Of Milestones, Models, and Mandates

Among many important milestones that mark the pilgrimage of Christians in world mission, the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 holds particular significance for Protestants. In this issue of the Occasional Bulletin, W. Richey Hogg examines the impact of that momentous gathering from a perspective informed by the missionary experience of two generations—seventy years—since it was held. Hans Kasdorf provides a valuable survey of bibliographical sources about a period nearly four centuries before the Edinburgh Conference. The ways in which the Protestant Reformers and their contemporaries interpreted the Great Commission have long been a matter of serious debate among missiologists. That debate will undoubtedly continue, but Kasdorf’s bibliography makes it easier to avoid unwarranted generalizations.

Models are expressions of both theory and practice. Jerald D. Gort’s article on “Contours of a Reformed Understanding of Mission” outlines the bases on which one major family of Christian churches has traditionally conceived its missionary responsibility; and J. Jermain Bodine recounts the life and contribution of a notable representative of that tradition, Duncan Black Macdonald (1863–1943). In “Bruno Gutmann’s Legacy,” Ernst Jäschke stoutly defends the philosophy and practice of a Lutheran missionary who served among the Chagga people of East Africa from 1902 to 1938. Despite the criticisms leveled at Gutmann, in his own day as well as in ours, Jäschke sees continuing relevance in his insights.

What are the most urgent missionary mandates now? Lesslie Newbigin, one of the world’s most respected missiologists today, concludes our series on “Mission in the 1980s” with some penetrating suggestions. And the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle (held at Hoddesdon, England, March 17–21, 1980) insists that one of those mandates is for Christians in the First World to live more simply. Our credibility in mission, they say, depends increasingly on that. A preliminary meeting, the Consultation on Simple Lifestyle for Evangelism and Justice, was held at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, in April 1979.

Announcing a New Name

Effective with the first issue of 1981, this journal will have a new name. The Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, which has been a quarterly publication since 1977, will take the name International Bulletin of Missionary Research. At that time we will also announce a distinguished international panel of contributing editors.

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of Missionary Research
Edinburgh 1910—Perspective 1980

W. Richey Hogg

Edinburgh 1910! The city and year designate the World Missionary Conference—a pivotal event in Christian and world history. With each passing decade, its importance looms larger. It began an epoch, and after seventy years it warrants fresh examination.

The origins of the ecumenical movement lie far behind 1910. Yet Edinburgh 1910 launched the organized world and national structures by which that movement is best known. Thus it stands unique.

More importantly, it appears to have inaugurated an era of councils among the world Christian community, the significance of which for world history may someday be seen to compare with those that stretched from Nicea (325) to Chalcedon (451).

In the current reckoning of history, Edinburgh 1910 stood not only at the end of the nineteenth century, at the high tide of Western European optimism and imperialism, but also at the beginning of the twentieth century, which held the demise of Western political control, the growth of Marxist-Leninist imperialism and its global messianism, and the independence and rise of great hope among the peoples of Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America.

More importantly, it stands amid an age of revolution that has embraced the past two centuries and will include the next. That revolution—in thought, science, the rapid expansion of knowledge, the view of the universe, the understanding of human beings, and in communication and the exploration of space—has brought a physically shrunken planet. It has thrust all into global interdependence and into a universal history.

Edinburgh's surrounding history shaped it. Yet someday Edinburgh may be judged to have transcended its period and to carry significance far beyond that initially seen in it.

Everyone "knows about" Edinburgh 1910, but how many understand what happened there? This article seeks to clarify those events and to indicate their meaning for today.1

1. The Background of Edinburgh 1910

The problems and theological dynamics of "the Great Century" form the background for Edinburgh 1910, but four specific forces shaped it.

The first of these contributing streams involved the growth of cooperative "field" conferences in India, China, Japan, South Africa, and Mexico. In them missionaries came together for counsel on their common task. They produced broad, cooperative planning and joint efforts in education, medicine, Bible translation, literature, and the like. They also developed bonds of Christian unity and recognized a need to face the issues of church union that confronted the growing churches.

For Edinburgh 1910, three of these gatherings held unique importance: the South India Missionary Conference at Madras in 1900, the All-India Decennial Conference at Madras in 1902, and the Centenary Conference at Shanghai in 1907. Madras 1900 marked a procedural and structural break with all preceding field conferences, and the two following built upon it.

Each of the three was a working body with committee-prepared studies providing the agenda. Each consisted of official, elected delegates. Each followed the explicit rule of Madras 1902: no one could raise theological or ecclesiastical questions on which the denominations represented held major differences. In plenary sessions those desiring the floor notified the chair by card, awaited recognition, and then spoke within a time limit. Carefully studied by those who planned Edinburgh 1910, these three meetings shaped that assembly and subsequent ecumenical conferences.

The second stream consisted of a series of conferences that met in England and America. They began in New York and London in 1854, and reached their peak in New York's huge Ecumenical Missionary Conference in 1900. They sought to encourage, stimulate, and educate the home constituency, and the final two became large, popular assemblies. They, too, displayed a growing unity and urged an international coordinating, cooperative agency. In fact, Gustav Warneck in his paper for London 1888 proposed a body similar to what the International Missionary Council (IMC) became. The last three of these "home base" conferences also created expectation for major decennial gatherings.

The third contributing force arose from the growth of continuing "home base" agencies for missionary cooperation. Among these were the London Secretaries' Association (1819ff.), the Continental Missions Conference (1866ff.), the Standing Committee (Ausschuss) of the German Protestant Missionary Societies (1885ff.), and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (1893ff.; FMC). After 1950 the FMC became the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches, USA, and the Commission on World Concerns of the Canadian Council of Churches.

These bodies facilitated increasingly important interdenominational ties and experience in dealing unitedly with governments. They also established the principle—adopted by the FMC from the Ausschuss—that the agency of cooperation is the creature and servant of its member boards and societies (and, by extension, of the churches), and that the latter alone have the right to determine missionary policy.

Two important corollaries derive from that principle. First, the cooperative agency must respect the convictions of each member body, cannot dictate to any society, and has authority only to the degree that the inherent wisdom of its counsel commends itself to the member bodies. Second, implicit in principle is the understanding—especially evident in the American church-board structure—that the cooperative agencies belong to the churches (directly or through their constituencies) and are thus interdenominational rather than nondenominational. Edinburgh 1910 followed this pattern and its Continuation Committee at The Hague in 1913 adopted this principle (and its corollaries). It was then embodied in the national Christian councils, the IMC, and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Indeed, it marks the genius of ecumenical cooperation.

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The fourth stream consisted of all that in that day made up the international Student Christian Movement: the YMCA, the YWCA, national SCMs, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), and the World’s Student Christian Federation (1895ff.; WSCF). The WSCF drew the others together as part of an international community. The Federation’s power sprang from the SVM Watchword, “The evangelization of the world in this generation,” and its basis included affirmation of faith in “Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures.” In the WSCF and its member bodies, John R. Mott, J. H. Oldham, and others gained knowledge of the global Christian community and insight into the dynamics of broad, ecumenical operation.

The WSCF was denominationally broader than the pre-1910 missionary conferences, and included Anglo-Catholics. From its Constantinople meeting in 1911, it also included Orthodox and Roman Catholic students. In its 1907 Tokyo meeting, Asian students outnumbered those from the West three to one—a sharp contrast with the Asian missionary gatherings. Mott, Oldham, and others agreed that the whole Student Christian Movement provided the most decisive shaping force for Edinburgh 1910.

2. The Nature of Edinburgh 1910

The World Missionary Conference (WMC) met in Edinburgh, June 14 to 23, 1910. Many viewed it as in the succession of London 1888 and New York 1900. Yet in preparation (three years), nature, and outcome, Edinburgh 1910 differed sharply from them. How did it differ? What was its purpose?

Edinburgh aimed to survey the “non-Christian world,” including the missions and churches there, and to achieve a cooperative strategy for its effective evangelization. In pursuing that aim, it disclosed its uniqueness.

First, Edinburgh 1910 was a working conference. It had engaged hundreds of correspondents, among them Asians—scholars, theologians, missionaries, and educators—from around the world. They contributed data, assessments, statistics, and counsel. The eight commissions reworked this vast quarry into eight comprehensive and balanced volumes, to produce which Mott raised $55,000. The printed materials reached the delegates before the conference, and provided the basis for the discussion. Through these books and the discussion-debate they enabled, the conference sought to create a common mind, to develop an informed global strategy, and to encourage cooperation as a means to that end.

Second, its more than 1200 members came officially delegated by their boards and societies, with allocations proportionate to financial expenditures overseas. Many of the boards and societies were agencies of or closely allied to their churches, and this invested the conference with a deep ecclesiastical concern. This was new and characterized future ecumenical gatherings.

Third, it limited its purview to the “non-Christian world.” This resulted from Anglo-Catholic concern to exclude missions in Latin America and the determination of those from Europe to exclude missions operating there. That limitation solved the practical problem of which bodies would be invited. Yet it produced afterward a rump session on Latin America, led to the founding of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America and the Panama Congress (patterned on Edinburgh) in 1916, and resulted in an American version of the Conference Atlas with figures for Latin America included.

Fourth, it set self-imposed theological limits. No resolutions would be allowed that involved “questions of doctrine or Church polity with regard to which the Churches or Societies taking part ... differ among themselves.” This excluded matters of faith and order on which the participating groups held sharp differences. From several traditions, those of strong “church conviction” insisted upon this limitation in the conviction that debate on faith and order belongs to the Churches themselves in arranged theological forum. Edinburgh assuredly did not eliminate theological discussion.

Fifth, commitment to this principle and their trust in the leaders of the SCM enabled Anglo-Catholics to be present. Their involvement was new. That, the WSCF, and the work of Mott with and for the Orthodox during and after World War I, opened the way for Orthodox participation in subsequent ecumenical gatherings. It also established a mode of operation that took responsibly into account the Roman Catholic Church.

What to some at the time seemed of small moment, Oldham judged to be “the turning point in the history of the ecumenical movement.” The self-imposed rule—following the same prudential decision of the less inclusive Madras 1902 conference—
little hindered theological discussion at Edinburgh (or within the IMC), but eliminated only the kind of theological debate appropriate to the Faith and Order movement. Indeed, the IMC’s history has produced an abundance of material focused on the theology of mission.

Sixth, it was inclusive—as inclusive as it could be in 1910. It included the Anglo-Catholic societies and the Quakers, the Lutheran societies of Scandinavia and Germany—those from the Continent for the first time really felt included—and the China Inland Mission. Within that range of inclusiveness, Edinburgh 1910 was shot through with a sense of its own ecclesial nature and of responsibility to the church for its mission.

Seventh, except for seventeen Asians, included as delegates from the mission agencies, its members were Westerners. Yet there is more to it than that. Many Asians contributed substantially to the commission volumes. Moreover, invitations had requested that if possible nationals be included in each delegation. Mott was clearly unhappy with the limited representation from Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. As chairman, Mott seated the Asians advantageously and enabled them to speak frequently. Their contribution was out of all proportion to their number. Indeed, Edinburgh’s two best-remembered addresses came from V. S. Azariah of India and Cheng Ching-yi of China. The latter pleaded for a union church in China and ended by asking the Continuation Committee to come to China. When the small Continuation Committee was appointed, three of its members were Asian—10 percent of its membership.

Eighth, as convened in Scotland, Edinburgh was Western. Yet the total reality of Edinburgh 1910 must include the Continuation Committee conferences—in some degree a response to Cheng’s plea—in Asia conducted by Mott from November 1912 to April 1913. They were the second stage—Edinburgh in Asia.

From Colombo to Tokyo, and on the Edinburgh pattern, Mott conducted twenty-one conferences. In India, China, and Japan there were also at the national level. Delegated Asians were full members, came in substantial numbers, and in several cases outnumbered missionaries. Of the 1600 participants, 35 percent were Asians, 14 percent were women, and several were Orthodox. Women’s work and medical missions (both omitted in 1910) emerged as major subjects. The unanimity of the findings across Asia, and based on a standard syllabus, staggered the imagination. “These meetings were nothing else than a new and better edition of Edinburgh, 1910 in Asia.” From them also arose the bodies that were to become in the 1920s the National Christian Councils of Asia. Mott regarded these as his greatest achievement.

For too long Edinburgh 1910 has been regarded as exclusively Western. It needs to be seen as a two-stage reality. Thus viewed, it was as nearly global as it could be at that time. (A few would add Panama 1916 as a third stage.) Seldom noted, the importance of this larger perspective deserves increasing attention.

Finally, Edinburgh 1910 generated uncommon power. Spiritually it was rooted in prayer—prayer offered on all continents before and during the conference. At the conference, prayer each morning began the day, and daily at noon the whole conference stopped for a half-hour of intercession for world mission. All affirmed God’s power in the Assembly Hall. It transcended human planning. The effect was cumulative, transforming, and profoundly unifying.

Mott, at forty-five the “Master of Assemblies,” presided daily and channeled that power to its proper end. Oldham, the conference secretary, kept everything in that marvelously complex operation moving smoothly. Most found the conference to be a unique experience of prayer, unity, power, world statesmanship, and of God’s leading into an eschatologically open future.

3. Achievements of the Conference

Edinburgh’s achievements were many, and some are suggested above. Others included renewed interest in missions, substantially increased giving, new training schools, and similar results. These hardly capture Edinburgh’s larger impact. Yet three must suffice as examples.

First, the vision of Oldham and Mott produced the commissions and their preparatory volumes. Their notable achievement set the pattern for almost all future ecumenical conferences.

Second, the WMC made a striking impact on the student-movement folk invited as stewards and on the younger leaders. They gained a unique vision of the church, the reality of its worldwide mission, and its growing desire for unity. Among those whom one can only mention were Azariah, Cheng, William Temple, John Baillie, Otto Dibelius, William Paton, William Manson, Kenneth Kirk, J. McLeod Campbell, and others. Among older members, the same experience also enlarged the vision of the archbishop of Canterbury and the Quakers, representatives of the Society for Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and of the China Inland Mission, indeed, of all. Such influence defies precise measure, but changes lives and institutions.

Third, Edinburgh’s one decisive accomplishment was to create the Continuation Committee. When steadily growing conviction of its need brought a unanimous vote, delegates arose as one and in joyous exultation burst into the Doxology’s “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” In the spirit and manner of Edinburgh, the new body would carry out certain responsibilities and work with the mission agencies toward an “International Missionary Committee.” Although constituted after World War I in 1921, the International Missionary Council emerged from Edinburgh 1910.

From the Edinburgh Continuation Committee, its Chairman Mott, and its Secretary Oldham came amazing creativity and catalytic power, the evidences of which in 1980 give substance on every continent and in regional and worldwide bodies to the ecumenical reality, and the strength of world Christianity.

4. Brent and Faith and Order

Through Bishop Charles H. Brent, missionary bishop in the Philippines, the Faith and Order movement took root at Edinburgh 1910. There amid the growing sense of oneness and recognized need for fuller cooperation and unity, delegates voiced hope that someday Anglicans, Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox could explore together their common Christian unity. With the Orthodox that came by 1919, and for the Roman Catholics it has grown notably since the end of Vatican II in 1965. In 1968 the latter entered the WCC’s Commission on Faith and Order.

Without tracing that development here, another engages one’s attention. Widespread conviction holds that in the Edinburgh Conference Brent spoke of its theological limits and there proposed in embryonic form the Faith and Order movement. Therein lies a problem. Did he?

In his formal evening address on June 22, he spoke of “a new vision . . . unfolded to us . . . that ultimate ideal . . . to achieve perfect unity . . . [of] the whole of Christendom . . . Rome . . . the Greek Church . . . That is the task before us.” The morning before, on June 21, in a memorable presentation he had spoken earnestly of cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church and acknowledged that Christian cooperation involves “fair fighting” and “controversy.” He noted in his diary: “Men of every type and creed came to me by the scores and thanked me. It was most moving.” Brent then regarded the ultimate issue as church union, but he soon distinguished and urged not “reunion” but
a new and larger unity that would comprehend the diversity of the universal church.

In his post-conference writing, Brent referred to himself as one “converted” at Edinburgh to be “an Apostle of Church Unity.” In that he enlarged the declared need in the Report on Cooperation and Unity “for apostles of unity.” But he did not refer to Faith and Order. His Diary records instead that in October 1910 at the early Eucharist on the opening day of the Convocation in Cincinnati of the Protestant Episcopal Church, there came to him “a conviction that a world conference should be convened to consider matters of faith and order.”

Yet before his death, J. H. Oldham insisted that Brent had raised the issue in the conference and added that faith and order, rightly excluded there, needed openly to be faced in another context. “I was naturally all ears, for I had been defending the basis for two years. . . . I cannot forget the speech.”

Oldham was conference secretary and editor of its volumes. How could he have omitted including that speech? Wardlaw Thompson made one very similar to what Oldham remembered. “The evangelization of the world in this generation,” was sufficient biblical warrant for world mission. Yet occasional state­

sion is God’s work, and the Spirit of God is the great Mission (Mt. 28:19-20) and its variants seemed to be regarded as and there such teachings and passages in their writings, which

Hindus teach, rather rejoice that for the heathen long ago a short, the theology of mission was not a focal point of concern.

Thompson cited Brent’s formal address and added that before he left Edinburgh, Brent told some friends that he planned to ask the stenographers’ verbatim reports were unequal and sometimes meager. Indeed, the strain of the conference required him to take a two-week rest immediately afterward, when the editing had to be rushed and handled by assistants in Oldham’s absence. “There will probably never be certainty about what Brent said at Edinburgh. I think that I know [that he made the speech] and that there is an adequate explanation of the absence of supporting evidence.”

Latourette accepted and affirmed Oldham’s view. Tissington Tatlow cited Brent’s formal address and added that before he left Edinburgh, Brent told some friends that he planned to ask his denomination to take the initiative for another world conference that would deal with faith and order. Edinburgh’s meaning in Brent’s drive for Faith and Order is clear. The precise details of origins there may be beyond our grasp.

5. Some Theological Dimensions

Edinburgh pursued survey and strategy for world mission and was hardly a “theological” conference. Yet theological assumptions and motifs were operative in it. Because of their importance and the widespread misconception that Edinburgh’s theological restriction meant no theology, several deserve noting.

