New Directions

It was said of the first-century Athenians that they “spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new” (Acts 17:21). Most of us cannot afford that luxury—nor would it be responsible in any age to disregard the wisdom of the past. Yet new directions are important considerations, and it is merely cynical to declare that there is nothing new under the sun. The Occasional Bulletin is pledged to keep its readers abreast of the most current missionary developments and scholarship throughout the world.

In this issue we continue our series on “Mission in the 1980s” with an article by Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. The short-term future is often more difficult than the long term to predict, and we welcome this Roman Catholic perspective on the decade just ahead in a task we all share.

The rise of independent churches is hardly a novelty, especially in Africa, but the new direction Andrew F. Walls advocates is in our attitude toward such movements: to reconsider their place within the history of religion as a whole and that of African Christianity in particular. He concludes that “in the end, the history of African Christianity will be a single story, in which the missionary period is only an episode.”

Harvie M. Conn here analyzes present trends and issues in mission on the basis of a questionnaire submitted to a broad cross-section of people from quite different missiological orientations. The responses indicate that despite continuing widespread disagreement on certain issues we may all need to revise our caricatures and stereotypes of one another.

Gabriel Fackre’s historical and theological “footnotes” on liberation and evangelization actually pursue one of the liveliest debates in missiological circles today. He insists that to recognize the validity of both liberation and evangelization is the most elemental step away from fragmented and reductionist missionary practices, and toward the fullness of mission.

In “The Legacy of J. N. Farquhar,” Eric J. Sharpe discusses a missionary leader in the first quarter of this century whose directions were precisely toward the concerns of today’s interreligious dialogue. Sharpe advocates a rediscovery of Farquhar’s exacting standards—not in order to apply yesterday’s solutions to today’s problems, but to bring the best thinking and deepest feelings into our own interfaith and intercultural encounters.

One clear direction that we have repeatedly signaled in the Occasional Bulletin is the growing importance of Third World voices in missiological thought. John W. Kinney’s reflections on the theology of John S. Mbiti—and Dr. Mbiti’s own response to that article—witness to the fact that “God was not a stranger in Africa prior to the coming of the missionaries,” and demonstrate that African Christianity today is by no means the passive recipient of western theological formulations.

Dr. A. J. van der Bent provides a critical survey of current periodicals on dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies that is a useful guide to available resources about the ongoing process—and new directions—of interfaith dialogue on all six continents.
Mission in the 1980s

Thomas F. Stransky

The assigned title is convenient for a mission prophet’s platform. But if we compare each decade’s anticipated agenda as offered in the January issue of mission journals, revues, and zeitschriften for 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1970, then re-read them ten years later, they appear as either pride-tempters or, more often, embarrassments to the authors and editors.

Amid these two thousand words, I could put a question mark after most sentences. I blue-penciled them out, and let the reader presume the question marks.

1. At a more quickening pace will be the emergence of the “Third Church”—as both a geographical and a historical repositioning, away from the Northern Atlantic/Eastern European/Mediterranean areas, to Latin America/Africa/Asia—in having influence over theological articulations, ethical stances, spiritualities, church disciplines, artistic expressions, interchurch cooperation, and structural forms of “home” and “foreign” missions.

How much this Third Church will become the church of the future, as well as the future of the church, will depend largely on those decisions of the 1980s taken in all six continents. Any theology of history (in that context, a theology of mission) which predicts irrevocable “Christian progress” would be naïve.

2. These objective realignments are already causing a mutation in the psychological climate in which mission has been carried out. During the last two decades, the euphoric self-confidence of the western churches and mission groups has rapidly been replaced by a general missionary discouragement and doubt, erratic and easily rationalized fumblings, masochistic guilt, and self-centered neo-isolationism—and thus, overall fatigue. Whereas in the nonwestern world, the churches have witnessed a new dynamism, self-confidence, and a will to find their own way into tomorrow’s world.

The 1980s will see in the western churches and mission groups a less uptight and humbler self-assurance about their role and responsibility in world mission. Six-continent partnership in mission will move beyond the slogan to at least modest taken-for-granted practices.

3. But in the Third Church, self-confidence, still often adolescent, will become chastened, more mature. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by the new mystique of “nation-building,” especially in Africa; and mission was being integrated into that general process. Now, new nations are no longer so innocent, nor are the churches therein. The immediate postindependence honeymoon is over.

Authoritarian regimes will continue to put pressure on the churches (“The Church is a state within the State, and so endangerers national unity”), as Christian consciousness and conscience become more sensitive and sophisticated in social, political, and economic issues. The 1980s will see new threats to whatever religious freedom is now enjoyed.

In fact, the growing secularization of value systems, especially through urbanization, and the increase of governmental pressure on those who are not “100 percent with us,” will, in many newer nations, demand a quality of Christian commitment not experienced before.

4. The moratorium debate will no longer be an either/or issue, which in its harsh, oversimplified demands has at least made its point. It will quicken co-responsibility in the allotment of money and the placement of personnel. The dominating power and lobby struggles will be within the churches more than between them and mission agencies/societies. If there be a strict moratorium somewhere, it will be imposed by a few visa-granting governments, no matter what missiologists debate.

5. The holy dissatisfaction with the more obvious dysfunctional patterns of mission ministry appears already in the 1970s: especially, the stress on ordination over service; a false professionalism with emphasis, in practice, on prestige positions rather than complementary functions; the concentration of leadership among those “highly educated” according to western standards of theological education. Through the less dependent and more secure generations of leadership, these dysfunctional patterns will fade more quickly. Ministry in mission will become less elitist; more emphasis on laity formation as distinct from the training of lay church workers. Grassroots training of more diversified church workers, paid or voluntary, will be judged equal in importance to higher forms of seminary training (although a disproportionate amount of monies will continue to be budgeted for the latter).

6. The “church growth movement,” i.e., the quantitative expansion in a mission context, will be taken more seriously by all the churches, as a conscious policy matter dealt with in theory, strategy, and administration. Church growth will no longer be overly identified with restricted presumptions or theories (e.g., “free church” or “faith group” evangelism); or with North American/European missionary agencies; or with specific institutions and personalities (e.g., Fuller School of World Mission; Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner). Calmer and less belligerent pros and cons will mark the examination of specific theories and methodologies.

7. Mission theology in the 1970s mirrored the emphasis of that decade’s theology in general—method more than content. One no longer assumes there is only one right way to reflect on what mission is and should be in practice. The 1980s will see more doing of mission theologies through various methods; more content—theologies and less monotonous we-need-to-dewesternize-the-enterprise.

And this development will be enhanced by a new generation of theologians, most of them yet unknown: the successors to John Mbiti, E.W. Fasholé-Luke and Peter Sarpeng, Choon-Seng Song and Kosuke Koyama, José Miguez-Bonino, Juan Segundo and Gustavo Gutiérrez, James Cone and Deotis Roberts, Rosemary Ruether, Raimundo Panikkar, etc.

The main themes of these fresh theological developments will remain classical and central: the God who saves through Christ in

---

Thomas F. Stransky, former president of the Paulist Fathers, was a staff member of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity from 1960–1970. He is a member of the United States Catholic Mission Council and a consultant to the World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, and the Vatican’s Christian Unity Secretariat.
the Spirit; the world that groans and grows; and in and of that world, the human person, alone and in community, who searches, finds, and searches (faith and unbelievs) in cultural contexts (theologies of experience); the church, and the images which reflect its mystery and its tasks; its relations with "The Others" (those of other religions, secular ideologies); evangelization, common witness, and proselytism; the local congregations in mission.

What remains to be seen: the extent to which theological plurality can be stretched in order to remain a faithful herald of Good News, and not of "another gospel" (I will not be surprised by less dissimilarity than others have already predicted); the extent to which Third Church theologies will indeed be cross-disciplinary, more synthetical than analytical (I predict, in general, an initial backward step); the extent to which western theologies will absorb and shift because of others (I predict very little in the 1980s, but more in the 1990s); the degree of patience of one "school" to indeed listen to others as they understand themselves to be (in the 1970s, too many violations of this simple dialogical discipline were witnessed in discussions of "Liberation Theologies").

The best shared sources for this entire theological enterprise will not be found in hard-covered, footnoted books but in catechetical and adult education materials (this has always been true, but seldom taken advantage of).

8. During the 1960s and 1970s, the paradigm of Christian mission cleavage has been shifting. No longer side-by-side existence of Protestant denominations/mission groups; no longer a simple, competitive Roman Catholic versus Protestant/Orthodox. The main gap now appears between the mainstream Protestant/Roman Catholic/Orthodox and the Evangelical. In the 1960s and early 1970s, both clusters were judging each other by those who were dominating the image-making and smothering the silent majorities: among the Evangelicals, those who downplay, in theory if not in practice, the mission struggle for just, sustainable, and participatory societies in one world; and among the others, those who downplay, at least in practice, explicit convert work among those not graced by explicit Christian faith and church discipline.

What is often overlooked is that Roman Catholic missionary communities and most local churches are far more evangelical than the Evangelicals realize, and at the same time, less uptight with, and more open to, cooperation and common witness with "conciliar, ecumenical" Christians.

In the 1970s, the Evangelicals emerged out of their low, defensive profile. With more energy and assurance than have other groups floundering and littered with burnt-outs, the Evangelicals are now looking afresh at the shared total mission agenda. In many areas they could very well give mission leadership to those Roman Catholics and other Protestants who are beginning to see that indeed they can learn and benefit from a positive encounter with the Evangelical mission movement.

Under the widely accepted umbrella of "holistic mission," evangelism—the Great Commission understood also holistically—could be restored to its rightful, central place in missionary activities across all borders, in and to all continents.

But the Evangelicals in the 1980s could blow this potential leadership role, if they would learn nothing from Roman Catholic and other Protestant good and bad experiences of the 1960s; if they would keep themselves aloof from the wider ecumenical movement; and worst of all, if the fragile unity among themselves would break apart because of a sadly titled "Battle for the Bible/Battle for World Evangelism."

In fact, as a Roman Catholic who prays he is committed to the biblical paradigm of unity—in-mission/mission-in-unity, I see the most ominous and depressing negative sign on the mission horizon of the next decade in the fact that the seventieth anniversary of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference will be celebrated in 1980 by two expensive, international meetings within five weeks of each other, the World Council of Churches' conference on world mission and evangelism: "Your Kingdom Come" (May, Australia), and the Lausanne follow-up Consultation on World Evangelization (June, Thailand).

Both meetings intend to reflect on a common commitment to the whole gospel of the whole church to the whole world. True, there may be somewhat different emphases and constituencies, and one should rejoice in a maximum of flexibility in mission approaches and organizations. Nevertheless, I do worry about an impending structuring of world mission that will force too many churches, mission agencies and groups to take sides in their stewardship of personnel, funds, and energy. So I end this article with the question: Will the 1980's see the children of Edinburgh and their prolific six-continent offspring now grown up only to be, once more, estranged members within the Christian mission family, divided witnesses to the Father who sent the Son that the world may believe?
The Anabaptists of Africa?
The Challenge of the African Independent Churches

Andrew F. Walls

We are just beginning to understand the complexity of African Christianity. Twenty years ago, while one could find missionaries and churchmen complaining of the activities of "sects," the African independent churches were not a subject of general interest. There was Bengt Sundkler's seminal study Bantu Prophets in South Africa (1948, revised 1961), and there were one or two area studies (notably Efraim Andersson's Messianic Movements on the Lower Congo). Terminology was very loose, words like "messianic," "separatist," "millennial," "syncretistic," and "prophetic" being used with great abandon as though they were interchangeable; indeed it was a great merit of Sundkler's book that he distinguished what he called "Ethiopian" from "Zionist" movements. Ten years later the situation had changed. On the one hand, H. W. Turner's two volumes on the Church of the Lord (Aladura) (History of an African Independent Church and African Independent Church, 1967) had given us not only a full and sympathetic account of one of these movements, but in the process the fullest account yet published of the life and worship of any group of African Christians. Partly by his influence, and aided by an International Missionary Council study (V. E. W. Hayward, ed., African Independent Church Movements, 1963), vocabulary was being tightened up. The phrase "independent churches" was now being widely used for those new movements that were recognizably Christian, by contrast with "older churches" (i.e., those that had maintained their mission connection); and Sundkler's earlier distinction (which had been designed for South Africa only) between "Ethiopian" and "Zionist" movements was being sharpened and made more widely applicable by the use of "prophet-healing" as a category. No longer could it be said that the subject was a minority interest: such floods of articles appeared that there was a real danger that the solid block of African Christianity that could not be comprehended within the "independent" category would be neglected. The significance of the movements as vehicles of national identity excited some students; their significance as a bridge with the old religion attracted others. Among observers with a "missiological" interest, there was a notable change of attitude (compare Marie-Louise Martin's hardline Biblical Concept of Messianism in Southern Africa (1964) with her Prophetic Christianity in the Congo (1968); and later, her Kimbangu (1975); and D. B. Barrett attempted a continent-wide survey (Schism and Renewal in Africa, 1968) producing on the one hand tables of the variables that one might think could be used to predict the appearance of new movements scientifically, and on the other a religio-theological explanation of many of them in terms of (generally missionary) "failure of love.""

We are now, I think, in a new situation, where we must consider, first, What is the place of these movements within the history of religion as a whole? and second, What is their place within African Christianity? In both considerations, Turner has been a pioneer. In a series of studies less noticed than his African contributions, he has shown that the new religious movements in Africa, of which the independent churches are a part, have their analogues elsewhere—in North and South America, in Oceania, some in Asia, even a few in Europe. He has produced a carefully circumscribed definition: "a historically new development arising in the inter-action between a tribal society and its religion and one of the higher cultures and its major religion, and involving some substantial departure from the classical religious traditions of both the cultures concerned, in order to find renewal by reworking the rejected traditions into a different religious system" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1975, "Tribal Religious Movements, New"). His Project for the Study of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies, within the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, has identified and documented thousands of such movements.

The worldwide nature of the phenomenon of new religious movements in primal societies should not, however, blind us to the fact that the distinction between the independent churches—which represent some of the many forms of new religious movements—and other forms of African Christianity can be exaggerated. It is worth considering Turner's definition again. "A historically new development arising in the inter-action between a tribal society and its religion" on the one hand, and an invader culture and its religion on the other, involving a substantial departure from both and a reworking of rejected traditions into something new—something like this is bound to happen whenever the Christian faith is effectively planted across a cultural frontier. Where it is thoroughly at home, where it has repaired the rent fabric of a shattered pattern of community life, where it is not simply an undigested "foreign body," African Christianity is likely to be a "new religious movement," reworking the old and the new. If this is true, the distinction between "independent" and "older" churches may be of decreasing value. We may also suspect that, when viewed as an aspect of Church history, the "historically new" movements are not "qualitatively new" but are new manifestations of "old religious movements" indistinguishable elsewhere in the Christian story.

Churches and Movements

It is perhaps necessary once again to indicate that "new religious movements" is a term much wider than "independent churches." Some of the movements are essentially renewal or adjustment movements within the old religion; one or two (even some called "churches") are abstractions from a romanticized tradition, patronized by intellectuals, attempts at a reformulated "intellectual" traditional religion; a good number are what Turner calls "Hebraist," making a clear and conscious break with vital aspects of the old religion, but without Christ holding any such place in their scheme as to enable them to be regarded as clearly Christian manifestations; a few (like Bayudaya of Uganda, who moved from mission Christianity via a "Hebraist" movement to a recognizable

Andrew F. Walls is head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.
Some Problems of Terminology

Even accepted terminology, which has been so helpful in sorting out past muddles and making clear distinctions, is now facing new strains.

First, what is an “independent” church? Nowadays most African churches are independent in the sense that their leadership is African, their ministry overwhelmingly African, and missionary direction minimal. Except, perhaps, in countries with white settlement, there seems therefore no longer any obvious reason for “Ethiopian” secessions: virtually all African churches are now “Ethiopian.” It has long been the case that life in the so-called “African” churches of Yorubaland (United Native African Church, Native Baptist Church, etc.) is virtually indistinguishable from that of the “mainline” churches from which they sprang: they are “new religious movements” only in a historical and no longer in a qualitative sense at all. (The end of the Ethiopian motive does not, of course, imply the end of schism, or even of ethnically or communally based schism—but that is another question.)

Second, the term “independent” must not obscure the fact that many (not all) “independent” churches consciously maintained a missionary legacy; they are often “mission-derived” churches as fully as the “older” churches. Some even claim fidelity to a particular form of missionary tradition as their raison d’être.

Again, with the passage of time, we now have independent churches with a substantial history. Many “independent” churches, with roots in the prodigious religious development of 1916–1930, are now in fact older than many “older” churches, some of which have achieved real independence of missionary control only in the last few years.

Changing Conditions

Present conditions help further to reduce the qualitative gap between “older” and “independent” churches.

The period when anyone desired complete assimilation to western cultural norms is now well past. One effect of this is to enhance the appeal of the independents, or of what they stand for, to évolues and intellectuals who in former times would have been embarrased by any association with “primitivism.” Partly for this reason, partly through a “routinization of charisma” in many older independent churches, the constituency of the independents is changing; some are institutionalizing, and developing along the well-known lines of the older churches.

“Nowadays most African churches are independent in the sense that their leadership is African, their ministry overwhelmingly African, and missionary direction minimal.”

Further, the search for African identity, and the question of continuity of the African Christian present with the traditional African past raised by that search, are exercising younger leaders of the “older” churches. Some are evincing sympathy and respect for the independents as better reflecting or maintaining that continuity than some churches of the main line.

Word and Sacrament

But the most cogent factor working toward the reduction of the differences between “independent” and “older” churches is the presence in both of Word and sacrament within the same general cultural contexts.

The sacrament, indeed, has not been a prominent feature of many African independent churches; but it is also true that it is not prominent in African Christianity as a whole. This results from the fact that the mission churches, Catholic and Protestant, have insisted on the practice of their countries of origin, that only a priest or minister is permitted to officiate at the sacrament: and there have never been enough of these to make sacramental worship more than a periodic experience for most African Christians. In some areas a further feature has been that church discipline in conflict with local marriage custom restricts the Communion in practice to a minority, often an older minority, of the congregation. It is not surprising if the independents have often taken the sacrament—and the creeds—as something that is part of being a church, part of tradition, but not as something near the heart of religious life. The EJCSK in effect kept the Communion service in cold storage for years: and then installed it, with great solemnity and an indigenization of the elements. But the communal meal, long prominent in African societies, has blossomed independently of the Eucharist. For instance, South African Zionists will break the Lenten fast with joy and gusto on Easter morning: but without the bread and wine or the words of institution. The Eucharist came to Africa without emphasis on its aspect as a communal meal, and the Christian communal meal has gone on, in older and independent churches alike, developing without the Eucharist.

The Word, however, has been central to African Christian experience. The independents have been marked above all by a radical biblicism—daring Christians in effect to live by what the Bible says. The Word is even visibly present when the charismatic person speaks, led by the free Spirit. Its visible presence is exalted...
even among groups who can barely read it; and more than one notable spiritual man has been anxious to demonstrate that, although illiterate, he can quote the Bible accurately and appositely. In some ways, the radical biblicists among the independents may be compared to the Anabaptists in Western Church history: the same wild variety, the same strong cohesion as “people of God,” the same insistence on following the Word as they hear it.

This concern for the Word has perhaps been the main “catholicizing” factor for the independents, giving them a point of reference (and thus a potential source of change) and a recognizable common ground with the other churches. African Christianity has been from the beginning book-religion. The most effective bridge-building between independents and others has probably been in the area of shared Bible teaching—and is it coincidental that Mennonites, successors of the Anabaptists, have been so prominent in this? At this point, at any rate, the independents have simply heightened a feature which is common to most forms of African Christianity.

Differentia

Where, then, are the differentia between independents and older churches? Many external features of the independents come to mind when someone is asked to characterize them. We take here an arbitrary selection of them, and ask how far these are characteristic of African Christianity in general.

