralph D. Winter, General Director of the United States Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California, is President of the American Society of Missiology. He served as a Presbyterian missionary in Guatemala from 1956 to 1966.

One would like to underline multiple merits in Lochman's work. There are no caricatures or oversimplifications (either of Marxist or Christian positions). Concepts are not left hanging in the abstract but related to their everyday social and personal significance. There is no attempt to find easy agreements or compromises but a generous, open, clear witness to the Christian faith. The challenge is strong and pointed, both to closed, dogmatic Marxism and to Christianity. It will not please fundamentalists or literalists on either side.

In a situation where some basic structural changes have already occurred, the discussion turns naturally to the concerns of building an authentic human existence. The young Marx and the Marxist "dissenters" are the natural interlocutors. In other latitudes, where structural rigidity forecloses the possibility of planning a new society, the themes may turn in other directions. But Lochman's openness, seriousness, and courage give all a valuable example.

I trust it is not merely a bourgeois prejudice that makes me deplore the overabundant typographical errors!

—José Míguez Bonino
Turning East: The Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism.


Dear Harvey Cox,

I have read your book, Turning East: The Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism, with much interest. A part of the book I read in Tokyo, the great city of West Turners. There is an awareness in Japan of its own hidden depth. Turning West is occasion for the reexamination and reappraisal of the East by the easterners.

Your book is realistic, since you have not written it from the safe distance of a detached observer. I appreciate this approach. With sincerity you have participated in the community life of Zen and Tibetan meditation groups. The book is an intriguing story of your own Turning East experience. But you do not lose your head. Your book reflects carefully upon the cultural and spiritual influence of the East upon yourself. In short, you meet the East responsibly, not superficially. There are a great crowd of West Turners in Japan, but only a very few examine carefully the spiritual and cultural implications of the encounter. I again appreciate your critical approach. You reject an easy East-and-West syndrome. "It is the fact that there are actually two 'Orients.' One is made of real people and real earth. The other is a myth that resides in the head of Westerners. One is an actual cultural area, stretching from India to Japan and from Mongolia to Singapore. The other is a convenient screen on which the West projects reverse images of its own deficiencies" (p. 149). "The East Turners do not represent a way out of our Western spiritual crisis" (p. 103).

You seek for a responsible theological stance in your pilgrimage. "We need an authentic contemporary form of spirituality. We must find it, I believe, in our own tradition, not somewhere else" (p. 157). You find the model for this in the lives of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Simone Weil, Camilo Torres, Martin Luther King in whom "the most thoroughgoing reading of the incarnation" took place (p. 171). It seems to me, however, the most theologially significant point you have made is the observation that the crucified Christ points to a direction "different from either the non-self of Oriental philosophy or from the self-realization ethic of modern Western thought" (p. 87). In my mind what you are saying here means that when Christ was crucified, karma was crucified. "But now God's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets gave their witness to it" (Romans 3:21). I understand that both nonself of Oriental philosophy and self-realization ethic of modern western thought are their respective responses to their own understanding of karma. "... even though the karma gave its witness to it." This makes then discussion on the karma important. In order to appreciate your book the readers should have the background provided by Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples by Hajime Nakamura.

—Kosuke Koyama

Die christliche Mission: Geschichte und Theologie.


There is no shortage of books on the history of missions. Neither are we lacking in studies on the theology of mission. But few missiologists have ever attempted a synthesis of both, the historical and the theological together. It probably takes a whole lifetime of missiological endeavor to do that, and to do it successfully. Dr. Gerhard Rosenkranz, professor emeritus of the University of Tübingen, wrote this comprehensive book when he was about to complete the eighth decade of his life, and it should be read as the sum total of his missiological scholarship. Once again he displays all the characteristics of his earlier writings, since 1935—painstaking investigation of historical facts, lucidity of style and, above all, a sense of critical scrutiny that refuses to take things for granted simply because they happen to be what they are. But all this has now more consistently than ever before been subjected to the eschatological dialectic of God's mission: the living Word in the world, though not of this world, anticipating the promise of a world to come. In addition, Rosenkranz applies wherever feasible the criteria of an enlightened science of religion, for he has never belonged to those simplificateurs terribles who conveniently claim for Christianity exemption from the vicissitudes of the history of religions. It would be no exaggeration to say that the net result comes close to a combination of what is best in Latourette, Kraemer and, possibly, Sundkler.

As highlights of the book this reviewer would single out the chapters on mission in the ancient church and in the age of the Reformation, and especially the treatment of the crucial topics of recent ecumenical debates on mission and evangelism up to 1974. As a drawback one may note that the emergence of mission in six continents, the transition from western mission to world mission in the fuller sense, is not as prominently dealt with as one would expect. Another drawback, the absence of a topical index, quite indispensable in a handbook such as this, is obviously due to ill-timed economical considerations on the part of the publishers, who otherwise deserve to be commended for a notable achievement.

—Hans-Werner Gensichen
The Church at the End of the 20th Century.


Francis Schaeffer is the best-known and most widely read of all evangelical writers today. Most of his books attempt to define and defend Christianity in terms of the contemporary world scene. This one is no exception.

The author is deeply concerned with the rapid, progressive degeneration of western civilization. He faults the church for taking on the complexion of its cultural environment and capitulating all too readily to the deteriorating morals and mores of the world. The church’s only hope is that it regain its pristine purity and power by returning to the principles and practices spelled out in the New Testament.

The book grows out of Schaeffer’s experience at L’Abri where he has for many years been an apostle to the student generation. Not surprisingly his first two chapters deal with revolution in the student world, and his last chapter deals with revolutionary Christianity.

If the church is to survive, certain considerations are required: (1) the difference between being a cobelligerent and an ally; (2) the preaching and practice of the truth; (3) the practice of orthodoxy of community within the church; (4) the difference between form and freedom in church polity.

Chapters 4 and 5, in some ways the heart of the book, deal with the church. Here the author draws a distinction between form and freedom. Form he identifies with eight norms of church life as outlined in the New Testament: local congregations, Sunday worship, deacons and elders, discipline, sacraments, etc. He goes on to say: “These are the New Testament form commanded by God. These norms are not arbitrary—they are God’s form for the institutional, organized church” (p. 66). But along with form, which is absolute, there is freedom. The church is free, under the Holy Spirit, to initiate, to innovate, and to abrogate in any and all areas where Scripture is silent. The church must be willing to change with the changing times if its message is to be relevant in the days ahead.

The author asks: “Does the church have a future in our generation? Only if it shows not only the form of Scripture at the point of proper polity, but also the form of Scripture at the point of proper community. If it does not show both together, we have missed the whole lot” (p. 74). He is interested not only in change, but goes further and advocates revolution. “Today we are an absolute minority. If we want to be fair, we must teach the young to be revolutionaries, revolutionaries against the status quo” (p. 82). The revolution, of course, is to be moral and spiritual and to involve the church, not the world.