First, the undergirding theology of mission was not in fact developed, but was taken for granted. It appeared in the reports and throughout the conference proceedings. The Great Commis­sion (Mt. 28:19–20) and its variants seemed to be regarded as sufficient biblical warrant for world mission. Yet occasional state­ments reflect a fuller theology informing mission. The world mission is God’s work, and “the Spirit of God is the great Missioner.” Only the living God and the Spirit empower mission through human instrumentalities.

Inevitably, the twenty-four-year-old watchword of the SVM, “The evangelization of the world in this generation,” was in the minds of many, but curiously was scarcely mentioned. In short, the theology of mission was not a focal point of concern.

Second, the relation of the gospel to other religions was a major theme. Two centuries before, in 1710, Ziegenbalg, the Halle Pietist in India, wrote of Hinduism: “I do not reject everything [the Hindus] teach, rather rejoice that for the heathen long ago a small light of the Gospel began to shine. . . . One will find here and there such teachings and passages in their writings, which are not only according to human reason but also according to God’s Word.” He stood, with reference to the spermatikos Logos, in the tradition of Justin Martyr, Clement, and Aquinas.

Moreover, similar affirmation of this theme appeared at Lon­don 1888. In a formal address a missionary from India declared that in Hinduism “every fragment of spiritual truth came from God.” This elicited spirited comment pro and con. New York 1900 heard similar expressions and with more voices pro than con, but all allowed that the Christian gospel stands unique.

For Edinburgh’s volume, The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions, nearly two hundred correspondents worldwide provided a massive amount of data and reflection. Distilled, these provided a handbook of 337 pages from a mission­

ary perspective on the major religions. Nothing like it had appeared before. It compared the early patristic world with that which amid encounter with living faiths its informants wrote. It noted the many close comparisons between Hinduism and “Hellenism.” Even its critics acknowledged the “true and eternal” in Hinduism. Despite the dangers of syncretism, “the risks must be undertaken.” With some guiding New Testament precedents, Christians can utilize certain Hindu forms for communication, but Hinduism is not a preparation for the gospel.

In sum, Edinburgh agreed on “two very notable points.” First, “the practically universal testimony” was that the mission­

ary’s attitude “to the non-Christian religions should be one of true understanding and . . . sympathy.” The proper “method is that of knowledge and charity.” These religions disclose “needs of the soul which Christianity alone can satisfy” and “in their higher forms they plainly manifest the working of the Spirit of God . . . . The merely iconoclastic attitude is condemned as radically unwise and unjust.”

Second, there yet appears “the universal and emphatic wit­ness to the absoluteness of the Christian faith.” Because of their conviction about Christianity, respondents could “take this more generous view of the non-Christian religions.”

Unfortunately, through mis-citing, Harry Sawyerr recently in the International Review of Mission has given a quite distorted view of what in fact Edinburgh believed about other religions. Edinburgh had studied the religions, was responsibly open to them, but was cautious in its statements. Jerusalem 1928 went considerably beyond it. Indeed, the substance of Jerusalem’s state­ment at many points and in remarkable fashion prefigures the Nostra Aetate (The Church and Non-Christian Religions) of Vatican II.

Third, the church “in the mission field” claimed major at­tention. The study was historical and documentary, but its theo­logical perception is significant. The chairman asked that all abandon the widely used but condescending phrase “the native church.” “We are no longer to be the leaders, but the allies of the Church of Christ in the Mission Field.” We must “rec­

ognize the enormous force that exists in the young Christian Church . . . which is itself now the great mission to the non-Christian world.”

That body “must be the chief evangelistic agency if the Gos­

pel is to be preached to all men in our day.” World evangelization belongs to the worldwide church. To the “Church in Non-Christian Lands” the conference declared: “You alone . . . can ultimately finish this work: the word that under God convinces your own people must be your word. . . . But we rejoice to be fellow helpers with you.”

Edinburgh uncovered the reality of the Asian and African churches. These churches and those of the West are reciprocally bound in life and witness. Despite its westernness, Edinburgh
Fourth, **Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity** led Edinburgh from the churches' missionary role to the importance of unity in fulfilling that mission.

Silas McBee, an American Episcopalian and editor of *The Churchman*, served as vice-chairman of Commission VIII. Oldham regarded McBee's shaping influence on Edinburgh as second only to that of Mott. The commission surveyed all forms of Christian cooperation in Asia, Africa, and the West. It charted efforts toward federation and progress in unions, assessed two dominant views of church union, and encouraged all movements toward church union on "the mission field."

The commission stated the goal of mission: "The supreme object of the missionary enterprise is to plant in the non-Christian countries the Church of Jesus Christ." As these churches grew, would they remain separate and isolated? Or rather, is it "not the aim of all missionary work to plant in each non-Christian nation one undivided Church of Christ?" These fundamental affirmations reflect much that had been said from Asia and Africa, and also a strong ecclesiastical concern and vision.

Mission and unity constitute "the concern of the whole Church." When it comes, that unity "must be something richer, grander, more comprehensive than anything which we can see at present." The commission urged comity, cooperation, and joint action and recommended creation of the Continuation Committee.

Mission involves the very life and nature of the church, and vigorously affirmative discussion supported the report. Having read again the Edinburgh volumes, the writer is impressed as never before with one fact: a strong sense of ecclesial reality permeated Edinburgh. Those present sensed, and revealed in what they said, that they were representatively concerned for the whole church in its mission. Edinburgh's ecclesiastical dimension for too long has gone unexamined.

**6. The Roman Catholics and the Orthodox**

Edinburgh's planners made no effort to involve Roman Catholics. They judged that Roman acceptance of an invitation would be impossible, but informally through McBee they provided notification. Orthodox missions were limited. Effective contacts with the Orthodox were so few that the planners did not attempt to include them, but within months Mott and McBee began to rectify that. The major accomplishment was winning the Anglo-Catholics, and for the moment that sufficed.

Nevertheless, at Edinburgh Anglicans, Congregationalists, and others voiced conviction that some day the Romans and the Orthodox must be included. Earlier, Silas McBee had visited and asked an old friend, Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona in Italy (one of the world's "great evangelical preachers," said McBee) to write a letter to the conference. This close friend of the pope did and, after circulating his letter widely in Italy with no criticism of it, sent it to McBee. It was irenic, supportive, and cordial. McBee read it to an amazed and pleased conference. Within five minutes a woman read another letter—appreciative and supportive—from a professor of theology in a Roman Catholic university. These events signaled the beginning of a decisively important tradition.

The Asian conferences of 1912–13, viewed as Edinburgh's second-stage extension, added another dimension. In India the metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church and three Mar Thoma representatives were delegates. In Japan, three Orthodox priests and Bishop Sergius, later patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin, were members. (Roman Catholics were invited to Panama 1916, but none accepted.)

Meanwhile, several notable developments occurred. Seven months after Edinburgh, Mott was in the Near East as chairman of the WSCF for its 1911 Constantinople Conference—a "milestone" and "the turning point in the ecumenical history of the Federation." Mott had brought McBee, and they met with the heads of all the Eastern churches. The ecumenical patriarch welcomed them and gave the conference his blessing.

Immediately prior to the meeting, the General Committee had opened WSCF membership to students from all Christian churches who accepted its basis and its evangelistic aim: "To lead students to become disciples of Jesus Christ as only Saviour and as God." In ecclesiastical breadth—Roman Catholic and Uniates, Orthodox in their several varieties, Anglicans, and Protestants—Constantinople 1911 had probably never been equaled. Present there were Nathan Soderblom and the young seminary dean, Germanos Strenopoulos, who in 1948 became one of the first presidents of the WCC.

That carefully planned preliminary travel to churches and leaders opened the way to Mott's continuing involvement with and for the Orthodox churches and helped to make it possible for them to be involved ecumenically from 1919 onward.

Mott returned to England for the 1911 Continuation Committee meeting, which authorized the *International Review of Missions* [Mission, April 1909ff.]. With Oldham as its editor, it began publication in 1912 and included articles by Roman Catholic writers and news briefs of Roman Catholic missions. Edinburgh 1910, Constantinople 1911, and the Asian conferences 1912–13 had projected a vision that embraced the whole church reaching out with the gospel for the whole world.

**7. The Road to the IMC, the WCC, and Larger Cooperation**

The story of the road from Edinburgh 1910 to the IMC (1921), and then on to the WCC (1948) has been told often and well. Numerous charts provide road maps of this journey familiar to all who read these pages. Edinburgh's Continuation Committee led to the constituting in 1921 of the IMC—a council of National Christian Councils. Integration occurred in 1961 at New Delhi when the IMC became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC. The road leads from there to Melbourne 1980.

Edinburgh's theological self-limitation gave birth to Faith and Order and also led inevitably to Amsterdam 1948. As the Edinburgh discussions on unity foretold, the IMC's existence required a World Council of Churches. Faith and Order carried its own name as a commission into the WCC.

Despite the charts, the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work did not root directly in Edinburgh 1910. Yet it shared in much of the Edinburgh tradition. Faith and Order, and Life and Work, with the IMC's constant collaboration, gave rise to the WCC. Edinburgh's impact continued.

One sidelight of this familiar history is seldom noted. From the end of World War I, the Orthodox had participated in the ecumenical gatherings. The Roman Catholics did not. The Protestant-Anglican-Orthodox side held a concerned openness toward Rome and invited Rome to attend Faith and Order. That group conveyed a formal invitation to Pope Benedict XV in May 1919, with negative results. Brent in May 1926 conversed with Pope Pius XI and certain members of the Curia about attendance at Lausanne. Sadly, he noted in his Diary that Rome would do...
nothing, and so all the others should move ahead, but "always leaving a door open" for Rome.50

For Life and Work, Söderblom viewed an ecumenical conference without Rome as a contradiction in terms. Yet from the Roman side the notion that the church could meet as a church with other churches in a council was also a contradiction. Correspondence in 1921 concerning Stockholm proved fruitless.51 The encyclical Mortalium Animos in January 1928 forbade Roman Catholics to participate in these meetings and movements.

Through Oxford 1937,52 Edinburgh 1937,53 and Amsterdam54 one finds continuing openness, unofficial Roman Catholic cooperation and even attendance, but a closed door in Rome. The 1950s proved to be a difficult period. Yet even Vatican II found itself shaped in part by the ecumenical reality outside Rome. The stream from Edinburgh 1910 through Faith and Order and the WCC represents a major factor in the totally new climate after 1965 between Rome and the rest of the world Christian community.

8. Edinburgh's Twentieth-Century Setting and Meaning

In this seventieth anniversary year of Edinburgh 1910, three conferences on world evangelization will meet.

The WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, when these words are read, will have assembled in May at Melbourne. Its theme, "Your Kingdom Come," attempts to discern authentic mission in today's interdependent world of change and vast new knowledge. The latter gives growing power to control and to shape life, but, as from the beginning of history, the same flaws and potential exist in the human nature of those exercising this new power. Many of them, perhaps most, in their perceptions of reality reject not only the Christian theological vocabulary, but also the central realities of faith it conveys. Yet in this odd new environment ancient religious faiths in new forms engage Christianity. In this setting what does responsible mission mean?

Several weeks later, in June, under the aegis of the Lausanne (1974) Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), a Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) with the theme "How Shall They Hear?" will have met at Pattaya, Thailand. Strategically, COWE is seeking to identify unreached and/or hidden peoples—Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, nominal Christians, those of traditional religions, and others—and enable them to hear the gospel.

Then, in October at Edinburgh another conference will convene, its membership determined by evangelical mission societies and agencies. Its stated eligibility requirements include those who hold to the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) or the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) positions or to the Lausanne Covenant. It will center on frontier missions, and its goal is a church for every people by A.D. 2000.

Melbourne, the lineal descendant of Edinburgh 1910, is focusing on the world in which the Word of God's kingdom must convey meaning. The LCWE has become "another" Continuation Committee, and COWE emphasizes its contribution "toward the evangelization of the world in this generation." Thus many view it as the spiritual descendant of Edinburgh. It points to specific groups needing evangelization. The third seeks to reproduce for today what Edinburgh 1910 was. Why these three? Why do they affirm seemingly different goals? Whatever the answers, obviously, each regards that meeting of seventy years ago important for today.

What meaning has Edinburgh 1910 for today? One response offers a reality and draws an analogy.

The reality is that in the post-Christendom age, Christians in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America now probably slightly outnumber those in the old "Christendom," and all Christians represent about 30 percent of the world's population.

Nearly everywhere those Christians confront growing encounters with old but renascent religions and current ideologies. They face the question of God's presence and work among all people. What does that mean for those covenanted to him in Jesus Christ? They confront the meaning of salvation—not of souls but of persons with souls and bodies and whose eternal life with God begins on earth now and for the sake of others.

Thus within the context of God's whole world, they must consider the nature of the church and the authority of the gospel. With the whole diverse human family represented in the church, those from different backgrounds see and emphasize different facets of God's truth conveyed in Jesus Christ.

The analogy lies with the fourth and fifth centuries, and with the great ecumenical councils from Nicea (325) through Chalcedon (451). At Nicea, Antioch through Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America now probably slightly outnumber those in the old Christendom, and all Christians represent about 30 percent of the world's population.

For Life and Work, Söderblom viewed an ecumenical conference without Rome as a contradiction in terms. Yet from the Roman side the notion that the church could meet as a church with other churches in a council was also a contradiction. Correspondence in 1921 concerning Stockholm proved fruitless. The encyclical Mortalium Animos in January 1928 forbade Roman Catholics to participate in these meetings and movements.

Through Oxford 1937, Edinburgh 1937, and Amsterdam one finds continuing openness, unofficial Roman Catholic cooperation and even attendance, but a closed door in Rome. The 1950s proved to be a difficult period. Yet even Vatican II found itself shaped in part by the ecumenical reality outside Rome. The stream from Edinburgh 1910 through Faith and Order and the WCC represents a major factor in the totally new climate after 1965 between Rome and the rest of the world Christian community.

8. Edinburgh's Twentieth-Century Setting and Meaning

In this seventieth anniversary year of Edinburgh 1910, three conferences on world evangelization will meet.

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They confront the reality of other religions, and show that the ancient division between Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian (shelved during the Christendom epoch) reemerges as a burning issue. They wrestle with questions of authority and the working of God's Spirit. In the degree to which the foregoing is true, it may point to the significance of Edinburgh 1910 for today. That assembly appears to stand as the first great representative gathering in a new counciliar period of Church history. The ensuing councils, with all their diversity, seek the meaning of covenant obedience for the whole church amid all the people of God's oikoumene. They search for strength and truth in the tensioned oneness of apparent differences. They press toward that kingdom in which reaching agape made visible for all God's children on earth is God's truth.

Notes


See also:


14. For all the above, see Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations, chap. 2.


25. WMC, 8:198-99. The index omits Brent's name.


29. WMC, 8:215-16.


32. Ibid., pp. 406-7. In his 1960 letter, Oldham noted that such would have been possible, but that he had no recollection of it. Allowing for the "extraordinary tricks that memory can play," he reaffirmed his conviction that Brent had declared his vision, without organizational details, in public session.

33. WMC, 1:351.

34. WMC, 1:351ff.

35. Professor Mirbt: The Germans can "not join in [the Watchword]" (WMC, 9:217).


39. In this area of interpretation, one notes Arthur P. Johnston's World Evangelism and The Word of God (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1974) and The Battle for World Evangelism (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1974) as defined by the Reformation" (World Evangelism, p. 16, cf. Battle, p.49). Johnston seems to stand in the tradition of the Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675), the Hodges, and Warfield. He holds that Edinburgh replaced the authority of Scripture with that of Christ (World Evangelism, p. 117). Another key theme in both books holds that London 1888 and New York 1900 were evangelical, but that Edinburgh 1910 was ecumenical and brought the downfall of evangelism by including in it social concern. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization now seems to be following the same dangerous route (Battle, pp. 346ff.). Detailed examination is pointless; but one notes that "Oldham" at New York 1900 (World Evangelism, pp. 107, 124 n. 82; Battle, p. 383 n. 51), is not J. H. Oldham, as one is allowed to infer, but W. F. Oldham from India.
27. *WMC*, vol. 4.
32. “The First World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh 1910,” *IRM*, July 1978, p. 271. He quotes Gairdner correctly, but applies the view of other religions as “absolute error and masterful pieces of hell’s invention” to the conference (!) rather than to those from whom Edinburgh’s delegates had distanced themselves, which was Gairdner’s intention. Unhappily several other mis-citations or errors flaw an otherwise useful article.
38. Wilhelm Andersen’s *Towards a Theology of Mission: A Study of the Encounter between the Missionary Enterprise and the Church and Its Theology* (London: SCM, 1955) is a splendid little book. Its basic thesis is true, namely, that between 1910 and 1952 the missionary enterprise increasingly encountered the church, through which process emerged a theology of mission. Yet Andersen totally overlooks the new ground that was taken at Edinburgh and erroneously denies the above evidence (cf. Andersen, pp. 17–18).
56. Some may argue that Vatican I should be first in this new age of councils. Yet a stronger argument suggests that it is the second and last of the Tridentine councils.
Mission in the 1980s

Lesslie Newbigin

The Editor has asked for an article on “Issues for Mission in the 1980s.” I am no prophet. There is a vast area of discussion and I do not know what will appear to have been the crucial issue when we come to look back on the decade now beginning. Contemporary “trends” are—I think—unreliable guides. All I can attempt is to pick up one of the contemporary issues and suggest some of the new questions that I think need to be asked.

I take, then, the contemporary debate about “contextualization.” No proof is needed for the statement that this is a live issue. The word itself, if I understand rightly, arose from the recognition that the older words such as “adaptation” and “indigenization” were misleading. The former implied that the message brought by the missionary is the unadapted gospel, the pure truth unadulterated by any cultural admixture. The latter tended to direct attention to the traditional elements in the receptor cultures and to seek to interpret the gospel through these, often at a time when the people concerned were in fact turning away from these traditions. The intention of the word “contextualization”—if I understand it rightly—was to point to the insertion of the gospel into the living situation of the people concerned so that it was related to the living questions that they were asking, not so much about the past as about the future.

