Toward Holistic Mission

Our predecessors in the missionary enterprise spoke, as we continue to do, of "the whole gospel for the whole world." The term "holistic" in today's missionary vocabulary reflects the same objective, but a troublesome gap between intention and realization continues to frustrate us. Truly holistic mission is sensitive to social justice, to corporate as well as individual dimensions of evangelization, to the sinned-against as well as sinners, to ways the gospel is heard as well as the manner in which it is proclaimed, and to the perplexing issues of contextualization as well as quantitative church growth. These are the concerns raised in this issue of the International Bulletin.

Peter Walshe describes a Christian effort in South Africa "to work for the empowerment of the powerless." Beyers Naudé, organizing director of the Christian Institute in 1963, saw the churches of South Africa's ruling white minority as corrupted vehicles, serving the interests of Afrikaner civil religion. His institute became the seminal Christian organization in the country during the 1960s, until it was banned in October 1977.

Responding to the renewed interest today in Christian mission to Muslims, David A. Kerr warns: "In order that it should not be ourselves we preach, we must learn the often painful discipline of seeing ourselves as Muslims see us, acknowledging that their image of us is existentially important to our understanding of how, for Christ's sake, we may aspire to be their servants."

Kenneth Cragg here evaluates the contribution of Temple Gairdner, an Anglican missionary who served in Cairo from 1899 to 1928. Gairdner's life among Muslims was in itself an islam, a submission to God in the wholeness of his personal being. Cragg describes Gairdner as a living translation of Paul's apostolic affirmation: "To me to live is Christ—for Egypt."

Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and Henry Venn (1796-1873) were the leading missionary statesmen of their day in the United States and England respectively. They developed similar and highly influential conclusions about how mission-founded churches could best achieve responsible selfhood. Wilbert R. Shenk raises the question of how to explain that similarity.

Based largely on the writings of Anderson and Venn, the "three-self" concept (self-government, self-support, and self-propagation) has long been regarded by missiologists as the essential earmark of a truly indigenous church. G. Linwood Barney's article insists, however, that "contextualization" is a more comprehensive concept than "indigenization" and responds better to the present world situation.

On Page

146 Mission in a Repressive Society: The Christian Institute of Southern Africa
Peter Walshe
152 The Problem of Christianity in Muslim Perspective: Implications for Christian Mission
David A. Kerr
164 Temple Gairdner's Legacy
Kenneth Cragg
168 Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?
Wilbert R. Shenk
172 The Challenge of Anthropology to Current Missiology
G. Linwood Barney
177 Book Reviews
183 Noteworthy
187 Dissertation Notices
188 Index, 1981
192 Book Notes
Mission in a Repressive Society: The Christian Institute of Southern Africa

Peter Walshe

For the first sixty years of this century, the white-controlled churches of South Africa very largely were absorbed into the country's cultural and legal patterns of racial discrimination. During this period many black1 and a few dissenting white Christians opposed the consolidation of racism, persistently if ineffectually struggling to arouse the conscience of the government and church establishments. Although the system of migrant labor was periodically criticized, in general the churches either nurtured Afrikaner nationalism or drifted with the powerful economic and political currents of South African history and so failed in their prophetic responsibilities. Successive governments, dominated by capitalist interests and a racist electorate, steadily tightened the legal apparatus of discrimination as the black labor force was drawn into a white-controlled industrial revolution to serve white interests.

The white Dutch Reformed Churches (DRCs), having identified themselves with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism,2 set out to legitimize the attempts of the Afrikaner Nationalist party to transform discrimination into a policy of apartheid, or “separate development.” In the years following the electoral victory of the party in 1948, the DRCs’ occasional and mild criticisms were invariably made from within the parameters of government policy. The English-speaking, or multiracial but white-controlled, churches were less directly involved in politics and adopted a complaining but essentially passive mode of relating to the established culture of white power, economic privilege, and the racist destruction of human fellowship.3 Of course there were exceptions to these trends. For example, the Anglican priests Michael Scott and Trevor Huddleston, and the Anglican Archbishops Geoffrey Clayton and Jooste de Blank, publicly confronted government policies; and in 1957 the Roman Catholic Bishops produced a major pastoral letter condemning both the principle and the practice of apartheid. A few dissenting voices were also heard in the DRCs, the major cases being Professor B. B. Keet in 1956 with his book Whither South Africa? and a group of Afrikaner theologians who produced Delayed Action in 1960. However, it was only after a decade of sporadic black passive resistance, which culminated in the massacre at Sharpeville in 1960,4 that a major church/state confrontation occurred. This confrontation developed in the aftermath of the Cottesloe Consultation (1960) and escalated after the formation of the Christian Institute in 1963.

When representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) met with the South African member churches at Cottesloe near Johannesburg in December 1960, the DRCs participated in what was an effort to reassess the churches’ stance on public policy. This had become an urgent matter after Sharpeville and the government’s banning of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress. The rather cautious and ambivalent report that was produced recognized divergent convictions about apartheid: some representatives found it unacceptable in principle and practice; others defended it in principle as the only realistic approach to race relations. Still, the report also recorded agreement on some major issues, inter alia: the church, as the body of Christ, was a unity within which the natural diversity among people was not annulled but sanctified; believers should not be excluded from any church on the ground of race or color; there was no scriptural basis for prohibiting mixed marriages; the system of migrant labor was decimating family life, that life Christians were bound to defend; it was a major injustice to maintain wage structures below the poverty line, as was the case for millions of nonwhites; individuals had the right to own land wherever they were domiciled and to participate in the government of their country.5

To have obtained what appeared to be a substantial element of agreement was far more than most participants had dared to hope for. Unfortunately the proceedings also revealed the paternalism of the white representatives, who comprised 80 percent of the participants. The Cottesloe report used the negative term “nonwhite” for Africans, Coloreds, and Indians. Although African political organizations had long rejected the term “Bantu” on account of its co-option into apartheid terminology, it too was still a regular part of the white vocabulary. Rather than working to empower the black Christian leadership that was available within the churches and had emerged more obviously within African politics, the white representatives were still thinking in terms of “cultivating Christian leadership for the Bantu.” What was even more remarkable at a time of wholesale state repression of black political movements was that delegates saw fit to ask the “Government to cooperate with the churches in developing [nonwhite] leadership.”6 There were yet more subtle examples of this paternalism that was so embedded in the white, Western mindset that even the shock of black theology and black consciousness in the 1970s failed to arouse many whites from its thrall. The report of one Cottesloe discussion group referred to those “who have a greater cultural, religious, economic or technical development” and their “duty towards the less developed.” The “less advanced” had to be educated “to full maturity.”7 At no point in the records of the consultation was there any recognition that, in contrast with the communal values of African cultures, the rapid social change imposed by capitalism might not be “development.” Had the church hierarchies been listening more closely to the underprivileged, to the protests and alternative futures envisaged by black South Africans, the Cottesloe gathering would have had to confront the church and government establishments with a much more radical set of challenges. There would have been talk of predominant political power for Africans, a major redistribution of land, the nationalisation of key industries including the mines, racial equality in a radically transformed educational system, and the dismantling of all racial discrimination. In the event, the consultation reflected the insularity of the white-controlled churches, formed as they were by a complacent white culture. There may well have been profound long-run effects had Cottesloe’s theological, political, and

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147
One reason for this intense hostility was the country's political situation. State repression had created a vacuum in terms of black political leadership with the result that multiracial church organizations were beginning to function as a residual matrix for opposition to apartheid. As the state undertook a massive mopping-up operation against the remaining pockets of black activists, as the newly formed underground movement was broken, and as still further repressive legislation was passed by the all-white House of Assembly in Cape Town, the Christian Institute emerged as the vanguard organization in an inchoate, loosely coordinated, and essentially spontaneous movement of Christian dissent. Individual churchpeople were banned or deported, attempts to nurture multiracial fellowship were disrupted, and the institute endured a vilification campaign simultaneously launched by Nationalist party politicians, the Afrikaner press, and the white DRCs. It became commonplace for ministers to use their pulpits to warn against the Christian Institute's blurring of racial divisions and to condemn its "liberalistic" and "Communistic tendencies." According to the Afrikaner Studente Bond the institute was in practice "a tool in the hand of Communism" and had to be countered by a vigorous reassertion of Afrikaner "Christian national principles." To ask whether in accepting apartheid the ORCs had ceased to do the will of God was now seen as a traitorous act, traitorous to both church and state.

In this situation the institute continued its efforts to wean Afrikanerdom from what Naudé saw as its idolatrous commitment to a dominant, privileged, and separate future; but increasingly its energies during the 1960s were spent on expanding ecumenical and interracial commitments. The institute encouraged its members to associate in Bible study groups designed to explore the social implications of the gospel; it worked with the SACC for improved cooperation among the multiracial churches; and Naudé maintained a special interest in the black DRCs—the Sendingkerk (Colored), the Kerk van Afrika (African), and the small, recently formed Indian Reformed Church. The institute also established a volatile relationship with the fragmented world of the black independent churches, helping to pull approximately forty of these into an African Independent Churches Association. In addition the institute took what it saw as a major initiative in sponsoring a training program for independent church ministers. By the late 1960s, when Naudé and his staff collaborated with the SACC to produce "A Message to the People of South Africa," the institute (with its journal Pro Veritate) had become the seminal Christian organization in the country.

The "Message" started from an ontological base in total contradiction to the sustained divisiveness of apartheid: the gospel's "good news that in Christ God had broken down the walls of division between God and man, and therefore also between man and man." Christ was "the truth who sets men free" from the "pursuit of false securities." The crucifixion had been followed by the resurrection and the gospel's message that it is God's "purpose that shapes history" giving rise to "the expectations of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells . . . the Kingdom of God." In searching for a deeper and deeper understanding of justice, Christians were working for the coming of God's kingdom, which was already incipient in history; they were being called to struggle for "the salvation of the world and of human existence in its entirety." From this base the "Message" attacked apartheid as the deliberate maintenance of human divisions and white supremacy, a policy of social sin that arbitrarily limited a person's ability "to love his neighbor as himself." Reactions to the "Message" varied widely. To some, including one or two of those involved in its writing, it was a flop—a damp squib. As an essentially white initiative to raise white consciousness, it put the issues clearly enough yet had little impact on white society. However, 600 clergy formally endorsed the "Message" and members of the SACC, with the exception of the Baptist Union, supported it even if some did so with less enthusiasm than others. It must also be rembered that it led on to further collaboration between the Christian Institute and the SACC, namely, the 1969-73 Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (SPRO-CAS). This was a determined if still white-orchestrated effort to describe the South African situation in depth and to offer practical alternatives to apartheid.

Clearly the "Message" reflected a mindset that still stopped short of seeing the liberating impact of the gospel as a call to the poor and oppressed to take their future into their own hands. Certainly the full and, for whites, startling consequences of the "Message's" theology had yet to be explored. Nevertheless, the "Message" did disseminate the Christian Institute's position. In Naudé's terms it "clearly and unequivocally . . . refuted" apartheid from a "biblical standpoint." The "Message" also pointed in the direction of liberation theology. Although it was a white initiative, it furthered the evolution of theology in South Africa, helping to raise social consciousness among a minority of white Christians and encouraging black Christians, who later developed the "Message" insights during the turmoil of the 1970s. In pointing to the need for an analysis of structural injustice and in accepting the historical challenge to work with the poor and exploited for the full development of all human potentialities, the "Message" helped to prepare the way for black consciousness and black theology. The liberating impact of the "Message" with its open-ended view of history, was not to be indefinitely circumscribed by what was initially a rather vague grasp of its implications.

In spite of these initiatives the actual state of the institute in the late 1960s was not too encouraging. Far from riding the crest of a wave, it was struggling to overcome a sense of anticlimax and even failure. The DRCs had extruded it; membership had stagnated, settling at approximately 2,000; and Africans continued to show the same reservations toward the institute that they had shown to any white-dominated organization. It had been hoped that the multiracial churches would respond quickly to the institute's challenge, but here too there were very few signs in the white parishes of a supportive Christian witness. Individual clerics and lay persons might join, often because of deep frustration with their own denominations; but apart from periodic public pronouncements at the level of principle, there was little emanating from the church hierarchies to encourage Naudé and his colleagues. Surveying this scene from his position as chairman of the Board of Management, Calvin Cook went on to deliver a remarkable address to the 1968 annual general meeting in which he made a prophetic judgment on the Christian Institute itself. There was, he suggested, a real danger that the institute's influence would be "like King Log: one big splash, then a few ripples, and finally a tranquil pond once more." Despite the institute, South Africa remained "the most stable country in Africa: a financier's dream." Rather then being the threat the DRCs had imagined it to be, the institute was in danger of becoming "a paper tiger." The enemy was "tougher, braver, cleverer, meaner and more purposeful" than anticipated. The walls of apartheid had not collapsed despite "repeated blasts" from Pro Veritate.

In fact the situation in the late 1960s and early 1970s was not quite so bleak. The institute was gathering increasing support from abroad, particularly from the Netherlands. Most important of all, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, meeting in Luntern, Netherlands, in 1968, once again condemned racial discrimination and supported the institute's stance, thereby sharply increasing the gap between the worldwide Reformed churches and the DRCs in
South Africa. As SPRO-CAS got underway, the institute's understanding of structural injustice was deepened, which increased its receptivity to black critiques of white-dominated churches and apartheid. Simultaneously the WCC decision to support the welfare activities of the Southern African liberation movements, the spread of civil war in the region, and the resurgence of African nationalism in the form of the black consciousness movement produced a new historical context. In short, the institute was faced with the need for a new praxis.

While the black consciousness movement was a reassertion of black dignity within the country's racist political economy—an attempt to nurture black confidence amid systematic humiliation—political black theater groups glorified this history before being censored and banned. The collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique and Angola in 1974, after prolonged pressure from African guerrilla movements, also helped to produce a surge of black confidence and more aggressive political attitudes. Sensing a new fluidity in the region as South Africa's buffer zone began to disintegrate, and aroused by new leaders like Steve Biko and Barney Pityana, young activists produced turmoil on the black campuses and later in the schools. Simultaneously, labor unrest, the growth of African trade unions, and a rash of strikes disturbed white complacency by raising the prospect of a resurgent African nationalism allied to politically oriented trade unions.

If the institute was to remain open to the liberation of the poor and oppressed in this new context, that is, open to the unforeseeable consequences of its biblical commitments, it had to grow in its understanding of mission. To confront the established powers with a demand that they reform themselves was one thing; to work for the empowerment of the powerless, as the institute now began to do, was another. As the 1970s progressed the institute's understanding of the Scriptures moved into sharper and sharper contrast with the civil religion of the ORCs and the dualistic Christianity that was rife among whites in the multiracial churches. This dualism placed the kingdom of God outside history. It argued that the injustice and oppression suffered by blacks was "far worse than that against which Afrikaners had waged war" and went on to "commend the courage and witness" of those who were prepared to go to jail in protest against unjust wars. The resolution then called upon Christians to "consider becoming conscientious objectors." Quite simply, to accept military service in defense of injustice was not permissible.

In addition to this attempt to start a movement of conscientious objectors, the institute's staff refused to testify before the Schlebusch-Le Grange Commission (The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organizations). The institute saw the commission as a partisan group of white politicians who sat in camera, withheld the names of witnesses, denied the right of cross-examination, and refused to publish their evidence. Correctly, Naude and his colleagues judged the commission to be a public-relations operation designed to prepare the white electorate for the repression of the new range of protest organizations that had emerged in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Indeed, during the period of the commission's hearings, key leaders of the National Union of South African Students (white), the South African Students' Organization (black), the Black Community Program, and the Black People's Convention were banned. By January 1974 forty young South Africans were also being held without trial under the Terrorism Act; later in the year a further group of thirteen SASO students were added to this list after they attempted to organize a
of black confidence, black leadership training, and the exploration of black consciousness movement—precisely those groups that were suffering increasingly ruthless repression. The Black Community Program was central in this commitment. Assisted by the institute, but staffed and controlled by young blacks of the caliber of Steve Biko and Barney Pityana, the program was committed to the recovery of black confidence, black leadership training, and the exploration of black theology. Using discussion groups, pamphlets, newsletters, and literacy campaigns, it sponsored medical clinics and an urban youth movement as well as a black church leaders' project. This latter initiative was designed to "gain control over churches whose membership is mostly black" and to reorient them "towards the needs of black people."24 In addition the Black Community Program worked with SASO to encourage the spread of black trade unions. Through this range of initiatives, the program therefore became an important part of that much wider resurgence of black consciousness that followed the formation of SASO in 1968.25

It was through this involvement with the black consciousness movement that the institute deepened its understanding of Christian mission still further, learning not only from its attempt to identify with the poor but from the evolution of black theology. Stimulated in part by the writings of black theologians in the United States, and increasingly aware of liberation theology in Latin America and of political theology in Europe, young black thinkers began to articulate an indigenous theology growing out of the South African predicament itself. In essence this black theology asked "Blacks to learn to love themselves ... to hate oppression, dehumanization and the cultivation of a slave mentality." It asked them to recognize their "infinite worth before God," to "affirm their blackness," and so to experience "a total conversion, the creation of a new humanity." This was not incitement to hate whites, but a "rejection of white values as the summum bonum," a call to blacks but also a challenge to whites to repent, to give up exploitation and repression, and so be able to "share our dreams and hopes of a new future."26 Reflecting on the struggle for liberation within the particular circumstances of South Africa, black theology tried to maintain some continuity from within African traditional religion; it also expressed a deep respect for the black experience, the black search for justice in the face of conquest, white domination, and the exploitative, socially disrupting forces of an industrial revolution. The region's history very largely had been written in terms of the advent and ascendancy of white power, and this history had now to be rewritten. Instead of a "black problem" there was really a "white problem," in that whites had not responded to the essential challenge of the Gospels, which was to identify with the poor. In the South African situation this meant accepting the hopes of black men and women who were searching for cultural continuity and seeking to escape the paternalism, psychological oppression, and economic exploitation of apartheid structures. On this last issue of structural change, African communalism was a recurrent theme and seen to be an alternative to capitalism or communism.27

So it was that black theology meshed with much of the Christian Institute's own evolving liberation theology. Both sources of inspiration were presented as the basis for a potential revival of Christian witness within phlegmatic churches; both theologies envisaged the renewal of society through a concern for the poor and hence the promotion of black hopes; both agreed that blacks (the poor) were about to appropriate the Scriptures with unpredictable consequences for salvation history.

During these last years of its existence, as black pressures for change increased and eventually erupted in the Soweto student protests of June 25, 1976 (with an initial death toll of 176),28 the Christian Institute pursued two further initiatives that contributed to its being banned in 1977. In addition to condemning the ruthless state violence, Naudé and his staff further alienated the Afrikaner church establishment by extending their contacts with the black DRCs. At the same time the institute refined its analysis of structural injustice, probing behind the country's institutional racism and becoming increasingly aware of the dimension of capitalist exploitation. Let me amplify each of these important initiatives.

