New Name Updates Our Heritage

Widely known and commonly referred to among mission scholars for more than three decades simply as the “Occasional Bulletin,” this journal now has a new name. Begun in 1950 by R. Pierce Beaver at the Missionary Research Library in New York City, it moved to the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey in 1977 and became a quarterly journal. Now with a circulation of over 9,000—including 2,000 subscribers overseas—we feel it is time our name matched our reality. We are “international” and we are devoted to “missionary research.”

This first issue of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research reflects the pledge we made four years ago to maintain and continually renew our rich heritage. We have promised a forum for discussion of the most significant missiological issues of the day in all six continents. Further evidence of this commitment and the capacity to reflect it in our pages is the appointment of a distinguished international panel of contributing editors beginning with this issue. Through articles, documentation, bibliographies, book reviews, and reports from significant conferences, we seek to provide the single most comprehensive study tool available to people interested and involved in the worldwide Christian mission.

A remarkably broad sampling of such coverage is to be found in the forty-eight pages of this issue alone. Orlando E. Costas here deals with tough issues of the church-growth debate in a Latin American context. Harvie M. Conn, in his discussion of the baffling socio-political situation in Taiwan, insists that proper evangelistic concern is for the sinned against as well as the sinner. Hans-Werner Gensichen and Creighton Lacy sketch the profiles of two great missionary leaders of the recent past, neither of whom was a North American. From the wide background of his own involvement, Arthur Simon underscores the complexity of being faithful to Christ’s mandate to feed the hungry. Per Hassing brings insight to the problems of church development in one part of East Africa. Gerald H. Anderson’s checklist of mission periodicals from around the world supplements two other such lists in different categories, published earlier in this journal. Brief final statements from the two most important mission conferences held in 1980—at Melbourne, Australia and Pattaya, Thailand—are included, along with the editors’ selection of fifteen outstanding books for mission studies published in 1980. All this, in addition to reviews of numerous other books of major interest, is found in just one issue of the International Bulletin!

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Church Growth as a Multidimensional Phenomenon: Some Lessons from Chile

Orlando E. Costas

The Christian mission is grounded in the mission of the triune God. There is no other mission than that which originates in the purpose and action of God in history. The Christian mission participates in that purpose and action, since its central point of reference is God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, and is carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit.1

God’s mission has as its ultimate and definitive goal the full manifestation of the messianic kingdom, understood as a new order of life characterized by love, justice, and peace. The church is the first fruits of that new order: it anticipates the messianic kingdom in its life and proclaims it in its mission.

There is much debate, however, as to the place the church occupies in the eschatological horizon of the mission of God. Is its origin and growth part of the very objective of God’s mission or is it an unanticipated fruit, one of the many “surprises” related to God’s working in history? Should we expect church growth, seeing it as a sign of the presence and future revelation of the messianic kingdom and using it as a measuring stick for our missionary faithfulness? Or ought we to consider church growth as a gift that is to be received with praise and thanksgiving, but not necessarily expected? Put in another way: Can we speak of the objectives of the mission of God only in terms of the ultimate and definitive character of the kingdom, or may we speak of one or more penultimate and provisional goals that can be demonstrated here and now and that can verify our evangelistic faithfulness and testify to the present reality of the coming kingdom?

My own view is that church growth is a sign, a provisional and penultimate goal of the mission of God. In other words, the category of growth is basic to a correct interpretation of the Christian mission in general and the church’s evangelizing ministry in particular. The problem, however, is what kind of growth may be associated with the mission of God and what kind of growth may be expected as an authentic result of the church’s evangelistic endeavor. While church growth can and must be considered as a sign and provisional goal of the mission of God and a proper fruit of evangelism, not every kind of growth is related to this mission and to evangelism.

My first objective in this essay will be to establish the preceding thesis in biblical and theological terms. This in turn will lead us to consider not only the fact of church growth but also its multidimensional nature and thus enable us to become conscious of that type of growth which may be identified with the mission of God and which may be expected from the work of evangelism.

The first objective makes a second task necessary: dissociating the kind of growth reflected in biblical theology from that which may be found today in some Protestant circles. In the second part of this essay, I want to examine a concrete case from Latin America, which demonstrates how the biblical model of church growth can be mutilated and deformed, even in situations of overwhelming numerical growth. From this case study I shall draw, in the third part, several relevant implications.

Church Growth as a Provisional Goal of Mission: A Biblical and Theological Perspective

In an article noted for its critical self-examination, Raymond Panikkar (noted phenomenologist of religion) suggests that the category of growth is essential to a correct understanding of all religious phenomena: Panikkar says: “Religion is essentially oriented toward the future... In the life of a religion as in the life of a person, in the intellectual as well as other spheres, if there is no growth there is deterioration: to stop means stagnation and death.”3

This view of religion concurs with the dynamic character of Israel’s religion. We see it in the Abrahamic covenant, which at least in the canonical order presupposes the formal statutes of Israel’s religion. Do we not find in the call of Abraham the response of love to the judgment of the nations, the promise of a new humanity that will begin with the “seed” of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 10-11)? Is not the formation of Israel as a people dedicated to the religion of Yahweh (Sinai Covenant) a sign of Yahweh’s universal kingdom and a call to proclaim that kingdom among the nations (Ex. 19:3-6)? Does not the Jesolimitanic liturgy, which confesses Yahweh as Lord and proclaims his salvation, affirm that the kingdom of Yahweh is above the kingdoms of this world and that his salvation extends to all the nations? (Cf., for example, Ps. 97; Is. 40-55; Zech. 8:23.) Does not the affirmation of God as creator of heaven and earth mean that God is the author of life who demands the obedience of all nations, having revealed himself to them (Ps. 19:1-7) and having included them in his plan of salvation (Ps. 86:9)? What is the meaning of the stories of Naaman, Ruth, and Jonah but that the God of Israel is also the God of the nations and desires to include them in the new humanity?4

This Old Testament vision of the dissemination and expansion of God’s mission comes through many different channels and has a predominantly centrifugal character. The vision, however, grows until it becomes the centrifugal force so clearly evident in the New Testament, where the emphasis is placed upon crossing sociocultural frontiers. The Old Testament clearly teaches that the God of Israel is no tribal deity, but rather, the creator and sustainer of the world; that Israel is not an end but rather an instrument for mission; that the kingdom of God, which is a universal fact, is not recognized by all the nations, and that the hope of salvation has a universal scope. For this reason Israel’s witness and proclamation before the nations is necessary (Is. 42:6-7; 43:10-12; 49:6; 52:7-10; 61:1-2) and the future expansion of the knowledge of Yahweh, which knows no frontiers or limitations, is foreseen (cf., among others, Is. 11:9; chaps. 40-55; 60-66; Dt. 7:14).

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a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" [7:9, cf. 15:2-5]). The fact remains that by the end of the first century the gospel had spread throughout the Roman world, resulting in numerous congregations, a vigorous and exciting theological reflection, a quality of life sealed with the blood of those who remained faithful to Jesus Christ, even to the point of death, and an organic development which was so extraordinary that it still serves as a point of reference for our liturgical and ecclesiastical development and the process of ecclesial and missionary indigenization—all of this being motivated by the eschatological hope of the kingdom to come.

The idea of growth is, therefore, basic to the experience and missional expectancy of the first Christians and to the biblical theology of mission. Equally important is the multidimensional nature of that growth. The numerical is only one of the different dimensions among many in the process of missional expansion. It is without doubt an essential dimension, which may not be reduced in any way. The mission of God deals with the nations; the gospel is oriented toward the many. Christian faith has a universal projection; it is neither provincial nor "particularistic." It seeks to reach out to the ends of the earth because it proclaims a message of good news for all humanity. The Methodist Church of Bolivia has expressed this idea very aptly: "every human being ... [has] the right to know Jesus Christ and his liberating Gospel." The church has a debt toward every "man or woman ... [toward] every child in existence" because the gospel "is not a property, but rather a stewardship."?

It is, however, precisely because the gospel is a "stewardship" that it cannot be reduced to evangelistic activism. The gospel demands reflection, internalization, and incarnation.

The church is called not only to proclaim the mystery of God in Christ (Eph. 3:9) but also to understand its "breadth and length and height and depth" (Eph. 3:18) until it attains "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). That this "reflective growth" is an intrinsic part of mission is clearly indicated in the command to disciple all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all the commandments of Christ (Mt. 28:18-19); we also see it in Paul's missionary practice (cf. "the mystery [of] Christ ... we proclaim, warning every man and teaching ..." [Col. 1:27-28]); and we see it in the missionary experience of the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42). In other words, while it is impossible to underestimate the importance of the numerical, it is equally true that the role of reflective thought must not be relegated to a position of secondary importance in the life of the church, that is, whether by dissociating it from mission or by consigning it to a privileged few. The whole church is called to grow in its understanding of the faith. Its reflective thought is part and parcel of its obedience in mission.

Neither must we belittle the missionary character of the organic development of the community of faith. If there is one thing that the book of Acts and the New Testament epistles make clear it is that the kingdom takes shape in the system of relationships that is produced by the call to faith and repentance. The liturgical celebration, internal discipline, stewardship, leadership training—all of which are aspects of the internal life of the church—are an essential, indispensable part of the mission, not some extraneous imposition. The evidence and goal of growth in the faith is that the whole body should participate in mission. Also, the proclamation of the kingdom carries within it the invitation to participate in the life of the kingdom now in the community's experience of faith. Without a vibrant com-

Church Growth as a Mutilation of Mission: The Case of Chilean Protestantism (1910–75)

I feel obliged almost immediately to dissociate the kind of church growth inherent in a biblical theology of mission from the kind of growth I see reflected in some circles of contemporary Protestantism. As a case in point, I propose to examine the case of Chilean Protestantism in the years 1910–75, since its growth has attracted the attention of many scholars around the world. The validity of that growth, however, is questionable in the light of the life and work of Protestantism in Chilean society and of a biblical theology of mission.

It is common knowledge that the majority of Chilean Protestants are Pentecostal. The history of the church has, since the second decade of this century, revolved around the Pentecostal movement, taking its roots from the spiritual awakenings of 1909–10 under the direction of Willis Hoover in Valparaiso and Santiago. To this we would have to add a latent underlying current of nationalism, which resulted in a structural clash between the emerging national leadership and the Mission Board of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Hoover himself has had to face the problem of nationalism within his own congregation ten years earlier, and this experience, in the opinion of J. B. A. Kessler, made him the only missionary capable of struggling with this problem during the crisis of 1909–10. Hoover maintained this leadership for twenty years until the new indigenous leadership broke the last bonds of missionary control. It is interesting to observe that not until the 1930s (when the leadership passed into national hands) did the church begin to grow.

From 1930 to 1960 Chilean Protestantism experienced unprecedented numerical growth, doubling the number of adherents every ten years. From a total of 54,800 in 1920, the church grew...
to 425,700 in 1960. This growth is even more impressive when one observes the annual percentage of growth decade by decade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-30</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-40</td>
<td>6.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-52</td>
<td>6.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-60</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This increase led Father Humberto Muñoz, a Chilean Catholic sociologist, to declare in 1956, "There is reason for alarm... because if the Protestants keep on growing at the same rate, within 50 years the whole country will be Protestant..."1

This impressive picture characterized not only the numerical growth but also the organic growth. This is evident in the extraordinary development of an indigenous charismatic leadership, an autonomous financial structure, a contextualized liturgy, a dynamic communal life, and a vibrant evangelistic witness. It is also clearly seen in the social makeup of the parishes. "The Gospel," say the Chilean Pentecostals, "is for the broken and needy. Protestantism, for the first time in Latin America, made its presence felt among the urban proletariat, and popular culture entered into the life of the church. Chilean Protestantism represents, therefore, a true church of the masses, being the only sector of Protestantism that can be identified with the continental phenomenon known as "popular religiosity."12

This impressive growth of Chilean Protestantism (in its most representative variant) does not, however, tell the whole story. One must point to the paradox of stagnation in mission that accompanied this numerical and organic expansion. This phenomenon takes several forms.

The first, while it cannot be statistically documented, is readily evident to the eyes of an observer. René Padilla has put his finger on a sore spot by calling church-growth students to study not only those who enter the church, but the "many who leave the church."14 Insofar as I have been able to observe (and from what I have heard from others who have studied the subject more closely), there is not only a "wide-open door" at the front of every congregation, but also one at the back. This phenomenon is typical not only in the Chilean church but throughout Latin America. It has two variants: (1) the "spiritual" casualties who have abandoned the church; and (2) the "functional" casualties who, while remaining in the church physically, nevertheless receive their "spiritual nourishment" or do their theological reflection in para-church organizations. The number of the first is difficult to calculate, but it must be very high if we include all those persons who have been related to Protestant churches at one or another time in their lives. And the number is even higher in the university and professional sectors. There is a theological, ethical, and sociocultural frustration among those who either belong to that sector and are converted to the gospel, or are second- or third-generation evangelicals who experience an upward social mobility. In addition, pastors and the ecclesiastical hierarchy feel threatened by the presence of these persons in their congregations.

The second form that this stagnation of mission takes is in the area of interchurch relations, for it is widely known that Chilean Protestantism is in the midst of a profound ecumenical crisis. Sociologically speaking, its numerical growth (so greatly admired by persons all over the world) is the result not only of its psycho-sociocultural style (simple people preaching and witnessing out on the streets in the language of the people, about what Christ has done for them), but also of its aggressive denominational competition, which could well be called "ecclesiastical capitalism." Pastor Miguel Gálvez refers to this competition in his evaluative report on the Evangelism-in-Depth project in Santiago:

For the past 20 or 25 years, the Chilean church has suffered from the satanic cancer of scandals, false leaders, economic interest, power struggles, etc., a tragic amalgam so strong that it has produced an indestructible sectarianism, tremendous suspicions and distrust...15

This brings us to the ethical problem. The phenomenon of missional stagnation appears, in the third place, in the moral deformation that characterizes the life and mission of Chilean Protestantism.

This church has created an extraordinary language of liberation. Lalive D’Epinay has commented that the church’s liturgical experience and structure has provided a language for those who had no language. Its evangelistic testimony has been the instrument of personal transformation for thousands of desperate, frustrated, and depersonalized Chileans. But when it comes to transferring this personal and spiritual liberation to the social and political level, there is a sharp break: the liberation process is truncated. This causes a radical difference between religious behavior and secular behavior.

This is all exceedingly strange because Chilean Protestantism is noted precisely for the manner in which it has been able to secularize and make authentically Chilean its worship and piety. This is a community that is concerned about the body (God wants to cure not only the soul, but also the body; sin has not only alienated humanity from God, but has also robbed it of its physical health). This community is neither ashamed of nor offended by the musical instruments, songs, and dances of its cultural setting, but rather, incorporates them into its worship and consecrates them to God. This is a missionary community; yet it suffers from a profound religious and missional alienation. God can save individuals, but not society. The world can be brought to the church, but the church cannot be in the world. The church, therefore, cannot and ought not to become incarnate in its social situation. It must always be at the service of mission (always preaching), but never at the expense of the church building.

The result of all of this was a most flagrant contradiction. This community, which for so many years exercised a prophetic role in Chilean society (not so much through its words and theology as in the way it offered the dispossessed of society a religious context in which they could express their protest to society), ended up, through its leaders, joining hands with a brutal, antisocial, military dictatorship. On December 13, 1974 thirty-two Protestant church leaders signed in the presence of 2,500 lay men and women a declaration of support for the Chilean military Junta.17 Two days later, General Augusto Pinochet, president of the Junta, was present at the dedication of the new cathedral of the Methodist Pentecostal Church at Jotabeche Street.18

It has been said that government pressure was brought to bear on the signers.19 It must be pointed out, however, that the declaration was made through the office of a Presbyterian pastor who was a staff member of the General Secretariat of the Junta, the same person who made the public presentation of the document, published it, wrote the preface, and directed the drafting committee of the introductory text.20 It should also be borne in mind that there was at least one bishop and perhaps other leaders who refused to sign. This reveals—at the very least—an uncritical and naive attitude toward the current government, together with an ahistorical and privatistic missiology, and at the most, a betrayal of the prophetic mission of the church.

On September 14, 1975 another event took place, which throws additional light on the role of large sectors of Chilean Protestantism in the support (and justification) of the Chilean
Announcing

The American Society of Missiology will hold its 1981 annual meeting at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, June 19-21. The theme for the meeting will be “Problems of Church and State: The Churches' Common Witness.” The Association of Professors of Missions will meet June 18-19 in conjunction with the ASM. For 1981 the ASM president is Dr. Charles Forman of Yale Divinity School, and Robert Schreiter, Dean of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, is the APM president. Further information may be obtained from Wilbert R. Shenk, Secretary of the ASM, Box 1092, Elkhart, Indiana 46515.

Lessons from Chile?

What are the implications of this case study? Are there any lessons that we may draw from the Chilean situation in five decades of the twentieth century for our respective church-growth contexts? Allow me to respond through four theses.

First, without reflection on the faith and without an effective incarnation in the hopes and conflicts of the world, numerical and organic growth can be impeded or at least limited to infrahuman situations where the option of faith is more an escape mechanism, the result of social pressures, rather than a genuine call to participate in the new order of life that is proclaimed in the gospel. In such circumstances, church growth becomes nothing more and nothing less than a mutilation of mission and an alienating opium.

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Third, church growth is a sign, not an instrument, of mission. A sign is something that points beyond itself, in this case to the mission of God fulfilled in the proclamation and the presence of the kingdom. Multidimensional growth is a fundamental sign of the kingdom, which may open the way for the recognition of other signs. The church that is engaged in mission, that is proclaiming the gospel out of a situation of engagement and incarnation in concrete reality, a church in the midst of which people are coming to Jesus Christ and are responding to the call of the gospel, a church that is growing from within in indigenous leadership, worship, and stewardship, a church that is critically reflecting and growing in the understanding of its faith— is much more capable, qualified, and prepared to recognize the other signs of the kingdom that are manifested in history.

An instrument, on the other hand, is “a means whereby something is achieved, performed or furthered” (Webster). In God’s mission, it is the church, not its growth, that is the instrument by which the mission is furthered and fulfilled. Multidimensional growth witnesses to the church’s faithfulness in the execution of its task.

This distinction between growth as a sign and the church
as an instrument of mission needs to be made in the face of those today who, getting their inspiration from “successful” church-growth situations like Chile, have taken the notion of growth and built it into a methodological category. They thus propose church growth as a missional methodology; that is, as an instrument for the study and fulfillment of the church’s mission. They bypass the church (its complex nature, composition, function, needs, and sociohistorical setting) and concentrate on its growth. Studying, inducing, planning, and cultivating growth is the means by which the mission is fulfilled. In so doing, however, they defeat their own cause because growth is meaningless without a subject. Therefore, it cannot be an instrument, for it can subsist only in relation to a body. Growth is important as part of that body. It is an indicator of vitality, not the means by which the body functions. Mission is fulfilled through and by the church, not through and by church growth. Its fulfillment, however, is made evident and verified in and by the growth of the church.

This leads to my fourth thesis. There is a fundamental difference between the growth of the church and that of a business. The former is the result of the efficacious work of faith; the latter, of the efficiency of applied science, of technology.

The growth of a business is the result of sound marketing analysis, planning, promotion, effective controls and supervision. It is influenced, to be sure, by certain ethical criteria. Nevertheless, it operates on the basis of economic principles, not of ethical standards. That is, sound investment can produce sound profit, provided there are favorable conditions and an appropriate climate.

