Religious pluralism in the contemporary world does not have geographical boundaries. Most regions of the world are now veritable kaleidoscopes of multiple and contrasting religious persuasions. Pluralism, moreover, is not simply a religious phenomenon. It also characterizes moral and ethical values, economic priorities, political and sociological affiliations—indeed, all aspects of modern life.

David Hollenbach, S.J. challenges the naïve assumption that human rights have the same meaning in diverse religious and cultural contexts: “In an age when people kill, terrorize, and turn each other into refugees in the name of human rights, surely something is amiss in the way these rights are understood.”

In evaluating the missionary contribution of E. Stanley Jones, Richard W. Taylor describes Jones as a brilliantly innovative evangelist whose style was “based on deep and extensive immersion in many aspects of contemporary Indian culture—much of it outside the confines of the church.”

Samuel Escobar of Peru finds the efforts of liberation theologians to reinterpret Christian history and the Christian message less than satisfactory. Liberation theology has nevertheless caused both Catholics and Protestants in Latin America to undergo agonizing self-criticism. Evangelicals, Escobar says, can no longer afford a missiology that refuses to take social and religious realities seriously.

Writing from Japan, Robert L. Ramseyer examines the dilemma missionaries face in a culture that is relatively indifferent to what people believe so long as it does not conflict with the duties expected of responsible members of their society. The cultural differences between Western missionaries and Japanese Christians give rise to quite different viewpoints about what is relevant in making ethical decisions.

Pluralism in mission is illustrated by more than 450 North American Protestant mission sending agencies. Some 300 of these are independent, unaffiliated. About 150 others are affiliated with the National Council of Churches’ Division of Overseas Ministries, the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA). As Robert T. Coote points out, none of these major associations, not even the EFMA (contrary to common assumptions), has contributed significantly to the increase in North American overseas personnel since the late 1960s; the growth is due almost exclusively to the 300 independent agencies.
In the present international climate discussion of the relation between human rights and religious pluralism may appear foolish or naive or both. Diversity of religious conviction is a particularly evident contributing factor to intractable communal conflict and long-standing patterns of human rights violations in many regions of the globe today. Hindu-Muslim strife in India and Pakistan, Christian-Muslim conflict in the Philippines, Catholic-Protestant resentments in Northern Ireland, and Jewish-Christian-Muslim animosity throughout the Middle East are glaring examples of the way religious in-group loyalty can become a threat to the dignity and rights of adherents of out-group belief systems.

Religious hostility is certainly not the only or even the principal threat to human rights throughout the world today. Defense of economic privilege, superpower geopolitical interests, regional distributions of military power, strains between racial and ethnic groups, the growing acceptance of the use of terror both by state security forces and by revolutionary groups all pose more direct and immediate threats to human rights. The religious component of the human rights situation, however, bears special examination for several reasons. First, the influence of religious belief on human rights observance is generally less examined than the impact of economic, political, and military forces. Second, when the issue is raised at all it frequently leads either to the submersion of the very idea of human rights in a swamp of moral relativism or, conversely, to an unrealistically positive estimation of the support that religious values actually provide for human dignity and rights. Finally, the Christian churches have a special stake in developing a careful understanding of the relation between faith and the protection of human rights. Most of the major Christian communions have cast their most recent teachings on social responsibility in human rights terms. This is evident, for example, in statements issued by Vatican Council II, the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Many of these church documents assume that human rights have the same meaning in diverse religious and cultural contexts. This supposition needs critical examination if Christian commitment to the cause of human rights is to be fittingly related to the realities of a religiously pluralist world. In an age when people kill, terrorize, and turn each other into refugees in the name of human rights, surely something is amiss in the way these rights are understood.

In order to bring the complex interaction of diverse religious faiths with human rights concerns into sharper focus, the discussion that follows will assess some of the positive contributions and negative impediments of the beliefs of Jews, Christians, and Muslims to the protection of human rights in the Middle East. The analysis is guided by perspective gained through extensive personal conversations with political, religious, and academic leaders during a recent two-month research trip to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. These conversations have led to one overriding conclusion: the religious impediments to the protection of human rights can be reduced and the positive contributions increased only by a more accurate understanding of the social role of religion by all parties to the Middle East conflict and by a similar improvement in the understanding that each of the religious communities has of the deepest beliefs and loyalties of the others. In other words, simultaneous insight into the social power of religion and heightened awareness of the beliefs of others through interreligious dialogue are together indispensable conditions for the fulfillment of the Christian churches’ commitment to human rights.

In discussions of the mission of the church in global society today, major cleavages are frequently seen between advocates of social and political transformation and advocates of enculturation and dialogue. In the Middle East this split rests on a false dilemma. The long-range possibilities for improved respect for the human rights of all people in the region depends on a much improved understanding of how the faith of each group influences its vision of well-ordered social and political life. Thus genuine dialogue about the religious underpinnings of the commitment to human rights is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the enhancement of the human dignity of the people of the Middle East. In the Middle East both commitment to the rights of all and an asceticism of humble listening to the self-definition of other religious groups are integral components of Christian mission.

When discussing human rights with the Christians, Jews, and Muslims of the Middle East, the first thing that becomes apparent is that all three faith communities assert their firm commitment to the full array of rights enumerated in the United Nations Universal Declaration. On this level of formal and verbal commitment there can be little doubt that all sides are sincere in their claims. Religious leaders in each community cite the scriptural roots of their dedication to the protection and enhancement of the dignity of all persons, which is the foundation of the Universal Declaration. Jews, Christians, and Muslims share a common, scripturally based monotheism—a belief in one God who is Creator and Lord of all the earth. Whether in the Jewish Shema, the Christian Credo, or the Muslim Shahadah, the one God is affirmed as the source and goal of the whole world and all its inhabitants. The ultimate faith of each believing community thus commits its members to a vision of human origins and destiny, which includes all persons, not just some of them. Similarly, the three faith communities share the common conviction that all persons are created in the image of God. In every person there is a sacredness that calls out for both reverence and respect. This anthropological content of the faith of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur’an provides an additional ground for the active support of the dignity and rights of all people. In addition, each of the three scriptural sources emphasizes the fact that the love, compassion, and justice of God is extended to all persons, not just to a select few. For Judaism, the covenant with Noah recorded in the book of Genesis and the care owed to the stranger in the midst of the people of Israel are the classic example.