Other sources of revelation: A prominent feature of the independents has been the use of vehicles of revelation other than Scripture. Indeed, part of their appeal has been the accessibility of a direct personal “Word of God” to the enquirer. The background of this can be sought in two factors: the use of mediumistic trance in indigenous culture, and the presence of prophecy and revelation among the gifts of the New Testament.

A study of the “revelations” given in some churches, however, suggests that they are less integral to the life of the church than might be supposed. Most have a formal, stereotyped character, even though uttered in ecstasy or received after rolling in the sand or some other technique for heightening the consciousness (and after all, did not the Old Testament prophets sometimes also employ techniques for the purpose? Cf.2 Kings 3:15).

Dispute over the sources of revelation has been a regular feature of Christian history: and often enough the gap in practice between the “literals” and the “spirituals” was narrower than one would guess from the vituperation on the topic. In the early fourth century A.D. Phrygia (another culture where spirit mediumship was entrenched) developed, in Montanism, an indigenous form of Christianity. The orthodox fulminated against Montanus and his prophetesses. But they had reluctantly to admit that they used the same Scriptures as themselves. And when we try to find out what was done as a result of the New Prophecy nothing more dramatic is alleged against the Montanists than the institution of some supernumerary fasts.

As for dreams, certainly they are prominent in any profile of independency, and their interpretation is much sought after in African societies from any proficient person. But as Bishop Sundkler has illustrated, dreams are important in the mainline
churches too; countless of their priests or ministers first recognized their vocation in a dream in which they saw themselves robed, at altar or pulpit according to their tradition. And the independents point those who demur at these direct forms of revelation to the stories of Joseph or Daniel or other biblical examples.

**Marriage:** It is commonly said that the members of independent churches are fugitives from older churches with stricter discipline on marital matters, but it is hard to prove this. In fact, some independents, notably the EJCSK, preach monogamy as rigorously as anyone, and there must be few who consciously encourage polygamy. It is simply that the subject is not high on the agenda; they accept the facts of African married life as they are. Childlessness and its causes will rank higher in the minds of most couples. Now the older churches themselves are reappraising their own discipline amid changing economic circumstances. It is unlikely that the marriage question will long be an unbridgeable gulf between churches.

**Healing:** In traditional Africa, healing was usually performed in a religious context; the time and manner in which medical missions developed prevented (in most areas) a smooth transition from the old religion of healing to the new. It was the independents who made the logical connection; if the Christian was to trust Christ and not entreat the old Powers, should he not trust Christ for all the things for which he once entreated the Powers? But there is again nothing here that is incompatible with the life of the older churches. What the independents have done time and again is to challenge the half-Christian who goes to church respectfully, but then in secret, and with guilty feelings, goes off to the diviner to seek the cause of sickness and the way of healing. The earthiness of African life demands that African salvation shall be as solidly material as biblical salvation.

Examination of a whole range of other features of independents might be revealing, if followed by search of the same features in other forms of African church life. The sacredness held to attach to certain places and objects is strange—until one remembers that the same strictness of observance may attach to, say, many an Anglican sanctuary in Africa, where no lay person, above all no woman, may sit beyond those rails. The prescriptions laid down by independents often seem a strange mixture of African tradition and Levitical law (and indeed very often it is African tradition reasserted on the basis of the Levitical law). But in how many African Anglican or Methodist or Presbyterian churches are women simply quietly absent from Communion during the menstrual period, or do men in effect observe the rules of ritual purity laid down in the Old Testament?

One of the remarkable features of the independent churches for a westerner is their combination of the ritual and hierarchical with the charismatic and spontaneous. The West knows both types of religion, but—at least until recently—identifies them with different traditions: the independents combine them in the same tradition. But both features are part of African life. African life is ordered, has a sense of the appropriate time, place, and person; but it is also spontaneous, improvisatory, responsive. What is both more ordered and more spontaneous than the dances of Africa?

In the end, the history of African Christianity will be a single story, in which the missionary period is only an episode. The judgment of the churches of Africa will not be whether one can denominate them "older" or "independent"—that distinction, I believe, will in time, and perhaps soon, become meaningless. Their judgment, like that of all the churches, will be by the Lord of the Church on the basis of his Word.

---

**NOTES**

1. "The root cause common to the entire movement of independency may therefore be seen in this single failure in sensitivity, the failure at one small point of the version of Christianity brought in by the missions to demonstrate the fulness of the biblical concept of love as sensitive understanding towards others as equals, together with the dawning African perception from the vernacular Scriptures of the catastrophic nature of this failure" (D. B. Barrett, Schism and Renewal in Africa [London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968], pp. 269f.).

2. Cf. J. V. Taylor's words about one Anglican area: "The rubric in the Prayer Book concerning the exclusion of the 'open and notorious evil liver' is applied to 87 per cent of married men in the church, and about 80 per cent of married women, and this quite irrespectively of the fact that in almost all peoples the congregation is not in the least 'offended' by what they have done." (The Growth of the Church in Buganda [London: SCM, 1958], p. 244).


---

**Some Important Books**


The most unique vacation you’ll ever have
combined with

The First Athens Congress
on World Missions
August 15-23, 1979

Travel in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.
See the perspective that Paul saw. Visit locations from which he led the Christian cross-cultural missionary movement. Travel opportunities to the Holy Land, Asia Minor, and the Cradle of Civilization. A ship cruise to the Greek Islands. Congress sessions in the historical amphitheater at the Acropolis in Athens. Turn your travel into a Great Commission vision. The Bible will be your guide.

Speakers and Sponsoring Committee
(Partial Listing)

†Dr. Ben Armstrong, Chairman
Communications Commission,
World Evangelical Fellowship,
Executive Director, National
Religious Broadcasters
†Dr. Bill Bright, Founder
& President, Campus Crusade
For Christ International
†Owen Cooper, Businessman
Former President, Southern
Baptist Convention
†Hal W. Guffey, President
International Students, Inc.
†Dr. Richard Halverson, Pastor
Fourth Presbyterian Church
Chairman of the Board,
World Vision, Inc.
†Donald A. Hamilton, Executive
Director, Association of Church
Mission Committees
†Dr. Jack Hayford, Pastor
Church on the Way
President, LIFE Bible College
†Dr. Carl F. Henry, Founding
Editor, Christianity Today
†Maxie Jarman, Businessman
Board Member, Moody Bible
Institute
†Dr. Torrey Johnson, Senior
Minister, Bible Town
Community Church
†Dr. Harold Lindell, Former
Editor, Christianity Today
†Dr. Harold Ockenga, President
Gordon-Conwell Theological
Seminary
*Don Richardson, Missionary
Author, Peace Child
†Dr. Waldron Scott, Executive
Director, World Evangelical
Fellowship
*Dr. J. T. Seams, Professor
of Missions, Asbury Theological
Seminary
†Dr. Tom Skinner
Tom Skinner Associates
†Dr. Paul Smith, Pastor
The Peoples Church
†Dr. Clyde W. Taylor
"Mr. Missions" among
evangelical leaders
†Dr. Cameron Townsend
Founder, Wycliff Bible
Translators
*Dr. Christy Wilson, Professor
of Missions, Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary
†Dr. Ralph Winter, Founder
& Director, United States
Center for World Mission
†Sponsoring Committee
*Speakers

The First Athens Congress has been designed for all individuals deeply concerned about the effectiveness of missions. Participate in a history making event with strategic planning regarding crucial new mission developments between now and 1984. Write for details including special travel arrangements for church officials, pastors, lay leaders, and church congregations.

The First Athens Congress on World Missions
c/o United States Center for World Mission
1605 East Elizabeth Street
Pasadena, California 91104
(213) 798-8996

Tell me about the Missions Congress.

Name
Address
City State Zip
Theological Trends and Issues in the Christian World
Mission As Seen from a North American Perspective

Harvie M. Conn

In the summer of 1978, a survey questionnaire prepared by a special commission of the Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions in North America (AEPM) to study "Theological Trends and Issues in Missions as Seen from the Western Perspective," was sent to 206 persons. Of these, 114 went to the current membership of the AEPM, thirteen to pastors whose names were supplied by members of the commission, seventy-nine to names selected at random from the membership of the American Society of Missiology (with the overwhelming majority of these from so-called mainline theological institutions and agencies whose theological and missiological perspectives might be thought to be most comfortable with those of the Division of Overseas Ministries, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.). Responses were received from sixty-two persons, including seven pastors, forty-one professors, five missionaries, twenty-one administrators, and one student (several persons put themselves in more than one category). The majority (49) indicated that they had served outside North America, in thirty-seven countries around the world. The average period of overseas service was a bit over twelve years.

Those surveyed were asked to identify which organization(s) represent the theological perspective with which they were "most comfortable." One respondent chose the Associated Missions of the International Council of Christian Churches (TAM); thirteen indicated the Division of Overseas Ministries (NCC-DOM); while the majority (37) indicated the category designated "Evangelical Foreign Missions Association/Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (EFMA/IFMA); and one respondent chose the Fellowship of Missions (FOM). Seven persons preferred the category "None," and one wrote in the notation, "All—the essence of a missions perspective is not theology—for me."

The first part of the survey requested the respondents to identify from a list of fifty-two choices those theological topics they considered to be crucial for missions and research in the next ten years. They were asked to number their choices one through nine in order of importance to them, with permission to give at least two issues the same number if they so desired. Our intent in this procedure was to see if some pattern of priorities might emerge. Simply asking respondents to list nine choices without order of preference might not, we felt, allow us to see any succession of importance by the respondents themselves, other than what we could determine from an average of the overall tally. Despite the methodological problems involved in such an attempt, a remarkable degree of consensus emerged.

The following list of theological topics regarded as crucial (in order of their importance) resulted from the survey:

1. Relation of the Gospel and Culture/Theology of Contextualization
2. Relation of Evangelism and Social Action
3. Christian Approach to Indigenous Religions
4. National Church/Foreign Mission Relations
5. Concept of the Church
6. Urbanization
7. Relation of the Kingdom of God to Missions
8. Christians under Authoritarian, Anti-Christian Governments
9. Christian-Muslim Encounter

It may be of interest to note some of the other possible topics in the list of fifty-two choices that were not ranked among the top nine: moratorium issue, polygamy, economic lifestyle of the missionary, liberation theology of Latin America, nationalism, syncretism, human rights, charismatic movement, homogeneous unit principle, and Protestant-Catholic dialogue.

Part 2 of the survey attempted to define and expand the questions. Obviously, editorial bias affects not only the interpretation of the data but also the formulations used to define the trends. The categories in themselves clearly reflect some preconceived ideas, on our part, of the mission task.

Theology of Mission

Several ominous notes were affirmed rather strongly by the respondents. They perceive increasing confusion over the theological basis for mission, linked with a feeling of widespread failure of nerve about the missionary enterprise, which does not bode well for the future. Weakness of vision for the world character of Christian mission paralleled the respondents' concern over a lack of creativity in seeking to reach the three billion non-Christian world population.

Underlining this was a lack of optimism regarding traditional evangelical emphasis in accomplishing this task. Opinion was strongly divided as to the emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission, though most felt there was a recovering of belief in charismatic gifts of the Spirit for mission. So too, a significant number of respondents were not sure there was a growing interest in personal evangelism by national churches (an almost equal number felt such an interest existed). There was strong agreement that only peripheral importance is given to prayer and faith in world mission today.

On the positive side, the role of the laity was seen as deepening in significance in the world mission of the church, though no

*Members of the special commission who carried out this study for the AEPM were: S. Wayne Beazer, Grace Theological Seminary (Winona Lake, Indiana), Donald Gregory, Grace College of the Bible (Omaha, Nebraska), Ray Talman, Moody Bible Institute (Chicago), and the present writer.

Harvie M. Conn is Associate Professor of Missions and Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

April, 1979
equally clear opinion was expressed as to the existence of an increasing number of nonprofessional tent-making missionaries. There was strong agreement on the growing recognition of the concept of the church in developing a healthy missiology, and an equally firm affirmation of increasing sensitivity to the role of the behavioral sciences in mission studies.

In the area of relation of evangelism and social action, opinions were quite mixed. A sizable majority saw a growing interest in the correlation of these two elements. Some saw a growing separation from the spiritual realities of the gospel, while an almost equal number were not sure, and again an almost equal group disagreed. Opinions were almost equally divided as well over whether there exists a growing alienation of the life of the church from its holistic task in the world. The vast majority, however, did not see such a trend as desirable. Ultimately a strong majority saw a polarization between those emphasizing personal conversion and church growth, and those emphasizing action for God’s justice in the world. Important also was the strong majority that found this polarization as not desirable.

It may be of some interest at this point to compare the answers in general with those whose theological affinities were identified with the DOM. Surprisingly, for those who might expect to see rather strongly divergent patterns of thinking, the voting, in the vast majority of cases, displayed little percentage differences. This was especially true when respondents were asked to evaluate trends as to desirability or not. The only marked difference here occurred over the evaluation of the homogeneous unit principle. In comparison to the overall voting, which saw a wider theoretical acceptance as desirable, only five out of ten votes cast by DOM-oriented people agreed.

One area of significant percentile difference was in the evaluation of the relationship between evangelism and socio-political involvement. The DOM-related votes, parallel to the rest of the ballots, saw a trend toward growing polarization (10 agree votes and 2 “not sure”), which all saw as “not desirable.” But, unlike the general vote, only four saw a trend toward lack of emphasis on evangelism and an overemphasis on socio-political involvement. Eight of the total fifteen votes cast disagreeing that such a trend existed were cast by the DOM group. Again, eight out of eleven DOM votes saw this as undesirable. By way of contrast, none of the DOM group agreed that there was a trend toward a separation from the spiritual realities of the gospel. And eight specifically disagreed (a significant portion of the 13 total votes cast for this category).

Still another area of significant difference was over the question of syncretism. Out of the total sixty-nine votes, twenty-eight agreed that there was an increase in syncretism, though the vote was divided almost evenly as to whether much of this originated in North American theological weaknesses. By contrast, only one DOM vote out of twelve cast agreed as to the trend of syncretism, and only two traced its origins to North America.

Cultural Questions

In 1973 Edward Dayton and William Needham commented in their essay “Changes in Trends in Missions Today” on the historical tendency in missions to equate Christianity with western culture, but noted that “mission agencies are recognizing the need to incorporate local culture, in Christian worship and lifestyles, even while holding biblical positions” (Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas, 10th ed. [Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1973], p. 75). That generalization is documented, by and large, in the overall responses in this category of our survey.

The vast majority of our respondents, for example, saw a deepening cultural sensitivity in gospel communication, and this was considered desirable by almost everyone who responded. Only five out of sixty-one saw a continuation of any wholesale mission condemnation of ethnic culture in the process of church planting. Again, with one exception, all saw any such trend as undesirable. The same voting patterns continued as the respondents noted a growing national effort to resist slavish imitation of the West in church formation, an increasing search for indigenous worship, art and music, a dewesternization of ministerial training patterns, and more sensitivity to the relation of human cultures and the universal gospel of Jesus Christ. So too there was a growing awareness felt by the respondents at large concerning the cultural, and not strictly theological, barriers to gospel communication. In every one of these cases, such trends were seen as overwhelmingly desirable.

At the same time there were areas of ambiguity in the picture and many of these appeared in the evaluation of more particular topics. Twenty-three out of fifty-eight agreed that there exists a continuing middle-class captivity of missions and Christian communities in the Third World (23 were not sure). A significant number saw a tension between the mission and the national church over the reception of polygamists into Christian fellowship (an equal number were not sure) while, at the same time, a strong majority claimed there was more awareness by mission agencies of the cultural complications involved in polygamy.

Opinion was also divided over the existence of a positive trend toward nationalism and nation-building. Though the vast majority felt this was desirable, thirty-two agreed it existed, but twenty-five were not sure. A similar breakdown appeared in evaluating the indigenous churches’ attitudes toward urbanization. A slightly more affirmative vote (38) saw the missions facing urbanization with a positive attitude, but the voting was more hesitant when it came to evaluating the national church and urbanization. There was a similar ambiguity in tracing the growth of interest in ethnic culture’s “redemptive analogies.” A combined total of thirty votes agreed such a trend existed. But twenty-five were not sure. And here also, in determining whether this was desirable or not, the largest number of “not sure” votes (11) were cast in this entire section. Thirty-eight saw it as a desirable trend.

No discernible, proportionate difference could be found in the answers supplied by isolating the DOM persons voting on these topics. In all categories the parallelism was quite strong.

Interchurch Relations

An increasing amount of hesitancy in evaluating trends identified with this category appeared in the balloting (as evidenced in many indications of “not sure”). But, nevertheless, there was strong affirmation of many developments. As in the earlier part of the survey, there was considerable agreement that a trend existed toward the development of new patterns in national-foreign mission relations, and that bifurcation continued between evangelicals and “ecumenicals” on national and larger levels. Interestingly, opinion was almost equally divided on whether this latter trend was desirable or not. By way of contrast, the DOM bloc unanimously saw it as undesirable. There was also much support both recognizing and supporting a trend toward better relations between the “sending” churches and their overseas-related churches.

On more specific questions, voting was not as uniform. A strong majority saw the trend toward cooperative efforts in theological education between mission agencies as desirable, and similarly for cooperative efforts in radio, literature, Bible distribution, and evangelism. At the same time, there was much greater hesitancy in evaluating the degree of hostility to the idea of planting “union” churches on the field. The largest block of votes were
“not sure” that such a trend existed and opinion was strongly divided as to whether this was desirable or not. The picture was roughly the same over the question of “greater appreciation for comity movements between missions on the field.” The preponderant number of votes (27) were “not sure” such a trend existed, while a significant number (23) did not feel it existed at all. There was also an almost equal division over whether such a trend, if it existed, was desirable or not. On the matter of planting union churches, the sharpest difference appeared between the general voting and those with DOM leanings. All the DOM-related ballots, by way of contrast with the general indecision of the majority (34 “not sure”), saw it as desirable, and five out of eleven DOM votes cast saw such hostility to the idea lessening (the remaining six preferred the “not sure” column). Again, in evaluating the possibility of “general hostility toward the African Independent Churches,” opinion was divided (26 agreed, 19 were not sure, and 12 disagreed). The vast majority did not see such hostility as desirable. From the DOM-related side, feeling was also mixed. Agreeing with the existence of such a hostile trend were four, but six disagreed (3 were “not sure”).

One of the most interesting categories was that evaluating evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue. Thirty-three saw a trend toward an increase in that dialogue as desirable, sixteen did not. The majority (36) also admitted the existence of such a trend, though a significant group again were not sure (15). The same patterns were duplicated in the voting of the DOM bloc over the existence of such a trend, but, by way of contrast, all eleven votes cast saw the possibility as “desirable.” If comparative data taken five years ago were available, I personally suspect that this present survey would indicate among evangelicals an increase in the number of those who see such dialogue as desirable.

Other Religions

A good deal more hesitancy or tentativeness on the part of the respondents appears here, not only in terms of identifying trends, but in determining whether they are desirable or not. Similarly, some of the strongest differences arise in comparing overall responses to those supplied by the DOM group of respondents. A strong majority recognized a resurgence of fervor and growing prominence in indigenous religions, and generally this was viewed as not desirable. Within the DOM group, by contrast, though the trend was acknowledged clearly, five out of eleven votes saw it as desirable (5 were “not sure”; and 1 saw it as undesirable). Interestingly, the general majority and the DOM vote both acknowledged clearly a growth of universalism in the face of these movements and both saw it as undesirable (of 9 votes cast on this topic by the DOM group, 5 saw it as undesirable and 3 were not sure). A similar vote spread appeared in the acknowledgment of more tentativeness regarding mission in this context. At the same time, a strong majority in all quarters saw more attention being paid by both mission and church to better methodology and strategy-planning in reaching the adherents of indigenous religions.

It was in the vote over particular religions and specific methodology, however, that much hesitancy and divergence of opinion was expressed. And again, there was sharp and general disagreement over the desirability of some of these trends. Value judgments were not always being made strictly according to “expected party lines.”