But the church is something else. It is a community of faith. Its mission needs to be seen as the efficacious work of faith in the horizon of God’s eschatological kingdom. It must be evaluated, therefore, not on the basis of its present institutional success, but on the basis of the future of God’s kingdom.

Someone may ask, however, “What happens when there are no results from the work of faith?” What about unproductive mission? It seems to me that this question confronts us with two possible situations. Either there is not an efficacious actualization of faith or we are up against the problem of the impatience of faith. In both cases we are confronted with an anomaly. For a faithful church is always a believing church—that is, a church that is, not a church that should. The problem with many of us is that we think that we are believing when we say the church should be this and the church should be that. But believing is not recognizing responsibility. It is commitment translated into action.

A faith-filled church is a believing church because it actualizes its faith in its action. Therefore, it is always a trusting, enduring, and steadfast church; trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform persons, families, clans, tribes, and nations; steadfast in the promises of Christ to bless the witness of his people; enduring in the hope of God’s coming kingdom; in short, always waiting upon the Lord.

A faith-filled church is always a working church. And, therefore, it is always testing the efficacy of its labor. It is always questioning and analyzing its missional performance in the light of God’s Word, its complex nature, purpose, and sociohistorical setting, and the responses it gets from those who come under its care or are reached by its word and service. In all of this, it seeks to discover its strengths and weaknesses and develop more effective means of fulfilling its missionary vocation.

The issue seems to me to be not whether the church is growing, but whether it is authentically engaged in the mission of the triune God in its concrete sociohistorical situations. It is a matter of efficacious participation in the ongoing life-struggles of society in a total witnessing engagement, which, more than a program or a method, is a lifestyle. For when this happens the church is turned upside-down. It becomes a living organism, a dynamic training and research center, and an effective team that is capable of leading multitudes to Jesus Christ. In such circumstances, the church is turned inside-out: its structures are put at the service of the kingdom and its missionary practice is transformed into a comprehensive enterprise where the gospel is shared in depth and out of the depths of human life.

**Notes**

1. See *El Reino de Dios y América Latina*, ed. René Padilla (El Paso, Tex.: Baptist Spanish Publishing House, 1974), especially the chapters by Emilio Antonio Nuñez (pp. 17ff.), Padilla (pp. 43ff.), and José Miguez-Bonino (pp. 75ff.). On the interrelationship between anticipation (presence) and proclamation of the kingdom in the life and mission of the church, see chaps. 1 and 12 of my work, *Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1976).


8. Donald McGavran’s insistence upon dividing the Great Commission (or the process of Christianization) into two stages, one relating to evangelistic action (discipling) and the other relating to teaching (per-


12. See Juan Tennekes, The only study which I am acquainted with is that which was prepared by the Evangelism-in-Depth team in Santiago, “El descarriado,” in Tenekes, p. 5.


15. The only study which I am acquainted with is that which was prepared by the Evangelism-in-Depth team in Santiago, “El descarriado,” Estudio socio-religioso, no. 2 (Santiago: Instituto de Evangelización a Fondo, October 1974), pp. 18-25. It is based upon interviews with thirty-seven persons who have left Protestant churches: fourteen non-Pentecostal churches and twenty-three Pentecostal churches. The interest of the interviewers, nevertheless, was not in the number of dropouts throughout the given period, but rather, in discovering the reasons behind their abandoning the church. Perhaps the most interesting datum, in our opinion, is the fact that 40 percent of those interviewed responded that the reason they had left the church was “the slander, the gossip, and problems with other members”; twenty-nine percent responded that they left the church because it didn’t practice what it preached.

16. C. Peter Wagner seems to be moving in this direction in his Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1976). Though his stated intention, as the subtitle indicates, is to describe seven signs of a “growing healthy church,” one gets the impression that in the end he is not just describing but prescribing medicine for healthy church growth. This corresponds with his understanding of “church growth” as a science. He says that “Church growth science... tries to explain why some churches grow and others decline, why some Christians are able to bring their friends to Christ and into church membership and others are not or what are the symptoms of a terminal illness in a church” (p. 40). This analytical function, however, is not the only thing that “church growth science” does. It “helps us maximize the use of energy and other resources for God’s greater glory. It enables us to detect errors and correct them before they do too much damage. It would be a mistake to claim too much, but some enthusiasts feel that with church growth insights we may even step as far ahead in God’s task of world evangelization as medicine did when aseptic surgery was introduced” (p. 41).

17. It follows from the foregoing paragraph, that when Wagner speaks of “church growth science” he is referring to a missional methodology (or a missiological method) rather than to a strictly scientific discipline. For he is concerned with the diagnosis of a particular problem (growth) in a given phenomenon (the church) and the development of a proper therapy for the correction of that problem, rather than with the systematic study of the phenomenon of which it is part. It should be added, moreover, that in missiology the object of study is neither the problem of growth nor of the church as such (this is the function of ecclesiology), but rather, the mission of God. As a missiological method, the church-growth school is weakest at this precise point; it does not offer means comprehensive enough for the systematic study of the phenomenon of God’s mission in the world.
Many Taiwans and Lordship Evangelism

Harvie M. Conn

In 1975 well over ten years of translation work on an aboriginal (Tyal) version of the New Testament came to an ignominious close. The Taiwanese government, in its desire to foster cultural unity on the island, confiscated the recently published edition. By 1978 that same type of treatment was repeated with several other language versions.

In December 1978 the government ruled that anyone wishing to read the Bible in any language other than Mandarin had to have a permit. Mandarin is the language of the island's mainland refugee rulers, the "heart language" of 10 percent of the population (1,525,000 in 1972). By contrast, 75 percent of the islanders use what is popularly called "Taiwanese," technically the language of the Fukien Province of China and of over 11,441,000 island Minnan Chinese. The Bible has been available in a Romanized dialect of this language for over a century. That translation may no longer be printed or purchased, unless it appears in a double-column edition. The first such edition appeared this year, Mandarin in one column and Romanized Taiwanese in the other.

For the mainlander who has swelled Taiwan's population since 1949, these regulations are defended as efforts to unify the country in its confrontation with a political rival two hundred miles from its shore and over 800 million strong. The "security, independence and freedom of the people of the Republic of China" is at stake. For the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, with a membership of over 50 percent of the island's Christians (and almost all of these either Minnan Chinese or aborigines), there is much more at stake. A 1975 appeal to the government underlines the danger of threats to national unity "arising out of one's place of origin. Basically, we are all brothers and sisters living together in Taiwan and we ought to treat each other in an attitude of understanding, help and acceptance." But against this desire for reconciliation and unity, there was also the fear of the loss of freedom of religious faith guaranteed by the constitution. "Every person should be able to enjoy the freedom to use his own language to worship God and to express his own religious faith. ... We urge that the freedom to continue to publish and distribute the Bible in any language be guaranteed."

The Missionaries

What does this mean for the eighty-two North American Protestant mission agencies and nearly six hundred missionaries reported on the island in 1976? For most, it will mean little change in strategy for church planting and evangelism. Oral reports from several sources indicate that easily over 75 percent of that missionary population works exclusively in the Mandarin language. And, in the face of government policies regarding language unification and pressures of a subtler source, few new missionaries are departing from that practice. Often with an appeal to Romans 13, and an eye on the young islander now learning only Mandarin in the public school system, the missionary plans for a Mandarin-speaking church in the distant or near distant future.

Other factors reinforce this focus on Mandarin and the culture it symbolizes. Geographically, the vast majority of missionaries are located in the northern half of the island, and in those cities of the north where the mainlander population centers on the island. The current mission emphasis on the cities will reinforce that pattern. Politically, the strong anticommunist mentality of the missionary underlines his or her support of the Mandarin cultural push. The history of communism's suppression and manipulation of the church on the mainland since 1949 is more contemporary than classical. The spectacular success of Taiwan's economic rise is an easily observed contrast. All these things combine to minimize local cultural conflicts over language to the level of translation questions and internal politics. Final judgments are controlled by what emerges as the bigger question on the missionary agenda. "Will Taiwan remain an open port for the gospel?" The assumption behind the question is that only mainlander rule will ensure it remains open (to the Western missionary).

Two other ingredients, one cultural, one theological, both relatively unacknowledged, remain to spoil the batter.

How Many Taiwans?

Western missionaries, trained by their background to think of countries, of geographical territories, too often see only one Taiwan, a political entity occupying 13,900 square miles. Evangelistic goals are measured out in terms of one of the world's 221 nations.

This way of "seeing" Taiwan is reinforced by the political discussions the missionary constantly observes. Both Peking and Taipei speak of "one China," both with alternative approaches to it. Peking continues to insist that Taiwan is a part of China. The Nationalist government on the island bases its claims on the same proposition. Taiwan, runs the argument, is the only free province of the whole of China, which it claims to represent. Thus there are two functioning governments on the island, the larger representing the whole of China in absentia, the other on a provincial level for the island. To preserve that thesis, no national elections have been held since the last one on the mainland in 1948. In fact, they cannot be held until China is liberated. The results for native Taiwanese? Only a handful of elected representatives of the "province" of Taiwan to the National Assembly. The vast majority of the seats remain filled by mainlanders, aging officials still representing provinces they have not seen for over thirty years.

The effects of this on missionary strategy are profound. Looking at Taiwan politically rather than ethnically turns the island from a plethora of cultural mosaics and gospel possibilities into a monolith of ancient resistance to Christ. With discouragement, the missionary looks at the 1968 Taiwan Christian Yearbook and notes a Protestant church representing only 3 percent of the whole population. And hasn't mainland China always reflected this same resistance? Even a quick glance at the Dayton/Wagner book, Unreached Peoples '79 discourages. Thailand's registry of the unreached yields fourteen subcategories, the Philippines forty-three.

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Taiwan lists only four. And these are almost too big to be strategically manageable: Taiwanese, 11,470,000; Hakka, 1,750,000; mainlanders, 2,010,000; urban workers in Taiwan, no information.

Is it any wonder that a missionary speaks to you, after a summer challenge to the Taiwan Missionary Fellowship, "to look for the hidden people" and confides, in a darkened hallway, "There are no hidden people in Taiwan; our job is done"?

Government pressures demand the island become a political "melting pot" and its ethnic diversities be killed to serve a political design. And "the Assyrian model" that diffused the ten tribes into an assimilationist culture is repeated. The "Babylonian exile model" that allowed the Jews to retain their ethnic identity and paved the way for the dispersion of the gospel among all the nations (Lk. 24:47) has been discarded.

The flood of case study books on Taiwan oriented to the "church growth" methodology of Fuller's School of World Mission uncover this dimension in their call for a "uni-lingual outreach to homogeneous units of society." But the insight lies buried by other priorities given equal status. There are calls for "sufficient workers," "early training of native workers," "lay enthusiasm." Robert Bolton's fine book, Treasure Island, focuses on the urban Minnna Chinese. We are reminded that, on the mainland, "about one quarter the number of Christians in the whole of China are to be found" in the Fukien Province from which the bulk of Taiwan's island population has come (p. 79). We are even assured that the missions working in this area "considered the Minnna Chinese as specific people." But when Bolton turns to strategy planning for reaching their descendants, 75 percent of Taiwan's population, that insight is buried in good advice of all sorts. "Encourage the national church," we are wisely cautioned (p. 263). But which "national church"? The Hakka church? The mainland church? The Taiwanese church? The church's theology "must be as thoroughly Chinese as possible" (p. 267). Good advice. But what is "Chinese"? Hakka Chinese? Minnna Chinese? The "one China/Taiwan" mentality is conquering, submerging the realities of many Taiwans.

The seriousness of the political drive for cultural elimination and its possible effect on church growth is underlined by a 1977 book, I Will Build My Church. Here are ten fascinating case studies of congregations on the island, edited by Allen Swanson. Almost every case study without exception speaks of churches that grow within their ethnic boundaries. Peace and Joy Presbyteran Church: "ethnically 80% Taiwanese, 17% Hakka, 3% mainlanders who understand Taiwanese." The Tok-Heng Church: "indigenous Taiwanese with the exception of two brothers who are Mainland Chinese married to Taiwanese Chinese." The Chilung Church: "a good example of a dynamic Mainlander Church . . . in a predominantly Taiwanese society . . . " Freedom Road Baptist Church: ministering "primarily to the mainlander—or Mandarin-speaking—community." The list goes on.

In the face of these realities, what does mission strategy demand? Over 75 percent of the island's missionaries have answered, "Concentrate on the mainlanders." Yet that ethnic group represents, says Bolton, only 10 percent of the island's population. In the meantime, only 20 percent or less of the missionaries work with the Minnna Chinese, representing 75 percent of the island. The Protestant community among the mainlanders is higher, 10.1 percent of the mainland total (154,025 believers). Among the Taiwanese, it is only 1.4 percent, or 160,174. Added to this side of the ledger is the growing use of Mandarin among the population overall. Soldiers are fined for using Taiwanese on duty, students penalized for its use in the class room. Isn't Mandarin the wave of Taiwan's future? And mainland church planting the best direction to take?

Only if one forgets the remark of Swanson that "today's strongest churches are often found among the Taiwanese-speaking community" (p. 9). Only if one forgets the warning of Alan Gates that "it seems rather that the number of receptive Mainlanders still uncommitted to any church are few indeed . . . The potential source for traditional lines of growth is drying up. Converts must come increasingly from younger Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese." Only if one forgets that languages, like the cultures they represent, are not buried easily.

The Japanese tried for fifty-five years on Taiwan (1895-1945) to destroy the use of the vernacular and substitute Japanese. The end of that period found Taiwanese, even without the benefit of grammatical study in the universities and in spite of a vast effort at cultural extermination, still the island's source of heart-to-heart communication. The research of the Wycliffe Bible Translators reverberates with the same echoes. Cultures, and the language barriers that protect them, may be assaulted politically and overwhelmed by government-induced pogroms. But they die hard, if at all. The heart still exclaims, "God speaks my language." Peoplehood, echoing the voice of God, still groans, "Thou shalt not kill." A young college student, trained all his life in Mandarin, still breaks into a broad smile when he hears the hesitant missionary struggling to reach him in the intricacies of Taiwanese and laughs in response, "Oh, you speak my language." Not even a government program can wipe away that smile of the heart. No mission policy, acting out of a misguided understanding of Romans 13, should try the same. The gospel must speak to the "many Taiwans."

How Big Is the Gospel?

Another bottleneck lies in the rigid wall often built up by the evangelical between evangelism and social action. He may defend it by speaking of "discipling" and "perfecting" as if they were two separate watertight compartments. He may speak of social action as "the consequence" of evangelism and of evangelism as the "primary" task of the church. His concern is not to lose the cutting edge of the gospel news, Jesus crucified, risen, and coming again. He may even remember enough of the church's history on the mainland and the sad result of a Christianity riding piggy back on the gunboats of Western economic and political interests in China. Beyond all this is the heritage of a pietist past to missions, and out of it the unhistorical mythology that missionaries are guests in their hosts' living room, not prophets at the front door of Herod.

The end result of this minimizing of missionary action in society is a minimizing also of the breadth and depth of the gospel as well. The Jeremias of Taiwan become hesitant to purchase their field in Anathpath. And their witness to the power of God to bring an Israel out of captivity is lost (Jer. 32:6-15). The words and works of Jesus are isolated from one another in the church that was instituted by their joint witness (Acts 1:1). How shall we follow a Paul who preached "by word and action as "the consequence" of evangelism and of evangelism as the "primary" task of the church. His concern is not to lose the cutting edge of the gospel news, Jesus crucified, risen, and coming again. He may even remember enough of the church's history on the mainland and the sad result of a Christianity riding piggy back on the gunboats of Western economic and political interests in China. Beyond all this is the heritage of a pietist past to missions, and out of it the unhistorical mythology that missionaries are guests in their hosts' living room, not prophets at the front door of Herod.

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Taiwan demands a new look at these artificial divisions. Its showcase role, the envy of many developing countries, has a dark side that grows more ominous and calls for Christian compassion. Martial law has remained in effect since 1947, sanctified by recent history for the Westerner. In 1971 Peking replaced "Freedom Taiwan" with "Treasure Island."
and the withdrawal of American troops from the agonized island. Forgotten is the brutal incident that inaugurated the process thirty-two years ago. Returned to China at the end of World War II, the Taiwanese rebelled against the atrocities and corruptions of Chiang Kai-shek’s occupation forces in 1947. Twenty thousand were massacred.

Since that time, in patterns paralleling too clearly for many the Japanese earlier efforts toward a cultural holocaust, the mainlanders have moved relentlessly in their program of ethnic mini­imization. Mainland feelings of cultural superiority, reinforced by the wrenching break with the homeland, “tend to look down on what Taiwan has to offer compared with the way things used to be on the mainland.”

Pleas from the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan have gone unheeded. A “Declaration of Human Rights” issued by that body’s General Assembly in March 1978 was sent by mail to all its pastors and never delivered. One writer adds, “Pastors learned of the declaration when police visited them. The text was published in the Taiwan Church Weekly, 4000 copies of which were destroyed by the post office.”

Delegates to the assembly had been allegedly offered bribes by the ruling Nationalist party’s fifth section if the declaration would be rejected and General Secretary C. M. Kao defeated in his bid for reelection. The assembly approved the document 235-49-10 and reelected Kao 225-49-8.

The battle goes on. Pending legislation was announced in the summer of 1979 for the “supervision” of shrines, temples, and churches. Said by many to be aimed at stifling the voice of the Presbyterian Church, it prompted an official petition from the Presbyterian General Assembly on July 4, 1979. Acknowledging “a life and death crisis” facing “our country,” the petition fears the proposed legislation will contravene the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion for the people. It predicts unnecessary friction between the government and the people and a growing distrust. “As a result our nation will fall into the trap of the united front struggle by the Communists.”

For whatever reasons, near the end of the year government offices announced the shelving of the proposed legislation. Some fear it will reappear in another form in the future. A Taiwanese observer remarked to me, “It’s more than just a trial balloon now being permanently withdrawn. It’s the government rapping our hands and warning us by veiled threat. They shout without raising their voices.” Issues are announced by culturally “writing between the lines” rather than alarming the Western observer, culturally accustomed to law by verbalization.

Nine of the twenty-six articles in the legislation are singled out for criticism by the assembly to reinforce their concerns. Particularly in keeping with past policy on language is the draft regulation which requires that “religious propagation must be done in public and in the Chinese language. Interpretation from another language may take place if the speaker does not know Chinese.” The assembly objects that in Taiwan “the law does not prohibit any religious body from preaching in any local language or dialect. If what the draft regulations call ‘the Chinese language’ is limited to Mandarin only and the use of other local languages is prohibited this will not only add to difficulties in religious propagation but it will really be very difficult to put into practice and will have no result except to damage the government’s reputation. Language is one of the tools used in religious propagation. One way of discerning whether people have religious freedom or not is to see whether they have freedom to use the local language.”

Behind this interchange some see a number of thunderclouds forming. Does the requirement that “religious propagation must be done in public” leave a loophole that will eventually come to mean “Evangelism cannot be done in private”? Is it part of the government program aimed at the cultural destruction of the island’s majority language?

Other proposals do not reassure. The drafted version of Article 19 allows for government intervention “if a shrine, temple or church is against national policy or is in contravention of its established aim or against public interest.” The legislation gives government authorities permission to dissolve the legal entity, among its possible steps.

How, asks the Presbyterian petition, will such a law avoid abuse? Would it not result in violating the freedom of religious belief guaranteed in the constitution? Asked one missionary on hearing it, “Who will be the government authority?” Does it put a club in the hands of a person with a grudge?