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The values at the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam cannot be simply identified with those enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This charter document of contemporary approaches to human rights came into existence as a result of the effort to bridge the cultural, ideological, and religious divisions of the modern world in the wake of the carnage of World War II. The declaration systematically prescinds from the particularities of different religious communities and formulates its norms in abstract and ahistorical language. Though the declaration fully acknowledges the pluralism and conflict that mark the relations between different religious and cultural families, it says nothing about the content or history of the beliefs of these groups.

By contrast, the beliefs of Jews, Christians, and Muslims are thoroughly concrete and historical. Each community stands in a special relationship to significant historical persons (Moses, Jesus, Muhammad). Foundational historical events are central in the way each community understands its relation both to God and to the rest of humanity (the exodus; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as well as the mission of Paul to the Gentiles; the recitation of God's final revelation by Muhammad contained in the Qur'an). And the long intervening history of each community between its beginnings and the present have also shaped both its faith and its ethics in importantly different ways for each group.

Krister Stendahl recently put the matter even more directly when he argued that the three religions are not only different but stand in adversarial relations to each other. This adversarial relationship is built into the symbolic structure of the three traditions and has been intensified by their interaction with each other through history. It is especially marked in Christianity and Islam because of the Christian and Muslim belief in the singular and universal significance of their faiths for all people and their consequent missionary orientation. Both of these faiths identify the ultimate fulfillment of God's universal purpose for the whole human community with the final victory of their religious vision. Further, Christianity views itself as fulfilling and superseding Judaism. Islam understands itself as God's final message to humanity, a message which corrects the errors and distortions that Jews and Christians have introduced into primordial revelation. Thus the three faith communities do not simply stand side by side as co-

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sources for discussions of the moral obligations and duties that bind all people to each other independent of their religious status. For Christians, Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan challenges all tendencies to set limits to justice and love on the basis of religious or ethnic boundaries. For Islam, the diversity of racial and ethnic groupings is to be understood as subordinate to their ultimate bond of unity in God's love. One of the names of God in the Qur'an is Rabb al-Alamin—the Cherisher and Nourisher of all the worlds. The followers of God's messenger are called to extend this care in an equally inclusive way in their own behavior. In all three religions, therefore, there are strong scriptural mandates for a universal respect for the dignity of both those inside and those outside the community of shared faith.

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Despite this optimistic reading of the foundational beliefs of the three communities, it would be a grave error to conclude that they are in practical agreement on the meaning of human rights, the relative priorities to be assigned to different rights, or the political institutions that should be adopted to implement these rights. Though the three dominant religions of the Middle East share belief in the one God, the creation of the human in God's image, and the all-encompassing scope of God's love and justice, they do not understand these religious convictions and their ethical implications in the same way. It is simply not true that deep down the three communities all believe the same thing about God or about human rights.

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participants in the universal history of the human race. They are oriented toward each other in a posture of competition and even positive antagonism. As Jewish-Christian dialogues have frequently noted and as Israelis frequently point out, the form of universalism to be found in Christianity has provided powerful legitimation for persecutions, crusades, and imperial adventures. Christians and Jews argue that the distinctive form of Islamic universalism has had similar effects.

By contrast, the faith of Judaism has emphasized the chosenness and particularity of the Jewish people rather than its universal expansion. This emphasis has given Judaism a willingness to coexist peacefully with other communities of faith throughout most of its history, provided that Jewish distinctiveness is respected by these others. This more humble attitude was expressed as far back as the prophet Micah: "All peoples go forward, each in the name of its god; but we, we go forward in the name of Yahweh, our God, forever and ever more" (Mic. 4:4–5). Hebrew University professor Zwi Werblowsky has put this Jewish stance in more contemporary sociological terms: "Ethnocentrism and intolerance are not necessarily related. In fact it could be argued that they are related in inverse ratio."

The historical experience of the Jewish people as a viciously persecuted minority, an experience carried to its absurd ultimate in the Holocaust, has given this Jewish particularism a necessarily defensive form. Western Christendom bears heavy responsibility for the strongly defensive form that Jewish communal loyalty has come to assume. The sad result of this history, however, is that contemporary Jewish identity is scarcely immune from the adversarial structure that exacerbates conflict in the Middle East today. Israeli policies concerning settlements on the West Bank, its readiness to engage in "preemptive" military activities in the name of defense, and the activities of the Gush Emunim reveal the dangers that arise when defense of particularity takes on aggressive overtones. The antagonistic relationship that is built into the beliefs, symbols, and historical experiences of the three primary religious communities of the Middle East is antithetical to the intellectual and practical foundations of the notion of human rights. Human rights are those rights that people have simply by virtue of the fact that they are human. They are those rights to which people can lay claim independent of their religion, nationality, sex, merit, or any of the other important characteristics that make people different from each other. They can be distinguished from the rights that arise when persons stand in a special moral relationship with each other, as do parents and children or partners to a contract or promise. The rights and obligations that exist within such special relationships can be genuinely moral ones, but they are not universal characteristics of every person’s life.

The faith of Jews, Christians, and Muslims binds them together in relationships of this special, nonuniversal form. The relationships of faith that constitute religious communities are not of themselves antithetical to human rights. The bonds between members of a religious community, however, have a weightiness that sets them apart from other kinds of special relationships. Faith is the source of ultimate meaning for religious believers. There is, therefore, a constant danger that the community of shared belief will itself be transformed into the object of ultimate loyalty for its members. This in turn can lead to confusion between the moral significance of the rights of one’s co-religionists and the human rights of all peoples. For this reason, concern for the rights of the members of one’s own religious group is at least in tension with concern for the rights of outsiders. If the two concerns come into overt conflict, particularist religious loyalty can become a threat to human rights both in theory and in practice. By the same token a universalist, secular theory of human rights can appear as a threat to the self-understanding of religious believers in situations of intense political strife between their communities, for such a secular theory seems to call believers to relativize the importance of their most deeply held convictions.