In the judgment of a growing number of black DRC ministers, the NGK had become a tragic body dominated not by the Scriptures but by the Broederbond29—the white church had become a corrupted vehicle serving the interests of Afrikaner civil religion. Financial dependence on the white church exacerbated these tensions and there was an increasing tendency to reject the confederal, racially structured constitution of the DRC. In positive terms, the black churches began to call for a forthright, nonracial witness to Christian unity—for example, common services with a mixing of congregations—as well as shared decision-making: it was time to drop the condescending terms “Mother Church” (white) and “Daughter Churches” (African, Colored, and Indian). By 1975 the black DRCs were taking their own independent initiatives; they committed themselves to nonracial membership, the NGK was called on to do likewise, and it was not long before they voted to join the SACC from which the white DRCs had withdrawn in 1961 after the Cottesloe Consultation.30

The Christian Institute's increasingly critical approach to capitalism had been indicated in the 1973 final SPRO-CAS report, A Taste of Power. By the mid-1970s, the themes raised at that time were being expressed with increasing frequency as the institute interacted with the black consciousness movement and tried to counter government propaganda, which persistently played upon the white community's ignorance of black politics. As Naudé put it in his address to the Convocation of the University of Natal in August 1975:

The vast majority of our African, Coloured and Indian community will never voluntarily accept the present economic system of distribution of wealth and land which the capitalist system, buttressed by a myriad of apartheid laws and regulations, has imposed on them. . . . The recent developments in Mozambique have focused the attention of many Whites and Blacks in our country on the whole issue of capitalism and socialism. The ruthless suppression by the Government, especially since 1960, of the freedom of the organization and expression of black thought which could seriously threaten either the Nationalist policy of separate development or the present capitalistic system with its major profits always going into White pockets, has created a situation where the majority of Whites live in dangerous ignorance regarding the real feelings and hopes of the Black community on the issue of capitalism and socialism. I am convinced that the majority of the Black leadership which will eventually decide the political future of South Africa, does not voluntarily accept and support the present economic system in South Africa and will never do so.31

Blacks, he continued, if they obtained the power to do so, would reject capitalism "in favor of a form of socialism which is much closer to the African concept of communal rights, communal freedoms and communal responsibilities."32

A few months later Naudé was to argue that it was
imperative that objective studies should be undertaken... to assess
the role of capitalism on the one hand and historic communism on
the other hand, especially to ascertain to what degree the emerging
form of African socialism could provide a more adequate and just
answer to the problem of affluence and poverty which both the
first and third world is currently facing.33

Of course, the government with “its terrible fear of communism”
would never permit such studies; but it was here that the challenge
existed for Christians—to work from “the perspective of the Gos­
pel” to restructure South African society.34 It was shortly after this
that the institute condemned foreign investment in South Africa.35

The confrontation with the state was no longer simply a mat­
ter of protesting racism and appealing to whites to reform the
system. Having taken the option of the poor, the Christian Institute
had come to reject the existing economic system as well as the
country’s racist, apartheid structures. The inevitable result was
that the Christian Institute and its leading personalities were
banned in October 1977. At the same time, the remaining organi­
zations of the black consciousness movement were banned, in­
cluding SASO and BPC.

There are several ways of interpreting this evolution of the
Christian Institute’s prophetic and dialectical understanding of
Christian mission. At one level, the institute functioned as part of
a matrix of personal contacts that facilitated the dissemination of
ideas—a vital network when African political organizations had
been repressed. In addition, an important part of the institute’s
role was to redefine Christian commitment, which it did by reject­
ning both the civil religion of Afrikanerdom and cultic aspects of
the white-dominated multiracial churches. This helped the insti­
tute to free itself from the suffocating grip of capitalist culture,
which in turn permitted it to interact with South Africa’s strain of
black theology. The result was an indigenous liberation theology
with its primary impulse in the struggle for identity and justice
taking place in the black community.

If the Christian Institute very largely failed in its efforts to
transform the understanding of mission in white hierarchies and
white parishes, and so failed to alter the politics of established
white interests, its leading personalities can nevertheless be seen as
a progressive group of thinkers. Working from a biblical theology,
they came to identify with the poor and oppressed and in so doing
eventually recognized the elements of class conflict as well as raci­
ism in the South African situation. All this meant that the insti­
tute’s leadership came to see the exploited classes—meaning
essentially the vast majority of the country’s black population—as
the potential source of energy that might, with increased political
consciousness, eventually move society toward more egalitarian
structures. It would be true to say that the institute remained
deeply suspicious of communism, yet its understanding of mission
and its political analysis pointed it in the direction of democratic
socialism. The evolution of the institute, therefore, provides yet
another important reminder of the common ground that can be
shared by democratic socialism and a prophetic Christianity when
the latter has been galvanized by the praxis of a liberation struggle.

Finally, the institute’s activities can be viewed as an example
of the historical phenomenon of recurring hope. Time and again
over the centuries, individuals, groups, and even classes have ex­
pressed a vision of greater equality. John C. Bennett has called this
the discernment of “the radical imperative.”36 Sometimes such
hope has focused on a redistribution of economic resources; at oth­
er times the concern has been for more democratic forms of gov­
ernment; often the vision has embraced both economics and
politics. There are innumerable examples, some of which (but by
no means all) were inspired by biblical values. To mention but a
few: they range from the Hebrew prophets condemning new stratifi­
cations in Israel, to Athenian democracy, peasant revolts in
fourteenth-century Europe, the English Levellers and Diggers in
the decades of seventeenth-century civil war. Further modern if
obvious examples are the American, French, and Russian revolu­
tions as well as the reaction of African, Asian, and Latin American
peoples against colonialism and economic imperialism.37

Such eruptions of hope are often associated with a drive to
transform the basis of legitimate government. Occasionally they
succeed, as with the French Revolution of 1789. With this in mind,
it may not be fanciful to see the Christian Institute and the wider
phenomenon of liberation theology as an important ingredient of a
late twentieth-century thrust toward more egalitarian social struc­
tures, the establishment of which could renew the basis of legiti­
mate government. This complex and still largely frustrated
movement, of which radical Christians are but a part, offers an
alternative to the widespread erosion of civic virtue and legitimate
government as privilege allies itself with tyranny in many coun­
tries around the globe.

Notes

1. The term “black” refers to African, Colored (mixed parentage), and In­
dian South Africans.

2. See Dunbar Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom (Berkeley: University of

3. For example, the segregated black townships and white suburbs re­
quired by the Group Areas Act.

4. Hundreds of Africans were wounded and sixty-nine killed when the
police panicked and opened fire on passive resisters.

South African Member Churches of the World Council of Churches, December 7–
73–78.

6. Ibid., p. 46.

7. Ibid., p. 38.

8. Ibid., p. 79.


10. Lesley Cawood, The Churches and Race Relations in South Africa (Johannes­
also note 29, below, on the Broederbond.

11. International Commission of Jurists, The Trial of Bayers Naude’ (London:
Search Press, in conjunction with Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1975),
pp. 72–73.

12. From 1968 to 1970 state action was taken against more than forty cler­


14. This initiative, the institute’s full-time staff at headquarters in Johan­
nesburg, and the regional office established in Cape Town under the
direction of the Rev. Theo Kotze in 1968 had been made possible in
part by increasing financial support from overseas, in particular from
the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. By 1974–75 three­quarters
of the institute’s R200,000 budget came from such external funding.

15. South African Council of Churches, “A Message to the People of
South Africa” (Johannesburg: SACC, 1968), pp. 1–2.


17. Bayers Naude’, “Apartheid Morally Unacceptable,” being the Christian
Institute’s translation of Naude’s “Apartheid is in Stryd met God”
(“Apartheid Is in Conflict with God”), Ster (Johannesburg), November
13, 1970.

18. Dr. Calvin Cook, “Some Frustrations and Hopes for This Five Year
Old,” Pro Veritate, October 1968, pp. 3–6. Cook was chairman of the De­
partment of Divinity at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johan­
nesburg.
The Problem of Christianity in Muslim Perspective: Implications for Christian Mission

David A. Kerr

Introduction

E ven a cursory reading of the voluminous Christian missionary literature dealing with evangelism among Muslims is sufficient to reveal how the subject—whether it be Muslims as individuals, their religious doctrines and practice, or their societies and cultures—is generally perceived in terms of "problem," and notoriously one of the most difficult problems besetting Christian evangelism. The problem has been analyzed under a variety of categories including sociological, anthropological, cultural, ideological, and less frequently theological, as may be deduced from Lyle Vander Werff’s well-documented Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record.1 This valuable study does not claim to be fully comprehensive, since, as its subtitle clarifies, its concern is with “Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East, 1800–1938,” and the author himself states in conclusion that “discussion surely shall continue as long as the church’s task remains unfinished.”

Any summary of developments over the past four decades would have to include, from Western Protestant circles, the critical debate between Hendrik Kraemer and Kenneth Cragg over their theological understandings of Christian evangelism in general and evangelical attitudes toward Islam in particular.2 They can be seen broadly to delineate the lines of approach in which, with some qualification, we could locate respectively the recent North American Conference on the Evangelization of Musli ms (Colorado Springs, 1978)3 and the World Council of Churches (WCC) conference on “Christian Presence and Witness in Relation to Muslim Neighbours” (Mombasa, 1979).4 Both these conferences tried to take serious account of the views of Christians from churches that are situated within what could be described as “the traditional world of Islam” where opinions are no less diverse than in the West. Attention would have to be given to the ways the Catholic church has absorbed something of the thought of Louis Massignon5 as distill ed by his scholar-priest disciples whose influence in Vatican Council II helped to produce the watershed declarations about Islam in Nostra Aetate and its sequels.6 The voices of the Orthodox churches in the Middle East, indigenous to areas commonly identified as the “heartland” of the Muslim world, have begun to be heard in Western missionary circles, particularly through the WCC, and most interestingly in this writer’s opinion through the writings of Bishop Georges Khodr of Mount Lebanon.7 Moreover, we would have to grapple with the mass of dialogue literature published over the last ten years, seeking to penetrate through the frequent generalization to appreciate, by an exercise of the imagination, the existential reality of Christian–Muslim debate that lies behind.8
The list of references to individual writers and conference statements could be increased, but in nearly all of them the "problematic" casting of Islam remains, explicitly or implicitly, and it is then used either as the basis of an appeal for Christian confrontation or as the stimulus for a hopeful attempt to transmute "problem," negatively construed, into "challenge" creatively experienced in human terms. Elements of both frequently intermingle as demonstrated most complexly in the International Review of Mission’s publication of the proceedings of the 1976 meeting of Christians and Muslims to discuss "Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah."

The point is that, by and large, Christians have identified the "problem" in terms of long-inherited perceptions of Islam as being "post-Christian" (in the temporal sense of emerging as a historical world religion in the seventh century after Christ), and contradictory of the central elements of Christian belief. Far less ready have Christians been—or are—to cast themselves in the category of "problem" and to develop a critique of Christianity/Christendom in relation to their ongoing critique of Islam, with the intellectual rigor and humility of spirit that such an exercise demands. This is not to ignore the searching criticisms in recent years by Christians of the Western acculturation of Christianity and attendant problems in terms of world Christianity, but to emphasize that it is a different, though certainly related, issue. To express it another way by extending Pauline language, it is the challenge "to be a Muslim to Muslims" for the sake of Christ, with all that that implies of seeing Christianity through Muslim eyes, not impetuously dismissing the image as mistaken or doctrinaire, but seriously wrestling with it as historically the longest-sustained critique of Christianity (excluding Jewish critique on a narrower and more discreet front), which has become more, not less important in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The need for such perspective is not unrecognized in contemporary Christian writing, particularly in the statements issuing from dialogue conferences that repeatedly call for Christians to manifest a spirit of repentance in their relations with Muslims. What is lacking, however, are well-researched studies of how modern Muslims view Christianity and Christians, and analysis of how this bears upon Christian understanding of evangelism in the context of Islam as we move toward the twenty-first century.

This essay is a faltering attempt to initiate such discussion by looking at "the problem of Christianity in Muslim perspective," though under the inevitable handicap of the fact that the author is not himself Muslim, but Christian. Problematical as this is in itself (as most Muslims would be quick to point out), it is not a total disqualification, since the paper is written against the background of the author's several years of discussion of this and related issues with Muslims in the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at the Selby Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England—the Study Centre being unique as a place where Christians and Muslims work together in the study of Islam and Christianity "in obedience to their respective faiths...in preparation for their varied vocations." Moreover, the Study Centre has, through one of its students, conducted some reasonably scientific research on the image of Christian life among a cross-section of the approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Muslims resident in Birmingham since the 1950s, and another is currently analyzing the perception of Christianity as evidenced in the writings of contemporary Egyptian Muslim authors since 1950. Some of the tentative findings of these pieces of unpublished research will be included in this paper, not as a basis for generalizations but as concrete illustrations of the main points that the author feels bound to make as a result of his own discussions with Muslims in and from different parts of the world.

Image of Christian Life among Muslim Residents in Birmingham

The Birmingham survey makes it abundantly clear that the Muslim population has relatively little understanding of Christianity as the faith of contemporary Christians, as distinct from their inherited notion of Christian beliefs on the basis of what is said in the Qur'an and Muslim tradition. Fifteen percent of the sample of 100 persons admitted to knowing nothing at all. Relatively the best informed were the adolescents and young adults up to the age of thirty (ca. 48 percent). Most of the "young generation" in this age bracket would either have been born in Birmingham or have been brought to the city by immigrant parents at an early enough age for them to have had sufficient time and experience to feel themselves reasonably "at home" in, and familiar with, British society. Their answers indicate that they have a rather general acquaintance with Christianity, principally through personal contact with Christians and Christian ideas in the situation of school (in the United Kingdom religious instruction is a statutory part of school curricula), college, or at work. Very few of them have ever read any part of the Bible, though a considerable number (more males than females) admitted to having attended a church service or having seen some form of Christian worship broadcast on television. They were not questioned closely on their knowledge of Christian doctrine, though it emerged that most were of the opinion that Christians worship the One God through Jesus Christ (as distinct from worshiping Jesus as God) and that "there is a lot to share as religions between Christianity and Islam." The older their age, however, the greater their apparent disillusionment with Christians, whom many regarded as extremely lax in the practice of their religion, to the point of its having no appreciable influence on their lives. Most saw little evidence of positive goodwill toward them from the Christian population, though a minority registered good experiences; and not surprisingly therefore those with young families saw no reason to encourage their children to look for personal contacts with Christians.

The bracket of early-middle-aged people (ages thirty to forty), mainly parents of reasonable educational background, also showed no more than a vague knowledge of Christianity, but included an approximate balance between those who felt that contact with Christians is desirable and those who did not. A narrow majority of this age group reckoned that few Christians in Birmingham take their religion seriously, and since most of them seemed to think that there is no evidence of an increase of Christian goodwill toward them, they were not keen to encourage their children to entertain personal relations with Christians. However, an almost equal number admitted to having attended or seen some form of Christian worship, and based their understanding of Christianity as much on their experience of meeting individual Christians as upon what the Qur'an and Muslim tradition have to say. More than half of this age group expressed the view that since Christians, like Muslims, worship the One God, there is a large measure of common ground between the two religions, but against this must be balanced the fact that just less than half tended to think that, though this should be the case, it is not so in reality. This reflects the opinion that Christianity can be known in its authentic character only from the Qur'an, not from the devout practice of Christians, particularly when they live in a society in which scant regard is given to fidelity to religious creed and practice.

This last opinion was broadly held by the "older generation" (aged fifty-plus) who showed clear evidence of retaining the traditional attitudes of their places of origin in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India (whence most of the Muslim immigrants in Birmingham have come), and for whom Christianity as represented in the West is far removed from what they believe it ought to be on the basis
of what they read in the Qur'an. None of those questioned had ever read the Bible and their contact with Christians was far less than we have seen to be the case with the younger age groups—and presumably it was nonexistent in their home countries. Nor did most of them see any point in encouraging their children to develop contacts with Christians.

Impossible as it is to generalize from the statistical evidence of the Birmingham survey, because of the limited size of the sample and because they are living as a Muslim minority in the West, the foregoing remarks provide us with a concrete illustration of what several missionary writers have deplored—namely, the neglect of the churches in extending friendship to Muslims and making the Christian faith known to them, accessible at least to their comprehension if not necessarily accepted by many in personal confession. The criticism often made to the author by Muslim friends is that most Western Christians seem to care little for their own faith, and therefore can have little care for the faiths of others—an argument that often seems to express their negative evaluation of "secularism" with which contemporary Western Christianity, as they see it, is closely related.

We shall return to this point, but for the time being let us see how the Birmingham survey also illustrates an observation made by Wilfred Cantwell Smith that "Muslims have religious convictions for genuinely imagining that they know real Christianity better than do Christians themselves and therefore are not intellectually interested in what appears to them to be pseudo Chris-

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### Quranic Patterns of "Affirmation/Rejection" of Christianity

It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage in a comprehensive discussion of the complex and controversial factors of Quranic affirmation/rejection of Christian beliefs, but the following tabulation is offered as a rough guide, the usefulness of which lies not in its scholarly accuracy but in the fact that it is based substantially upon a scheme devised by a Muslim member of the Study Centre in Birmingham.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern of Affirmation</th>
<th>Pattern of Rejection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jesus (Isa): son of Mary</td>
<td>&quot;Son of God&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jesus, prophet and messenger of God to the Children of Israel</td>
<td>Universal/eternal mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Miracles of Jesus' birth and life</td>
<td>Incarnational understanding of miracles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moral teaching of Jesus</td>
<td>Doctrines of his redemptive power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rejection of Jesus by Jews</td>
<td>Crucifixion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jesus' &quot;ascension&quot; to heaven</td>
<td>Death on the cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jesus as uplifted</td>
<td>Jesus as risen from the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jesus as word/sign/spirit</td>
<td>Jesus as the Word made flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jesus as Messiah</td>
<td>Implications of this title in Christian theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Special status of Jesus</td>
<td>Uniqueness of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Jesus' prophecy of the Paraclete (affirmed as 'ahmad)</td>
<td>Doctrine of the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The Last Supper</td>
<td>Its sacramental significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Disciples of Jesus as 'ansar Allâh, helpers of God</td>
<td>Disciples united &quot;in Christ&quot; by the power of the Spirit/Eparchist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The 'injil (gospel in form of book)</td>
<td>Its authenticity in biblical form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Christians as &quot;People of the Book&quot; ('âlî al-kitâb)</td>
<td>Church as body of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Christian piety</td>
<td>Christian belief about divinity of Christ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To state that Muslims have an inherited view of Christianity derived from the Qur'an, embodying a critical pattern of affirmation and rejection, is not to suggest that Muslim attitudes to Christianity are monolithic, or that all Muslims would express them schematically as in the tabulation above. The latter is no more than an approximate guide to some of the Quranic data, and suggests the reason why there are many more Muslims who claim to know Christianity than there are Christians who would claim to know Islam. The "pattern of affirmation" indicates why, for example, as many as 79 percent of the Muslims in the Birmingham survey expressed the view that Islam and Christianity share much in common. The Birmingham survey also shows how effectively the "pattern of rejection" operates at the same time, particularly among adult Muslims whose firsthand encounter with Christians in the city has not apparently been such as to cause them seriously to question the Quranic data. This generally corroborates Irene West's observation in her address to the 1969 Asmara conference on "The Christian Faith and the Contemporary Middle Eastern World" that "Muslims [can] say on the one hand, as did Khuda Bakhsh, that there is no essential difference between Islam and Christianity and take no intellectual interest in Christian doctrines, and on the other ... refute on every occasion what they consider to be pseudo-Christianity."'

These two suggested patterns of Muslims' inherited attitudes...
toward Christianity need to be considered in relation to the variables of the historical, sociocultural, and moral contexts of Muslim encounter with existential Christianity in order that their complex interaction be properly understood. Before doing so, however, we may conclude this part of the paper by observing that “the problem of Christianity in Muslim perspective” lies essentially in the Quranic view that historical Christianity has deviated in its doctrines and religious practices from what the Qur’an attests to have been the authentic preaching of Jesus. To put the point more bluntly, there are Quranic reasons why Muslims have traditionally held that Christians, originally entrusted with the true gospel (in-jil), which reaffirmed the Torah (with certain legal amendments, Q. 3, 44), no longer possess it authentically.

This is usually explained in terms of “corruption” (tahrīf) on the basis of several verses of the Qur’an which allege either willful or unwitting abuse of the original gospel by early generations of Christians, either by literal falsification of the text (tahrīf la‘afār) or by mistaken exegesis (tahrīf ma‘anā‘i). Historical “proofs” of such corruption, mentioned by the Qur’an itself, are the disunity of Christians “who forgot part of that whereof they were admonished [for which reason] We [God] have stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection when God will inform them of their handiwork” (Q. 5, 14); and Christian rejection of Muhammad as the Messenger of God and Seal of the Prophets (Q. 33, 40), despite the alleged testimony to him in the original gospel from which the Qur’an quotes Jesus as saying: “O Children of Israel, I am the Messenger of God to you, confirming that which was revealed before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a Messenger who cometh after me, whose name is Ahmad” (Q. 61, 6)—the word “Ahmad” (‘ahmad) being derived from the same Arabic root as the word “Muhammad,” meaning “praised one” (h-m-d). Both these points have regularly been put to the present author by Muslim acquaintances in criticism of contemporary Christianity, usually in the form of questions such as: Why do Christians disagree so much? and, Why can’t Christians accept the prophethood of Muhammad when we Muslims accept the prophethood of Jesus who foretold his mission? These questions could be said to be “loaded” in the sense that they often represent a subtle transition from the pattern of affirmation to the pattern of rejection, and convey an underlying concern for the correction of what are seen to be the errors of historical Christianity due to its alleged deviation from the teaching of Jesus.