The most sensitive question to several observers lies in the close of the church’s request. “We appeal for an investigation to take place to determine the real motives underlying the drafting of these Regulations.” In the light of the last five years, more may well be at stake than simply “regulation” of abuses. Too many government agents spend weeks listening to sermons of pastors unwilling to join the Nationalist party. Biblical passages dealing with church/state relations are not frequently preached. Open discussions are not held on the floors of church courts. Books on Christianity and politics are not translated or written.

The political explosiveness of the issues involved, the more than subtle government pressures that inhibit free discussion about these things, help restrict missionary and islander from writing about them. And, more dangerous still, from openly evaluating its effect on evangelistic strategy and church growth. In 1979 Dorothy Raber’s dissertation from Fuller Theological Seminary, Protestantism in Changing Taiwan, was published. She was urged by her instructors to seek out reasons why, after a decade of careful analysis of evangelistic potential and numerous methodological suggestions, the church still continues to do no more than hold its own. Her analysis abounds in rich material about Taiwan’s economic and cultural progress in the last decade. But one searches in vain for an equally full treatment of the effect of these repressive measures on the Taiwanese. Some references to nationalism surface. But its history as a key factor in church planting among the Minnan Chinese is not explored.

That is regrettable for many reasons. Even for one who keeps evangelism and social concerns clearly distinct, evangelistic strategy alone demands that we wrestle with the question. The largest target potential for church growth remains the Minnan Chinese of the island, a group increasingly responsive by contrast with the mainland history of the last decade. Even if missionaries should continue to focus on the mainland portion of the population, and even should they evangelize it out to its ethnic boundaries, they will still have a church representing only 10 percent of the island’s population. In the meantime, the Taiwanese, aware of government pressures against their cultural identity, will identify Christianity as a pro-mainlander ideology. Seventy-five percent of the missionary force working with the Mandarin-speaking community says that to the Taiwanese loud and clear.

Let us hope that the situation will force us to raise questions about the artificiality of our distinctions between evangelism and our concern for the pressures of Taiwan’s social questions. As Jim Wallis has said, evangelism can never be seen “in isolation from the critical questions and events that shape the context in which the gospel must be lived and proclaimed. The scope of our evangelism must be at least as pervasive as the power of sin itself.”

This will not mean a revival of social-gospel evangelism, something the conservative wing of the American evangelical
community seems to fear increasingly in these days. It could mean a recapture of the holistic dimension of evangelism for which John Perkins argues in his community model in Mississippi. It could mean a reaffirmation that the gospel presentation of Christ crucified and risen from the dead is big enough to start anywhere on the spectrum of human concerns and point men and women to the only redeemer of God’s elect. The evangelical has usually been content to start at the ABC end of the gospel continuum. Taiwan may be demanding we work from the XYZ end of the message.

Richard Mouw calls this “political evangelism.” That terminology may be threatening to evangelical sensitivities. “Holistic evangelism” has other difficulties. Ultimately are we not talking about what might be called “Lordship evangelism”? Evangelism that flows out of our acknowledgment of the kingdom—already reign of Christ over all of life, and directed toward persons as we encounter them in every part of their lives? Evangelism that preaches the name of Jesus and does it while offering cups of cold water in that name? Evangelism that speaks to men and women in their roles as fathers, mothers, church members, military strategists, framers of economic policy and consumers, Mandarin-speaking and Taiwanese-speaking? Evangelism that is not either/or, but both/and, that maximizes love by maximizing justice? Evangelism that does not say to the Minnan Chinese, “You stand over there or sit down by my footstool,” and to the mainlanders, “You sit here in a good place” (Jas. 2:3)?

Perhaps our evangelism has begun in the wrong place among the Taiwanese. We have started by talking about the person as a sinner, rebelling against God, needing repentance. This is as it should be. But a person is also “sinned against,” not only the subject of sin but also the object of sin. Jesus’ compassion for the harassed and helpless, the sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36) was a compassion for the sinned against, not simply the sinner. That compassion opened the heart doors of the poor and oppressed, the deprived and helpless. “The bondage of sin” for our Lord was more far-reaching than simply individual captivity to lust and self-satisfaction. Sin’s influence is not limited to our “private” lives. It distorts family relations, language, technological activity (the tower of Babel), even the building of political policies (the book of Amos). In these circumstances, our presentation of humanity’s need for Christ may well have to be in terms of the human being as “sinned against.”

An evangelism that does not cost the church is cheap evangelism. Evangelism in Taiwan and evangelistic methodologies must struggle again with the demands of costly grace.

Notes

1. Taiwan Christian Yearbook. 1968 (Taipei, Taiwan: Missionary Fellowship, n.d.)
7. J. Martin Bailey, “Taiwan: The Church, the Government and American Reality,” The Church Herald (January 26, 1979), p. 6
The Legacy of Walter Freytag

Hans-Werner Gensichen

The Measure of the Man

I s there at all such a thing as a legacy of Walter Freytag? When Freytag died unexpectedly twenty years ago, in his sixty-first year, he left behind only one major book published in 1938, two or three pamphlets, and a number of scattered essays, sermons, and lectures most of which were collected in two slim volumes two years after his death. He had been teaching missionology, history of religions, and ecumenical theology for thirty years. But he never produced a comprehensive scholarly survey of any of those fields. He had taught a large number of devoted students. As a teacher he was perhaps at his best, and he actually spent part of the last night of his life discussing with me how he could reduce his ecumenical obligations in order to gain more time for his students. But he never created a “school” of his own. He had never been a missionary or a mission board secretary, and neither a Third World church nor a mission society could claim to have been shaped by him.

He had indeed been holding a variety of leading positions in church, mission, and ecumenical bodies. Yet he cannot be said to have been one of the powerful strategists of the world church, either preservers or reformers, whose achievements have left indelible marks in the history of ecumenical Christianity. Nevertheless he is remembered, in the words of John A. Mackay, as “a pivotal figure in the life and thought of the Christian missionary movement.” And it is certainly not by chance that it was left to one of the great Christian laymen of his generation, Sir Kenneth Grubb, to explain even before Freytag’s death why this was the case: Freytag’s thought was “part of the man himself” who “conveyed certain precious attitudes” and not just “meaning.”

Freytag for his part, during his travels in India or his beloved New Guinea, in America or in China, had always been more keen on coming into contact with people than with systems of thought, cultural patterns, or church organizations. Because he never tried to dominate he was able to listen, sometimes for hours at a stretch. The highest tribute that a young African was able to pay to Freytag shortly after his death was that he remembered him as a man to whom he had been able to talk for a long time without having been interrupted. Another of Freytag’s contemporaries, Max Warren, described it as perhaps the main source of Freytag’s influence that he brought to all of his companions in the missionary enterprise an understanding heart, which in turn admitted him to the heart of others in a unique way, sharing particular experiences and drawing from them general applications.

This approach occasionally led to doubts about the quality of Freytag’s theological work, which, however, did not impress him unduly. “Maybe I am not a theologian at all,” he would concede in a joking mood. He did not disregard theology as a scientific enterprise. But he knew, as the philosopher Martin Heidegger had said, that each science that claimed to be more than a mere technique rested on presuppositions that transcended scientific investigation. Theology, too, had to be more than an exercise in dialectics. It had to grow out of the individual and corporate experience of the redemptive purpose of God-in-Christ, and in that sense it could not but have a missionary perspective.

Background and Career

Freytag’s father was a jeweler in Neudietendorf, a small town in Thuringia. Both he and his wife were members of the Moravian Brethren. Like Schleiemacher, Freytag might have considered himself a “Moravian of a higher order.” Zinzendorf’s Unitas Fratrum was and remained his spiritual home, even when he, a member of a “Herrnhuter” family in central Germany, became a minister in a German regional church. Later in his life in difficult situations he was sometimes heard to quote one or the other of Zinzendorf’s hymns, which he had committed to memory as a youth. As a student of theology he was strongly influenced by Adolf Schlatter and Karl Heim at Tübingen, the leading representatives of biblical realism and a theology of Heilsgeschichte.

Shortly after ordination he received and accepted a call to work as a lecturer in religious education in Wuchang, China. In preparation for this task Freytag obtained a Ph.D. in Pedagogics, Psychology, and Chinese Religions at Hamburg University in 1925. However, developments in China forced him to cancel his plan. After a short period as a parish pastor he was appointed secretary and, two years later, director of a German agency for public relations and promotion of the missionary cause. In addition he was soon called as mission director of the churches of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck as well as lecturer in missionology at the Philosophical Faculty of Hamburg University and the Theological Faculty at Kiel University. This unique combination of influential positions allowed Freytag, by teaching, writing, and lecturing, to lay the foundation for what was later to become the spiritual and administrative center of German Protestant missions. In 1925 he married Anne-Katherin Wohlfahrt. They had four children.

The Nazi regime succeeded in silencing Freytag for the last two years of the war. Yet in 1946 he not only resumed his activities but also became chairman of the German Missionary Council, which position he retained until he died in 1959. When in 1953 the University of Hamburg at last decided to establish a full-fledged theological faculty, Freytag was the obvious choice for the newly created chair of missionology and ecumenical relations. The Mission Academy, set up due to Freytag’s initiative in 1954 as part of the university structure, became the institutional link between his activities as teacher, scholar, and missionary leader.
When ecumenical contacts with German churches had been reestablished, none other but Freytag could be thought of as the representative of German Protestant missions in the world church. He participated in all world missionary conferences from Jerusalem 1928 to Ghana 1957–58, became chairman of the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches in 1954, a vice president of the International Missionary Council in 1958, and took an active part in numerous other ecumenical bodies. After 1945 Freytag paid repeated visits to the United States and Canada, mostly for participation in ecumenical events.

Far from being a mere “ecumaniac” or from considering missionary statesmanship as an end in itself, Freytag felt it to be part of his personal responsibility to make “the missionary dimension of the whole church and of all churches” manifest. Identification with and participation in the world church called him to serve his German home church even more devotedly. He understood, as expressed in the title of his last address, “the regional church (Landeskirche) as part of the world mission.” No less than three times he was urged to run for the vacant office of bishop in the regional church of Hamburg. Three times he declined. But as a member of the Hamburg church synod and various nationwide church committees he continued to exert considerable influence in German Protestantism as a whole.

It has quite rightly been said that Walter Freytag saw it as his task to lead both the church back to its mission and the mission back to the church. Whether he succeeded in doing so in Germany may be debatable. He certainly did achieve a degree of understanding and unity of purpose among German missionary agencies unheard-of before, and which seems almost incredible now as the polarization of so-called evangelical and ecumenical groups has been increasing at an alarming rate. Church leaders listened to Freytag’s appeals and gave indications of their willingness to act accordingly. Yet when his charismatic persistence had disappeared, when his mediating skill was no longer in operation, things took a different turn. It is not only sobering to discern the facts but to be governed by God’s own plan. Yet this was not evident on the surface of events. It had to be discerned by the eye of faith, more often than not in contrast to what the realities seemed to indicate. Insight into the meaning of history was not, as a generation later Wolfhart Pannenberg would maintain, the presupposition of faith but its consequence. Heilsgeschichte only would open up the depth dimension of all history. The “facts” as such proved to be ambivalent. As part of the old aeon they had to be regarded as the linen cloths in the tomb of Jesus—serving a purpose in the world as the sphere of human life and action, yet in principle having been laid aside at the dawn of the new age of the resurrection.

Occasionally Freytag had been taken to task for what to some appeared to be a far too pessimistic view of history and the world. For example, was not Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s concept of the modern world come of age, and man as its free agent, unencumbered by religious scruples, closer to the biblical view of what God had willed for his creation? Freytag might have replied that he was not primarily concerned about problems of anthropology or the interpretation of history in general. The focal point of his argument was an eminently practical one: the Christian mission in a changing world, and that not in a theoretical sense but as a challenge to the obedience of faith that God demanded at each particular historical juncture. It was as simple as that: “Without mission, history is nothing but human history, and its progress can lead nowhere except to a climax of its catastrophes.” Or in more positive terms: “Mission is the real meaning of the interval in salvation history between Christ’s resurrection and parousia. In mission the truly decisive things happen—those related to the end, irrespective of all human history and circumstances, in season and out of season.” Yet from that angle even the things of this world could take on a new relevance.

Nothing could have been more important to Freytag than to trace the expressions that the obedience of faith would take among those who responded to the call under varying conditions. Those who knew him well have often remarked on his way of elaborating important points in his lectures and addresses with illustrations, sometimes attributing more weight to the latter than to the former. Mission had to do with the spontaneous, authentic response of faith, different in different contexts, but in any case embracing the total range of relationships in both society and environment, the organic life of the peoples, including culture and religion.

"New Realities"⁵

While Freytag respected the scholarly achievements of previous generations of missiologists, he had no use for mere repetition of theories of the past, hoary as they might be. He was most seriously concerned to do justice to what he called the “new realities” or simply the “facts” of changed situations as he saw them. And was it not obvious that missions were deeply affected by such changes? “Then,” at the time of the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, “missions had problems, but they were not a problem themselves.” . . . Today we are uncertain about their patterns as they are and even more, the historic, basic conceptions of missions are being questioned.⁶⁷

The questioning originated, in the first place, from new realities in national and international politics, in social and cultural affairs, in development and education, religion and spirituality. The age of colonial rule was patently in eclipse all over the world. A new longing for self-realization, although in many instances still unstable, made itself felt. Freytag together with others had sensed all this already in the twenties and early thirties. During his first extended journey in Asia on which he reported in 1938,⁸ he had come to the conclusion that God was at work in the political, social, and cultural revolutions that stirred even the most backward peoples. How could traditional concepts of eternal return, of cyclic repetition of events persist when God himself provided new goals, a new kairos, which created a new sense of direction and destiny?

Freytag knew that he was moving on dangerous ground. He had himself been in open conflict with so-called “German Christian” theologians who, in a seemingly similar fashion, declared the new realities created by the Nazi regime to be unmistakable evidence of God’s working in history. The personal experience of Hitler’s tyranny and of the ensuing world war had led Freytag to a critical reappraisal of any facile identification of historical facts and the will of God. History could certainly not but be governed by God’s own plan. Yet this was not evident on the surface of events. It had to be discerned by the eye of faith, more often than not in contrast to what the realities seemed to indicate. Insight into the meaning of history was not, as a generation later Wolfhart Pannenberg would maintain, the presupposition of faith but its consequence. Heilsgeschichte only would open up the depth dimension of all history. The “facts” as such proved to be ambivalent. As part of the old aeon they had to be regarded as the linen cloths in the tomb of Jesus—serving a purpose in the world as the sphere of human life and action, yet in principle having been laid aside at the dawn of the new age of the resurrection.

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⁶ "Without mission, history is nothing but human history, and its progress can lead nowhere except to a climax of its catastrophes." From "New Realities" in International Bulletin, 14, 1975.

⁷ "Today we are uncertain about their patterns as they are and even more, the historic, basic conceptions of missions are being questioned." From "New Realities" in International Bulletin, 14, 1975.

⁸ "Missions had problems, but they were not a problem themselves." From "New Realities" in International Bulletin, 14, 1975.

⁹ "Then," at the time of the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, "missions had problems, but they were not a problem themselves." From "New Realities" in International Bulletin, 14, 1975.

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14 International Bulletin
Freytag’s concept of Volk, in his day a hotly debated issue, is an instructive case in question. While he spoke up against any pseudo-religious glorification of Volk as a natural point of contact for the gospel, he insisted that such God-given societal patterns had to be respected and utilized in connection with the growth of the church precisely because in this age before the end they were not yet suspended, although in view of what was to come they could never claim ultimate loyalty. They might be dangerous wherever they appeared in heidnischer Umklammerung, that is, embraced by paganism, just as all other attempts at a synthesis of religions and social patterns had to be regarded with suspicion, not least the post-Christian and even the Christian ones. On the other hand, they, too, were part of the realities that had to be faced if, as Freytag liked to say, the mission was to become what it ought to be: “God’s reality in this world.” At an early stage of his career Freytag had a foretaste of the difficulties involved in maintaining so precarious a balance between positions that were indeed difficult to reconcile. He was one of the German delegates at the Tambaram Assembly of the International Missionary Council of 1938 who presented a statement of their own, trying to combine an eschatological emphasis with a defense of the “orders which God has established and ordained . . . for this period of transition between Christ’s resurrection and His Second Advent,” including nations and races. This was bound to be misunderstood as a veiled defense of the Volk-ideology of the Third Reich. Nobody could be further from such an intention than Freytag. But the experience helped him to clarify even more carefully the paradoxical character of the church’s mission in this world, “witnessing by word and deed in real brotherhood and sacrificial service for the sake of mankind” and “so proclaiming the Lord’s death till He comes.”

“Mission as God’s Reality in this World”

Freytag’s missiological approach has been described as inductive, in contrast to a deductive way of thinking that starts from Scriptures and then proceeds to the interpretation of contextual situations. It is not clear whether Freytag himself ever used this terminology. He certainly would never have consented to any philosophy or theology of mission that relied on the so-called realities of nature, world, and history more than on the explicit testimonies of Scripture. On that basis he would, however, attempt to make reality transparent, as it were, for the signs of God’s eschatological work of salvation and redemption and thus to “find new openings towards the center secretly hidden”—openings that were not to be discovered except by attempting “to follow what God is doing step by step.”

This would, in the first place, imply a realignment of missions with reference to traditional patterns. The pietistic type, while rightly insisting on calling people to repentance and conversion, was one-sided in its individualistic emphasis. Church-centered missions were right in their concern for the gathering of believers into the church. But they often tended to identify the kingdom of God with the institutional church. Philanthropic missions were rightly concerned about obedience active in love. But not even the most devoted attempts to make the world a better place to live in would bring the coming kingdom any nearer. Finally, there was the one-sided emphasis on the “beyond” in apocalyptic missions, which believed to be called literally to speed up the return of Christ by their witness. In contrast to all these approaches, the relative merits of which he did not want to deny, Freytag advocated a view of mission as “taking part in the action of God, in fulfilling his plan for the coming of his kingdom by bringing about obedience of the faith in Jesus Christ our Lord among the nations.” Nowadays this may sound fairly conventional. But a generation ago Freytag’s thought provided for many the kind of direction in mission whose loss had been widely deplored, not least by Freytag himself.

The World Missionary Conference of Willingen 1952 in this connection made the phrase missio Dei, God’s own mission, internationally popular. Freytag himself had already ten years earlier described mission, with reference to Mark 13:10, as “part of God’s own eschatological action,” as “the sign of the coming end set up by Him.” To him this carried a dual emphasis. First, missio Dei, as the very term suggested, was meant to correct all undue indulgence in missio hominum. The signs of the times made it clear to everyone willing to see: the “loss of directness” in Western missions, their “endangered image,” were more than a symptom of transitory weakness. Did they not rather point to a more permanent defect, a habitual overestimation of human missionary action and its achievements, perhaps even to the “spectre of pan-missionism,” and thus to a new and peculiar kind of active disobedience in the guise of restless activity?

Second, missio Dei made sense only in view of the end, the eschaton, which alone gave mission the proper perspective. It has sometimes been said that Freytag had borrowed the eschatological emphasis from the Cullmann school of biblical exegesis. However he had learned it already from his teachers Adolf Schlatter and Karl Heim. Moreover he deliberately refrained from giving the mission its place in a comprehensive scheme of Heilsgeschichte whereby it might serve as an unfailing indicator of apocalyptic events to come, or even as a device of bringing those events nearer. The fact of the matter is that Freytag found the dialectic of mission and eschatology fulfilled in the continuing call to mission, “to take part in the responsibility of God’s outgoing into the whole world,” to such an extent that those “who live in the obedience of faith are part of His action.”