In his final chapter, on revolutionary Christianity, Schaeffer makes a strong appeal for compassion and community within the fellowship of the church. Young people with their strange ways, radicals with their new ideas, minority groups with their peculiar problems—all should be able to find a home within the confines of the church. And to make them feel at home, churches should be willing for change. Times of meetings, forms of worship, orders of service may have to be changed. Indeed, “meaningless meetings” should be eliminated (p. 110). The great force of the author’s appeal stems from the fact that at L’Abri he practices what he preaches. Not all writers on revolutionary themes do!

—J. Herbert Kane

Liberation and Change.


Ostensibly these Schaff lectures given by Gustavo Gutiérrez and Richard Shaull at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1976 originated in the question “What is the meaning of the North American revolution for contemporary, third world revolutions?” Neither addresses the question directly, but what they do is far more interesting. Gutiérrez, professor of sociology at Lima’s Catholic University and the widely recognized progenitor of the Latin American theology of liberation, traces in historical fashion the human desire and the necessity for freedom, which he defines as “the condition of access to religious truth.” Where economic, social, and political oppression exist, he contends, the poor—to whom Jesus came to proclaim the gospel—are unable to give a faith response. Authentic evangelization and salvation are impossible without freedom from the oppressive structures that operate for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many. The checkered history of the Roman Catholic Church’s attitude toward religious freedom as recounted by Gutiérrez is concise and effectively presented.

Central in his presentation is the example of the sixteenth-century friar, Bartolomé de Las Casas, who for more than fifty years gave himself to the struggle to free the Indians from colonial exploitation. The far-reaching importance of Las Casas is indisputable, but he is somewhat idealized by Gutiérrez, who says nothing, for example, of Las Casas’s proposal to save the Indians by importing Negroes—advice he quickly regretted—not of the impetus the cleric gave to the “black legend,” which has distorted much Spanish and Latin American history written by Germans, French, and Anglo-Saxons. But Gutiérrez’s point is effectively driven home: theology that matters is more than spiritual or rational insight into historical situations. It is even more than critical analysis of historical injustices. It is injecting oneself into the historical situation, into the struggle against the structures of oppression. It is promoting the remaking of “history from below.” The communicating of the gospel message must therefore be based on “an understanding of the poor and the oppressed and their struggles” and the unmasking of those pious and not so pious attempts to use religion or anything else to justify situations contrary to right and justice.

Alan Neely, formerly professor of philosophy and missions at the International Baptist Seminary, Cali, Colombia (1963–1975), is now Professor of Missions, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

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Alan Neely, formerly professor of philosophy and missions at the International Baptist Seminary, Cali, Colombia (1963–1975), is now Professor of Missions, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.
The contribution of Richard Shaull, professor of ecumenics at Princeton Theological Seminary, takes the form of a moving and readable narrative of his own pilgrimage from “a passionate commitment to the struggle to create a better world,” through a kind of religious and philosophical menopause wherein he loses all faith in the possibility of reforming the basic institutions of society, to an apocalyptic vision of systemic disaster, which he believes can be followed by a new world. “It is not hard to discern the shape of the coming apocalypse,” he says (p. 113). “There is probably very little we can do to avoid this apocalypse” (p. 114). “To experience society today” is to see it “standing under judgment and headed for an apocalypse” (p. 116). “I expect the apocalypse; I know it will bring incredible suffering and destruction” (p. 124). Finally, “our Western culture is falling apart”; and “I see no reason to expect” that things will improve in the years ahead; it will quite likely get worse” (pp. 132, 147). Somber words, these, and Shaull offers no political or social prescriptions for avoiding the catastrophe. He is clearly disillusioned with the possibilities of Marxism. For one who has long admired Shaull and his commitment to change, the degree of his pessimism is lamentable. Further, one wonders if what Shaull is now offering is essentially different or more compelling than his original dream: “new life in intimate relationships” and a “resurrected America, bound in solidarity to the rest of the world; using its tremendous technological and industrial potential to meet elementary human needs—and discovering how to survive as a more egalitarian society.” Is this an invitation to exchange one utopia for another?

—Alan Neely

1980 Consultation on World Evangelization

The Lausanne Continuation Committee for World Evangelization will sponsor a 1980 consultation as a follow-up of the 1974 Lausanne congress. The dates have been set for June 14-28, 1980 in Pattaya, Thailand. The theme from Romans 10:14 will be “How Shall They Hear?” which is seen as a logical sequel to the Lausanne ‘74 theme, “Let the Earth Hear His Voice.” It is intended that the 1980 meeting will go beyond the 1974 congress and discuss strategies for world evangelization.

Dr. David M. Howard, on loan from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, is serving as conference director. The number of participants has not yet been determined, but it is expected to be on a smaller scale than the 1974 Lausanne congress.

The statement of purpose of the 1980 consultation is as follows: “Accepting the nature, basis and framework of Christian mission as revealed in Scripture and interpreted in the Lausanne Covenant, and humbly desiring to discern and obey the direction of the Holy Spirit, the Consultation will convene: (1) To seek fresh vision and power for the task Christ has given to His Church until He comes; (2) To assess the state of world evangelization, its progress and hindrances; (3) To complete an extended study program on theological and strategic issues related to world evangelization, already begun in many regions, and to share its results; (4) To develop specific evangelistic strategies related to different unreached peoples; (5) To review the mandate of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the role it might play in furthering these objectives.”

The Lausanne committee is also planning a related conference, the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle for Evangelism and Justice, to be held just prior to the evangelization meeting. It will focus attention on the relationship between evangelism and life style, with discussion of models of simple life styles among Christians in different parts of the world.

The lifestyle gathering will be coordinated by Ronald Sider of Messiah College and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, author of Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger.

—World Evangelization Information Bulletin, May 1978

Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church.


The Puppet Master: An Inquiry into Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church.


In the latter part of 1977 I participated in a television program in St. Louis with Mr. Neil Salonen, the president of the Unification Church in the United States, and Dr. Herbert Richardson, theological adviser to the Unification Church. On that occasion Salonen brought Sontag’s book with him and urged the viewers to read it, calling it a “completely objective” view of the Unification Church with “scholarly documentation” written by a nonmember of the Unification Church. I also noticed that Mr. Bo Hi Pak, special assistant to Reverend Mr. Moon, brought this book along for his appearance before the House Subcommittee on International Organizations, headed by Representative Donald M. Fraser, where he testified concerning links between the Unification Church and Korean CIA activities within the United States.