Why has the debate about contextualization become so intense? I suppose that it is because of the recognition that the cultural dominance of the old “Christendom” can no longer be assumed. Among the peoples of Asia and Africa, recovering their confidence in their own cultures and shaking off the suffocating power that was exercised by the culture of the Western nations during and after the colonial period, Christians become aware of the extent to which the gospel has been presented in a purely Western form and seek to find their own ways of grasping it in the terms of their own cultures. Among the churches of the Western world there is a corresponding recognition of the fact that the gospel is not communicated at all unless the culture of the receptor people is taken far more seriously than it often was in the “Great Century” of missions.

All this is familiar, and in repeating it I am merely pointing to a vast jungle of complex problems—problems about hermeneutics, about communication theory, about the relation of the gospel to history, about law and gospel, and about many other things. I only want to draw attention to two points at which I think the discussion needs to take a new direction. The first is a relatively minor point, which I mention without developing; the second is the one on which I want to focus.

The first point is this. The debate about contextualization among the churches of the Third World is understandably dominated by the struggle to break free from the embrace of Western ideas. It is carried on (necessarily) by those who have themselves thoroughly mastered the Western traditions in theology, having been trained in the leading universities and seminaries of the West. The Third World theology, which has become a desirable addition to the libraries of the West, is all written in European languages and addressed to those who live and move in the world of thought that that implies. But there is also another kind of Third World theology—namely, that which is being continuously produced in the languages of the churches of the Third World—in the form of preaching, catechesis, song, story, and drama. The volume of this material is very great, but it is rarely translated into the languages of Europe. Yet it represents the real fruit of the day-by-day struggle of the Christians of these lands to interpret the gospel to their contemporaries.

My point here is that there is often very little contact between these two kinds of Third World theology. Working in different languages, they seldom meet. Yet they imperatively need each other. The first without the second can become essentially a negative protest against the Western tradition rather than a real communication of the gospel to the peoples of the Third World. The second without the first can become static and irrelevant, encapsulated within the theological categories of a former era.

I am happy to note that the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (Bangalore) has begun serious study of some of the Christian poets who have written in the Indian languages, and there may well be analogous moves in other areas of which I am unaware. It will always be extremely difficult to bring the insights of this “vernacular” Third World theology into the mainstream of the ecumenical debate, but without it that debate will be beating the air. The only way in which it can be done is by the kind of initiative that has been taken in Bangalore, and which I hope will be carried much further.

My second point is, however, the one that I wish to develop, and it is this. Western missiologists are debating with intense earnestness the questions that arise from the effort to “contextualize” the gospel in all the cultures of humankind from Peru to Papua. I do not find an effort of comparable intensity to wrestle with the question of contextualization in the contemporary culture of the West. Yet it is the West that ought to be giving missiologists their most worrying questions. It is in the West that the church appears to be continuously losing ground. It is typically the product of Western “enlightened” culture to whom the gospel appears irrelevant nonsense. Yet one does not find (at least in my limited reading) that missiologists are giving the same intense and sustained attention to the problem of finding the “dynamic equivalent” for the gospel in Western society as they are giving to that problem as it occurs in the meeting with peoples of the Third World.

Here let me confess that (inevitably) I am reflecting on my own experience. After a lifetime spent in India I now struggle with the problem of communicating the gospel in the comfortable suburb of an English city. And, from this angle, I am bound to reflect with some wry amusement on the anxiety shown by some of my missiological friends about the danger that the churches of the Third World should be led by their eagerness for contextuality into the morasses of syncretism. What is obvious...
to a returned missionary is that English Christianity is a prime example of syncretism. Christianity as practiced in most of our churches does not call in question the basic assumptions of the normal Englishman. Christians are not distinguishable as people who obviously live by different commitments from their neighbors. And I should doubt whether it is normal on the other side of the water to find that the churches are regarded as centers of "un-American activities!"

That great interpreter of the gospel to Hindus, A. G. Hogg, died too soon to learn the blessed word "contextualization," but he spent his life doing what that word intends. He summed up the essentials of the matter in the phrase "challenging relevance." The gospel must be heard as relevant. It must speak of things that are real things in the lives of the hearers. It must therefore begin by accepting their issues, using their models, and speaking their language. But relevance alone is not enough. The gospel must at the same time challenge the whole world-view of its hearers. It must cause them to question things that they have never questioned. It must bring them to the place where they hear spoken to their whole world of understanding and experience that word of grace and judgment which marks the end of one world and the beginning of another, a death and a new birth.

How can the church become the bearer of that word of grace and judgment for the Western culture with which it has lived so long in an almost total identification? That, to my mind, is the most pressing missiological issue for the next decade. For centuries the churches in the West have seen themselves as the guards and sustainers of the culture of which they have been a part. They have not—in general—seen themselves as the bearers of God's judgment upon this culture. If they had done so, they would have learned again that "challenging relevance" means, in the end, suffering, and that suffering is the fundamental form of Christian witness (marturia).

From a missiological point of view, it seems to me that one of the most significant facts of the contemporary world is the fact that the churches in the USSR (Orthodox, Baptist, and Pentecostal) are not only continuing to exist but are winning converts to Christ out of a society dedicated to a totally secular and atheist view of humankind. This seems to be the only part of the Western world in which the church is not losing ground but gaining it. And it is significant that the witness of Russian Christians has been and is conformed precisely to that which the New Testament indicates as the essential form of witness—that endurance of rejection and suffering which comes from bearing witness to the truth in the face of the lie.

The Stalinist form of Marxism represents an extreme development of that view of humankind and the world which, in the period that we call (significantly) the Enlightenment, replaced the Christian view as the dominant model by which Western people undertook to understand and manage their affairs. The Enlightenment took the autonomous reason of human beings to be the bearer of their history, and therefore saw the Christian tradition as a bondage from which people had to be delivered. Looking back over the three centuries that have passed, we see that while the churches struggle to retain their traditional hold upon Western society, they lost the struggle and retreated into the private sector where they could exist without challenging the cultus publicus, which rules in the world of public affairs. The traditional machinery, which had sought to impose some sort of ethical rules upon economic life, were dismantled in the name of human freedom and the era of the "free market" began, in which everyone was free to pursue one's own interests with the maximum of enterprise and the "invisible hand" would ensure that all worked for the common good. Marxism represents the revolt of the victims of this ideology while remaining within the general world-view of the Enlightenment. It has seen even a privatized religion as a threat to the perfection of humankind and has therefore forced the churches into the position where they have to choose between compromise and suffering. Insofar as they have chosen the latter, they have become places where the promised witness of the Holy Spirit is being given so powerfully as to "convict the world."

Churches under the capitalist system have not been forced to make this choice. They have been seduced into compromise. The capitalist system, placing self-interest at the center of the entire philosophy of society, is no less total a contradiction of the gospel than Marxism. But the churches of the West have accepted for so long the position of tolerated beneficiaries of the system that they have almost lost the power to question it. In the effort to be "relevant" to the "modern world," they have almost lost the power to challenge it. And the forms of Christian teaching and example that they have carried to the rest of the world have been deeply imbued with values derived not from the gospel but from the post-Enlightenment ideology of the Western world.

Now, however, we are in a new situation. Western society is showing every sign of disintegration. Its claim to be the bearer of "enlightenment" to the rest of the world is rejected with growing violence. The church has become a genuinely worldwide society in which powerful voices can and do speak the Word of God to Western Christians from standpoints in other cultures. I think that the Western churches are now challenged to a fresh and urgent examination of the relation of the gospel to Western culture. It is here that the problem of contextualization is most urgent. An enormous amount of Western theology has been occupied with the question of restating the gospel in terms of "modern thought." But this can be done in two ways. It can be done by those who take "modern thought" as providing the fundamental models and axioms into which the gospel has to be fitted. Or it can be done in a truly missionary way: standing within the tradition of Christian faith, worship, and discipleship, taking the biblical axioms and models as fundamental, it can seek to bring the word of judgment and grace to bear upon the whole world that comes to expression in "modern thought." I am not advocating a biblicist fundamentalism; fundamentalism and liberalism are twin products of Enlightenment rationalism. I am speaking about something that is known in practical experience, a kind of discipleship that is open at the same time to Western culture and to the testimony of Christians in other cultures, and which is totally committed to obedience to Jesus as he leads us along the way of the cross. It is in that kind of discipleship that the promise of the Holy Spirit is given both to convict the world and to guide the church into the truth.

The church that practices this kind of contextualization will not be a strong and "successful" church. It will be a church that is spoken against. It will be seen as a threat to the powers that rule society. But it will be a witnessing church in the fundamental meaning of that word. I hope that the great work that has been done during the last decade in exploring the meaning of contextualization in relation to non-Western cultures may, in the decade now beginning, enable us to undertake with comparable energy and seriousness the exploration of the problem of contextualization in relation to the powerful paganism of our Western world.
Contours of the Reformed Understanding of Christian Mission: An Attempt at Delineation

Jerald D. Gort

Before proceeding to the main burden of this paper, an attempt to sketch the main lines of a Reformed apprehension of Christian mission, it would, I believe, be useful to try to formulate an acceptable, broadly stated definition of Christian mission itself (i.e., without any qualifying terms) from which to take our departure. This will be followed by a section dealing with a number of salient issues of Reformed theology having an important bearing on mission. The third part of the essay represents an attempt to state the Reformed understanding of mission—or perhaps less presumptuously, this Reformed writer’s perception thereof. The final section treats of the role and function of missiology.

I

The simplest, most general definition of Christian mission that I can think of is the coming of God to people. But it is doubtful whether with this barest of statements one is speaking of Christian mission rather than of something that is virtually synonymous with the concept “salvation.” A definition of mission in history must include the element of human as well as divine instrumentality, the facet of missio hominis as well as that of missio Dei.

The coming of God to people through his disciples brings us nearer but not quite all the way to the goal of finding a proper definition of Christian mission. For as it stands, this particular wording could be understood as including the pastoral care of the believing community, liturgical worship, and so forth. To avoid confusion we need a definition that distinguishes mission from pastorate.

One might perhaps settle for the liberating coming of God in Christ to people through his disciples brings us nearer but not quite all the way to the goal of finding a proper definition of Christian mission. For as it stands, this particular wording could be understood as including the pastoral care of the believing community, liturgical worship, and so forth. To avoid confusion we need a definition that distinguishes mission from pastorate.

And proceed we must, of course, since the terms of a highly condensed formula such as this one obviously require to be spelled out in much greater detail. But because it is one’s specific theological legacy that provides the colors and composition of such further elaboration, it is necessary, first, to attempt a brief articulation of what it is in Reformed thinking that has a direct and central bearing on its understanding of mission.

II

As my former teacher Fred H. Klooster recently pointed out in a very cogent and helpful article, it has proved impossible for scholars up until the present time to isolate any one central theme which could convincingly be said to integrate either all of Calvin’s thought or Reformed theology as a whole. If there is anything like a golden thread running through the Reformed tradition, he argues, it is one of a basic, prior stance rather than one of a doctrinal nature: namely, “allegiance to the Scriptural principle,” fidelity to the “whole of Scripture” (toti Scriptura), and “Scripture alone” (sola Scriptura).

Thus, instead of seeking one unifying key theme, one ought to think in terms of several parallel distinctive emphases of Reformed thought, all of which were developed within the framework of a presuppositional conviction that Scripture is the only truly eye-opening source and final norm for faith and order, and life and work.

A number of these distinctive emphases have played and continue to play a key role in shaping Reformed thinking in respect of the Christian missionary task. It is to them that we must now direct our attention, without thereby losing sight, however, of the fundamental commitment to the scriptural principle referred to, which having exercised a deeply formative influence on the Reformed attitude toward human history and culture, is in and of itself of singular import for the Reformed conception of mission.

1. Knowledge of God and Knowledge of Humankind

It may fairly be said that in Reformed thinking theology begins with three basic questions: Who is God? Who is humankind (what is the world)? How are they related? The order in which these questions are put is an essentially indifferent matter, for an answer to the one is not possible without an answer to the other. True knowledge of humankind is unattainable without knowledge of the living God. And conversely, genuine knowledge of God is impossible without knowledge of humankind. In like manner, the answer to the question of the relationship between God and human (world) is simultaneously dependent upon and presupposed by the answers to the other two questions. Where can such answers be found? For Reformed theology the answers in their deepest essence are revealed with special—indeed unique and unsurpassable—authority and normativity in Scripture.

There we discover that God and human are related in and through creation, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and parousia. These are not to be viewed as isolated, discrete events occurring at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of time, but as profoundly interrelated turning points, connected historical moments of nonpareil decisiveness in the ongoing, never-ending, intense involvement of heaven with earth and earth with heaven. They teach us all that is basically necessary for us to know about both God and humankind. They teach us
that humankind's relationship to God is one of desperate, life-and-death ambiguity, and that left to oneself, one will perversely a life without God. They teach us of beatific acceptance of condemnation of obedience for the imprisonment of rebellion; of the salvific power of faith, hope, and love traded off for the chains of doubt, despair, and hatred; of the blessedness of trust turned in for the ensnarement of suspicion, the release of reconciliation for the bondage of guilt.

And this rejection of God by human beings is dreadfully reflected in the condition humaine. Each individual human life and the whole of collective human life are shot through with the evil consequences of the perversity of human choice.

But this is not the end of the story, for those same historical moments of world- and time-encompassing efficacy also teach us that things can be and surely will be radically different. The lifegiving and liberating breathing of the triune God in creating and re-creating the world and humankind has not been extinguished. God's faithful commitment to the work of his hands is unconditional, and his gracious saving activity in the actual world of human history is unending. God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit has provided and offers the unfailingly powerful means whereby human life, both personal and communal, and all human relationships, both small and large, can be transformed; whereby the human condition can be changed to one of peace, justice, righteousness, and love. This is the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, the gospel of the messianic kingdom of God (basileia tou Theou).

2. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

The emphasis on the kingdom has always been very much at the center of Reformed thinking. Briefly put, the New Testament concept of the gospel of the kingdom is understood as God's announcement of total human salvation through the reestablishment of his liberating rule in the earth. This kingdom gospel has, in the Reformed view, direct application to every single aspect of human life and living: religious, cultural, social, economic, and political. It applies to individual persons but also to the micro- and macrostructures created by people to organize their life in the world; it applies to the inner but also to the outer life of human beings. Its concern is with the relief not only of the spiritual but also of the physical burdens of men, women, and children. It has to do with the forgiveness of sins but also with the sanctification of life, with the restoration of the relationship between God and human, but also with the setting right of relations between individuals, between people and the surrounding natural world, between the sexes and generations, the nations and races.

Reformed theology does not permit of a division of the world of human reality into two totally unrelated, irreconcilable realms of church and state, religion and politics, the spiritual and the material. Such a division, consistently followed through, leads inevitably to a basic indifference toward and often unrelieved pessimism with regard to human life in the world. On this construction of things the world is perceived as the realm of darkness, doomed to pass away utterly. And salvation in this life is conceived in purely spiritual terms. Only part of salvation is now available; it can be obtained wholly only in the next life. Therefore, any directly Christian attempt to change the existing order is useless and, worse, even pernicious. Only individuals are transformable by the gospel. At best such individuals might be able to leaven society in incidental ways, but present human society as such remains essentially unalterable.

In the Reformed view this interpretation of things is tantamount to a denial of biblical teaching regarding creation, humankind, and the saving work of Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth. God has not abandoned his creation. On Golgotha he uttered a terrible "No!" it is true, but in the incarnation and resurrection and ultimately also in the crucifixion a resounding, lifegiving "Yes!" Moreover, human beings are indivisibly whole; and the salvation of the gospel of the kingdom is likewise whole, pertaining here and now to the totality of human life and not only to part of it. Salvation obtains not only for a person's "heavenly" soul but also for one's "earthly" body. Avowedly, there is more to heaven than earth; but most assuredly, there is also more to earth than heaven.

This is of course by no means to say that our salvation is complete or full in this life. Though whole in its breadth and total in its range, it will be fully attained only at the consummation of history when Christ returns to usher in the new order of things in its replete richness. There will be, thus, no new, additional miracles of salvation in heaven but, instead, the glorious fulfillment of that which Christ has already powerfully and wholly wrought for us in this life; the exciting completion in depth and degree of the kingdom, which in him is nigh, has come, is at hand. Paul did not write: "Now I know in part; then I shall know in whole," but rather: "Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully." Clearly, his frame of reference here is a qualitative rather than a quantitative one.

3. Gospel and Law

Closely connected with this kingdom emphasis, and thus also of signal importance for the understanding of mission, is the Reformed conception of the relationship of gospel and law. According to the lights of Reformed thought there is a vital relationship between the two in both the Old and New Dispensations. It is not true that the gospel has superseded the law, destroyed it or made it of no account.

The New Covenant does represent, however, a radical turning of the tables on this relationship. The latter has been drastically altered from what it was in the Old Dispensation before the coming of the Messiah. In him the law is fulfilled; in and through him its locus and function have been changed. It is no longer something written on stone, external to and hanging above human beings, something by which they live—impelled by the threat of the destruction of death—to save their lives. In Christ the law is written internally in the hearts of believers, is something by which they live—empowered by the gift of life—to complete the death of destruction. In the New Covenant the gospel is not the progeny of law but, rather, law is the fruit of the gospel. Right living is no longer creative of salvation but salvation of right living. Faith is enabling of works, and works are the lifeblood of faith. Liberation is the vehicle of law, and law the motor of liberation.

Thus, though altered radically, the relationship between gospel and law remains, for Reformed theology, very much in force. In the Reformed position, theology and ethics belong together; in fact, it may legitimately be said that theology is ethics, and ethics theology. Ethics without theology is at best a form of humanist messianism, which ultimately can never be trusted because it trusts not the Ultimate One. But the converse is equally noxious: theology without ethics is essentially narcissistic and in the end misanthropic. No Reformed theologian could ever share Luther's musings on the desirability of removing the book of James from the canon.