In this connection Freytag used to mention an experience he had in 1956 in China. He had been asked by Christians in Peking how the church in West Germany since 1945 had given witness to the Lordship of Christ in this world. He had not been asked about the work of German missions—and was this not striking evidence that in the final analysis every Christian was supposed to be part of God’s mission in the world, that “the decisions of God’s action are made in our life with Christ”? Max Warren reported how Freytag summed this up in christological terms at the Whitby conference of 1947: “The life of Christ has to do with the day of his return. Gospel is never glad tidings of solved problems but a summons to a fight in which victory is certain.”

Again, Freytag’s strictly eschatological concept of mission has come in for questioning. Did he not perhaps, in order to maintain the perspective of the eschaton, play down the salvation that had already been achieved in Christ’s cross and resurrection? Freytag might ask in return, as he did at Whitby: “Do not the acts of God which constitute the kerygma . . . contain the future acts of God—the future of history, the future of the Church—the end of the world?” He probably would have cared little whether, in his outline of the missio Dei, reconciliation and redemption, presence and future, promise and fulfillment were perfectly in balance or not. What mattered most to him was, again, whether Christians in their whole life and existence were willing to become part of God’s eschatological mission or whether they would stand in its way.

January, 1981
"The Miracle of the Church among the Nations"22

It was this perspective with which, in Freytag's opinion, the church, too, would stand and fall: it has "its life towards that end, the goal of God in the coming again of Christ."23 In saying this, Freytag steered a course between two extremes, neither of which seemed acceptable to him. On the one hand, there were those who regarded mission primarily as an operation from an existing church to a church to be, as it were, a device for the self-propagation of church bodies, their traditions and structures. Freytag would agree that the gathering into a visible community of those who came to believe was an indispensable part of the mission, just as mission in both the Old and New Testaments had a centrifugal as well as a centripetal aspect. Yet the mission as participation in the action of God could not possibly be domesticated within the limits of a confessional or regional church and its immediate outreach. On the other hand, the church was more than mission. Its total being was not to be reduced to its missionary action. J. C. Hoekendijk, otherwise on friendly terms with Freytag, could not help disagreeing violently with Freytag's rejection of "pan-missionism," which Hoekendijk quite rightly interpreted as an emphatic objection against Hoekendijk's favorite idea of "mission without church."24 In fact, in this respect some of Freytag's own disciples were more in sympathy with Hoekendijk than with him. But Freytag was not willing to yield because he was afraid of letting the church fall back from one captivity in human actionism into the other. Not mission but the grace of God, manifested in baptism and Eucharist, was the ground on which the church had to reply. There might be times of emergency and pressure when the church would have to survive by relying on that ground only, even without any outgoing mission. Was not China after 1949 a case in question—China, which had been the aim of Freytag's ambition in his younger days and had retained its special fascination for him ever since? And so he explained to the Ghana Assembly in a remarkably sober and cautious manner that in the varieties of "services" of the churches, mission was but one human form in which Christian obedience was to take shape, and that it might well become concrete in separate missionary organizations and institutions, which would send out witnesses in order to carry the gospel from church to nonchurch. "This service of missions is human service, it cannot claim to be exclusively the mission of God"—which in its turn was of course more than such service, as Freytag never grew tired of emphasizing.25 So he insisted that outdated patterns of mission should be overcome, that the missionary obedience of churches should find new forms in new contexts. But he was unwilling to abandon the idea of missions, foreign missions in particular, as a "special service" of the church, reaching out to what was yet to become a church.

His refusal to muster theological arguments for the integration of church and mission, as recorded above, fits into the picture. No wonder that Freytag seems to have had little trouble with the term "Assessere Mission," foreign missions, as distinguished from "Volksmission," home missions. God's outgoing into the whole world in which each church was to take part might happen in "non-church" areas as well as in countries in which the church had long been present—the task was essentially the same, "mission here and there,"26 yet not simply to be identified with the conventional teaching and preaching of the church for its members.

There is a marked difference between Freytag's wrestling with the problem of calling saturated Western churches to missionary obedience, and his discovery of the "responding church" as he found it in Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. That was where the "miracle of the church among the nations" was really coming true, and where therefore, in Freytag's opinion, the criteria of what the mission was meant to achieve became manifest.

It is neither possible nor necessary to analyze Freytag's concept of the "younger church" in detail—its special blessings and its special problems as he had observed and interpreted them in most of what he had said and written since his first comprehensive report of 1938. But there are emphases that are of more than historiographical interest, especially because they seem to provide clues to what, according to Freytag, established the obedience of faith in pursuit of the missio Dei and in relation to the new realities as they appeared in the various cultural contexts.

In 1925 Freytag had written his doctoral dissertation on "Patterns of Religious Formation and Education in A. Tholuck's Book on Sin." Here for the first time Freytag had concentrated on the role and function of human conscience in religious experience. Later he developed this further in his famous essay on the "Psychology of Conversion among Primitive Peoples" and, finally, in one of his most mature treatises, written in the midst of isolation during the war, on "How Pagans Become Christians." The argument was as lucid as simple: There is a difference between the gospel message as it is proclaimed and as it is received. The preaching is conditioned by the cultural and personal circumstances of the messenger as well as by those of the addressees. The gospel message remains alien and ineffective unless it enters into the respective cultural and personal circumstances of those who hear, and thus appeals to their conscience. For there, and there only, in their very life center, both individuals and groups are able authentically to respond to the call of God's Word, either by opposition or by consent. There the struggle between the old and the new loyalties will be fought out. There alone the obedience of faith will be generated, which otherwise would remain superficial. "Conscience speaks the mother-tongue,"27 and without its spontaneous response the Word would "return empty and not accomplish that which God purposes" (Is. 55:11). Above all, the change of conscience under the impact of the gospel is the decisive factor in the process of the genesis and growth of the younger church—a church which, as Freytag said frequently, comes into being and must be respected as "another and a different church."

Never before had Freytag expressed this as concisely and consistently as in a brief memorandum that he sent out to some contact people before his last major journey to Asia in 1956–57: "The decisive feature is that which we might call the responding church. For what constitutes the life of a church, as seen from the human side, is that it is a responding one in the twofold meaning: responding to the Word, and in a given situation. It is in this twofold response that a given church has its identity as Church." It was Freytag's chief concern to discover the genuine response of the younger church "not only where we are used to do so according to the ideas which we derive from western churches, but perhaps most intensely at points where a church's reactions are different from those of western churches."28

It is remarkable that in this connection Freytag omits any reference to the confessional or denominational identity of the church. This may have been partly due to his upbringing as a member of the Moravian community which, while associating itself with the Lutheran family of churches in a broad sense, had traditionally placed loyalty to Christ as the Lord above any denominational affiliation. Even as an ordained minister in the Lutheran church of Hamburg, Freytag maintained membership in the local Moravian congregation. However, quite apart from biographical circumstances, Freytag was convinced that there was an organic relationship between the mission and the unity of
the church, which the Moravian community in its history since the days of Zinzendorf had expressed in a specially convincing way. Generally speaking, only as divided churches agreed to go forth in mission could they be expected to make progress toward achieving a higher degree of unity. Here, too, Freytag could place the truth of the church, as he used to call it, above its historical appearance. “To ask for unity does not mean to ask for the sum total of empirical churches but for the true church,” the church that is known precisely by its fruits beyond the borders of existing denominations. On the other hand, existing denominational churches should not be disregarded on that account only: “The fruits are there not in spite of people being members of an empirical church but because they are.”

This, incidentally, was the frame of reference in which Freytag considered the church’s witness among people of non-Christian religions or no religious adherence whatever. There, too, Freytag would advocate waiting for a better proclamations of the Word, reaching deeper than hitherto experienced, searching for expressions of the faith that would do justice to the particular challenge presented by the encounter in a given situation. That challenge would never be met on the basis of a naive assumption of Western-Christian superiority. “You have not really understood another religion unless you have been tempted by the insights of this other religion. . . . There is no understanding of other religions which does not yield new biblical insights.” After all, the Christian religion itself was permanently in danger of falling victim to the assaults of demonic powers. And was it not at least partly due to the failure of the church’s witness, its inadequate communication of the biblical message, that a phenomenon such as “post-Christian non-Christian” religion could at all come into being? Hence it was not any innate prerogative that Christianity could claim in the struggle. It was the living Lord alone to whom one had to resort in order to find the right approach—an approach that would eventually reach the conscience of those to whom the gospel message of salvation in Christ was to be addressed, irrespective of any handy theological formulae like continuity and discontinuity, promise and fulfillment, question and answer.

Besides, while Freytag did give due attention to the general problems of the Christian approach to non-Christian religion, he was prophetically aware of new developments that would require entirely new responses: “A new world religion is in process of formation which will embrace all religions, old and new, including the political ones in east and west, so that their traditional contradictions will appear merely like those of denominations within the same confession.”

In this respect as well as in others it would be tempting to determine how Freytag, the prophet of a past generation, would qualify as a judge of our own age, its achievements and failures. Even though not all of his contributions to the mission of the church and to a responsible science of mission will prove to have lasting effects, the fact remains that he stood out in his day as a teacher, preacher, and scholar, endowed not just with persuasive power but with authority in the sense of an exousia that drew its strength not from its own resources but from total submission to the guidance of God. Or as Freytag himself put it somewhat paradoxically a few months before the abrupt end of his life: “We ought to be much more conscious, should we not, of the danger implicit in wanting to see, here and now, the very things which we have only by faith and hope. It is only by this certain confidence in things not seen that we actually have them as our own.”

Notes

6. ibid., p. 138. The official English translation of Freytag’s speech at the Ghana Assembly missed the cutting edge of the original German wording: “Damals hatte die Mission Probleme, heute ist sie selbst zum Problem geworden” (Reden und Auswahl 1: 111).
7. ibid., pp. 138ff.
10. ibid., p. 214.
11. ibid., p. 219.
13. ibid., p. 185.
15. ibid., p. 146.
18. Freytag, Reden und Auswahl 2: 94.
21. ibid.
27. ibid., p. 72.
28. ibid. 1: 55. The English wording quoted here is Freytag’s own.
29. ibid. 2: 120.
30. ibid., p. 230.
32. See in particular Das Rätsel der Religionen und die biblische Antwort.
34. ibid., p. 97. “Sollten wir uns nicht der Gefahr viel bewusster sein, die darin liegt, dass wir jetzt und hier sehen wollen, was wir nur im Glauben und in der Hoffnung, nur in der gewissen Zuversicht dessen, das man nicht sieht, haben?”

January, 1981
Creighton Lacy

“Doc” Devanandan—as his friends and associates called him—was above all an enabler, a facilitator, an encourager, an inspirer, a challenger, a friend. To be sure, he was—as farewell tributes reminded us—an outstanding preacher, pastor, scholar, prophet, evangelist, even practical joker. One colleague called him “a finder and builder of men.” Another wrote: “Gradually he built up a team of younger thinkers and writers who have the opportunity to move into larger areas of thought and witness which he suggested, but had no time to explore.” These are the marks of a gifted and humble teacher. Let me illustrate this in several areas.

In 1959 a relatively young, unknown American professor, totally ignorant of the Indian scene, arrived in New Delhi on an academic quest and a financial shoestring to undertake independent research on India’s social ethics. Somehow “Doc” heard about it, and within a few weeks, on his next visit to the capital, almost overcome by joy and pride at the achievement of his pastorate, scholar, prophet, evangelist, even practical joker. One colleague called him “a finder and builder of men.” Another wrote: “Gradually he built up a team of younger thinkers and writers who have the opportunity to move into larger areas of thought and witness which he suggested, but had no time to explore.” These are the marks of a gifted and humble teacher. Let me illustrate this in several areas.

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Two years he spent as head of the YMCA Department of Literature and Publications. But it was as director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, an appointment tragically cut short after only five years, that P. D. Devanandan traveled the length and breadth of India and shared more widely his mature social and theological reflections. The institute (when I saw it, at least) occupied a small, breezy, enormously cluttered bungalow immediately adjacent to the United Theological College in Bangalore. There the plain but pregnant Bulletin, later called Religion and Society, was published; there books and pamphlets were collected and edited; there plans were made for the seemingly endless succession of workshop consultations conducted all over the country.

For the CISRS was really at work, most truly carrying out its mission, wherever P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas happened to be. From "The Urban Community and the Urban Church" to "The Pattern of Rural Community Development," from "Dynamic Democracy" to "The Communist Role in Kerala and Christian Responsibility," these seminars and study conferences focused the attention of Indian Christians on their essential involvement in "nation-building" (a favorite term). In writing on international affairs, for example, Devanandan asked: "Can foreign aid be so utilized as to realize cultural and social objectives as well" as economic and technological ones? But "Doc" knew—as many missionaries and church members did not—that a tiny minority of Christians could not make a significant contribution to their country or their community without understanding and appreciating the truths and values and insights of the dominant Hindu culture. Devanandan’s final weeks of activity included a "dialogue on the Concept of Truth between Christian and Hindu friends held at the Christavasram" and a conference of theologians on the "Christian Doctrine of Creation," a conference to which he invited noted Hindu scholars to present "the Hindu view of purpose, society and history so that the theologians may do their thinking on the [Christian] Doctrine of Creation within the context of and in dialogue with Indian thought." Precisely because P. D. Devanandan was always so "busy," so constantly "on the go," so involved in editing, organizing, and directing consultations, many contemporaries lost sight of the profound theology that undergirded and motivated these activities, as well as providing their substance and purpose. Looking back over nearly two decades since his death, rereading his most important works, one is struck by the clarity and directness with which he tackled most of the issues that still befuddle missiology, mission theology, and interreligious dialogue.

"Doc" was always building bridges, not erecting barricades. Without ever compromising his own faith, without ever denying or minimizing the differences, he sought for points on which Hinduism and Christianity might agree—or at least seek common goals. He declared that "the concept of man in society is a modern concept... that all rationalism tends toward individualism... an individualism which has become... man against society." Yet at the heart of his thought and life lay the conviction that "essentially religion is concerned with the fulfillment of the human person, not in isolation of self but in community of being." As a Christian in "the world's largest democracy" Devanandan believed in religious pluralism, but also in the freedom to affirm an "exclusive," decisive, converting faith. In the perennial debate as to "whether the meeting of human need is a rightful function of the Church or is somehow only subservient to the evangelistic aim," he quotes Willem Visser ’t Hooft with unqualified agreement: "Diakonie exists in its own right, and is a perfectly necessary and essential expression of the Church’s life." With equal conviction "Doc" would place Chris-
Christianity along with “Hindu secularism” (i.e., recognition of the reality and significance of the created world and human responsibility within it) over against the escapism, the world-and-life-denial, of traditional Hindu “spirituality.” In these and other apparent dichotomies and tensions, for Paul David Devanandan, Jesus Christ is the ultimate “bridge.”

Few if any Christians have demonstrated so deep and comprehensive an insight into Hinduism. Few if any Hindus have offered so clear and simple and fair a presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary Hindu thought, as are to be found in the slim posthumous volume entitled Preparation for Dialogue. Hindu scholars may disagree with Devanandan’s conclusions, but they seldom criticize his honesty or accuracy. On countless platforms in innumerable seminars, before all sorts of audiences, P. D. Devanandan probed the inconsistencies, the contradictions, the unanswered questions of ancient and modern Hinduism, not with a polemical, combative attitude, but to open channels of receptivity to Christian alternatives.

For example, “Hindu thinking will have to come to terms with the whole idea of personality as applied both to finite and infinite being.” A contemporary view of personality, Devanandan believed, is essential for the development of relationships, of true community, and of nationhood. Or again, “Hindu religious thought, in all its voluminous literature, takes no serious notice of history . . . . The Hindu indifference to history is due to its characteristic theology, its conception of God and Reality.” This metaphysical view of Reality and the absence of any doctrine of creation, Devanandan emphasized, produce a major dilemma for those modern “secular” Hindus who wish to stress social reform, economic development, political responsibility.

Yet such lacunae in traditional Hinduism often pose more problems for Christians and Muslims than for Hindus and Buddhists, because Westerners are wedded to an either/or logic rather than both/and. One may argue that all faiths are but different paths to the same truth, that “the ultimate goal of all religions is beyond religion.” One may acknowledge that each faith is partially true, but that it is possible to “reconcile differences by setting them in the larger framework of an evolving world-religion.” Or one may reject all religion as false, unscientific, retrogressive—the charge of some Marxist-inspired materialists, even in traditionally spiritual India. But the Christian position espoused by Devanandan is that “each historic religion is an entity by itself . . . . that there are differences which we should all be willing to accept, and to give all men of faith full freedom for religious self-expression.”

In this sincere invitation to dialogue in the midst of acknowledged pluralism, Devanandan never surrenders or blurs the central affirmation of the gospel. There is no syncretism, no “Christo-paganism,” not even the latent theological imperialism of claiming a hidden Christ, an “unknown Christ of Hinduism.” For Devanandan the particularity, the admitted “exclusivism,” of Christianity is out in the open, precisely because it is more inclusive than the claims of any single creed, confession, or church. “The Christian faith is that what God has done in Jesus Christ has been done for all men. So that the claim for uniqueness is only an affirmation of its universality.”

On the other hand, Devanandan—like his Lord!—reserves his harshest language for those orthodox pundits whose narrow, judgmental dogmatism alienates rather than attracts. He draws a sharp distinction between propagation and propaganda, between persuasion and coercion, as between conversion and proselytism. He acknowledges the regrettable frequency of “somewhat dubious methods” in the history of Christian missions, especially “the temptation of exaggerating the validity of Christian claims by deliberately minimizing the inherent worth of other faiths.”

“Conviction about one’s religious beliefs does not necessarily involve condemnation of the faith of others,” he reminds his Christian audiences. In fact, “the claims made for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the reality of the Church, the urgency of the mission and the authority of the Bible, are claims addressed not to others but to those who profess the Christian faith.” In other words, the particularities, the distinctive elements that mark off Christianity from other faiths, are the result of the gospel message, not the basis of it. “It is not Christianity that is preached as against other religions.”

What, then, is that essential, irreducible gospel message? Simply that “the Christian view is that revelation is of God Himself, not of truths about Him, and that it is the communication of Person to persons.” If that conviction cuts across many traditional Hindu doctrines, such as those cited above, so be it. According to Devanandan, “man reflects the nature of God, but he is not of the same substance as God; . . . . he can share in the creative purpose of God . . . . because Christian anthropology has always been concerned with mankind rather than with man as against women.”

Somewhat unexpectedly—at least to those who equate interreligious dialogue with liberal theology—Devanandan was biblically conservative, basically neo-orthodox. First exposed to the liberal currents of the twenties and thirties, he was profoundly influenced by Karl Barth and, according to M. M. Thomas, “found in Kraemer a basis of renewal of his theology.” But in missiological terms Devanandan “has been in revolt against Kraemer, searching for the post-Kraemer approach to the relation between Christianity and other religions.”

That influence included a serious but nonlegalistic view of sin—another concept that has no ultimate meaning in traditional Hinduism. “Man individually and collectively chooses,” Devanandan wrote, “to direct his affairs in accordance with his own will . . . . The root-cause of all this disorder is the individual and collective selfishness of man.” But, he hastened to add at a Hindu-Christian colloquy: “The Christian faith does not stop with the conviction about the sinfulness of man in the here and now. It goes on to proclaim and testify to the fact of forgiveness of sin.”