I find Sontag’s book to be neither scholarly nor objective in its discussion of the theological teachings of the Unification Church. Sontag documents the reasons for the rise of Moon’s movement to a church with missions in 120 countries, but the book is a consistent defense of Moon and his

Wi Jo Kang is Professor of World Religions and Missions at Christ Seminary—Seminex in St. Louis, Missouri.
movement, with very little critical analysis. The bulk of the book is the author’s travelogue of his visits to major Unification Church centers around the world and includes many statements by Moon’s followers in support of his movement. One that particularly grabbed my attention: “We are like the Hitler Youth Movement in the very intense idealism that we share. A complete commitment to the cause is another similarity. We feel an intense loyalty toward our leader” (p. 38). Sontag includes an interesting interview with Moon and many documentary pictures of the Unification Church movement. A comprehensive bibliography, probably the best reference source on Moon and the Unification Church, is included.

Yamamoto’s work is highly critical of the Unification Church. He divides his book into four parts: the personal background of Moon, the historical background of the Unification Church, the doctrinal basis of the Divine Principle (the chief writing of the Unification Church), and a critical evaluation of Moon’s teachings from Yamamoto’s evangelical perspective.

A major editorial drawback of Yamamoto’s work is the inconsistent romanization of Korean names and words and inaccurate translations. The author spells “Pikarume” for “Pikarum” (p. 20), “Mr. Eu” for “Mr. Yu” (p. 40), Ehwa University founded by Methodist missionaries becomes “Ewha University, a Presbyterian college” (p. 40), etc.

Yamamoto’s book, however, is well documented, making good use of the Unification Church’s own material, and is useful for those interested in a critical look at the Unification Church.

—Wi Jo Kang

What Asian Christians Are Thinking: A Theological Source Book.


This is a fascinating introduction to the variety and vitality of Asian theologizing. Traditional Christian doctrines and themes are discussed in the Asian context, providing a promising opening for more critical theological reflection. The book provides a representative selection of essays by Asian theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, in a convenient source-book collection. Most of the articles are reprints of essays that had appeared earlier in journals and symposia.

The perceptive article by the Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama, on “Theological Situations in Asia and the Mission of the Church” (pp. 16-40), gives an enlightening overview. “It is the crucified mind that can meaningfully participate in authentic contextualization” (p. 37), says Koyama, who believes that contextualization enables theology to speak in and through the Asian historical and theological world.

Emerito P. Nacpil explains the genesis and gist of the “critical Asian principle” (pp. 3-6). First used in 1972, the principle is a frame of reference for doing theology, Christian formation, and equipping the Christian community for missionary responsibility. In light of this principle, there are seven features that characterize the region, according to Nacpil. Because it consciously locates the context of theologizing, the critical Asian principle seems appropriate for doing theology, but one wonders how distinctly Asian it is. There seems nothing distinctively Asian, for instance, in the seven features he mentions, such as “plurality and diversity in races, peoples, cultures, social institutions, religions, ideologies.”

Nevertheless, this is a book on contextualization. Bong Rin Ro, a Korean theologian, distinguishes four kinds of contextualizers (pp. 47-58). There are syncretizers, who mix Christianity with other Asian religions. There are accommodators, who select and adapt good ideas and practices from other religious traditions. There are situationalists, who seek to contextualize the gospel in relation to Asian living situations. There are the biblically oriented, who relate biblical issues to actual situations. By no means exhaustive, these classifications suggest the diversity and dynamism of Asian contextualization. This volume has more.

The discerning reader may be impressed by four interrelated questions in Asian contemporary theologizing. First, is there the question of identity? Who is a Christian? Who is an Asian? Who is an Asian Christian theologian? “The task of theology of any people,” Saphir F. Athyal, an Indian theologian, states, “is to articulate their understanding of the eternal truth in terms of their locale and context” (pp. 68-69; cf. p. 456). Exactly what is the Christian identity in Asia, the most populous region in the world, but where the Christian community remains a very small minority?

There is also the quest for destiny. Asia is “infected with colonialism and neo-colonialism,” writes Chun-Seng Song, a Taiwanese. It is “pregnant with aspiration of teeming humanity for better, meaningful, and liberated life” (p. 269). But what future can Asians expect? Is it liberation? Is it social justice? Is it development? Is it indigenization? “The promotion of the various Asian quests for self-identity is the church’s task” (p. 456). What can faithfulness to the gospel mean in Asia?

The third dimension in the contextualizing process is the quest for integrity, the congruence of theologizing and Christian living. For Fridolin Ukur, an Indonesian, the demand for sufficient food also means “demand for liberty, independence, justice, equal opportunity, genuine human dignity, and full participation in the determining of their own lives” (p. 293). Theology, ministry, and lifestyles must cohere in the integrative process both in the present and in the future beyond history, for the “meaning and destiny of human life are not exhausted by the potentialities open to man in development within history which is subject to the power of decay and death” (p. 388).

There is, fourth, the question of novelty, or new ways of theological reflection, of relating to culture, and of political participation. Asian Christians must no longer parrot what western theologians are doing or saying, but are to seek “with vigor and boldness new understanding and new application of Christian faith” (p. 260). The Japanese prayer, “Deliver Japanese theology from German captivity” (p. xxii), may well be the prayer of Asian Christians.

The compiler, Douglas J. Elwood, a systematic theologian, is well qualified, having been a professor of theology since 1961 at four seminaries in Asia. The book is recommended for Asians and non-Asians alike. But it will be a disappointment if more sharply articulated theological writings do not follow soon.

—Mariano C. Apilado

Mariano C. Apilado is Minister of the Silliman University Church, Dumaguete City, Philippines.
In August 1976 a group of twenty-two Catholic and Protestant theologians from Third World countries met for a week in Dar es Salaam. This volume brings together the papers presented at that consultation, plus a short Final Statement prepared by the group at the end of their deliberations. Some of the most creative theological minds from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are here represented. They come from many different backgrounds and speak out of diverse social and cultural situations. But they are united in searching for and exploring new directions in their theological reflection. This imperative is laid upon them because western theology has failed by and large to relate to the "life throbings" of their people; also because this theology is the product of an order of domination and exploitation from which they and their people are struggling to liberate themselves.

The participants are well aware of the enormity of this task; they are also excited about it and have their own ideas as to how to pursue it. They have certainly not got together to agree on a common theological line. But what fascinates me in reading these pages is the sense that a number of them are following converging paths, toward a new theological approach, which I find very promising. I hope I am faithful to them in expressing it as follows:

1. They are inclined to start their theological reflection with the concrete situation of their people: the "cultural and historical themes" of their world; the experience of suffering as well as the hopes of the people.

2. This means that they take "historical reality" very seriously: the culture and the traditions of their societies, and the specific conditions of oppression and poverty under which the masses live, as well as the structures of domination that have created these conditions. This stands in sharp contrast to western theological systems with their abstract concepts; it compels these people to reject all attempts to take the thought of any theologian, past or present, and try to apply it to a local situation.

3. Many of these Third World theologians would go one step further. Their central concern is to discern the activity of God in the process of historical transformation of the people and the structures in which they live. This implies a decisive shift away from attempts to "indigenize" theology, or at
AND MAKE DISCIPLES
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DAVID H. C. READ has a large national following through regular appearances on NBC's National Radio Pulpit.