From the Reformed position ethics are viewed in terms of the kingdom. Without this kingdom emphasis, ethics can only
There is less agreement, however, on the question as to which righteousness or at most interpersonal relationships alone; social briefly to be examined:

foundly affect one's perception of and attitude toward history other key emphases of Reformed theology, which thus also require

lationship with the established order and is not entirely free
erthics of the messianic kingdom of God, that is, they reach into

ethics are precluded. To the Reformed mind Christian ethics are

and touch upon every aspect and all the manifold relationships of human life.

4. Semper Reformanda, Theologia Crucis, the Scriptural Principle

A fourth distinctive theme to be mentioned in connection with this discussion is that of semper reformanda, the principle of continuous reformation. This theme has its roots in at least two other key emphases of Reformed theology, which thus also require briefly to be examined: theologia crucis, and the Scriptural principle.

a. Theologia crucis. All Christian theology, of course, shares the conviction that the work of Jesus Christ is at the center of God’s never-ending saving activity on behalf of humanity. There is less agreement, however, on the question as to which of the elements of that work is the midstmost turning point of salvation history. The theological choice in this matter will profoundly affect one’s perception of and attitude toward history and the world. Incarnation theology in its most consistent expression, for example, can quite easily lead to a fairly cozy relationship with the established order and is not entirely free from the danger of engendering a reactionary stance with respect to the status quo.

Reformed theology has always striven to be a theology of the cross. It is in and through the crucified Lord that God says both “No!” and “Yes!” to the world. Both of these utterances from the crown of Golgotha are unconditionally definitive and must, therefore, be taken in full seriousness. It is true that God’s “Yes!” is in principle the final word, resting in Jesus Christ’s atoning victory once for all over sin and death and in the establishment, through him, of the New Creation. That is why in the Reformed view it is impermissible to assume an attitude of indifference or antagonism toward or pessimism in regard to the world of human life. If God is not indifferent, how can his disciples be? Is the servant greater than the Master?

But it is also true that the dreadful thunder of God’s “No!” has not yet died away, for there is much in this world of ours, great blocs of human life that remain in bondage to the forces of evil and the powers of darkness, forming thereby a pertinacious denial of the messianic kingdom. According to Reformed thinking this too must be taken into account in the assessment of the present world.

b. The scriptural principle. We need not dwell long here on this particular emphasis, since it has already been described above. In the present context it is important to add only that the scriptural principle represents Reformed theology’s prior commitment to the transcendent authority of God the Creator and Savior. There is only one Lord, and all human thought and activity is measured by and must be conformed to his will, which is revealed in his Word. As the first thesis of the Ten Conclusions of Bern (1528) puts it: “The holy Christian Church, whose only head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, and abides in the same, and listens not to the voice of a stranger.”

c. Semper reformanda. As a consequence of these two emphases, Reformed thinking—at any rate in its more consistent manifestations—assumes a critical stance vis-à-vis the authorities, prescriptions, traditions, institutions, and ideological predilections of the existing world order, as well as all historical occurrences that take place exclusively within its confines. Any of these that prove to be merely of the present order, that is, that are in-

compatible with the constitution of the messianic kingdom, are subject to the principle of ongoing renewal and transformation.

This principle, which has played an important role in Reformed thinking from the very beginning, was used not only in connection with the church (ecclesia reformata semper reformanda) but also in terms of the whole of human society and culture (semper societas reformanda). The gospel demands the conversion and sanctification not only of individuals in their spiritual and daily life but also of the church and society. The Evangel requires the renewal of political, economic, and cultural structures and institutions—not just any renewal, however, but one that can stand up to testing on the touchstone of the liberating promises of the gospel and law of God in Christ.

III

In this present section we shall attempt to sketch the contours of the understanding of mission that emerges from the distinctive concepts and key elements of Reformed theology discussed above.

I should like to argue for the adoption of the gospel of the messianic kingdom of God as the central, integrating theme, the cutting edge, the heart and perspective, the beginning and end of Christian mission. This kingdom perspective constrains us to view mission in the following manner.

1. The missionary task is as coherent, broad, and deep as the need and exigencies of human life. The gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of the total liberation of men, women, and children from all bondages and enslavements of whatever nature, in all times and places. As life is one and whole, so also is salvation one and whole. And this cohesion and comprehensiveness of God’s salvation and humankind’s necessity imply the cohesion and comprehensiveness of Christian mission. The interpretation of the missionary task in light of the kingdom allows of no divisions or separating distinctions between spiritual and material, here and there, now and then, mission and evangelism.

2. Mission is in the deepest sense God’s mission, not ours. It would be both foolish and pernicious to think that we could bring about the kingdom. The kingdom does not belong to us; it is Christ’s. He instituted it, is realizing it, and will usher in its final manifestation in his own predestined time. He is the Liberator, who is engaged in the transformation of the whole of creation, in the bringing of his side of the New Covenant to successful issue.

His activity is not limited to the church but is oriented toward and centered on the whole world. Nor is he limited by the church’s activity—or by the lack of it. He alone determines his coming and going: the Spirit listeth where it will. Thus it is incumbent upon his people to be thoroughly open to the discovery of the operation of God’s Spirit in “strange” places, to follow him where he leads and find him where he is. Mission belongs to God.

3. At the same time, however, he calls the people of the New Covenant to carry out their side of it, to participate and share in his salvific work, to become fully associated in his liberation campaign. “It is Christ’s business to effect the transformation of society, but He enlists us to the watchful and prompt pursuit of that transformation,” in the words of Verkuyl. Thus, though belonging to God, mission is definitely the business of the church. Mission is, in a derivative sense, also missio ecclesiae.

Being derived from the missio Dei, the church’s mission is— or at least ought to be—carried out naturally, joyfully, humbly, cooperatively, hopefully, trustingly, confidently, passionately, and unquestioningly. This means that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as missionary obligation, no obligation depending upon personal inclination or circumstances, no obligation inhering in ecclesiastical position or even in those words of Christ in Matthew

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Mission is simply a natural part of the church’s being, an ineluctable given of its very creation, a direct result of the mighty act of God that brought it into existence: the visitation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. For the congregation of Jesus Christ, mission is not a subject for discussion but the very stuff of its corporate life. And if the concept of constraint, in one or another form, is to be used at all in terms of the missionary task of Christians, it must be understood in the sense of the constraint of their existence as people of the New Covenant.

The consequences of this are clear. For one thing, the missionary task of the Covenant Congregation must be carried out not only at certain times by certain groups or certain individuals but by the whole People of God, by all the members of that Covenant, wherever and whenever in the world they live and work. In like manner, missionary endeavor is not a prerogative of only certain churches or denominations in certain lands and continents but of all churches everywhere. Spontaneous expression of their life in mission and their life-in-mission belongs fully and equally to all churches. Simply put, every congregation has given the glorious freedom to live its life. Moreover, the task of mission must be fulfilled by the whole church in every part of the world in complete, unquestioned mutuality. In fact, mutuality is in and of itself a cardinal aspect of mission, for the great unfinished task confronting the Gathered of Christ is incapable of fulfillment without the combined resources of the whole oikos tou Theou, the full ecumenical church.

Making use of the various insights, concerns, and emphases discussed above, we may now attempt a fuller statement of mission from the Reformed point of view. Formally speaking it is the use of the whole body of believers by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as agents in his once-for-all yet ongoing, ever-constant yet ever-renewed liberating advent and epiphany to and among people everywhere who no longer know or have never known him and his liberating power, until the feast of his final coming and appearing in fulgent glory. Or if one prefers to have it put more briefly, Christian mission is the communication of the gospel of kingdom liberation by believers to those who have forgotten or have never heard it. Our task is not yet completed, however, for it is not sufficient to state what mission is in a merely formal sense; we must now go on to a more programmatic definition of it.

The material content of the missionary task is correlated precisely to that of human exigency and of the liberation wrought and offered by God in Christ: the elements of the one are exactly parallel to the elements of the other two. For this reason the term “communication” as used in the definition above must be understood in a broad sense as including both word and deed, both speech and action, both announcement and incarnation. Communication of the gospel in this sense leads to an understanding of the Christian missionary task which includes the following facets.

a. Kerygma. The deepest need of human beings is that of liberation from the devastations of rebellion against God and the cumulative guilt resulting from that rebellion, of the agonizing anxiety attendant on the awareness of the true meaning and significance of mortality, of the deeply troubling fear of death. It is the task of mission to proclaim the Good News of forgiveness and absolution, of new life which begins now and continues beyond the grave with Christ in the New Jerusalem. In light of this most profound of human exigencies it would be grossly inhuman and also unpardonably treasonous if, as ambassadors of God’s glorious kingdom, we failed to name the Name of the King, if we neglected to urge men and women to let themselves be set free from these enslavements through acceptance of and allegiance to the Crucified and Risen One.

b. Koinonia. People also need to be released from the chains of loneliness and alienation, from the purposelessness and meaninglessness of their lives. Here, too, there is a clear and pressing task for the missionary Congregation of Christ. People must be told the Good News that in Christ all walls of division have been broken down. They must be invited to the new communion and fellowship of those who have committed themselves to the King and to the service of his kingdom, and who live in joyful anticipation of his and its final appearing.

c. Diakonia. The bitingly acute individual physical and material needs of huge numbers of our fellow human beings in this world must also be at the very center of missionary concern. Jesus saw in the multitudes around him the sick and diseased, the blind and the halt, the poor and the needy, the dumb and the deaf, the hungry and thirsty; and he went and stood next to them and gave them bread, healing, liberation (Lk. 4:18-21; Mt. 11:2-5). He took their side, identified himself with them and their suffering; for that reason he was sent, that was his mission. Surely the bearers of his gospel of liberation, the community of those who in partaking of the bread and the wine enter into communion with, are equipped for sharing in, and signal and seal their participatory filling up of the suffering of Christ in the world—surely, these can do no less in carrying out their missionary task.

d. The struggle for justice and righteousness. Hundreds of millions of people in our day are enslaved within the stifling confines of unjust economic, social, political, and cultural structures. As we learn in no uncertain terms from the scriptural prophetic tradition, injustice and human exploitation is a form of unrighteousness and sin that is particularly offensive to God. It is a form of evil at which his wrath knows no bounds, for it is the most profound perversion imaginable of what he intends and purposes for his creation, the most banefully wicked denial of the designs of his kingdom. The gospel of that kingdom applies as directly to these local, national, and international macrostructural enslavements as it does to any other form of human bondage.

On that account, the search and struggle for liberation at this level also belongs directly and indisputably to the Christian missionary task. The prophetic demands and the promises of the kingdom must be fearlessly and importunately witnessed to before the rulers and governors of this age, at the seats of earthly power: in the palaces of kings and dictators; the headquarters of generals; the chambers of legislators and judges; the boardrooms of industry, commerce, and finance; the halls of education and learning.

All four of these aspects belong directly and fully to the missionary life of the congregations of Jesus Christ. There is no a priori answer to the question of priorities in regard to them. Which of them, or whether any of them should take precedence over the others is a purely hermeneutical question: the fixing of priorities depends entirely on analysis and understanding of the given context in which mission takes place.

Moreover, as Harvie Conn reminds us in speaking of the “hermeneutical obligations of the Gospel,” this determination of the character of the missionary situation is a duty constrained on us by the Evangel itself, for the gospel wishes above all to be “missioned,” that is, communicated. And communication requires not only comprehension of the text but also apprehension of the context. This is one of the important points at which missiology can be of service. We shall now look briefly at its role and function.

IV

Missiology, in my opinion, has two major tasks: a hermeneutical and a missionary one.
The next general meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies will be held in Bangalore, India, January 4-12, 1982, sponsored by IAMS at the same site. Further information about the theme, program, and other arrangements will be sent to members in the IAMS Newsletter. Save the dates!

kingdom Evangel will be determined through the application of the kingdom ethic of self-denying service and unconditional love for the other to the specific needs of the receivers. With regard to this latter, the matter of missionary approach, it ought to be clear that the means employed in the communication of the transforming and liberating power of the gospel must themselves be genuinely transforming and liberating in character. Methods that alienate people, destroy their lives, shed their blood, maim and kill them—even in a figurative, cultural sense—belong not to the New Order of Christ but to the demonic kingdom of powers of darkness.

Notes

2. Ibid., p. 39.
3. Quoted from Klooster, p. 41.
5. Ibid.
8. See Conn, "Contextualization."
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The Legacy of Duncan Black Macdonald

J. Jermain Bodine

Although he is primarily known as a scholar in the fields of Islamic theology and religious experience, Duncan Black Macdonald began his long career at the Hartford Theological Seminary as an instructor of Semitic languages in the Department of Exegetical Theology. His appointment came as the result of a series of coincidences and tragedies, since he was appointed to replace an American student from Hartford who died while studying in Germany—as was Macdonald at the time. While he is remembered as a scholar engaged in the training of missionaries for service in Muslim lands, he himself never served as an American historian of science and founder-editor of the journal Isis, Macdonald says, “It is my greatest merit as an Orientalist that I discovered that you could smuggle Muslim studies into a theological seminary under the guise of training missionaries.”

In a review of Macdonald’s three books on Islam, The Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam, and Aspects of Islam, W. H. T. Gairdner remarks:

In the two former [books] he had written about Islam with complete objectivity. In writing them he had not its relation to Christianity in mind, and apparently, therefore, he had preferred to keep absolutely clear of all comparisons between the two faiths of whatever sort. This, combined with the sympathy that is inseparable from interest, may have led readers of the first two books to think that the author had no interest in the christianization [sic] of Islam.

Private correspondence, now in the Archives of the Hartford Seminary Foundation’s Case Memorial Library, suggests that this impression was not fully inaccurate. In a letter to George Sarton, American historian of science and founder-editor of the journal Isis, Macdonald says, “It is my greatest merit as an Orientalist that I discovered that you could smuggle Muslim studies into a theological seminary under the guise of training missionaries.” Further, in a note written to his successor as chairman of the Muslim Lands Department of the Kennedy School of Missions, Dr. E. E. Calverley, he says, “[I] . . . was told there was no opening in this country for Arabic, but . . . did not believe it . . . . saw a demand for missionaries in Arabia . . . jumped at this and therefore founded the first real school for Arabic in this country.”

And to this we may add Macdonald’s description of his involvement in the training of missionaries, found in a letter to Calverley from 1930: “Often, I am sorry to say, I get fed up with Mission news-sheets. You won’t understand that but remember that I am a wild olive grafted in—an Arabist who has turned teacher of missionaries, which has its humorous side.”

From these statements we may gain the impression that, for Macdonald, the training of missionaries was a kind of backdoor means of introducing the study of Arabic and Islam to the United states. However, while the Orientalist himself may well have felt from time to time that his true calling was as “an Arabist,” and not a missionary, his continuing commitment to quality training for mission workers, his deep Christian faith, and the care and attention that he devoted to missions to Islam throughout his life are clear. Gairdner, in the review earlier mentioned, goes on to say that the third book, Aspects of Islam, showed that the author was “. . . wholehearted for missions to Islam, and only deeply concerned that missionaries should be adequately equipped for their work.”

If there is one thread that runs through the story of Macdonald’s involvement with missions to Islam, it is the quest for adequate preparation and equipment of workers in the field. This concern, observably deep through all his published articles and editorials dealing with the subject, evidently first arose during his only visit to the Near East, in 1907–8. In Cairo he found himself impressed with the lack of training characteristic of most missionaries and wrote to the seminary to ask about the possibility of Hartford’s accepting some of the American Mission and Cairo Missionary Society personnel for an intensive period of study.

The touring scholar appears to have been scandalized at the missionaries’ lack of acquaintance with a number of areas of Islam, beginning with the most rudimentary knowledge of colloquial languages and going through the Qur’an (in Arabic) as well as a more than passing acquaintance with Muslim theological systems. In addition, he felt quite strongly that a missionary must be well acquainted with the actual practices and life of those to whom he sought to minister and witness. It is in this deep concern for the adequate preparation of the missionary that the legacy of Duncan Black Macdonald lies.

He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on April 9, 1863. The youngest of six children, his early life shows a great contact with all sorts of literatures, including the Arabian Nights as well as other books and stories closely related to the Romantic school. He prepared to enter the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, matriculating at the University of Glasgow in 1880. While there he fell under the spell of Arabic studies through the teaching of James Robertson, professor of Hebrew. From Glasgow he went to Berlin to study under the great German scholar, Eduard Sachau. It was during his years in Berlin that events transpired which brought him, in 1892, to the Hartford Theological Seminary—where he remained for the rest of his scholarly and teaching career: holding positions with the seminary and with the Kennedy School of Missions, as chairman and later consulting professor in the Department of Muslim Lands.

He married the former Mary Leeds Bartlett, from his standpoint a most fortunate choice, since she provided all the support and encouragement he could have asked in his pursuit of a scholarly career. Mrs. Macdonald, who died in 1929, fourteen years before Duncan Black, combined graciousness in entertaining her husband’s friends and students, a talent for poetry, musical researches, and a willingness to learn as much as she could of her husband’s fields of study to be of what he characterizes as inestimable aid. In one other way she was of great help: she

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began to experiment with "automatic writing," as the result of his having once said he would like to meet such a "medium." Macdonald himself was deeply interested in psychic phenomena as a means of understanding religious inspiration, particularly that of prophets. A perusal of his The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam will make this apparent. Although the Macdonalds were childless, the marriage was an evidently happy one.  

He was succeeded in the Kennedy School of Missions by one of his own students, Dr. E. E. Calverley, in 1925. His retirement from active participation in the school was precipitated by the need to look more closely after his wife's failing health. In 1932 he retired from the Hartford Theological Seminary, but remained in close contact with the school—particularly the Kennedy School as "Honorary Consulting Professor of Muhammadanism" until his death in 1943. It was during his retirement that the two books on the Hebrew Bible, The Hebrew Literary Genius and The Hebrew Philosophical Genius, appeared. A projected third volume dealing with the Hebrew religious genius exists in partial manuscript but was never completed. Throughout his life Macdonald maintained a voluminous correspondence with fellow Orientalists, students and former students, and missionaries in the field. He served on the editorial board of The Moslem World, founded by Samuel Zwemer in 1911 (now The Muslim World), contributing numerous articles and editorials to that journal. His bibliography includes, in addition to the five books, over eighty articles in the Leiden Encyclopaedia of Islam (including those on "Allah," "Kalâm," "al-Ghazzâli," and many other major theological entries as well as one on the Arabian Nights contributed to the Supplement); seventeen articles for the eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, as well as numerous contributions to The Jewish Encyclopaedia, Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, and A New Standard Bible Dictionary.  