Christian Concern in Hinduism was published in the spring of 1961. In the chapter on “Our Task Today” Devanandan declared: “We would now hesitate to talk of evangelism as what we do but [rather recognize it] as what God is doing through us.” In December of 1961—to the surprise of some who tended to dismiss the speaker as a social activist, deeply involved in political and economic concerns—Paul David Devanandan delivered an address to the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in New Delhi, on the theme “Called to Witness.” “No one,” he asserted in the opening paragraph, “can claim to be a Christian believer, unless he bears living testimony to the redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus as a present reality.”

In the earlier book Devanandan defined evangelism in “its fourfold character as a cosmic process, a historic reality, a divine undertaking and a people’s movement.” At the New Delhi Assembly, where the International Missionary Council became the Division of World Mission and Evangelism within the World Council of Churches, he amplified these distinctions. First, basing
his conviction on Ephesians 1 (and Colossians 1), he affirmed
that “the whole creation, life in its totality, every aspect of . . .
earthly existence, will be brought eventually under the direct
way of God.”32 Second, “the message of the Kingdom” as an
experiential fact “is directed to the individual and collective
conscience of humankind,”33 where it is thwarted, the cause
is humanity’s sinful rebellion. Third, “this work of redemption,
made manifest in human history in the life, death, and resurrection
of Jesus Christ, is in fact being carried out—now and everywhere
in our world! It is a present occurrence.” Finally, God has entrusted
“the fulfillment of His purpose” to us, to be witnesses, fishers
of men, missionaries, “members of a fellowship whose calling
is to herald the Good News. . . . In any locality the community
of believers are in fact the Body of Christ, exercising Christ’s
continuing ministry of intercession, service and love in the con­
crete situation of contemporary life.”34

"Doc" was committed to dialogue. Not destructive debate,
not demand for deserting community or denying genuine religious
experience. Rather, dialogue that starts with persons, in the midst
of their social heritage and spiritual pilgrimage. Dialogue that
ends ultimately, in God’s time and God’s manner, with Jesus
Christ. Dialogue, as essential for followers of the Way as for
others. Said M. M. Thomas of his mentor and colleague: “His
fundamental concern was to help the Indian Church to understand
Jesus Christ as the final clue and fulfillment of God’s work for
the world of Indian religion, culture and society. . . . Jesus Christ
reinforced and clarified the common humanity of all men. On
this basis all dialogues among men about man, his faith, his
culture, or his society, become real conversations, conversations
in Christ and conversations about Christ.”35

Paul David Devanandan spent his life building bridges: be­
tween East and West, between Hindus and Christians, between
religion and secular life, between church and society, between
the individual and the group, between God and His people. In
short, he undertook the work of Jesus Christ, and he did it as
a labor of love. Furthermore, he did it in the spirit of Christ,
a spirit too often lacking in today’s world, where narrow dog­
matism or political and theological conflict so often obscure the
Light. “Doc” Devanandan, said Thomas, “always sought to look
forward to new and emerging creative forces and ideas. . . . He
saw more clearly than anyone else I knew of his age that the
new period was one, not of revolts, but of reconstruction, whether
in theological endeavour, church-life, or nation-building.”36

As long as Christians are concerned about a Christlike ap­
proach to social responsibilities or to other religious faiths, the
legacy of Paul David Devanandan will be quietly, lovingly at
work.

Notes
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. IRM, op. cit.
12. Ibid., p. 112.
13. Ibid., p. 111.
17. Devanandan, Preparation . . . , p. 137.

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“Religion and National Unity in India.” Christianity and Crisis 18 (Dec.
Edited by Nalini Devanandan and Stanley J. Samartha
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“In Memory of Devanandan.” Bangalore: CISRS, 1962 (reprinted from
N.C.C. Review, National Christian Council of India, September and
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January, 1981

Edited with M. M. Thomas

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on Social Concerns, 1957.

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21
Bread for the World: Clear Command, Complicated Task

Arthur Simon

But if any one has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth (1 Jn. 3:17–18).

God’s command for Christians to feed the hungry is clear. From the earliest time humankind was given the responsibility not only for stewardship of the earth’s abundance but for the care of one another.

As clear as the command is, the task is not so simple. How do Christians begin the great job of feeding one billion hungry people in the world? How can Christians translate the love of God that abides in them into deeds and truth?

One obvious and important way is through gifts to relief and development projects on both local and international levels. Most churches or denominations have relief and development agencies, and giving to these agencies must be encouraged. Yet there is a far larger hunger problem than charitable gifts can solve.

Bread for the World is a Christian citizens’ movement based on the conviction that a part of Christian responsibility for the hungry lies in the use of political influence on their behalf. Christians can advocate the cause of the poor in the powerful political and economic systems where the poor are not heard.

Growing at a grassroots level, the seven-year-old movement has spread throughout the United States and now has a fellowship of more than 30,000 members studying hunger issues and urging their representatives in Congress to take appropriate action against hunger. Bread for the World members see themselves as an important part of the political process, and the political process as an important way to oppose hunger on a large scale.

But why should Christians become involved in public policy? What is the link between United States governmental decisions and hunger overseas?

The Cause of Hunger

To look at the link between United States public policy and hunger, Bread for the World began by studying the causes of hunger.

If a person does not have money to buy food or the land to grow food, that person will be hungry. If the person is a child, or an elderly person, then labor for food or income is also impossible. Poverty causes hunger. The struggle against hunger requires that poverty be reduced or eliminated, and that sources of income and food are found for the poor.

The sources of income and food production are tied directly to the political and economic systems that govern the world. No political or economic systems at work today wield as much power as those of the United States.

A single action of Congress or one decision by the president can undo—or multiply many times over—the dollar value of all our voluntary contributions combined. To take an offering in church for world relief and quietly leave the big decisions to political leaders only encourages them to make the wrong decisions. Our silence is taken as indifference or hostility toward the poor when policies are hammered out. Hungry people become victims. In the ways we fail to hold these systems accountable and affect the decisions made within them, we become a part of the problem of hunger.

The Poverty Link

Why are there so many poor people? The first and most obvious answer is because of population growth. But that does not really explain the numbers and degrees of poverty we see today. Enough food was produced in the worst of the African famine of several years ago to feed all of Africa. The problem was the processes, economical and political, that determine how food is distributed.

The earth is capable of feeding all of its inhabitants. But onetime barter and trade economies in the Third World countries are now cash economies. When a bad year comes to West Africa, farmers who do not have money to buy reserves from grain dealers may simply starve.

Export cropping, encouraged by United States trade and aid policies and developed by multinational corporations, is another food production/poverty problem. The best land is often used to grow food for other countries. Many land holdings that once belonged to family farmers now belong to prosperous landowners or corporations. Under this land consolidation, some of the most fertile land, formerly used for growing beans, rice, and other food for domestic consumption, is now used to grow crops for overseas markets. The agriculture-export industries often do not provide jobs for the farmers. Without land, without work, they become part of the poverty-stricken billion of the world.

In other countries the land problem is one of division and not consolidation. The land remains in the family, but after years and years of farming it is worn out. Then the land is divided among the sons of a family and then divided among the next generation and the next, until plots are too small to support a family. Whatever the land-use pattern, a comprehensive approach to rural development, including reforms that enable the very poor to participate in development, is needed.

Urban hunger is also related to public policy. Many of the jobless in cities have migrated from the country when they could no longer live off the land. Sometimes the migration took place decades ago, but still the family has not been able to break...
the hunger cycle. The pace of migration to the cities is accelerating. Foreign aid has in some places been useful, but contrary to the belief of most United States citizens, the foreign aid offered by this country is neither generous enough nor sufficiently aimed at helping the poor. Of the seventeen free-market donor nations, the United States ranks thirteenth where aid-giving is measured as a percentage of Gross National Product. About 75 percent of America’s foreign aid is spent in the United States, in line with agreements that accompany the giving of aid.

Aid is not always aimed at developing self-reliance among the very poor. Much of it is “security supporting assistance”—aid given to support countries such as Israel and Egypt for strategic political purposes. Beyond that there is need to shape our assistance in ways that assure delivery of help to the very poor, and the kind of help that will give them access to land, jobs, and other economic resources. The aim should be to enable them to help themselves.

Other public policies deal with world banking systems, trade, and investment—issues that are often more important than aid in determining whether people eat or die. Christians must be informed to participate in making these policies. This is why education, research, and group study are part of the Bread for the World citizens’ movement.

**Public Responsibility**

Privileges and responsibility have always been held in balance in the Christian journey. Jesus said, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

The people of the United States, including we Christians, have been given much. We consume far more than our share of the world’s natural resources. We have political power and business influence that reaches around the globe. But the greatest privilege of all may be the privilege of participation. Our government not only encourages people to participate in its affairs, but if our form of government is to work properly, people must participate.

Christians in the United States are part of this people-represented system, which can work either for or against hungry people. We can become advocates for hungry people by practicing a stewardship of public influence, just as we practice a stewardship of time, talents, or money. We can speak on behalf of the poor, who have little voice.

There are two hurdles Christians must cross to become a part of the political process. The first is the belief that they are themselves poor. We may perceive ourselves as poor because we do not have all the modern appliances or because we have struggles in maintaining our lifestyle in the face of inflation. But we are not poor at all compared to the thousands on the sidewalks of any city in India who have no home whatever.

The second hurdle is the feeling that the government is a powerful giant and we are neither a part of it nor an influence within it. Bread for the World has shown that Christians joined together with a common purpose can influence legislation. Right-to-food resolutions, grain reserve legislation, and famine relief for Cambodia are just a few of the successful campaigns mounted by Bread for the World members.

The government is a powerful, mysterious giant only if we allow it to be. A letter to a representative, a phone call to an official, an informed letter to a local newspaper—all have influence and all are within the reach of every Christian in the United States.

These small efforts when multiplied by Christians all over the country become major political influence. The combined learning and doing of Bread for the World members can bridge the gap between government and citizens.

**The Most Important Factor**

The most important factor, though, is not just a new relationship between ourselves and our government, but the relationship between ourselves and God.

In response to the gospel we care for the poor and needy by our works, not our words; and as we respond with “faith that is active in love” our relationship to Him is cemented. “And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the spirit which he has given us . . . beloved let us love one another, for love is of God and he who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 Jn. 3:23–24; 4:7).

Not only do the lives of the hungry hang in the balance of our action or inaction. So does the integrity of our own relationship to God. Putting it more positively, it is in the joy of celebrating the kingdom that we are free to place ourselves beside hungry brothers and sisters and advocate their cause.
Orbis Books
New Asian Religious Studies

THE SEARCH FOR GOD
An Encounter with the Peoples and Religions of Asia
by Walbert Buhlmann, O.F.M. Cap.

*The Search for God* is a valuable report on the high level encounters between Christian and non-Christian religions that have taken place in Asia over the past twenty years. Buhlmann moves easily between theological dialogue and the day-to-day Christian and non-Christian experience in Asia. He gives a valuable overview of the progress of mutual understanding and enrichment that is happening there.

$7.95

THE HUMAN AND THE HOLY
Asian Perspectives in Christian Theology
Emerito P. Nacpil and Douglas J. Elwood, editors

The official report of the All-Asia Consultation on Theological Education for Christian Ministry in this volume addresses the relationship between authentic human life and the Asian sense of the sacred, the experience of nature, and the assumption of responsibility for society. Selected by the *Occasional Bulletin* as an Outstanding book for Mission Studies.

$14.95

COMPASSIONATE AND FREE:
AN ASIAN WOMAN'S THEOLOGY
by Marianne Katoppo

Marianne Katoppo, prize-winning novelist, journalist, and theologian explains why Asian Christian women want to seek their own identities rather than to borrow from other cultures or from men. "Draws heavily on the Bible and the contemporary realities of life for women in Asia. Beautifully illustrated." — *AsiaWeek*

$4.95

ASIA’S STRUGGLE FOR FULL HUMANITY

Virginia Fabella, M.M., editor

The Asian Theological Conference held in Sri Lanka offers a unique contribution to the theological reflections of North Americans. This analysis of its accomplishments and documents "breathes hope and creativity." It is "one of the strongest challenges yet to entrenched western models of doing theology." — Simon Smith, S.J., Jesuit Missions

$8.95

EASTERN PATHS AND THE CHRISTIAN WAY
by Paul Clasper

Paul Clasper shares his conviction that a sensitive appreciation of the Asian Paths of Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism and Zen can deepen and renew understanding of the Christian Way. "Sane, humane, and perceptive. A useful contribution to inter-faith dialogue." — Huston Smith, Syracuse University

$5.95

All titles quality paperbound/CIP

ORBIS BOOKS
Maryknoll, NY 10545

Write for Complete Orbis Catalog, 1980.
Ecclesiastical Tension in Tanzania

Per Hassing

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is the largest Protestant group in the country, with 800,000 members and organized in a strongly structured church federation with eight synods led by presidents, and six dioceses led by bishops. It is the largest and strongest Lutheran church in Africa. From both a historical and a contemporary perspective one might justifiably call it a church in a state of tension, but a creative tension. Not many churches in Africa have had such a changing and problem-filled history. A Lutheran church was started by German missionary societies—Berlin, Bethel, Leipzig—shortly after East Africa became a German colony in 1884. In some cases the German societies took over the work started by Anglicans, who agreed to move out in order to give room for the newcomers. This happened, for instance, in both the Bukoba and the Kilimanjaro areas.

When the German missionaries were interned during World War I, English Anglicans and Scottish Presbyterians stepped in to offer support and guidance. This happened especially in the southern part of the country, and did not prove altogether a happy experience; but most unhappy was the experience with the South African Methodists in the Bukoba area. In the northern area, American Lutheran missionaries stepped in to support the work of the Leipzig Mission in 1922, and subsequently took over the embryonic Leipzig work among the Iramba people. The Swedish Evangelical Mission entered the Southern Highlands in 1939.

When the German missionaries were interned once more during World War II, Lutheran missionaries from the Lutheran Church in America and the Church of Sweden Mission came to help in the new and difficult situation. Later on the Germans again returned, but were now supplemented by Lutheran missionaries from America, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. During World War II there were new developments in that the Lutheran missions for political and financial reasons were placed under one administration, which in turn led to the formation of the Lutheran Mission Council in 1952 and the Federation of Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika in 1958. These experiences in cooperation among Lutherans were so positive that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania was organized in 1963.

This is a long, complicated, and very interesting piece of church history, which a number of historians have described in great detail. But the purpose of this essay is only to point out some of the most important reasons for the present widespread Lutheran cooperation, as well as some of the elements of tension that characterize the life of this church, which geographically covers most of Tanzania.

The 1978 census found that Tanzania has a population of 17,551,925, which traditionally is divided into about 120 tribes. The Muslim influence is strong on the island of Zanzibar, along the coast, and along the railway line from Dar es Salaam to Lake Tanganyika. In proportion to their numbers, the Muslims are very strong politically. President Julius Nyerere has often appealed to the churches to encourage unity within the country and thereby strengthen the country and build up a common loyalty transcending the tribal loyalty. There was therefore a certain political pressure on the several Lutheran churches to cooperate and bring together the many small churches into one large one. Politically it was also an advantage to face the state as one large Lutheran church rather than as many small ones. President Nyerere is a practicing Roman Catholic and as such was accustomed to face one church.

The sociological situation also encouraged cooperation. Some of the early German missionaries directed their missionary labor toward the tribe rather than the individual. A man like Bruno Gutmann did not move beyond the Chagga people and wanted to build a Chagga Lutheran church. But the sociological and economic development made such thoughts obsolete rather soon. From every corner of the country people moved into the cities and urban centers, and the civil service and the large financial institutions moved people from one part of the country to another. Therefore Lutherans, as well as other Christians, were forced by external pressure for years to attend church somewhere else than in the rural area where they had grown up and felt at home. Lutheran cooperation became a necessity. The alternative would have been for various Lutheran churches to enter into competition with each other in the towns and cities. That would have been an intolerable situation.

The economic situation was also very important. Originally every synod and diocese was connected with a certain church or missionary society in Europe or America, which in practice determined the synod’s and diocese’s international contacts. If the missionary society was economically strong, the money flowed quite freely to the work in Tanzania, but if the financial situation of the missionary society was weak, the synod or diocese suffered accordingly. There was a time when one synod could receive very little support from abroad, while another could be very strong financially. This led naturally to jealousy and rivalry. The tendency was disruption and disunity. This has now changed, since, with one exception, all Lutheran support services in Europe and America channel all their funds through the Lutheran Coordination Service, where all cooperating synods and dioceses are represented. (The one exception is the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, which is working in the Mbulu Synod.) This development has led to a great deal of cooperation and to an economic equalization in the church.

The education of the pastors in this large church was for a long time not very satisfactory. Not all the missionaries were in favor of educating and ordaining African pastors. Bruno Gutmann was in fact against this on the ground that such an education would disrupt the African tribal structure. But the demand was there and would not be satisfied with local and temporary measures. Dr. Richard Reusch had started a course for theological studies at Machama, to which students from other

*Per Hassing was a Methodist missionary in Rhodesia for twenty years, and then was professor of World Christianity at Boston University School of Theology from 1960 to 1978. During 1978–79 he was a visiting lecturer at Makumira Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tanzania, and is now pastor of a Methodist Church near Oslo, Norway.*

January, 1981
parts of Tanzania were invited. But joint theological training for Lutheran pastors was started in earnest in 1946 at Lwandai on the initiative of the Lutheran Mission Council. This school was moved to Makumira, near Arusha, in 1953. Today all Lutheran pastors receive their education at Makumira. The college has today about 120 students, most of them Lutherans, but also some Moravians, and at least one Methodist. The students come from Tanzania, of course, but also from Kenya, Zaire, Namibia, and Mozambique. The faculty is also highly international, and of a very high quality, many of them having their doctorates from well-known American and European universities. The aim is to give the students an education that has the standard of an international B.D. That all the pastors in the ELCT receive their education at Makumira is naturally a factor of the greatest importance for the future unity of the church.

The ecumenical situation has also been a factor in this development. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in Tanzania are very strong, and in our ecumenical era the question of ecumenical cooperation has arisen. But how can a dozen Lutheran churches conduct meaningful conversations with other churches? Would it not be necessary to clear up some internal "ecumenical" questions first? Similarly, the formation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) forced the question of closer cooperation on the Lutherans in Tanzania. So the ELCT is a member of the LWF, and it is the ELCT that conducts any negotiations with other churches. Also it is the ELCT, not the individual synods and dioceses, that holds membership in the World Council of Churches.

Like all other churches in this world, the ELCT also has its problems and weaknesses. In 1961 the Evangelical Church in Buhaya, now the Northwestern Diocese of the ELCT, chose Dr. Bengt Sundkler as bishop, and with his consecration the historical episcopate was introduced from the Church of Sweden. This tradition is now firmly established both in the Northwestern Diocese and in the newly formed (1979) Karagwe Diocese. Other influences from German and Norwegian sources are also at work in the same direction. Dr. Fridtjof Birkeli was at that time the mission secretary of the LWF and he left that office to become the bishop of Oslo and primate of the Lutheran Church of Norway. Therefore some high church and liturgical elements have entered forcefully into the life of the church, and these influences are spreading. Liturgical processions, colorful vestments, stoles, and episcopal staffs appeal naturally to African people. Since many of the African tribes also have a tradition of powerful African chiefs, bishops in liturgical colors, with great dignity, great ecclesiastical and spiritual power, have a strong appeal to Africans. There are those who believe that it will not be long before every synod will be turned into a diocese.