Iconography of Religions: An Introduction.


Iconography, literally "writing in images," is the subject of Albert C. Moore's excellent work, Iconography of Religions. It is also his particular mode of approach to a broader subject: the understanding of human religious traditions. This is a book about religion as well as about iconography.

Iconography has been, for many, a rather dull, antiquarian subject. Most of the excellent classical iconographic works are heavy with detail and too dense for the ordinary reader. It is unfortunate that in the academic division of disciplines the study of iconography has never been fully adopted by either art historians or historians of religion. Albert Moore's work has rescued iconography from the crack between the disciplines and has brought the subject to life.

Moore begins with the presupposition that human religiousness has always been highly visual in its expression, from the earliest cave-drawings at Trois Frères to Picasso's "Guernica." The eye is the "window of the soul" and the visual image mediates the sacred. In order to grasp the meaning of the elaborately carved
Hindu temple façade, or the meditating Buddha image, or the Greek Orthodox icon, the scholar or lay person must be able to read this "writing in images" that is iconography. Western scholars have delved into the word-texts, the Scriptures, of their own and other religious traditions, but have generally been less adept at reading these "visual texts." Particularly in the last few decades the world of scholarship has changed radically. Travel, photography, and the technology of photographic reproduction have made available to contemporary scholars a library of visual resources unavailable to their predecessors. In this book, Moore has demonstrated how skilfully and perceptively an introduction to the religious traditions of humankind can be written using this library of images as its primary source.

The wide margins of Moore's book are filled with drawings and photographs of the images to which he refers. There is no flipping of pages required; the visual and the verbal are interwoven in the text, as they are in the traditions he surveys. Moore's subject is not only the images themselves, but also the attitudes toward and uses of these images by those who have created them and found them meaningful. It is rewarding and enlightening reading.

Moore surveys the various religious traditions, beginning with the "Primal" religions, a term he adopts to convey the understanding that the Australian or Polynesian tribal cultures are not "primitive," but, rather, reveal basic, "primary" structures of ritual and artistic expression. He demonstrates precisely what he means in his exposition of the use of elaborate masks in Melanesian culture: he takes this occasion to look at the ritual use of the mask in Egyptian, Greek, and contemporary religious traditions as well.

In each chapter, Moore describes the symbols and images in their cultural context, and he also addresses some of the persistent difficulties outsiders have had in understanding the religious value of these symbols. For example, in his chapter on ancient Mediterranean religions, he explores the religious dimensions of Egyptian animal symbolism and the significance of the highly idealized anthropomorphism of the Greeks. In his chapter on the Hindu tradition, he gives the reader insight into the meaning and use of Hindu images, and he deals effectively with the missionary misunderstanding of images expressed by the term "idolatry," a term that can only be an outsider's misapprehension of the faith of others. He awakens a more subtle understanding of the religious vision expressed in images.

Following his chapter on the vividly visual Hindu tradition, Moore turns to the Jain and Buddhists of India, tracing the emergence of the iconic image of the Buddha in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. In his chapter on East Asia, he pursues the interaction of Buddhist imagery with the indigenous traditions of China, Japan, and Tibet. Here, particularly, is our understanding of the layering and convergence of religious traditions enriched by the "visual texts" he presents.

Turning to the West, Moore reviews the prophetic traditions that have been identified with iconoclasm, the breaking of images—Judaism and Islam. He exposes some of the deepest roots of the western propensity for the Word, but he also shows how the visual has found expression even in these traditions. Finally, he takes up the Christian tradition, where attitudes toward "writing in images" have ranged from the Orthodox sacramental view of images as "mirrors of the sacred" to the Protestant distrust of images and the triumph of the verbal over the visual.

In his concluding chapter, Moore poses the question of the survival of iconography in the modern world. What meaning can this "writing in images" have in a culture where the symbolic view of the universe has been supplanted with a scientific view, where individualism rather than tradition has become the guiding hand of artistic expression? The icon must be recognized by its viewers in order for its image to convey power and meaning. Thus it is hard to imagine iconography emerging from the ceaseless quest for novelty and the continuous change that has characterized modern "protean" human life. Nonetheless, Moore's sensitivity as a historian of religions has shown him that symbols and images have a history; where some have died, others have been born or reborn. He holds out that possibility for this age as well, and by breaking open the meaning of religious images, western and eastern, ancient and modern, Moore may help his readers toward just that re-visioning and re-imagining.

—Diana L. Eck
Tanzania and Nyerere: A Study of Ujamaa and Nationalism.


Tanzania and Nyerere—the emerging East African nation and the man who brought it to birth as an independent country in 1961 and has since then guided its growth from colonialism to ujamaa, "familyhood"—a socialism based on the old tribal concept of the extended family.

In this book, really two separate works within one cover, the readers have an opportunity to form their own judgment of the development of Tanzania under its "socialistic" president. Since both leader and nation have been the objects of extreme admiration as well as of extremely adverse criticism, the rather balanced evaluation given by William R. Duggan in the present work should offer a welcome clarification for American readers.

Duggan traces the history of Tanzania from its days as a German colony, and, later, a British protectorate, to its achievement of full independence and its adoption and adaptation of socialism under its first and only president, Julius K. Nyerere.

In the second, shorter, section of the book, John R. Civille takes a closer look at Nyerere's socialism, and finds it not at all the bogey it seems to the half-informed general public. Far more closely allied with Pope John XXIII and Teilhard de Chardin than with Marx and Engels, Tanzania's form of socialism stresses racial equality, political nonalignment, emphasis on human dignity and the rights of all persons, and equality of economic opportunity for all.

In general one can say that Tanzania and Nyerere is competently written. The first part covers almost every angle the average reader would be interested in and does so in an orderly, fairly unbiased manner. To this reviewer, who lived and worked in Tanzania through the 1950s and 1960s, Duggan seems unduly critical of Great Britain, unduly complimentary to the United States, whose diplomats showed little understanding or sensitivity in their dealings with the young country during several crises that arose in 1964 and 1965. But the historical account is straightforward and reasonably thorough; the projections for the future seem neither unrealistically optimistic nor excessively pessimistic.

The second, more theoretical, section will probably have a greater appeal for readers who already subscribe to the Catholic Church's social teachings than for readers who are convinced that rapid industrialization under capitalism is the only practical answer to Third and Fourth World woes.

Both writers defend Tanzania's one-party system and show clearly that it retains all the essentials of democracy, indeed, that it is one of the few governments in Africa to guarantee a vote to every citizen, whatever one's racial origin, Asian, European, or African.