Macdonald's interest in the Arabian Nights led to the publication of still more articles, as well as his unfinished task of a critical edition of the Galland manuscript of the Nights. In his time and after, Duncan Black Macdonald was seen as one of the most important contributors to the study of Islam, popular religion among Muslims, the Arabian Nights, and Muslim theology. He is still of importance, though the passage of time and the increase of scholarly knowledge has somewhat dimmed his glory. His articles on Muslim theology remain of value, as do his works on the Arabian Nights and al-Ghazzâli. His students include a large number of outstanding figures both on the mission field and in scholarship; among them are Fred Field Goodsell, E. E. Calverley, Walter Skellie, W. H. T. Gairdner, Alford Carleton, Murray T. Titus, Earl E. Elder, and John K. Birge. He corresponded with the "greats" of European and English Orientalism on a regular and familiar basis, and was obviously considered a peer by them. The mere fact that he was entrusted with the major articles on Muslim theological subjects for the Encyclopaedia of Islam provides one of the most convincing testimonies to his stature as a scholar. It is reported that one of the first acts of Louis Massignon, the great French scholar of Sufism, when he reached Hartford, was to pay homage to Macdonald at his grave.  

We turn now to a consideration of the contributions of Macdonald to the training of missionaries for work in Muslim lands. As has been remarked earlier, his visit to the Near East convinced him of the need for more extensive and exhaustive preparation on the part of prospective workers in the field. His concern was that those who represented the Christian church be the best examples of learned concern and empathy for their peoples possible. Time and again, he would sound the note that missionaries must be willing to know their people from within, must be willing to understand the religion of their people as fully as possible, while holding to a fully owned and articulated Christian faith. The motto he gives his book on Aspects of Islam is indicative of this attitude:  

The paradox, in truth, of the missionary's life is that he must have a liking for his people and their queerest little ways even while he is trying to change them.  

His writings and teaching were devoted to helping the missionary gain both understanding and liking for the people as well as for points of contact between Christianity and Islam. Throughout his writing, Macdonald advocates approaching the Muslim as a person, as a human being who has his or her own value and religion, which must be understood and appreciated before any effort can be made to present Christianity to him or her. Ill-informed, unsympathetic, controversy-oriented persons would not serve the cause of Christ, he held; and he set about to provide such tools as would equip persons for an understanding mission.  

He advocated patience, tolerance, participation, and understanding on the part of the missionary. He felt that the "wandering Arabist" approach that he had taken in the Near East would be a good preparation for the missionary; enabling the missionary to gain insight into the life and personality of the people before entering into the task of witness and ministry. He sought to find points of contact between Muslims and Christians particularly in the areas of ideas, words, and human feelings. In an outline for a talk on missionary methods, he notes the following "axioms":  

Avoid controversy. Seek points of contact. Foster the idea that the Bible may be worth reading. Assimilate yourself to Muslims in language as far as conscience will permit [marginal note: "Good Muslim Arabic. Avoid Christian Arabic."] Be perfectly clear that our notion of God [is] different. Remember distinction of [between] Religion and Theology.  

Many of his articles in response to questions directed to him from missionaries in the field sought to establish for the missionary the points of contact, or to define with greater understanding the particular point of information on Islam which would enable the missionary to enter into the life of the people among whom he or she served.  

In an earlier article of mine, I have dealt with his use of the Arabian Nights as an avenue for the missionary who seeks to understand Muslims. This theme sounds constantly through his works for missionaries, especially the early ones. Misunderstanding of Macdonald may easily arise at this point—as if he perceived all Muslims, or at least all Arab Muslims, as having stepped out of the pages of the Arabian Nights. The point of his insistence on use of the Nights was that it could enable readers who spent extended and careful time with the tales to come to a deeper appreciation of the ways and mores of the people to whom they sought to minister. Macdonald used the Arabian Nights as a means of grasping and understanding the psychology of the Muslim Arab, as a way in to appreciating the life and civilization of Islam reflected in and by the Arabian Nights. He suffered no illusions that he would himself encounter all the events and characters found therein; nor that a total understanding of Islam could be gained by reading the tales. But he did understand the role of popular literature and particularly popular folk literature in shaping and informing the kinds of persons...
macdonald sought to catch and convey the spirit, the flavor as it were, of the Muslim world through the Arabian Nights. In view of the testimony of his success at penetrating that world, it would appear that his instincts were sound.

In an article as necessarily brief as this, it is manifestly impossible to present all of Macdonald's views or accomplishments. His interests and achievements were as broad as his understanding and scholarship were deep. One area in relation to missions remains to be dealt with: his insight into the continuing need for Christian missions from the West to the East. It has been related that he himself was never a missionary, nor so far as can be ascertained did he ever feel a call to be one. He perceived his role as that of scholar-teacher, enabling others to go out on the basis of such preparation and learning as he could provide them. He also counted on those in the field to provide him with further information for his own researches—enabling him to keep up with developments in the Muslim world on a firsthand basis. But he was convinced of the importance of a continuing Christian missionary presence in the Muslim world.

It is after World War I that we begin to find a deeper reason for missions, according to Macdonald. He was greatly concerned with the incursions of Western (European and North American) technological, scientific, and philosophical civilization into the world of Islam. His perception was that little of the moral or truly spiritual values of the West accompanied these invasions. He felt keenly the Muslim criticism of the materialism of the West, the spiritual drought that made itself apparent to the Muslim world—which at the same time accepted the technology and sciences of the West. Macdonald pleads for missions as a means of countering the value-poor, or at least spiritually value-poor, Western developments. He was deeply concerned that the best of Christian spirituality, represented in honest, convinced missionaries who were also in love with their Muslim brethren and sisters, not be surrendered, nor be changed simply into medical, agricultural, or scientific stations.

In an editorial written for The Moslem World in 1933, he sets the contemporary Muslim consciousness of Islam's past glories in contrast to the actual situation of Western superiority. Noting that in this the Muslim world looks to the West as an enemy, he goes on to see that the arch-enemy as perceived by the Muslim world is "Christendom," an anachronism to be sure, but none the less so perceived as the enemy, with Christian missionaries as the militant phase of the church. But he goes on to note that the attitude toward the missionary will vary in proportion to that person's respect, understanding, and approach to Islam. Courtesy, he says, will always meet with response; yet missionaries must be explicitly and exactly Christian lest they be thought "crypto-Muslims" and therefore less trusted. Missionaries must incarnate in their own lives and dealings the Christian message.

What Macdonald is here arguing for is the presence of honest and earnest missionaries who will show in their lives that all from the West is not devoid of spiritual life and concern; that Christianity is not to be identified with the West, that there are those in the West who deny the ultimate value given by so many to the merely technological advances now sweeping over the entire world. He is deeply concerned that others of spiritual persuasion see that even in the materialistic and secularist West, there are those who strive to impart a different insight, a different value system; that the church which is not the West comes not to conquer, to crusade, but to love.

This is the task of Christian missions, the reason why Macdonald urges its continuation in response to the Great Commission: that the vacuum left by the incursions of a superior Western military, technological, and scientific presence not be ignored and left to fill itself with misunderstanding of Christianity, but that Christianity be found in its most explicit and open form. Let the church not be perceived as an enemy, but as a co-worker with Islam, striving against the problems raised by materialism, hedonism, and decreasing interest in the life of the spirit. He hopes to see Christianity presented as a viable option, as a real choice; not as the inevitable concomitant of Western decadence. To this task he calls those persons who are willing to undergo lengthy and intensive training to acquire the tools that will enable them to express their own faith intelligently and honestly, as well as to enter into a deep, human, and empathetic understanding of the life and religious experiences and beliefs of those to whom and with whom they seek to witness and minister.

Notes

1. Hartford Theological Seminary Register for 1892-93, "Faculty Listing."
13. It is to be noted that the capitalization of Macdonald's last name, used in this article, is that employed by the scholar himself. Although it appears in numerous citations as "MacDonald," this latter usage is incorrect, and should be avoided.
14. For details, consult the dissertation noted in n. 2, above.
15. Ibid., pp. 50-54.
21. Ibid.
22. Reported in the Bulletin of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, n.d. (evidence points to either late 1940s or early 1950s).
23. Title page of Aspects of Islam. This is a quotation from p. 359 of that book.

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Bruno Gutmann’s Legacy

Ernst Jäschke

Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk’s doctoral dissertation Ker en Volk in de Duitse Zendingstoeienschap, published in 1948, may be regarded in missiological circles as a definitive statement on the “organic folk unit” mission method. When Bruno Gutmann, one of the most remarkable representatives of that missiological school, passed away on December 17, 1966, a very important period in German missiology came to an end. Gutmann’s concepts need to be taken seriously, especially in the light of recent developments in the Third World. 2

For a true picture of Gutmann, one must consider his family background. He says of himself, “My paternal and maternal grandparents were farmers. My father came from the Meissen plains [German Saxony], where my grandfather had a farm. My mother came from the Erzgebirge ranges, where her father, Weichelt, was a small landholder.” 3 It is in these rural origins that we find the roots of Gutmann’s emphasis on ties to the soil, the source of his great love for animals, and his deep understanding of family relationships.

In his praise of God’s creation, Gutmann was a gifted poet. He never tired of glorifying the Creator’s greatness; nature in its manifold forms was, for him—a descendant of farmers—an ever new manifestation of God the Creator himself. Thus we find in Gutmann a theologian who regularly emphasized the first article of the Christian Creed.

Bruno Gutmann was born on July 4, 1876, in Dresden (Saxony). He says, “My youth was overshadowed by various misfortunes in the family.” 4 His father lost part of his share of the inheritance by not finding a buyer for the house he had built on the outskirts of Dresden. His pious mother died on May 6, 1882, when Bruno was only six years of age, and he grew up with his grandparents. “Already at the age of eleven,” he writes, “I had to contribute to the family finances with earnings from employment at the local factory after school. I worked at the factory for one year and received as wages every fortnight onealer [$1.50], which I handed over to my grandmother.” 5 So, in his childhood, he experienced both mutual assistance and strong family ties. We can thus understand his appreciation of clan relationships throughout his life’s work.

Gutmann grew up at a time in which the welfare state was unknown. The family regulated its own affairs, as is still the case in agricultural societies. He encountered the same basic understanding among the African small landholders and, to a far greater extent than any European before him, he studied the origins of mutual assistance in their clan and family life and sought to make those relationships fruitful in the missionary task. To a certain extent the family as Gutmann experienced it corresponded to that described in Wilhelm Riehl’s 1854 publication, Die Familie. 6 But, of course, as a child he had already seen the decline of family stability in western Europe and the growth of the social and economic problems of the emerging twentieth century. He continues:

After I left school at about fourteen years of age, I was apprenticed to the municipal administration in Pleschken, where I remained until I entered the seminary of the Leipzig Lutheran Mission. . . . The incentive for my desire to serve in the mission came through my membership in the YMCA, so I began to study Latin, shorthand, and other subjects in evening classes at Dresden. It was during this time that I received many spiritual impulses from the active congregational life of those days. 7

From 1895 to 1901 he entered upon an intensive and methodical course of studies to prepare for the theological examination and mission work abroad. During this time the theologians of the Erlangen School of Neo-Lutheranism, who were also the leading theologians in Leipzig, had a strong influence on confessionalistic Lutheran theology. The young student was also greatly influenced by Karl Graul, director of the Leipzig Mission from 1844 to 1860. 8

During his years at Leipzig, Gutmann came under the influence of the philosopher and psychologist Professor Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920). 9 The Christian Socialist movement led by Pastor Friedrich Naumann and Pastor Adolf Stoecker (1832–1920), two men who influenced many young theologians, had an influence on Gutmann too. Throughout his lifetime, Gutmann remained faithful to Naumann’s thoughts and was at times mistakenly accused of consenting to the “blood-and-soil theology” of National Socialism. Since it was my privilege to be associated with him during those years, I know from many conversations how remote that was from his thoughts. His beliefs and convictions were at all times based on Holy Scripture, on Luther’s Small Catechism and the other Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

In 1902, following his examination and a one-year vicarage at Vohenstrauß in Bavaria, the Kirchenrat D. Theol. Bard ordained Gutmann and seven other missionaries in Leipzig, on the
Gutmann, Herrmann Fokken, and a medical doctor named Ploetz both spent 1902 in the German East Africa Colony. Gutmann was assigned to the Mission-Senior Althaus at Mamba in the then German East Africa Colony. Following an introductory period on the eastern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, he was transferred to the western Kilimanjaro area. After two years at Machame, he was entrusted with founding a new station called Masama in the lower Machame region. Martin Küchler says of this period in Gutmann's life:

Gutmann dedicates himself fully to this task, giving his best. He places greater emphasis on winning the hearts of the Chagga people than on raising buildings. They find him not only a keen observer of their customs, mores and character, but also a faithful and energetic advocate of their laws and rights which he defends, if necessary, against European planters and administrative officials. Weakness and self-indulgence are foreign to his nature.¹⁰

For health reasons he returned to Germany in 1908, where he published his first major literary work, Dichten und Denken der Chaghagener: Beitriige zur ostafrikanischen Volkskunde (Thoughts and Endeavors of the Chagga People—Contributions to East African Ethnology).¹¹

A short time after his return to Masama he was called to take over Old Moshi station, a congregation in middle Chagga, and from then on his life's work was closely associated with Old Moshi and its people. He stayed there, with brief interruptions, until 1938. The Moshi people still think of him as their spiritual father, missionary, and apostle. With this assignment the most creative period of this gifted missionary's life began. He published twenty-three books, some of them more than six hundred pages in length, and 476 articles in various periodicals, annuals, collected works, and duplicated circulars.¹² The Theological Faculty of the University of Erlangen awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Theology in 1924, and two years later the University of Würzburg granted him the Doctorate of Law in recognition of his book Chagga Law.

In August 1920 Gutmann, along with the other German missionaries, was deported in accordance with “Mission Paragraph” 418 of the Treaty of Versailles. For a time he stayed in Berlin, but he was finally able to locate a home in Ehingen, a village in Franconia, where as a “rustic” he quickly put down roots. The ensuing period of waiting for permission to return to East Africa was filled with literary work. Earlier (in 1914) he had published his Volksbuch der Wachagga (Chapbook of the Wachagga), a collection of legends, tales, fables, and anecdotes that he had heard among the Chaggas. This book, including its sensitive preface and profound introduction, had attracted attention far beyond missionary circles. Martin Küchler writes:

Gutmann’s knowledge of these people has penetrated to an unusual depth. It is significant and programmatical for his subsequent scientific work when Gutmann says, “The so-called primitive races are not childish organisms and easily manageable as some believe. Not only does the spirit of past generations live within them, but extinct cultures also smoulder within their souls. Would, therefore, that in addition to bringing in the disintegrating influences of our civilization, the colonial powers might come up soon, and with increasing emphasis, with constructive and considerate development programs, so that the indestructible life forces do not flare up unexpectedly like flames from a ruined structure, but that they be engaged creatively and effectively in indigenous forms for service in the total community.”¹³

Some significant publications during the enforced interim were Das Chaggaland und seine Christen (Chaggaland and Its Christians) and Gemeindeaufbau aus dem Evangelium (Congregational Nurture from the Gospel), 1925.¹⁵ The latter, a programmatical work on mission theory, with the subtitle “Fundamental Principles for Mission and Church at Home,” brought him recognition as an authority in the field of missiology. This book, although not easy to read, occasioned vigorous discussion in following years and led the author to defend his position in numerous articles, to clarify the questions, and to attempt to elucidate the basic principles of the book.¹⁶ His last book, Afrikaner-Europär, includes a bibliography of his works published between 1905 and 1966.¹⁷

**Gutmann’s Anthropological Insights**

The starting point for Gutmann’s theological thought is a basic consideration of people in their relationship to the world and to other human beings. He is primarily concerned with the so-called modern person, whom he sees as an individual misunderstanding himself or herself and the real purpose of one’s life.¹⁸

Through his work on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Gutmann came into contact with a people whose community life was still intact. Civilization had penetrated to a limited extent only, and had not yet begun its destructive work. This stable relationship among people, these national, organic, social, and kinship units in Africa were the point of departure for his missionary activity. They were the basis for his reflection on both secular and theological problems at home and in the overseas mission of the church. With a wealth of illustrations from such basic human structures, urtümliche Bindungen as he calls them, Gutmann’s slogan in his own practice and in all his publications was “back to the primordial ties.”¹⁹

The three primordial ties Gutmann encountered in Africa—clan, neighborhood, and age group—were then in such pristine clarity that he thought he had found in them an approach for the gospel in constructing Christian congregations. Indeed, those three relationships are still to be found everywhere in the world. Recent research has shown that even in the large cities of the Western world, with their extreme individualism, the primordial ties continue to play an important part. For Gutmann they were the absolute basis of true Christian life: in the power of God, it is the primordial ties through which people become true human beings, capable of receiving Christ. And the spiritual and ethical attitudes that bring inner unity to the human race, despite the most pronounced outward diversity, are developed in those same relationships. He was mindful in all his research of what he conceived to be the major task of mission: the struggle to preserve the values of the communal structure intact. From such ethnological perceptions he drew conclusions that made him a pioneer in missiology and enabled him to participate in the movement of culture criticism in his homeland.²⁰
Despite his universal concerns, the practical issue of building up the congregation was Gutmann's predominant effort throughout his entire stay in Africa. With forceful singlemindedness he concentrated on the one problem that was central in German missio-theological thought from the time of Karl Graul to World War II: utilizing indigenous structures in building up the national church.