On the other hand, there are also strong countercurrents within the life of the church. It is an interesting fact that the Nyaturu people did not have the tradition of a powerful chief, but have a democratic heritage. The Nyaturu happen to live within the area of the Central Synod, where the Lutheran Church in America has been at work since 1926, where bishops are not necessarily desired, and where democratic principles play an important role. The tension becomes even stronger when one considers the Mbulu Synod, where a radically lay perspective is present through the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. There is a feeling among some Africans that bishops somehow are more than synod presidents, which feeling may favor the introduction of the episcopal office, but may also strengthen the opposition to it.

If it should happen that all synods are turned into dioceses, the danger is that a problem, already discernible, may grow: namely, that there will be a greater distance, perhaps even alienation, not only between bishops and pastors, but between the clergy as a whole and the common people. Lutheran church history shows how dangerous such a gulf between clergy and people can be for the life of the church, and one therefore hopes that this part of the history of the church will be well known in Tanzania. This distance between people and clergy becomes even more problematic when there already is a visible tendency for the congregation to be a Sunday congregation, which meets one hour every Sunday morning. No church life can remain healthy when this happens, and Scandinavian church history shows this very clearly. The church is not only a congregation celebrating divine service, but a community where the Christian fellowship (koinonia) is experienced and nourished, and from which the service (diakonia) and the missionary outreach spring. Roman Catholic life shows that a high church practice does not necessarily lead to a separation between people and clergy, but the danger is always there.

An English saying has it that "money talks." It is quite obvious that in the ELCT there is no shortage of money. This can be seen in the widespread administrative structures, with general secretaries and ordinary secretaries, a big net of interlocking committees, international conferences of many kinds, a strong scholarship and study program, large institutions, magnificent buildings, a large and well-maintained car park. All of this speaks also of effectiveness and great activity. But when much (or most) of this is financed with foreign money on African soil, one cannot but wonder what might happen if, for instance, the present economic crisis should be so severe that the mission funds would be drastically reduced. Would the present church in Tanzania be able to take it and adjust? In other words, is a lot of money from abroad really a sign of strength in an African church?

Church-oriented Africans find it often difficult to grasp that many of the missionary societies and committees, who send money and whose representatives they meet, do not represent the churches and themselves, but groups within the churches. When bishops and church leaders from Tanzania go to Europe, they sometimes do not meet their ecclesiastical counterparts, but general secretaries and secretaries of Christian organizations and groups. It adds to the confusion that the mission representatives of the Lutheran Church in America and the Church of Sweden mission are in fact official representatives of their churches. To all of this must be added that the Bethel Mission and the Rhenish Mission are not "pure" Lutheran bodies, but right from their founding were united societies with support from both Lutheran and Reformed Christians.

In recent years there has been a lot of talk about a moratorium on missionaries and money from abroad. It is clear that the Lutherans in Tanzania have not accepted this idea, but it is also clear that the emotional wave which gave birth to these ideas has meant much within the ELCT. There is present within the church a certain tension between African and expatriate personnel. It is under the surface, but it is discernible. Missionaries know about this, and Africans on occasion express it. Examples can be found in published and unpublished papers written by members of the ELCT. This is one reason why missionaries show "a low profile," a reserved attitude. Other reasons for this "low profile" may be that some missionaries think they have too little experience, or that the important decisions should be made by Africans. But it is not easy always to keep quiet and to ask no questions. Such an attitude may be good for the humility of the missionary, but it may also cause deep questions of conscience and ethics at times. One may also ask if this is really good for the church and why the missionaries are in Tanzania.

Does the ELCT help to ease the tribal differences in the
Members who move from rural to urban areas do not necessarily become full members of the city church, but may retain their membership in their home parishes, although they may also maintain a dual membership and a dual allegiance.

Is the ELCT one church or a federation of churches? The truth may be expressed like this: the ELCT is a federation of Lutheran churches on the way to becoming one church.

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### Checklist of 40 Selected Periodicals in English from Mission Agencies and Institutions

*Gerald H. Anderson*

Virtually every mission agency—of which there are hundreds—publishes at least one periodical; some publish several. These publications are primarily for information and promotion within their own constituency. The periodicals listed here, however, are some that also include material of general interest and value for missiological studies by a wider audience. This list supplements two earlier checklists of periodicals for mission studies published in the *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January, 1977), and vol. 4, no. 4 (October, 1980).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodical</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa Now</td>
<td>Sudan Interior Mission, Cedar Grove, New Jersey 07009.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Alliance Witness</td>
<td>The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Box C, Nyack, New York 10960.</td>
<td>Every two weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Lutheran News</td>
<td>68 Begonia Road, Yau Yat Chuen, Kowloon, Hong Kong.</td>
<td>Monthly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>Bethlehem Missionary Society, CH-6405 Immensee, Switzerland.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ to the World</td>
<td>English edition. Via de Propaganda 1-c, 00187 Rome, Italy.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commission</td>
<td>Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 3806 Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23220.</td>
<td>Monthly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia Millions</td>
<td>Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 404 South Church Street, Robesonia, Pennsylvania 19551.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Enterprise</td>
<td>Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board, 217 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2M2, Canada.</td>
<td>Quarterly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Missions</td>
<td>Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1350 Spring Street NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30367.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, P. O. Box 5, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Africa</td>
<td>Africa Inland Mission, Box 178, Pearl River, New York 10965.</td>
<td>Quarterly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America Evangelist</td>
<td>Latin America Mission, P.O. Box 341368, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.</td>
<td>Every two months.</td>
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</tbody>
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*Gerald H. Anderson is Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, and Editor of this journal.*
Mandate/Mission Magazine
United Church of Canada, 85 St. Clair Avenue E., Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8, Canada. Ten times a year.

Maryknoll

Mission Intercom

Mission Review
Commission for World Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia, Box 103C, Clarence Street P.O., Sydney, Australia 2000. Quarterly.

Missionary Herald
Baptist Missionary Society, 93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA, United Kingdom. Monthly.

Missionary Monthly

Missionary News Service
Evangelical Missions Information Service, Box 794, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Every two weeks.

Network
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 15 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3QQ, United Kingdom. Quarterly.

New World Outlook
Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10115. Monthly.

Newsletter
Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham B29 6LE, United Kingdom. Twice a year.

Now
The Methodist Church Overseas Division, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR, United Kingdom. Ten times a year.

Occasional Essays
Latin American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies (CELEP), Apartado 1307, San José, Costa Rica. Twice a year.

Praxis
WSCF Asia Newsletter. Kiu Kin Mansion, 12F, 568 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Three times a year.

Scarboro Missions
Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, 2685 Kingston Road, Scarbororough, Ontario M1M 1M4, Canada. Eleven times a year.

South African Outlook
P.O. Box 245, Rondebosch 7700, Republic of South Africa. Monthly.

Sparks. Eastern Europe: Religion in the News
Institute of Slavic Studies, Box 1122, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Three times a year.

Team Horizons
The Evangelical Alliance Mission, P.O. Box 969, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Every two months.

Tear Times
Tear Fund, 11 Station Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9AA, United Kingdom. Quarterly.

Theological Review of the Near East School of Theology
(Continuing the Near East School of Theology Quarterly). P.O. Box 11-7424, Beirut, Lebanon. Twice a year.

World Encounter
Division for World Mission and Ecumenism, Lutheran Church in America, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19129. Quarterly.

World Vision

Yes
Church Missionary Society, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UU, United Kingdom. Quarterly.

Youth
Newsletter of the Youth Office, World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, P. O. Box 66, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Quarterly.
Message from Melbourne 1980

World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

We, more than five hundred Christians from many of the world's nations, have gathered in Melbourne, Australia, May 12-24, 1980, in the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism. In the name of Jesus Christ we have come. Our attention focused on the prayer Jesus taught us: "Your kingdom come." This prayer disturbs us and comforts us, yet by it we are united.

We meet under the clouds of nuclear threat and annihilation. Our world is deeply wounded by the oppressions inflicted by the powerful upon the powerless. These oppressions are found in our economic, political, racial, sexual and religious life. Our world, so proud of human achievements, is full of people suffering from hunger, poverty and injustice. People are wasted.

Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread? (Psalm 14:4)

The poor and the hungry cry to God. Our prayer "Your kingdom come" must be prayed in solidarity with the cry of millions who are living in poverty and injustice. Peoples suffer the pain of silent torment; their faces reveal their suffering. The church cannot live distant from these faces because she sees the face of Jesus in them (Matthew 25).

In such a world the announcement of the kingdom of God comes to all. It comes to the poor and in them generates the power to affirm their human dignity, liberation and hope. To the oppressor it comes as judgment, challenge and a call for repentance. To the insensitive it comes as a call to awareness of responsibility. The church itself has often failed its Lord by hindering the coming of his kingdom. We admit this sin and our need for repentance, forgiveness and cleansing.

The Triune God, revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is the center of all peoples and all things. Our Saviour Jesus Christ was laid in a manager "because there was no place for him in the inn" (Luke 2:7). He is central to life yet moves toward those on the edge of life. He affirms his lordship by giving it up. He was crucified "outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). In this surrender of power he establishes his power to heal. The good news of the kingdom must be presented to the world by the church, the Body of Christ, the sacrament of the kingdom in every place and time. It is through the Holy Spirit that the kingdom is brought to its final consummation.

People who suffer injustice are on the periphery of national and community life. Multitudes are economically and politically oppressed. Often these are the people who have not heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ comes to them. He exercises his healing authority on the periphery. We, participants in this Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, are challenged by the suffering of the poor. We pray that they may hear the Gospel and that all of us may be worthy proclaimers of the Gospel by word and life. We stand under the judgment and the hope of Jesus Christ. The prayer "Your kingdom come" brings us closer to Jesus Christ in today's world. We invite you to join us in commitment to the Lord for the coming of whose kingdom we pray.

Your kingdom come, O Lord!

The Thailand Statement 1980

Consultation on World Evangelization,
Pattaya, Thailand, June 16–27, 1980

Introduction

We have gathered at Pattaya, Thailand, for the Consultation on World Evangelization, over 800 Christians from a wide diversity of backgrounds, nations and cultures. We have spent 10 days together in a fellowship of study, praise and prayer. We have celebrated God's great love for us and for all humanity. We have considered before him and under his Word the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim the gospel to all people on earth. We have become freshly burdened by the vast numbers who have never heard the good news of Christ and are lost without him. We have been made ashamed of our lack of vision and zeal, and of our failure to live out the gospel in its fulness, for these things have lessened our obedience and compromised our witness. We have noted that there are hard places where opposition is strong and evangelism is difficult. At the same time, we have rejoiced to hear how God is at work in his world, and how he is making many peoples receptive to his Word.

Our consultation has been held in the ancient Kingdom of Thailand, and we are grateful for the welcome which we have received from the hospitable Thai people. In particular we have enjoyed fellowship with Thai church leaders, and have sought to share the concern of their hearts that, after more than 150 years of Protestant missions, considerably less than 1% of their country's 45 million people confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Close by, on the country's eastern border, are hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries. They symbolize both the political ferment of the world and the tragic suffering of millions of human beings. We denounce the injustice of which they are victims, and have struggled to understand...
he has made all men, women and children in his own likeness; of the universe and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he loves all those whom he has made, although they have rebelled against him and are under his judgment; and that he longs for their salvation. He sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for sinners and, having raised him from the dead, has given him universal authority, that every knee should bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord. This exalted Jesus now sends us, on whom he has had mercy, into the world as his witnesses and servants.

As his witnesses he has commanded us to proclaim his good news in the power of the Holy Spirit to every person of every culture and nation, and to summon them to repent, to believe and to follow him. This mandate is urgent, for there is no other Saviour but Jesus Christ. It is also binding on all Christian people. As the Lausanne Covenant declares, the evangelistic task requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world (para. 6).

We are also the servants of Jesus Christ who is himself both the "servant" and the "Lord." He calls us, therefore, not only to obey him as Lord in every area of our lives, but also to serve as he served. We confess that we have not sufficiently followed his example of love in identifying with the poor and hungry, the deprived and the oppressed. Yet all God’s people should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression” (Lausanne Covenant, para. 5).

Although evangelism and social action are not identical, we gladly reaffirm our commitment to both, and we endorse the Lausanne Covenant in its entirety. It remains the basis of our common activity, and nothing it contains is beyond our concern, so long as it is clearly related to world evangelization.

The Mandate for World Evangelization

We believe that there is only one living and true God, the Creator of the universe and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he has made all men, women and children in his own likeness; that he loves all those whom he has made, although they have rebelled against him and are under his judgment; and that he longs for their salvation. He sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for sinners and, having raised him from the dead, has given him universal authority, that every knee should bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord. This exalted Jesus now sends us, on whom he has had mercy, into the world as his witnesses and servants.

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The Primacy of Evangelization

The Lausanne Covenant declares that "in the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary" (para. 6). This is not to deny that evangelism and social action are integrally related, but rather to acknowledge that of all the tragic needs of human beings none is greater than their alienation from their Creator and the terrible reality of eternal death for those who refuse to repent and believe. If therefore we do not commit ourselves with urgency to the task of evangelization, we are guilty of an inexcusable lack of human compassion.

Some two-thirds of the world’s four and a half billion people have had no proper opportunity to receive Christ. We have considered the value of thinking of them not only as individuals but also as "people groups" who perceive themselves as having an affinity with one another. Many are within easy reach of Christians. Large numbers of these are already Christian in name, yet still need to be evangelized because they have not understood the gospel or not responded to it. The great majority of people in the world, however, have no Christian neighbours to share Christ with them. They can therefore be reached only by cross-cultural messengers of the gospel. We confidently expect that these will increasingly come from all countries, as the Christian mission becomes universalized, and we will work to keep this challenge before the churches.

Some Vital Aspects of Evangelization

At Lausanne our theme was "Let the Earth hear his voice"; in Thailand it has been "How shall they hear?" So we have searched the Scriptures daily in order to learn more about the God who speaks, the message he has spoken, and the people to whom and through whom he speaks.

We have reaffirmed our confidence in the truth and power of God’s Word, and our desire to let his voice penetrate our cultural defences. We have recognized the local church as the principal agency for evangelism, whose total membership must therefore be mobilized and trained. We have heard the call to be sensitive to other people’s cultural patterns and not to try to impose on them our own. We have also acknowledged the indispensable necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit, and of prayer to the sovereign Lord for boldness to speak for him.

For five of our ten days together we have divided into 17 mini-consultations, all of which have concentrated on how to reach particular peoples for Christ. These mini-consultations have built upon a lengthy study programme in which hundreds of groups throughout the world have been involved. Our purpose has been to consider important issues of theology and methodology, in relation to our approach to different peoples, in order to develop realistic strategies for evangelism.

Many of the reports have called for a change in our personal attitudes. The following four have been particularly emphasized:

Firstly, love. Group after group has asserted that "we cannot evangelize if we do not love." We have had to repent of prejudice, disrespect and even hostility towards the very people we want to reach for Christ. We have also resolved to love others as God in Christ has loved us, and to identify with them in their situation as he identified himself with us in ours.

Secondly, humility. Our study has led us to confess that other people’s resistance to the Gospel has sometimes been our fault. Imperialism, slavery, religious persecution in the name of Christ, racial pride and prejudice (whether anti-black or anti-white, anti-Jewish or anti-Arab, or any other kind), sexual oppression, cultural insensitivity, and indifference to the plight of the needy and the powerless—these are some of the evils which have marred the church’s testimony and put stumbling blocks in other people’s road to faith. We resolve in future to spread the gospel with greater humility.

Thirdly, integrity. Several groups have written about the character and conduct of the message-bearer. Our witness loses credibility when we contradict it by our life or life style. Our light will shine only when others can see our good works (Matt. 5:16). In a word, if we are to speak of Jesus with integrity, we have to resemble him.

The fourth emphasis has to do with power. We know that we are engaged in a spiritual battle with demonic forces. Evangelism often involves a power encounter, and in conversion Jesus Christ demonstrates that he is stronger than the strongest principalities and powers of evil by liberating their victims. Strategy and organization are not enough: we need to pray earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of boldness.

Cooperation in World Evangelization

We have been deeply concerned during our consultation to
strengthen evangelical cooperation in global evangelization, for no single agency could accomplish this enormous task alone.

We joyfully affirm the unit of the Body of Christ and acknowledge that we are bound together with one another and with all true believers. While a true unity in Christ is not necessarily incompatible with organizational diversity, we must nevertheless strive for a visible expression of our oneness. This testimonies to Christ's reconciling power and demonstrates our common commitment to serve him. In contrast, competitive programmes and needless duplication of effort both waste resources and call into question our profession to be one in Christ. So we pledge ourselves again, in the words of the Lausanne Covenant, "to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission" (par. 7).

It is imperative that we work together to fulfill the task of world evangelization. Cooperation must never be sought at the expense of basic biblical teaching, whether doctrinal or ethical. At the same time, disagreement on non-essentials among those equally concerned to submit to Scripture should not prevent cooperation in evangelism. Again, cooperation must never inhibit the exercise of the diverse gifts and ministries which the Holy Spirit gives to the people of God. But nor should the diversity of gifts and ministries be made an excuse for non-cooperation.

Yet obstacles to cooperation remain, which involve genuine problems and complex issues. Some of these reflect either the social, political, geographical and cultural circumstances or the ecclesiastical traditions from which we come. Others reflect tensions between different forms of ministry (e.g. between traditional church structures and those which are not directly accountable to churches) or between different evangelistic strategies and methodologies. These and other tensions are real and must be frankly faced. They do not release us, however, from our responsibility to explore with creativity different levels of cooperation in evangelism. We are determined to work more closely together. The Scripture urges us to "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27).

We believe that God has given a special role to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization to act as a catalyst for world evangelization. We desire therefore to give it a further mandate to stimulate evangelism throughout the world, on the basis of the Lausanne Covenant, and in growing cooperation with others of like mind.

Our Commitment to Christ

In the light of his clear command to go and make disciples of all nations, his universal authority and his love for all humanity, we solemnly make the following commitment to Christ, which we shall seek his grace to fulfill:

1. We pledge ourselves to live under the lordship of Christ, and to be concerned for his will and his glory, not our own.
2. We pledge ourselves to work for the evangelization of the world, and to bear witness by word and deed to Christ and his salvation.
3. We pledge ourselves to serve the needy and the oppressed, and in the name of Christ to seek for them relief and justice.
4. We pledge ourselves to love all those we are called to serve, even as Christ loved us, and to identify with them in their needs.
5. We pledge ourselves to pray for the church and for the world, that Christ will renew his church in order to reach his world.
6. We pledge ourselves to study God's Word, to seek Christ in it, and to relate it to ourselves and our contemporaries.
7. We pledge ourselves to give with the generosity of Christ, that we may share with others what he has given to us.
8. We pledge ourselves to go wherever Christ may send us, and never to settle down so comfortably that we cannot contemplate a move.
9. We pledge ourselves to labour to mobilize Christ's people, so that the whole church may take the whole gospel to the whole world.
10. We pledge ourselves to cooperate with all who share with us the true Gospel of Christ, in order to reach the unreached peoples of the world.
11. We pledge ourselves to seek the power of the Spirit of Christ, that he may fill us and flow through us.
12. We pledge ourselves to wait with eagerness for Christ's return, and to be busy in his service until he comes.