One of the more obvious weaknesses in the book is its silence on the work of missionaries in health services and education. The bibliographies, too, are disappointing, Duggan's containing very few works written or published in the 1970s, while

Affirming the mandate and the need for missions

With a strong sense of vision coupled with a lifelong career in missions, Dr. Max Warren takes a close look at the traditional belief in the Great Commission and defends it against recent criticism. While cognizant of the bewildering developments of this century, the author challenges Christians to confidently obey the New Testament mandate with faith in an irrepresible God.

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Evangelism is personal. It is also mass crusades. It is verbal proclamation and social service. Christ's command to proclaim the good news has rarely seemed so urgent. With a firm grasp of biblical directives and a keen sense of the contemporary world situation, David Watson thoroughly examines the meaning and opportunities for evangelism in the twentieth century.

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Sister Margaret Rose Winkelmann is a Maryknoll Sister now residing at the Maryknoll Sisters Center, Maryknoll, New York. She was a missionary in Tanzania from 1948 to 1970, and is a personal friend of President Julius K. Nyerere and his wife, Maria.
Civille's has all the earmarks of a doctoral dissertation. The latter is, however, admirably full, especially in the area of socialism and the church's social teachings.

But its good points outweigh its weaknesses, and Tanzania and Nyerere can be recommended to the general reader unwilling to accept the cliches and the name-calling of the popular press.

—Margaret Rose Winkelman, M.M.

**Noteworthy**

Augsburg, By John V. Taylor. Minneapolis: for MOderation m a Consumer-Oriented Society.

Enough Is Enough: A Biblical Call for Moderation in a Consumer-Oriented Society.


This slender book by an English bishop issues a “biblical call for moderation in a consumer-oriented society.” Its thesis is that insatiable consumption negates human happiness, ruins the natural environment, perpetuates poverty in the Third World, and violates God's designs on the human race. These are familiar charges: Marcuse long ago denounced industrial society as one-dimensional, Roszak sketched the wasteland of the American dream, and Reich strove to “green” us into wanting less. Taylor's book adds to the library of social alternatives an eloquent theological justification for limiting one's wants. It offers, in effect, a religious rationale for finding virtue in simplicity.

The lesson is useful: too many American Christians still uncritically equate “God's blessings to them” with Thanksgiving tables overlaid with food and drink. They fail to see, as Taylor puts it, “that the so-called growth economy which our two main political parties take for granted, and which so many economists and industrialists regard as sacrosanct, is maintained by creating discontent in the rich countries and inescapable poverty in poor countries” (p. 18, italics are Taylor's). Yet the author never resolves the central problem he poses in convincing terms. Taylor endorses James Weaver's remark: “If all of us decided that our homes were adequate, our cars satisfactory, our clothing sufficient, our present sort of economics would collapse tomorrow. For it is built on the assumption that man's wants are insatiable” (p. 19). His policy prescriptions, however, are confined to exhorting individuals and churches to practice “simple living.” As he writes (p. 69): “Yet, inasmuch as the systems often impose the attitudes, we have to defy them also; and this calls for a counter-culture of families and groups that cannot be conned or manipulated because they simply do not accept the accepted values or pursue the ambitions that are expected of them.” His hope is that enough “cells of dissent” will be created to constitute a “critical mass” serving as a leaven in society and ultimately changing its structures.

We must, of course, limit our wants to “enough” if only to free ourselves from desires easily manipulated, and to show effective solidarity with those who are poor because austerity is imposed upon them, not freely chosen. But private examples of living witness cannot suffice; they must be joined to public policies which provide institutional incentives to rational consumption. There is simply no excuse for Americans to consume fifty times more electricity than Indians. This reviewer has just returned from India where Gandhi's vision of village-based development around the satisfaction of basic needs currently enjoys new favor. Two lessons emerge for Americans: one is that true development consists in meaningful community, self-reliant sufficiency, and creative action open to all, not mere proliferation of goods for a few. The second is that there exist enough resources in the world to meet the needs of all, but not enough to satisfy the greed of each one.

Denis Gosset is a pioneer in a new discipline, the ethics of development. He is a Senior Fellow of the Overseas Development Council in Washington, D.C., and has held visiting professorships in Canada, the United States, and France.
Taylor correctly insists that "enough is enough." Not only are individuals dehumanized by pursuing what Erich Fromm calls "mindless af
fluence," but entire societies as well are undermined when they reward waste and compulsive consumption.

This is why the market system—which is triggered by the buying power of those who already have and not the needs of those who do not—cannot serve as the organizing principle of a sound national economy. At best, the market can serve as a regu-

latory mechanism to offset inefficiency, duplication, and overcentralization.

Thus simple living is not merely an individual alternative. It also stands as a normative value shaping the public policy of any society that seeks to be truly "developed."

—Denis Goulet

Thy Will Be Done: Praying the Our Father as Subversive Activity.

By Michael H. Crosby, O.F.M. Cap.

Michael Crosby works for the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, and is author of Catholic Church Investments for Corporate Responsibility. His present book seeks to integrate mystical and ministerial dimensions of Christian spirituality by meditating the Lord’s Prayer in the context of current systemic injustice. He was struck a few years ago by the fact that a phrase of the prayer to once so subversive of current institutions that it needed to be included in the ultimate banality of being listed near the top in pop-music ratings. He aims to restore a sense of the challenge posed to Christians by their most distinctive prayer.

The eleven chapters are consistently structured, moving from brief comments on a phrase of the prayer to reflections on contemporary systems and situations as evaluated by Chris-
tian faith. Usually there is some reference to Francis of Assisi and his contribution to our understanding of the gospel of poverty and justice. Analyses are set within the framework of individual, interpersonal, and infrastructural dimensions of human life.

Originating in a retreat given to fellow Franciscans, the volume offers no detailed exegesis or analysis of the phrases of the Lord’s Prayer. The movement from brief exegetical comments to analysis of contemporary systems of injustice takes place without a tight theological linking of Bible with contemporary theological reflection. There is no formal hermeneutic indicating just how the passage from biblical narrative and teaching to doctrinal and pastoral stances today is to be navigated. The petitions of the Lord’s Prayer thus serve a primarily symbolic role in the author’s argument.

That argument is generally sound, well informed (with abundant references to contemporary treatments of justice issues), and pastorally passionate within the bounds of moderation. Though it is in touch with important scholarly researches, its appeal is to a broader, theologically literate, audience. It will perhaps make few converts among those trapped in privatizing theologies and spiritualities, but it should provide support and nourishment for the growing number of Christians who are no longer content with dichotomy between prayer and life.

Though the author’s touch is generally sure, there are places where the present reviewer would quarrel with the conclusion, or at least with the failure to consider counter-arguments. An instance is the branding of unequal status regarding office-holding in clerical communities of men as a denial of God’s image in the nonclerics. There may well be, within the Franciscan tradition, an infidelity to charism in such distinctions. That such is the case in all clerical communities would need to be argued for, not simply stated.