What about the trend acknowledged (in spite of considerable hesitancy) toward an increased use of dialogue as a method of approach? Thirty-three found it desirable and fourteen said no. More particularly, the DOM group cast eleven votes for desirability and one vote against (1 was “not sure”). A very large majority supported greater recognition of the need for a theological understanding of mainland China, though opinion was generally mixed as to whether such a trend existed or not (10 of the 12 votes felt it did). Even more ambiguity was seen in attempting to recognize a clearly discernible trend toward improved methods of reaching what the survey called “ancestor worshippers.” Though all saw this by and large as desirable, twenty-five agreed that the trend existed, but twenty-five were not sure (the DOM persons similarly split their vote 5 and 5 on the same question).

Francis X. Lynch, S.J.
1921–1978

Francis X. Lynch, S.J. (better known as Frank), the noted Philippine missionary anthropologist, died of a heart attack on September 29, 1978, at the age of fifty-seven in Manila. Born in Orange, New Jersey, he joined the Jesuits in 1940, and was a graduate of Woodstock College in Maryland, University of the Philippines (M.A.), and University of Chicago (Ph.D. 1959). He was the founding director of the Institute of Philippine Culture at Ateneo de Manila University, and was also active in organizing the Philippine Sociological Society, which he served as president (1961–1962) and as editor of its journal (1969–1973). A distinguished teacher and author, Father Lynch became a naturalized citizen of the Philippines in his later years. He is buried near the Ateneo University campus, where the Frank X. Lynch Memorial Chair in Anthropology and Sociology has been established. A tribute to him in the Philippine Studies Newsletter of the Association for Asian Studies concluded, “Father Lynch was a patient, generous, and considerate colleague. His influence on the development of anthropology in the Philippines was significant and lasting. He shall be sorely missed and long remembered.”

Generally, there was even more difference of judgment over evaluating a possible movement toward Marxism as a tool for self-criticism of capitalist excesses. Twenty-nine agreed that the movement existed, and twenty were not sure. But even more significant was the divergence over desirability. Twenty-five saw it as desirable (9 of these by DOM-related persons) and eighteen felt it was not (1 DOM person). One professor in a well-known evangelical seminary noted, “If balanced, it can be healthy.”

In the area of Muslim evangelization, the picture was not clear. Though a strong majority saw an increase in awareness of new methods for reaching Muslims, and a desirable trend at that, opinion was divided again over a movement to new openness to the gospel in Muslim communities. Though few negative votes were cast (3), a significant number (25) were “not sure” it existed. By way of contrast, the DOM vote was heavier on the “not sure” side (7) than on the “agreed” side (3) in acknowledging this. Virtually all saw it as desirable. So too in acknowledging a trend toward support for the concept of “anonymous Christianity” in Muslim strategy, there were differences. Only fifteen saw the trend (32 were “not sure”) and twenty-one saw it to be undesirable. But there were ten votes that saw it as “desirable” and a larger number (15) that were just not sure. At this point, the largest number of DOM-related votes were cast in the “not sure” category (4), while three saw it as desirable and two as undesirable. Past generalizations and caricatures of positions on all sides may have to be more guarded in light of this ambiguity on all sides.
In the area of Jewish evangelism, similar patterns emerged in evaluating the existence of trends. Consistently large numbers of "not sure" votes were cast in evaluating increase in awareness of new methodologies (17) and on the question of new openness to the gospel in Jewish communities (25). The vote was particularly split (almost equally in three areas) over the question of possible "reluctance to support 'Jewish evangelism.'" In the DOM group, the difficulty in acknowledging these trends was even more radical. Out of all DOM votes cast on the question of new methods for reaching Jews, seven were not sure such a trend existed, and only four agreed it did. Eight (out of 12 votes) were not sure of a new openness to the gospel among the Jews (2 agreed). A majority (8) saw a reluctance to support "Jewish evangelism" and the remaining four were not sure. This ambiguity in the DOM group also appeared in evaluating the desirability of such reluctance. Three votes affirmed, four said "no," and three were "not sure." On the whole, a strong majority, by contrast, saw this reluctance as undesirable.

"Significant majorities acknowledged a growing awareness of the impact of the economic lifestyle of the missionary on evangelism."

Sociological Issues

Hopeful signs emerged in reading the data collected under this category. Though the percentage of general uncertainty remained high in determining whether some trends existed, significant majorities affirmed many trends toward more sensitivity and openness in key areas, and in only one instance did there seem to be a sizable group (24) still unsure as to the desirability of the trend ("more openness on the part of missions to 'right-wing' than to socialistic governments"). On this question alone did there seem also any divergence noted by those voters associating themselves with the DOM. The vast majority of DOM people in this instance (10) saw this preferential leaning to the "right" as undesirable, with the only remaining vote going in the "not sure" category.

Significant majorities (44) acknowledged a growing awareness of the impact of the economic lifestyle of the missionary on evangelism. The same majority (48) affirmed increasing sensitivity to problems of superiority and racism in mission attitudes and activities.

Similarly strong majorities acknowledged more alertness to the need for developing and implementing a theology of the poor (40) and a growing concern for ways in which mission power and resources affect missionary work (36).

The increase of Christian concern for violations of human rights on the mission field, and the need for preparing the churches to function under authoritarian governments, was recognized as a trend by strong majorities in the survey (even in the face of a large number of "not sure" votes) and an even larger majority saw these trends as desirable. Similar reactions marked the efforts to gauge mission and church participation in local and national development projects.

Developing Third World Theologies

Much more mixed reactions occurred in this section. As in the previous section, there remained a high category of voters unsure as to whether many of the trends existed. And here, as in the section on "Other Religions," there was occasional sharp division even on the desirability of many of the trends, acknowledged though they were. Perhaps the highest degree of difference in voting patterns could also be discerned between the general pattern and those of the DOM-related group.

A clear majority saw as desirable the general expectation that the national churches would adopt the theology of their maternal mission agencies. But the picture was much more mixed in evaluating a possible trend toward encouraging the national church to develop its own theology (even should it conflict with that of the mission agency). No clear majority was exhibited even in determining whether such a trend existed (21 affirmed its existence, 15 were not sure, and 22 saw no such trend). And the same picture, to some extent, appeared in evaluating such a trend as desirable. Though the largest block of votes affirmed this as desirable (27), a significant number were not sure (10), and a slightly larger group (17) denied it. The combined total of the "no" and "not sure" equaled that of the affirmative vote. A much sharper contrast appeared here in a study of the DOM votes. Both in affirming the existence of the trend (8 out of 11 votes cast) and in seeing its value (all votes), this group was much more positive.

Judgments about the individual theological movements were able more clearly to affirm trends, whereas judgments as to desirability remained, for the most part, mixed. Thus an obvious majority of votes affirmed the fear of syncretism in Latin American liberation theology and in African theology, but a determination as to desirability was more confused in both cases. If anything, the votes moved in the direction of undesirable. At the same time, balancing this uncertainty were strong affirmations of the need for willingness on the part of missions to learn from such movements. Was there a trend toward identification of liberation theology with the advocacy of violent revolution? In response, 31 out of 57 agreed there was, but again a significant number (21) were not sure. A strong majority (33) agreed such a trend was desirable (12 were "not sure").

The evaluation of these questions by the DOM votes was also mixed, though much more on the side of whether there existed a fear of syncretism in liberation theology and African theology. The DOM group clearly saw any drift toward fear of syncretism in liberation theology and African theology as undesirable. Overall, there was much less ambiguity in the voting patterns of the DOM group on this question.

General Conclusions

Drawing large generalizations from these data can be hazardous. The vast majority of respondents were either teachers or administrators. One wonders, for example, how a similar number of field missionaries would have viewed the same questions. A survey taken largely among pastors in North America would have yielded yet more contrasts and comparisons that could have provided very fruitful research. Granting all this, some tentative and very personal judgments may be attempted.

1. On the majority of issues, there was much more convergence of opinion between the votes in general and the DOM group in particular. If my own suspicions about the theological slant of the DOM group are shared by evangelicals generally (and the EFMA/IFMA groups in particular), there are many surprises in this survey. There seemed to be more agreement—especially in areas of evaluation (desirability)—than I had anticipated. Out of a total of seventy-eight questions asking whether trends were desirable or not, there was a clear agreement of percentile parallels between the general vote and the DOM vote on sixty-six topics. There were three topics on which some divergence could be noted, and there were nine topics where the divergence of opinion was

56 Occasional Bulletin
rather sharply defined ("recovering of belief in charismatic gifts of the spirit for missions"); "wider theoretical acceptance of homogeneous unit principle"; "greater appreciation for comity agreements between missions on the field"; "continued bifurcation between evangelicals and ecumenicals on national and larger levels"; "resurgence of fervor and prominence of indigenous religions"; "support for concept of 'anonymous Christianity' in Muslim strategy"; "reluctance to support 'Jewish evangelism'"; "fear of syncretism toward Latin American liberation theology"; "fear of syncretism toward European theology of politics"). To be sure, these topics are crucial, with eight of the nine falling under one or more of the nine themes designated by the survey as of greatest importance in mission theology today. And there is always the suspicion that those willing to affiliate their viewpoints with DOM may not be fully representative of the thinking of that group. Nevertheless, the figure has significance which cannot be discounted. On the simplest level, it may be an indicator that some of our evangelical prejudices regarding the theological thinking within the DOM constituency need revision. Assuredly it warns us against the ease with which we evangelicals continue to judge books only by their covers. Does it indicate some theological shifting within DOM? Our survey has no prehistory that would allow us a statistically fair answer to that question.

2. From the same point of view, those outside explicitly EFMA/IFMA circles may need to do some radical rethinking about their mental caricatures. The clear majority by which evangelicals labeled as desirable such recognized trends as the correlation of evangelism and socio-political involvement, a deepening cultural sensitivity in gospel communication, concerns for de-westernization, and concern for response to the violation of human rights on the mission field needs to be underlined.

Even on those issues where a clear majority seeing trends as desirable cannot be ascertained, the diversity of judgment may indicate change taking place within American mission thinking. A future survey might affirm this change more clearly. One suspects that ten or twenty years ago, value judgments by evangelicals on such questions as planting "union" churches on the field, comity agreements between missions, and evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue would have been much more negative than the current ambiguities indicated by the vote by the respondents in this survey. Furthermore, the parallel ambiguity reflected by the response in general and the DOM group in particular on some questions indicates certainly the difficulty of the issues for all concerned. Whether it indicates theological divergence seems more uncertain. Both groups appear to be struggling with issues such as the relation of evangelism and social action.

3. The survey underlines, through the ambiguity of many value judgments, those areas that need much research and more thinking for the future. Particularly was this true of union and comity questions in interchurch relations, the continued bifurcation of evangelicals and ecumenicals on national and local levels, and evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue. Again, in the general area of relations with other religions, the whole question of dialogue, of our approach to Marxism, of the concept of "anonymous Christianity" in Muslim strategy, voting over desirability indicated lack of certainty in stance. Still another wide area needing much more analysis was western mission perspectives on developing Third World theologies. Should the national churches be encouraged to develop their own theologies? How shall we look at liberation theology and African theology? What about mission interaction with ethnic political issues? The responses on this survey indicate that there remains widespread disagreement within the missionary community.

4. At the same time, there is every indication that we evangelicals in the West continue to have a sense of stability and continuity with our past. We have a continued concern about weakness of vision for the world character of the Christian mission and about the peripheral place of prayer and faith in that vision. We see a growing (and desirable) interest in personal evangelism by national churches and we want to see that correlated in some way with socio-political involvement. We want the church to tackle world problems of urbanization and "nation-building." We applaud new developing patterns of church-mission relations, both in the West and abroad. We fear what we suspect is a lack of creativity in reaching the three billion outside of Christ, and we commend new methodologies being developed for us by collaboration with the behavioral sciences. We support the trend toward better methodology and strategy-planning in reaching the Muslim and the Jew. We recognize the need for a theological understanding of mainland China. Our concerns for our missionary economic lifestyle, the subtle ways in which mission power and resources affect our work, and the poor of the world, continue to trouble us. Syncretism in our own circles and in others impresses us as undesirable.

In short, we are changing but we have not lost our fear of where change can, under certain circumstances, take us. In the language of Dayton and Needham, "In the midst of change we can also see the basic and unchanging truths of the Christian faith that must be both an anchor to hold fast and a gift to be given away in obedience and service" ("Changes in Trends in Missions Today", p. 75).
Liberation and Evangelization—Some Historical and Theological Footnotes

Gabriel Fackre

There have been occasions in the history of Christianity when the strangers, liberation and evangelization (or those bearing a strong resemblance to them), have met. One such coming together was the radical Reformation of the sixteenth century, particularly the Anabaptist wing of it. What can be learned from the evangelists and liberators of that time?

The common feature of the many expressions of sixteenth-century Anabaptism—from spirituals who sought to establish a colony of the kingdom of Heaven distanced from the fallen systems and structures of this world to the apocalyptic insurgents who attempted to take the kingdom of Satan by storm—was the focus on the Not Yet. Anabaptists fixed the eye of faith upon the future. As the light of the kingdom approached the present, its luster exposed the world for what it was. The things that shall be call into question the things that are. This juxtaposition stirs the eschatological visionary to action. For the Melchiorites of Münster the expectation of the imminent arrival of the end drove them to prepare the way for the Lord by wielding the sword of the elect, thereby giving a preview of the day when the mighty would be brought from their seats and the lowly exalted. Others were led by their gaze toward the future to evangelize zealously, converting thousands to a fervent faith. Still others, less sanguine about the transformation of the world by either political action or personal conversion, gathered in conventicles on the margins of society, and by rigorous moral and spiritual disciplines set up advance outposts of the approaching kingdom. In all these expressions, the collision of the future with the present demanded judgment upon a church too much at home in this alien world (both Roman Catholic and Reformer alike) and a corrupt culture, and issued a call to move from the old age to the new by the act of either revolution, evangelical decision, or conventicular withdrawal.

Synoptic Vision

Movements of liberation and evangelization in the churches today share the future-orientation of sixteenth-century Anabaptism and the future-shock that accompanies an intense preoccupation with things to come. Now, as then, there is a calling into question of cultural and ecclesiastical captivity to the present age and an imperative to come out from the midst of it. And again there is the tendency to divide on the nature of faithful response. Liberation movements stress political action and systemic change, evangelistic movements call for personal conversion, and others doubtful of historical transformation or missionary penetration set up visionary communities on the edges of culture. Our task is to look for a way to move beyond partial perspectives. Is there such an opening?

The way ahead is inseparable from the vision that moves us. The Anabaptists, their forebears and heirs, are right in calling the church to its fundamental reference point, the eschatological dream that climaxes the Christian story. But this dream must be captured in its fullness if liberation and evangelization are to be more than either the strangers or nodding acquaintances they have been. And the realities with which this dream deals must also be part of the perception of the visionary.

The biblical vision of the future of God is a cosmic one; it includes the fulfillment of all things, individual, corporate, and natural. The prophetic seers of the coming of Shalom sketch pictures of the wolf and the lamb together, swords beaten into plowshares, the child’s hand over the viper’s den, each under vine and fig tree, a world where justice is done and peace is made—individual, nature, and society liberated and reconciled. The New Testament stretches this dream over eternity as well as time and deepens it by the bold affirmation that the vision of God has become flesh in Jesus Christ, who does triumphant battle by the sword of the cross with the powers and principalities ranged against the divine purposes. In him is anchored our hope that the kingdom of Shalom will come and God’s will shall be done on earth as well as in heaven.

To believe this story about what was, is, and shall be is to be sensitized to the extent and intransigence of the foes that assail the dream, and also to have the horizons of one’s hope widened. The forces pitted against the divine intention are within and without, in self and society, nature and history. They include the intimate enemies of arrogance and apathy, and the public thrones and authorities of political, social, and economic oppression. These are the realities of sin and evil with which the vision and the visionaries must deal. Because they are allied in their assault on the kingdom, victory over one and not the other leaves the enemy free to recoup its forces and return to reconquer territory thought to be secure. Witness to the wholeness of the Christian vision, and an understanding of the full range of hostility to it, means commitment to both liberation and evangelization.

Sober Hope

Inclusive commitment is rooted in synoptic vision. Transformation of both heart and history is what this dream is all about. But it is also true that there is a negative confirmation of this witness in praxis. Joseph Hromadka speaks of his experience with Marxists in Czechoslovakia who expressed an interest in Christian spirituality. Hromadka was asked to lecture to them on prayer, because Christians appeared to have some secret about changed persons which Marxist societies lacked, for their new social structures did not uniformly produce individuals of the commitment and integrity necessary for the functioning of the new order. Without the conversion of persons the reordering of social power can become the occasion for new corruption. On the other hand, evangelization which seeks the conversion of individuals but does not confront lethal powers and principalities is not only short of the biblical vision of the new Commonwealth of God, but also leaves unchallenged the structures of power which so oppress the body...
and soul that both the proclamation and the reception of the Word are imperiled.

Eschatological perspective yields a view of the depth as well as the breadth of both resistance and the grace that overcomes it. Here liberation and evangelization converge in their call for radical change. In contrast to developmental theories and strategies of social change or religious pedagogy, and also sanguine views of the human situation, there is an awareness of the depths of sin and evil and a commensurate radical call to repentance of persons and powers. The human plight is painted in chiaroscuro. The obstacles to redemption cast long shadows as the light of the dawn shines on them. Eschatology not infrequently becomes apocalyptic with the sharp juxtaposition of present misery with imminent glory, and the promise of vindication for the faithful and harsh judgment for the faithless. Again, however, each needs to hear the radical assessment of the other, for there is the temptation of the proponents of liberation to overlook the perversity of the human heart, and the advocates of evangelization to ignore the malice of historical evil.

Movements of liberation and evangelization, including those that seek to bring these two visions together, have often been flawed in their perception of the junctures of soteriology and eschatology, time and eternity. While the eschatological reference point has afforded a principle of radical criticism of the fallen world in both its personal and corporate manifestations, and a mandate for radical change, the future orientation of eschatology erodes the more it is believed that a positive response is made to the imperatives of the end. The Already/Not Yet tension of the New Testament is weakened by the assumption of an increasingly realized eschatology. Thus liberation theologies speak exuberantly of the possibilities of history when the yoke of bondage has been thrown off, while indeed at the same time seeking to distinguish this confidence from nineteenth-century forms of optimism by the accent of God’s action, not ours, and on historical dynamism. While the heavenly banquet is not to be had in history, there is, however, the promise of the first course. The same kind of expectation is true for the theologies of evangelization which hold that the new birth so places us in the kingdom to come that the disciplines of penitence, self-criticism, and struggle are at best marginal to the testimony that we have arrived. When the tension between the Already and the Not Yet is relaxed in either of these ways the genuine futurity of the Christian drama is denied, and in consequence the stubborn persistence of sin and evil is discounted and with it the corruptibility of the best of our moral and religious advances. The result is, on the one hand, a fanaticism or naïveté about the possibilities of either personal or corporate history, and on the other, a despair and paralysis that eventuates when these illusions are exposed.

The New Testament metaphor for the arrival of the Not Yet is not the presence of harvest time in personal or corporate history but the coming of first fruits. In this world we have a real taste of what is to come. Yet no claims are made for the final ingathering. To change the figure, salvation now is the aperitif of the eschatological banquet. This is no mere “whiff of the future” as in “Christian realism,” for there is a genuine participation in and portent of what is to come. But there is no mistaking promise for fulfillment, with its foreshortened vision and illusions about self or society.

**Partnership in Liberation and Evangelization**

Witness to the wholeness and depth of the vision requires that the integrity of liberation and evangelization be maintained and defended. It is possible to give formal allegiance to each, but so to define or redefine them that their particularities are denied. Thus evangelists may adopt the language of liberation but mean by it personal liberation from sin and guilt. Liberation is indeed deliverance from sin and guilt by the pardon and power of God in Christ. But standing alone this is a reduced gospel from which is absent the Good News of deliverance, at Exodus and Easter, from bondage to the principalities of this world, and the call to “resist the powers of evil.” Again movements and theologies of liberation may speak about evangelization but mean by it change of heart and mind from apathy to resistance to political, economic, and social oppression. Indeed, conversion is not the radical about-face described in the metanoia and epistrophe of the New Testament and shubh of the Old Testament unless it includes a turn away from idolatry before Caesar, and seeing and serving in the Light the wretched of the earth. But it is also radical repentance for breaking the divine heart on Golgotha, belief in the mercy that covers our sin, and baptism into the body of Christ. It is seeing the Light as well as seeing and struggling in and by it.