It is painfully evident that such threats play a powerful role in the political and religious psychology of the peoples of the Middle East today. For example, in conversations at Islam’s most revered academic institution, the Al Azhar University in Cairo, the Ulema and sheikhs forcefully asserted the right of the Muslim majority to follow out the implications of their faith by establishing an Islamic constitution for Egypt. They expressed astonishment that the Coptic Christian minority is vigorously opposed to this. "Do they not know," said one of the sheikhs, "that Islam is just? I assure you, Islam is always just." Needless to say, the Copts are not reassured by the prospects of being governed by the norms of Islamic justice. One respected lay spokesman for the Coptic community stated that there are indications that the future of Christianity in Egypt may be in jeopardy.

The same sort of conflict is even more painfully evident in the tragic country of Lebanon. Maronite, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians speak passionately of being caught in a powerful vise between the forces of Islamic resurgence and Zionism. One Christian leader summed up this experience by stating that Lebanese Christians are being pressed to choose between emigration, martyrdom, and the establishment of a confessional Christian state in part of present-day Lebanon. Syrian and Palestinian Muslims regard such talk as evidence that many Lebanese Christians are concerned only with the preservation of their own communal privileges.

In a similar vein, Israeli Jews often speak of the profound dangers they are exposed to as a tiny Jewish island in a tempestuous Muslim sea. The consequences of this Israeli fear are severe for the rights of Palestinians in Israel, in the occupied territories, and in Lebanon. For their part, the Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, argue vehemently that Zionism and Western Christianity are involved in a conspiracy to deprive them of their rights to land and nationality.

It is clear then that the religious particularity of the three major groups in the region is an important part of the Middle Eastern human rights picture. Though all three faiths possess scriptural and theological resources for the support of universal human rights, their commitments to universal community assume different and sometimes conflicting forms. These scriptural and theological differences have been intensified by the long history of conflict among the three groups. Each faith community retains vivid memories of the ways the others have violated or oppressed it in the past. This is evident in the way believers frequently compare the theoretical basis for commitment to human rights of their own tradition with the historical records of the other communities.

What, then, is the way out of this sad conflict of faiths? Secularist thinkers are likely to suggest that a solution will be found only when the social role of religion is weakened or eliminated from the scene in the Middle East. Such an approach seriously underestimates the power of belief in the lives of the people in the area. It will also lead to self-contradictory efforts to improve human rights observance, for one cannot defend religious liberty and try to limit the influence of religion at the same time. Practitioners of realpolitik, on the other hand, are likely to conclude that human rights considerations don’t belong on the political agenda in the first place. They argue that only an adequate strategic balance of military and political power will ever bring peace to the region. This conclusion, however, rests on the false assumption that a strategic and military calculus that relegates human rights to a position of low priority is in fact less dangerous than is the particularism of religious faith. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith has pointed
out, the record of the modern national state is considerably more destructive of human life and dignity than religious loyalty has ever been.  

Each of these two approaches seeks to eliminate religious conflict by reducing the influence of religion in the Middle Eastern political situation. An approach that is both more consistent and more likely to succeed is that which addresses the root causes of the religious conflict itself. If religious particularity is a major obstacle to a genuine sense of universal community, then this obstacle must itself be overcome if human rights are to be enhanced. This is a properly religious and theological task. Though political, military, and economic factors are crucial causes of human rights violations in the region, solutions on these levels are bound to fail if they are seen as religiously unacceptable by the belligerents.

Renewed emphasis on a universalist and inclusive sense of community to be found in the faith of each religious group is essential to the task of ameliorating the Middle Eastern human rights situation. But by itself such an emphasis will be insufficient. Each faith community must find reasons to respect the rights of the others within the distinctive structure of its own faith. Christians, for example, need to find Christian reasons for respecting the rights of Jews and Muslims. In addition, each community must find a basis within its own faith for respecting the particularity and distinctiveness of the other communities. Thus Christians need a new theological and religious foundation for adopting an affirmative stance not only toward the rights of human beings in general but toward the rights of Jews and Muslims as such. The same can be said about the developments needed in Judaism and Islam.

In other words, a new religious and theological development is necessary in each faith community if the human rights of all in the Middle East are to be enhanced. Such development in no sense implies that the three faiths should be homogenized or reduced to a least common denominator even if, per impossibile this were possible. Rather, the necessary development must be firmly rooted in the distinctive faith of each while being simultaneously aware of the distinctiveness of the others. Such development can occur only as a result of a genuine interreligious dialogue, which fully acknowledges both the depth of the differences that exist and the painful record of mutual recriminations that is etched in the memory of each community. Only through such dialogue can the formal and verbal commitment that each group has to the rights of the others become a concrete and living commitment.

The vast scope of this way of approaching the future of human rights in the Middle East is undeniable. Its magnitude could easily be the cause of a temptation to fall back on secularist or realpolitik solutions. However, the full realization of religious agreement among the three communities is not a precondition for progress along these lines. The very willingness to enter into such dialogue itself signals a major advance toward an inclusive, universal community where the rights of all will be respected. In other words, in a religiously pluralistic world the protection of human rights demands interreligious dialogue and understanding. In such a world, dialogue and interfaith understanding are a precondition for the respect for the dignity of persons that the gospel demands. Belief in that gospel calls for confidence that the God who is revealed in Christ has not finished the task of making all things new.

In our time part of that newness is the discovery of a kind of community in which faith draws people together in mutual respect rather than setting them to prey upon each other.

Notes


2. These remarks were made in a presentation on "Christian Attitudes toward Jews and Muslims," 1979 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, unpublished.


The Legacy of E. Stanley Jones

Richard W. Taylor

"The world's greatest missionary" is what Time magazine called E. Stanley Jones. The Christian Century called him "the most trusted exponent of evangelism in the American Church," and later said that "perhaps no Christian leader in America commands a wider popular following than he." A spokesman of the government of India, when Jones was awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize, called him "the greatest interpreter of Indian affairs in our time," and went on to declare that he had done more than any other person to bring India and the United States together. Stephen Neill maintains that "in his great days Jones was probably (second to C. F. Andrews alone) the best-known western Christian in the whole of India." Some legacy!