We believe that God, who has uniquely exalted his Son Jesus Christ, has led us to make these pledges to him. With hope and prayer we invite all Christ's followers to join us in our commitment, so that we may work together for the evangelization of the world.
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BILLY GRAHAM

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Book Reviews


John R. Mott, ecumenical Christian, lived for almost ninety years, and for fifty of those years bestrode the Christian world like a colossus. A biography of Mott appeared as early as 1934. He himself wrote many books and countless pamphlets and articles. Before his death he published six large volumes of his papers and addresses. The Mott archives are mountainous. Now twenty-five years after his death a definitive biography has appeared. Howard Hopkins has shown exemplary diligence in mastering the vast mass of materials, and considerable skill in organization. The book falls into twelve chapters and no less than 162 sections.

It is hardly likely that many readers will plow through all the pages of this massive book. As this panorama passes rapidly before our eyes, it is hard not to be bemused by the parade of cities, persons, conferences, and speeches that is presented. There was hardly a limit to the religious organizations with which Mott was concerned—WSCF, SVM, YMCA, IMC, WCC, to indicate only a few. With it all he was for many years the most powerful evangelist among students in the world.

Everything about this great man was paradoxical. The farm boy from Iowa found himself at home in the palaces of kings and queens; he was a friend and confidant of President Woodrow Wilson. This layman was on the best of terms with patriarchs and archbishops. This Methodist had a special affection for the Orthodox churches. This poor man had a magical skill in extracting dollars from the pockets of millionaires. But through it all he remained just John R. Mott, and behind John R. Mott stood always Jesus Christ, his example, his inspiration, and his Lord.

One of the excellent things about this book is that it shows the weaknesses as well as the strengths of Mott. He had never had any theological training, and was not always alert to changes in theological thinking. For all his church connections he was never a churchman, and roused opposition, some of it unfair, by his "YMCA-style-Christianity." He was not a prophet and did not always see the direction in which things were moving. He was authoritarian, and could be brutal, leaving his wounded on the field. But no one who ever had to do with him doubted that he was a great man.

For those old enough to remember the great days (I first met Mott in 1928), a veil of sadness rests upon the book. Mott's American dream has faded away. The Student Christian Movement is today little more than a distinguished publishing house. The International Missionary Council has been integrated with the World Council of Churches, and the WCC has launched itself on paths that Mott would have regarded with amazement and dismay. He is today almost forgotten; yet much of his work has remained. Before John R. Mott, people thought of the world church in one way; after him, they think of it in another way. It is not given to many men to influence so deeply Christian activity and thinking for two whole generations of human life.

—Stephen Neill

The Cry of My people. Out of Captivity in Latin America.


The authors, now back in Latin America after a stint of missionary service in the United States, are personal witnesses to the theme of the book, as they have participated in many of the movements and organizations described in it. Their modesty allows the book to speak by itself, as yet another attempt at trying to bridge the gap in mutual understanding between Latin Americans and North Americans.

This attempt at communication of a reality mostly foreign to the North American experience is helped by a style that is direct and factual, with the strong support of personal stories of people involved in that reality. The chapters on human rights and women's liberation accomplish the communication of another reality in the best possible manner given the space allocated to them. However, these chapters cannot provide a full impact on the unaware North American reader without the previous ones, where the authors give a short synthesis of many of the problems affecting the lives of Latin Americans today—although the role of the United States in the creation of the dependent and underdeveloped condition of the south of the Americas is not portrayed forcefully and clearly enough to make an impact on the minds and hearts of North American readers. Sometimes an excess of po-

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Stephen Neill was for twenty years an Anglican missionary and bishop in South India. Now retired and resident at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, Bishop Neill is writing a major history of Christianity in India.

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Arturo R. Chacon, a Chilean, is Director, Ecumenical Forum, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Formerly he was associate professor of sociology at the University of Chile, Santiago and the Theological Evangelical Community, University Centre, Santiago.
The reality described in the book cuts right across the bittersweet relationship of the north and south of the Western hemisphere. It will not be placated with appeals to mutual respect and human dignity (p. 39). If anything, the book, because of the very reality with which it is dealing, is a call to hope and at the same time a dismissal of optimism, although the authors themselves fall sometimes prey to easy optimism, as in the case of Brazil (p. 68). The case for hope is stated in the last two chapters, which deal with the missiological task of the church today and in the future in the continent of Latin America. It is a struggle between life and death, a struggle that has been defined as not knowing “moral or natural limits, is beyond good and evil” (p. 78). In spite of the nature of the struggle defined in these terms, the church(es) in Latin America are finding the way to answer this challenge; it is the “itinerary of a Christian generation” (p. 128), which has led many Christians in Latin America to side with the poor of the continent. It is not a sudden discovery of the poor and the gospel but the facing up to a reality that appeared hidden before our very eyes. The question is whether or not this realization is also possible for the North American Christian. This book is a brave attempt at calling our brothers and sisters in the north to share the hope, and to be in solidarity with the poor. “The cry of my people” is a cry for justice (p. 32), justice that cannot be realized without affecting the lives of the people in the north. Again, the reading of the situation makes one hopeful but not optimistic. However, the book can be read with benefit by those interested in the future of this hemisphere and the role of the church(es) in it. Our participation, as Christians, in the modernization process of the continent needs to be replaced with the vision provided by the new martyrs of the church(es) in the continent. Here lies the challenge to the missiologists and policymakers in this part of the world.

—Arturo R. Chacon
The Third Latin American Conference of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church held at Puebla, Mexico, in February 1979, undoubtedly is one of the most significant Christian meetings of our times. And this is due not only to the visit of Pope John Paul II—now a familiar feature around the world—or the three thousand journalists crowding into Mexico, witnessing to an unparalleled world expectation on what could otherwise be considered just a routine regional conference of Roman Catholic bishops to look at “Evangelization in Latin America: Present and Future.” Behind those symbols is the fact that Latin America holds a decisive clue for the future of Christianity. By the end of this century half the Roman Catholic population of the world will be in Latin America. And it is here that Christianity is being decisively challenged by the inescapable problem of the world poor, of injustice and oppression for the vast majority of the masses. Christian masses, that is, in the case of Latin America. But the issue is a global one, and the agenda is for the world and for world Christianity.

A book on this conference is a primer for Christians everywhere, particularly for those concerned with the mission of the church in the world today, and specifically for those who are yearning for a more biblical and relevant understanding of evangelization in our days. Paulist Press has provided us, through this volume by Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, with an exciting introduction to the event and a fascinating disclosure of the facts and factors and factions behind the scenes. Actually the book can be read as easily as a novel. But it is no fiction. Both authors have a long exposure to the realities of Latin America and the church in that part of the world and a first-hand knowledge of the “inside track” in the churches, and particularly at the Puebla Conference. And this, in spite of the fact that Gary MacEoin himself, a well-known and respected Catholic writer, was denied a press credential.
Part of the fascinating picture the authors give us is the emerging of the comunidades de base (grassroots communities), "a new way of being the church." Chapter 2 is one of the most helpful brief introductions to this subject that is attracting the attention of churches around the world. Puebla has a strong word of affirmation of this new reality of the churches in Latin America (in Brazil alone, they count nearly 100,000 such small communities), but, according to our authors, with the intent to control them by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Puebla, following in the line of the gospel and of the former Medellin Conference, also denounced injustices, violations of human rights, and the totalitarian national security ideology of repressive regimes, but ignored the theology of liberation and made many concessions to the conservative forces that control the Latin American Conference of Bishops (CELAM). Puebla did not condemn the theology of liberation, as liberation theologians had expected it would.

MacEoin and Riley believe that "for the next decade we can expect a continuation of the mutually exclusive ways of being church" (the hierarchical and the horizontal), and that "the real significance of Puebla will be determined by the pastoral practical applications that follow," and they conclude: "What is important is that no door has been closed." As to Christians in the United States—both Catholic and Protestant—they seem to be hearing the message of Puebla in their synodal meetings. "Puebla is a parable with enormous meaning for us . . . The forgotten Christians of poverty-stricken lands are here bringing liberation to those who thought little of them or at best felt good by throwing to them a few crumbs from their rich table. . . . Yet it is precisely they who have . . . the good news of liberation for us."

—Mortimer Arias

Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary.


Puebla's meeting of Latin American Catholic bishops in 1979 came into the limelight when the new Polish pope announced he would make his first papal visit to the New World to open the conference. But interest in the Puebla meetings had been building ever since the last bishops conference in Medellin in 1968 ushered in liberation theology and the rest of the world realized that the Latin church had something significant to say.

For this reason we are indebted to these two editors from Orbis Books who have compiled a Puebla "Reader," which belongs on the shelf of anyone interested in having not only the major speeches and the document produced at Puebla, but also the background and analysis that contextualizes them.

Faith Annette Sand is Assistant Editor of Missiology, and is pursuing doctoral studies at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. For fifteen years a missionary to Brazil, she not only attended the entire Puebla Conference but also a preconference consultation for Latin American book publishers.
Penny Lernoux starts the volume with a good step-by-step historical analysis of Puebla's backdrop. Moises Sandoval continues the saga with a report of how the conference scene developed and carefully sketches the Machiavellian efforts of Colombian archbishop Lopez Trujillo to control the conference.

Virgilio Elizondo analyzes the pope's messages given in Mexico. Like most of the contributors, he is sympathetic to liberation theology and, in culling out and highlighting certain papal themes, he shows how the pope supports the goals and methods of liberation theology. Archbishop Marcos McGrath, an astute church politician who attended as a delegate from Panama, obviously had intimate knowledge of what transpired at the meeting. Yet his critical analysis of the document, though meaningful, is a somewhat dry overview that does not convey the life and spirit of the meeting. Here is a politician trying to be insightful without offending anyone.

Brighter is the essay on the significance of the conference by Jon Sobrino, who brings his Jesuitly honed mind to give a historical analysis of Medellin and the resultant polarization within the church that has been happening ever since. Sobrino ascribes the pope's devotion to Mary and fidelity to the church to his Polish background and asks for a tolerance toward this anachronistic stance. Gremillion and Brown, neither of whom attended the Puebla meetings, analyze its significance for North America. These are but theoretical conjectures and really do not strengthen the book.

Four of the pope's speeches are included. The "Homily at the Basilica of Guadalupe"—a difficult document for a Protestant to ingest—is directed to "Mary, . . . Mother of God, . . . Mother of Mexico, . . . Mother of Latin America" It is a document that Protestants will have to accept within its context. His speech to the Indians of Oaxaca and Chiapas is definitely the strongest statement in support of liberation theology's appeal to the church to deal holistically with the socioeconomic conditions of Latin America.

The Puebla document itself is an eclectic morass of strong and weak, incisive and redundant. It is nevertheless an important reference work for those who want to know how the Catholics analyze their task in Latin America today.

The strong-arm genius, Lopez Trujillo, got permission at the end of the conference to straighten out the "grammar and misspellings" of the document. In his usual style he toned down the "unofficial translation," which was brought home by the journalists who attended the conference. The "official translation" included in this volume thus translates:

Urged on by the clamor of the Latin American people who demand the bread of the Word of God and who demand justice . . .

The Church has felt itself summoned by a people who ask for the bread of God's Word and demand justice (135, #93).

Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel.


M. M. Thomas is widely known as an ecumenical statesman of the church, both in India and in the World Council of Churches where he has served as chairman of the Central Committee.

He speaks with the authority of his various credentials, a major one here being that he is from "within" the Mar Thoma Church.

These lectures were presented on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Mar Thoma Seminary. For those outside of India and especially for those in the West whose self-understanding is Reformation-related, this small volume is both interesting and

For a greater understanding of Asian theology today...a book of "Tremendous value...[for] the picture it gives of the creativity, vitality, and variety of Christian thought in the Asian churches today...We may have in this book the beginnings of a real word of God to us from the Asian experience."

—DR. CHARLES C. WEST, Princeton Theological Seminary

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Aside from being provocative and tantalizing, these essays provide the sort of reading that enables those of us who are from the Western, so-called sending churches to do some listening and learning from a prophetic Asian Christian leader.

—Herbert O. Muenstermann

Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation.


The term “conversion” covers a broad spectrum of realities today in the churches, from a radical personal religious experience to strategies for evangelization. Walter Conn of Villanova University has prepared this anthology to deal with specific segments of that spectrum. He centers upon the nature of the religious experience in the moment of conversion, and how that happens in situations where the convert or environment may already be nominally Christian.

Conn has carefully edited his selections, so that the content of this anthology is extraordinarily good. The first section develops a framework for understanding what conversion is, with selections from Bernard Lonergan, who distinguishes between intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and Rosemary Haughton, who compares formation and transformation as experiences of change in human life. Selections from Niebuhr and Barth contribute Protestant perspectives. Yale philosopher John Smith calls for a solid theory of the self as a basis for understanding the conversion process.

The second section includes studies of the biblical sources and from non-Christian religions. In the New Testament studies, there is a good offering on conversion in the synoptic writers, but, surprisingly, nothing on Paul.

Perhaps the best-chosen selections are on the psychology of conversion. Along with the classic discussion of conversion from William James, the selections of Wayne Oates and Seward Hiltner, who suggest that the midlife period may be more important for religious conversion than the adolescent period so often concentrated upon by the churches, will be of special interest.

The section on theology of conversion brings together readings from Karl Rahner, Thomas Merton, and Hans Küng, as well as from Catholic moralists Bernard Häring, Charles Curran, and Joseph Fuchs. The final section introduces social perspectives.

Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P.S., is Dean of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and Co-Director of the Chicago Institute of Theology and Culture.

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Third-Eye Theology.


Any reader who plunges into this book must be prepared to be both disconcerted and disarmed. Disconcerted because a third eye—the perspective and experience of Asian spirituality—is truly necessary to see the dimensions of Christian life that the author explores. Disarmed because it is indeed the Christian life, responding to the God who made himself known to the people of Israel and in the coming of Jesus Christ, which is here explored. The same spirituality, writes Song, "that enabled the people of Israel to view their own historical experiences in terms of the liberating power of Yahweh their God . . . is transformed into the power of salvation on the cross for all nations and peoples. The Christian church is to make visible and evident this spirituality of creation and redemption. Christian theology is to serve this same spirituality by making explicit the creative and redemptive meaning of all human historical and cultural experiences" (p. 3).

Working with this paradigm, the author develops for us "a theology open to the mysterious ways of God who in Christ becomes human flesh in Asia" (p. 21). It is a deeply thoughtful enterprise, but also one in which the heart guides the head. Theology begins, Song writes, with God's heart-ache, which is an expression of the depth of his love. The biblical story of this God finds a confirming resonance in the spirituality of Asian culture, especially in its Buddhist expressions. Through theme after theme Song weaves a similar pattern: a deep and poignant cultural experience, the expression of such an experience into the redeeming death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, reflections of this redeeming grace in Asian spirituality, and finally, the efforts of both Asian and Western theologians to express this dimension of the gospel in ways that help Asian people to grasp the historical meaning of their existence in hope.

This does not mean for Song simply the acculturation of Christ in an Asian setting. His theology comes to a climax in the politics of resurrection and the transformation of Asian society by the power of the suffering Savior. "In this transformation, or metanoia of power, is found the essence of God's politics" (p. 222). A prophetic critical principle is at work throughout the whole study, which directs the Christian vision beyond traditional culture, Western imperialism, or human revolution to the transfiguring power of the risen One who makes new history.

It should be evident from all this that Song is neither a syncretist nor a conventional liberation theologian. Here is a new style of Christ transforming culture at work. There are some problems with it. Harder analysis of social systems as they in fact exist, governed by traditional Buddhist assumptions, by technological modernism or by socialist revolutionary ideas, might lead to a deeper treatment of the problem of conflict, violence, repentance, and forgiveness. The relation between creation, suffering, and redemption, though portrayed with great sensitivity, lacks a certain sharpness that the analysis of false motives, of pride, of selfishness, and of the misuse of power, would give it. These themes too are present, both in the Bible and in Asian cultural experience. Song alludes to them, but their outlines remain somewhat misty.

This may, however, be only a question of focus. Other readers who follow Song's explorations may see more clearly. The journey is well worth the effort.

—Charles C. West

Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey.


This work is the fruit of nearly thirty years of research and compilation under the leadership of Richard V. Weekes during his career as journalist, United States Information Service officer, and university lecturer in anthropology. He has collaborated with some eighty other scholars from all over the world to produce the first detailed and probably definitive compilation of the rich variety of different races that make up the Islamic world. Gone forever is the image of the Islamic world as predominantly Arab with a few Persians and Turks thrown in and an afterthought for Asia, Africa, and Europe. There is detailed statistical evidence in appendices, which will become a constant source of quick reference for total population of the Muslim world and for the breakdown into particular countries and also the

John B. Taylor is Director of the Program on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies in the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland. From 1966 to 1973 he was director of Islamic studies at Selby Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.

January, 1981
percentage of Muslims within particular nations.

However, the book is made particularly valuable by the series of lengthy articles that discuss each major Muslim group, adding in each case a substantial and original bibliography. Especially in the case of Asian and African groups, the information is often more detailed than, for example, in the Encyclopedia of Islam. One hopes that missionaries, who are often among the best-informed and most sensitive observers of ethnic groupings, will check the material in this volume and forward any additional or corrective comments to the editors. I feel sure that this work will go into several editions and consequently it will be good to have such new contributions taken into account.

Finally, it is to be hoped that this book will be taken very seriously in some Islamic circles where the statistics quoted are frequently very wide of the mark, notably in the case of countries like Tanzania (24% Muslim in Weekes, and 65% Muslim in Manazir Ahsan, Islam: Faith and Practice, Leicester, England, 1977), Uganda (Weekes 6%, Manazir Ahsan 35.9%), Chad (Weekes 50%, Manazir Ahsan 85%), Mali (Weekes 60%, Manazir Ahsan 90%), Sudan (Weekes 72%, Manazir Ahsan 85%). Figures for Asia are closer, but there is a substantial discrepancy of 5 percent on Indonesia, and in reading the text about Muslim groups in Indonesia one realizes the somewhat partial Islamicization, which is not reflected by the statistics.

—John B. Taylor

The Integrity of Mission. The Inner Life and Outreach of the Church.


Whether you spell it with or without an s, the term “mission(s)” remains a verbal code signal over which the Christian church continues to stumble in the light. The last two decades of theorizing about it have produced one polarization after another.

This slender volume represents to me a “pause that refreshes” in the controversy. More modest in scope than the author’s two previous volumes in English, and written in more popular style, it is still no lightweight in substance. Its goal, “to look at the Christian world mission as a unitary, indivisible whole, in the hope of generating a wider vision and stimulating a more effective missional involvement” (p. xiii), is imposing but achieved. Apart from an excursus on “The Gospel and the Poor” (pp. 78-83), which stylistically might have been better integrated into the book, the work shows a remarkable integrity and unity of thrust.

The great contribution of the book is Costas’s refusal to create dichotomies. He demands that we continue to “make proclamation a central aspect” of functioning Christianity (p. 12), and he does not fudge on the full-scale dimensions of that proclamation. His chapter on “Mission as Disciple-Making” (pp. 13-24) links him clearly and effectively with the evangelical tradition. But he is not afraid of denouncing our temptations to cheap grace, to “culture-Christianity.” His scalpel is sharp but his goal is healing.

In his discussion of the church-growth emphasis, Costas offers new perspectives. And again his purpose is to help us see the wholeness of the task. His terminological distinctions alone may be helpful in getting us out of many of our present-day dichotomies. The final chapter on “Mission as Celebration” (pp. 84-93) explores the correlation of mission and worship, a theme very seldom attempted in conservative evangelical definitions of evangelism.