---

**Indexes Available**

Indexes to volumes I (1977) and II (1978) of the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research are available. Send $1.00 for both to: Publications Office, Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, NJ 08406. Payment must accompany orders.

---

Partnership has its pedestrian characteristics as well as its theological commitments. Day-to-day strategies are needed which bring together partisans of each of these movements. An inclusive vision presses for holistic mission. The apostolic praxis in Acts 3 and 4 is our charter. In the first missionary sortie of the church there is a deed of healing and hope done to a broken body, the word of proclamation, the call to repentance and belief, the confrontation with the structures of power, the suffering of the evangelist-liberators, the joyful response of many who both saw and heard the work of the Spirit, the life together of sharing, prayer, and praise. This apostolic model is the prism through which we see the eschatological radiance.

How can the fragmented and reductionist practices of mission with which we are all too familiar be moved toward this full-orbed understanding? An important clue is found in Paul’s struggle with the partisanships within the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 12 he legitimates the variety of gifts of the Spirit, the manifold parts of the body of Christ. In our own context this suggests that the most elemental step toward the fullness of mission is the acknowledgment by each charism, liberation and evangelization, of the validity of the other. Both are organs of the body and “the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you.’” But Paul expects much more of the Corinthian Christians than this mutual accreditation. The great homily on love in the thirteenth chapter calls each gift ministry to reach out to, learn from, and work with the other. Surely the word to us is the interrelationship and mutual ministry of liberation and evangelization. And more, we are encouraged to believe possible yet a further sign of maturity in that companion passage about somatic growth. Here an eschatological visionary dares to hope that there shall be a “building up of the body of Christ” in which the parts “attain to the unity inherent in our faith and knowledge of the son of God ... measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).
Where are the unreached people of the world?

1,200,000 are Turkish laborers in Germany
50,000 are racetrack dwellers in the U.S.
1,000,000 are high-rise residents in Singapore
30,000,000 are Ajlaf Moslem farmers in Bangladesh

"UNREACHED PEOPLES '79 details important research of the MARC Ministry of World Vision International together with the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in identifying and describing the unreached peoples of the world."

THE EDITORS

EDWARD R. DAYTON is the founder of the Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, a ministry of World Vision International. He currently heads the Evangelism and Research Division of World Vision. He has written extensively on mission strategy and management.

C. PETER WAGNER is chairman of the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. He is also associate professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission and vice president of Fuller Evangelistic Association.

WHAT WORLD LEADERS SAY:

BILLY GRAHAM:
Today in many parts of the globe there is an unprecedented interest in the Gospel. Yet nearly two-thirds of the world's people have yet to understand salvation in Christ. UNREACHED PEOPLES '79 will help to pinpoint the need, stimulate intelligent prayer, and motivate informed obedience. Missions leaders, missionary-minded pastors, and lay persons with a heart for the world should be familiar with this important book.

UNREACHED PEOPLES '79

$5.95

David C. Cook Publishing Co.

ELGIN, ILLINOIS—WESTON, ONTARIO
The Legacy of J. N. Farquhar

Eric J. Sharpe

Arguably the most serious single problem facing the Christian mission in our day centers on the two concepts of "religion" and "culture." How is what we call religion related to perhaps to the point of bondage, to western cultural patterns, a cultural group must find and affirm its own religious roots, and that outside its own area, Christianity has nothing to offer?

Because these are today's questions, it is easy to assume that they were formulated only yesterday. This is a false assumption, and in the work of the Scottish lay missionary John Nicol Farquhar (1861–1929), who served in India from 1891 to 1923, we can find ample evidence of their urgency in an earlier period. Farquhar was perhaps the first Protestant missionary in India to base a missionary theology, not on Christian assumptions only, but on a close and sympathetic study of Hinduism, and to gain acceptance as an Orientalist in his own right. In his insistence that the Indian cultural heritage must be recognized, understood, and made one foundation of a Christian attitude, he anticipated some of the concerns of what we now know as "interreligious dialogue."

The facts of Farquhar's life are soon told. Born in Aberdeen in 1861, he was early apprenticed to a draper, and returned to school only at twenty-one. He passed rapidly through Aberdeen Grammar School and Aberdeen University, before completing his studies at Oxford—the Oxford of A. M. Fairbairn, Max Müller, and Monier-Williams, from all of whom he began to learn how to study India and things Indian. In 1891 he arrived in India, and taught for a decade at the London Missionary Society's college at Bhowanipur, Calcutta. In 1902, thanks to the intervention of the tireless John R. Mott, he was set free from college teaching to devote himself to evangelism and writing under the auspices of the YMCA.

From 1907 to 1911 he served as National Student Secretary of the Indian YMCA, representing the organization at World Student Christian Federation Conferences in Tokyo (1907), Oxford (1909), and Constantinople (1911), and making important contributions to all three. He was not actually present at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, though he was a correspondent, and his influence is clearly seen in the Report of Commission IV. In October 1913 he delivered the Hartford-Lamson Lectures at Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, on "Modern Religious Movements in India," by which time he had become literary secretary of the Indian YMCA, on a roving commission which allowed him to spend half of each year in Oxford, and half in India. This arrangement continued even during the 1914–1918 war, in the course of which he was also instrumental in bringing out to India T. R. Glover (author of The Jesus of History) and the New Testament and Zoroastrian scholar J. H. Moulton as visiting YMCA lecturers (Moulton lost his life on the return journey when his ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean). In 1923 increasing ill health forced Farquhar to leave India. For the last six years of his life he was professor of comparative religion in the University of Manchester, England. He received honorary doctorates from the universities of Oxford and Aberdeen, was elected Wilde Lecturer at Oxford, and was a much valued speaker in many other parts of the country. He died on July 17, 1929.

Farquhar married in 1891 his childhood friend Euphemia (Effie) Watson, the daughter of his former employer; they had two children, one of whom (Marjorie) later served as a CMS missionary in India.

Farquhar's career as a writer began in his Bhowanipur days, but it was not until his emancipation from the routine of college work that he became more generally known. In 1903 he published Gita and Gospel, in which he considered the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita from a Christian point of view; in 1911 there appeared A Primer of Hinduism, and in 1913 his best-known work The Croton of Hinduism, and in the following year his Modern Religious Movements in India, still a standard work. In 1920 he published An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, which at once assumed a place it has never lost as an invaluable scholar's work of reference.

Scarcely less important were the books which he persuaded other Christian scholars in India to write, and for which he assumed editorial responsibility. "The Religious Quest of India Series" included such titles as Nicol Macnicol, Indian Theism (1915), J. H. Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi (1917), and Margaret Stevenson, The Rites of the Twice-born (1920). "The Heritage of India Series" contained sixteen titles, among them A. B. Keith, The Samkhya System (1918), F. Kingsbury and G. E. Phillips, Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints (1921), and A. A. Macdonnell, Hymns from the Rigveda (1922). "The Religious Life of India Series" included Bishop H. Whitehead's study The Village Gods of South India (1916) and H. A. Walter, The Ahmadiya Movement (1918). It has sometimes been objected that these series were written entirely by western missionaries, and that the authentic Indian voice is not to be heard in them. In point of fact, although Farquhar did his utmost to persuade Indian Christians to write, and at one time had more than a dozen books by Indian Christians on the stocks, none materialized—due almost entirely to the exacting scholarly standards demanded by the editor. Perhaps we might say, however, that the Protestant missionary corps in India during the first quarter of this century made its most distinctive and lasting contribution in the field of literature, and that Farquhar more than any other individual was its director, its inspiration, and its conscience.

When Farquhar arrived in India in 1891, India was just beginning to feel the impact of the national movement, though its zenith was not to be reached for some years. In face of India's new consciousness of national identity and national pride, Protestant missionaries had depressingly little to offer by way of understanding and affirmation. Missionary proclamation, where it noticed Hindu beliefs at all, reacted only to their darker side; missionaries as a rule knew no Sanskrit, and were not trained in the field of Indian religions. The developing "science of religion" associated particularly with the name of Friedrich Max Müller, had touched them hardly at all. There were few "liberal" missionaries who were aware of the sea-change that was coming over Christianity as a
In one of his early articles, from 1901, we find Farquhar stating bluntly that “we want a criticism that will set Christianity clearly and distinctly in its relations with other faiths.” Missionary criticism of Hinduism may have been of some limited value in the past, but has seldom been scientific enough to be of permanent value. The rise of the science of religion might change radically the missionary’s presuppositions, showing him how every form of religion has its place in the vast sweep of human evolution, and giving him a key for sympathetic and positive evaluation, while still demonstrating the superiority of Christianity.

The main use of the science, it seems to me, will be that, with the cold irresistible logic of facts, it will set forth the essentials of religion, and will exhibit historically the development of religion and religions. A scientific statement of the essentials of religion will at once shew how exceedingly weak Hinduism and Muhammadanism are in comparison with Christianity.

And he sums up: “The more knowledge missionaries have of the general progress of the science the better.”

But how could he make the claim that the scientific approach would inevitably demonstrate that Christianity is superior to Hinduism? Is there not a serious contradiction here? This is the claim that lies at the heart of The Crown of Hinduism, and it is necessary that we look at it a little more closely.

The dominant liberal intellectual theory of Farquhar’s day was the theory of evolution, in the light of which all social institutions (as well as all biological organisms) find their place on an ascending scale of value and effectiveness. What is lower is not false: merely incomplete and undeveloped. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw this theory applied very extensively to the study of religion, and indeed it forms the theoretical heart of what was then called “the science of religion.” Religion, like every other organism, has grown from modest beginnings to the heights of ethical monotheism (or perhaps no less ethical agnosticism). Now from the point of view of the liberal missionary, it seemed not only feasible, but inevitable, that the relative positions of Hinduism and Christianity on the evolutionary scale should be recognized and evaluated. Hinduism, in this light, might then appear to be a less “developed” form of universal religion, to be recognized for what it is, but ultimately to be supplanted by Christianity as a “higher” form. This was certainly Farquhar’s belief.

But the missionary scientist, whose calling is to help the evolutionary process along, so to speak, must actually be a scientist. He must know his sources, gather his material with meticulous accuracy, and apply to them the best thinking of which he is capable; but for the most part he must keep his knowledge in the background, and not use it as a weapon. In another early article we find Farquhar saying that

“... while every missionary ought to study Hinduism as much as he possibly can, yet in ninety-nine hundredths of his work he ought to keep his knowledge strictly in the background. Our task is to preach the gospel of Christ and to woo souls to Him; and to that great end every element in our work should be made strictly subordinate and subservient.”

From this same article there emerges another vital point, that it is impossible to do accurate work in such a sensitive area as the encounter of religions without genuine sympathy.

All our study of Hinduism and everything we write and say on the subject should be sympathetic. I believe incalculable harm has been done to the Christian cause in India in times past through unsympathetic denunciation of Hinduism. Even if the severe condemnations passed on certain aspects of the religion be quite justifiable, it is bad policy to introduce these things into our addresses and our tracts; for the invariable result is that our audience is alienated. . . . Our aim is to convince the mind and conscience of those who hear us, and we shall do that far more effectively if we eschew the traditional habit of denunciation, and try to lead Hindus to the truth by other paths.

Scholarly accuracy and genuine sympathy, then, are the first two missionary requirements in face of the challenge of Hindu faith, in Farquhar’s view. To these he was compelled to add a third—faithfulness to Christ. We may if we wish call Farquhar a “liberal,” though for the most part his Christian stance was that of the evangelical—a simple and straightforward faith in Jesus Christ, from which he never deviated. In fact the focus of his faith might well be characterized as “the religion of Jesus.”

This was not irrelevant to his development as a missionary theologian, for the simple presentation of Jesus as a religious teacher had long proved more acceptable to the Hindu mind than the attempt to expound an intricate system of theology. Again from the early part of his career, we find him asking “the thinking men of Calcutta”:

Will you not try to see the real Jesus? Will you not study the Gospels, and try to understand the secret of his extraordinary influence? Will you not try to get a glimpse of this face that is loved as no other son of man is loved?

These various trends come to a focus in the theological concept of fulfillment, which formed the cornerstone of Farquhar’s missionary thinking, and which he advocated with such energy and eloquence that it became an item of Christian orthodoxy for a whole generation of Indian missionaries. It had already taken shape in his mind at the time of his recruitment by the YMCA; it reached its fullest expression in his book The Crown of Hinduism; and it was an ideal Farquhar was never to relinquish. It contained two separate elements. First, from the perspective of the history of religions, the belief that universal religious elements reach their fullest and most complete form in Christianity—or rather, in Jesus Christ. And second, the belief that in Jesus Christ, all people everywhere can find the resolution and goal of their religious quests. Thus from India’s point of view, Hinduism poses questions—about human nature and destiny, community, renunciation and salvation—to which it is able to return either unsatisfactory answers, or no answers at all. India, further, is seeking for a form of religion...
which will fit her for life in the modern world; again Hinduism is unfitted to meet that need, but Christianity is. Christ, in Farquhar's view, stands for such ideals as progress, freedom, the search for truth, and the loftiest morality—all of which ideals India was striving to embrace, but all of which (again in Farquhar's view) were destined to prove very elusive indeed without the motive power that only Christian faith could provide. To say that Christ was the fulfillment of Hinduism was, therefore, a statement with social and political, as well as religious, overtones. In respect of caste, for instance, after noting that "the religious basis of caste is fading out of men's minds," Farquhar goes on to state that, nevertheless, religion and society are closely interwoven:

For the purpose of creating a living social order, a living religion is needed. It alone provides moral conceptions of strength and reach sufficient to lay hold of man's conscience and intellect and to compel him to live in society in accordance with them. Where [he goes on] ... shall we find a religion whose governing conceptions, when they take organized form in society, will incarnate the great principles of the essential equality of all men, the rectitude and high value of complete social freedom, and the obligation of moralizing all social relations...?8

What Farquhar was trying to say in The Crown of Hinduism was not always too well understood, either by Hindus or by other Christians. Although he was offering the “fulfillment hypothesis” as an item of private equipment to the missionary who needed to have some working theory of the theological relationship between Hinduism and Christianity, there were those who saw it more as either a peg on which to hang sermons, or a gratuitous insult delivered at the heart of India. Some conservatives felt that in introducing the evolutionary theory, which they had been brought up to despise, as an element in missionary apologetics, Farquhar had virtually sold his soul to the devil. Others felt that in insisting on the final supremacy of Christ in the world of religions, he was undoing whatever good his protestations of sympathy might initially have achieved. To all of which Farquhar replied: "I have no desire to represent the fulfillment hypothesis as a revelation from heaven. . . . It is to my mind merely the best hypothesis which has yet been suggested, a hypothesis to be tested and tried by all the relevant facts."9

Today perhaps one might be permitted to doubt whether the fulfillment hypothesis itself should be looked on as Farquhar's main achievement in missionary thought. It has proved fairly tenacious, and, since Vatican II, has been unwittingly copied by not a few Roman Catholic missionaries. But as the much more acute theological mind of A. G. Hogg was not slow to point out, it may be tantamount to forcing on the Hindu answers to questions he has not asked, while the questions he does ask remain unanswered. It may also be the case that to speak of "fulfillment" in this way implies an unintentional condensation; Hinduism are not only seekers, they are also finders, though what they find may not be easy for the Christian to recognize and accept.10

I tend to think that the true measure of Farquhar's missionary achievement lies not in his (alas dated) theories of encounter, but in his solid scholarship. Scholarly achievement, particularly when it is based on firsthand observation, does not date. When theoretical constructions have retrofitted into that special limbo reserved for yesterday's insights, solid firsthand scholarship will remain for coming generations to use as best they can. In a sense, Farquhar knew more about Hinduism than he knew of Christianity. His Christianity, though intense and radiant, was of a particular kind; his knowledge of Hinduism was broad and catholic. He saw, as few missionaries before (or since) had seen, that Hinduism was an exquisitely complex organism, requiring for its understanding a full-time scholarly commitment. Most missionaries had neither the ability nor the time to acquire such knowledge. Farquhar had both. His mastery of the written sources is seen most clearly in his Outline of the Religious Literature of India, which is so much more than a bloodless catalogue; his capacity for patient observation gave rise to Modern Religious Movements.11 I have already spoken of his exacting personal scholarly standards. In 1916, writing to the Reverend Joseph Passmore of Madras, he had this to say about two of his books:

Even if there were a call at once for the republication of the Primer of Hinduism and The Crown of Hinduism I could not agree to it without largely rewriting them. I have not changed in the slightest in my convictions as to the supremacy of Christ and the inadequacy of the religions of India. What I feel is that my work in the past has not been sufficiently scholarly and accurate.12

During virtually the whole of his career in India, Farquhar was in touch, not only with the Hindus he so much respected (even when he was unable to agree with them), and with his fellow missionaries, but also with the most prominent western Orientalists of his day, among whom he held a leading position. He was also a significant figure in the international missionary movement, and his work on the borders of Hinduism and Christianity inspired workers on other, no less important, frontiers. With John R. Mott in particular he enjoyed close friendship, and along this channel there passed much mutual support and inspiration, as may be seen from their lengthy correspondence. It was Mott who had made it possible for Farquhar to devote most of his missionary career to writing and research, and for this he was always grateful. A letter written to Mott in 1923 includes the words:

I should also like to say that it is to your emancipation of me for literature that I owe the opportunity these years have given me to study widely and to publish my books. Apart from all this, I should not have been appointed to Manchester. I thank you with all my heart. The work throughout has been a continuous joy, and I have constantly thought of you.13

Not all of Farquhar's personal attitudes would now win the unqualified approval of the Christian world. Christian ideas have moved on, and presuppositions have changed. For much of what now passes for "interreligious dialogue" he would have had little time, less on account of its warmhearted comprehensiveness than for its superficiality and its tendency to shy away from difficult issues of belief. He was not enamoured of Indian nationalism, and believed wholeheartedly in India's need of the best that the West could offer. Those Christians, whether European, American, or Indian, who too readily adopted the Hindu nationalist point of view—among them C. F. Andrews on the European side and K. T. Paul on the Indian—disappointed him greatly, again not because of the warmth or sincerity of their beliefs, but because of the way in which they had permitted the heart to rule the head. This caused him real distress, and in one letter from late in his Indian career we find him saying, "I have been afraid some of my friends would think I was growing extremely self-confident and very
harsh." The cause of this anticipated judgment was, it should be added, his refusal to publish books of inferior scholarship—many of which today's publishers would probably accept without more ado.

I have already said that in my opinion Farquhar's lasting contribution was made as a scholar. This is not to devalue his very great importance as a missionary leader: after all, he taught the missionary corps virtually single-handedly the need for sympathetic and positive evaluation of the Indian cultural and religious heritage. But he did so under conditions which no longer obtain in today's world, and which it would be idle to attempt to recreate. Every generation must work out for itself its own understanding of both religion and culture—and this brings us back to our starting point. To Farquhar, with his fundamentally historical mind, the key to India's present was to be found in the proud record of India's past. But a modern nation, he believed, could not live on the mere memory of the past, however noble. Hinduism, whatever its achievements, remained in his view deficient in the area of morality, caused ultimately by its failure fully to recognize the moral nature of God and the force of the divine imperative. Living Hindu spirituality (for which he perhaps had little real feeling) he saw as a retreat from the world, not a commission to service. For this reason he was unable to contemplate any halfway meeting between Christian and Hindu traditions. He called himself a "Liberal Evangelical": today it would appear that his evangelicism always had the upper hand.