Mention should be made at this point of the controversial Gospel of Barnabas, which Muslims of polemical disposition frequently maintain to be the most accurate extant record of the original gospel. Needless to say, the document that such Muslims produce (which is completely different from the apocryphal epistle attributed to Barnabas in the Christian tradition) coheres closely to the Quranic data, so much so that its Christian critics argue that it has been the authentic preaching of Jesus. To put the point more bluntly, there are Quranic reasons why Muslims have traditionally held that Christians, originally entrusted with the true gospel (in-jil), which reaffirmed the Torah (with certain legal amendments, Q. 3, 44), no longer possess it authentically.

For almost fourteen centuries the dispute or dialogue between Muslims and Christians has been based on . . . convictions about the Bible and the Holy Qur’an respectively. For some, since 1908, the date of the first Arabic and Urdu translations of the Gospel of Barnabas, this position seems to have changed. Several Muslim writers . . . keep insisting that Christians should take this so-called gospel seriously. Here lies my dilemma. Taking it seriously would mean for me not taking our Christian tradition seriously . . . . Secondly, my hesitation to take it seriously is prompted by the experience that this so-called gospel has proved to be more a hindrance than a help in Muslim–Christian relations. Thirdly, in my opinion, scholarly research has proved absolutely that this “gospel” is a fake. This opinion is also held by a number of Muslim scholars.

Variables

Muslim arguments about the alleged deviation of historical Christianity from its origins draw upon much more than a few verses of the Qur’an. These form the basis of the criticism, but the Quranic data need to be explicated in terms of history, moral, and ethical behavior, and the doctrinal developments of Christian creeds. These represent, in the author’s opinion, the most important variables in the interaction of the affirmation/rejection factors of the Quranic data, and can be early documented from the traditions of Muslim writing about Christianity.

a) History

In terms of historical explanation, the alleged deviation of Christianity is closely related in Muslim argumentation to its Western acculturation. This is clearly reflected in the researches of one of the doctoral students at the Study Centre in Birmingham who is analyzing the views of Egyptian Muslim writers on Christianity since 1950. Common to most of the books he examines is their authors’ assumption that historical Christianity is a Western religion; most of them make no more than scant reference to Christianity in its Egyptian form as represented by the approximately 5 million Coptic Christians living in Egypt, despite the fact that Coptic roots in that country long predate the arrival of Islam. Another Study Centre research student has discovered that a major modern Egyptian commentary on the Qur’an (Tafsīr al-manār by Muhammad Abdūh and Rashīd Rīḍā) contains but one reference to the Copts, the Quranic verses dealing with Christians otherwise being interpreted entirely by reference to Western Christianity, usually as explained in the writings of Protestant missionaries resident in Egypt.

This observation is in no way intended to confirm the negative evaluation of the impact of the Oriental churches on Middle Eastern society, as is often made in the writings of Western missionaries, nor to reopen the debate about the strategy of Western missions in relation to the indigenous churches of the Middle East. For if we set these modern Egyptian Muslim writers within the broader historical sweep of Muslim writing about Christianity, it becomes clear that they are not simply overlooking Christianity on their own doorstep by concentrating on its Western form. Their assumption seems to be, rather, that since mainstream historical Christianity in its Pauline and conciliar forms embarked upon a Hellenistic development in the Greco-Roman (Gentile) world from New Testament times, all that Christians accept as the canonically scriptural bases of their faith represents a departure from the Semitic culture of Jesus’ teaching. In this sense the word “Western” is not being used with its modern connotation of Euro-American, but in historical reference to the Greco-Roman world of the entire Mediterranean basin at the time of Christ. Jesus himself is seen to have taught in an Aramaic-Semitic context, but as a result of the missionary journeys of Paul and other apostles his simple teaching is seen to have been adulterated through compromise with the “metropolitan” Hellenistic culture with its admixture of mystery religions, paganism, and so forth.

The argument is succinctly expressed by the late-tenth-century Muslim theologian ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025), who wrote: “It was not the Romans who became Christian but Christianity which was Romanized.” Christianity is seen, therefore, in its biblical form to have adapted itself in creed and institution to the Hellenistic culture of the Greco-Roman empire. The process was consummated during the Constantinian era, but, with the later decline of the empire, mainstream Christianity itself retreated from the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean to become a “European” religion. The small pockets of Christianity that remained in
...the Middle East differ in that they are clearly not Western in the "European" sense, but are seen to be comparable in that their religion is Hellenistic in character as distinct from Islam, which represents, as it were, the "re-Semitism" of the Middle East. This was emphasized historically in the fact that the Middle Eastern Christian communities regarded themselves, and were treated, as separate entities under the provisions of the dhimmī laws and subsequently the millet systems; it is still evidenced by differences of cultural, social, and political orientations to which their Christian faith is held to have given rise.

The present writer fully appreciates that this line of argument, in the tradition of 'Abd al-Jabbār, is dangerously oversimplified and raises as many questions as it purports to settle. To summarize it is not, of course, to endorse it uncritically, least of all in its cavalier treatment of the Eastern churches, but neither can it be impatiently dismissed, since in rather general terms it anticipates the modern scholarship of many Christian historians themselves. The point is that this is how Muslims usually do explain the history of Christianity, and why therefore they tend to treat it as "Western" religion in toto, from its biblical foundations (already considered in some sense to be a deviation from the teaching of Jesus), through its regional histories, up to the twentieth century. A modern expression of the classical argument may be found in the apologetic writing of the late-nineteenth-, early-twentieth-century Indian Muslim modernist Sayyid Ameer Ali.25

It should be emphasized at this juncture that, until relatively recently, Muslim interpretations of Christian history were essentially part of their apologetic tradition. Their purpose was to elucidate the Qurʿān for Muslims, in this case by providing a historical explanation of tahrij—how they saw Christianity to have gone astray from the original teaching of Jesus. They seem not to have been at all concerned to convince Christians themselves of the allegedly deviant history of their religion; they wrote in Arabic and only rarely addressed themselves to Arabic-speaking Christians. Much of their writing reflects the medieval Muslim confidence that history had proved Islam to be in all matters superior to Christianity, thus vindicating the Quranic assertion that "You [Muslims] are the best community that hath been raised up for humankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and you believe in God. And if the People of the Book [i.e., Jews and Christians] had believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are believers but most of them are evil-livers" (Q. 3, 110). Possessed of such confidence during the "golden age" of Islam, Muslims felt little need to upbeat Christianity in harsh terms, since they encountered it less in the form of a threat (even during the Crusades) and more as a curious deviation from the mean of Islam; it needed correction and would be corrected in God's good time by the guidance of the Qurʿān, patiently demonstrated in civilization by Muslims who would "call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way" (Q. 16, 125).

However, the line between apologetics and polemics is thinly drawn. In the sense of "attack," polemical content and intent is never entirely absent from Muslim apologetical writing on Christianity, but it is noticeable that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in particular the polemical type of Muslim approach to Christianity became more heavily pronounced, and more vitriolic in temper. The reasons for this lie in what Muslims experienced as the reversal of the proper course of history with the rise of European colonialism, which subjected nearly the entirety of the Muslim world to European "Christian" control. The sense of chaos and humiliation that this history produced in the minds of millions of Muslims has been described as having been little short of a "cosmic crisis," and out of such crisis emerged a harsher style of Muslim writing, particularly in India and Egypt. Much of it continued to be apologetic in that its concern was to vitalize Islam as the best way to defend it against the pressures of Europeanism, but this frequently included polemical rebuttals of Christianity, which was seen to be part of the aberration of Western power. Particular anger was expressed against missionary Christianity, which was seen to be the religious wing of imperialism.

This is an oft-rehearsed criticism of modern Christianity over which Muslims have no monopoly, but it is this writer's impression that it is frequently Muslims who have been and continue to be more outspokenly angry about this than people of other religious traditions whose societies were subject to Western colonial rule. This can perhaps be explained in terms of the community character of Islam—a religion that is very seriously committed to creating a righteous order for society as a whole, as well as in the lives of individual Muslims. "Muslim society" (for some, "Muslim statehood") is a concrete concept for most Muslims, who trace it back to the Qurʿān and search for its "blueprint" in the sharīʿah (Quranically derived law), even though they admit that more often than not it has been elusive in practice. That the human control of Muslim destiny was snatched by the "Christian" West in the age of imperialism was, from a Muslim point of view, much more serious than simply an alien intrusion into individual matters of religion. Hence, for example, the British government's colonial policy of noninterference in what it understood as religious matters, while often irritating to British missionary societies, assuaged Muslim indignation not one iota! European colonialism represented in their eyes a subversion of the foundations of society as a whole, which, through reform movements already underway in the late seventeenth century, was seeking to renew itself from within. The consequent resentment pervaded Muslim society in its totality and produced an anger at popular as well as intellectual levels to fuel polemical fires that have not yet burnt themselves out.

Within this general sense of indignation, two specific points are frequently mentioned by Muslims in criticism of Western Christianity as a focus of their resentment of the West in general. First, the misrepresentation of Islam in Christian writing and in popular Christian thinking. It is perhaps this point that wounds Muslims more acutely than any other, and it is most sharply felt over Christian attitudes to Muhammad. Given the love for the Prophet among the devout, and pride in his achievement among those for whom spiritual concerns may have less of a hold, it is not surprising that all Muslims feel insulted by the manner in which Christians over the centuries have defamed Muhammad in their own tradition of anti-Islamic polemical writing.26 Among this author's Muslim acquaintances are some who, with difficulty, understand why Christians in general, given what they believe of Jesus Christ, do not accept Muhammad as "the Seal of the Prophets"; but none of them can understand—and why should they?—why Christians have indulged in rank slander of Muhammad as a person. This is but one example taken from the armory of Western Christian polemic writing against Islam, which began in Spain under Muslim rule, provided a religious propaganda for the Crusades, fueled popular Western stereotypes of Muslims, and up to the present time serves conveniently to create an image of Islam that can then be easily demolished by Christian invective.

Polemics breed polemics, and all who bear false witness should expect false witness to be borne unto them. This can be illustrated in the unhappy case of Karl Pfander's polemical book entitled Mizān al-Haqq (The Balance of Truth), in which his attempts to refute Islam first create an image that Muslims themselves reject. Not surprisingly the book was answered in similar vein by an Indian Muslim, Sheikh Rahmatullah al-Hindi, under the title Izhār al-Haqq (The Demonstration of Truth), and this book in Arabic translation is still used as a reference work by...
many modern Egyptian Muslim writers on Christianity—as Pfander’s work has recently been republished as a “textbook” for some Christian missionaries.

It is the view of this author that polemics reveal more about the person/society which produces them than about the object of the polemical attack. If readers of this paper feel that this observation is borne out in terms of Muslim polemical writing about Christianity, then we shall be the better disposed to take seriously the Muslim view that Christian polemical writing against Islam is part of the wider complex of the Western discipline of “Orientalism”—recently analyzed in a fascinating book of that name by Edward Said, who defines it as “a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.” As such it is the intellectual cement of imperialism, and since several Christian missionaries in the Muslim world have also been distinguished Orientalists, it is understandable that Muslims who have read their writings should see them to have been implicated, as missionaries, in the imperial adventure of the West.

This brings us to the second point of specific Muslim criticism of Western Christianity in connection with the imperial age: the charge of missions being a willing or unwilling vehicle of imperialism. Once again Muslims have written a great deal about this, usually in polemical style, which, true to type, prefers angry condemnation to documented analysis, and it is not the purpose of this paper to rehearse the arguments in their tedium. The point is to realize that this is how Western missions and missionary-created churches in Africa and Asia are seen by the majority of Muslims, as is made abundantly clear in the published record of the 1976 consultation of Muslims and Christians on the subject of “Christian Mission and Islamic Da’wah,” organized by the International Review of Mission in Switzerland (Chambesy). While the Muslim participants in this consultation accepted that mission, in the sense of witnessing to Christ in word and action, is a fundamental duty for Christians, they heaped negative criticism upon what they termed the “abuses” of missionary practice, which were identified with colonialism in its historical and contemporary forms. Particularly grievous to the international group of Muslims present was the widespread Western Christian support of Israel (to quote an African Muslim participant: “In my view the most imperialistic radio programme in the world is the Radio Voice of the Gospel. It has a long history of pro-Zionism and has only moderated its view in light of recent political events in Africa”)

The Muslim participants several times protested that the issues of mission and colonialism/imperialism are being widely discussed throughout the Christian world today, often with radical conclusions that more than meet the criticisms Muslims themselves are making. But the Muslim convenor of the conference replied:

Let it be noted in passing that such Muslim criticisms of mission extend also to many of the contemporary efforts to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue, upon which the Muslim critic quoted above made the following comments:

I feel bound to say that the Roman Catholic statement is frank, forthright and clear, while the references in the WCC documents seem to be couched in a language which has little relevance to past and present realities and rather concentrates on hopes for the future. Furthermore, my worry is that the feedback from these documents to the Christian constituencies is very limited. The third thing that worries me is that the political dimensions of missionary involvement, of which we Muslims are very conscious—possibly over-conscious, I admit—is not sufficiently clear in these statements.

History as a variable factor influencing Muslim attitudes to Christianity could thus be said to have had a broadly negative impact over the last two centuries, and continues to do so. If this should be thought to be a somewhat academic point, let us not forget that it is often suggested that history is perceived to be a much more influential factor in traditional societies than may be the case in the West. New histories are, of course, in the making between Muslims and Christians in Africa and Asia, but there seems to be a good deal of evidence indicating that these are themselves effected by the larger and continuously complex history of the encounter of Muslims in these regions with Christianity as a “Western religion.”

b) Morality

The survey of Muslim attitudes toward Christianity in Birmingham demonstrates, as we have already seen, the degree to which Muslims tend to be skeptical of Christians’ commitment to their faith. Insofar as this is so, it seems to confirm Muslims in their view of Christian deviancy and brings into operation the “pattern of rejection” in the Quranic data. Significant exceptions were registered in the survey where some Muslims spoke of their admiration of individual Christians, but 59 percent of the sample thought that “very few Christians practise their faith.”

The use of the verb ‘practise’ is here very important, for “praxis” in the sense of moral and ethical behavior is for Muslims the traditional criterion of faith. “Faith” (imán) in the Qur’an is an active concept, which expresses itself through “good works” (sāliḥāt) or not at all, and for this reason Islamic religious thought has always preferred to concentrate upon the systematization of moral guidance through the shari’ah rather than upon “theology” in a more abstract sense. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss how Muslims apply this criterion to themselves or to speculate as to their conclusions, though we may note in passing that at least two modern Christian missionary writers, Jens Christensen and Arne Rudvin, emphasize the degree of piety that they have encountered in Muslim acquaintances, considerably in excess of that normally encountered in Western Christians. Our point, rather, is to realize that it is from the application of this criterion to Christianity in the West that Muslims tend to draw their most negative conclusions.

Their criticism is straightforward and, though inclined to be overgeneralized, is not without its strength. Western society proclaims itself to be secular, and modern Christianity, in Muslim eyes, has acquiesced in the distinction between “church” and “state” on the basis of the scriptural command: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21, etc.). This passage is one of several frequently quoted by Muslim writers who charge Christians with having neglected the Torah, thereby transmuting their religion into an otherworldly panacea and subordinating the church in the temporal
realm to human rather than divine law. Hence Western industrial and technological advance in modern times has produced a social development over which Christianity is seen to have had little if any influence. In this sense it has failed to provide moral tutelage in the interests of a just and balanced society, built upon divine revelation as exemplified in the lives of the prophets.

In the vacuum two aberrations have arisen: capitalism, identified with egotistical greed, exploitation, and oppression by the individual; and communism, identified with atheistic greed, exploitation, and oppression by the state. Several modern Muslim writers, including Colonel Qadhafi, have expressed their critique along these lines, and recently it has figured in the propaganda behind the Iranian revolution where the emphasis has been upon the exploitative intrusion of Western power through vested interests in the Muslim world itself.

Evidence of the failure of Christianity in the West is further adduced from what many Muslims see to be the rampant moral permissiveness, which, they argue, is the inevitable consequence of secularism. The multitude of criticisms made on this issue can be grouped under three interrelated categories: the devaluation of the dignity of women through commercial exploitation of sex, resulting in the disintegration of the family of which the mother is the traditional pivot, resulting in juvenile delinquency (drugs, alcohol, etc.). These are all matters that gravely concern Muslims living in Britain, and the author remembers the occasion of a large day-conference of Muslims and Christians in the Midlands of England when, at the end of discussions on "the family," the Muslim chairman concluded with words to this effect: "We look to the churches as allies in the struggle against secularism, but find only indecision."

Similar concerns were expressed by Muslim participants at the 1976 Chambesy (Switzerland) consultation on mission and da 'wa, referred to above. They were generally of the mind that Christian missionaries have more than enough to do in their own countries without turning to the Muslim world where, given their Western upbringing, they are liable to do more harm than good. The point was lucidly made as follows:

One finds Christians . . . to be more in sympathy with the situation where a Muslim can become secular or even communist rather than remain a practising Muslim. . . . This makes the vast range of Christian mission in the Muslim world acquire a negative image. The Church is seen not as inviting people to the teaching of Jesus (the peace and blessings of God be upon him), but trying to subvert or seduce Muslims from practising Islam.

Continuing this same line of argument, another Muslim participant criticized Christian missions for being, in his view, instrumen
tments in the process of implanting secularist values into Muslim societies, particularly through their involvement in education, which he held specifically responsible for leading the Muslim educated elite away from their religious traditions, with the result that the new leadership which has emerged in the Muslim world during and after the colonial period lacks moral and religious commitment. Christian missions in the Muslim world have failed to convert Muslims to Christianity, but have succeeded in driving quite an important number of Muslims away from Islam towards secularism. The net result has been the loss of religious commitment and a decline in moral values and of a moral approach to life.

Once again these criticisms reveal at least as much about the Muslims who make them as they do about their attitudes to Christianity. The severest Muslim critics of the moral failure of Christianity in Western society are those who are sharply critical also of what they regard equally to be the ethical laxity of most modern Muslim societies where the shari'ah law is only partially applied (e.g., only in matters of personal/family law), and who aspire to the creation of shari'ah-constituted Muslim states, if necessary by revolution. They see secularism in entirely negative terms as a Western fabrication, and compound within it the view, expressed by many Western Christians, that religion is essentially an individualistic issue, concerned with individual salvation rather than, or more than, with the destiny of society as a whole. This criticism is implicit at least in one of the Muslim comments during the Chambesy consultation:

Personally I do appreciate the Christian desire to "save" the Muslim soul in accordance with their understanding of the Divine Truth, but the question we face is whether the Muslim has the right to an Islamic society until it is possible to convince him otherwise. Unfortunately there is no unequivocal answer to this question and one is led to suspect that perhaps some people see the path of conversion beginning in the subversion of Muslim values and social fibre.

For such Muslims considerations of moral and ethical behavior, at societal as well as personal levels, significantly influence the ways they interpret the Quranic passages dealing with Christians and, insofar as they judge Christianity as failing effectively to provide authoritative moral guidance, they tend to emphasize the pattern of rejection. "Oriental" Muslims are often confirmed in this attitude, particularly in Western Europe today, by the small number of articulate Christian converts to Islam who tend to explain their conversion against the background of their disillusionment with Christian moral teaching, arguing either that it is impracticable (in the sense of being idealist), or that the churches lack the authority to put it into practice.

In concluding this section of the paper, however, we should note that the morality variable often favors the Quranic pattern of affirmation at the level of personal encounter between Muslim and Christian. Where Christians as individuals demonstrate a sincere effort to conform personal lifestyle to the ethical norms of the New Testament, it is the author's experience that this invariably elicits Muslim approval, for in their judgment it confirms well-known Quranic verses like: "Lo! Those who believe, and those who say: Lo! We are Christians. That is because there are among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud" (Q. 5, 82). It will be noticed that the first of these two verses links belief in God with righteous living, which reminds us of the point made at the beginning of this section about the ethical priority in

158 International Bulletin of Missionary Research
Muslim religious criteria, their emphasis being upon “orthopraxis.”

c) Doctrine

This subject has purposely been relegated to third place among the variables considered in this paper, since, notwithstanding the oft-stated Christian opinion that it is precisely at this point that the differences between Christianity and Islam are at their most profound or complex, Muslims themselves tend to see the issues in a more straightforward manner. As has been suggested already, “theology” in the sense of doctrinal discussion is not of widespread appeal among Muslims, who incline toward a more practical emphasis in their religious thought. This is not necessarily to judge Muslim religious thought as less sophisticated in method or poorer in content than Christian theology, but simply to note a difference of approach in which the primary Muslim question seems to be: How is humankind, individually and communally, to be obedient to the revealed will of God?