One particularly refreshing feature is the recourse to Francis as speaking powerfully to our times. Of several quotations from the poor man of Assisi in this volume, my favorite is this one, related by Celano: “At times exhorting his brothers to go begging for alms, he would use these words: ‘Go,’ he said, ‘for at this last hour the Friars Minor have been lent to the world, that the elect might fulfill in them what will be commanded by the Judge: Because as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.’ ”

—Thomas E. Clarke, S.J.

Social Action vs. Evangelism: An Essay on the Contemporary Crisis.


To “explore again the meaning of Christ’s mandate to evangelize the world in relation to the crucial questions posed by the new theology” is the stated aim of this essentially ironic little volume.

The “new theology,” for the author’s purpose, is that variety of contemporary theological reflection which doubts transcendence and votes for secularism. This, he holds, impinges disastrously on the Christian world mission. One of its several effects has been “a diminution of the role of evangelism” (p. 4). Thus “humanization” and “liberation” have been “in” words in areas of the church’s life where evangelism has been put down as outmoded or so redefined as to be unrecognizable by those who have a sense of history.

Professor Richardson dismisses as wholly unacceptable the view that the world writes the church’s “agenda.” Both in authority and specification the church’s mandate is from her risen Lord, not from Athens or Manhattan.

As for humanization, it is not an unworthy concept provided always that its frame of reference is found in God’s purpose in Christ as realized on behalf of the world in the election of his redeemed people.

The shallowness of humanization as otherwise envisaged is exposed, with good documentation, in one of the most lucid and forceful sections of the discussion. Quoted with approval is a striking passage from Mennonite professor Vernard Eller. Eller is describing dramatically what is happen-

Paul S. Rees is Editor-at-Large of World Vision magazine.
ing when a person receives Christian baptism as a confession of his faith in Jesus Christ. "And the mood during the service is not to be 'Thank God, our brother has found the fire escape,' but 'Glory be! Kingdom come! It's happening. The race is finally on its way to getting human; our brother just decided to let God make a man out of him!'" (p. 23).

Where the going gets stickier is in a chapter called "Evangelism Is Social Action." It opens with a dictum by the late Jesse Bader: "The way to Christianize the social order is to Christianize folks and the way to Christianize folks is one by one. . . . evangelism is the divine quest of the individual for God."

These words would appear to support a highly individualistic concept of evangelism. Without saying as much, Richardson goes well beyond such a restricted view. Not, however, until he has pointed out that when the church becomes in effect an echo of the world, either by its clinging to the status quo or its ringing the tocsin for radical change, it heads down the road of assimilation by the world.

Must it, then, give up social concern and responsibility? No. Avoiding the unbiblical procedure of using "social and political action" to "replace evangelism," it can adopt the insight articulated by the Lausanne Congress in its "Covenant" of 1974: "Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty."

It is probable that the Lausanne affirmation will strike some readers as being more sharply perceptive than Richardson's handling of his own proposition that "evangelism itself, in faithfulness to its biblical mandate, is social action." This section of the discussion seems to lack the cogency and clarity found in other parts of the book. For example, no attempt is made to define the precise sense in which the phrase "social action" is to be understood. There is a considerable body of contemporary thinking in which a distinction is made between social service, which is generally philanthropic and alleviative, and social action, which is structural and preventive. It is a distinction, however, which the author chooses not to discuss.

The thrust of the concluding chapter—"Renewal Is for Mission"—is valid enough, but the discussion of it, particularly as it relates to Christian unity, seems needlessly to toast some traditional formulas that this reviewer believes should be rephrased.

At the same time this chapter offers a salutary emphasis on the people of God as "a covenant community" elected not to the enjoyment of a private salvation but to the communication of a universal gospel.

The manner of Richardson’s writing is direct and tidy. His "Notes" at the end of each chapter form a kind of bibliography. His reading has made him familiar with many authors in schools of thought other than his own. To his credit let it be said that he offers dissent with calm grace and conviction.

—Paul S. Rees

Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Power.


Allen Boesak is a thirty-one-year-old black South African, presently living in Hougenot, South Africa. His academic credentials include the Theological University in Belville; Union Theological Seminary, New York; Colgate-Rochester Seminary; and the Theological Academy of Kampen, Netherlands, from which he holds the doctorate of theology.

Religious Studies Review

IN THE APRIL ISSUE:

Nancy Falk reviews Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary, Fatima Mernissi, Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society, Manisha Roy, Bengali Women; Edward Braxton surveys recent studies in Black theology and Robert Detweiler examines recent religion and literature scholarship; John Burkhart, Matthew Lamb, and Samuel Sandmel assess Hans Küng, On Being a Christian; Robert Michaelson and N. K. Clifford review Robert Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada / Critical notes on over 150 recent titles / Recent dissertations in religion

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The theme of Farewell to Innocence is well expressed on page 56:

Black Power is the "answer to white power structure," the answer to racism, degradation, humiliation, exploitation, and alienation. Black Power means discovering that the white power structure defines the reality of black life. It means discovering that there is no innocent way of going through life—that innocence is a refusal to face reality, a clinging to empty promises, which makes blacks apathetic. It is learning to discern what really matters, for instance, that the solution does not lie in screaming to white people that they are devils, but in confronting their power with another kind of power.

Boesak pursues this theme by examining what Western theology and "civil religion" have done to whites and what this means for blacks in America and Africa. Of special interest are his discussions of liberation theologies, his contrasts of black theological ideas among the major writers, and his analysis of power and ideology. He also attempts to show a similarity between the themes and aims of black theology in America and Africa. He is both critical of and complimentary to the major black theology writers, showing no favoritism. He does take exception with James Cone more often than he does with the others.

One finds this an exceptionally valuable book. It should help whites understand some current black thought-patterns both in America and abroad. It should help blacks reexamine the major agenda items about which they must be concerned. It restates the problem in both Western and liberation theologies.

There are weaknesses in the book:
(1) Boesak affirms historical spiritual linkage between Africans and black Americans, yet apart from liberation theology these links are underdeveloped. Liberation theologians are speaking mostly to each other and their academic constituents. The "rank and file" of black Americans remains untouched by their communication. It is incorrect to assume that black liberation theologians represent the thinking and attitudes of the "rank and file." Substantive relationships between those who are "on the firing line" in both Africa and America must develop with those in academia.
(2) The fifth and last chapter, "Beyond the Sorrow Songs," is very disappointing. One expects resolutions of the problems described, some programmatic directions. Instead, we get the answer to the preceding chapter title, "Haven't We Heard All This Before?" Chapter 5 is just a restatement of the preceding.

These "weaknesses" are minimal to the tremendous impact Farewell to Innocence has had on this reviewer. This book ought to be mandatory reading for all Christians, but especially for those committed to the "missionary enterprise."