Missionary, evangelist, India, America, trusted, interpreter, pacifist—these are the major dimensions of the Jones legacy. Perhaps the most admirable aspect of the legacy is that Jones was able to keep all these dimensions together—each enriching the others. And he was remarkably creative in interrelating these dimensions. He had an awesomely synthetic mind, and the ability to gather people around him who had fresh and timely ideas to contribute. There are not many missionaries like that any more. Times have changed. But there is still much that we can learn from him.

Eli Stanley Jones was born in Maryland in 1884. He went to Asbury College, felt called to be a missionary and evangelist, and arrived in India in 1907 as a Methodist missionary. In 1911 Jones married a colleague, Mabel Lossing, in Lucknow where they were both stationed. She had been teaching in Isabella Thoburn College. Soon after their marriage they moved to Sitapur where she continued to serve as an educational missionary until their retirement. He died at Bareilly in Northern India in 1973. Their only child is Eunice Jones Mathews, whose husband is United Methodist Bishop James K. Mathews.

In the early years of his residence in India, Jones had a physical breakdown and a difficult emotional time along with it. Then he had a fresh religious experience and commitment—and never looked back. In 1928 he was elected a bishop by the Methodist General Conference in the U.S.A., but resigned the next morning before his consecration—feeling called to continue as a missionary evangelist. By 1930 his Methodist appointment was "Evangelist-at-large for India and the world."

Stanley Jones was above all a brilliantly innovative evangelist. He was innovative principally in relation to culture and context. His legacy to us is both his style and approach, on the one hand, and his remarkable innovations on the other. His style was Indianizing and de-Westernizing in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres—all treated evangelically. It was timely—he usually dealt with current questions and problems. This style was based on deep and extensive immersion in many aspects of contemporary Indian culture—much of it outside the confines of the church. And it was based on great sympathy for and empathy with those he met in this immersion. In this way Jones’s style differs crucially from that of some other evangelicals (of whom John R. W. Stott is probably the brightest and the best) who call for the same sort of innovation and who see clearly the instrumental need for indigenization, as Jones did, but who lack both specific cultural understanding and sympathy, and who tend therefore to make judgments about particulars of indigenization that are in danger of being bound by a very Western orthodoxy. Perhaps this sort of understanding of and friendship for a people and their culture can come only from years of labor—when it comes at all. I venture that it is a measure of the fruitfulness of Jones’s style that many Indian Christian theologians continue to be stimulated by him—whereas many foreign indigenizers lecture these same theologians on the limits they must not transgress rather than stimulating them.

Let us look at some of his innovations—both as examples of his style and approach and because they still have a fruitful suggestiveness. I shall take mainly the Indian contributions because I am inclined to hope that I understand their significance better.

The Indian Christ

Stanley Jones’s first book, written out of his wide experience as an evangelist to educated Indians, was The Christ of the Indian Road published in 1925. It developed out of articles he had written and his many public talks throughout India and North America. Here, at a time when Indian nationalism was on the rise, he wrote:

Christianity must be defined as Christ, not the Old Testament, not Western civilization, not even the system built around him in the West, but Christ himself, and to be a Christian is to follow him.... Christ must be in an Indian setting. It must be the Christ of the Indian Road.... Christ must not seem a Western Partisan ... but a Brother of Men. We would welcome to our fellowship the modern equivalent of the Zealot, the nationalist, even as our Master did.

The fact is, most missionaries and Indian Christians in the churches still led by them were supporting the British empire and opposing the Indian national movement.

About theology, he wrote:

We want the East to keep its own soul—only thus can it be creative. We are not there to plaster Western civilization upon the East, to make it a pale copy of ourselves. ... We are not there to give its people a blocked-off, rigid, ecclesiastical and theological system, saying to them, "Take that in its entirety or nothing." Jesus is the gospel—he himself is the good news. Men went out in those early days and preached Jesus and the resurrection—a risen Jesus.... We have added a good deal to the central message—Jesus.... Jesus is universal. He can stand the shock of transplantation. He appeals to the universal heart. ... We will give them Christ, and urge them to interpret him through their own genius and life. Then the interpretation will be first-hand and vital.

Further on Jones writes of Christ: "He and the facts not only command us to go, but he, standing in the East, beckons us to come. He is there—deeply there, before us. We not only take him; we go to him.... We take them Christ—we go to him." While this sounds like something Roland Allen wrote earlier, Jones had the wit and courage to make it specific to his field of work and thought. In this passage Jones quotes much of the second half of

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Matthew 25 too. So he is seeing Christ already there in the hungry, thirsty, naked, and sick. I am inclined to see here a seed of what became a major South Asian contribution to ecumenical theological thinking in the late 1950s and early 1960s by thinkers who had been reared on Jones’s thinking and preaching—heard most clearly, perhaps, in the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, where the importance of seeing Christ at work in the world was stressed.

In the heart of the following paragraph Jones has buried a remarkable picture of his Christ of the Indian Road:

A friend of mine was talking to a Brahman gentleman when the Brahman turned to him and said, “I don’t like the Christ of your creeds and the Christ of your churches.” My friend quietly replied, “Then how would you like the Christ of the Indian Road?” The Brahman thought a moment, mentally picturing the Christ of the Indian Road—he saw him dressed in Sadhu’s garments, seated by the wayside with the crowds about him, putting his hands upon the heads of the poor, uncLean lepers who fell at his feet, announcing the good tidings of the Kingdom to stricken folks, staggering up a lone hill with a broken heart and dying upon a wayside cross for men, but rising triumphantly and walking on that road again. He suddenly turned to the friend and earnestly said, “I could love and follow the Christ of the Indian Road.”

This mental picture is both vivid and attractive. So attractive that within a few years two versions, one urban and one rural, entitled “Christ of the Indian Road” had been painted by the young Indian Christian painter A. D. Thomas—who went on to paint many events of Christ’s life as Indian. Others also started to paint Christ as an Indian and/or in Indian settings at about the same time, and this trend has continued. And a few years later, inspired by both Jones and Thomas, Chandran D. S. Devanesan, a descendant of two celebrated Tamil Christian poets who had himself become a recognized poet, wrote his poem “Christ of the Indian Road” while still a college student.