An illustration of this emphasis is to be seen in the structure of many of the Muslim “creedal” and catechetical statements, which begin with the assertion of God’s unity and uniqueness, with mention of his principal attributes (ṣifāt), but which then pass quickly to much more extensive treatment of the doctrines of prophethood (nabiyyatuh) with particular reference to the prophethood of Muhammad in whom there is “a good example for him who looketh unto God and the Last Day, and remembereth God much” (Q. 33, 21). This emphasis, important in itself as providing a model of obedience for “those who believe and do good works,” leads directly into the sphere of ethics upon which we commented in the previous section.

This approach to matters of doctrine reflects itself also in the shape of Muslim criticism of Christian theology. It is interested less in metaphysical arguments about the nature of God than in questions of Christology, for in what Christians say about Jesus Christ, Muslims detect a compromise of the divine unity (tawḥīd) and, consequently, an erroneous view of the human relationship with God in which the duty of human obedience seems to be mollified by doctrines of divine redemption.

Consonant with its persistent warnings against the idolatry of associating created things or beings with God (shirk), the Qur’ān cautions, chides, and condemns Christians in respect of their assertions about Jesus’ relationship with God, without implying the least criticism of Jesus himself who, together with his mother, is revered beyond reproach. The Quranic criticism is illustrated in the following verse:

O People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught of God save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers, and say not “Three)—Cease! It is better for you—God is only One God. Far removed is it from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. God is sufficient as Defender (Q. 4, 171).

For Muslims of polemical inclination such a Quranic verse invokes the pattern of rejection of Christian beliefs, and arguments of this type abound in much modern Muslim writing on Christianity. An example of this is the influential Egyptian Muslim writer Muhammad Abū Zahrā, whose study of Christianity is rated by the present director of the Azhar University’s Department of Da’wah as “the most of every other book on the subject published since” its first printing in 1942. The book intends to be objective but depends heavily upon earlier polemic writers, including al-Hindi’s Izhār al-Flāqq, which we have already mentioned. Belief in Jesus’ divine Sonship is caricatured as crude anthropomorphism, and the Trinity as tri-theism, but rarely does he attempt to pursue his discussion at a “theological” level. He concentrates, rather, upon explaining the alleged deviations of Christianity by historical reference, attributing the errors to a mixture of pagan and Greco-Roman philosophical influences, which, in his view like that of his medieval predecessors, undermined the original tawḥīd of Jesus’ gospel. Cultural differences between the Hellenistic and Semitic worlds are often suggested as the reason why later Christians mistook the meaning of Jesus’ statements about himself, the poetry of his Semitic parable being misinterpreted through the categories of Greek philosophy. Particularly popular also is the argument of reason, that the central doctrines of Christianity are self-evidently irrational, and in their irrationality demeaning of human dignity, humankind being necessarily and hopelessly fallen (“peccatism”), and God having to save them by suffering death as the price of their fallensness (“savourism”). To quote an Arab Muslim professor in the United States, “it destroys God’s transcendence … it denigrates man, flouts his moral responsibility, and renders … religion itself meaningless.” Christians are often portrayed as being uncertain of their beliefs or naively open to exploitation by their clergy and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Not surprisingly this argument is used against Catholics and Orthodoxy in particular, but Protestants are criticized on grounds of sectarian tendencies resulting in a confusion of imprecise doctrinal positions.

This must suffice to indicate the type of polemical argument with which Christians must reckon in terms of Muslim rejection of Christian beliefs. Harshly as these views are often expressed today, there are fortunately more thoughtful Muslims who find such polemical temper discordant with the attitude of the Qur’ān itself, which, while critical of Christian beliefs, nevertheless calls Christians (and Jews) to “Come to an agreed word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God” (Q. 3, 64). For such Muslims the Quranic pattern of rejection must always be balanced by the pattern of affirmation, and vice-versa, for only thus can the Quranic critique of Christianity be positively maintained. This view is nowhere better expressed than by one of the author’s Muslim colleagues at the Study Centre in Birmingham, Professor Hasan Askari, who writes:

The kind of relationship laid down in the Qur’ān between Christians and Muslims is fundamentally a dialogical relationship. From chapter to chapter the Qur’ān engages the Christians in discussion, and all the time insists that Jesus is an integral part of the Muslim faith. The Qur’ān thus involves Christians in the new faith of Islam, and reminds Muslims that Christians have a special relationship with them. The real dialogue between religions was, however, started by the Qur’ān. Its recognition of the People of the Book—the Christians and Jews—was a dialogical recognition. In all such Qur’ānic discourses it is difficult to miss the deep feeling of Christianity and Islam being present to each other. . . . One is aware of strong disagreements. One is aware [also] of deep sharing. What else could signify this sharing more than the fact that Jesus is the common centre between Christians and Muslims? He is the word, speech, meaning and occasion of the dialogical relationship between them. He is the common “sign.”

Conclusion

This last view is not included as a candy to sweeten the bitter diet offered in the major part of this paper—though, to change the metaphor, we may see it as a contemporary ray of light which pierces the gloom of a centuries-old tradition of negative Muslim evaluation of Christianity. Fortunately there are other Muslim thinkers who approach Christianity in comparable spirit, and it behooves us, as contemporary Christians, to avoid a clumsiness of
The specific problem with which this paper deals calls to mind Paul's understanding of evangelism: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Christ's sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). Clearly, if there is any value in this paper in terms of its implications for a critique of Christian evangelism in relation to Islam, it must be that Christians have failed to realize this Pauline principle. Muslims continue in the majority to identify Christianity with the West, and Christian evangelism therefore with the extension of Western culture and Western values. The reasons for this we have seen to be rooted in traditional Muslim explanations of the Quranic allegation of corruption (tahrif) in respect of Christians and, for this, modern generations of Christians can hardly be held responsible. But the history of the last 200 years of Western domination of the Muslim world—and the history of Christian mission in Muslim lands in particular—has confirmed most Muslims in this historical view. For this we cannot escape responsibility, however differently we may like to see the matter. In order that it should not be ourselves we preach, we must learn the often painful discipline of seeing ourselves as Muslims see us, acknowledging that their image of us is existentially important to our understanding of how, for Christ's sake, we may aspire to be their servants. The first challenge therefore is to remove the log from our own eye (cf. Matt. 7:3).

The discipline calls as much upon our faculties of hearing as upon sight, for the implication of this paper is that we should not only see that there is a sustained Muslim critique of Christianity, but listen to it patiently and with understanding, for despite its frequent exaggeration there clearly is substance in much of what it has to say. The art of listening has never come easily to Christians, who feel constrained themselves to communicate a message. But is not another reason for our difficulty in hearing Muslims the fact that our ears are ringing with the cacophony of our own centuries-old tradition of polemical abuse of Islam? This author is of the opinion that, by honest and objective analysis of the Christian polemical tradition against Islam, we have no alternative but to admit that it is older, more fabulous, and certainly more thoroughly hostile than its Islamic counterpart.

From the beginning—and its origins go back to seventh-century Arabia—Christian rejoinder to Islam did not have the inner scriptural mechanism of self-restraint equivalent to what this paper has described as the Quranic pattern of affirmation and rejection of Christianity. As a consequence Islam was viewed either as an erroneous derivation from Christianity (e.g., St. John of Damascus's view of Islam as a "Christian heresy") or as something opposed to Christianity, challenging and threatening it doctrinally and by physical expansion. Preoccupied by the physical threat, it was the latter view that prevailed in the West within medieval Latin Christendom, and eventually in Eastern Christianity as well. Not surprisingly, therefore, we find that the biblical passage most frequently cited by Christians seeking to explain Islam—from the tenth-century Spanish martyr to sixteenth-century Martin Luther and onwards—was Daniel 7:24 ff.; Muhammad, the Saracens, and the Turks were identified as the eleventh king "who shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings; he shall speak out words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time. . ." By such exegesis it was concluded that Islam was an eschatological omen, anti-Christian in essence, violent in character, ethnically corrupt, and in its worldliness born of Satan; a threat to be confronted by Christ's soldiers (the Crusaders), or later to be subjugated in an age of European colonialism when the rising self-confidence of Western technological power dismissed Islam as a religion of backwardness, superstition, and fanaticism.

The echoes of this polemical tradition still ring loudly in the mansions of Western establishment—among politicians, economists, press barons, and in the popular reaction to, for example, contemporary events in Iran, the coverage of which in many Western newspapers illustrates the vigor with which the polemical tradition survives. As Christians we cannot dissociate ourselves from this mood, and herein lies our difficulty. So easily we fail to hear Muslims because of the accusations we heap upon them. Tragic as this is from a human point of view, it is yet more tragically a blatant infringement of the commandment "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Deut. 5:20) in a world where, we believe, all God's human creatures—however perverse their nature—are held within the fraternity of his love.

How, then, are we to break out of this vicious circle of polemics, which, as partially reviewed and explained in this paper, has been the hallmark of the religious encounter of Christians and Muslims over fourteen centuries, producing such dreadful mutual misrepresentations? The imperative for asking this question out of concern of evangelism, and the problem inherent in our answering it, are both contained within Paul's assurance to the Corinthians: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, . . . entrusting us with the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors of Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:19–20). Evangelism is ultimately our representation of God's acts in history as a work of reconciliation with Christ at its center. In relation to our Christian meeting with Muslims this truth is not to be compromised by crying, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). But neither is it to be abused by allowing the gospel of reconciliation to be compromised, distorted, and corrupted by association with Western power or by our own inherited and thus deeply ingrained prejudices. If, as Christians, we have been entrusted with God's "message of reconciliation," it is not for the sake of historical Christianity but because "grace has been given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph. 4:7) that we might therefore be "imitators of God," "walking in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us" (Eph. 5:1). It is of this that we should be mindful as we discipline ourselves to silence our protests and listen to the Quranic and Islamic critiques of Christianity.

For Paul the grace given to him meant nothing less than to "bear on my own body the marks of Christ" (Gal. 6:17)—the marks wrought at the price of self-sacrifice; "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate" (1 Cor. 4:12–13). It was by this costly road that the apostle sought to identify himself with God's "message of reconciliation," not by virtue of his intellectual ability to bring an argument to victory, nor yet by what some modern apostles have identified as his methods of cross-cultural communication, but by his readiness to be reviled, persecuted, slandered—as was Christ, and indeed many prophetic figures in the earlier history of Israel. The readiness thus
to suffer is, alone, that which liberates the apostle from the restrictive nature of culture, to become a witness by participation in the truth of the message of "God in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

In a remarkable paper entitled "What Makes a Missionary?" the Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama develops these same ideas in his inimitable style, with conclusions that are apposite to the concerns of this paper. In answer to his question, Koyama delineates three principles, which the present writer would relate to evangelism in relation to Muslims.

First, "the missionary must live in the complexity of living man and living history." No missionary can nor responsibly should wish to escape the complexities of the history of Christian-Muslim relations with its heavy burden of negative connotations for Muslim and Christian alike. The temptation that faces us all, however, is to conceal ourselves behind the stereotype pictures we create: of "us" as the misrepresented, and of "them" as the misrepresenters; Christianity as Western imperialism, Islam as anti-Christian; and so the polemical spiral continues. Praying that we might be delivered from this evil, it is the missionary's duty to displace dehumanizing stereotypes by an acceptance of Muslims as people loved by God, through whose lives his omnipotent Will must be at work in some manner that it is important, albeit difficult, for Christians to understand—as in times past Israel was challenged by God to learn the significance of, for example, the Ethiopians, the Philistines, and the Syrians in his eyes (Amos 9:7-8). This sort of learning is not to be pursued in libraries, seminars, study centers, and the like—useful as these most certainly are—but in experiential encounter with Muslims as men and women, where they are and as they are. Learning thus of them, and of ourselves as they see us, we may be deepened in our understanding of what the gospel requires of us as their "servants for Christ's sake" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:5).

Koyama's second principle is that "the missionary's mission will be nurtured by his life participation in the apostolic witness of reviled-bless/persecuted-endure/slandered-conciliate." This learning-presence among Muslims is a missionary duty, and for some it may command the fullest concentration of their talents, but evangelism requires the missionary to represent the biblical story of God's salvific acts in history—summarized by Koyama in his verbal compound based upon Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:12-13. To this end theological discussion has its place, and in the spirit of dialogue is a useful way to clarify what we mean when we speak to one another of matters of faith. But as this paper has tried to show, theology in the sense of doctrinal discussion is of limited interest to most Muslims, whose religious concerns lie much more in the field of ethics. Faith (imán) is demonstrated in good works (ṣalihāt). To instance one of the traditional issues of Christian-Muslim debate: the Crucifixion. If what Christians believe of it has found so little comprehension among Muslims, it is perhaps because Muslims have rarely been challenged to consider it seriously by the quality of Christian ṣalihāt. The quality of Paul's apostolate was plain in that he bore upon his body "the marks of Christ," and this is what Koyama means when he speaks of the missionary as a person with a "crucified mind."

The present author is convinced that in such mind must Christians hear and bear Muslim criticisms of historical Christianity. He has argued that the polemical temper of such criticism in recent times is a function of Muslim responses to their complex but often humiliating experience of the West. Since Christianity is suspected as the religious wing of Western imperialism, or neo-imperialism, the missionaries and missionary-created churches in Muslim countries become convenient scapegoats upon which frustrations may be vented. A concrete example of this is to be seen in the plight of the Anglican church in Iran amid the anti-Western Islamic revolution. Precisely because of the exemplary way in which many of the members of that church faced persecution, loving rather than reviling their assailants, and finding their own faith immensely strengthened thereby, this writer is moved to conclude that acceptance of the role of scapegoat is the most creative expression of evangelism for the Christian missionary in the Muslim world today. The circumstances need not be as dramatic as those of Iran for the church in the Muslim world to conform itself to the model of the Suffering Servant (cf. Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12), and therefore it is in accepting this role in spirit, and as occasion demands in practice, that the missionary can live the message of reconciliation in fellowship with Muslims. This applies particularly to missionaries from the West, for we, by taking upon ourselves as Westerners the anger of Muslim criticisms of Western power, may hope as Christians to be channels through which the reconciling power of God can heal the wounds of history.

These thoughts bring us finally to Koyama's third principle of missionary vocation: "The missionary's missionary quality will be nurtured as he travels in the direction of the unity of message and messenger." An authentic missionary, he propounds, is always "becoming missionary," growing through continuous participation in the saving drama of God's acts in history; it involves the missionary in "spiritual exercise...in the direction of unity of message and messenger." The challenge to Christian evangelism in relation to Muslims could not be more clearly expressed. This paper has tried to show that the kernel of Muslim critique of Christianity is the charge that it has become removed from the original teaching of Jesus. The discrepancy is variously explained, but the conclusion reached by most Muslims is that historical Christianity has forfeited its credibility. Christians ultimately differ from Muslims in their perception of the authentic teaching and ministry of Jesus, and the difference is, in the real sense of the word, crucial—to do with the cross. That this discrepancy may be bridged, and that the meaning of the cross may be made credible to Muslims, Christians must place themselves under its judgment and search, by God's grace, to represent the gospel among Muslims with "the crucified mind, not the crusading mind." If this is the hallmark of the missionary, the present writer dares to suggest that mission in the context of Islam has hardly yet begun.

Notes


16. Khuda Bakhsh, an Indian Muslim writer in the first quarter of this century who advocated a bourgeois form of Islamic modernism; frequently praised Christianity for its spirit of human clarity.


20. Qur'ān 2, 75–9; 2, 174–76; 2, 159; 3, 69–78; 4, 46; 5, 13; 5, 41, and passim.

21. H. Goddard, "Egyptian Muslim Writings."


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Can you translate this line of Virgil: ‘Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit’? ‘Perhaps it will be a joy to remember one day even these things’. . . Be sure that mother and I do feel with our boy and girl in the trial which separation and lodgings mean to them. We do, we do. You must look on it as part of your contribution to the work of Christ, because that is what has caused it all really.’”

What a father to quote Virgil, from Cairo, to a son who has returned to school from a visit to his parents as an interlude in long separation! How right to tie it so firmly and sweetly to the love of Christ. So much of Temple Gairdner is in this incidental passage—his firm faith, his classical erudition, his playful humor, his tender heart, his strong commitment. His correspondence, selected and treasured in W. H. T. G. to His Friends, is a warm legacy of a rich and lively mind, serving a most generous Christian heart. These winsome personal qualities have such a vivid character that any honest observers of the present scene in Cairo or in mission sadly conclude: “We shall not look upon his like again.”

But that sense of contrast, however pressing, would give the lie, in its despair, to all he stood for and exemplified. For his gifts of person and of spirit were matched by solid legacies of missionary apologetic and policy and by a clear vision of ecumenical voca tion. Saintliness of spirit was Gairdner’s greatest gift to the Egyptian church, but it was a passionately practical saintliness, full of lessons for the times of lesser men. For the present writer it is a dream to return to those winsome personal qualities have such a vivid character that any honest observers of the present scene in Cairo or in mission sadly conclude: “We shall not look upon his like again.”

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Temple Gairdner’s career bore all the marks of the double leg acy of his parentage. It was his mother’s deep gospel-love that he embraced in the Christian Union’s cause, his father’s sane wisdom that steadied his enthusiasms. After Oxford he became a traveling secretary for the Student Christian Movement and a volunteer for overseas service. His friendship with Douglas Thornton in this activity developed into a close partnership, which took them both to Cairo after ordination at the end of the decade. The decision for Cairo was quite deliberate. Gairdner saw Islam as uniquely evoca tive of Christian concern, and he saw Cairo as the intellectual cen ter of Islam. He sensed that it would probably “occupy” him for life and he was ready for that dimension of investment. He came quickly under the spell of Arabic, both as a discipline-and as a delight and, like all true lovers, Egypt and the Nile held him in their spell. Equally tenaciously he found his commitment to the local church, its needs and its nurture, as the vital clue to all he held dear.

Cairo was to be his home until his death, with short absences between 1908 and 1911 when he attended the famous Edinburgh Conference, wrote its popular report, and spent a year of research study at Hartford, U.S.A., and in Europe. During that period he also wrote the life of his friend Douglas Thornton, whose death in Cairo in 1907 bereaved his mission sorely. His subsequent “single-handedness” in so many of his aspirations meant that his immense gifts were tragically overstrained. That single “year of research” ought to have been several. For he had the capacity to contribute massively to Christian/Islamic theology and to Arabic scholarship. But his spirit convinced him that the local church, with its pastoral claims, and the actual mission with its administrative burdens, were the first priority for which he must forgo things where he would have excelled. “The treasure” of the faith, as he saw it, was supremely for the “earthen vessels” of a living church, however strenuous the care of it, however daunting its precariousness.

Thus Gairdner’s whole endowment of imagination, zeal, sensiti vity, and love was lavished unsparingly upon the Egyptian church, its present and its future, its hymnology, its drama, the tu-
leading the expatriates who all too thinly came to serve it, its nurture in theology, and its outreach in witness. His mastery of Arabic was demonstrated in the manuals he produced on its colloquial study and its phonetics. His faith in a mission-planting Anglican church in Egypt was at once discerning and assured. He saw it as “… a truly militant, evangelical, and therefore evangelistic Church, however small, a truly Catholic Church with power to absorb and unify the most diverse elements, and gifted with historical order and reverent, inspiring and liturgical services.” His biography could be summed up as the personal translation of that vision into untrilling venture and unremitting consecration of talent and travail. No church was ever more passionately served or more intimately loved in a pastoral devotion, nurtured in one culture and cherishing another, with sustained initiatives of mind and heart. Gairdner’s was truly a translation of Paul’s apostolic affirmation: “To me to live is Christ”—for Egypt.