All of Gutmann's utterances rest on his basic anthropological conviction that a man is to be addressed not as an individual but as a member of an organic whole. Thus Gutmann embraces Wilhelm Wundt's contention that individualism is to be overcome and the community, in all of its originality and independence, to be acknowledged. The individual in the community, the individual through the community, the individual for the community—this is the keynote of Gutmann's ethnology, ecclesiology, and missionary activity. With the organic-natural relationship man is called to freedom by God. The phenomenon of conscience, as he observed it ethnologically, also points in this direction: Conscience is the organ of equilibrium of the soul, which requires only minor resiliency so long as its bearer, living in an inclusive community, is unvariedly and uniformly governed by its impulses and life rhythm.21

Decisive, in his view, was the Chagga system of relationships between relatives, regulated to the last detail and assuring help and protection to the individual. The pedagogic and social duties of each member toward one's children, nieces and nephews, parents, and siblings are defined by age-old traditions. In the examination of the bride and groom at the wedding, or in the customs surrounding baptism, for example, Gutmann sought to strengthen the existing system of relationships and put it to work for a Christian understanding of family life within the congregation.

The clan in Chagga life is a comprehensive entity, based on biological relationships, which obliges all members to maintain both internal and external solidarity. The disappearance of the chieftainship, however, threatens the entire institution with disintegration. In places where the clan organization as such has deteriorated, the neighborhood may provide the necessary substitute.22 "Neighborhood" is a highly important term in African culture. It is not to be understood as a merely geographical term, people living in close proximity to one another. "Neighborhood," in African understanding is "neighborliness," a relationship of friendship and mutual assistance. To have a neighbor is to have a helper on whom one can rely in all circumstances and with whom one enjoys fellowship. There is a reciprocity of assistance and protection. Gutmann described the organization that developed in their social order under the supervisors of the canals which, fed from the Kilimanjaro glaciers and forest region, irrigate the Chagga gardens. He attempted to employ the same kind of structure in providing for church elders in each congregational neighborhood to organize meetings and to settle matters of church discipline.

Young boys in the neighborhoods, encouraged by their elders, begin to establish bonds of mutual relationships in their games. These bonds are later sealed in tribal initiation ceremonies, when the boys are assigned places in the overall organization. The entire male Chagga population is thus organized for war and peace in easily activated age fellowships. Gutmann adapted this traditional system in baptismal and confirmation classes, relating each group of two or three young people with a young man or woman a few years older for mutual assistance throughout their lives. This Schildschaf t, or Fellowship of the Shields, came to have great significance in the lives of the youth and of the congregation as a whole.

The entire life of every Chagga is based upon unhesitating recognition of his or her place in this age-old social structure of the tribe—a triple relationship according to clan, neighborhood, and age group:

Two considerations regarding these ethnological observations of Gutmann are of crucial importance:

1. He accords them a universal validity—beyond the purely African context. The three sociological points of reference as analyzed in East Africa—blood, soil, and age—shape the basic, though varying, forms of every human community.

2. Without this arrangement healthy human life is not possible, according to Gutmann.23

It was Gutmann's main sociological contention that a people is composed not of individuals but of the units named above, and that the dissolution of these units signifies national death. For Gutmann this was a theological as well as a sociological observation. He was concerned with religious anthropology.

The social forms recognized by Gutmann reflect the will of the Creator, hence he calls them "ties in conformity with creation, or primordial ties," for whose absolute validity he passionately contends. . .

The structural pattern of all human social life, as delineated by Gutmann, now has a mortal enemy—civilization. This brings uprooting, proletarization, isolation, displacement of human by material values. Money becomes a substitute for brother and neighbor, dehumanizing and dissolving all mutual obligations.24

There is only one remedy to restore the health of a people: "Return to God's Way," as the title of one of his books puts it. In other words, "make a determined effort to rebuild or re-activate what remains of the basic cells of the indigenous community." Salvation is to be found not in organization—the mere aggregation of like-minded individuals—but in the preservation of the living organism which the Creator provided.

As a young and inexperienced missionary, with imperfect knowledge of the Chagga language, I became Gutmann's successor at Easter time in 1938. I do not know how I could have managed the task of pastor to this congregation, scattered over a large area and numbering about 5500 souls, had it not been carefully organized down to the last Christian farmstead. About 20,000 people lived in the whole middle Chagga area. The congregation was divided into neighborhoods, each with its own elders. A district, composed of several neighborhoods, was presided over by a church elder who came to be called District Elder. He served as mediator only if a neighborhood was unable to settle its own disputes. Each neighborhood recognized its obligation to care for the poor and the sick and to reclaim lost members. In such tasks as community work, road building, schools, churches, and housing for teachers and evangelists, these neighborhoods were making remarkable progress long before the government inaugurated and implemented its policy of "community services."

Fathers and godfathers together brought their children for baptismal registration on Friday evenings, accompanied by the neighborhood elders. This provided a rich opportunity for instruction in the meaning of baptism. Matters of church discipline were regulated in the neighborhoods, where people knew one another so well that deception was hardly possible, and the missionary's counsel was sought only in the most difficult cases. The sharing of mutual concerns between church elder and missionary pastor was a source of blessing to the congregation.

Since the effectiveness of such a system depends to some
The Legacy of Gutmann

What is the significance of Bruno Gutmann’s legacy for the African indigenous church? The Chagga tribe, along with all other tribes, is capable of mastering its wealth of imagery. Gutmann was a master of the Chagga language and something of a poet. He produced a hymnbook for the congregation and, in 1938, a translation of the New Testament, fruits of thirty years of language study. Such superb monuments of Chagga culture as Stammelehren der Chagga (his corpus of Chagga law or Chagga tribal precepts) witness to the extremely high standard of African tribal culture, often hopelessly underestimated because its manifestations were undivulged to white people and largely unrecorded before they fell prey to the onslaught of a new age. Gutmann’s writings can provide valuable aid in the present struggle of Africans for a new identity.

Gutmann was a master of the Chagga language and something of a poet. He produced a hymnbook for the congregation and, in 1938, a translation of the New Testament, fruits of thirty years of language study. A diligent foreigner can learn the grammar and vocabulary of a Bantu language, but few Europeans are capable of mastering its wealth of imagery. Gutmann was one who did have a command of the metaphorical nuances. I once asked Nahum Mrema, a teacher, whether the people were able to understand the Kichagga spoken by Gutmann. Nahum laughed aloud and replied, “Gutmann? He knows Kichagga better than all the rest of us put together.” My question arose from the fact that Gutmann’s German writings and lectures were phrased in a manner difficult for Germans themselves to understand, the reason so few of them have been translated.

Gutmann was a dedicated missionary. I heard him remark on several occasions, not entirely without pride, “I have never been a parish pastor, but I am thankful that I have been able to remain a missionary all my life.” Following the example of Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:20, 22–23, he wanted to become a Mchagga (an accepted member of the Chagga tribe); and he was able to achieve it in a relatively short lifespan only because he dedicated himself so completely to the Moshi people.

Whatever criticisms may be made of Gutmann’s exegesis in claiming a biblical basis for his sociological observations, it cannot be maintained that the congregational structure he advocated is either unbiblical or antibiblical.

Notes
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
read: "Die Familie besorgt als eine der wichtigsten erzieherischen Mächte die Reproduktion der menschlichen Charaktere, wie sie das gesellschaftliche Leben erfordert und gibt ihnen zum großen Teil die unerlässliche Fähigkeit zu dem besonders gearteten autoritären Verhalten von dem der Bestand der bürgerlichen Ordnung in hohem Masse abhängt."

7. Gutmann's personal notes.

9. Wilhelm Wundt, professor of inductive philosophy at the University of Leipzig, organized his course on socially conditioned processes, he who asserted that the relationship of community to individual existence is the problem of problems, and he did not try to solve it collectively."

16. See especially his Christusleib und Nächstenliebe (Feuchtwangen: Frankenverlag, 1931).
17. See Jäschke, ed., Bruno Gutmann, bibliography.
21. Ibid., p. 89.
24. Ibid.

The Reformation and Mission: A Bibliographical Survey of Secondary Literature

Hans Kasdorf

Introduction

The intent of this article is neither to review nor to critique the writings dealing with world mission in the Protestant Reformation era; rather, it is to classify, introduce briefly, and then list secondary literature written on the subject. Without any claim of being exhaustive I submit what I have thus far been able to collect on the intriguing topic of the Protestant Reformation touching the matter of world mission. Catholic writings are not included.

First, there are more than twenty-five titles which deal with the Reformation and mission in general. It is to be noted that some authors are not altogether unbiased, depending on their theological persuasion or denominational loyalty. In such instances the level of objectivity is relative and the matter of classification becomes somewhat of a problem. There are, for example, several titles that indicate a general topic, yet in their orientation they may be more Lutheran than Reformed, or more Anabaptist than either Lutheran or Reformed.

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The Warneck Tradition

This is not the oldest, yet it is the one that presents the most persuasive arguments that the Reformers generally were indifferent to world mission. Since the Anabaptists are left out of the discussion, this tradition represents a rather negative view. When Gustav Warneck (1834–1910)1 together with Theodor Christlieb (1833–89)2 and Reinhold Grundemann (1836–1924)3 founded the Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift (AMZ) in 1874, the dawn of a new era in missionary literature appeared on the horizon.4 Warneck the misologist, Christlieb the theologian, and Grundemann the cartographer-statistician emerged as an eminent trio of scholars who devoted their expertise and energies to a hitherto neglected field of study. In their scientific pursuit to accumulate and interpret data they actually created a new genre, namely, the genre of missiological literature. Thereby they established respect and credibility in academic circles for the whole missionary enterprise.

Warneck became the authoritative spokesman and father of the Protestant branch of missionary science. Among his early achievements was a historical-theological interpretation of the Protestant Reformation and its relation to world mission. He was saddened by the existing spiritual condition of the state churches on the Continent. He claimed that the sixteenth-century Reformers and subsequent Protestant churches, though orthodox in theology, lacked evangelistic vitality and missionary vision. “When the Church is not active in mission,” he wrote, “she pronounces her own spiritual death sentence.”5

The three major sources in which Warneck deals with the missionary idea of the Reformation are his mission history,6 an address given at the 1883 Luther-Jubilee in Wittenberg,7 and frequent references in his five-volume Evangelische Missionslehre.8 He pleads for tolerance in judging the Reformers for their lack of missionary vision and thought.9 But he himself is less tolerant of them. In his history he proposes more than a dozen reasons why the Reformers did not become actively involved in mission to the “pagan world.” When Luther talked about a mission field, Warneck points out, he meant the “repaganized (verheindischte) Christian Church.”10 Warneck’s thesis, as expressed in his history, has been critically analyzed by the historical theologian John Howard Yoder11 and by the mission researcher Herbert C. Jackson.12 While the majority of Warneck’s supporters see circumstances as the basis for the Reformers’ apathy toward mission, Yoder blames their church concept and Jackson their theological frame of reference.

Since Warneck’s stirring essays on the Reformation and mission, numerous other writings have appeared, corroborating his findings. Such eminent missiologists as his disciple and younger colleague Julius Richter (1862–1940), the Halle professor and mission director Gustav Kawerau (1847–1918), as well as Karl Sell, and the American professor of church history Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884–1968), all relied heavily on Warneck’s findings in their interpretation with regard to the missionary idea in the era of the Protestant Reformation. To the same tradition belong two other essays, which are as much theological discourses as historical investigations. My reference here is specifically to the one-time Zurich professor Walther Köhler (1878–1946) in his assessment of the “Reformation and Mission” and to Otto Michaelis’s interpretation of Martin Bucer’s treatise Von der wahren Seelsorge.13 Both essays merit careful reading.

The Positive View

As early as 1897 Warneck met his first opponent in Paul Drews, who could not share the view that the Reformers had been indifferent to Christian world mission. Drews set the stage for the development of a positive position. In his essay on “Die Anschauungen reformatorischer Theologen,” Drews raises the question about the Reformers’ understanding of mission and focuses particularly on methodology. Luther did not conceive of mission as an organized agency, contends Drews, but as spontaneous expansion through the preaching of the gospel.14 With reference to the Reformed Reformers, Drews believes that their idea of mission can in no way be brought into harmony with the modern concept. He again sees the main reason for his argument in method, not in motive.15

Following Drews was the Lutheran scholar Werner Erelt (1885–1954) who not only vehemently disagreed with Warneck, but also attempted to show that the traditional arguments were totally untenable. Walter Holsten believes that Erelt was the first scholar who, with a measure of success, has discredited the negative Warneck tradition. That is not to say, however, that this tradition no longer has its supporters.16 In more recent years such Continental scholars as Howard Yoder,17 Hans-Werner Gensichen,18 and Wilhelm Maurer,19 and their American counterparts John Warwick Montgomery20 and Charles Chaney,21 have been the chief exponents of the positive view. Chaney’s view can be cited to endorse Gensichen’s position. The contention is (a) that Luther had, in fact, a positive view of mission; (b) that this view was deeply rooted in his understanding of the Gospels; and (c) that through the preaching of the Word the church is, by its very essence, missionary. Thus, negatively, Luther had no concept of the nineteenth-century parachurch mission structure; but, positively, he had a concept of the church’s missionary nature.22 Upon in-depth investigations these scholars quite persuasively conclude that the Reformers were not indifferent to mission as the Warneck tradition has shown them to be. Their contention is that the Reformers’ position on mission cannot be measured in terms of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century concepts and methods, but that it must be assessed against the conditions of time and circumstances. Gensichen’s view is characteristic of this position when he says:

The question, “Were the Reformers indifferent to missions?” can no longer be answered with a plain yes or no. The answer may have to be yes, if we continue to regard the nineteenth-century concept of missions as the only possible standard. It may be quite different, if we allow the Reformers to challenge our own conceptions, even if this leads to a somewhat painful readjustment on our part.23

The Neutral Position

One of the first essays on the Reformation and its relation to world mission was written by the Basel mission executive Albert Ostertag. His research antedated Warneck’s work on the same subject by twenty-five years.24 Ostertag argues that ever since the ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit there has been no period in history in which the church was a mere corpse, devoid of mission, its very life.25 This is not to say, however, that its missionary impulse has always been strong; in fact, there were times when it was so weak that it appeared to be more dead than alive. The German Protestant church was no exception until the Danish-Halle Mission sent out its first missionaries to Tranquebar in 1706.26 The only positive note Ostertag sees in the Reformation is that Luther talked about preaching the gospel to the Gentiles27 and Melanchthon challenged the church actually to engage in such a mission.28 Writers who hold the neutral position are generally, though not exclusively, more sympathetic to the Warneck tradition than to the positive view. To be especially noted are the theological
contributions by W. Liitgert, the philosophical essay by Paul Eppler, the historical survey by Gottfried Simon, and the interpretations by Erich Beyreuther, the contemporary scholar of historical Pietism.

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The Reformer of Wittenberg and Mission

It goes without saying that much of what has been written on the Protestant Reformation and mission in general applies to the Lutheran as well as to the Reformed persuasion of the Reformers. Yet there are specific writings that must be considered separately. These deal with Luther, and only in general terms with other Lutheran Reformers.

Karl Holl (1866-1926) deserves credit for his early assessment of Luther and his thoughts on the preaching of the gospel.29 Holl goes to great lengths by quoting from Luther's writings different passages to refute the arguments that the Warneck tra
dition usually upholds to show the Reformer's indifference to mission.

In 1953 the Swedish professor Gustaf Wingren developed the argument that, since mission means basically sentience and since Luther did not promote sending, he did not motivate mission in a gospel preached out of love and in a love that emerges from the gospel.30

In the Anglo-American camp we have at least three defenders of Luther as a man who had deep missionary concerns. One is the church historian and theologian John Warwick Montgomery, mentioned above; the second is Rolf A. Syrdal, author of a useful mission history,31 and the third is Professor Charles Chaney, to whom reference has already been made. Montgomery becomes almost vehement in his defense of Luther, especially in his second article.32 Syrdal and Chaney likewise propose that Luther was, indeed, a promoter of Christian mission.33 Their as
terions are endorsed by the Germans Holsten, Maurer, and Gensichen, all cited above. However, the Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder objects to such positive statements. In prin
ciple he not only upholds Warneck's view that Luther and his Protestant contemporaries were indifferent to mission (Calvin perhaps excepted), but he (correctly) identifies ecclesiology as the real reason behind that indifference.34 To this I shall return later.

Bibliographical Listing

Birkeli, Fridtjov. "Luthers teologi og verdensmisjonen." Søensk
The two representatives to be considered briefly are Zwingli of Zurich and Calvin of Geneva.

Zwingli and Mission

Zwingli admired the faith of Seneca and elevated Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, but also such "upright" Gentiles of antiquity as "Aristides, Socrates, Fabius, Camillus, Scipio, and others." Zwingli admired the faith of Seneca and elevated Pliny and Cicero—together with other ancients—on a special pedestal, states Eppler.35

Years later the Zurich pastor Rudolf Pfister wrote on the same subject.36 With no reference to Eppler, Pfister analyzes Zwingli's writings, particularly his last work, Fidei christianae expositio (1531), which Zwingli's son-in-law, Heinrich Bullinger, published in 1536. Pfister reports that Luther acted shocked when he read the exposition. In his response in 1544 (thirteen years after Zwingli's death), the reformer of Wittenberg expressed doubt concerning the salvation of the Reformer of Zurich, who, according to Luther, was "gantz und gar zum Heiden geworden."37

Calvin and Mission

Considerably more has been written on Calvin than on Zwingli touching the mission issue. One of the first essays deals with "Calvin und die Mission," By Wilhelm Schlatter of the Basel Mission.38 Schlatter offers one of the finest histories dealing with the often cited mission expedition by the French admiral, Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon. This has become the classical example of active Protestant mission work of the Reformation era. The outcome, however, was disappointing. Villegagnon betrayed the believers and the first Protestant overseas mission venture ended in failure and tragedy. The story has also been written up in some detail by the Reformed apostle to Muslims, Samuel M. Zwemer (1867–1952), and by two Roman Catholic scholars, Marshall K. Powers and A. Perbal.39 Zwemer correctly asserts that Calvin has contributed both theological and practical principles to the cause of world mission.40

One of the finest essays on Calvin's missionary ideas comes from the German scholar Ernst Pfisterer, of Bochum. Pfisterer has studied Calvin's Institutes and succeeded in lifting out nine mission principles inherent in the Geneva Reformer's theological thinking. Particularly those who do not share the Believers' Church perspective on mission will find these ideas remarkably relevant even for our day.41

Another tribute to the man of Geneva has been made by C. George Fry, "John Calvin: Theologian and Evangelist."42 In his list of "insights into the art of witnessing," gleaned from the writings of Calvin, Fry points out the missionary passion of the Reformer. Written on a similar note is an essay by Charles Chaney on the missionary dynamic in Calvin's theology.43

Bibliographical Listing


The Reformed Reformation and Mission

The two representatives to be considered briefly are Zwingli of Zurich and Calvin of Geneva.