Jones sought to “naturalize” Christ and Christianity. This is a lesson most of us have yet to learn thoroughly. In the final paragraphs of his book he puts it rather poetically:

There is a beautiful Indian marriage custom that dimly illustrates our task in India, and where it ends. At the wedding ceremony the women friends of the bride accompany her with music to the home of the bridegroom. They usher her into the presence of the bridegroom—that is as far as they can go, then they retire and leave her with her husband. That is our joyous task in India; to know him, to introduce him, to retire—not necessarily geographically, but to trust India with the Christ and trust Christ with India. We can only go so far—and India must go the rest of the way.

India is beginning to walk with the Christ of the Indian Road.

What a walk it will be!

Round Table Dialogue

On P. D. Devanandan’s first tour of North India as director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, in 1958, I took him to Rishikesh to meet my friend the late Swami Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society, which became so open to interreligious dialogue. As Devanandan described our hopes for starting interreligious dialogue, Sivananda’s face lit up and he said that of course he would cooperate, that he had been in such a meeting once before in Saharanpur and would welcome many more, and that it was a great pity that there had been none for so long. In Saharanpur, Sivananda had been in one of Jones’s Round Table conferences for sharing religious experience and understanding. And Sivanandaji was right. There is much in common between the religious Round Table conferences originated by Jones and the interreligious dialogue of much more recent concern.

Jones got the idea for his Round Tables from a tea party hosted by a leading Hindu before one of his evangelistic lectures. The other guests asked him various religious questions in that very civil social gathering. It became clear to Jones that “they wanted to know about [the] Christ of experience.” “Round Table conferences” must have been very much in the intellectual air. Jones was advocating them as a part of his concern for reconciliation in international affairs. The British government was proposing one on Indian constitutional reforms in response to Indian nationalism. With his remarkable sensitivity to people and times Jones picked up this term for what it was clearly timely for him to do. The invited group of about fifteen members of other faiths and five or six Christians would sit in a circle. Jones would suggest that they use the then popular “scientific method” of experimentation, verification, and sharing of results. He really called for the sharing of religious experience in daily life. He suggested that no one argue and that no one talk abstractly. He also suggested that differences should not be suppressed to preserve the friendly atmosphere. Everyone should feel free, as in a family circle. Jones gives many pages of examples of such dialogue.

I know of nothing like this previously in India. There must have been friendly conversations. But in public it was usually either monologue or debate. Even now that interreligious dialogue has become fashionable not much of it is experience-based dialogue. More often it is about views and opinions and doctrines and practices—a point that Jones makes in his autobiography forty years later. This is an important corrective for us in the dialogue business today. We must take religious experience seriously.

In Jones’s recounting of various statements from the different Round Table conferences there is a certain undertone of triumphalism—but a little triumphalism in 1928 is not really surprising. On the other hand, it is very refreshing to have Jones confess:

The valuable thing for us as Christians in the Round Table Conferences with non-Christians lay in the fact that we were compelled to rethink our problems in the light of the religious experiences of non-Christians. So while these Conferences have been valuable in our approach to the non-Christian faiths, they have proved of even greater value to us in facing our own problems, spiritual and intellectual.

Ashrams

Modern Indian ashrams have been an attempt to reclaim an ancient Indian social institution for contemporary, often nationalist, social, political, or religious purposes. They originated in Bengal in the final decades of the nineteenth century within Hindu reform movements and spread widely. Then in the early decades of this century Gandhi brought his intentional communities from South Africa to India and soon decided that they too were ashrams. The first few Christian ashrams were founded in the 1920s. Jones had been with Gandhi in the Sabarmati Ashram in the early 1920s. He seems to have spent several months at Tagore’s Santiniketan Ashram in 1923. He wrote of it with great sympathy and appreciation. I think it likely that his poem “I Took My Lamp” was written during his stay there; it is certainly about that stay. How very like Jones to have written a poem as a result of his stay in the ashram of the Nobel laureate poet! Without ever losing his primary commitment to evangelism, and probably just because of this commitment, Jones seemed to try harder than most others I have known or studied to understand and fit in with people, both in groups and as individuals—and often to succeed in this remarkably well. I do not think he wrote many other poems. In fact, I know of none.
In 1930 Jones created his Christian ashram. In that period of national consciousness, in which missionary-founded Christianity seemed foreign in style and sympathy, the Christian ashram was to put the Christian movement into the center of national life and evangelize it. The ashram was to be truly Christian and truly Indian. As Jones thought about it, the ashram was to be an ongoing local community of living together.28 But when he actually announced it a few months later the ashram was to start out as a summer event at Sat Tal with the possibility of a permanent year-around community (which most ashrams were at their core).29 The dress, the food, the style, and the simplicity of life would be Indian—very Gandhian, actually. There would be an attempt to make the Indian spirit creative in art, in music, and in Christian thinking. This would include the study of the gospel, its implications, its relationship to India’s heritage, and to India’s present religions and to the national life of India. It was hoped that this would lead to publication. There would be absolutely no racial barriers or differentiation as between Indians and foreign missionaries—a giant step for those days. On the whole this is exactly what happened. The Indian clothes worn in the ashram were of homespun khaddar cloth—the very symbol of the nationalist movement. Once when Jones was in a meeting in the ashram he stood up, his dhoti (a sarrong-like garment wrapped around the body and worn instead of trousers) became untied and, as it dropped, he grabbed it and ran from the room in confusion.30

In 1935, under Jones’s leadership, the Lucknow Ashram grew out of the Sat Tal Ashram. This was a permanent, year-around community with much the same aims as the Sat Tal Ashram but with more emphasis on the community as being a model of the kingdom of God and with more outreach to college and university students of whom there were many in Lucknow, which was a provincial capital.31 For Jones the ashram was more of a base than a residence.32 He was much on the move throughout India and the world as a sought-after and effective evangelist. But other modern ashram leaders also roamed widely from their ashram base. Gandhi did. So did Tagore. So did leaders of other Christian ashrams from Jack Winslow of Pune to Murray Rogers of Jyotiniketan. Group thinking and publication, which had started at Sat Tal, continued in Lucknow. This venture at Christian “group thinking” can be seen as a forerunner of the style of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society that was formed in Bangalore under the leadership of P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas. The very success of the Lucknow Ashram led to its demise. Its Christian nationalist group thinking made it the center and base for the Kristagraha movement, a kind of Christian Gandhian nationalist freedom movement led by some members of the ashram.