But I am personally convinced nevertheless that he read the Hinduism of his day more sympathetically and more accurately than many of us as Christians read the Hinduism of ours. We need to rediscover his exacting standards of sympathy, accuracy, and Christian centrality, not with a view to applying yesterday's solutions to today's problems, but in order to bring our best thinking, as well as our deepest feeling, to bear on today's interreligious and intercultural encounters. He will not give us the answers; but he will at least show us how to ask the questions responsibly.

Notes

Books and articles are by Farquhar unless otherwise stated.

2. Ibid., p. 370.
3. Ibid., p. 374.
5. "Missionary Study of Hinduism" (Calcutta Missionary Conference paper, May 1905), offprint, p. 3.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
12. J. N. Farquhar to J. Passmore, June 1, 1916 (YMCA Historical Library, New York City).
13. J. N. Farquhar to J. R. Mott, October 25, 1923 (Farquhar Collection).

Selected Bibliography

Material Written by Farquhar:


Material Written about Farquhar


64 Occasional Bulletin
The Theology of John Mbiti: His Sources, Norms, and Method

John W. Kinney

John V. Taylor chose to open his book The Primal Vision with a Ghanaian proverb which states, “When the leopard comes to you, the club at your neighbor’s won’t drive him off.” Taylor suggests, and rightly so, that this should be enough to check any more non-Africans from offering to interpret Africa and the African experience to the world. In a similar vein, I have heard John Mbiti, while questioning the dilettantish manner in which western “authorities” on Africa prate their “expertise,” suggest that one does not become an authority on African religion or the African experience to the world. In a similar vein, I have heard non-African to examine the theology of John Mbiti. Dr. Mbiti must bear, to some extent, responsibility for the audacity of this one who dares to comment on the African experience. His tutelage provided initial insights into the complexities of the African religious experience and generated a continuing interest that prompts this present endeavor.

I would consider one of the fundamental aspects of theological investigation to be internal participation. It is this participation in the activity that generates interest, purpose, value, and meaning that gives a sense of direction and purpose to all theological endeavors. This is the type of theological investigation that Mbiti advocates. It is this type of theology that is the subject of this article.

Having acknowledged the limitations of the presentation, it remains viable and valuable and one that Dr. Mbiti invites us to pursue. Clearly theology develops in a context, but it cannot develop with blinders on. An authentic theological contribution must be aware of and come to grips with the relevant observations and questions that develop in relation to it. The questions and observations presented here address the sources, norm, and method in the theology of John Mbiti.

Dr. Mbiti has gained international recognition as a scholar through his prolific writings relating to traditional African religions and the development of Christian theology in Africa. His critics have not been great in number and, for the most part, have been appreciative and encouraging. His few harsh critics have tended to be more personal and visceral rather than analytic. He is respected and appreciated in Africa as a “pioneer” in the systematic analysis of traditional African religious concepts. At the same time, however, Mbiti is seen as a “creative African theologian” who is revealing what is and should be happening in the theological thought of the church in Africa while identifying “those critical points where Christianity has failed to address itself meaningfully to the African situation.” He is characterized, along with others, as exercising “a function for Africa equivalent to that of Barth, Tillich, Niebuhr, and Rahner in Europe and North America.”

When one initially considers the manner in which Dr. Mbiti appropriates his theological sources and the nature of his theological objectives, this dual acceptance becomes understandable.

Dr. Mbiti suggests that there are four areas which variously have to make their contributions toward the evolution of theology in Africa: (a) the Bible and biblical theology, (b) Christian theology from the major traditions of Christendom, (c) a serious study of African religions and philosophy, (d) the theology of the living church.

a. The Bible and biblical theology: Mbiti stresses that the Bible is the primary and essential source for theological development. Mbiti observes that “biblical theology must be the basis of any theological reflection, otherwise we shall lose our perspectives and may not claim the outcome to be Christian.” He notes that the African church has at its disposal a rich heritage of biblical scholarship it cannot neglect. He adds, however, that “biblical theology will have to reflect the African situation and understanding if it is to be an original contribution to the theology of the Church Universal.”

b. Christian theology from the major traditions of Christendom: Mbiti maintains that tradition is another essential and vital source. He asserts, “Christian theology from the major traditions of Christendom will put us in the mainstream of ecumenical and apostolic heritage, so that we are not isolated from the catholicity of the Church.” He notes, however, that African theologians cannot be content to be fed just this aspect of theology and that Christian theology must be understood in and translated into the African milieu.

c. A serious study of African religions and philosophy: Professor Mbiti cites the need for a serious dialogue between Christianity and the African religiosity. He is not content with seeing African Christians as carbon copies of European and American Christians and believes that Christianity is sufficiently unique and flexible to be accommodated in the African environment and that traditional religion is sufficiently compatible with Christianity to give it an African character. Mbiti feels that there needs to be a clearer understanding of what conversion means. Conversion is not simply a clear, sudden forsaking of one religious system and the simultaneous total embracing of another. Conversion is a process both theological and psychological which means for African Christians the blending of Christianity and traditional religions in a creative manner.

John Mbiti consistently maintains that African traditional religions should be regarded as preparation for the Christian gospel:

African religious background is not a rotten heap of superstitions, taboos and magic; it has a great deal of value in it. On this valuable heritage, Christianity should adapt itself and not be dependent exclusively on imported goods.

Here we face the difficult question of sorting out what is valuable preparation for the Gospel and what is not. For that purpose, churches and theological institutions should make it a

John W. Kinney is Co-director of the Education for Leadership in the Black Church Program sponsored by the School of Theology of Virginia Union University, and Assistant Professor of Theology and History at the same institution, in Richmond, Virginia.
Mbiti maintains that traditional religions are “largely compatible” with Christianity, but still affirms that there are many places where Christianity may be seen as a fulfillment of African traditional religions. He considers this particularly true in relation to traditional religiosity in all its richness utterly ignorant and silent.” In this light, “African religiosity must assume a listening posture and receive the new Word.”16 Dr. Mbiti observes that this new Word must not only fulfill but also judge and save African traditional religions, pruning and removing the “deadness and rottenness” of traditional religiosity.17 In the end, faithful attention to traditional religiosity and religions will enrich Christianity in Africa and will mutually benefit the academic enlightenment of the Universal Church and traditional African religions.18

d. The theology of the living church: A fourth source that John Mbiti enumerates is the contemporary experience of the living church in Africa as it expands in its life and mission in African societies.19 He notes that it is here that one must give adequate attention to the independent churches and religious movements. Here too, the church must be seen in its full scope: in areas of conflict, tension, and revolution; industrial centers, in the slums, in the villages, in schools and hospitals, in refugee work; ministering to the poor and the rich in cities and in towns, engaged in radio and television work, in missionary and evangelistic work; the church looking both inward and outward, being rejected, opposed, even persecuted; but as the church, loving, forgiving, reconciling, worshiping, and living.20

Moving from these formative factors, Mbiti sees a trinitarian task for Christian theology in Africa: to retain its African religious and cultural heritage; to give Christianity an African imprint and character; and to uphold the uniqueness and catholicity of Christianity.21 This triangular balance is always precarious but is being sought faithfully by many through various theological investigations. Dr. Mbiti believes that this theological objective can be attained without an exaggerated effort to indigenize Christianity. He has used the term “indigenization of Christianity” but in more recent years he has given up this expression. He explains his rationale for doing so in the following manner:

...I do not think that we need to or can “indigenize Christianity.” Christianity results from the encounter of the Gospel with any given local or regional community/society. To speak of “indigenizing Christianity” is to give the impression that Christianity is a ready-made commodity which has to be transplanted to a local area. Of course this has been the assumption followed by many missionaries and local theologians. I do not accept it anymore. The Gospel is God-given. The church in which it is incarnated is made up of people who are by “definition,” indigenous “where they happen to be born or live or have their roots.”22

Professor Mbiti further believes that it would be a pity to look at African theology in terms of only negating the foreign elements found in the church in Africa. His perspective suggests that African theology should first and foremost address itself to positives of the Christian faith and that the vast agenda of African theology ill affords wasting time with constant litanies about the foreignness of the church and the mistakes of the missionaries.23

On the surface, Mbiti’s theological sources and objectives seem coherent and consistent but I would suggest that the further clarification and development of the norm and method which mediate his sources would be helpful and valuable. Norm and method are formative and foundational presuppositions of theological discourse which, whether presented implicitly or explicitly, are integrally related to the questions raised and the answers offered by a given theological perspective. Mbiti clearly indicates the christological character of his theological norm: “In any case the final test for the validity and usefulness of any theological contribution is Jesus Christ.”24 He intensifies and magnifies this christological perspective by emphatically stating, “If African Theology starts with or even concentrates upon anthropology, it loses its perspective and can no longer be regarded as Theology.”25 Dr. Mbiti must clarify how he sees the relationship between the revelation of God in Christ and the natural knowledge of God, which is a correlative assumption of his preparatio evangelica.26 Further, given the elevated christological perspective and the rejection of the anthropological, humanistic perspective, how can the African experience tell us anything really new about Christian truth and the “God-given Gospel”? I believe we would all be helped if Dr. Mbiti would clarify in what sense Jesus Christ is the norm and not the limit of religious discourse. This would not necessarily demand the abatement of Christocentrism but would require the expansion of the circumference of revelation through Jesus as the Christ who unlocks the meaning of God’s cosmic revelation.27 This is particularly critical for Dr. Mbiti due to his trifurcated theological objective that includes: retaining the African religious and cultural heritage; giving Christianity a distinctive African stamp; and upholding the uniqueness and catholicity of the Christianity. The question is to what extent his norm allows for the substantive realization of the first two objectives?

The problematical nature of Dr. Mbiti’s norm is compounded by the nebulous manner in which the norm is characterized. The character of the norm that properly emerges from the encounter between the Bible and the faithful community is not defined and the informing nature of experience for the norm is not evident. Jesus Christ is the fundamental interpretive principle for all Christian theology, but there is no norm detachable from the reality one knows and the process of theologizing within that reality. The existence of the norm in some universal realm would confine theology to abstractions with neither a people nor a mission. The norm cannot have formal validity outside history because it becomes intelligible only with references to the concrete situation out of which it develops.

Experience not only receives the event of Jesus Christ but also participates in it and contributes to it. A particular experience prepares a community to reveal something of Christ no other community can reveal, and until that story is told our understanding of Christ is deficient. In some cases, a community, as it interprets, colors, and analyzes through its experiences, functionally produces a “new” Christ. That is, the transformation of the nature and work of Christ when filtered through experience while not discontinuous with Christ or alien to the faith or tradition, may be so revealing, unrecognized, and challenging in relation to the dominant views of Christ that this transformation may be perceived by other communities as a “new” Christ. There is an integral relationship between experience and the norm. Experience informs the character of Jesus Christ as the norm, while Jesus Christ as the norm inspires, commands, and judges experience.28

Dr. Mbiti gives attention to experience as a formative factor for theological development and context as the crucible for theology, but the Christian answers he brings to the situation are overbearing to the extent that his method is basically kerygmatic rather than contextual. Mbiti’s general approach to theology indicates a concern about the encroachment of particularity on theolog-
ogy and he tends to reject ethnicity as a theological category. Mbiti's apparent method would allow Africans to color and interpret Christian "truth" on a superficial, liturgical level only, for the creative, critical, participatory, and "functionally" truth-producing dimensions of experience are textually de-prioritized.

I do not wish to suggest that Dr. Mbiti does not affirm the provisional nature of theology, nor do I want to suggest he denies the African experience. What I do want to suggest is that the imprecise nature of his theological norm and his general approach to theology mutes the informing nature of his particular experience.

I am not, by any means, supporting the tyranny of established norms and methods that have often blocked our access to truth. Methods and norms vary and their precise character is neither absolute nor eternally valid. Methods and norms are vehicles to truth and not the truth, as vehicles they must be taken seriously. Our manner of conveyance definitely affects the manner in which we reach our goals and whether or not our objectives are attained. Norms and methods are not a priori to theology, but neither are they arbitrary. They are indeed evident at the outset providing order and consistency to theology, but they must be malleable enough that they can be altered and developed by the theologizing process. I would agree with Dr. Mbiti's observations that "theology must strain its neck to see beyond the comforts of our ready-made methodologies" and that it must "be freed from the inhibitions handed from past generations." In the final analysis, the vindication of any method and precise norm rests on the ability of the consequent theology to embody coherently and practically truth in the situation.

No doubt the questions of norm and method did not press themselves upon African theologians with the same urgency as other questions. Undoubtedly, normative and methodological precision are in the developmental stage in African theology and Dr. Mbiti and other African theologians can best tell us if these questions are presently appropriate. I do believe, however, that the Christian community and its theology would be impoverished if we did not sometimes raise questions that are potentially valuable but are not being asked. I am no longer certain that questions like those related to norm and method are picayunish, exaggerated nonessentials of western scholarship. Our lack of immediate concern for method and norm cannot result in complete neglect. This neglect could cause, at best, the loss of some creative insights that we have to gain, as well as to offer, through precision in these matters and, at worst, our becoming slaves to and being victimized by the methods and authorities we seek to explode.

The fact that I have addressed my comments to something about which Mbiti has had little to say is indicative of my appreciation for all that he has said. These comments are presented in anticipation of future writings by Dr. Mbiti with the hope that they are of enough worth to stimulate and encourage the direction of some of these writings.

Notes

2. I presented a paper entitled "The Contribution of John Mbiti to the Development of Christian Theology in Africa: An Overview and a Critique" before a session of the American Society of Church History at the Dallas, Texas, meeting in December 1977. This paper was forwarded to Dr. Mbiti and he returned a helpful response that has informed this present writing and in which he invited our continued discussion. This communication shall be hereafter cited as "Response."
6. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pp. 436-437.
20. Ibid.
23. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
25. Ibid., p. 186.
28. As presently explicated and developed, Scripture would also tend toward a normative function. As such, the norm might be characterized as a twofold Word of God that is embodied in Christ and Scripture.

Bibliography

Dr. Mbiti's published writings are quite extensive and would probably number over three hundred items. Listed are a few of his books:


On the Article of John W. Kinney: A Comment

John Mbiti

I am grateful for the careful way in which Dr. Kinney has highlighted some of the issues in my theological writings, and to the editors of the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research for the opportunity to respond. The space available allows me to take up only two points.

Dr. Kinney is right in indicating the four areas which I consider to be basic sources of theological development in Africa. I first mentioned these in a 1971 publication. However, since then I have isolated two additional sources which I had not articulated clearly. These are: African culture and African history. In the African situation, these two items have their peculiar role. Considering that Christianity is the outcome of culture and the gospel, it is culture which shapes the different forms of Christianity. While in the southern two-thirds of Africa, the gospel was introduced in the cultural dress of Europe, it was inevitable that sooner or later there would be a cultural reaction from the African peoples. They now want to articulate the gospel, interpret it, celebrate it, and even suffer for it, within their own cultural framework. One must take very seriously the words of the World Council of Churches conference on “Salvation Today” in Bangkok in 1973 that “Culture shapes the human voice that answers the voice of Christ.” African culture is doing precisely that now, and with ever growing forcefulness. For this reason I feel that it has to be considered as one of the sources shaping African theology, and in recent addresses and writings I have accordingly taken up the question of the gospel in the African cultural setting.

I consider African history to be another source of theological development. This history can be considered under three phases, each of which has its imprint on the life of the church today. There is the long history of African peoples before the coming of European occupation in the nineteenth century. It goes back many thousands of years to prehistoric times. There is the phase of colonial rule, with the subdivision of the continent, the creation of new countries owing political allegiance to European capitals, and the eventual subsequent African struggles for political liberation. This phase ranges in length from a few decades to several centuries of foreign rule. It paved, even if painfully sometimes, the way for modern national consciousness. Christian missions penetrated Africa largely during this phase of our history. The third phase is that of independent nationhood, often born out of and through much struggle, bloodshed, and the sacrifice of many lives. A few African countries are still in the second phase, and many of those which have entered the third phase of history are engaged in the excitement of nation-building with its teething pains and promises.

I mention these two additional sources of theological framework because of their importance in shaping both the contemporary church in Africa and what amounts to African anthropology.

Dr. Kinney calls on me to clarify two related issues: “Dr. Mbiti must clarify how he sees the relationship between the revelation of God in Christ and the natural knowledge of God, which is a correlative assumption of his preparatio evangelica… clarify in what sense Jesus Christ is the norm and not the limit of religious discourse.” I can only indicate briefly the trend of my thinking in this respect.

a. I have no doubt whatsoever that God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same God who for thousands of years has been known and worshiped in various ways within the religious life of African peoples. He is known by various names, and there are innumerable attributes about him which are largely identical or close to biblical attributes about God.

b. The moral and ethical values by which African peoples have lived for hundreds of generations are substantially similar to the ethical and moral values taught within the framework of the church and in the biblical record.

c. The spiritual aspirations of African peoples, as glimpsed in their traditional prayers, point very clearly in the same direction as do Christian aspirations.

d. Jesus himself told his contemporaries: “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). This is not a historical but a geographical presence of Christ in the world made by and through him. Recent theological debate has over-stressed the historicity of salvation (if that is the right word), and neglected its geography. God deals with the world both historically and geographically. We have to avoid the danger of reducing the understanding of our Faith to one, and linear, concept of time. The gospel of St. John, among other passages of the Bible, presents us with a portrait and teachings of Jesus which are largely within another framework of time. Perhaps if we apply that other dimension of time, we will see better how it is that God has not left himself without witness among the peoples of the world. God was not a stranger in Africa prior to the coming of missionaries. What the gospel brought was Jesus Christ. The gospel enabled people to utter the name of Jesus Christ; and for that reason many African Christians have suffered and others have died for the sake of Jesus Christ—that final and completing element that crowns their traditional religiosity and brings its flickering light to full brilliance.

In the light of these remarks I take it that African religiosity has indeed been a preparation for the gospel. It has provided the religious groundwork, religious vocabulary, religious insights, religious aspirations and direction for the gospel to find a hearing and an acceptance among African peoples. It is also in the light of these considerations that I consider Jesus Christ to be the central norm for Christian theology, since without him the meaning of our religiosity is incomplete. Also without him there can be no Christian experience, even if there are continuous experiences of people in Africa and other parts of the world. He colors the experience of Christians, including the experience of their theological development.

I am aware that these brief comments are far from being adequate to answer the questions that Dr. Kinney has raised. Let me say that I am grateful for his drawing my attention to them, and I will try to give them more thought than so far I have done in my published writings. This is an open and ongoing dialogue and I hope that others will enter into it.

John S. Mbiti, an Anglican clergyman and Africa’s best-known Christian theologian, has taught in several African universities and at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He is currently on the staff of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey/Celigny, Switzerland.

68 Occasional Bulletin
The Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies in Current Periodical Literature

A. J. van der Bent

Even today a large number of general bibliographies listing books, pamphlets, and periodical articles on various theological subjects devote little or no attention to the dialogue with people of living faiths and ideologies. Sections on non-Christian religions, Indic religions, Judaism, Islam, and others, if included, mainly refer to the traditional discipline of comparative religions, Sacred Scriptures, and interpretation of source material, written almost exclusively by adherents to a particular faith. Religious Reading, an annual guide to 2000 new religious books, published by Consortium Press in Washington, D.C., is a typical example.

On the periodical shelves of a larger number of university and seminary libraries and ecumenical institutes, one searches frequently in vain for a basic collection of journals and bulletins in the field of dialogue between Christianity and other religions, or between the church and various forms of contemporary Marxism. The purpose of this survey article is to introduce periodicals which deal with the ongoing dialogue in various countries in reflective and practical ways. Also a number of journals will be described which include more or less regularly in several issues, besides other theological topics, contributions to the dialogue. The reader will find at the end of this article an alphabetical list of titles with full bibliographical information, including the address of where subscriptions may be obtained. It is hoped that more libraries will subscribe to several of the periodicals introduced in this survey, and that theological students will discover their importance and value for their research and ministry in whatever situation.