Zwingli and Mission

In Zwingli's "hall of fame of the blessed," says Paul Eppler, "the Ruf. Selbstverlag der Bayerischen Missionskonferenz, 1955; pp. especially 'Aristides, Socrates, Fabius, Camillus, Scipio, and others.' Zwingli admired the faith of Seneca and elevated Pliny and Cicero—together with other ancients—on a special pedestal, states Eppler.35

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English Sources

I have pointed out elsewhere how mission historians have neglected the Anabaptists' involvement in carrying out the magna charta of our Lord.43 Even the renowned American church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette makes no mention of it in his seven-volume History of the Expansion of Christianity.44 In a later work he redeems the situation by devoting several chapters to the Anabaptists.47

The Radical Reformers and Mission

The Anabaptist movement was primarily an ecclesiocentric movement. Church and mission belong together. Where the church is dynamic and vital, there the missionary vision and activity will be likewise. The frequently quoted words of Emil Brunner (1899–1966) are true: “The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.” The Anabaptists were convinced of this truth centuries before it was penned.

English Sources

I have pointed out elsewhere how mission historians have neglected the Anabaptists' involvement in carrying out the magna charta of our Lord. Even the renowned American church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette makes no mention of it in his seven-volume History of the Expansion of Christianity. In a later work he redeems the situation by devoting several chapters to the Anabaptists.
The Radical Reformers found these norms for a missionary church in the New Testament, and that is what they sought to actualize. Along similar lines of thought are two essays, one by the late Professor J. A. Toews,52 the other by David Ewert of the Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California.53 Toews not only presents an excellent interpretation of existing secondary literature, but also offers a fresh perspective on the mission of the church in the Reformation. Ewert’s essay is more tightly focused on the Anabaptist understanding of mission and its theological implications. The use of the singular “mission” in his title indicates a direction that is more in keeping with the Anabaptist ecclesiocentric concept of their responsibility to the world about them than the plural form “missions,” commonly used in Anglo-American writings since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Several other English titles deserve mention. One is a paper by Arnie Neufeld, instructor at the Winkler Bible Institute in Canada. Neufeld develops his thoughts quite effectively around a concluding summary, Graber lists nine principles of abiding interest in the message the Anabaptists preached. This was not a call to “cheap grace,” but a call to costly discipleship.60

The most complete study ever undertaken is Schaufele’s dissertation, Das missionarische Bewusstsein und Wirken der Täufer.61

No other work has dealt so thoroughly with the question of the Reformation and mission as this one. Schaufele demonstrates from original sources the extent to which the Anabaptists went in obedience to the Great Commission and the price they paid for radical discipleship.

Bibliographical Listing


Kasdorf, Hans. “Anabaptists and the Great Commission in the Reforma-


——. “Obedience and the Great Commission in the Protestant Ref-


German Sources

Credit goes to Wilhelm Wiswedel for giving serious thought to the mission work of the Anabaptists. Little was known to the average reader prior to Wiswedel’s essay “Die alten Täufergemeinden und ihr missionarisches Wirken.”61 After an excellent delineation of church order and structure,62 Wiswedel describes the missionary messenger, his message, and his method.63 In a fascinating manner he gives an actual example of a commissioning service, which was a special occasion for the whole church.64
Conclusion

As stated earlier, this survey was not to be of an interpretive nature. At no point have I deliberately attempted to answer the burning question whether or not the mainstream Reformers—Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli—were indifferent to mission. A survey of the original writings must be undertaken to answer that question. But even then the conclusion will be relative, depending on the view of the church and on the concept of mission of the one doing the research.

It is hoped that the literature here listed will stimulate and facilitate others to carry on the study with the objective to discover principles that will help the church in our day become more effective in its world missionary outreach to the glory of God between the resurrection and return of Christ, the Lord.

Notes


Elsewhere, I have made an attempt to assess more critically the Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift. I have also cited numerous references to similar evaluations (“Warnecks missiologisches Erbe,” pp. 25–33, 392–94).


6. Warneck, Abriss einer Geschichte der protestantischen Mission von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart, 7th ed. (Berlin: Martin Warneck, 1901), pp. 8–21. Later revisions and English translations of this invaluable interpretive missiology history may be found in some older libraries. Several religious encyclopedias carried Warneck’s original 1882 draft of this History. See “Bibliographical Listing,” above, and n. 19, below.


8. The complete set of five books appeared in two editions between 1892 and 1905. The references in Warneck’s works to the Reformation are too numerous to be listed here.


10. Warneck, Abriss, p. 10. In fairness to Luther it should be noted that, in theory, he did go beyond the repaginized church, but not in practice. There are numerous references in his writings which indicate his concern for the “heathen” outside the immediate Protestant and Catholic folds.

11. Yoder offers a critical review of Warneck’s arguments why the Reformers, particularly Luther, failed to become conscious of world mission. “Reformation and Missions: A Literature Review,” Occasional Bulletin (from the Missionary Research Library) 22, no. 6 (1971): pp. 1–9. Yoder’s “Review” lists a number of items touching the mainstream Reformers; his major focus is on the missionary vision of the Anabaptists, to which I shall return later.


13. “Zur Frage des Missionsverständnisses der Reformatorischen, Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft 41 (1926): pp. 337–43. In an article on the same subject, Walter Holsten incorrectly refers to the Evangelische Missionszeitschrift (which was not existing in 1926) as the source of Michaelis’s article.


16. Support for this tradition has been referred to above. For further references, see nn. 11 and 13, above.

17. Holsten’s position is amply clarified in his writings. See n. 14, above.

18. The Heidelberg professor read a paper at the World Student Christian Federation meeting in 1960. This was subsequently published under the title “Were the Reformers Indifferent to Missions?” in History’s Lessons for Tomorrow’s Mission (Geneva: World Student Christian Federation, [1961]); pp. 119–27. Gensichen is also the editor of the historiographical work, Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte, vol. 4: Missionsgeschichte der neueren Zeit, 3rd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967). In a special section entitled “Das Reformationsjahrhundert,” Gensichen reviews some of the literature on the subject. The present survey, however, includes a number of items not listed by Gensichen.

19. In 1963 several Lutheran missiologists and other scholars made a special tribute to the late Georg Vicedom’s sixtieth birthday, entitled Ihr wäret meine Zeugen sein. Among them was Wilhelm Maurer, who wrote on “Reformation und Mission,” Lutherisches Missions­jahrbuch für das Jahr 1963, ed. Walter Ruf (Nürnberg: Selbstverlag der Bayerischen Missionskonferenz, 1963), pp. 20–25. Maurer’s accusation that “Martin Warneck” (p. 20) was “falsifying history” is incorrect. It should go to “Gustav Warneck,” father to Martin.


22. Ibid., passim.

23. Gensichen, History’s Lessons, p. 120.


26. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

27. Ibid., p. 10.

28. Ibid., p. 11.


32. Whereas Montgomery’s first article is more general, the second deals specifically with Luther: “Luther and Missions,” Evangelical Missions Quarterly 3 (Summer 1967): 193–202. Montgomery makes reference
to an article written by Warneck in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1910. Insofar as Warneck treats the Reformation era on only one page of that article, Montgomery's basis for the conclusion he reaches seems rather inadequate. He also quotes (or misquotes) Eert's sarcastic remarks about Warneck, saying: "Poor Luther! [sic. 'The poor man!'] Instead of founding a missionary society, accompanying Cortez to Mexico, or at least assuring for himself a professorship of missionary science, he devoted himself, of all things, to the reformation of the church!" Montgomery ("Luther and Missions," p. 194) quotes Eert's question and comments in its support: "A good question—and one that gains even greater force when one considers the extent of missionary activity carried on by the church bearing Luther's name during the two centuries immediately following his split with Rome." One is left to wonder what exactly Montgomery means by "the extent of missionary activity," and to what time of the "two centuries" he refers. If he means the Danish-Halle and Herrnhut missions, then we are still left with the question whether "the church bearing Luther's name" can be credited for the missionary spirit of early Pietism.

Syrdal, To the End of the Earth, p. 175; Chaney, "Martin Luther," passim.


Pfister, Pfister, "Zur Begründung der Seligkeit von Heiden bei Zwingli," Evangelisches Missionsmagazin 95 (1951): pp. 70-80. Pfister has also written an extended version on Die Seligkeit erwählter Heiden bei Zwingli. Eine Studie zu seiner Theologie. But this work is not accessible to me at this time.


Chapter 9.

The articles by Powers and Perbal are an attempt to provide a historical corrective with legal implications to Calvin's mission efforts in Brazil. Other than that, they contribute little of interest to our survey. For complete reference, see the "Bibliographical Listing" under "Calvin and the Reformation of the Church!" Montgomery ("Luther and Mission," pp. 194) quotes Eert's question and comments in its support: "A good question—and one that gains even greater force when one considers the extent of missionary activity carried on by the church bearing Luther's name during the two centuries immediately following his split with Rome." One is left to wonder what exactly Montgomery means by "the extent of missionary activity," and to what time of the "two centuries" he refers. If he means the Danish-Halle and Herrnhut missions, then we are still left with the question whether "the church bearing Luther's name" can be credited for the missionary spirit of early Pietism.

Yoder, "Reformation and Missions," p. 6.


Ibid., p. 100.

Yoder, "Reformation and Missions," p. 6.


Ibid., pp. 165-66.


Ibid., 325-26.

Published as vol. 21 in the series of Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche (Hamburg: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1966).
Supplemental Checklist of Selected Periodicals for Study of Missiology and World Christianity Recommended for North American Theological Libraries

Gerald H. Anderson

This list of 40 periodicals supplements the checklist of 60 titles published in the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research for January 1977 (vol. 1, no. 1).*

☐ AACC Newsletter
All Africa Conference of Churches, P.O. Box 14205, Nairobi, Kenya. Monthly.

☐ Atheism and Dialogue
Secretariat for Non-Believers, Vatican City. Quarterly.

☐ Bulletin of African Theology
Ecumenical Association of African Theologians, Faculté de Théologie Catholique; B.P. 823, Kinshasa XI, Republic of Zaire. Twice a year.

☐ The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies
Henry Martyn Institute, P.O. Box 153, Hyderabad 500 001, India. Quarterly.

☐ Catalyst
Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Service, P.O. Box 571, Goroka, E.H.P., Papua New Guinea. Quarterly.

☐ China and Ourselves
Newsletter of the Canada China Programme. Canadian Council of Churches, Suite 201, 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M9, Canada. Five times a year.

☐ China and the Church Today
Chinese Church Research Center, 5 Devon Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Every two months.

☐ Christus
Centro de Reflexión Teológica, Augusto Rodin No. 355, Mexico 19, D.F. Monthly.

☐ Church Alert
English edition. SODEPAX, Ecumenical Centre, P.O. Box 66, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Quarterly.

☐ Contact

☐ Dansalan Quarterly
Dansalan Research Center, P.O. Box 5430, Iligan City 8801, Philippines. Quarterly.

☐ East Asian Pastoral Review
(Continuing Teaching All Nations and Good Tidings). East Asian Pastoral Institute, P.O. Box 1815, Manila, Philippines. Quarterly.

☐ Encounter

☐ Impact
A monthly Asian magazine for human development. P.O. Box 2950, Manila, Philippines. Monthly.

☐ Indian Church History Review
Church History Association of India, c/o Mackichan Hall, Wilson College, Bombay 400 007, India. Twice a year.

☐ Indian Missiological Review
Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong 793 008, India. Quarterly.

☐ Indian Theological Studies
St. Peter’s Seminary, Malleswaram West P.O., Bangalore 560 055, India. Quarterly.

☐ Journal of Religion in Africa
E. J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands. Three times a year.

☐ Lutheran World Information
Lutheran World Federation, P.O. Box 66, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Weekly.

☐ LWF Marxism & China Study—Information Letter
Lutheran World Federation, Department of Studies, P.O. Box 66, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Occasional.

☐ Media Development

☐ Mensaje
Casilla 10445, Santiago, Chile. Monthly.

*A checklist of “denominational” mission periodicals will appear in a future issue; therefore they are not included here.
An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle*

Preamble

For four days we have been together, 85 Christians from 27 countries, to consider the resolve expressed in the Lausanne Covenant (1974) to "develop a simple lifestyle." We have tried to listen to the voice of God, through the pages of the Bible, through the cries of the hungry poor, and through each other. And we believe that God has spoken to us.

We thank God for his great salvation through Jesus Christ, for his revelation in Scripture which is a light for our path, and for the Holy Spirit's power to make us witnesses and servants in the world.

We are disturbed by the injustice of the world, concerned for its victims, and moved to repentance for our complicity in it. We have also been stirred to fresh resolves, which we express in this Commitment.

1. Creation

We worship God as the Creator of all things, and we celebrate the goodness of his creation. In his generosity he has given us everything to enjoy, and we receive it from his hands with humble thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:4, 6:17). God's creation is marked by rich abundance and diversity, and he intends its resources to be husbanded and shared for the benefit of all.

We therefore denounce environmental destruction, wastefulness and hoarding. We deplore the misery of the poor who

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*This statement was written and endorsed by the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle, held at Hoddesdon, England, March 17–21, 1980. The consultation was sponsored by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization's Theology and Education Group and the World Evangelical Fellowship's Theological Commission's Unit on Ethics and Society. Convenors of the consultation were John R. W. Stott (London) and Ronald J. Sider (Philadelphia).
suffer as a result of these evils. We also disagree with the drabness of the ascetic. For all these deny the Creator’s goodness and reflect the tragedy of the fall. We recognize our own involvement and repent.

2. Stewardship

When God made man, male and female, in his own image, he gave them dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26–28). He made them stewards of its resources, and they became responsible to him as Creator, to the earth which they were to develop, and to their fellow human beings with whom they were to share its riches. So fundamental are these truths that authentic human fulfillment depends on a right relationship to God, neighbor and the earth with all its resources. People’s humanity is diminished if they have no just share in those resources.

By unfaithful stewardship, in which we fail to conserve the earth’s finite resources, to develop them fully, or to distribute them justly, we both disobey God and alienate people from his purpose for them. We are determined, therefore, to honor God as the owner of all things, to remember that we are stewards and not proprietors of any land or property that we may have, to use them in the service of others, and to seek justice with the poor who are exploited and powerless to defend themselves.

We look forward to “the restoration of all things” at Christ’s return (Acts 3:21). At that time our full humanness will be restored; so we must promote human dignity today.

3. Poverty and Wealth

We affirm that involuntary poverty is an offense against the goodness of God. It is related in the Bible to powerlessness, for the poor cannot protect themselves. God’s call to rulers is to use their power to defend the poor, not to exploit them. The church must stand with God and the poor against injustice, suffer with them and call on rulers to fulfill their God-appointed role.

We have struggled to open our minds and hearts to the uncomfortable words of Jesus about wealth. “Beware of covetousness” he said, and “a person’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). We have listened to his warnings about the danger of riches. For wealth brings worry, vanity and false security, the oppression of the weak and indifference to the sufferings of the needy. So it is hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:23), and the greedy will be excluded from it. The kingdom is a free gift offered to all, but it is especially good news for the poor because they benefit most from the changes it brings.

We believe that Jesus still calls some people (perhaps even us) to follow him in a lifestyle of total, voluntary poverty. He calls all his followers to an inner freedom from the seduction of riches (for it is impossible to serve God and money) and to sacrificial generosity (“to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share”—1 Timothy 6:18). Indeed, the motivation and model for Christian generosity are nothing less than the example of Jesus Christ himself, who, though rich, became poor that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). It was a costly, purposeful self-sacrifice; we mean to seek his grace to follow him. We resolve to get to know poor and oppressed people, to learn issues of injustice from them, to seek to relieve their suffering, and to include them regularly in our prayers.

4. The New Community

We rejoice that the church is the new community of the new age, whose members enjoy a new life and a new lifestyle. The earliest Christian church, constituted in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, was characterized by a quality of fellowship unknown before. Those Spirit-filled believers loved one another to such an extent that they sold and shared their possessions. Although their selling and giving were voluntary, and some private property was retained (Acts 5:4), it was made subservient to the needs of the community. “None of them said that anything he had was his own” (Acts 4:32). That is, they were free from the selfish assertion of proprietary rights. And as a result of their transformed economic relationships, “there was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:34).

This principle of generous and sacrificial sharing, expressed in holding ourselves and our goods available for people in need, is an indispensable characteristic of every Spirit-filled church. So those of us who are affluent in any part of the world, are determined to do more to relieve the needs of less privileged believers. Otherwise, we shall be like those rich Christians in Corinth who ate and drank too much while their poor brothers and sisters were left hungry, and we shall deserve the stinging rebuke Paul gave them for despising God’s church and desecrating Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 11:20–24). Instead, we determine to resemble them at a later stage when Paul urged them out of their abundance to give to the impoverished Christians of Judea “that there may be equality” (2 Corinthians 8:10–15). It was a beautiful demonstration of caring love and of Gentile-Jewish solidarity in Christ.

In this same spirit, we must seek ways to transact the church’s corporate business together with minimum expenditure on travel, food and accommodation. We call on churches and para-church agencies in their planning to be acutely aware of the need for integrity in corporate lifestyle and witness.

Christ calls us to be the world’s salt and light, in order to hinder its social decay and illuminate its darkness. But our light must shine and our salt must retain its saltiness. It is when the new community is most obviously distinct from the world—in its values, standards and lifestyle—that it presents the world with a radically attractive alternative and so exercises its greatest influence for Christ. We commit ourselves to pray and work for the renewal of our churches.

5. Personal Lifestyle

Jesus our Lord summons us to holiness, humility, simplicity and contentment. He also promises us his rest. We confess, however, that we have often allowed unholy desires to disturb our inner tranquility. So without the constant renewal of Christ’s peace in our hearts, our emphasis on simple living will be one-sided.