Noteworthy

Walsh-Price Fellowships, 1982–83

Six outstanding scholars and researchers have been selected to receive research grants during 1982–83 under the Walsh–Price Fellowship Program of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America.

The program, now in its fifth year, was established by Maryknoll 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.

Father Clarence Engler, M.M., Director of the Mission Research and Planning Department, which administers the program, says it 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, and the high quality of the proposals, were the major criteria in making the final selections from among many outstanding proposals.

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

Fr. Manuel Maria Marzal, S.J., Anthropologist and Professor at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, Lima, will undertake research under the title “Popular Religiosity and the Indian and Black Experience in Latin America.” He proposes to study the persistence of popular religion in three situations, an Andean, a Meso-American, and an Afro-Brazilian, from an ethnographical-theological, a historical, and a pastoral-theological perspective.

Dr. Rudolf J. Siebert, Professor of Religion and Society at Western Michigan University, will pursue a research project entitled “Socio-Critical Theology and the Missionary Movement.” He will explore how and to what extent the Hegelian dialectical methodology can be of help to the Christian missionary movement at home and abroad in this framework.

Dr. Robert Bobilin, whose disciplines are social ethics and the sociology of religion, is Professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Based on his active involvement in the promotion of interfaith dialogue, particularly between Buddhists and Christians, he has entitled his research project “Encounter with Economic Change and Conflict: Case Studies of Christian and Buddhist Movements in Thailand and Sri Lanka.” His focus will be on Christian and Buddhist socioreligious movements that are concerned with economic change and conflict, with special emphasis on the interaction between religious communities and how this has influenced the understanding of poverty, wealth, and oppression.

Dr. Robert J. Gordon, who was born in Namibia, is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Vermont. He will undertake research under the title “Women and Grass-roots Christian Activism in a Namibian Rural Area.” His focus will be on women’s strategies of survival, resistance, and collaboration and the role of the church.

Dr. Norman A. Horner, Associate Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, has entitled his research project “The Contemporary Churches of the Middle East: Christian Interrelationships and Reactions Amid Muslim Cultural Domination and Political Instability.” Dr. Horner has been widely recognized as a leading North American authority on the churches in the Middle East following the publication, in 1974, of his Redis-
This led to the missionary deputy leader of the ashram, Jay Holmes Smith, being forced out of India by the British government, and the closing of the Lucknow Ashram. The Sat Tal Ashram continues, presently under the somewhat absentee leadership of James K. Mathews, the son-in-law of Jones. Even this keeping of an ashram in the family of the founder is very Indian. It is the case with the Ramanashram in Tiruvanamalai and in several other ashrams, both Hindu and Christian.

A measure of the remarkable success of Jones's adaptation of the Indian ashram model to his evangelism is the institution contributed by his contemporary Asbury College-oriented fellow Methodist missionary E. A. Seamands who was named "Missionary of the Century" by the South India Annual Conference during their 1976 session. The best that Seamands could do was to import the Kentucky Camp Meeting into South India and call it a Jatha, which is a kind of Hindu religious fair. This was not such a bad idea. It seems very much like the adaptation advocated by John Stott and others today. It works—to some extent. But it is not nearly so perceptive and effective as Stanley Jones was time and time again—starting always with something especially Indian and something especially timely. Jones even imported a couple versions of his Christian ashrams into the United States and elsewhere, with considerable success. In the early 1940s the Harlem (New York City) Ashram was founded to bring reality to the kingdom of God and to work as a group for racial justice, Indian independence, Puerto Rican self-determination, and peace—all Jonesian themes. It was founded by some former members of the Lucknow Ashram and their friends. Jones was a principal adviser. About the same time, Jones started his short-term ashrams in the United States. They began as week-long events, but many eventually became weekend only. Nevertheless they followed the general pattern of the Sat Tal Ashram. These ashrams continue to look back to their Indian roots. They have served the growth of many. From Jones, here, we learn that missionary adaptation can indeed be a two-way street.

The Kingdom of God

Already in Jones's second book the kingdom of God is a social order to be achieved because of personal conversion and understood through Jesus who is its illustration and meaning—although its achievement might require the action of God as well as of human beings. But after his visit to the Soviet Union in 1934 he spelled out the kingdom of God as an alternative social structure in considerable detail. This was also in response to his keen awareness that communism was attracting many intellectuals in India and elsewhere. As always Jones was unusually sensitive to the con-

cering Christianity Where It Began. He will report on the new and baffling problems in interchurch relations and in the response of the churches to emergent currents within the Muslim majority brought on by the social and political turmoil in that region since his earlier report.

Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies' Bulletin

After a long interruption the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies is issuing a new series of its Bulletin. From 1982 the Bulletin will include information, reports, and comments relating to mission studies. To allow space for this, the Literature Survey, now called Review of Current Literature on the Christian Mission and Christianity in the Non-Western World, will appear as a separate microfiche publication. The survey covers monograph literature, both scholarly and popular, in most of the major languages on subjects related to the Christian mission, to Christianity in the non-Western world, and to many topics in the history of religions. Full bibliographical details are given, together with the reviews from specialist reviewers all over the world. An author index is included. An eye-readable index is included with the microfiche. A book version of each issue will be separately available at a later date. Further details from: Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies, c/o Department of Religious Studies, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, AB9 2UB Scotland, U.K.

"Mission Studies and Information Management" Proceedings

The entire proceedings (154 pages) of the International Association for Mission Studies consultation on "Mission Studies and Information Management," held at Urban University, Rome, July 24–30, 1980, are now available on two microfiche for U.S. $4.00 postpaid. Orders, with payment, should be sent to: IAMS Secretariat, Boerhaavelaan 43; 2334 ED Leiden, The Netherlands.