The physical toll was heavy. His last literary piece was a paper prepared for the Jerusalem Conference of 1928, which he did not live to attend, on “The Values of Christianity and Islam.” He was already in the shadow of an affliction that was to prove fatal. But “shadow” is a false word. For the sheer music of his last failing months in Cairo, following his English furlough of 1927, made his passing inwardly triumphant. He died in May 1928, and was buried in the Old Cairo Christian Cemetery, near to where the Church of Jesus the Light of the World was erected as his memorial.

He had just celebrated his silver wedding. His wife, Margaret Mitchell, had been a childhood friend in Ardosson, and altogether shared his convictions and his dedication. Their partnership and their home in Boulac, Cairo, were the secret of all that he achieved. The disciplines they kept and the hospitality they gave made their home the very sanctuary of the gospel for which they lived and cared. It was fitting that within a year of Temple Gairdner’s passing, his life-story had ardent expression in a biography from the pen of Constance E. Padwick, which brought his impact into a whole generation of Christian recruiting and went far to ensure the abiding lessons of his personality.

**Gairdner’s Time Perspective**

It is a fascinating but perhaps pointless exercise to transpose the times of minds, to have Archbishop William Temple, for example (for whose father, Frederick, Gairdner seems to have been named Temple) take on theologians of the 1880s, or, more widely, to put Athanasius into modern Islamic “dialogue.” How would Luther cope with existentialism? But such notions of historical displacements are imaginary. Men belong in their times. The whole idea of “legacy” conceives this. We are assessing a “who” at a “when.” So it is important to be clear about the time setting.

Gairdner’s Cairo was Cromer’s Cairo. The Bait Arabi Pasha (house), which he and Thornton rented, was the former center of a failed nationalist. Britain was still strongly entrenched and circumstances of its dislodgement lay far below the horizon. The evangelizing activities of Thornton and Gairdner were possible within the purview of that power in a way that is no longer feasible in independent Islamic statehoods. Their contemporary, Samuel Zwemer, was writing in 1915 on “The Disintegration of Islam”—a standpoint that seemed even more legitimate after the demise of Ottoman Turkey, the ending of the Caliphate, and the vigorous secularism of Kemal Atatürk. It would not be wise to ascribe Zwemer’s more trenchant views of Islam to Gairdner. For all their deep friendship, they were men of different personal and theological mettle. Nevertheless, Gairdner’s time coincided with a period of disarray and confusion in Islam, which still labored under the paradox of foreign dominance, waiting disconcertedly for that emancipation from external control so vital to a faith inured to assumptions of power.

Another two decades were to pass after Gairdner’s death before these hopes began to fructify. It is true that there were intellectual stirrings. But the ideas of the great Muhammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905) had enjoyed no adequate succession. It was not till the year of Gairdner’s passing that Hasan al-Banna launched the *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* as a spearhead of fundamental conservatism to counter what “liberal” enterprise there was. Change in more concrete forms was doubtless penetrating inexorably within Muslim society and jurisprudence. But the central factors that today so strongly characterize Islam—political autonomy, population surge, economic resurgence, and cultural assertion—were yet in the making.

On the other side of the ledger, Muslims with the sort of readiness for Christian relationships shown by such writers as Kāmil Husain or Muhammad Arkoun, few enough still, were fewer yet in Gairdner’s day. Nor had Christian thinking yet moved where it now is in, for example, World Council of Churches’ initiatives vis-à-vis Islam. If there is legitimate point in the distinction between Christian mission to Muslims intending their conversion, and a Christian mission to Islam intending a relevance to its mind and society, it was a distinction hardly operative in Christian awareness in Gairdner’s generation. It would be interesting to speculate what his critique of it might have been, had the Bhamdoun Meeting of 1972 between Muslims and Christians or the inter-Christian stock-taking at Kanamai, Mombasa, in 1979, had the beneficence of his presence. But then, how may these occasions look forty years on? We return lovingly to Gairdner but only by a lengthening retrospect.

**Gairdner in Witness**

Utterly committed as he was to be an apologist for God in Christ and for Christ *via* the cross, Gairdner’s whole temperament and spirit took him far beyond the polemic that characterized earlier modern mission among Muslims. His constant stress was on the personal dimension of moral change, of “holiness” through grace, in the hearts and lives of those for whom he yearned. He did not see theology as winning a debate but as unveiling a glory and refining a soul. Hence his steady emphasis on personal conversion, on imaginative care of and provision for converts, on the living hospitality of the present church, and all grounded in the distinctive actuality, as he saw it, of God’s redemptive “fact of Christ.” It was this stance that made him wary of all suggestion that the Christian relation to other faiths could be achieved in partnership for morality and progress. For him “salvation” was essentially “radical” in respect of sin and redemptive on the part of God. What fired his soul was “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It was there he believed it to be.

This stake-peg of all his mission meant that all “debate” or “dialogue” was with intent to save, not crudely to score, nor idly to compare, nor cosily to converse. If mere polemic was firmly excluded, so also was neutrality. For both reasons he was resourceful in creating rapport wherever he could sense it might be found. Issues within nationalism or the impact of the sciences on education were grist to the mill in his lectures and articles—H. G. Wells for example, or questions after Darwin. There is a discernible mellowing of his writing within the second decade of the century as he came to closer grips with the travails of his vocation. In almost his last writing, that for the Jerusalem Conference of 1928, he wrote of the “values” of Islam persisting within all the antitheses to “God in Christ” that were the center of his vocation as a Christian. Both the core, as he saw it, of the Islamic doctrine of God and his estimate of the career of Muhammad in, for example, *Ecce Homo Arabicus* (1918) confirmed him in his belief that Christian mission had
Like many others, his concern for the irenic required a focus on Islamic mysticism as an area where the Christian spirit could find “sympathy” and the Muslim escape from the arid rigorism of Sunni dogma. His translation of Al-Ghazâli’s Miskhât al-Anwâr (Niche of Lights), the fine product of his Hartford research (not published until 1924), illustrates this “release” into Sufism. But Sufism itself tends to leave orthodoxy to its severities precisely by providing an escape from them for tender spirits. As a philosophi­cal theology, or sometimes a theosophy, it does not resolve the in­herent problems of theism and revelation.

It is with these we must grapple in assessing the legacy of Gairdner to the Islamic/Christian future. Having brought us so far on from the enmities and asperities of the nineteenth century, what ought our now longer retrospect to say of his “mind”? He re­ferred in 1908 to Islam as “that great antagonist . . . compelling us to explore unknown depths of the riches of the revelation of God in Christ.” Need it be only as an “antagonist”? Have we come since to a greater appreciation of what might be called “the Islamic reasons for being Christian”? May it not be a still more authentic relation to Islam of a suffering Christian theology to refuse to con­cede that Islam is impervious on its own terms to the theological rele­vance of the cross? Have we sufficiently rescued the implications in the firm Quranic doctrine of creation? What, also, of the “sacra­mental” emphasis in the Qur’an on the “signs of God” in the natu­ral order and on the trusteeship, even deputyship, of humankind to God? And does not the whole possibility and actuality of “immunity,” of idolatry, of human “exclusion” of God from all that is humanly his due, require in some sense a divine “vulnerability” to human­kind of which the cross, for Christians, is the supreme and ultimate measure? Does not the basic principle of îslâm itself, namely, of submission to God in the wholeness of our personal being—living, dying, loving, possessing, inquiring, deciding—presuppose a freedom in us that “involves” God in the stake of our response? For, such freedom apart, our very îslâm is either unnecessary or automatic or impossible.

If there is point in these questions, then was it wise or right for Gairdner to speak of “Unitarian Deistic Islam”? At least if, as it seems, he meant the adjectives to be inclusive (saving, of course, Sufism), Islam is not “deism.” Nor is “unitarian” a less question­begging word here than “trinitarian” is for Christians. The God who creates the human creature and gives that creature the order and on the trusteeship, even deputyship, of humankind to God? And does not the whole possibility and actuality of “immunity,” of idolatry, of human “exclusion” of God from all that is humanly his due, require in some sense a divine “vulnerability” to human­kind of which the cross, for Christians, is the supreme and ultimate measure? Does not the basic principle of îslâm itself, namely, of submission to God in the wholeness of our personal being—living, dying, loving, possessing, inquiring, deciding—presuppose a freedom in us that “involves” God in the stake of our response? For, such freedom apart, our very îslâm is either unnecessary or automatic or impossible.

To think these thoughts is no reproach to Gairdner. It is, rath­er, to carry forward his work and to question the reservations—or should we say the scruples?—of his time. Doubtless those scruples were well founded, both in Christian fidelities and in solid fea­tures of theological Islam. Gairdner could rightly argue that Islam itself had vetoed or ignored the implications we have just argued. He could insist that the Qur’ân itself is deeply determinist and that theologians like Al-Asha‘rî have contrived to make their theism seem deistic, in spite of creation, of prophethood, and of humankind. But, acknowledging all that, it then becomes for us a matter of expectancy, of faith, of intelligent neglect (as Alford Carleton once phrased it) in respect of the Qur’ân’s more desolating areas, while we maximize legitimately all its deeply pro-Christian em­phases. To do so will not be to deny persisting controversies: it will, rather, be to surmount them with a final confidence in the Holy Spirit, letting the “areas” be read for the positives we serve.

It could be claimed that Gairdner pointed the way across the half-century that divides us from him. He was ready to concede that terms like Ibn Allaâh “Son of God,” must be replaced as long as their meaning is opaque or frustrating. He saw Christ as God’s Wa­kil, under whose “segis” divine action on behalf of the sinful world, and in the full “hallowing” of humanity by justifying and regenerating grace, was achieved. That thought-initiative can be seen as prophetic. It is in line with our present urgency to break free of “substance” metaphors that set Christology/theology in the realm of abstract metaphysics, and bring it firmly into the con­crete “operation” of divine energy to save, fulfilled within the hu­man. It is in such “Christology,” as the art of being the saving Christ, that Gairdner’s own sure conviction about authentic grace finds its guarantee. To let oneself despair that Islam is “deist” is to despair that Islam is impenetrable to Christ, and this would be to forfeit the deepest implications of its faith in Îkhâli’d (unity), its sense of rahmah (mercy), and the principle of Îkkâbir, or “magnifi­cat.” It would also be to despair of the Holy Spirit, who does not fail until he brings “crisis” through to “truth” (Isa. 42:3). It was Gairdner’s glory that he kept the “crisis” so eloquent in his genera­tion, both by the single “gesture” of his ministry and the vigor of his apologetic.

What Gairdner achieved in less than thirty years in Cairo was immense. With all the fruits of his pen he left another great legacy in his care of personnel. He coveted for all the same standards of Christian communicability that he himself attained. The Cairo Study Center, begun in 1912, later grew into the School of Oriental Studies of the American University at Cairo, where Arthur Jeffery developed a notable Quranic scholarship, inspired by Gairdner’s lead. W. H. T. G.’s standards of Arabic were exacting and one would judge that in his powers of communication in sermon and lecture he has had no peers since. He wanted a revision of the Bei­rut Arabic Bible (completed in the 1860s), which sadly has only come to pass in 1978 and equally sadly has had a “stalling” recep­tion by many in the local church on which he laid such hopeful emphasis. His reading of the Qur’ân was illuminated by a felici­tous sense of words and nuances. One suspects that an approach that has developed since his time (as just argued) would have gained his sympathy, had the constraints been such as they have now become by developments both inside and outside Islam.

### Gairdner in Worship

The centrality of the church to Gairdner’s thinking has been clear throughout. So it is in the field of worship that his legacy must also be assessed. To contemporaries his inspiration was tremen­dous. He loved the ordered dignity of Anglican tradition, but he infused it with wonderful spontaneity and enthusiasm. His zeal for music led him to gather some 300 Egyptian and Syrian tunes, which he brought into service. He realized the potential of church drama and though the inhibitions of his Church Missionary Soci­ety board largely confined this to nonliturgical buildings, its im­pact was considerable. He wrote a series of biblical plays like Joseph and His Brothers, Saul and Stephen, King Hezekiah, and The Last Passover Night, all within the last eight years of his life. In these he brought to focus basic themes of suffering and grace, evil and salvation, God and human tragedy, in ways that addressed Muslim suscepti­bilities while escaping abstract contention. He cared, too, that wor­ship should be truly an offering of culture and the consecration of art. His design for a published “Harmony” of the Passion narra­tives in the Gospels, in the form of Quranic script with margin “medallions” in Islamic style, which pictured or hinted at the con­tent of the page, is an imaginative example of his vision.

He was also alert to the need for a local ministry. Though moving in the context of British authority, he saw, as many of his contemporaries did not, the legitimacy of “national” aspiration
Church, of which he dreamed was to be a genuine partnership, in which Englishness gave unstintedly but with a deference and humility that would draw equal strength from local genius. He took a vast Islamic metropolis as school for Christian togetherness where sectarian attitudes stood condemned. That metropolis now is four times as populous as when he died. But his Anglican church has only four active Egyptian clergy including its bishop.

Ought his contemporaries and their mentors to have thought, therefore, in terms of a presence that was simply “Christian” and not “ecclesiastical”? Some analysts now would think so. But within the constraints of Gairdner’s day, could it have been otherwise? There are circumstances in which even “ecumenical contribution” necessitates an “ecclesiastical” base. The Coptic Church has changed notably since midcentury, while the Coptic Evangelical Church (Presbyterian order) has developed clearer ecumenical perspectives. In Gairdner’s view the burning need to demonstrate what churchness was, by his criteria, demanded that one should strive to plant and be that church. Moreover, then as now (though through many vicissitudes), a cosmopolitan presence, or “foreign community,” had also to be kept in view. One cannot ultimately constitute a missionary “presence” in a metropolis like Cairo and fail to provide for all who comprise its worshiping Christian “constituency,” whether diplomats, commercial people, teachers, tourists, and expatriate residents of every sort. Mission is, in fact, now more heavily dependent indirectly upon these than it was in Gairdner’s day.

There was, then, prescience in his church-based thinking, lovingly as its focus was on the Egyptian dimension. If his concept of an Anglican partnership of all potential elements, working within a local authenticity of churchness, has had only very modest realization since his time, that belongs not with the failure of the vision but with the frailty of his successors. If we are to serve “the Word made flesh” we must belong both particularly and universally. If we are to affirm the Christ-achievement in Jesus we must become redemptive community. If we are to make grace credible we must live in holy love. If we are to counter Islam’s sanctions of merit and of force, as W. H. T. G. saw them in his estimate of Muslim history, we must embody conversion in a society. Such was his active “ecclesiology.” Its perspectives remain.

Gairdner, we might say, was a realist romantic. Perhaps to talk of a “legacy” is to use a wrong word. For when we have tried to assess it, we are left with him. He faced intractable things with a joy that was never quenched, so that its significance does not “pass.” We might see his whole struggle for Muslim evangelism within the dimensions of his will for wholeness. Of this he wrote: “Some men can delight in the world, in men, in things, apart from holiness. God has decreed that I cannot, and though the flesh sometimes makes bondage of this decree, it is the supreme mark of His love.”

Notes
2. Constance E. Padwick, Temple Gairdner of Cairo (London: SPCK, 1929). C. E. Padwick was a fellow worker, an Islamicist in her own right, and an inspired biographer. She later headed the Central Literature Committee for Muslims, which Gairdner helped to generate.
3. Ibid., p. 264.
4. For these two writers, see Youakim Moubarac, Les Musulmans (Paris: Consultation Islamo chrétienne, 1971). Also, for Kamil Husain, see his City of Wrong (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1959), and The Hallowed Valley (Cairo: American Univ. Press, 1976).


Ecce Homo Arabicus. Cairo, 1918 (privately printed).


Harmony of the Passion Story from the Four Gospels. Cairo: SPCK, 1925.


Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. Cambridge: Heffer, 1926 (rev. ed.).

Commentary on Galatians, with new Arabic trans. Cairo: SPCK, 1928.

5. The Bhamdoun Meeting of July 1972 “began” a sequence of several meetings under World Council of Churches and other auspices. The Mombasa Conference of Christians in December 1979 was designed to assess where we now are. See also Christians Meeting Muslims, WCC Papers on Ten Years of Christian-Muslim Dialogue (Geneva: WCC, 1977).
7. Ibid., p. 160.

Major Publications about W. H. Temple Gairdner


Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?

Wilbert R. Shenk

Rufus Anderson (1796–1880) achieved eminence as the leading American mission administrator of the nineteenth century. On the other side of the Atlantic, Henry Venn (1796–1873) enjoyed similar acclaim. Already in their lifetimes their contemporaries noted the striking coincidences: they were born within a few months of each other; each lost his mother at age seven and father at seventeen; each was eldest son and graduated from college in 1818; both Venn and Anderson reflected the strong influence their parental homes had on them by preparing for the Christian ministry with warm sympathy for the missionary cause.1 Most important, both men, from their positions as senior secretaries of the largest American and European missionary societies respectively, exerted far-reaching influence on missionary theory and policy. Both are credited with formulating the classic “threeself” definition of the indigenous church: self-supporting, selfgoverning, self-propagating. The extent to which each influenced the other has never been fully established.2 We wish to explore that question in this article.

The Milieu for Missions in the Early 1800s

Venn and Anderson were born only three years after William Carey sailed for India. Venn’s father presided at the founding of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799 and Anderson’s father supported formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810. The modern foreign missions movement was in its own infancy as these two future leaders grew to adulthood.

Some leaders such as Samuel Hopkins offered a theological rationale for missions, but a full-blown theology of missions would not appear for several decades. Nevertheless, missionary societies all felt the need for promotional magazines from the beginning. Some of these publications were substantial journals, which carried interpretive articles on a variety of theological issues. They featured regular reports on missionary work from many parts of the world. This generation of mission publicists showed refreshing ecumenical breadth by publishing information on the work of many missionary societies rather than simply promoting the program of their particular society. By later standards these mission promoters took a gentle approach in their appeal for support and in enlisting recruits.

The Panologist and Missionary Magazine (later Missionary Herald) which soon became the official organ of the ABCFM typically published articles on a wide range of theological and practical issues facing the church. Occasionally, the editor reprinted articles from other mission journals.

Perhaps the most respected and widely read missions journal of the period was the Missionary Register. Josiah Pratt, secretary of the Church Missionary Society, 1802–24, edited and published the Missionary Register as a private venture until his death in 1844. Through the Register Pratt promoted a comprehensive view of missions. His annual worldwide surveys kept before readers the spread of the Christian faith around the globe regardless of denomination or nationality.

William Carey’s well-known “pleasing dream” of a worldwide missionary conference to be held at Cape Town, South Africa, in 1810 fitted well with the tenor of the times. Carey envisioned “a general association of all denominations of Christians, from the four quarters of the world, kept there once in about ten years,” which, he argued, would greatly foster mutual understanding.3 The CMS Laws and Regulations adopted in 1799 included article XXXI, which read: “A friendly intercourse shall be maintained with other Protestant Societies engaged in the same benevolent design of propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Speaking on behalf of the ABCFM, Samuel Worcester instructed the first group of missionaries sent out in February 1812: “The Christian Missions of every Protestant denomination, sent from Europe to the East, you will regard as your brethren; the servants of the same Master, and engaged in the same work with yourselves.”4 These regulations and official instructions encouraged cordial relations and cooperation among the missionaries of Protestant societies. In such a climate the exchange of ideas occurred easily.

The June 1817 Panologist and Missionary Magazine reprinted an article, “A Brief View of Missionary Exertions,” from the January 1817 Missionary Register. Although unsigned, it expressed ideas consistent with Josiah Pratt’s views. In this article the author argued that missionary work should induce converts to the Christian faith to assume financial support for their own churches and institutions. “The Christian church must give the impulse, and must long continue to send forth her missionaries to maintain and extend that impulse; but, both with respect to Funds and Teachers, a vast portion of the work will doubtless be found ultimately to arise from among the heathen themselves; who, by the gracious influence which accompanies the Gospel, will be brought gladly to support, as the Christian Church has ever done, those Evangelists whom God, by His Spirit, will call forth from among them.”5 Although not yet fully developed, such insights helped to set the course later in the formation of missionary principles and theory.

Further evidence of the assiduous efforts leaders like Josiah Pratt made to promote missions is found in the correspondence he had with individuals on both sides of the Atlantic concerning missionary publications.6 Upon returning to London from Cambridge in 1819 Henry Venn soon became a member of the CMS. When Rufus Anderson graduated from Andover Seminary in 1822 he became full-time assistant to Jeremiah Evarts, ABCFM secretary. Both found a climate of openness toward other societies and a free exchange of ideas within the missionary world, especially through journals and magazines.