Several Christian “study centers” in Asia have been issuing for a number of years now serial publications. Religion and Society (Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, India, 1953 on) deals with political and socioeconomic problems in India and elsewhere, patterns of struggle for justice, contemporary theological issues in a multireligious society, and theology of dialogue. Most contributions are written by Indian Christians. In Colombo, Sri Lanka, the Reverend Lynn A. de Silva has, since 1962, edited a bulletin titled Dialogue. It concentrates on the Christian-Buddhist encounter, but also pays attention to the multilateral religious dialogue, dispelling prejudice and ignorance, and to the growth of indigenous theology. Al-Basher (succeeding in 1972 the Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad, India which since 1967 has been known as the Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies) changed its name in 1978 to The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies. It devotes articles and reports to the study of the Muslim faith with the purpose of fostering an adequate and sympathetic understanding of Islam and of assisting the church to fulfill its evangelistic obligation. Its present editor is David T. Lindell.

The Christian Study Centre in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, has published since 1959 a theological journal called Al-Mushir (The Counselor), with contributions in English and Urdu. It deals with the religious and socioeconomic situation in Pakistan and a variety of issues related to the Christian-Muslim encounter in various other contexts. Bp. S. Pereira is its editor. Ching Fung is a quarterly periodical of the Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture in Hong Kong. It is ably edited by Dr. Peter K. H. Lee and contains important research contributions with the aim of assisting the church in its task of witness and service to the world Chinese community. The National Council of Churches Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto has for the past twenty years issued Japanese Religions under the guidance of Professor Masatoshi Doi. It deals with a wide range of ancient and contemporary religions in Japan and the theological implications of interfaithe dialogue. Contributions are sent in from various countries.

Two other less known publications of Asian study centers should be mentioned. Dr. Clarence O. McMullen is responsible for a Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies at the Baring Union Christian College in Batala, Punjab. The Dansalan Research Center in Marawi City, Philippines, publishes occasional papers. Its director, Dr. Peter Gowing, is an expert in Christian-Muslim relations. The eight publications mentioned above can be obtained on a comprehensive subscription basis of U.S. $34.00 from the World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Institutions and libraries will receive the journals directly from the study centers. Finally in the realm of Asian publications the Journal of Dharma (published in Bangalore, India) deserves close attention. It is an international quarterly of world religions published by an editorial board and a board of consultants including many well-known scholars. Recent issues dealt with themes such as Time and Timelessness, Meditation, Suffering and Evil, Religion and Human Development, Ashrams and Asectics.

The World Council of Churches does not publish a periodical directly concerned with interreligious dialogue, except for The Church and the Jewish People Newsletter. This has been published since 1962, first in mimeographed and later in offset form, by the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, which since 1973 has been a subunit in the Unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies. The Newsletter contains much information on Christian-Jewish relationships in national and international ecumenical perspectives. The World Council’s two major quarterly, The Ecumenical Review and International Review of Mission, occasionally contain articles and essays on dialogue concerns of an ecumenical nature. The WCC Unit on Dialogue, however, has since 1970 published various reports on interreligious conferences and books dealing with the subject of dialogue.

The Secretariat for Non-Christians and the Secretariat for Non-Believers in Vatican City each issues a periodic. Ateismo e dialogo (started in 1966, the first numbers were titled: Bolletino) contains official reports of the Roman Catholic Church, studies and documents on modern atheism, the phenomenon of unbelief,
the problem of secularization, church and state relations in socialist countries, the Christian-Marxist dialogue, book reviews, bibliographies, and news from the Secretariat. Articles are in English, French, Italian, and Spanish, sometimes with summaries in two or three of these four languages. The Secretariat's *popular Christian Bulletin* also started in 1966. In 1974 the original separate English and French editions were combined into one. It reports on various ongoing conferences and contains a wide variety of contributions by various scholars in the field of one or another world religion. A section "Dialogue in the World" provides news on interreligious seminars and conversations in several countries.

Among the periodicals dealing regularly with issues and concerns for dialogue and frequently issuing a whole number on dialogue with people of other living faiths or ideologies, the following should be mentioned. The outstanding *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* has devoted a great variety of scholarly articles to the Christian-Jewish dialogue, the dialogue with other religions, and the Christian-Marxist dialogue. Contributions of experts in the field from various countries have been published at regular intervals. Dr. Leonard Swidler of Temple University is the editor; Dr. Paul Mojzes of Rosemont College, the managing editor. *Missiology: An International Review*, continuing *Practical Anthropology* (1954-1972), published by the American Society of Missiology, provides a great variety of resources toward better understanding and effectiveness of the Christian mission in today’s world. Although North American based, the journal is deliberately international in scope and participation. The *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, a quarterly publication of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, in which this survey article appears, is another important serial publication in the field of ecumenical dialogue, mission, and the churches’ interaction with the national traditional and cultural context in which they live. It deals with contemporary issues of language and culture in mission in six continents, the development of indigenous churches and theologies, understanding and communication with persons of other faiths, and reports from important conferences. Its book reviews, dissertation notices, and book notes are very helpful. Also valuable is *Exchange: Bulletin of Third World Christian Literature*, analyzing documents from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. No. 17 is devoted to the Ujamaa Policy and the Missionary Situation in Tanzania. No. 18 deals with Spirituality and Struggle for Fullness of Life, Interreligious Stimuli, and Secular Challenges. The *Muslim World* is one of the oldest periodicals in its field. The subtitle of the first and following numbers, from 1911 onward, read “A quarterly review of current events, literature, and thought among Mohammedans, and the progress of Christian Missions in Moslem lands.” It is now described as “A journal devoted to the study of Islam and of Christian-Muslim relationship in past and present.” The journal is published by the Duncan Black Macdonald Center at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. The editor is Dr. Willem A. Bijlefeld.

Although the following two journals do not deal precisely with matters of dialogue in an African context, they do raise regularly questions and problems about African primal religions, interactions between Christianity and these religions, the African cultural and social heritage, and the impact of African and black theology on contemporary mission. The *Journal of Religion in Africa*, published by E. J. Brill in Leiden, is a scholarly journal, devoted exclusively to the scientific study of the forms and history of religion within the African continent. *Flambeau*, published by the Association of Theological Schools in Central and West Africa, concentrates more on the encounter of the Christian churches with multireligious African societies.

During the 1960s periodicals such as the *International Dialog* Zeitschrift (Freiburg), *Religioni Ogni* (Rome), and *Praxis* (Zagreb) cov-

---

**FROM PENTECOST TO THE PRESENT**

Stimulating missions resources for all who are serious about the world mission of the church.


A thoroughly interesting introductory survey of Christian missions from A.D. 30 to the twentieth century. Ideal for use by Bible colleges and seminaries, it will also be highly effective when used by adult study groups in the church. This volume will provide all committed Christians with a working knowledge of the Christian world mission, Paperback, No. 5395-1, $4.95


Here are twelve case studies of rapidly growing religious movements around the world. Each study is meant to challenge and inform today’s evangelists, missionaries, and missiologists, and to show what these movements can teach evangelical Christianity about church growth. The movements studied are: The African Zionist Movement; Kimbanguism (Africa); the New Apostolic Church (Europe); Iglesias Cristo (the Far East); Moon Sun Myung and the Unification Church (the U.S. and the Far East); Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai (Japan); the Ahmadiya movement (the Middle East); the Jehovah’s Witnesses; Mormonism; Jesus Only — the United Pentecostal Church (South America); Umbanda (Brazil); and Gaudaism (Vietnam). Cloth, No. 4130-9, $9.95

Other books available by J. Herbert Kane and David J. Hesselgrave are:

*Theology and Mission*, Hesselgrave, paper, $7.95

*A Global View of Christian Missions*, Kane, cloth, $9.95

*The Making of a Missionary*, Kane, paper, $2.95

*Understanding Christian Missions*, Kane, cloth, $9.95

*Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, Kane, cloth, $9.95

Available at your bookstore or:

Baker Book House
P.O. Box 6287
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
ered the issues of the Christian-Marxist dialogue, East-West relations, problems of atheism and secularization, and attitudes of communist parties toward Christian churches. These and other journals unfortunately ceased in the 1970s. The following few current journals in the realm of dialogue between Marxists and Christians should be mentioned.

Neues Forum, Zeitschrift für den Dialog, edited by Dr. Günther Nenning, devotes many articles to East-West relations and Eurocommunism. Communio Viatium, published by the Ecumenical Institute of the Comenius Faculty of Theology in Prague (editor: Ludek Broz) contains, besides theological issues and trends, articles on Christian coexistence and cooperation in a socialist society. Junge Kirche, Parole et Societe (continuing Christianisme Social), and Masses Ouvrieres are periodicals to be consulted on the joint endeavors of socialists and Christians (in several countries calling themselves “Christians for Socialism”) to change oppressive and unjust political and socioeconomic structures of society. The dialogue is for them not a matter of theoretical and academic discussion but of acting together in situations of conflict and change. I mention, finally, the Christian Peace Conference Bulletin reporting regularly about the Christian Peace Conference’s activities, conferences, and various European and international social and religious issues in which Christians from both liberal-democratic and socialist countries are involved. There is also a German edition of the Bulletin.

A considerable number of other Christian periodicals publishing an occasional article on the dialogue with people of other faiths and on contemporary ideologies could be added to this survey. My purpose was, however, to single out those journals which deal intentionally and at length with questions of encounter, conversation, and cooperation between Christian and other communities and movements. My concluding remark is that relatively few periodicals are genuinely “frontier”-orientated, keenly aware of the need of an authentic dialogical theology and the living out of that theology in tangible dialogical relationships. A greater part of Christian periodical literature throughout the world still tends to believe that the center of world Christianity is not so much to be found at its unexplored and unprotected borders as within the heritage and present compound of the Christian churches themselves. This fact points clearly to the necessity of making periodicals with dialogical perspectives available to a much wider readership.

Journals of Interfaith Dialogue

Ateismo e dialogo, 1966–
Segretariato per i non credenti, 00120 Vatican City. Quarterly.

The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies (formerly Al-Basheer), 1978–
Henry Martyn Institute, P.O. Box 153, Hyderabad 500001, A.P., India. Quarterly.

Ching Fong, 1956–
Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, Tao Fong Shan, Shatin, N. T., Hong Kong. Quarterly.

Christian Institute of Sikh Studies Bulletin, 1971–
Baring Union Christian College, Batala, Punjab, India. Occasional.

International Secretariat of the Christian Peace Conference, Jungmannova 9, Prague 1, Czechoslovakia. Quarterly.

The Church and the Jewish People Newsletter, 1962–
Committee on the Church and the Jewish People, World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Quarterly.

Comunio Viatium, 1958–
Ecumenical Institute, Comenius Faculty of Theology, Knikovna, Jungmannova 9, 110–00 Prague, Czechoslovakia. Quarterly.

Dansalan Research Center Papers, 1974–
P.O. Box 5430, Iligan City 8801, Philippines. Occasional.

Dialogue, 1962–
Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue, 490/5 Havelock Rd., Colombo 6, Sri Lanka. Three times a year.

The Ecumenical Review, 1948–
World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Quarterly.

Exchange: Bulletin of Third World Christian Literature, 1972–
Department of Missiology, Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Boerhaaveelaan 43, Leiden, The Netherlands. Three times a year.

Flambeau, 1964–
Association of Theological Schools in Central and West Africa, Editions CLE, B. P. 4048, Yaoundé, Cameroun. Quarterly.

International Review of Mission, 1912–

Japanese Religions, 1959–
NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, c/o Kyoto Diocese of the Japan Episcopal Church, 602 Karasuma-Shimotachiuri, Kamikyo-Ku, Kyoto, Japan. Irregular.

Journal of Dharma, 1975–
Dharma Research Association Centre for the Study of World Religions, Darmaram College, Bangalore 560029, India. Quarterly.


The Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 1964–
American Society of Missiology, 1605 East Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, California 91104, U.S.A. Quarterly.

The Muslim World, 1911–
Duncan Black Macdonald Center at Hartford Seminary Foundation, 55 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06105, U.S.A. Quarterly.

Museumstrasse 5, A-1070 Vienna, Austria. Monthly.

Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, 1977–
Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, New Jersey 08406, U.S.A. Quarterly.

Parole et Société, Revue bimestrielle du christianisme social, 1972–

Religion and Society, 1953–
The Bulletin of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, P. O. Box 4600, 17 Miller’s Road, Bangalore 560 046, India. Quarterly.

Secretariatus pro non Christianis Bulletin, 1966–
Palazzo S. Calisto, Vatican City. Three times a year.
“Anyone teaching contemporary theology or missions or ecumenical thought or modern ethics (or almost anything else) has had a similar experience. Question: ‘Who are the most important writers in the area of third world theology?’ Answer: ‘Well, there is Gutierrez, of course, and Segundo and ASSmann and Miranda and Dussel and… Look, just get a hold of the latest catalogue of Orbis Books. They are publishing all the important material. Their list is the best bibliography around.’

—ROBERT McAFEE BROWN, “To Orbis, With Thanks!” in The Ecumenist
To Orbis, With Thanks

Robert McAfee Brown

Anyone teaching contemporary theology or missions or ecumenical thought or modern ethics (or almost anything else) has had a similar experience. Question: “Who are the most important writers in the area of third world theology?” Answer: “Well, there is Gutiérrez, of course, and Segundo and Assmann and Miranda and Düssel and.... Look, just get hold of the latest catalogue of Orbis Books. They are publishing all the important material. Their list is the best bibliography around.”

Last year, I did an annotated introductory bibliography on liberation theology for the Auburn Seminary extension program. I included eighteen books that I thought were basic. When I went to check out the publishers, I found out that over half of them had been published by Orbis.

In a recent article on the Roman Catholic Church’s concern with justice, written in preparation for the American Bicentennial, Professor David O’Brien of Holy Cross College reviewed the appropriate literature in the field; six of the nine books he cited were published by Orbis. Fr. O’Brien commented, “Maryknoll’s Orbis Books, and its editor Philip Scharper, deserve the gratitude of the entire American Church for their courageous publishing of innumerable books and documents by and about the Church in the third world.”

When Paulist Press and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. published Mission Trends No. 3, edited by Gerald Anderson and Thomas Stranksy, C.S.P., it included an eighty-two-item bibliography on “third world theologies.” Of the eighty-two, thirty-two were from Orbis, or thirty-eight percent of the total. The next most frequently cited U.S. publisher was Harper & Row, Inc., with two titles. This is not an adverse reflection on Harper & Row; as “number two” they clearly tried harder than anyone else. It is a positive reflection on Orbis Books as incontestably the most influential publisher in the field.

Another approach in the Greek word oikoumenē, from which we get words like “ecumenical,” and “ecumenism,” has had an interesting history. In most of its infrequent New Testament usages it refers simply to “the inhabited world” in which the early Church found itself. It was later used to describe ecumenical councils and ecumenical creeds—meetings and statements that had the support of Christians throughout “the inhabited world,” and not just in, say, Rome or Corinth or Alexandria. The word has been refurbished in the twentieth century, and “the ecumenical movement” in our day has aimed at restoring Christian unity and working together on the Christian mission to the oikoumenē. Even more recently, it has come to refer to activities in which Christians engage together for the sake of all people in the inhabited world; concern about minorities, civil and human rights, averting nuclear war, and engaging in projects of liberation have come to be called “ecumenical activities” because they involve concern for the people in all of the oikoumenē.

This recent stress is not a dilution of the meaning of the word, but a recovery of its original biblical meaning. Anyone who has global concerns—about liberation theology or development of the “green revolution” or apartheid or reading the Bible from the viewpoint of the oppressed—is thinking and acting ecumenically. And to help people do so, Orbis Books has provided the most significant resources: writings from all over the world, particularly the world of Asia, Africa and Latin America, translated for those in North America who would otherwise not have access to them. Ecumenical consciousness has been widened and deepened in an unparalleled way by Orbis Books.

The Foundation of Orbis

Who, or what, is Orbis Books? In June 1970, the Maryknoll religious order launched a new publishing operation called Orbis Books/Maryknoll Documentation, designed, so the press release stated, “to make Americans more aware of and responsive to the problems of the third world, those emerging nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America where two-thirds of the world’s people live.”

Zeroing in, the release continued: “Orbis Books draws its imperatives from and orders its priorities on the fact that the majority of Christians live in the affluent countries of the North Atlantic community, which controls almost eighty percent of the world’s resources but accounts for only twenty percent of the world’s population.... Christians bear a heavy responsibility for a world that can annually ‘afford’ to spend $150 billion on arms, but can scarcely scrape together $10 billion for international economic and social development.”

Zeroing in still more, the release stated, prophetically: “Total development will demand the restructuring of oppressive political and social orders wherever they exist, in Calcutta or Chicago, New York or Recife. For this reason, the word development should be replaced by liberation.” In 1970 most people did not even know the word “liberation.” Maryknoll did.

Fr. Miguel d’Escoto and others at Maryknoll responsible for launching the venture were not unaware of the risky consequences: “As the Christian churches increasingly call for radical reforms at home and abroad to support the claims of the poor and oppressed, the churches will become centers of controversy rather than of complacency which in effect, if not in intention, bestow their blessing on the status quo.”

In an ordinary business sense, particularly in the climate in the United States in 1970, all this was a recipe for disaster—either that, or a long-shot prophetic venture that just might strike a responsive chord. Fr. d’Escoto was realistic: “We might die trying, but we would have been long dead if we didn’t try.”

Orbis didn’t die. But before celebrating its life, we should note that it began in an almost Catch-22 situation: it had to publish books the public didn’t really “want” to read but should, and it had to educate the public so that it would in fact read the books it didn’t want to. Further, it had to be content to publish for a relatively small readership—not the mass market that keeps most publishing houses going, but a university press type of constituency, a small group of decision-makers, policy-makers and

Robert McAfee Brown is Professor of Ecumenics and World Christianity at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. His article is reprinted from The Ecumenist, July-August 1978, with permission from Paulist Press.
thoughtful elites who might have a little clout in the religious world and even a tiny bit of clout elsewhere, those who, inspired by what they read, might try to effect social change. They were great people, this potential audience, and absolutely parsimonious book-buyers.

Orbis didn’t die. To be sure it isn’t yet fully breathing on its own (despite erroneous claims in such journals as the National Catholic Reporter that it has made a bundle on liberation theology) but with the on-going generous support of the Maryknoll order, it is getting closer and closer to solvency, and it hopes within a couple of years to be able to survive without further subsidy from the parent organization. For taking not only the financial risk at a time when “religious publishing” was at a low ebb, but also the public-relations risk of a lot of flack for sponsoring “controversial” books, the Maryknoll order deserves the unending thanks of the theological world. Without initial Maryknoll support there would have been no Orbis Books at all. Without continuing Maryknoll support over the next few years, Orbis would have died on the vine. The support is becoming less necessary as the list grows and the Orbis name flourishes.

The Scope of Orbis

The scope of what is produced, sold and read is amazing. A few statistics: By the end of 1978, Orbis will have published one hundred and forty-one books. The largest single category classified in the latest Orbis catalogue is “Theology” with forty-seven titles. Thirty-six books are listed as “Religious Studies” (described somewhere as “broader than theology”) and twenty-eight are in the tricky category known as “Inspirational.” Twenty-two are in the hard-nosed data-filled “Socio-Political” area, and the remaining eight are listed under “Family,” although juveniles, which Orbis originally intended to publish frequently, were discontinued in 1975. (The fluidity of these categorizations is indicated by the fact that different releases from Orbis occasionally vary the numbers, even though the total remains constant.) Although many of the authors were born in the United States or Europe, most of them have spent extensive time in third world countries, and thirty-one of the authors were actually born there.

The area of greatest concentration covered by Orbis publications has been Latin America, with thirty-nine titles, if one defines such concentration as both “direct and indirect.” Since the most significant and articulate theological movements have been growing there, it is not unnatural that this should be so. But Asia and Africa have by no means been neglected, each continent being represented by twenty-four volumes, with more on the way.