Resource on Multinationals

The May 1982 issue of engage/social action magazine (e/sa) included a 32-page e/sa forum on "Multinational Corporations and Christian Mission." e/sa is the social issues publication of the United Methodist Church. The e/sa forum on multinationals was produced from the proceedings of a seminar in February 1982 that was co-sponsored by the Overseas Ministries Study Center and the Center of Continuing Education at Princeton Theological Seminary. Copies of this e/sa forum are available from: engage/social action magazine, Board of Church and Society, 100 Maryland Avenue N.E.; Washington D.C. 20002. Two copies for $1.00 postpaid; payment must accompany orders.

Personalia

The World Evangelical Fellowship has appointed Theodore Williams of Bangalore, India, as President, David M. Howard of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, as General Secretary, and Tokunboh Adeyemo of Madagascar as Chairman of the executive council.

Marcella Hoesl, a Maryknoll Sister from the U.S.A., who served as a missionary in Mexico, has been appointed Dean of Mission and Head of the Department of Mission at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.

New officers of the International Association for Mission Studies, elected in January 1982 at the general meeting in Bangalore, India, are:

President: Gerald H. Anderson, Ventnor, New Jersey, U.S.A.
Vice-President: Joan Chatfield, M.M., Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
Secretary General: Frans Verstraelen, Leiden, Netherlands
Treasurer: Paul R. Clifford, Dalbeattie, Scotland
cerns of those with whom he sought to share the gospel. But it must be immediately added that Jones never neglected the social dimensions of the gospel—as some other great evangelicals have tended to do.

This societal understanding of the kingdom of God was a part of Jones's understanding of his first ashrams. Of them he wrote:

It was this quest for a Kingdom-of-God order that drove some of us to adopt the Ashram as a possible mould in which this order might be expressed. This quest for the Kingdom-of-God order was not primary in the beginnings of the establishment of our Ashrams. That came out as we went along.40

And

We look forward to ... the Kingdom-of-God order, which will gather up into itself all the good of individualism and socialism and fulfil each and add something lacking in each.41

And

... what we try to be: A Family of God, a demonstration in minia­ture of the meaning of the Kingdom of God. People must not only hear about the Kingdom of God, but must see it in actual operation, on a small scale perhaps and in imperfect form, but a real demonstration nevertheless.42

It also becomes clear, partly from the experience of the Lucknow Ashram, that an important aspect of the kingdom of God is economic.43 They had a common purse and the group passed on individual “budgets” monthly in advance. So the ashram became a “model” for the kingdom of God, or at least a model for moving toward the kingdom of God.

Jones held up the kingdom of God as model for the community of Christian people. In this he was at one with P. Chenchia and other members of the Rethinking Christianity Group who were the leading Indian theological thinkers of the time. They particularly emphasized the kingdom of God as against what they considered to be an overemphasis on the church at the meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, 1938. Their emphasis, like so many of the emphases of Jones, grew out of their Indian experience, in which the church appeared Western, imperialist, and communalistic—in the Indian sense of in-group oriented. Jones tried to carry this insight back to the West.44 There were a number of establishment counterreactions to these reactions to Tambaram. The most critical was from Henry P. van Dusen, a prominent professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York. Van Dusen aimed his guns at Jones—wholly turning his back on anything he might have learned from the Rethinking Christianity Group whom he must have met at Tambaram.45 I find it impossible to believe that Van Dusen had really read all that Jones had written on the kingdom. In his rejoinder to Van Dusen, Jones asserted that he was as much “pro-church and pro-ecumenical” as anyone. He observed that his own commitment to Christian community had been clearly shown by his founding and active participation in the Lucknow Ashram, which was a far deeper and more intimate fellowship than that found in most churches. He then suggested that the church “gets its authority and function, its right to live, its discipline and judgment from a higher standard of reference, the Kingdom of God.”46 Finally he wrote:

Stand before an intelligent non-Christian audience in India and begin from a church-centric position and work out and see how far you get. In a few minutes you will be floundering. For the church is deeply suspect in India as bound up with communalism, imperialism and the old order. But begin with the Kingdom God and work out to all the problems of life and you have a message that cuts through everything with incisiveness. Jesus, as the door to such a Kingdom, and the church as the chief means to the realization of that Kingdom, necessarily follow.47

For imperialism and the old order we need only to substitute the Central Intelligence Agency and capitalism to realize that this part of the legacy of Jones is still very relevant, as is so much of the rest of his legacy too.

I am inclined to think that his legacy is on target in a general way for the missionary movement of today precisely because it is still so very much on target in India today—where it was formed—as testified to by many Indian church leaders’ references to Jones and his ideas even now. Maybe this is so because it was formed in context. I have elsewhere observed that today most Protestant missiologists are well-educated, male, former missionaries. Jones never became a “former missionary.” He remained very much rooted in the Indian context. I venture that this may have contributed to the longer-lasting relevance of his ideas.

Notes


3. Ibid., 58 (June 4, 1941): 743f.


10. Ibid., pp. 15f.

11. Ibid., pp. 28f.

12. Ibid., pp. 48f.


17. Dr. Devanesan writes of this in his letter of Feb. 22, 1979, now in the archives of the United Theological College, Bangalore.
Selected Bibliography

Major Publications of E. Stanley Jones


Materials about E. Stanley Jones


Beyond Liberation Theology: Evangelical Missiology in Latin America

Samuel Escobar

The Liberating Gospel in Latin America

“Praise, adore, submit to his will, never complain, ask for a miracle, bend your knees”—that is how Peruvian journalist Olga Jara summarizes the program “700 Club” now being presented on television channels across Latin America. In her daily column in *El Comercio*, the oldest newspaper of Lima, she went on to comment that this television program is

a typical expression of the traditional Protestant church [sic], but is not in agreement with the new principles of the Christian church or even those of the Protestant church. While the speaker and MC of the “700 Club” tries hard to teach us how to live off miracles, how to yield and be happy “with what God gave us,” the Third Episcopal Conference (Roman Catholic bishops of the CELAM) agreed to proclaim: “The luxury of the few is an insult against the misery of the vast masses” and also “We condemn as the most devastating and humiliating plague the human situation of poverty in which millions of Latin Americans are living.” ... On the other hand, the creaking noise and the repetitive tone of the MC, make it hard to stand this program of Protestant promotion from the U.S.A.

Here we have expressed at a popular level the challenge of some themes of liberation theology.