Anderson Meets Venn

Rufus Anderson never received the appointment as missionary for which he applied. Instead the ABCFM kept him on the home office staff, and in 1832 the thirty-six-year-old Anderson became a member of the secretariat and foreign secretary, the position he would hold until he retired in 1866.
Henry Venn remained an active member of the CMS while serving as parish priest. The society soon elected him to the powerful Corresponding Committee. In 1841 CMS was desperate to find a new clerical secretary for its secretariat and Venn agreed to fill the post on a temporary, part-time basis until a regular appointment could be made. In 1846 at fifty years of age, he resigned his parish duties to devote full time to the CMS, a position he held until 1872.

Rufus Anderson paid a visit to ABCFM missions in the Middle East in 1843-44. He stopped in London en route, but Venn was then dividing his time between parish and the CMS and we have no evidence that they met.7

The first correspondence that passed between Anderson and Venn was Anderson's August 18, 1852 letter to Venn in which he proposed to turn over to the CMS the ABCFM Mission to the Greeks in Constantinople. He mentioned that other American missions would be glad to gain control of this mission but the ABCFM preferred to have the CMS as their neighbor in that region.8 Venn replied promptly on September 15, saying that, owing to financial constraints, the CMS would not be able to accept this offer; but he expressed warm appreciation for the spirit in which the American Board approached the CMS.9 The letters continued to flow back and forth between the two men until 1866 when Anderson retired from the ABCFM secretariat.

Some twenty-six letters are in the official archives of the two societies. Of these twenty-six, Anderson wrote nineteen, while Venn wrote seven. What is the character of these letters? With one exception, to which we shall turn in a moment, the bulk of these exchanges had to do with rather routine administrative questions. These letters were not a vehicle for carrying on sustained dialogue on questions of missionary statesmanship. Yet Anderson would note about Venn in Foreign Missions, Their Relations and Claims, "No one is better informed on missionary subjects."10 On what did he base such a judgment?

The occasion for Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn to meet in person occurred in August 1854 when Anderson and his colleague, A. C. Thompson, laid over several weeks in London before continuing their voyage to the Middle East and South Asia. From a brief note of apology we know that Venn was not in his office on August 15 when Anderson called on him. He invited Anderson to see him on August 17—Anderson's birthday—at his office and then have dinner that evening in the Venn home along with two or three other friends.11

Anderson and Thompson had set out on their deputation assignment armed with comprehensive instructions. The board charged them "everywhere to see how far the oral preaching of the gospel is actually the leading object and work of the missions." The next instruction pursues this in greater detail: "It is a leading object with this Committee in sending this representation, to ascertain . . . to what extent, in the countries of India, the missionaries of the Board are prepared to rely on the oral preaching of the gospel, and to dispense with the pioneering and preparatory influences of schools; and especially of schools in which the use of the English language is a prominent and characteristic feature."12 The board, undoubtedly under Anderson's influence, was calling for major review of one of the mainstays among methods of modern missions—the mission school. Another issue was what appeared to be an undue delay in "putting native converts into the ministry and into the pastoral office." Missionary method was much on Anderson's mind.

Anderson's journal does not describe either his meeting in Venn's office or in the Venn home. Apparently they got on well and had a cordial evening together. Later in several letters he recalled his warm remembrance of the prayer Venn prayed.13 In an 1857 letter he recalled the "free and confidential nature of our intercourse when I was in London in the years 1854 and 1855, and my feelings of respect and confidence towards yourself and your associates."14 During his six weeks in London, Anderson saw a number of other mission societies and participated in a meeting at the home of Sir Culling Eardley Eardley to plan a mission convention held in London in October 1854. Venn did not join in promoting this convention.

On September 9 Venn wrote Anderson inviting him to attend the weekly meeting of the CMS Committee of Correspondence. Anderson was present on September 11, but the Minute record does not tell us whether he was given the floor at any time.15

The only other occasion on which Venn and Anderson must have met would have been during the last week in December 1855, when Anderson was en route home to Boston from India and the Middle East. The CMS secretaries reported to the Committee of Correspondence that Anderson had called at CMS House to express a concern over a decision the CMS Bombay Committee had taken, which Anderson felt "would be a violation of the understanding of 1853, and introduce confusion and discord in the Missions of the two Societies."16 He alluded to important changes in missionary approach, which he introduced during his visit and which were placed in jeopardy by this CMS action. The CMS Committee took Anderson's appeal under advisement, while reasserting its commitment to the XXXI Fundamental Law of the CMS.

Although we may conjecture that Anderson and Venn ranged far and wide in their discussion of missions during the few hours they spent together in London in August 1854, the only evidence we have of what issues actually occupied their attention is the statement of instructions that Anderson brought with him and a list of questions that he handed to Venn, to which Venn gave a detailed reply on September 6, 1854.

Five of Anderson's nine questions related to CMS policy concerning schools and educational assistance. Venn's bias in favor of vernacular-medium schools shines through as does his general ambivalence over mission schools. On the one hand, he believed firmly in the need to educate Christian converts as well as contribute to the improvement of the local community. On the other hand, Venn lamented "that all Missionary Societies have hitherto allowed too much of the time and labour of their preaching missionaries . . . to be expended upon education."17 The solution that Venn now advocated was to appoint trained lay schoolmasters to head up educational work and free "preaching" missionaries to devote themselves to their primary work. While he emphasized the need to provide education in the languages of the people, Venn gently disagreed with Anderson's proposed rule "that no school should be sustained in which the vernacular language is not made the grand medium of instruction."18 Venn counseled a more flexible, pragmatic attitude be adopted in policy matters.

Anderson queried Venn on the possibility of thrusting more responsibility more quickly on converts and preachers in the new churches. Venn responded candidly that he had "an increasing conviction that Missionaries are too backward to trust their Native Agents of all classes." He added, "I have observed in numerous instances that a pressure from home has put the native forward; and that subsequently the Missionary has expressed his surprise and satisfaction at the result."19 To be fair to the missionary, Venn compared the missionary with the typical rector of parishes at home and found rectors guilty of stifling the initiative of their members, too.

Venn concluded his letter to Anderson with the observation "that while the present era is one for the development of Missionary principles in action, it is also one of incompetent theorizing and with a tinge of Missionary romance."20 He emphasized that each field required its own particular set of principles as well as adaptation of principles to the various stages of development.
Announcing

Waldron Scott has been appointed President of American Leprosy Missions, with headquarters in Bloomfield, New Jersey. Previously he was general secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship, and international field director of the Navigators.

Princeton Theological Seminary has appointed Samuel H. Moffett as Professor of Mission and Ecumenics for a three-year term. A longtime Presbyterian missionary to Korea, Moffett was vice president of the Presbyterian Seminary in Seoul.

Tetsunao Yamamori, formerly professor of intercultural studies at Biola College, is now Senior Vice President for International Relations, Food for the Hungry, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Wartburg Theological Seminary (American Lutheran Church) in Dubuque, Iowa, has appointed Wi Jo Kang to their endowed chair of Mission. Formerly on the faculty of Christ Seminary—Seminex, St. Louis, Kang is also President of the Mid-West Fellowship of Professors of Mission.

Former general secretary of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Tracey K. Jones, Jr., is now Professor of Missions at Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey. His successor as head of United Methodist Global Ministries is Randolph Nugent.

G. Thompson Brown, former director, Division of International Mission, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., has been named as Adjunct Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Clifton Kirkpatrick III of Houston, Texas, is the new Director of the Presbyterian U.S. International Mission agency.

Sister Joan Chatfield, M.M., Director of the Institute for Religion and Social Change, Honolulu, is President of the American Society of Missiology for 1981–82.

Pearl Lee Walker-McNeil, former Ecumenical Officer for American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., became Professor of Missions and Global Christianity at the School of Theology, Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, effective September 15, 1981.

Former bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia, Mortimer Arias, is now Visiting Professor of Evangelization and Hispanic Studies, School of Theology at Claremont, California.

Wheaton Graduate School has announced that Lois McKinney will become Associate Professor of Cross-Cultural Communication and Missions effective September 1, 1982. She is presently executive director of the Committee to Assist Ministry Education Overseas (CAMEO), Wheaton, Illinois.

Emergence of the Three-Self Formula

As already noted, the seeds for the three-self formula had been sown as long ago as 1817. The process by which Anderson and Venn discovered each one and eventually brought them together deserves further examination.

Both Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn assumed they were living in a period when missionary principles were inchoate. They took as their personal responsibility the task of carefully examining past and present missionary experience with a view to identifying underlying principles of action. They did not approach these questions as detached armchair theorists. They came to certain insights amid crisis situations. Each held up to scrutiny new developments that might throw light on the missionary task. Both men sensed the need for greater accountability on the part of missionary societies and their workers. They scorned those who romanticized or sentimentalized missionary life and labor. As good administrators, they insisted on a clear definition of the goal of mission as the basis for evaluation of results.

Anderson and Venn shared a strong awareness of the stages of development in the life of a church. Both found themselves relating to young churches already a generation old. With an eye to the future, they asked: How long should a missionary society attend to the needs of a new church?

Such a question called for more careful thought concerning the processes of church growth where a mission agency was involved. In the ABCFM Annual Report, 1841, Anderson observed that in the early churches the apostles generally ordained “natives of the country” (italics in original). He added, “In this way the gospel soon became indigenous to the soil, and the gospel institutions acquired, through the grace of God, a self-supporting, self-propagating energy.” One of the inherent dangers of modern missionary practice was the tendency of the missionary to withhold from the new church responsibility for its own destiny.

In borrowing the term “indigenous” from the social scientist, missionary statesmen altered its meaning. Social scientists of the day used the term in its original sense of the culture native to a particular place and people with their own institutions and folkways. Both Anderson and Venn would have helped their cause along if they had insisted on respecting this definition. Instead, they redefined “indigenous church” to be one in which indigenous peoples had become competent to lead an institution that met European standards. Venn reported in 1858 that the CMS Committee had just received heartening proof of progress in South India. The bishop had recently examined nine Indian teachers for ordination. Venn exulted: “Their examination papers . . . would have satisfied any of our English bishops.” At other times he showed outstanding-
control over the new churches, the CMS faced a time of financial stringency. One of Venn's first tasks upon becoming honorary secretary for founding a vigorous community. The solution was to emphasize the selfhood of the individual and church.

In 1841, as Anderson challenged missionaries to loosen their control over the new churches, the CMS faced a time of financial stringency. One of Venn's first tasks upon becoming honorary secretary for founding a vigorous community. The solution was to emphasize the selfhood of the individual and church.

Over the decade 1841-51 Venn counseled critical constituents to have patience with the new churches while the CMS tried to devolve this responsibility on them. He also prodded his missionary colleagues to change their attitudes and approach in order to encourage self-reliance in the new churches.

Venn and Anderson struggled throughout this period to define and express in principles of action the selfhood of the church. They saw self-support as the starting point for the new church to gain a sense of dignity and autonomy from the mission. By this time they were using terms such as "self-supporting," "self-propagating," "self-governing," "self-sustaining." But neither one had yet brought them together as three aspects of the indigenous church.

Venn took the first step in this direction in 1851 when he issued the first of three policy papers on the subject of the indigenous church. This statement, entitled "Employment and Ordination of Native Teachers," distinguishes between the missionary's task—which is temporary—and the work of the pastor. He emphasized that the ultimate object of mission is to establish a self-supporting church, with the missionary resigning full responsibility for the church to the local pastor, in order to move to the "regions beyond."

Venn lost no time in interpreting this new policy through instructions to outgoing missionaries and in correspondence. To a group of missionaries about to leave for Yorubaland he said: "Keep in mind the importance of introducing, from the first, the principles of self-support and self-government among the converts." (Italics in original.)

The first time we find Venn using the "three-selfs" as a unit was in instructions to missionaries, June 1, 1855. If this statement of the famous "three-selfs" resulted from conversations with Anderson, Venn gave no hint. If he perceived it as some kind of breakthrough, he remained a model of calm. He matter-of-factly addressed the missionaries on "the means to be adopted for establishing a Native Church upon the principles of self-support, self-government, and self-extension." Rather than feeling that he had in some sense arrived at the culmination of a search, he viewed the search for principles as a task that would never be completed. That same year he noted, "Many of us who have long taken part in the guidance of Missions are looking with deep interest at the reports and suggestions made by such men as Dr. Anderson, Mr. Underhill, Mr. Wylie and others. The present seems to be an era of the establishment of 'Missionary Principles.'" The search was carried on in a spirit of collegiality and mutual helpfulness. That neither Venn nor Anderson put the same weight on the "three-selfs" that later generations did is reflected in the fact that ABCFM's Outline of Missionary Policy, adopted in 1856, simply does not use this terminology as its framework.

Venn worked out the implications of the "indigenous church" in his 1861 and 1866 papers. In 1861 he especially attacked the dangers of the mission-station approach—a system that he saw threatening the selfhood of the new church and subverting the missionary's calling. The 1866 paper added nothing new by way of policy and insight. The CMS released these three papers—1851, 1861, and 1866—as an official statement of policy in 1866.

In his major work, Foreign Missions, Their Relations and Claims, published in 1869, Rufus Anderson used the "three-self" triad as a framework for interpreting apostolic missions (chap. 4) and extrapolated from that precedent "Principles and Methods of Modern Missions" (chap. 7).

Announcing

The joint annual meeting of the Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Missions and the Eastern Section of the American Society of Missiology will be held at Maryknoll Mission Institute, Maryknoll, New York, November 6 (Friday afternoon) to November 7 (Saturday noon), 1981. The theme is "Modern China: Challenge to Mission." For further information regarding membership and the meeting, contact Dr. Norman A. Horner, Secretary, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, NJ 08406.

Conclusion

Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson held each other in high regard. Their brief meetings in 1854 and 1855 did not result in an intimate friendship. Both were mature, well-seasoned mission administrators when they met; they were accustomed to reading and seeking counsel widely. But they were strong-minded, independent personalities. By 1854 Anderson and Venn had already been struggling with the same issue for many years: how to enable a mission-founded church to achieve responsible selfhood. They carried on their search in an atmosphere of free exchange of information through missionary magazines and journals—which both read carefully—and at the same time each raised questions about the meaning of his own society's experiences. By 1841 many missions had completed a full generation of work and were moving into a further stage of development. Venn and Anderson, therefore, confronted the same kinds of problems in their relations to the new churches. Despite the fact that the two men came from quite different ecclesiastical traditions—the one Congregational, the other Anglican—they agreed on the basic problems the modern missionary movement had to face. Historical evidence does not suggest that one depended on the other in arriving at his conclusions. This is simply one further remarkable coincidence in the lives of two remarkable missionary statesmen.

Later generations remember Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn primarily as the fathers of the "three-self" triad. But this particular formulation was not a dogma with them. They concentrated their concerns on the "indigenous" church as the means to the object of missionary labors. By constantly scrutinizing missionary experience and the conditions of the emerging churches, they attempted to discern the mysteries of the processes of church growth. With their innate distrust of sterile dogma, they used the "three-selfs" only as pointers toward the missionary goal of founding churches that would themselves become the means of missionary advance in the world.
The Challenge of Anthropology to Current Missiology

G. Linwood Barney

I. Introduction

Modern Missions and Culture: Their Mutual Relations was the title of a book by Gustav Warneck in 1879 (English trans., 1883). Despite the infancy of cultural anthropology and ethnology as sciences, Warneck was aware of the reciprocal implications between missions and culture.

Considering the time in which Warneck wrote, one is amazed at the insights he expressed regarding the complexities of the sociocultural value systems of peoples and what bearing they have on the proclamation of the gospel. He speaks of culture as being in itself "an entirely neutral concept" which is to be interpreted from the perspective of the insider (Kasdorf 1980:105; italics added).

"Missions and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship" was the title of an article by Paul Hiebert nearly a century later (1978). 1 Tracing the sometimes stormy history between anthropology and missions, Hiebert concluded with a wistful, even hopeful, note:

In many ways missions and anthropology have been like half-brothers—sharing, in part, a common parentage, raised up in the same setting, quarreling over the space and arguing the same issues.

It is unfortunate that at times this has led to polarization and mutual hatred; for each had much to learn from the other. With the growing awareness among anthropologists that they must face the overwhelming problems among anthropologists that missionaries have faced so long, and among missionaries that they must deal with people within their sociocultural contexts which anthropology has studied, a greater mutual understanding and exchange of ideas seems possible (1978:178).

There are a number of committed Christians among anthropologists who are currently active in applying the insights of their discipline to the task of missions. This was very evident in the Willowbank consultation on "Gospel and Culture" (Stott and Coote 1979, 1980) sponsored by the Theology and Education Group and the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in January 1978. Five of the major papers were given by anthropologists.

Anthropology: A Developing Discipline

Two or three decades ago a common definition of culture in cultural anthropology would be similar to this one from A. L. Kroeber: "... the mass of learned and transmitted motor reactions, habits, techniques, ideas and values—and the behavior they induce—is what constitutes culture. Culture is the special and exclusive product of men, and is their distinctive quality in the cosmos" (1948:8).

This is an omnibus definition that includes ideas, values, pat-
terns of relationships, patterns of behavior, material objects made by people, and so forth. For a century or more ethnographies were produced that sought to describe a given culture within these general categories. These served to inform missionaries about particular peoples and, indeed, many ethnographies were written by missionaries.

With the emergence of the functional/structural schools of anthropology, ethnographies took on more dynamic and systemic configurations. Cultures were presented as organic wholes in which the various parts were interdependent and all contributed to the whole. This development in anthropology caught the attention of many missionaries who then pursued studies in anthropology and applied these insights to missionary principles and practice. For example, the three-self formula (self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating), which had been considered a progressive step forward, was challenged to a deeper understanding whereby its three principles would be expressed in patterns indigenous to the local culture. Concepts of leadership, patterns of organization and support, methods of communicating the gospel, and the process of making religious decisions would be drawn from and identified with the local culture (e.g., William Smalley 1958). Stress was placed on the unique configuration of each culture. Missionaries in evangelism and church growth were challenged to adapt to these differences. Mission strategy recognized the homogeneous unit, which became a working concept for many and a basic principle in missiology to some. 2 An understanding of decision-making by consensus in many such groups confirmed the legitimacy of a people’s movement. All of these developments were taught and explored in missiology courses.

However, even as these approaches were being debated in missiology, unprecedented changes were occurring at an accelerating pace around the world. Emerging nations, rapid transportation, instant communication, and multinational corporations were effecting complex changes virtually everywhere. While the analogy of the world as a “global village” seems overdrawn, it has increasing validity. The concept of contextualization is now in vogue and seeks to respond to the current world situation as indigenization sought to do a few decades ago. These new realities challenge anthropology as well as theology and missiology.

Anthropologists, once caught up in the discovery of variety, are now turning back to the search for cultural and human universals. The extreme forms of cultural relativism are now almost dead. Chomsky and other linguists are seeking universals in the basic generative processes of language; Levi-Strauss and other structuralists in the structure of the mind; Bateson, Berlin, Kay and others in common sense processes; and mathematical anthropologists in some fundamental order inherent in the nature of the universe itself (Hiebert 1978:175).

Culture: A Working Definition for This Study

The 1960s and 1970s have seen a concept of culture being adopted by a growing number of anthropologists that promises to inform and challenge the science of missions in a marked way. One of these anthropologists, James Spradley, 3 has worked with this concept for several years. He has defined culture as “the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior” (Spradley and McCurdy 1975:5). This concept approaches the nature of culture from a different perspective from the omnibus definition given earlier. While the former definition was helpful at a stage in anthropology’s development, it did not distinguish between outsider and insider points of view of a particular culture.

This latter concept of culture is a catalyst to many in their understanding of missionary anthropology. To weave it consistently into one’s thinking and practice takes time and experimentation.

The Posture of This Christian Anthropologist 4

Probably most members of the discipline of anthropology would not want to address some of the topics that follow. When metaphysical or supracultural matters are considered, their agnostic posture would assert that since these cannot be empirically verified they are outside the purview of anthropology. The writer considers his “acquired knowledge” (see working definition of culture in preceding paragraph) to have been derived not only from the human institutions of family, school, community, and the like, but also from his relationship with God (see Lk. 24:44ff. and Rom. 12:1-2). He considers that his interpretation of today’s mission context and the writing of this essay issue from his acquired knowledge.