As far as sales go, the “best seller” has been The Radical Bible, an anthology of biblical themes and other writings, edited by Scharper and Eagleson. This provocative volume provides useful material for those who are concerned about social justice and want not only biblical buttressing but subsequent Christian and non-Christian insight as well. Next in line (and really at the head of the line if we are considering works by individual authors) is Gustavo Gutiérrez’ A Theology of Liberation, which has sold almost 45,000 copies. This was a relatively early publication of Orbis, by an author at the time unknown on the North American scene. Its sheer excellence has not only made Gutiérrez’ name a theological household word, but has done much the same for Orbis. The five-volume series by Juan Luis Segundo, “Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity,” a post-Vatican II set of guides for laity and theologians, has sold a total of 64,000 volumes, with Community Called Church leading the way with sales over 20,000 copies. The Desert Is Fertile, Dom Helder Camara’s deceptively simple-looking volume of meditations (meditations that are social dynamite) has sold almost 20,000 copies.

But statistics do not really tell the story. The only way really to tell the story from here on is for this reader to reflect on the Orbis Books that have been most important to him. In this context I must refer again to Gutiérrez’ A Theology of Liberation. I had the privilege of reading this book in galley proofs before its publication. It changed, and continues to change, my life. I have not nearly caught up with all that it implies for me and for people like me—comparatively affluent North Americans who are discovering that our comforts are purchased at the cost of exploitation of third world peoples. The manifestly Christian and theological tone of the book defies those critics who try to “reduce” it to sociology or ethics or (as the phrase goes) “thinly-veiled Marxism.” It is a new
Christian vision, disturbing, powerful and finally hopeful—clearly the most important single book Orbis has yet published.

But it is by no means alone. Juan Luis Segundo's *The Liberation of Theology* does for overall theological method what Gustiérrez has done for overall theological content. José Miranda's *Marx and the Bible* (a little about Marx, a lot about the Bible) and his *Being and the Messiah* (a little about being, a lot about the Messiah) force us to read the Bible afresh from “the underside of history,” a perspective we have skillfully avoided in the past but can avoid no more. Jon Sobrino’s *Christology at the Crossroads*, just out, give us a view of Jesus from the perspective of the oppressed that we have also skillfully avoided. These are perhaps the most substantive contributions thus far, but there are many more. Four of Hugo Assmann’s biting and challenging essays, collected in *Theology for a Nomad Church*, give us a polemical challenge and perspective we cannot ignore. Books like Charles Antoine’s *The Church and Power in Brazil* offer the historical information and data that enable us to look at present events in that tragic country with deeper perspective. And if it is documentation we want, *Between Honesty and Hope*, edited by the Peruvian bishops’ Commission for Social Action (with a strong assist from Gustavo Gutiérrez), and *Christians and Socialism*, edited by John Eagleson, provide primary source materials to assess the always exciting, sometimes baleful, and occasionally depressing story of the way different segments of the Roman Catholic Church respond to, or avoid the cries of, the oppressed. Enrique Düssel’s two volumes, *History and the Theology of Liberation* and *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, give us in “popular” form the insights of one of the most acute historical minds at work on the Christian scene today.

For those who want their message biblical, there can be no more telling companion to Miranda’s works than the two volumes edited by Ernesto Cardenal, *The Gospel in Solentiname*, tape recordings of unlettered fisherfolk reflecting Sunday after Sunday on the Gospel lesson for the day, and reflecting so accurately the “fire upon the earth” that the Gospels represent that their community has subsequently been totally destroyed by the brutal Somoza regime in their native Nicaragua.

“Time would fail me” to tell of other books that can only disrupt, shake, but finally (because they are rooted in the Gospel) reinvigorate and reinforce their readers. Dorothee Söllé, a Protestant theologian from Germany, has given us *Revolutionary Patience*, blank verse poems of searching and explosive power. Kosuke Koyama, perhaps the most original of the Asian theologians, is represented by his evocative *Waterbuffalo Theology* and his Earl Lectures, entitled *No Handle on the Cross*, with a third book of meditations shortly to appear. And for Asian controversy, Ray Whitehead’s *Love and Struggle in Mao’s Thought* will occasion many reappraisals. Those who want instruction on how to translate these concerns into the parish situation can refer to *Education for Justice: Pedagogical Principles*, by Brian Wren, and a resource manual on the volume edited by Thomas Fenton.

Perhaps the significant African contributions are Alan Boesak’s *Farewell to Innocence*, a treatment of black theology and black power by a black South African, and Richard Turner’s *The Eye of the Needle*, a white South African scenario for the future in that troubled land, so troubled that the author was murdered just before the book was published in this country.

But no listings or brief descriptions can finally communicate the way in which these authors bring their worlds alive to chal-

---

The 1979 annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held at the S.V.D. Conference Center in Techny, Illinois (near Chicago), June 15-17, 1979. The theme of the meeting is “For God’s Pluralistic World—An Ultimate Gospel.” The Association of Professors of Missions will meet at the same place, June 14-15, 1979.

The 1980 meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be August 22-24, 1980, at a site yet to be decided. Save the dates.
Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction.


Johannes Verkuyl's Contemporary Missiology is a monumental achievement, with its encyclopedic scope and coverage, rich bibliographies, ecumenical perspective, and evangelical commitment. The English edition is an improved version of the original Dutch published in 1975. We are indebted to Dr. Verkuyl, to Dr. Dale Cooper who did the translation, and to Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. for making this significant volume available in English.

Verkuyl, who retired in October 1978 as professor of missiology and evangelism at the Free University of Amsterdam, served for many years as a missionary in Indonesia, and claims J. H. Bavinck and Hendrik Kraemer as his "gurus." His book traces the historical development of missiology as a theological discipline, then surveys the major figures, books, and centers for mission studies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapters are devoted to the biblical foundation, the motives, goal, purpose, ways, and means for mission. His surveys of ecumenical organizations and theological developments in the Third World, and mission in six continents, are especially useful for orientation and reference.

Of particular interest and importance is Verkuyl's substantial treatment (44 pages) of "The Church and the Jewish People"—a topic usually avoided by missiologists today. He maintains that the phrase "mission to the Jews" is theologically incorrect, and that any relation between Christians and Jews "must take the form of a dialogue" (p. 134). He denies, however, that the goal or purpose of dialogue with Jews is different from that of mission to people of other faiths. This blurring of a distinction between dialogue and mission needs clarification, so as to avoid misunderstanding among Jews and other non-Christians who already suspect that dialogue is the new name for evangelism in Christian mission.

There is also some confusion over the definition of mission in relation to evangelism. Verkuyl says, "Evangelism has to do with the scientific study of communicating Christian faith in Western society, while missiology centers on communicating it in regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean" (p. 9)—a very dubious distinction! Later (p. 340) he acknowledges that "such a distinction is no longer tenable in view of the fact that churches in the West now also confront a missionary situation in their own backyards." Nonetheless, the author indicates in his preface that "in this book we shall concentrate on Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean and Pacific areas," and he has written a more recent book on evangelism (Inleiding in de Evangelisitiek, Kampen: Kok, 1978) in which he concentrates on Europe. Further clarification from Dr. Verkuyl on these distinctions and definitions will be helpful as missiologists attempt to sort out the relationship of mission to evangelism, dialogue, social service, and intercultural fellowship in contrast to witness and ministry in general.

In chapter 13, on "Trends in the Theology of Religions," Verkuyl gives a summary and synthesis of the issues and directions in this area, with valuable discussion of German and Dutch literature that is not so well known and accessible to English readers. While calling for "a fresh theology of religions," he is very critical of the directions taken by Rahner, Schlette, Panikkar, Halbfas, Heislbet, Camps, Bleeker, and W. C. Smith. He prefers Newbigin, Kitamori, W. Andersen, M. M. Thomas, and Vicedom, who begin with a trinitarian confession.

Neither Roman Catholics nor conservative evangelicals will feel that Verkuyl has given adequate and balanced attention to their concerns and contributions in missiology. The book is also marred somewhat by errors and occasional mistranslations. For instance, Gustav Warneck died in 1910, not 1919 (p. 13); and there is a serious misstatement about Marburg University (there was no such decision as reported on p. 13; a mistranslation from the Dutch edition, which is correct). These are relatively minor flaws, however, given the comprehensive nature of the work. It is a reference tool of abiding value—one of those select volumes to keep close at hand.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes.


Of the increasing number of books appearing in English on the subject of liberation theology, this volume by Robert McAfee Brown is, in my judgment, the most lucid, concise, and informative introduction available thus far. Brown, formerly of Stanford University and more recently of Union Theological Seminary in New York, cites some of the more outstanding antecedents—both Roman Catholic and Protestant—of the theology of liberation and discusses briefly the crucial events leading up to and including the

The differences between traditional European and North American theology and the theology of liberation are graphically set forth in the discussion of the characteristics of theology as seen “from below.” For those who are accustomed to think of God as apolitical and of Marxism as the international bugbear, the theology of liberation will be disconcerting. Brown rightly observes, however, that for most liberation theologians, Marxism is not an all-encompassing Weltanschauung but a useful tool for social analysis.

The section on the hermeneutics of liberation theology confronts us with some of the more neglected, unsettling, and usually spiritualized biblical passages. Relentlessly the point is made that we all hear, interpret, and communicate the gospel through ideological filters, and that we North Americans and Europeans find it difficult to think of our theology as anything but normative.

The taxonomy of criticisms of and objections to liberation theology is neat and comprehensive. The lessons we can learn from “elsewhere” are explicit and helpful. The question “Is there still a role for the church?” is somewhat rhetorical, but the response is provocative and unequivocal.

Brown’s style is, as always, colorful, vigorous, and penetrating, although the musical analogies tend to be overutilized and are for me distracting at times. But this is after all a minor deficiency. My principal concern is that while we are credibly and adequately informed as to where the theologians of liberation may be right, nothing is suggested as to where they may be wrong. Because of the ambience out of which the theology of liberation emerged and the suffering and oppressed peoples it champions, it is easy for us who have lived and worked in Latin America to ignore its theological inadequacies. When we do—those of us who believe that there is more continuity between the biblical message and liberation theology than discontinuity—we become more writers of tracts than doers of theology.

—Alan Neely


The translation into English of Father Schurhammer’s four-volume Life of Francis Xavier is a notable enterprise. The first volume, it must be admitted, was rather dull. But, with the second and the arrival of Xavier in India, the tempo changes, and we are caught up in an exciting story. The Jesuits seem never to have lacked for parchment or ink. Xavier was an unwearyed correspondent; many of his journeys were carried out on small coastal vessels, and he seems to have occupied his leisure in inditing these letters, so many of which have been carefully preserved, and which make it possible to work out an almost day-to-day record of these years spent in India. Thus the reader can come into firsthand contact with the saint, watching him as he works and coming to understand his ideas and his ideals for missionary work. For much of the time Xavier was experimenting with methods of bringing the gospel home to the illiterate fisher-folk, who had been baptized before his arrival in India and then completely neglected. But bishops and incompetent priests, loved colleagues and rascally Portuguese equally come before us in steady procession.

Francis Xavier was for twenty years an Anglican missionary and bishop in South India, and precisely in the area where Xavier did most of his work. Now retired and resident at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, Bishop Neill is engaged on a major history of Christianity in India, and nearing the end of volume I, which brings the story up to 1705. The chapters dealing with Xavier and his work have already been written.

April, 1979
Faith, Science and the Future.
Preparatory Readings for the
1979 Conference of the World
Council of Churches.

Edited by Paul Abrecht. Philadelphia: Fortress
Press; and Geneva: World Council of
$3.95.

This book was prepared by an editorial
group constituted almost entirely by
members of the Working Committee
on Church and Society which is re­sponsible for the planning of the WCC
“Conference on the Contribution of
Faith, Science and Technology in the
Struggle for a Just, Participatory and
Sustainable Society” to be held at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
contains a series of preparatory read­ings intended for the use of partici­pants and study groups who may be
interested in the questions to be dis­cussed at that meeting of scientists,
technologists, theologians and people
of other disciplines. The readings are
distributed in five parts dealing with
“The Theological and Ethical Evalu­ation of Science and Technology, and
their Worldviews,” “Food, Resources,
Environment and Population—Key
Areas for Technological Judgment and
Policy,” “Science and Technology as
Power—Its Distribution and Control,”
and “Economic Issues in the Struggle
for a Just, Participatory and Sustainable
Society.”

During this last decade it has be­come obvious that the growing human
pressures on finite natural resources
and the ecological and social risks asso­ciated with increasingly large techno­logical systems leave no room for the
assumption (often made in ecumenical
social thought before 1970) that eco­nomic and technological growth are
nearly always beneficial and can be
practically unlimited. Because of the
deterioration of the physical environ­ment, the exhaustion of resources and
the present threats to human welfare,
no longer can it be taken for granted
that the whole world might someday
have the affluence which the most
(technologically) developed countries
achieved in the past. The challenge
now is, not to achieve the affluence
characteristic of the technocratic soci­ety, but to create a “just, participatory
and sustainable society” on a world­wide scale. But, as Prof. Charles Birch
stated in his address to the Fifth As­sembly of the World Council of
Churches in Nairobi, December 1975,
“If the life of the world is to be sus­tained and renewed...it will have to
be with a new sort of science and tech­nology governed by a new sort of eco­nomics and politics.”

There is in the past, especially in
Latin America, an impressive record of
social analysts who have insistently
pointed to the incompatibility between
the values of the technocratic society
and the vision of a global sustainable
society in which the basic spiritual
and physical needs of the majorities are
met. The problem that confronts the
WCC Conference to be held at M.I.T.
is: “How can the needed change of val­ues be achieved in an affluent society
in which the church herself is captive
to the consumer society?”

—C. René Padilla
Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach.


The imagery of "the crossroads" that appears in the title of this book is a vivid and fitting one. It evokes in us a picture of a busy cross-section of streets where people and vehicles coverge from all directions and disperse again in different directions. As the author Jon Sobrino, Jesuit priest who teaches philosophy and theology at the Universidad José Simón Cañas of El Salvador, puts it, his Christology is the crossroads where a long tradition of the past and "a new and authentically Latin American Christology" intersect in a critical way (p. xv). Crossroads being a very noisy place, such christological intersection is bound to provoke noisy reactions both in the East and in the West. In Christology at the Crossroads Sobrino has laid open to thinking Christians in the West and in the so-called Third World that which matters most in the life and mission of the church.

After briefly reviewing Christologies of some contemporary western theologians, the author goes on to deal with his subject from one central vantage point, namely, the history of Jesus. Detached from the history of Jesus, that is, from his life of obedience to God and his suffering in response to God's call, Christology becomes a metaphysic that has little to do with the faith affirmed and lived by Jesus. "The faith of Jesus," says Sobrino, "is fashioned through his history" (p. 100). This is the fundamental thesis that runs through this rather lengthy treatise on Christology. He doggedly pursues this main theme, trying to get at the heart of Christology through exegesis of passages in the Gospels that have to do with Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God, his prayers, and his journey to the cross.

Here is the author's decisive break with the traditional approach to Christology typified by Chalcedonian theology, for example. His Christology starts "from below" instead of "from above" (p. 104). In other words, Jesus comes to us not supremely as 'the Son of God' but as someone who "becomes" the Son of God. If this is true, history, not history in general but particular and concrete history which concerns us individually and as a whole, is the entry point into the experience and knowledge of Jesus. To know Jesus is therefore to take our history seriously, to follow him in our historical conditions. To put it in the language of liberation theology, to become engaged in the task of liberation from injustice, oppression, and other socio-political evils is to know Jesus. The knowledge of Jesus Christ hinges on our discipleship in our struggle for human liberation.

Sobrino has given us a Christology that places the historicity of Jesus and our historicity in close relationship. From his competent exegesis of the Bible passages, his critique of traditional Christologies, and above all his passion to relate Christian faith to historical struggles in Latin America...
a Christology that seeks to grasp Jesus in flesh and blood, and to come to grips with the challenge of our times in obedience to God's call. This is a Christology born of liberation theology.

My enthusiasm for such Christology prompts me to ask two questions. First: In relation to the resurrection of Jesus why does the author seem to give up his stanch historical approach? He actually says: "... basic discussion about Jesus' resurrection does not have to do with the possibility of envisioning it in physical, biological, or historical terms" (p. 244). Not in physical or biological terms—perhaps yes, but why not in historical terms? The second question is related to the author's preference to the English edition, where he says: "In my opinion, theology does face the urgent task of analyzing, criticizing, and giving direction to the Christologies held by the popular masses; but I do not propose to undertake that task in this book" (p. xxvi). Why did he choose to put aside this "urgent" task in his Christology at the Crossroads? Perhaps a Latin American picture of Jesus would have come out even more clearly and forcefully if the author had not put away such an important insight. The influence of Moltmann's theology on the author is visible throughout this book. One hopes to see in the future from this able Latin American theologian a Christology that bears the strong imprints of "Christologies of Latin American masses."

—Choan-Seng Song

Jesus Christ Liberator. A Critical Christology for Our Time.


This christological essay, worthy of a wide audience, dates from Brazil in the early seventies, a period of marked political repression against broad segments of the church in that country. An epilogue in the present English edition explicates what the author, a Franciscan priest, did not feel free to express in 1972. This historical point is important for appreciating the contribution of Boff's Christology. The main body of the book offers thirteen chapters, admirable in their clarity, terseness, and eloquence, which articulate a christological viewpoint that is, in my opinion, more European than American. From his studies in Munich, Boff has imbibed a familiarity with the best of German biblical and theological scholarship. His Christology draws on numerous Continental authors (rarely on British or North American), and some of his more favored formulations echo the anthropological Christology of Karl Rahner.

He first deftly leads the reader through "the history of the history of Jesus" in the past century, and through the hermeneutical problem. Without a really decisive option for the Jesus of history or the Christ of faith (his epilogue will state a clear preference for the former as inherent in liberation Christology), he presents a portrait of Jesus as: coming to proclaim the kingdom of God understood as both realization of human potential and as liberation from all that hinders it; critical of oppressive religio-political structures yet repudiating the violent approach of the Zealots; characterized by good sense, imagination, and creativity; living so totally for others that his death was both result and peak embodiment of this attitude; and realizing in his resurrection the true Utopia, the eschatologization of human reality.

In elaborating on how the faith of the church received and developed the message about Jesus, Boff spends three chapters with New Testament (including a chapter on the infancy narratives) and conciliar formulations. He then asks where we will find and how we can name the resurrected Christ today. For these reflections he draws on a di-
versity of contemporary currents, ranging from Jungian (Jesus Christ as archetype of the most perfect individuation), through the Teilhardian (Christ as the omega point of evolution), to the formulations of Schoonenberg, Bonhoeffer, and Soelle. As the work envisages a popular audience, there is no effort to criticize these diverse views or to test their compatibility with one another.

Only in his epilogue ("A Christological View from the Periphery") does the author begin to disengage from the Continent and speak somewhat more distinctively as a Latin American theologian of liberation. Here he makes significant distinctions between the epistemic and the social setting of a Christology (a distinction which touches the question of the autonomy of theology with respect to social praxis), and between a sacramental and a socio-analytical articulation of liberation Christology.

My principal doubt regarding the book as a whole is whether the Christology of the first thirteen chapters might not itself fall under some of the strictures enunciated, several years later, in the epilogue. The distance between the two unequal parts of this essay would seem to stem not so much from the change in opportunity for free speech on the part of the author as from the progressive indigenization of his own christological position. This failure to reflect back critically in the epilogue on his own journey is a decided shortcoming. At the end it remains unclear whether the socio-analytic approach to Christology within the social milieu of the Latin American liberation movement has made any major difference for Boff’s articulation of christological faith. The overall competence of the present volume indicates that he is fully capable of developing such a distinctive Christology, which, however, would doubtless involve the revision of much that he has said before coming to his epilogue.

—Thomas E. Clarke, S.J.

This book on conversion as the aim of missionary proclamation deals first with the mission theology of the late Walter Freytag, a German missiologist of considerable influence (d. 1959). For him conversion was central: "In the biblical sense you cannot call mission

mission, unless it aims at conversion and baptism" (W. Freytag). Triebel demonstrates how the entire theology of Freytag opens up from that angle. He has worked through Freytag’s wide range of writings with zeal and competence, showing how the reasons for

Bekehrung als Ziel der missionarischen Verkündigung.