Our Christian obedience demands a simple lifestyle, irrespective of the needs of others. Nevertheless, the facts that 800 million people are destitute and that about 10,000 die of starvation every day make any other lifestyle indefensible.

While some of us have been called to live among the poor, and others to open our homes to the needy, all of us are determined to develop a simpler lifestyle. We intend to reexamine our income and expenditure, in order to manage on less and give away more. We lay down no rules or regulations, for either ourselves or others. Yet we resolve to renounce waste and oppose extravagance in personal living, clothing and housing, travel and church buildings. We also accept the distinction between necessities and luxuries, creative hobbies and empty status symbols, modesty and vanity, occasional celebrations and normal routine, and between the service of God and slavery to fashion. Where to draw
the line requires conscientious thought and decision by us, together with members of our family. Those of us who belong to the West need the help of our Third World brothers and sisters in evaluating our standards of spending. Those of us who live in the Third World acknowledge that we too are exposed to the temptation to covetousness. So we need each other’s understanding, encouragement and prayers.

6. International Development

We echo the words of the Lausanne Covenant: “We are shocked by the poverty of millions, and disturbed by the injustices which cause it.” One quarter of the world’s population enjoys unparalleled prosperity, while another quarter endures grinding poverty. This gross disparity is an intolerable injustice; we refuse to acquiesce in it. The call for a New International Economic Order expresses the justified frustration of the Third World.

We have come to understand more clearly the connection between resources, income and consumption: people often starve because they cannot afford to buy food, because they have no income, because they have no opportunity to produce, and because they have no access to power. We therefore applaud the growing emphasis of Christian agencies on development rather than aid. For the transfer of personnel and appropriate technology can enable people to make good use of their own resources, while at the same time respecting their dignity. We resolve to contribute more generously to human development projects. Where people’s lives are at stake, there should never be a shortage of funds.

But the action of governments is essential. Those of us who live in the affluent nations are ashamed that our governments have mostly failed to meet their targets for official development assistance, to maintain emergency food stocks or to liberalize their trade policy.

We have come to believe that in many cases multi-national corporations reduce local initiative in the countries where they work, and tend to oppose any fundamental change in government. We are convinced that they should become more subject to control and more accountable.

7. Justice and Politics

We are also convinced that the present situation of social injustice is so abhorrent to God that a large measure of change is necessary. Not that we believe in an earthly utopia. But neither are we pessimists. Change can come, although not through commitment to simple lifestyle or human development projects alone.

Poverty and excessive wealth, militarism and the arms industry, and the unjust distribution of capital, land and resources are issues of power and powerlessness. Without a shift of power through structural change these problems cannot be solved.

The Christian church, along with the rest of society, is inevitably involved in politics which is “the art of living in community.” Servants of Christ must express his lordship in their political, social and economic commitments and their love for their neighbors by taking part in the political process. How, then, can we contribute to change?

First, we will pray for peace and justice, as God commands. Secondly, we will seek to educate Christian people in the moral and political issues involved, and so clarify their vision and raise their expectations. Thirdly, we will take action. Some Christians are called to special tasks in government, economics or development. All Christians must participate in the active struggle to create a just and responsible society. In some situations obedience to God demands resistance to an unjust established order.

Fourthly, we must be ready to suffer. As followers of Jesus, the Suffering Servant, we know that service always involves suffering.

While personal commitment to change our lifestyle without political action to change systems of injustice lacks effectiveness, political action without personal commitment lacks integrity.

8. Evangelism

We are deeply concerned for the vast millions of unevangelized people in the world. Nothing that has been said about lifestyle or justice diminishes the urgency of developing evangelistic strategies appropriate to different cultural environments. We must not cease to proclaim Christ as Saviour and Lord throughout the world. The church is not yet taking seriously its commission to be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

So the call to a responsible lifestyle must not be divorced from the call to responsible witness. For the credibility of our message is seriously diminished whenever we contradict it by our lives. It is impossible with integrity to proclaim Christ’s salvation if he has evidently not saved us from greed, or his lordship if we are not good stewards of our possessions, or his love if we close our hearts against the needy. When Christians care for each other and for the deprived, Jesus Christ becomes more visibly attractive.

In contrast to this, the affluent lifestyle of some Western evangelists when they visit the Third World is understandably offensive to many.

We believe that simple living by Christians generally would release considerable resources of finance and personnel for evangelism as well as development. So by our commitment to a simple lifestyle we recommit ourselves wholeheartedly to world evangelization.

9. The Lord’s Return

The Old Testament prophets both denounced the idolatries and injustices of God’s people and warned of his coming judgement. Similar denunciations and warnings are found in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus is coming back soon to judge, to save and to reign. His judgement will fall upon the greedy (who are idolaters) and upon all oppressors. For on that day the King will sit upon his throne and separate the saved from the lost. Those who have ministered to him by ministering to one of the least of his needy brothers and sisters will be saved, for the reality of saving faith is exhibited in serving love. But those who are persistently indifferent to the plight of the needy, and so to Christ in them, will be irretrievably lost (Matthew 25:31–46). All of us need to hear again this solemn warning of Jesus, and resolve afresh to serve him in the deprived. We therefore call on our fellow Christians everywhere to do the same.

Our Resolve

So then, having been freed by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to his call, in heartfelt compassion for the poor, in concern for evangelism, development and justice, and in solemn anticipation of the Day of Judgement, we humbly commit ourselves to develop a just and simple lifestyle, to support one another in it and to encourage others to join us in this commitment.

We know that we shall need time to work out its implications and that the task will not be easy. May Almighty God give us his grace to be faithful! Amen.


Christians Meeting Muslims: WCC Papers on Ten Years of Christian-Muslim Dialogue.


Taken together these two volumes provide a fascinating survey of some of the major trends in Christian approaches to Islam over a period of nearly two centuries, from 1800 to the present day. In many respects the two works are very different. In the first a single author engages in a scholarly evaluation of the Anglican and Reformed missions working among Muslims in India, Persia, Turkey, and the Arab States (the last three regions being rather anachronistically termed "Near East"), while the second maps out the course of ten years of WCC-sponsored dialogue between Christians and Muslims through a series of fourteen ecumenical documents produced between 1966 and 1976, by the "hand" of anonymous drafting committees.

It is easy to gain the impression on first reading that the two volumes differ sharply along the well-furrowed lines of contemporary debate about mission and/or dialogue, and to a certain degree this is true. Vander Werff explains the purpose of his historical research in McGavran terms of developing the right strategy in mission by analyzing, in the Islamic context, "what has taken place in hundreds of matchless laboratories which...modern missions have provided" (p. 3). On the other hand, Professor D. C. Mulder's introduction to the World Council of Churches volume urges "dialogical openness" and commends the ecumenical documents as contrasting the past by their "new spirit" of cooperation and real effort toward mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims.

These differences notwithstanding, more attentive reading—and nothing less than maximum concentration is adequate to the density of the two volumes—reveals an impressive element of continuity in the development of self-critical thinking and theological insight from the early missionary pioneers, portrayed by Vander Werff, to many of the views expressed corporately by the participants in the recent WCC meetings. The two volumes, therefore, should not be used exclusively of one another, or set in opposition, but should be valued together as source books for Christians and Muslims alike who lament the dearth of scholarly documentation and research in the field of Christian-Muslim relations over the last two hundred years.

Vander Werff's study has the merit and the disadvantage of having begun as a doctoral dissertation. Prepared at the University of Edinburgh—and living up to the reputation of that city as both a milestone in the modern history of the missionary and ecumenical movement, and as the home of an important tradition of Christian scholarship of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations—the book is well researched within the limits of its purpose of elucidating the main themes of missionary concern and practice, as discussed within the mainly American and British missions in India and the "Near East" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries up to the 1938 Tambaram Conference.

After a rather heavy-going, though informative, first section where three centuries of the formation of a Protestant concept of mission (1500 to 1800) are packed into twenty pages, the middle part of the book traces the relatively smooth, though gradual, passage of Western missionaries in India from the polemical approach of Martyn, Lee, and Pfander to the calmer apologetics of French, who questioned (without entirely escaping) the public-debate approach, and Lefroy, who criticized much of the earlier missionary literature on grounds of what he saw to be its intention "to confute the enemy [rather] than to win the disguised friend." Vander Werff sets this development within the Indian context of "a healthy blend of the indigenous and the ecumenical in both church and mission" (p. 95), but precisely because he draws this conclusion it would have been instructive if more attention had been given to indigenous influences upon the Western missionaries.

This raises the question of how far it is possible to "record" and analyze Western missionary history against the background of an entirely Western perception of mission, be it Protestant or Catholic, and using only Western archival sources. This question becomes yet more pressing when we move to the section of the study that deals with the situation in the "Near East," which Vander Werff rightly describes as having been for the missionaries more difficult than India because of the overwhelming Muslim majority, the presence of indigenous churches, and the complex political situation. Since the issue of the relationship between the missions and the indigenous churches was so important, and since American Reformed and English Anglican groups generally adopted different policies, with resultant differences of emphasis in their...
attitudes to the wider religio-political issues of the region, the question of Eastern Christian criticism of the missionaries cannot be ignored where archival and other material is available, as it now is in increasing quantity. Nor can a historical analysis of missions in the Arab world escape the charge of naïveté if it fails to take the issue of power politics and ecclesiastical involvement (Eastern and Western) fully into account, as has been demonstrated in the work of, for example, Professor Hajjar (re Catholics) and John Joseph (re Protestants).

In his treatment of the Western Mediterranean missionary encounter with Islam, however, Vander Werff does convey to us something of the intellectual and spiritual difficulties of the nineteenth-century missionaries, and the remarkable stimulus this proved to be to the thinking of their early twentieth-century successors, particularly Temple Gairdner (Anglican) and Samuel Zwemer (Reformed). It is in the discussion of these two giants of Christian scholarship of Islam and of missionary theology, ethics, and method that Vander Werff is at his best. Nowhere else do I know of a better-researched comparison of these two men, equally compelling in their different ways, though I expect that their differences of approach to Islam were greater than Vander Werff concludes. On much they were clearly in agreement: the need for Christians to engage in the serious study of Islam in terms of its theology and popular practice; the need for language studies; the need for a profound respect of Muslim spiritual as well as ethical values—a respect that seems to have been cultivated in both men by their reading of Sufi literature and their respective books on al-Ghazzālī, whom Zwemer described, wishfully, as “a schoolmaster leading [Muslims] to Christ.” But notwithstanding the evidence that Vander Werff produces in support of his view that Zwemer’s evaluation of Islam and Christian approach developed from the polemically dogmatic to the “Christocentric-anthropological,” Zwemer seems to have retained the view that Islam and Christianity are two irreconcilable systems of thought and life. Gairdner also could talk in terms of the “contrast between light and darkness,” but in “deistic Islam” he saw an engagingly theological challenge to Christian faith, which calls the Christian “to work out his theology experientially,” and in this spirit he was prepared to confess himself in the debt of Islam. Paradoxically, perhaps, from within the Anglican tradition, he was more radical than Zwemer in calling for a restatement of Christian doc-

The disadvantage of publishing a thesis substantially in the original form in which it was written is that it is likely to be too heavy in detail, footnotes, and appendices for the average reader. But more than this I regret that this particular thesis was not “updated” for publication in order to take account of the significant Christian missionary debates about Islam that have taken place since 1938, particularly between Hendrik Kraemer and Kenneth Cragg, whom Vander Werff sees to stand in the descent respectively of Zwemer and Gairdner. If he
is right in drawing these relationships, the very important differences between Kraemer and Cragg, notwithstanding Wei"ff's book and the WCC documentation on Christians Meeting Muslims. Continuity of spirit is already present in John Taylor's prefatory comments, which underline the importance of ecumenicity in the Christian approach to dialogue, and the need for continu-
ing study of Islam on the part of Christians as a necessary component of theological reflection. The most obvious difference is that nearly all the reports contained within this volume arise out of "open reflection" with Muslims present and participating. If this sends shudders down the spines of some who claim to be the contemporary heirs of Zwemer, I tend to imagine that Gairdner would have enjoyed the experience, and certainly the influence of Kenneth Cragg is readily detectable at several points.

The WCC volume has the merits and disadvantages of not having been an academic thesis in origin. The reports arise out of live situations, and though they are consensus documents, anonymously penned, the reader who has any appreciation of the joys and agonies of dialogue will not be at difficulty to detect those passages in the reports which represent the profoundest of agreement between Muslim and Christian participants, and those which tread honestly but delicately over areas of profound difference or uncertainty.

The subjects of discussion range from the practical, historical, and ethical to more abstract theology, and mission theology and methodology are by no means ignored. The canvas is wide to the degree that even the attentive reader may at times lose a sense of clear direction. We still await an analytical guide to the Christian-Muslim dialogue materials, though a useful beginning has been made in the Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin (74, September-October 1978). But we should temper any impatience with these reports by recalling Gairdner's advocacy of experimental and experiential theology, and remind ourselves also of Cash's question, recorded by Vander Werff, "Is there anything similar in the two religions which would enable Muslims and Christians alike to approach the subject of their faith in better spirit?"

The answer coming through the WCC documents is clearly "yes"—though the mood of optimism neither ignores nor is dulled by the honest recognition of difficulties and hesitations.

The record of encounter between Christians and Muslims cannot be complete because the relationships are continuing to grow, attitudes to change and mature, and theological reflection to deepen. Let us hope that contemporary Christian interest in Islam will stimulate more of the scholarship for which both Gairdner and Zwemer called, and to which Vander Werff has made an important contribution in historical perspective, and the WCC documents in contemporary concern.

—David A. Kerr
The Gospel and Islam.


In October 1978 the North American Conference for Muslim Evangelization was held in Glen Eyrie, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Invitations extended to potential participants were conditional upon the willingness of the invitees to read and criticize a series of foundation papers, which were distributed during the six-month period preceding the conference. This book contains those forty papers, each presented with a brief summary of the criticism received together with the author's rejoinder. The foundation papers are introduced by a statement about the conference by Don M. McCurry, the editor of the book and the director of the Samuel Zwemer Institute; the keynote address by W. Stanley Mooneyham, the president of World Vision International; and the Conference Report, prepared after the conference by Arthur Glasser, dean of the School of World Mission of the Fuller Theological Seminary. Considering the amount of time spent in preparation and criticism, one regrets that the practical emphasis of the conference prevented the more directly theological concepts and issues contained in the papers from being discussed at the conference in any systematic way. This volume will, however, keep those concerns alive and challenge all who are involved in the Muslim world to take them seriously.

According to the planners of the conference, the foundation papers belong to one of three categories: the conceptual (10 papers), the key "givens" (16 papers), and "concrete responses deemed essential to effective missionary service among Muslims" (14 papers). Not all papers fit well into the categories assigned to them. The papers of Cragg and Peters, for example, which are included among the key "givens," are clearly conceptual. With the exception of a few contributions (among them those of Cragg, Cooley, Gowing, and Horner), the papers were written by those who identify themselves in some fashion or another with that definition of evangelism which sees making converts of Muslims as the Christian objective for involvement in and with the Muslim world. In affirming this objective, not all contributors would agree, however, with Mooneyham's opinion (p. 24) that Islam is the stronghold of Satan, or with Peters (p. 401) that Islam is a "supra-humanly designed' anti-Christian movement to offset and oppose the gospel." The best single summary of the motivation behind and the strategies to be used for the evangelization of the Muslim is found in the last paper "To Reach the Unreached" (pp. 596-612), prepared by the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Here one is introduced succinctly to terms like "Engel Scale," "people movements," and "Resistance/Receptivity Scale." Other concepts such as "homogeneous units," "cross-cultural evangelism," and "dynamic equivalence" also occur regularly. These terms and others like them are essential for an understanding of the general argument.

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of the book. This argument affirms that the Muslim world is open to conversion and that the tools (represented by the terms above and the strategies they imply) which make this possible are now at hand (cf. Rickards, pp. 429–37).

Having generalized in this way, it must be said that every author in this book has his or her own point of view. Indeed one is impressed by the diversity of thought found in this volume. The quality of articles is uneven and what might be offered as criticism has, for the most part, already been noted in the appended materials. For this writer, the most stimulating articles were those by Cragg and Khair-Ullah. The comparative articles provide a wealth of information about the Christian involvement in the Muslim world. They are useful for that reason alone. Only three articles are by people from the Third World, which is to be expected, since the basic frame of reference for the planners is the North American Christian scene. More than one bibliography falls short of what the subject requires, even as a minimum.

A few points of additional criticism about the general approach of the book should be raised, although this reviewer is fully aware of the fact that there are exceptions to each criticism. Because theological issues were not given their due consideration, one is left with the impression that the whole issue of the gospel and Islam is a matter of Christian strategy and methodology. McCurry says that because theological issues are controversial and polarizing, they will be taken up at small group meetings to be held after the conference [p. 195]. Perhaps this is why the implications of the biblical norm of “love,” as proposed by Abdool Masih and Peters, never receive serious discussion.

Second, for all the emphasis upon the relationship between the gospel and culture, very little writing in this book focuses upon how Western culture affects, is related to, or corrupts the understanding and practice of the gospel. To the contrary, the assumption is that the Western Christian who learns enough about the culture of the Muslim will be able to present the gospel to that Muslim in ways that are not offensive to the Muslim’s cultural outlook and hence not offensive to the individual Muslim. The “Westernness” of this whole approach is ignored, Khair-Ullah being a major exception.

Third, though writers speak of the need to be friends with Muslims, to understand the culture of the Muslim world, to give up polemics, to keep love central, etc., nevertheless for most contributors the Muslim remains an object. Muslims and their cultures are the “other,” which stands “over there” outside the Christian world, available for investigation and study for the purpose of evangelization. This book is a discussion in which Muslims do not participate, nor are they even consulted. In what sense, then, are they to be thought of as “friends” and “to be loved”? This objectifying produces inconsistencies that require some resolution in order for the approach to have credibility.

In spite of its limitations, this book is important because it is a major attempt to apply one theory of missiology to the Muslim world. One only hopes that the Muslim response will be informed by an awareness of the particular Christian context that produced the book.

—Byron L. Haines

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**Dissertation Notices**

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