He comes to this essay, then, not as an antagonist to challenge missiology. He comes as a Christian trained in the discipline of anthropology to present insights, ideas, and suggestions that should challenge missiologists and especially theologians (also Bible scholars and historians) to respond. The tensions can be corrective and creative. Missiology can be stronger if scholars in these various disciplines will constantly challenge one another with their respective skills and insights.

II. Culture and Missiological Concepts

Amplification of the Concept of Culture

Culture is the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior.

Culture is not some innate knowledge that humans possess. It is acquired. This acquisition is a process that begins before one can remember (e.g., what person remembers when he or she distinguished father from mother?) and continues until one dies. The nature of this knowledge is more than mere information. For example, it includes language with its functions of classifying knowledge, holding it in memory, and calling it forth in communication. It includes world-view, presuppositions, values and priorities, patterns of relationships, technology, and all that is normally included in cultural universals. It includes all the appropriate paradigms by which these are related. New information must be classified and processed into this system to become part of the acquired knowledge. It becomes operational when one uses it to interpret one’s ongoing experience and to generate appropriate social behavior.

This acquired knowledge may be tacit knowledge that the insider uses but cannot talk about, since it is not in his/her conscious awareness. It may be explicit knowledge, which the insider can discuss and describe.

To the degree that this acquired knowledge is shared among members of a community, to that degree they have a common culture. This shared cognitive orientation (SCO) prompts similar interpretations of experiences and generates behavior that can be anticipated. This SCO prompts appropriate behavior in any situation but also monitors behavior of others as befitting a situation or not.

This amplification of the concept is very limited but suggestive for the discussions that follow. The writer will seek to discuss a number of concepts and topics that concern missiology and will attempt to give his perspective on these as an anthropologist. These discussions will not be exhaustive but indicative of how this perspective might stimulate critical thinking and provide clarification of issues.
What follows is hardly more than a beginning. A continuing dialogue between anthropologists and scholars in biblical studies and theology is essential for the development of a theology of culture that would be useful to missiology.

Some of the writer’s basic assumptions will be obvious. God is creator, and humankind (used in a generic sense) is creature. Thus God is and the human being becomes. This person, made in the image of God, was intended to have fellowship with God and is incomplete without that fellowship. Human beings make culture how beh it with God-given capabilities. In self-centeredness all humanity has alienated itself from God and produced culture that reflects that alienation in a self-centered perspective and selfish concerns.

Reconciliation between God and human beings is initiated by God in his redeeming acts in Jesus Christ and is effected in the experience of people through the dynamic activity of God, the Holy Spirit. However, it is difficult to distinguish between that which in essence is determined by God’s activity (supracultural) and that which is a believer’s response (cultural). Culture change, which is always in process, only adds to the difficulty. A God/human relationship does not occur in a sociocultural vacuum. Therefore any separation of the supracultural and the cultural is in theory only. The crucial question would seem to be: Can the supracultural find adequate and meaningful forms of expression in any culture? If the answer is in the affirmative, then the Christian community in a specific culture should be encouraged to develop its own cultural forms for a meaningful expression of the supracultural: its new faith; the communication of the gospel to others; its common life as people of God, and so forth. In this process the essential nature of these supracultural components should neither be lost nor be distorted. Rather, they should be secured and interpreted clearly through the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the “inculturation” of them into this new (different) culture. If the designation of human beings as the source of culture is correct, then any society’s self-oriented culture will have to be modified (transformed) and reoriented to reflect the supracultural with its divine source. However, such innovations should not be cultural forms imposed by one society upon another but, rather, relevant changes within a culture—changes that are consistent with the character of the supracultural.

In struggling to present these concepts more clearly to students and to suggest the components in the appropriate categories of the supracultural or the cultural, the writer has found the following model helpful. By definition the absolute is that which is undivided and unchanging. Conversely, the relative is derived (dependent) and changing. God is absolute, undivided, and unchanging. But consider the following implication. The gospel is given of God. Therefore it is derived. It cannot be absolute. Is it therefore relative? If so, it is changeable. Yet Paul (Galatians) speaks of the one gospel. Another conceptual category is needed between absolute and relative. It would seem that the term “constant” might meet this need. “Constant” refers to that which, by nature, does not change though it may be derived. It is helpful to add “constant” between “absolute” and “relative” as conceptual categories in our consideration of the supracultural and the cultural. Then it follows that God is absolute. That which he initiates and affirms to humanity in his covenant and redeeming acts is constant. However, the forms in which people respond to God, express their faith, and live out their relationship with God are tied to their culture and therefore are relative. The absolute and the constant are supracultural but the response of people is relative and varies from culture to culture as each society expresses the supracultural in forms peculiar to its own cultural configuration. Thus a relevant expression of the God/human relationship can preserve the integrity (unique identity) of a culture but in no way needs to compromise the essence and nature of the supracultural.

A precedent and pattern for this approach to a theology of culture is found in the incarnation. The supracultural in a given cultural context seems to reflect the incarnation. That which both humanity and culture seriously in the incarnation, so must missiology take humanity and culture seriously in crossing cultural borders. As the Christ became a Jewish person in Jewish culture at a given period in history, the Christian is a human being in a given culture at a given time in history. As Jesus lived in tension with his Judaic culture because he conformed to the will of God, so the Christians in any culture will experience tensions in their respective cultures when they seek to conform to the will of God. The good news is that as Jesus broke through the centripetal force of the vicious cycle of alienated humankind and human culture, even so Christians by the will and power of God can expect to break through that same centripetal force. This is one powerful manifestation of the kingdom of God coming to pass.

**Toward a Functional Definition of Faith**

As a missiologist the writer is concerned to identify Christian faith. Is it synonymous with a creed, a system of theology, or church affiliation? An effort toward a functional definition of Christian faith follows: Christian faith is that which establishes and maintains a relationship of fellowship between a person and God apart from the particular forms of any one particular culture. Corollaries to this definition would be: (1) this faith does not exist in a sociocultural vacuum; (2) it is experienced, expressed, and witnessed to in a specific sociocultural context and utilizes forms of that cultural context; (3) the forms employed by Christians in one culture are not to be imposed on the new believers in a different culture.

This knowledge of Christ and the relationship with God become part of one’s acquired knowledge. As it is classified and processed into the overall knowledge it is likely to modify one’s interpretation of experiences and also one’s social behavior. Priorities, values, and world-view will be reconsidered (cf. Rom. 12:1-2) and be transformed. However, these transformations will not be conformity to another culture (e.g., Western Christianity) but an outworking of the reformulation of knowledge wrought by this
This means then that a believer’s natural expression of his or her faith will be evident to others in patterns of behavior and lifestyle that are consistent with this new component serving as a catalyst in the believer’s knowledge and life. One’s verbal witness to this new relationship with God will not be in the language, borrowed jargon, or style of expression of another culture. This should not disturb the perceptive missionary (outsider) who is observing the new believer (insider). Indeed, it should be reassuring that true conversion is taking place.

Toward a Functional Definition of Church

As a missiologist the writer is also concerned that the nature and function(s) of the church be fully realized in a given culture. Is the church synonymous with Christendom, with a particular denomination, or with a local congregation? Related to and parallel with the functional definition of faith is this functional definition of the church: In any community the church consists of those who have a relationship of fellowship with God in Christ (faith) and with one another apart from any particular forms or structures of any one particular culture. The similar corollaries to this would include: (1) the church never exists in a sociocultural vacuum; (2) its members experience, express, and witness to their relationship with God in their own sociocultural setting in forms and through structures that are appropriate to that context; (3) the forms and structures of the church in another culture are not to be imposed on this community of new believers.

This new knowledge of Christ and fellowship with God have become part of the acquired knowledge of these new believers. Furthermore, in terms of their shared cognitive orientation (SCO) it tends to make them a close-knit subgroup in the larger community of which they are still members. Their SCO may modify the way that they, as believers, interpret experiences and generate modifications in their behavior and relationships. As a subgroup with a common SCO they will work out the implications of their common new knowledge as it reflects their traditional priorities, values, world-view, and societal commitments (cf. Rom. 12:1–2). These will be reflected in their corporate fellowship with one another as well as with God, and each member will make his or her contribution to the enrichment and vitality of the group (cf. Rom. 12:3ff.).

In this way the community of believers will arrive at a consensus of the most appropriate manner for structuring their fellowship in their locale and how best to express their relationship with God in lifestyle, worship, and witness. Outside observers (e.g., missionaries) should not be alarmed to see unfamiliar patterns emerging. Rather, they ought to be alarmed if the patterns appear too similar to their own.

III. The Concept of Culture and Contextualization

Toward a Strategy in Second-Culture Learning

Traditionally in teaching missiology an area study is considered to be important. The quality of these studies varies according to sources available. An area study normally includes a general introduction to the area in matters of geography, demography, and so forth; a study of the political history summarized in a time chart; a study of the culture, which preferably should be collected and codified in categories such as those presented in the Outline of Cultural Materials (Murdock 1971); a study of mission and church history correlated with the political-history chart; an analysis and evaluation of the missionary methods employed; and finally a church-growth analysis and strategy projection. This kind of area study is still valid and needs to be continued. However, the cultural study is basically the outsider’s observations and descriptions. There is need to discover the insider’s point of view, to be able to describe it and then to learn it. These stages are parallel to what one seeks to do with regard to language. Language and culture are inseparable.

The term “new ethnography” refers to ethnography as described from the insider’s point of view. James Spradley, from whom the writer has borrowed his working definition of culture, has also produced The Ethnographic Interview (Spradley 1979), which is a manual for the investigator who seeks to do an ethnography from the insider’s point of view. This methodology has been developed by Spradley during twelve years of both teaching and doing ethnography. Not only is this a breakthrough in describing culture but it is an effective base for learning a culture as the insider lives it. It appears to be a parallel to developments in descriptive linguistics, which have not only facilitated language analysis but provided significant insights for translation work and second-language learning. It presents a challenge to missionary anthropology and missiology: (1) to incorporate into the curriculum for missionary training actual programs in doing this new ethnography; (2) to produce a resource library of these new ethnographies of sociocultural groups that have priority in missionary strategy; (3) to develop programs of second-culture learning similar to or in conjunction with language-learning programs around the world.

In his own doing of ethnography as well as that done by his students, Spradley has found that this method is effective in working with segments of complex societies as much as with traditional cultures. Thus missionary candidates could develop the skills in segments of their own complex societies and then use these same skills in second-culture learning. This development in anthropology promises a more thorough discovery of and participation in the culture as viewed and experienced by the insider. This seems to be made to order for the present concern about contextualization. The challenge to missiology is to work through the implications of this new ethnography and channel it for more productive results in contextualization.

Toward a Strategy for More Adequate Hermeneutics

Culture must be taken more seriously in biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. In a review of Christianness in Culture by Charles H. Kraft (1979), William Dyrness remarks:

... it is impossible any longer to ignore Kraft’s contention that hermeneutics is an essentially cross-cultural enterprise. What we see in Scripture is clearly conditioned by the biblical cultures and defined by our own. Kraft calls the interpreter to take full advantage of this by using an ethnolinguistic method of exegesis that goes beyond the traditional grammatical-historical techniques (1980:40).

It is the writer’s impression that most biblical exegesis gives more attention to the grammatical than to the historical. Furthermore, when the historical is incorporated it is from a broad general perspective. Here again is a challenge to anthropologists first and then to missiologists to develop an ethnographic resource for biblical study. No one can do the ethnographic interview à la Spradley for biblical cultures. Nevertheless, as further insight into this understanding of culture is developed one should be able to approximate more closely the insider’s point of view in the varied times and cultural contexts of the Scriptures. Both biblical text and extra-biblical sources can be used in developing such understanding. Then the anthropologists and exegetical scholars can interact to produce a more incisive exegesis, which in turn should enhance a
3. Spradley and others continue to work out the implications of this concept of culture. In the book by Spradley and McCurdy, 1975, an introductory text in cultural anthropology, the authors reflect this concept of culture across the gamut of universals included in cultural anthropology. Spradley’s approach to doing ethnography is exceptionally well developed and anticipates his book on the ethnographic interview, which is referred to later in this essay.

4. Although an anthropologist, this writer acknowledges that the discipline has expanded beyond his powers to keep abreast of all developments. While his primary concern has been missionary anthropology, yet new nuances in the broader discipline often develop and only later do their applications to missiology emerge. Therefore there may be current developments in the discipline that have not been incorporated in this study.

5. Much of this section is drawn from a paper, “The Supracultural and the Cultural” (Barney 1973). However, that article was written before the author had adopted the Spradley definition of culture. A revised edition of contextualization and see many of these developments as processes in apologetics that sought to affirm the Christian faith in a culturally changing world.

In the contemporary effort to do theology in different cultural settings, whether it be liberation theology, black theology, African theology, or Western traditional theology, the influence of culture needs to be recognized in all its aspects and appropriately dealt with. Theology—biblical, systematic, historical, or contemporary—needs to be understood in terms of sociocultural context. Certainly this is an area where missiology, prodded by anthropological perspective of the homogeneous unit sees it as a significant and Mission History

The seemingly problems may actually be a forced blessing whereby the transcendent power of Christ and his gospel is most in evidence.

Notes

1. Paul Hiebert’s article not only traces the history of the relationship between anthropology and missions but, in assessing the issues that confront them today, he cites implications that have been suggestive for this essay.

2. This writer’s perspective of the homogeneous unit sees it as a significant factor in evangelism, but also as a deterrent to the church in transcending ethnic and class diversity.

3. Spradley and others continue to work out the implications of this concept of culture. In the book by Spradley and McCurdy, 1975, an introductory text in cultural anthropology, the authors reflect this concept of culture across the gamut of universals included in cultural anthropology. Spradley’s approach to doing ethnography is exceptionally well developed and anticipates his book on the ethnographic interview, which is referred to later in this essay.

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of the article incorporates the concept of culture as acquired knowledge.

6. This model emerged during years of teaching as the writer and his students would struggle to define a border between “absolute” and “relative.” The suggestion to use “constant” proved helpful and the dictionary definitions of the three terms led to development of the more formal presentation of the model.

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Unconditional Good News: Toward an Understanding of Biblical Universalism.


Universal Grace: Myth or Reality?


In discussions caused by newly militant world religions, the claims of "hidden peoples," and the demands of development, few theological topics are of more significance than the extent of Christ's work. Both of these books in very different ways make a contribution to this discussion. The titles highlight the difference: Neal Punt, writing as an American Christian Reformed pastor, stresses the universal intent of Christ's work; Richard Coté, an American priest with many years' missionary experience in Africa, accents the universal and continuing effects of Christ's incarnation in restoring the personal order God intended in creation.

Father Coté writes in terms of a Catholic imagination wherein grace perfects nature especially as this comes to expression in the thought of Teilhard de Chardin (who figures prominently in Cote's book). Coté aims to show how the world is penetrated and filled with God's grace "emerging through the continuing effects of the incarnation." This is expressed in terms of what Cote calls a personal order, which Christ has renewed. Christ "stands united to every person just as surely as all people by definition are present to one another." This original grace means that to exist as human is to be in relation to Christ. It is true that sin has broken this solidarity, but Cote emphasizes that "our solidarity with Christ through grace is more universal, more decisive, and more efficacious than is our solidarity with Adam through sin." This then has important implications for mission. We approach

October, 1981
people not to bring Christ to them but to bring him out of them; we look on the world not as enemy but as a partner in the work of salvation; and we see both evangelism and development serving to further humanity in Christ.

In the case of Punt we are in the world of Calvin and Luther and the Reformed confessions; one senses a somewhat stale world of endless (and unresolved) debates in Reformed synods. (Such casuistry clashed strongly with the vivid discussion over poverty and spirits at a provincial Philippine pastors’ conference where I read this book.) But Punt deserves credit for his attempt to open the doors and look at things differently. His thesis is that if one considers that Christ died for all people except those specifically declared in Scripture to be lost, many apparent problems can be resolved. Condemnation is not because of Adam’s sin or the insufficiency of Christ’s work, but because of actual individual rejection of God’s will (which Punt says cannot be explained). Punt believes this perspective, missing in Reformed theology, would enable us to preach freely to all people while not overemphasizing the role of faith and would allow Christians boldly to press Christ’s claims in the social order. For, in an interesting parallel to Father Cote, “The work of Christ, the second Adam, has counteracted the work of the first Adam in every instance.”

Here then are two attempts to help us see mission in the positive terms of Christ’s victory and expect the triumph of God’s grace. Cote gives more scope to the energies of God’s creative purposes and thus sees Christ’s presence as a renewal and restoration. So it is easier for him to see the universal extent of grace. His preference for organic metaphors, however—“the world mirrors the Church . . . [for] that . . . is the law of all living things”—does not allow him to give full weight to the moral dimension of the personal order he so often speaks of. It would seem there can be no ultimate rebellion or disobedience where original grace rises like sap in the created order. Scripture moreover is called in to support these claims when it is able; and ignored when it cannot. By contrast Punt’s book is filled with biblical exegesis and interaction with various theological traditions (Arminian and Lutheran, regrettably not Catholic). And one is persuaded in the end that he has uncovered an important strand of biblical material often overlooked by Calvinists. Though even here, one feels, he cannot bring himself to draw out the radical implications of what he is saying: though opposed to the whole drift of his argument he cannot give up limited atonement (because he can see it in no other terms than personal atonement, there is little sense of cosmic reconciliation) and he gives little place to a strong doctrine of creation and God’s kingdom, which Christ came to bring to fulfillment (though he touches on the cultural mandate in the final chapter). Cote for his part helps us avoid “applying overpowering and majestic words to the intricacies of our little souls” (to use Krister Stendahl’s expression), but even his helpful emphasis on the personal order overlooks the eternal consequences that Punt shows us attend the rejection of God’s loving call extended in the gospel.

—William A. Dyrness

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Missionary Theology: Foundations in Development.


The author's capacity for synthesis makes his analysis of the historical roots of the church's missionary experience, and of the theological shift that, particularly in the beginning of the present century, created seeds of change in that experience, an especially helpful contribution to missionary theology. His critiques of more current theological developments in Europe and Latin America are less constructive. Owing to a consistent attempt to show how these theologies are insufficient as theologies of mission, the author fails to show how these theologies are also "seeds of change," helping to shape the expression of the church's mission today in particular contexts, and how they are at the same time being shaped by other currents in society. The fact that theologies developing within the local churches of Asia and Africa are not mentioned or included in the analysis represents a serious weakness in view of the scope that the initial thrust of the book presents to the reader.

Dunn, who is a former papal volunteer in Lima, Peru, and is presently chairman of the Theology Department of St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa, attempts to describe the theological framework of the church's expression of mission in terms of development, as the title of his work indicates. A special contribution he makes in this respect is the argument he uses for a reformulation of natural law based on a "new dynamic paradigm" of the human person. The overall development of a theological reflection on the church's mission in the area of development is, however, disappointing, since it is not fully elaborated, but appears to be a collection of the views of different theologians. There likewise appears to be an underlying orientation to theologize about the church's mission as development. This orientation would seem to place a severe limitation upon the expression of the church's mission, if one accepts that the mission of the church is in view of the kingdom, which, while present in Jesus Christ, is still not fully present or realized. This tension between the already and the not-yet implies the fundamental necessity of openness to the unknown, which excludes absolute answers developed outside of specific contexts. Therefore, while development is certainly, in the present context of the world, intimately bound to the mission of the church in a particular way, new orientations could emerge for the future.

—Mary Motte, F.M.M.
This volume consists of a series of papers given in a conference at Milligan College, Tennessee, in 1977. Four main divisions relate to the church in Africa (southern, eastern, central, western), each major paper being presented by an African church leader, with two respondents—some African, some Western missionaries. It concludes with a chapter on the future of the church in Africa and an epilogue by the editor. The book contains valuable insights into the church scene in Africa. Each author struggled with the diversity of African culture, religion, politics, and the almost impossible task of adequately covering the subject.