CHRIST’S LORDSHIP AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM A CONSULTATION FOR THE 1980’s

October 24-27, 1979
Union Theological Seminary in Virginia

FEATURED SPEAKERS

ORLANDO COSTAS
Latin-American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies

PIETRO M. ROSSANO
Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions

STANLEY J. SAMARTHA
World Council of Churches

WALDRON SCOTT
World Evangelical Fellowship

WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH
Harvard University

KRISTER STENDAHL
Harvard Divinity School

OTHER RESPONDENTS AND PANELISTS

Arthur Glasser • Robert Schreiter • Margarethe B. J. Brown • Thomas F. Stranksy • Gerald H. Anderson • Donald G. Dawe • Mary Carroll Smith • Philip Scharper • Deotis Roberts • John B. Carman

SPONSORS

Center for the Study of World Religion, Harvard University • Diocese of Richmond, Roman Catholic Church • Maryknoll Center for Mission Studies • National Council of Churches, Division of Overseas Ministries • Overseas Ministries Study Center • Presbyterian Church U.S., Division of International Mission • Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Department of Interfaith Witness • Union Theological Seminary in Virginia • Washington Theological Union

FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

D. Cameron Murchison, Jr.
Union Theological Seminary in Virginia
3401 Brook Road, Richmond, Virginia 23227

April, 1979
mission relate to its aim and how the churches' participation in mission is connected with their raison d'être. And at the center of it all is the call to conversion, both as a constant challenge to Christian life and as the essential core of missionary proclamation.

Taking Freytag's theological concept of conversion as his point of departure, Triebel goes on to explore the ecumenical debate on mission under that same perspective. He analyzes in particular the results of the World Council of Churches' project on missionary structures of the congregation, the study on "Conversion to God and Service to Men" (1967–1968), the study project on "Churches in Mission," and the church growth approach. The result of the survey is quite sobering. He discovers a general lack of interest in the concern for conversion (exceptions granted), and is convinced that this results from an insufficient regard for the theology of the cross in ecumenical circles.

While the material offered and worked through by Triebel is of considerable help, it is precisely at the point of his evaluation that my questions begin. The ecumenical discussion on mission and evangelism cannot be adequately approached from the perspective of the missiology of Walter Freytag. The Lutheran emphasis on a theology of the cross is but one element. It can never serve as a yardstick to measure the authenticity of theological debate in the oikoumenē. —Paul Löfler

Paul Löfler, formerly professor of mission and ecumenics at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, is currently Director of Studies, Missions Academy, Hamburg, West Germany.


Pentecostals are doers of mission. It is not surprising, therefore, that few of them have taken the time to write concerning the theology and philosophy of mission. Now a leading Pentecostal missiologist has taken the time to do just that. Dr. Melvin L. Hodges—Assemblies of God missionary-educator and author of various books and articles on missionary strategy and methodology—has contributed a basic text on the theology of mission. If the book itself comes as a mild surprise, however, rest assured that it contains no surprises whatever. Hodges has given us a straightforward and simple statement of what conservative Pentecostals believe the church should be and do in the world. He grounds the related prescriptions and proscriptions of mission in Scripture, and insists that the enabling power for mission comes from the Holy Spirit. He suspects that many or most non-Pentecostal evangelicals have not really appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission. He has no doubt whatsoever that many or most ecumenists have not really depended upon the propositions of Scripture for their understanding of the church's mission. And he cites some of those familiar statistics of Pentecostal growth to support his contentions.

The book is divided into three parts.

Under the topic "A Theology of the Church" the author deals with biblical authority, the plan of redemption, the Holy Spirit, and the nature and organization of the church.

Under "A Theology of the Church's Mission" he writes concerning the mission, social concern, and theological and organizational currents in missions.

Under "The Church in Mission" Hodges challenges his readers to take a careful look at the precedents set by the apostles and the early church, and to go into all the world to do what they did.

Dr. Hodges has done what he set out to do in this book. He has provided Pentecostals with a brief yet encompassing theology of mission. He has attempted to substantiate his conclusions in Sacred Scripture. He has dealt with opposing viewpoints, by no means exhaustively but forthrightly and without rancour. He has partially filled a lacuna in Pentecostal literature on the church and its mission. Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike should be grateful.

—David J. Hesselgrave

This is an important book because it accurately presents the pain and calculated dehumanization in South African society. The foreword to the book is by Alan Paton, who is sympathetic and supportive toward South African blacks—although it must be said that as a white man he has a vote while millions of blacks do not, and he has made a living with his pen as he wrote from a position of citizenship, choice and comfort in the racially torn land of my birth.

The author is an American who frequently battled with her conscience as she enjoyed a relatively luxurious lifestyle in South Africa where she had blacks as servants under the outworn excuse of giving them a job! She recounts some of the touching and sickening experiences she had in the midst of South Africa’s psychological oppression of blacks. One of her stories gives two examples of how Africans value people more than property. This remnant of a traditional African social value is struggling for survival where it is at variance with the white western world’s materialistic values, which are put above human lives. In contrast she ably reports on the separate and unequal laws under which the survival and status of the blacks is determined by the whites on the basis of race and color. This is a serious indictment on all Christians, South African whites and those in the western world who have done so little to stem this escalating desecration of human life and worth. This book is an honest, urgent, pleading voice of a privileged American through whose pen the hurting voices of the oppressed speak—even scream to us. Do read it even if you can’t bear to be exposed to real suffering and injustice. It calls you to reach out!

—Motlalepula Chabaku

Paulo Freire: His Life, Works, and Thought.

As a disciple, co-citizen, and friend of Paulo Freire, I greet with enthusiasm this little book by Dennis Collins. The main virtue of the book lies in the fact that he summarizes and explains Freire’s thought to Anglo-Saxon readers in a way never tried before. In other words, the author portrays Freire not so much as a radical philosopher of education or as a philosopher of radical education, but as the educator committed to a pedagogy of liberation born out of his personal involvement in the struggle against oppression in Latin America and Africa, with special focus on Brazil.

Of course, there are limits in the work. One cannot expect to explain Freire’s contribution in ninety brief pages. Also the author obviously wrote for a scholarly audience and not to the “wretched of the earth” or others most in need of Freire’s approach. But the author recognizes these and other limitations. To use an old cliché, his book should be “seen as a tugboat guiding a transatlantic ship into a stormy dock.” And for that we thank him.

I believe this book will make Freire’s work more understandable to the Anglo-Saxon mind, and should be recommended as study material for professors, college students, and educated community organizers.

—Jovelino Ramos

Quality of Life in a Global Society.

“Quality of life” is a term that is in vogue today. “Development” is an involvement that is likewise in vogue. Presumably, development will lead to improved quality of life. But does it? And how do we know? Answers to these questions are elusive mainly because the concepts “quality of life” and “development” have been so inequately defined.

McCleary and Wogaman have taken a noble stride toward clarifying the nature of quality of life from a biblical perspective. Their stated premise “... that the theological/ethical dimension must undergird pragmatic involvements ...” (p. ii) implies that Christians who look to the Scriptures for their ethical and value foundations will view quality of life substantially differently from those whose worldview is not influenced by the Scriptures.

Chapter 1 contains the book’s major contribution: “Quality of Life in Biblical Perspective.” After briefly laying aside the dichotomistic notion that quality of life is essentially physical or essentially spiritual—“Fortunately, we do not have to choose between one-sided spiritualism and one-sided materialism” (p. 4)—the chapter goes on to identify four biblical themes that bear on our understanding of quality of life. The covenantal theme brings one’s relationship with God into the picture and provides hope. The communal theme suggests that quality of life is not an individualistic phenomenon; biblical quality of life is always experienced by a group together. The creative theme suggests that quality of life includes purposeful activity, directed toward positive ends which contribute to relationships. The celebrative theme says quality of life includes the articulated enjoyment of the goodness and beauty of life—“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!” The themes cited above begin to bring into focus a biblical perspective on quality of life which is often omitted by development workers.

Chapters 2 and 3 relate the prob-
of alternative responses to the problems discussed above. The authors differentiate between relief and development and imply that relief is a necessary but not sufficient response to global needs. They then identify five shortcomings of traditional development concepts, which imply the need to rethink development philosophy and programs.

At this point the authors take a disappointing turn. The problem analysis is elevated to a global philosophical level with a discussion of "triage," "lifeboat ethics," and "spaceship earth" ideas. What is disappointing is that recommended solutions for these global dilemmas are themselves so global as to resemble pie in the sky. The United Nations is suggested as the coordinating agency through which massive resources be marshaled with which to address the problems. It is remarkable that they should take this position so strongly in light of the following:

1. One of the shortcomings of traditional development, cited in Chapter 4, was "internationally conceived development often fails to be integrated or contextualized." This is still true today. The United Nations is too far removed from Third World communities to deal effectively with life-quality needs of residents of those particular communities. And governments through which the United Nations channels its assistance are concerned with the macro-level problems of national development and are similarly unable to relate to quality of life needs of local communities. The notion should be dispelled that macro-level national development improves quality of life in particular communities of a country. The trickle-down theory does not work. If quality of life is to be improved, quality-of-life needs must be addressed at the community level. National and international solutions to local problems are inadequate. In recognition of this problem, some international agencies are taking steps to address community-level needs through local, nongovernmental agencies which have demonstrated a capacity to facilitate development assistance at the community level.

2. The authors are closely related to a particular interchurch agency, which works through church-related missions to encourage community-level development in the Third World. The failure to stress the effectiveness of such mission agencies in addressing community-level needs which impinge on quality of life is an unfortunate omission.

The last word has not been written on the subject, by any means. But Quality of Life in a Global Society has taken a significant step toward identifying some of the important issues for Christians to consider as they seek to alleviate needs in the world.

—Donald Miller
Patriarch, Shah and Caliph.


William G. Young recently retired from his work as Bishop of Sialkot in the Church of Pakistan. Ordained by the Church of Scotland, Young has served as a missionary in Pakistan since 1947. From 1966 to 1969, he was professor of church history at Gujranwala Theological Seminary in that country.

Patriarch, Shah and Caliph is a study of the Church of the East (Nestorian) in its relationships with the Sassanid Empire and the early Muslim Caliphs up to A.D. 820. In the opinion of this reviewer, it is a welcome and highly competent summary of information about the period of Eastern Church history most often neglected by missiologists and church historians. Most of us tend to deal with the Nestorian Church of those centuries (roughly from the Synod of Seleucia in 410 to the closing years in the long reign of Catholicos-Patriarch Timothy I) in rather vague and sketchy generalities. We do so largely because the details have hitherto been available only in Syriac documents—which we can’t read—or in modern-language volumes so ponderous as to discourage all but the most indefatigable. Young’s concise and readable study therefore meets an important need.

A brief chapter (pp. 3–26) is devoted to relationships between the Church of the East and the state before A.D. 410. But with Young’s discussion of the Synod of Seleucia (pp. 27–36) we are introduced to advantages and disadvantages in the experience of the church as a legally recognized subject community within a non-Christian state.

Further development of that ambiguous church-state relationship is given in chapter V, “Under the Sassanid Shahs, 410–630 A.D.” (pp. 50–77). During this period the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon grew in importance as a Christian center, its Bishop of the Cities becoming Catholicos-Patriarch of the East and no longer subordinate to Antioch. In Young’s opinion: “If there had been no Arab invasion, it is conceivable that the Persian Royal House might have become Christian and exercised the kind of control over the Church of the East that Justinian had over the Greek Church of the Byzantine Empire” (p. 76). It was in this same period, however, that the struggle between Nestorians and Jacobites brought division to the Church of the East.

The heart of Young’s argument comes in chapter VI, “Change-over to Arab Rule” (pp. 78–105), based on the writings of two contemporary Christians, Patriarch Ishu’-Yab III and John, a monk of Penek. Young emphasizes that “the bitter opposition of Christian to Muslim, and Muslim to Christian, which has so often been characteristic of mediaeval and modern times, was not a feature of this period. It came after the Crusades were to show Christian intolerance at its worst, and those who suffered most as a result were the Eastern Christians.”

Noteworthy

The library of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, now receives the computer-output-microfiche of the union catalog of all new books cataloged by the theological libraries of Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Union (New York). This microfiche record contains, in dictionary arrangement, all types of entries, e.g., author, title, editor, co-author, translator, subject, etc., symbol identifying the library cataloging each title, as well as the title page and call number, is associated with the bibliographic entry. If more than one library reports the same title, symbols and call numbers for each library are displayed. Inquiries concerning subscription to this Cooperative Religion Catalog (CORECAT) on microfiche should be directed to the Committee for Theological Library Development, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 111, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Chapter VII, “Under the Early Caliphs: 650–820 A.D.” (pp. 106–175), quotes primarily from Thomas, Bishop of Marga’s “Book of Governors” and the voluminous letters of Patriarch Timothy I. This is followed by Young’s conclusion (chapter VIII), including a useful section on some lessons for minority churches today.

The five appendices are: (A) The Record of the Synod of Seleucia in 410, (B) Details about Metropolitan Sees, (C) The Order of Metropolitan Sees, (D) an altogether fascinating summary of Patriarch Timothy’s theological discussions with a Muslim Aristotelian and with the Caliph al-Madhi, and (E) a chronological listing of Catholicos-Patriarchs from A.D. 399–813. There are three maps showing the distribution of metropolitanates of the Church of the East in 410, 410–650, and 650–820.

—Norman A. Horner

Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation on Scripture, Theology, and History.


A volume containing essays on Jews and Christians in dialogue is nothing new. But to receive a book containing conversations between Jews and evangelical Christians is something of a landmark in the ongoing dialogue. That is what this valued book is. It contains the papers delivered at the National Conference of Evangelical Christians and Jews to which participants from both faiths contributed essays on selected themes. This format greatly benefits the reader, since it helps keep in focus the specific topic being addressed from the vantage point of each faith.

Jewish and evangelical Christian viewpoints are presented on the following topics: (1) Perspectives on Judaism and Evangelical Christianity; (2) The Meaning of Messiah; (3) The Meaning of Israel; (4) The Interpretation of Scripture—four essays; (5) Response to Moral Crises and Social
Ferment—four essays; (6) Religious Pluralism; and (7) The Future.

The essays make it very clear that the theological and cultural differences between evangelical Christians and Jews are specific and substantial. There seems to have been no attempt to ignore or tone down sensitive issues. Each contributor writes forthrightly from within his own faith commitment. The differences are not permitted to make the conversation cease, however.

Obviously the terms “evangelical Christians” and “Jews” are abstractions. Not everyone who is known either as an evangelical Christian or as a Jew will agree that all possible positions are represented, for both Christianity and contemporary Judaism consist of a variety of viewpoints and emphases. This does not, however, detract from the book’s value for the casual reader or the scholar.

I for one would have appreciated a more specific agenda for the future than is found at the close of the book. The reader is also left in the dark as to what the National Conference of Evangelical Christians and Jews is, when its meetings took place, and what its purpose and goals are. This is unfortunate, since there are some, I am certain, who are interested in this.

There is so much more that needs to be said and discussed that one looks hopefully to the future for further similar conversations.

I appreciate the book and intend to use it in my course in seminary. I hope that the publishers will continue to show leadership by soliciting and publishing further studies in this area.

—Richard R. De Ridder

Richard R. De Ridder, Professor in the Department of Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a former missionary to Sri Lanka of the Christian Reformed Church.

---

Dissertation Notices

Cochran, Alice C.
“Miners, Merchants, and Missionaries: The Roles of Missionaries and Pioneer Churches in the Colorado Gold Rush and Its Aftermath, 1858–1870.”
Ph.D. Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1975.

Dekar, Paul.
“Crossing Ritual Frontiers: Bulu Traditional Religion and Bulu Christianity.”

Fittipaldi, Silvio E.
“The Encounter between Roman Catholicism and Zen Buddhism from a Roman Catholic Point of View.”

Han Ki-Bum.

Herrera, Marina.
“Man and the Latin American Church in the Theology of Liberation.”

Mei-Fen, Chu.
“The Religious Dimension in Mao Tse-tung Thought.”

Minamiki, George.
“The Modern Phase and Conclusion of the Chinese Rites Controversy.”

Pankratz, James N.
“The Religious Thought of Rammohun Roy.”

Schebera, Richard.
“Robert Zaeher’s Understanding of Revelation in Christ as a Basis for Dialogue between Christianity and Other Major World Religions.”
Leading Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox authorities offer a wealth of information on the vital issues and opportunities in the world mission today...

MISSION TRENDS
A series of sourcebooks edited by
Gerald H. Anderson (Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center) and
Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. (President of the Paulist Fathers, 1970-1978)

Just Published!

MISSION TRENDS No. 4: Liberation Theologies:
North American and European Perspectives on Liberation, with Contributions from the Black, Feminist, Native American, Asian American and Chicano Experience

Like other books in this series, this is a collection of articles on the theology and practice of Christian mission that is drawn from the knowledge and resources of the editors and a world-wide group of consultants and contributors. This new volume focuses on “liberation theologies” — not in the Third World — but instead, as they are encountered in North America and Europe. Paperback, $3.45

MISSION TRENDS No. 1: Crucial Issues in Mission Today

Written for the reader who takes seriously his participation in the active Christian life, the essays in this volume reflect a wide variety of opinion. They range from a consideration of the basic question — what is “mission” today? — to a discussion of the nature of the Christian message, the unique position of Third World Christians, the development of the black church, and what must be learned from the past as the world mission continues in these rapidly changing times. Paperback, $3.45

MISSION TRENDS No. 2: Evangelization

This collection begins with a section on the meaning of evangelization from its Biblical definition to its modern usage. This is followed by discussions of the role of the Church in Africa, India, and South America, as well as its impact on young people and neo-pagans. It reminds us that the Church must re-examine its view of other faiths and ideologies, especially those of China and the rest of Asia. The volume concludes with statements from Bangkok, Lausanne, Rome, Taizé and Bucharest. Paperback, $3.45

MISSION TRENDS No. 3: Third World Theologies

Since the majority of the world’s Christians will be living in Asia, Africa and Latin America by the year 2000, this collection gives readers an opportunity to look at “some creative theological currents” in the Third World countries and to see Christianity from the perspective of other cultural contexts. This informative sourcebook begins with essays dealing with theology in concept before moving on to separate sections containing relevant essays by Latin American, African and Asian writers. Paperback, $3.45

Available from

PAULIST PRESS
545 Island Road, Ramsey, New Jersey 07446
Betts, Robert Brenton.
Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study.

Christianity in Independent Africa.

Fitts, Leroy.
Left Carey: First Black Missionary to Africa.

Hesselgrave, David J., ed.

Holmes, Lionel, ed.
Church and Nationhood.

Horowitz, Irving Louis, ed.
Science, Sin, and Scholarship. The Politics of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church.

IDOC International, ed.

Johnson, Arthur P.
The Battle for World Evangelism.

Mulder, John M. and John F. Wilson, eds.

Roozen, David A.
The Church and the Unchurched in America: A Comparative Profile.

Strayer, Robert W.
The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa.

Tuma, Tom and Phares Mutiboa, eds.

Weeks, Richard V., ed.
Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey.

World Council of Churches.
Church and State: Opening a New Ecumenical Discussion.

In Coming Issues

The Other Message
Eugene A. Nida

Cultural Problems in Mission
Catechesis among Native Americans
Carl F. Starkloff, S.J.

Statement of the Asian Theological Conference of Third World Theologians

Christian Mission among the Chinese People: Where Do We Go from Here?
Tracey K. Jones, Jr.

Christianity in North Africa Today
Norman A. Horner

Bruno Gutmann's Legacy
Ernst Jäschke

The Legacy of Rufus Anderson
R. Pierce Beaver

Mission Interaction and Ethnic Minorities in the United States
Roy I. Sano

Looking at a Catholic Mission in Africa
Per Hassing

Book Reviews by

Changing your address?
Please notify the Occasional Bulletin subscription office six weeks in advance of your move to insure uninterrupted delivery of the journal.