All of this Costas accomplishes in what is almost always a responsible use of Scripture, something frequently lacking in the awkward allegorizing one gets accustomed to in many evangelical treatments of this sort. Only once did I find myself objecting to his hermeneutic. And this was in his extensive allusion to church-growth agricultural principles using biblical references to support his conceptions of cultivation, pruning, and harvesting (pp. 39-47). A sample of his helpful probing is his brief dialogue with Herman Ridderbos’s treatment of the “poor” texts in the Gospels (pp. 77-78). I am not yet sure he does full justice to Ridderbos’s argument, but he surely adds something that is needed for our full understanding of the references.

All readers will find themselves wishing for more or wishing it were done differently some place or other. I found myself wishing that Costas had made it clearer exactly with whose views he was interacting at times. Further, his quotations were almost always of a positive sort, without further qualification. This gave me particular trouble when he quoted Karl Barth’s remarks on the deity of Jesus humanized and his humanity divinized, in a footnote on pp. 97-98. My own understanding of Barth at this point is considerably more negative.

But all of these qualifications are minor. The message of the book is a powerful one and potentially of great help in the church’s self-understanding. We look forward to the varied contributions of Dr. Costas as he settles into his new post on the faculty at Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia.

—Harvie M. Conn

Harvie M. Conn, Associate Professor of Missions and Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, had twelve years’ experience as an evangelist and teacher with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Korea.
Room to Be People. An Interpretation of the Message of the Bible for Today's World.


In these playful, sophisticated dialogues the Dean of Studies of the Buenos Aires' Union Theological Seminary shows us how he “does theology” in a local Protestant congregation church hall. Capable translator Vickie Leach has managed to pull off her own kind of revolution (title of the Spanish original was, more literally, “Space to be Men”).

When Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch affirmed, “Only an atheist can be a good Christian,” theologian of hope Jürgen Moltmann responded, “But only a Christian can be a good atheist.” Starting from this confrontation, Bonino in chapter 1 explores the modern implications of the Bible’s condemnation of idolatry.

In chapter 2 Bonino manages to sneak in the back door of a Madelyn Murray debate hall to plant the question, “Do human beings exist?” And in chapter 3 he takes as his starting point a question scrawled on a wall in Belfast, Northern Ireland: “Is there life before death?”

After three chapters of “disturbing the comfortable” Bonino concludes with a message to comfort the disturbed: “Is there any security?”

In the course of the work Bonino manages to treat concisely but profoundly a number of major concerns in contemporary life and theology. The book has become one of the required texts for Introduction to Theology in the Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica.

If you have concluded that Latin American liberation theologians so sprinkle their works with technical Marxist sociological jargon as to be incomprehensible, Bonino will shatter your stereotype. In a previous work the dean of Latin American Protestant theologians has shown us how to “do theology” in a revolutionary situation. Here he shows us how to communicate the results in a local congregation. What better introduction for a seminarian or inquisitive church member?

—Thomas D. Hanks

African Tradition and the Christian God.


Father Charles Nyamiti is a Roman Catholic priest from Tanzania. In this book he elaborates in four parts on his previous works.

In part 1 Nyamiti presents African beliefs about God and points out what “the Christian can learn from African teachings on God.” He concludes that there is a “superiority of the Christian teaching on God over that of traditional Africa, as well as the intrinsic oneness of the two... For the African, God is the God of the Bible, having the same nature and attributes”; and all that is needed is for the African Christian to “purify his theistic doctrine from superstition and error” (p. 19). In a further discussion the author presents his “solution of some African problems by Christian teaching.” He isolates “human needs and aspirations,” “suffering and death,” “future life,” “racialism,” and “African Socialism” (pp. 20ff.) He concludes that “belief in the God of Christianity can give stability and security to African Socialism” (p. 25). I find this statement to be simplistic both in logic and in implication.

In the second part Father Nyamiti presents and evaluates theologies of liberation in America and South Africa. He does not make a clear connection between these theologies and the concern of his book to examine African concepts of God and their relation to Christian teaching.

Part 3 deals with concepts of God in the African setting and in relation to Roman Catholic doctrine and philosophy. Father Nyamiti discusses God as Ancestor, as Power and Life, as Communion and Sharing, and the concept of the Holy or Sacred. It is this...
third part that comes to the center of the book and wrestles with the real issues of theological reflection. The fourth part is a three-page conclusion to the book. One page is full of the shortcomings that the author feels about his book. He then lists eight points on what “African Christian theism should be,” namely: “dynamic and vitalistic,” “one of solidarity, totality and participation,” “sacred,” “anthropocentric,” “ancestral,” “one of divine motherhood,” “one of liberation,” and “one of fulfillment.” These are big terms, but Father Nyamiti does not elaborate on them.

Father Nyamiti hopes that his book will be “a possible working model that can be applied to all of the Christian themes and mysteries” (p. 72, my italics). This hope or claim is too ambitious. At best the book is a traditional and conservative view, which treats an important concern; however, his ideas deserve some attention.

—John Mbiti

Announcing

The International Bulletin of Missionary Research is pleased to announce the appointment of a distinguished international panel of contributing editors. Coming from five continents and representing the major Christian traditions—Catholic, Orthodox, and both evangelical and conciliar Protestant—they will bring to our pages and editorial perspectives a rich heritage and collective wisdom that will greatly enhance the value of our publication. We welcome them and introduce them to our readers.

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., a Filipino Jesuit, is Professor of Theology at the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines, and a member of the Pontifical Theological Commission in Rome.

R. Pierce Beaver, founding editor of this journal and former Director of the Missionary Research Library, is Emeritus Professor of Missions at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Mary Motte, F.M.M., an American member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, serves on the executive committee of SEDOS in Rome, and is a consultant both to the Vatican Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity and to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

Lesslie Newbigin, longtime missionary and Bishop in the Church of South India, retired recently as Lecturer in the Theology of Mission at Selly Oak Colleges, and lives in Birmingham, England.

C. René Padilla, born in Ecuador and brought up in Colombia, has been on the staff of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students for the last twenty years. Presently he is Director of Ediciones Certeza, the IFES publishing house in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. former President of the Paulist Fathers, is a member of the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, and an official consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

Charles R. Taber, formerly editor of Gospel in Context, is Professor of World Mission at the Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee. He served for seven years as an educational missionary in the Central African Republic and four years as a Translations Consultant of the United Bible Societies in West Africa.

Desmond Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, has served as Bishop of Lesotho in the Anglican Church of the Province of South Africa, and as Africa Secretary of the Theological Education Fund in London.

Anastasios Yannoulatos, Bishop of Androussa, is Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Athens, and General Director of Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece.

The Battle for World Evangelism.


The Battle for World Evangelism by Arthur P. Johnston is important, not because it is original or fully accurate, but because it represents a significant segment of evangelical thought. It both reflects and augments the current debate within evangelical circles about the nature of evangelism and its relationship to social justice. The future of evangelicalism in the next couple of decades depends to a significant degree on whether the issues raised in this book can be resolved in an honest, biblical way.

Johnston sees three great threats to world evangelism in the church today: the denial of the authority of Scripture; the distortion of the relationship between Scripture and tradition; and the redefinition of mission as anything other than evangelism.

The author adopts a historical approach, examining the most significant international conferences from Edinburgh (1910) to Nairobi (1975). At the Edinburgh conference he detects the beginning of a shift in emphasis from the “traditional” view of evangelism. Johnston credits this change to the “demise of scriptural authority” already allegedly apparent at Edinburgh. He traces this demise through the conferences at Stockholm (1925), Jerusalem (1928), Madras (1938), Oxford and Edinburgh (1937). Neo-orthodox influence in the World Council of Churches from Amsterdam (1948) on further dampened the zeal for world evangelization, he maintains, because of neo-orthodox universalistic tendencies and its inadequate doctrine of Scripture.

In reaction to these developments, Evangelicals held conferences in Berlin (1966) and Lausanne (1974), which reaffirmed the priority of evangelism. But Johnston is still worried. He attacks the growing concern for social justice among evangelicals, fearing that this will reduce concern for evangelism.

Ronald J. Sieter is Professor of Theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also serves as the co-convener of the World Evangelical Fellowship’s Theological Commission’s Unit on Ethics and Society. James F. Wardwell is Dr. Sieter’s administrative assistant. He helped to organize the WEF’s recent consultation on the Theology of Development and attended the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle.
How should we evaluate Johnston’s book? Disappointment perhaps is the appropriate reaction. Certainly there is much in the WCC that deserves rigorous critique, but if it is to be effective, the evangelical contribution to this dialogue must be more nuanced. Certainly there is an urgent need for forthright debate between evangelicals concerned with “radical discipleship” and evangelicals who fear such concerns will lead to the neglect of evangelism. But it will not be helpful, as Johnston often does, to make unsubstantiated inferences suggesting that “radical discipleship” evangelicals have “abandoned the historical inspiration of Scripture.”

There is no necessary connection between growing concern for social justice and a “low” view of Scripture. The accidental correlation of these two developments in the WCC proves nothing other than that one should be careful not to repeat past mistakes. It may be precisely the Scriptures that are producing a deeper evangelical concern for justice in society. What we urgently need is a new attempt by all Christians to return to the Scriptures with unconditional openness to modify programs in keeping with biblical priorities.

Finally one must object to Johnston’s attack on John Stott’s qualified acceptance of New Delhi’s definition of “mission.” Do evangelicals have to reject everything the WCC says? One can grant that in some ecumenical circles the actual balance of program and concern covered by the word “mission” betrays inadequate attention to evangelism. But surely it is misguided both etymologically and theologically to deny that the word “mission” includes all the things (including seeking justice for the oppressed) that God’s people are sent forth into the world to do.

However much we disagree with aspects of Johnston’s analysis, one can only affirm his passionate commitment to the ongoing task of sharing the gospel with the three billion who have never heard. We need to get on with that awesome, exhilarating task.

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Classics of Christian Missions.


If one is invited to a gathering where old friends from across the years have been brought together in a delightful and stimulating mix, one’s gratitude to the host is as enthusiastic as it is sincere. Such are my feelings toward Francis M. DuBose, professor of missions at Golden Gate Theological Seminary, sentiments that I am confident will be shared by many.

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ATTENTION

Missionaries, Administrators, Candidates, Students...

NOTE

these titles and authors in mission and evangelism:

COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY (Zondervan, 1978) David J. Hesselgrave
DYNAMIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (Baker, 1978)
PLANTING CHURCHES CROSS-CULTURALLY (Baker, 1980)

THE BATTLE FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (Tyndale, 1978) Arthur P. Johnston
WORLD EVANGELIZATION AND THE WORD OF GOD (Bethany, 1974)

GLOBAL VIEW OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS (Baker, 1971) J. Herbert Kane
LIFE AND WORK IN THE MISSION FIELD (Baker, 1980)
UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN MISSIONS (Baker, 1974)

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS (Moody, 1972) George W. Peters
SATURATION EVANGELISM (Zondervan, 1970)
A THEOLOGY OF CHURCH GROWTH (Zondervan, 1980)

THEOLOGY AND MISSION (Baker, 1978) Papers given at Trinity Consultations 1976 and 1979
NEW HORIZONS IN WORLD MISSION (Baker, 1979)

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Trinity Evangelical Divinity School admits qualified students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin without regard to sex or handicap.
Responding to the growing interest in Christian missions in recent years and the concomitant desire to know more of our great missionary heritage that stretches across two millennia, DuBose has brought together in this one volume a representative selection of missionary classics. He is quick to acknowledge the frustrations in making many difficult choices, faced with an embarrassment of riches of missionary literature. Given such a task, he can be readily forgiven any “omissions.” Among his criteria was the decision to include only postbiblical sources and material by authors who are not living.

The editor has arranged his choices topically, presenting the broad range of mission literature in eleven categories. These are: The Biblical-Theological Basis of Missions; Mission Histories, Biographies, Journals and Diaries; Letters; Mission Theory and Practice, Tracts and Sermons; Historic Missionary Conferences; Mission Encounter with Non-Christian Religion, Historic Missionary Encyclicals, and Voices from Younger Churches. Within these categories the arrangement is chronological.

The general introductions that stand at the beginning of each section are further enriched by more specific introductions preceding each piece of literature that succinctly put them in their proper frame of reference. These are especially valuable for anyone just becoming exposed to the personages, philosophy, and key events of mission history. Reference is also profitably made to other significant writings by the same authors or to related documents.

Although the book has been put together from a Protestant perspective, the reader will delight to find excellent selections from such great Roman Catholic missionaries as Francis Xavier, Matthew Ricci, and Bartholomew de Las Casas. The latter, incidently, sounds strikingly modern in his impassioned plea in behalf of the civil rights of the Indians in Mexico. The same note of modernity appears in Origen’s exhortation to Gregory Thaumaturgus to adapt Greek learning to the service of Christianity.

The whole volume is enhanced by a full bibliography and indexes to persons, places, and subjects.

—John Gratton
The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara: The Impossible Dream.


I read Mary Hall's masterful little volume on Dom Helder Camara in Holy Week—following the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. The celebration of these mysteries made my reading a meditation on the gift of living and dying, like Christ, for one's friends.

Simple, direct, and easily understood, The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara: The Impossible Dream engages the reader quickly. Writing in the present tense and using homey descriptions to set each scene, Dr. Hall gives us the sense that we are accompanying her and Dom Helder on his pastoral visits and daily rounds of meetings and consultations. She acquaints us with his friends and confidants and they also become ours. The experiences catalogued on tape, notes, and memory are well chosen and synthesized in a way that makes the physically slight and unassuming country pastor-bishop gain the proportions of a spiritual giant.

It seems to this reader that the author's contribution is that she perceives and describes with insight the process of grace in the life of an individual who has become a sign of Christ for our times. A man of incredible creativity, organizational ability, and personal qualities, Dom Helder was also a man born into all the traditions of the era now passing and he functioned with them as a framwork until his awakening in the early 1940s to the liberating and social philosophy of Jacques Maritain. The absence of disjunctures seems to be the characteristic of truly spiritual persons, and one has the sense, while following alongside Dom Helder, that he is continually growing to full stature—seeing no contradictions in his ministries and commitment to Christ and yet fully aware of the sign of contradiction that he is to many within and without the church, of which he is the foremost Brazilian representative and spokesman.

But if there is one key to the spirituality of Dom Helder captured by Dr. Hall it is "communication." With credibility and artistic force Dr. Hall describes Dom Helder's ease in relating to the unseen world of (yes) his guardian angel, José; to the created world of the ants whom he scolds one day for ravaging his rose bushes, and thus spares his flowers from further destruction; to the world of immediate concerns where his conversation with an assassin paid to kill him concludes with the man leaving him in peace. Dom Helder was an innovator in the use of media to communicate with his people and he still uses radio to speak out for those who are without voice. One Christmas he mobilized all the various groups in Recife for a drama in the medieval style; the story of the "Victims of Prostitution" (pp. 84–86) testifies to the trust he engenders.

Studying the cover of Dr. Hall's book, one can identify with the words of Dom Helder's parishioners: " . . . he is already a small man . . . but his charisma is so strong that it transcends everything . . . he is a man full of the Spirit of God; a prophet of the Third World. A prophet is always a person who is a nuisance to other people because he brings them face to face with themselves" (p. 94).

Dom Helder stands firm and speaks "as one of the voiceless poor of Brazil" (p. 80). Mary Hall has given us the opportunity to hear this voice, humble and challenging.

—Joan Marie Berninger, M.M.

Noteworthy

U.S. Catholic missionaries serving abroad in 1980 numbered 6,393 according to the latest report in Mission Handbook 1980, published by the U.S. Catholic Mission Council. Counted in the annual survey are U.S. citizens serving for at least one year outside the 48 contiguous states. Not included are 150 staff members of Catholic Relief Services working in 86 countries.

Trends over the last twenty-four years can be seen from the following figures:

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1962</td>
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The major sending groups are the Jesuits with 574 (671 in 1976), the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers with 570 (676 in 1976), and the Maryknoll Sisters with 411 members (493 in 1976) serving abroad.

There are 1,576 serving in Asia and 1,556 in South America. The individual countries with the largest numbers are Brazil (465), Peru (436), and the Philippines (428). Copies of the report may be ordered from USCMC, 1302 18th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Cost: $1.25 domestic; $2.00 overseas airmail.

The Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, now receives in its library nearly 500 current periodicals in the field of missiology and world Christianity. A checklist of these periodicals may be obtained for $4.00 postpaid by sending your order to: Publications Office, Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, NJ 08406. Payment must accompany orders.

Christianity and World Order.


This is the text of six lectures delivered on radio by the Dean of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, during the fall of 1978. Each year the British Broadcasting Corporation invites a distinguished scholar to give a series of lectures on a subject of national interest in memory of its founder and first director-general, Lord Reith.

The choice of a church historian was an innovation, but the result was even more controversial than the invitation. Dr. Norman's thesis is that, since World War II, Christianity has become politicized, and he criticizes Western church leaders and the World Council of Churches in particular for their responsibility in this regard. They have been, he claims, merely the reflection of current humanist intellectual fashions, notably of a leftist tendency.

Paul Roatree Clifford, former president of Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England, is Treasurer of the International Association for Mission Studies.
In developing his theme he castigates the churches for uncritical partisanship in the defense of human rights, in their stance on Southern Africa, in their criticism of military regimes such as the one in Chile, and in their attitude to the policies of the Soviet Union. He believes that, in becoming involved in political affairs outside their competence, Christian leaders have lost the transcendental dimension of the Faith and have confused historical relativism with the eternal verities.

How far are we justified in taking Norman’s polemics seriously? Certainly they can be faulted for their wild generalizations, their loose umbrella usage of categories such as liberal, humanist, and Marxist, and their inaccuracies on matters of fact. But behind all the distortions clearly lay the intention to provoke his hearers, and indirectly the leaders of the churches, to reexamine the presuppositions on which pronouncements regarding public policy are made. Norman is concerned to recall the churches to what he believes is their traditional task: to prepare men and women for heaven and enable them to live in this transitory world without being committed to its passing show.

The thesis of these Reith Lectures has largely been dismissed by those who were pilloried in them, but their significance lies, as one informed observer remarked, in that they reflect the average outlook of the pew. Norman says what many ordinary Christians believe or perhaps want to believe, for it gets them off the hook. They can escape from uncomfortable involvement in matters that seem too big for them and so retreat into a private manageable religion.

If this is so, the Reith Lectures have at least served to open up the issues as long as they are not forgotten like yesterday’s newspaper. More seriously, they underline the urgency of coming to terms with a theology of society, which is sadly lacking, not least among those who are political activists.

—Paul Rowntree Clifford

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Dissertation Notices

Gingerich, Ray C.
“The Mission Impulse of Early Swiss and South German-Austrian Anabaptism.”

Hadsell, Heidi R.
“The Moral Thought of Julius Nyerere.”
Ph.D. Los Angeles: Univ. of Southern California, 1979.

Hintze, Otto C.
“Complementarity: A Mature Interrelationship between Partner Churches for Better Effecting God’s Mission.”
Th.D. Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology, 1980.

Hughes, Robert Dan.
“The Role of Broadcasting in the Contextualization of the Gospel in Sub-Saharan Africa.”
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Jesudasan, Ignatius.
“A Gandhian Theology of Liberation.”

Luck, Donald G.
“The Manifest and Latent Spiritual Community: The Essence of the Church in the Theology of Paul Tillich.”

Mothabi, Mokgethi B.

Patterson, James Alan.

Persha, Gerald Justin.
“Juan Luis Segundo: A Study concerning the Relationship between the Particularity of the Church and the Universality of Her Mission (1963–1977).”

Whiteman, Darrell L.
“Melanesians and Missionaries: An Ethnohistorical Study of SocioReligious Change in the Southwest Pacific.”

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