Writing on southern Africa, Thomas Leeuw focused on "The Church and Human Liberation," and dealt almost exclusively with the sociopolitical involvement of the various church organizations, demonstrating a tremendous grasp of that situation. The reviewer looked in vain, however, for any recognition of the spiritual reality of Christ's church. Some will take issue with Leeuw's theological position, particularly his contrasting of Christ and Paul, and his apparent universalism (p. 33). Considerable theological jargon made reading difficult, for example, "... in order to participate in the theophanic and epiphanic presence, we must be drawn into the Christological theological hermeneutical exercise" (p. 21). Responding, Norman Thomas rightly points out the dangerous assumption that a change in political systems (e.g., Mozambique, to Marxism) constitutes "liberation."

Concerning eastern Africa, Negash Kebede summarizes the commonality in developmental stages of the churches, and attempts to survey church growth in ten countries. His insights are largely limited to his own country of Ethiopia.

Central Africa, presented by Mutombo Mpanya of the Mennonite Church in Zaire, is essentially a case study of that denomination. He asserts that the basic problem of churches in central Africa is that of dependency, providing evidence from his own denomination. Max Ward Randall, in his excellent response, rightly points out the resulting limited viewpoint and lack of any reference to the very significant development of the Church of Christ in Zaire.

John Pobee, professor at the University of Ghana, ably surveys West Africa in terms of major influences at work, including Western culture and education, Christianity, and Islam. The final chapter on "The Future of the Church in Africa" by Norman Thomas reveals considerable knowledge and insight regarding present trends and their likely development during the next few years.

Charles R. Taber, the editor, spent part of his childhood in Africa, later serving as a missionary and translation consultant for the United Bible Societies. He is now Professor of World Mission, Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee.

—Peter Stam
Jesus and Jim Jones: Behind Jonestown.


What really happened in Jonestown? What brought about this wild death dance of perverted belief? These are the questions Steve Rose, Congregational theologian, explores in his "introductory enquiry into some of the religious, ethical, and social implications of Jonestown."

Rose believes Jonestown resulted from deep strains in American life: the loss of political and religious authority and a continuing loss of the integrity of the self. Part of Jones's power derived from what Rose calls the "Herculean Conscience," the overwhelming desire to do good, which in failing to recognize its own limits and aggressive tendencies eventually turns paranoid and suicidal. Without the healing truth of biblical faith, which recognizes the finite limits and corruptions of the human self, all such herculean messianic efforts are ultimately doomed to self-destruction of one form or another.

The greater the idolatrous belief, the greater the human disaster. By way of contrast, Jesus, whom Jones renounced, came not as a herculean Messiah, but as the redemptive servant of Isaiah 53.

Rose recognizes that he is merely "touching the edges" of the mystery of good and evil; that in the events of Jonestown we are confronting "principalities" and "powers" beyond our rational explanation or control. As such the book purposefully avoids any simple "comprehensive structure." One of its values is its appendix containing the most extensive collection of documents relating to the People's Temple yet published, including a transcript of the tape that recounts the final tragic moments of Jonestown.

Rose also offers his own "biblical" value system by which to judge the health of contemporary religious movements: nonidolatry, radical tolerance, aiding the helpless, and participatory democracy. What Rose fails to recognize adequately is his tendency to identify his own liberal 1960 American values with those of first-century biblical faith. In fact, while he recognizes that these four values may conflict, it is the principle of radical tolerance, so manifest in San Francisco, that led to the failure of anyone in church or state to intervene effectively in time to limit the Jonestown tragedy.

—Roger Hull

1982-1983
Walsh-Price Fellowship for Mission Study and Research

in honor of Bishop James A. Walsh and Father Thomas F. Price, co-founders of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll)

Purpose
The purpose of the Walsh-Price Fellowship is to provide scholars, teachers and researchers with time to pursue serious and productive research related to the church's mission to the world. The work undertaken should essentially aim at advancing and contributing to contemporary mission understanding. Maryknoll is particularly interested in promoting gospel values as they affect the human family.

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Requirements
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Original and new studies related to mission concerns including such varied disciplines as theology, scripture, social sciences, comparative religions, area studies, international ethics and international issues of social justice. Research in problems crucial to mission in specific geographic areas is also acceptable.

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Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
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October, 1981
A Life of Jesus.


Lives of Jesus are legion, but this is the first one by a Japanese to appear in English. Moreover, it is by one of Japan’s leading novelists, a Roman Catholic layman, who has been dubbed “the Japanese Graham Greene.” Endo’s first novels, which dealt with the themes of martyrdom and apostasy in early seventeenth-century Japan, have been translated into several foreign languages. His best-known novel is Silence. Similar to Greene’s, Endo’s novels are marked by an element of ambiguity and surprise; his “heroes” are frequently weak, bumbling antiheroes.

Some of these same characteristics are found in this life of Jesus. It is first of all an apologetic for his own people; he seeks to appeal to them by emphasizing the mother-love image of God rather than that of an authoritarian father. However, Endo also interacts with Western biblical scholarship and traditions. He knows biblical scholars as diverse as Stauffer and Bornkamm, Cullmann and Bultmann. He is also familiar with the Holy Land and Jewish laws and customs.

What makes this portrayal of Jesus so moving and compelling is Endo’s ability to make us visualize and even feel the pathos of Jesus as he identifies with the weak and helpless and endures the misunderstanding and false expectations of the crowds and his disciples.

What appeals to Endo is not so much the popular, powerful miracle worker who attracted the crowds in Galilee, but the increasingly lonely and isolated Jesus who made his way steadfastly to Jerusalem—and certain death. It is this Jesus, weak and ineffectual, one who appeared to be a “pathetic do-nothing,” who stands out. ‘Nevertheless,’ Endo concludes, “concealed in the very fact of Jesus being ineffectual and weak lies the mystery of genuine Christian teaching. The meaning of the resurrection is unthinkable if separated from the fact of his being ineffectual and weak. A person begins to be a follower of Jesus only by accepting the risk of becoming himself one of the powerless people in the visible world.”

All of Endo’s powers as a novelist are evident in this fascinating portrayal, especially in the dramatic denouement in the last chapter. Unfortunately, the last few paragraphs detract from the proper conclusion. Other speculations will offend some readers, while intriguing others. The overall impact, however, is powerful and gripping. The translator also deserves our thanks.

Read Endo’s Life of Jesus; you will never forget it. 

—I. John Hesselink

Henry P. Van Dusen, when he was president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, told me that “Unit­ed Theological College in Bangalore is the finest theological seminary in Asia.” I had asked because Russell Chandran, the principal, had written inviting me to teach there. When I settled into my first teaching position at Bangalore I discovered that Van Dusen was probably right, and the reason was Russell Chandran’s imagination, energy, and blunt self-confidence. Those who have worked with him and known him well remember occasional intimidation, regular respect, and growing admiration, flowering most often in deep affection. A totally un­pretentious man, he has built a major center for theological education out of an endless fund of new ideas and an earthy gift for making things happen. Samuel Amirtham, one of Russell’s most gifted colleagues, has edited an impressive testimony by former students, colleagues, and friends.

The contributors to the Festschrift come from various groups with whom Chandran has worked, and on whom his influence has been felt: ecumenical colleagues like Philip Potter and J. Robert Nelson; fellow Indian educators like Chandran Devanesan; colleagues from the Christian Peace Conference like Karoly Toth of Prague; missionary colleagues like Hunter Harrison, his predecessor as principal at Bangalore, and Harold Moulton; bishops of the Church of South India like Lesslie Newbigin and Ananda Rao Samuel; and students who have gone on to make their mark in theological education and the life of the church—Arvind Nirmal, Wesley Ariarajah, Gnana Robinson, K. C. Abraham, and others too numerous to mention. It is an enormously impressive testimony to a widely influential man.

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Noteworthy

Six persons have been selected to receive research grants under the fourth annual Walsh-Price Fellowship Program sponsored by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America.

The fellowship program, administered by Maryknoll’s Mission Research and Planning Department, was established to provide scholars with an opportunity to pursue intensive and productive research leading to the enhancement of the church’s mission to the world. It is named in honor of the founders of the mission society, Bishop James A. Walsh and Father Thomas Frederick Price.

According to Father Clarence Engler, M.M., director of the Mission Research and Planning Department, the program was created specifically “to invite scholars from outside the Maryknoll community to utilize their academic and philosophical skills to further the global mission of the Church through research, education and communication.” He adds that “relevance to contemporary cross-cultural mission was the major criterion for final selection of the proposals submitted.”

The award winners and the areas in which they will pursue their fellowship study are as follows:

Dr. David Kwang-Sun Suh, theologian and educator in Korea, is former dean of the College of Arts and Science at Ewha University. His research title is Minjung Theology: A Liberation Theology in Korea. He proposes to delineate the meaning of the recent development of minjung theology in Korea as well as its implications for the formation of an indigenized theology and its consequent effect on the mission of the church in Korea today.

Mr. Phillip Berryman, Philadelphia, Central America Representative of the American Friends Service Committee, has entitled his research Central America, Crux Theologica: Issues Raised by the Participation of Christians in Revolutionary Processes. He will trace how these new issues have arisen in the practices of Christians, how they are formulated in Central America, and what their significance is for the wider church.

Father Edicio de la Torre, S.V.D., was chaplain of the Federation of Free Farmers of the Philippines. He worked with social-action groups and community organizations prior to his arrest and imprisonment, without a trial, from 1975 to 1980. He is presently studying in Europe. His research topic is The Ecclesiology of Liberation in the Philippines.

Dr. Maria Patricia Fernandez, San Francisco, holds postdoctoral fellowships at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Inter-American Foundation. She is a visiting Scholar at the Center for Latin American Studies at Stanford University and Researcher at the Centro de Estudios Sociologicos, El Colegio de Mexico. The title of her research project is A Cross-Cultural Study of Free-Trade Zone Industrialization in Asia and the Mexican American Border.

Dr. George C. Bond, Teaneck, New Jersey, is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Education, School of Philosophy and the Social Sciences, Teachers College, Columbia University. His research title is Patterns of Religious Conversion in Northern Zambia. He seeks to relate patterns of conversion to Christianity to kinship, status, and changing occupational structures.

Father Jeffrey L. Klaiber, S.J., Dr. Theol., is Associate Professor of Theology and Peruvian History at the Universidad del Pacifico, Lima, Peru. His fellowship research title is Church and Society in Peru, 1821-1980. He plans to do an interpretive overview of the interrelations between the church and the lower classes, with special reference to the emergence of the “Popular Church.”

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The Dean of Mission

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ciety. All are areas in which the man has made his mark, and in a book containing a number of striking contributions to contemporary Christian thought, none is more telling than Amirtham’s concise and eloquent summary of Russell Chandran’s thought. The title of the volume was chosen carefully. Russell Chandran holds to a Christocentric vision of a human community that is inclusive, not exclusive. For all his concern with church unity, Chandran has been unassuming in pointing to a goal beyond the unity of the institutional church. That vision is one of a renewed community with a new style of life in which the life of Christ is normative for all people because it is a revelation of our true humanity. It is a vision of community where there is peace with justice, and freedom with dignity. It is a vision of community in dialogue, not for its own sake, but for sharing our deepest commitments in the faithful confidence that the Lord of all will lead us together into a vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

—Leroy S. Rouner

Discipling the City: Theological Reflections on Urban Mission.


“Can the city be saved?” is the crucial question asked by the authors of this book. They are really asking, “Can the world be saved?” As missionaries, they have witnessed the urbanization of the new world culture that is now emerging. They are saying with a note of urgency that the crisis of the city is the crisis of the world. Can the city be made livable in an urban technological age?

Third World cities are growing too fast to accommodate their burgeoning populations. Some have more than ten million inhabitants, and at current rates will double their population in a little over a decade. Cities like São Paulo, Brazil, and Mexico City grow at the rate of almost two thousand persons per day. Adequate housing cannot be built or financed fast enough. The city government cannot meet the demand for water, sewage disposal, and other needs.

In these cities, millions of people are living in crowded, unsanitary slums and squatter communities. This poses a crucial problem and challenge for those who seek to carry out the great commission Christ gave to his disciples.

The authors of this book have given us a biblical and theological view of the city. They agree with Jacques Ellul that “The city is a citadel of sin.” Cities are known for their crime, violence, sexual immorality, murder, greed, and lust. However, there is also the perfect city whose builder and maker is God. Just as we look to Christ as the perfect model for our lives, so we should look to that ultimate city as the model to copy in building our cities today.

Discipleship in the city means to seek the welfare of the city out of love and obedience to Christ under the guidance of his Word. Discipleship affects everything—where a person chooses to live, how he carries on his work or business, and the lifestyle he follows.

Greenway and the other missionary scholars have done an excellent job in producing a book that is essential reading for all involved in missions today.

—Rufus Jones

Rufus Jones recently retired as General Director of the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society, Wheaton, Illinois.
Professor James F. Engel, director of the Billy Graham Program in Communications at Wheaton College (Illinois) Graduate School, has written a book on evangelism that reflects the conversionist orientation of his own religious experience as well as that of his academic institution. This is not an uncritical treatment, however, as Engel incorporates the work of Hovland, Sherif, Berelson, Lazarsfeld, Schram, Aronsen, Maslow, and others into his evaluation of contemporary evangelism. Not surprisingly, there is much that is found appealing, including the basics of the biblical message are neither known nor understood; a church that overemphasizes evangelism at the expense of discipleship. Engel is critical of parachurch outreach that is not rooted in the local church; mass communication of the Christian message without subsequent personal interaction; missions broadcasting calling for Christian commitment where the core of the biblical message are neither known nor understood; a church that overemphasizes evangelism at the expense of discipleship. The book is most sympathetic to the views advanced by the younger Third World evangelicals, such as René Padilla, Orlando Costas, and Samuel Escobar. It is not especially sympathetic to the viewpoint of Donald McGavran, Peter Wagner, and the Church Growth school at Fuller Theological Seminary. Engel is quite unsympathetic toward Campus Crusade for Christ and its “Here’s Life America” campaign. In short, Engel’s work is a partisan effort arguing the more progressive side in the continuing intramural missions/evangelism debate in the evangelical camp.

Some readers may well be put off by the tables depicting the “Spiritual Decision Process” and identifying at what stage a “call for decision” may best be made. While the treatment may be on the simplistic side, it is a valuable contribution that will, one hopes, spur some hard thinking and dialogue. A greater problem is that the theological sources marshaled to support various conclusions tend toward the light-weight—certainly no match for the quality people cited from the social sciences. An unfortunate and needless annoyance is the consistent use of masculine pronouns.

—Deane A. Kemper


This book’s prophetic message is in the subtitle. Our worldwide witness desperately needs alternatives to supplement (not necessarily supplant) the voluntary society model that has

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October, 1981

Deane A. Kemper has a Ph.D. in Speech-Communication from Michigan State University and is Associate Professor of Ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts.
served the Protestant churches well through the industrial/colonial era. And, as the author ably shows, the time has come to reemphasize the biblical/historical “tentmaker” model as one of the more important of these alternatives.

Christy Wilson speaks as a participant. He was a pioneer of the Afghanistan experience—an outstanding example of this model in the post-World War II period. The book is partly autobiographical, and therefore reflects the warmth and vitality of worked-out-in-life principles.

But the author’s focus is on the future. Nearly half the book is given to counsel for those considering such a ministry. Particularly helpful in this regard are the chapters dealing with “Tentmaking Students Abroad” and “Preparation and Orientation.”

Wilson avoids dichotomizing tentmaking and mission societies with an important chapter on “The Crucial Position of Mission Boards in Tentmaking.” He has the courage to name the societies that have made the most progress—or at least have clear goals—toward integrating tentmakers into their ranks as associates or partners. The resultant ties of supportive fellowship can be crucial to the tentmaker in keeping his or her eyes fixed on the original vision. The goal is to encourage the tentmakers, not to control them.

A chapter on “English Language Churches Abroad” illustrates how completely the author covers his subject. Tentmakers and their families need pastoring. But I missed discussion on the vital role the pastor can play—if properly prepared—in training the most highly motivated witnesses in practical missiology, helping them move from frustration to fulfillment.

One of the book’s weaknesses develops from the author’s strengths. The scholarly Dr. Wilson is known to most of us as a gracious, generous Christian gentleman. He gives credit to almost everyone who has commented on tentmaking! The many quotes are apropos but tedious. One could also wish for a bit more updating regarding the kinds of issues facing tentmakers in the eighties, such as the potential or actual oppressive nature of the transnational corporations.

But then, the author has not tried to write the last chapter. He has served us well by opening the dialogue afresh—and warmly sharing something of himself in the process.

—Charles Mellis

Charles Mellis is the Director of Missionary Internship in Farmington, Michigan. He previously served twenty-seven years as an executive officer of Mission Aviation Fellowship, assistant editor of Missiology, and director of the Summer Institute of International Studies.
LATINAMERICA PRESS (LP), a weekly news bulletin published in Lima, Peru, provides information and analysis of forces shaping Latin America.

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October, 1981
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INDEX—VOLUME 5

January through October 1981

(Pages 1–48 are in the January issue;
pp. 49–96 in April; pp. 97–144 in July;
and pp. 145–192 in October.)

ARTICLES

Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement, National Committee, selects officers in 1980, and reactivates publication of Tianfeng, 87.
Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement, National Committee, selects officers in 1980, and reactivates publication of Tianfeng, 87.
Church Growth as a Multidimensional Phenomenon: Some Lessons from Chile, by Orlando E. Costas, 2–8.
Ecclesiastical Tension in Tanzania, by Per Hassing, 25–27.
Fifteen Theses About China, the Church, and Christian Mission Today, by Donald MacInnis, 77.
The Legacy of John R. Mott, by C. Howard Hopkins, 70–73.
The Legacy of Karl Ludvig Reichelt, by Notto R. Thelle, 65–70.
Library and Archival Resources of the Billy Graham Center, by Robert Shuster, 124–126.
Many Taiwans and Lordship Evangelism, by Harvie M. Conn, 9–12.
Selected Research Journals on Christianity in China, by Donald MacInnis, 76.
Sixteen Outstanding Books on China and Christianity, 85.
CONTRIBUTORS OF ARTICLES


Conn, Harvie M.—Many Taiwans and Lordship Evangelism, 9–12.


Costas, Orlando E.—Church Growth as a Multidimensional Phenomenon: Some Lessons from Chile, 2–8.


Gensichen, Hans-Werner—The Legacy of Walter Freytag, 13–18.

Hassing, Per—Ecclesiastical Tension in Tanzania, 25–27.

Hopkins, C. Howard—The Legacy of John R. Mott, 70–73.


Lacy, Creighton—The Legacy of Paul David Devanandan, 18–21.

MacInnis, Donald—Fifteen Theses About China, the Church, and Christian Mission Today, 77.


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Shuster, Robert—Library and Archival Resources of the Billy Graham Center, 124–126.


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Breslin, Thomas A.—China, American Catholicism, and the Missionary, 79.

Bria, Ion, ed.— Martyria/Mission. The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today, 140.


Bürkle, Horst—Missionstheologie, 131–132.

Carmody, Denise Lardner—Women and World Religions, 92.


Costas, Orlando E.—The Integrity of Mission. The Inner Life and Outreach of the Church, 40.


Cussianovich, Alejandro—Religious Life and the Poor: Liberation Theology Perspectives, 132–133.

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Elesferio, Fernando G.—The Iglesia ni Kristo: Its Christology and Ecclesiology, 93–94.


Endo, Shusaku—A Life of Jesus (tr. Richard A. Schuckert), 182.


Greenway, Roger S., ed.—Discipling the City: Theological Reflections on Urban Mission, 184.

Hall, Mary—The Spirituality of Dom Helder Camara: The Impossible Dream, 45.

Hancock, Robert Lincoln, ed.—The Ministry of Development in Evangelical Perspective, 91–92.

Hanson, Eric O.—Catholic Politics in China and Korea, 80.

Hardin, Daniel C.—Mission: A Practical Approach to Church Sponsored Mission Work, 137.


Lacy, Creighton—Coming Home—to China, 80–81.

Lischer, Richard—Marx and Teilhard. Two Ways to a New Humanity, 134.


Miguel Bonino, José—Room to Be People. An Interpretation of the Message of the Bible for Today's World (tr. Vickie Leach), 41.

Miranda, Jose—Marx against the Marxists, 134–135.

Needelman, Jacob and George Baker, eds.—Understanding the New Religions, 138–140.

Norman, Edward—Christianity and World Order, 45–46.


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