—Emmanuel L. McCall

Emmanuel L. McCall is Director of the Department of Cooperative Ministries with National Baptists, Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Atlanta, Georgia. He also serves as Coordinator of Black Church Studies for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

Liberty to the Captives. The Struggle Against Oppression in South Korea.


We should all rejoice in the publication of this book by Dr. George Ogle, who was a United Methodist missionary in Korea for nearly twenty years, engaged in the work of urban industrial mission.

In the first part of the book the author carries the readers through the earlier experiences of his work in urban industrial mission. Beginning with a quite traditional approach, it gradually developed into a program with much more mature ideological orientation. However, the basic concern was to bring the gospel to the industrial situation.

Ogle emphasizes three basic elements in the purpose of an intensive leadership training program, the basic core of the Inchon urban industrial mission work: (1) The bourgeois Protestant ethos of the first group of trainees confronts, for the first time and in a remarkably significant way, the unjust and exploited working condition of the laborers. The trainee has no choice but to break down or to go through a conversion experience. The author says: "The missioner in the first place is not the preacher of the Gospel, but one to whom the Gospel is preached by the comrades in the shop. In other words, Christ is located not in me but in the common day laborer and his work place. This is a radical conversion for it gives God, His Church and Salvation an identity quite different from that which has always been familiar to the new missioner." (2) Human relationships with the laborers are developed through common participation in hard physical labor. (3) Labor-management relations are examined from the workers' side.

The testimonies of the trainees in the second and third chapters show the process of conversion or conscientization. Though the author does not explicitly refer to it in later chapters, these missionaries carry immense burdens of concern for the struggles for human rights and restoration of democracy in Korea.

The Yushin system is referred to as a revitalization scheme, not for the revitalization of the people, but rather of the dictatorship. Despite all the rhetoric about promoting the national salvation, it boils down in fact to an overt political design to perpetuate the present political regime, characterized by the megalomania of an ex-Japanese military officer. Because this system is buttressed by United States and Japanese business interests, the author refers to it as "colonial authoritarianism."

The People's Revolutionary Party incident was a completely drummed-up charge already in 1964, as confirmed by the man who was then the director of the Korean CIA and now lives in the United States. The author's expulsion from South Korea was due largely to his protest against the second stage of charges fabricated against more or less the same people. The government, faced with mounting protests from students and the general public, needed scapegoats in both cases. One must go to Korea to see how the kangaroo court operates. Eight people were hanged despite all efforts on their behalf. The blood of the innocent cries out in Korea.

The year 1974 was, for George Ogle, American missionary in Korea, another new experience—probably a second conversion. He found himself confronted by a collusion of corrupt powers. He also found a new nexus between Christians and non-Christians in their common struggles for justice and liberation, a realization that one has to transcend all the religious and political taboos in Korea. Solidarity was what Ogle experienced, and for this solidarity one must sometimes choose a course that one would...
not choose under normal circumstances.

The visit of President Gerald Ford to Korea highlighted the degree of American support for the South Korean dictatorship. The United States ambassador continues to play a key role in this dictatorship's defense against communist North Korea. Ogle was finally expelled from South Korea in a dramatic and unceremonious way.

Ogle's down-to-earth modesty is shown in the unassuming way he selects the testimonies of his coworkers. Yet this book lacks adequate descriptions of the work in the urban slums, such as community organization, etc. No one disputes his conviction regarding self-reliance. However, his reference to outside funding (p. 68) is somewhat misleading. The work of UIM work in Korea or to the new ecumenicity emerging in that country is somewhat misleading. The work of the urban industrial mission was not funded through the project system of the World Council of Churches. This leads to the further comment that the author has not given sufficient attention to the ecumenical character of the UIM work in Korea or to the new ecumenicity emerging in that country from the painful struggles for justice and liberation of the people. Nevertheless, this is still the best available book concerning present political calamities in South Korea.

—Sang Jung Park

Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression.


José Porfirio Miranda, professor of mathematics, economics and law at the Universidad Metropolitana Tzatapalpa in Mexico City, states that his goal in Marx and the Bible is simply to understand the Bible. His interpretations, if accepted, would cause drastic changes in missiological priorities.

Miranda's main thesis is that God's purpose is to establish justice on behalf of the oppressed. God's people are called to overcome, by their action, their praxis, the political, social, and economic injustice rooted in the structures of society.

While presenting his convincing biblical case, Miranda criticizes those who truncate the gospel of its relevance to the political, social, and economic arena. He also points out the Greek epistemological presuppositions which lead to these errors of omission. Ironically, Miranda then falls prey to the same Greek way of viewing reality, and as a result denies several central biblical themes, the very themes his opponents overemphasize. The presuppositional error can be simplistically summarized as follows: When confronted with concepts that seem to be opposite or contradictory, western people (indoctrinated into a Greek, scientific way of viewing reality) attempt to determine which concept is the "correct" one. This western, Greek mindset resists the possibility that both sides of an apparent contradiction could be true. (Remember, a contradiction only as a result of our Greek way of viewing reality). The Scripture contradicts this way of viewing reality (e.g., Jesus is both fully God and fully man); nevertheless, both Miranda and his opponents attempt to explain away the particular aspect of Scripture that the other person is emphasizing. The following examples will serve to illustrate this reductionism in operation.

Miranda rightly rejects the view that God is relevant only to the individual heart, presenting a convincing

Vient de paraître :

V. Neckebrouck

Le onzième commandement

Étiologie d'une Eglise indépendante au pied du mont Kenya

LIV + 634 pages. Supplementa de la Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire Vol. XXVII, ISBN 3 85824 053 2 Cart. sFr. 92.—

Les Églises indépendantes d'Afrique continuent de susciter l'intérêt des spécialistes des sciences missionnaires, des historiens et des ethnologues, et l'on se réjouit de voir certaines d'entre elles faire l'objet de nouvelles études. L'ouvrage de V. Neckebrouck est cependant plus qu'une monographie sur l'American Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), répandue parmi les Kikuyu du Kenya. Ethnologue et théologien, l'auteur montre de manière approfondie que cette Église est née à la résistance que les Kikuyu ont opposée aux mesures politiques et économiques du régime colonial ainsi qu'aux tentatives des missions chrétiennes qui voulaient faire disparaitre des aspects vitaux de la culture traditionnelle. Il n'est pas surprenant que Neckebrouck attache une grande importance à la question de la clitoridectomie pratiquée sur les filles et éclaire cet élément de la culture des Kikuyu sous tous ses aspects, car l'interdiction absolue de cette pratique par les missions chrétiennes (le onzième commandement) fut vraiment la pierre d'achoppement, le signal de la lutte pour la libération du pays des ancêtres, la cause de l'opposition à un christianisme de caractère européen. L'AIPCA est un mouvement religieux et chrétien, dont l'origine n'est pas due à un personnage charismatique, mais s'explique par la situation. Ses membres se considèrent comme des chrétiens et sont restés fidèles à la doctrine et la liturgie des Églises protestantes. Mais ils veulent être aussi de vrais Kikuyu. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils se sont séparés et ont fondé une Église nouvelle et indépendante, qui « recréée... un milieu social où on peut de nouveau respirer, vivre, et surtout, espérer » (p. 453).

Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire
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bibilical case demonstrating God's priority of establishing justice for the oppressed. Then Miranda ignores the prophets as he truncates the gospel of its relevance to the individual, going so far as to argue that the apostle Paul was not concerned about individual salvation (p. 179), and that "Yahweh's main intervention in our history has only one purpose... to serve the cause of justice" (p. 79, emphasis added). Miranda further demonstrates his adeptness at selective proof-texting by asserting that the only sin is injustice.

Perhaps most alarming is Miranda's view about God and man. Both viewpoints are rooted in his ontological assumptions. He rightly criticizes the western, Greek tendency to become preoccupied with ontological questions, stating, "The moment we ontologize we obstruct the summons of the word" (p. 134). Miranda's lack of interest in careful ontological study allows him to make significant errors about God and man. He arrives at an unbiblical, optimistic view of man, a naive anarchistic hope, and a correspondingly low view of God. He implies that sin and evil, begun by man, can be eliminated by the work of man (p. 255). Indeed it is tacitly implied that God is limited to establishing justice through the work of men. If this is so, then ethics can be reduced to an ethic of "the end justifies the means." While Miranda clearly demonstrates that believers are called to obedient praxis, his reviewer is extremely uneasy with Miranda's failure to define what is involved in praxis. Miranda's almost deistically transcendent God puts the total responsibility and hope for justice in fallen man. This low view of God's actual presence in the world can quickly lead to the acceptance of violence as a part of praxis.

*Marx and the Bible* levels significant criticisms and, read critically, can be a valuable resource. Miranda's reductionism, oversimplifications, and denial of certain biblical themes does not negate the accuracy of his assertions. It will, however, make it easier for western Christians to dismiss this book as "ideological"; and herein lies the tragedy, because what he is saying needs so desperately to be heard.

—Bron Taylor

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**The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ.**


**Society and Religion (Essays in Honour of M. M. Thomas).**


The first book is written by M. M. Thomas and the second is a Festschrift in his honor. M. M. has given creative leadership to the CISRS as director and has been recognizably involved in the ecumenical movement, for several years as chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. His main interest has been to reinterpret the Christian gospel in relation to society and to evaluate social and political realities in the light of Christ.

The Secular Ideologies... is a study of some patterns of Indian secular thought with a view to exploring the quest for the spiritual reality underlying them and its significance for human existence.

The chapters of the book follow a recurring pattern: the tenets of an ideology, its relation to the Christian movement, and an evaluation.

The Indian Liberal Nationalists (see chap. 1) differed from their Western counterparts in that they rejected laissez-faire in the area of political change. They had a positive stance toward Christianity for bringing about social change but were opposed to mass conversions.

Socialist Humanism (see chap. 2) aimed at reaping the benefits of the collective process without the use of coercion. In Christ they found a fellow revolutionary but were suspicious of the church because it provided moral and Christian covering to capitalism and imperialism.

The Marxists (see chap. 3) view the present government as feudalistic, dominated by big business, landlords, and priests. Ghandism is "bourgeois-democratic rather than proletarian" (p. 97). Despite the communist claim that Jesus was a communist, Christians in independent India have regarded them as a threat to democracy.

Anti-Brahminism (see chap. 4), more a movement than an ideology, fights caste in all forms. Gandhi's halfway measure of removing untouchability while preserving caste would not do. Leaders of the movement have derived inspiration from Christianity, but the church will forfeit its challenge if it continues to compromise with caste prejudice in its own congregations.

The chapter on "Three Unique Ideologies" (chap. 5) summarizes the positions of S. C. Bose (authoritarian socialism), of M. N. Roy (radical Marxism), and of M. R. Masani (capitalism).

The book, despite its long and clumsy title, is useful for students of the Indian political and social scene. The last chapter seems a retreat into the traditional theological jargon of the church and thus betrays the overall secular stance of the rest of the book. It bears testimony, however, to the optimistic faith of the author: the "hope in a spiritual power" which "in the End" fulfills love and justice, as vouchsafed in the Risen Christ.

The Festschrift *Society and Religion* contains disparate essays grouped in three parts. In the first part, "Politics and Society," Ninan Koshy, in the chapter on "International Relations" bemoans India's diplomatic style as not being sufficiently sophisticated to earn credibility and trust from her neighboring states. Thakurdas, in "Indian Political Culture amid Transition," sees the reason for the emergency rule by the Indira Gandhi government not in some one event but in the irrelevance of the traditional value-structure to meet the demands of a developing India. The emergency "sustained over a length of time could produce hopeful signs" (p. 30). S. L. Parmar's essay on "Our Shared Quest for World Community" sounds too utopian and unrealistic. He is, however, "not thinking of what can be done, but essentially of what should be done" (p. 43). A. P. Barnabas's classroom notes on the role of "Sociologists in Society" point to the usefulness of sociological studies in assessing progress in national programs and suggesting guidelines for future planning.

Articles in part II of the book on "Religion and Culture" study religious phenomena in the midst of modernization. Erna Hoch's paper on "Religion and Mental Health" reveals, among other things, how mental ill-health is often revered as charismatically saintliness. Charles Ryerson's case study, "Pitcharamman: Pilgrimage of a God-
“Liberation Themes in the Indo-Anglian Novel.” Here he illustrates from novels themes of poverty, hunger and disease, social evils of caste and communalism, dislocations and conflicts in a tradition-ridden society (p. 85) and the ways in which novelists have dealt with them in terms of liberation.

In section III on “Indian Christian Theology,” the first article, by Mathew P. John (“Incarnation and Translation”), brings a ray of joy to the otherwise tedious and time-consuming job of the biblical translator by interpreting it, and very rightly so, as a paradigm of the incarnation, that is, as a way of making God more intelligible to man. In “Chakkarai and the Indian Church” there is simply a repetition of ideas we have heard before. The essay that can stimulate much creative dialogue is by Samuel Rayan, “Indian Theology and the Problem of History.” Rayan refutes the facile generalization that Hindu culture is ahistorical and thus incapable of grasping the significance of the incarnation in human history. He stresses that Hindu culture is also “Holy History.”

We commend the editor for bringing together a number of choice essays which reflect the contemporary concerns of the Christian scholars in India. The Festschrift is an excellent testimony to the growing maturity of Christian Indian thought under the leadership of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society.

—Herbert Jai Singh

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*from The Netherlands (1970–1977)*

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Bakker, J. (State University of Utrecht)
“Oecumene, praktijk en probleem: Een vergelijkende sociologische beschouwing van hervormd-gereformeerde verhoudingen in Nieuw Guinea en Nederland.”

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