As a Latin American evangelical I cannot but recall the contrast of this situation with an incident that triggered a constitutional battle in this same city of Lima in 1915. Manual Zúñiga Camacho was a Peruvian Aymara Indian who became an evangelical when he attended a Protestant mission school in Iquique, where he worked in the nitrate fields. At a time when neither politicians nor social theorists had yet “discovered” the Indian reality, Zúñiga Camacho—who was recognized as a leader in his community—led a delegation of Indians to the president of the republic, and worked hard to establish a school in his native town of Patafeta. The Roman Catholic hierarchy opposed him fiercely. The bishop of Puno sent friars to dissuade the Indians from attending the school. Through sermons the Indians were informed that “God never intended them to go to school and get learning. Their business was to attend to their sheep and crops, and if they persisted in attending school their crops would be blighted and disease would kill their flocks.” Through the years Zúñiga fought to keep his school open, but on March 3, 1913, Bishop Valentin Ampuero, with a mob of 200 drunken and fanaticized Indians, plus the local authorities, brutally attacked the school, trying to raise nationalist feelings against the missionaries who at that point were cooperating in the area. After being viciously beaten, Zúñiga and six converts were jailed. The incident triggered a series of events: the issue was taken to the Supreme Court, the Peruvian Parliament discussed religious freedom, and on October 20, 1915, the Peruvian constitution was changed to allow room for religious freedom. Not even the pastoral letter of the archbishop of Lima could stop this liberal victory.

This is by no means an isolated incident. For thousands of Indians and other marginal groups in Latin America, the gospel brought by evangelical missionaries at the beginning of the twentieth century was a liberating force, and the religious establishment an oppressive force. Some of us evangelicals in Latin America came to a conscious discipleship inside situations where such oppression and liberating power were active and real.

The process has been described by sociologist Ivan Vallier in this way:

Two kinds of radical movements, both arising within the past half century, have helped to break this cultural monopoly of Catholicism: political movements of the left and salvation oriented Protestant sects. Both movements preach a new reward system, assume a militant posture against the existing social order, and articulate a cohesive set of anti-Catholic values. Relevant to our discussion is the fact that when Peruvian historian Luis E. Valcárcel described in 1928 the rising of a liberated “new Indian” in Peru, he paid tribute to the liberating force of the gospel through Protestant missions. However, he was criticized by José Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the Communist party of Peru, on the basis that missionaries were the avant-garde of American imperialism. José Miguez Bonino echoes that criticism when he refers to the crises of identity among modern Protestants in Latin America:

After decades of priding themselves on their progressive stand vis-à-vis Catholicism, they begin to discover that their role was much more ambiguous than they had thought. Even admitting that it was historically necessary to break the power of the traditional colonial mentality, and that Protestantism played a significant role in that respect, they cannot but ask: Did we not in fact provide religious sanction to a new colonialism? Did we not in fact contribute to create the benevolent and idealized image of the colonial powers (mainly the U.S.A.) which has disguised the deadly character of their domination? There is a historical fact present here: the liberating power of the gospel in the lives of Latin Americans. Vallier represents one way of understanding it while Mariátegui and Miguez Bonino represent an almost opposite reading of it. The reflection that is called “liberation theology” has been preceded by a political alignment that involves an interpretation of Latin American history. This is clearly acknowledged by liberation theologians themselves and it determines the structure of already classic books like those of Gustavo Gutiérrez and José Miguez Bonino. Regardless of interpretations in Latin America, we are confronted by qualitatively different facts when we compare the role of Catholic Christianity in the conquering process of the sixteenth century, with the role of

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evangelical Christianity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A cursory reading based on Marxism has the academic advantage of simplifying these two processes and making them almost homogeneous or equivalent. But in doing so it eliminates several elements that constitute distinctives that neither church history nor Christian theology can afford to overlook.

The Ground of Theological Reflection

We cannot afford to overlook the concrete ecclesiastical and missionary reality that constitutes the ground out of which a theological or missiological reflection develops. Liberation theology in Latin America is basically a Roman Catholic phenomenon that has to be understood within the frame of the particular history and social reality of Roman Catholicism in Latin America. The medieval and crusading Iberian Catholicism that came here in the sixteenth century took with time a particular shape and went on being molded by our unique historical experiences. Distance from the imperial metropolis, the encounter with aboriginal cultures, tensions between altar and throne were all factors that contributed to making up Latin American Catholicism. The Roman Catholic church was so much a part of the imperial colonial structure that its hierarchy saw independence from Spain in the early 1820s as a threat to Christianity and civilization. After independence from Spain was achieved, the church continued to be a conservative force through the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, and in some countries more than others it had a strong and decisive political influence. Liberation theologians are not asking for a new involvement in politics from a church that has been apolitical. Rather, they are asking for a radical change of alignment.

Protestantism, on the other hand, is a growing religious minority whose coming into being is linked to the process of independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century, and to the liberal battle against conservatism in the late twentieth century. Aside from the ethnic Protestant communities that are significant in Brazil and Chile (Lutherans), and Argentina (Anglicans, Reformed, and Waldensian), the bulk of Protestantism is made up of evangelicals of classical denominations like the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians; free churches linked to faith missions; and Pentecostals. This minority has many times experienced oppression from the Catholic majority, has very seldom shared political power at the decision-making level, and has been tempted to align itself with whatever force challenged the politico-religious status quo.

The religious dynamism of evangelicalism in Latin America cannot be overlooked. In Peru, for instance, evangelicals constitute less than 3 percent of the population, but in terms of leadership and finances, this tiny minority shows more vitality than the Roman Catholic majority. Almost 62 percent of the Roman Catholic clergy in Peru are foreign, including many of the bishops, after four centuries of presence there.7 Less than 20 percent of the leaders of evangelicalism in Peru are foreigners, and many of their churches are supported completely by local giving, over and above what is paid in taxes for the state-supported Catholic church.

This dynamic minority, however, has not yet found articulate theological expression. It has provided for millions of people an experience of holistic salvation and liberation, but it has not yet elaborated a theological reflection of its own. This is partly due to the domination of foreign, imported patterns of ready-made theological training and communication. Theological institutions like seminaries or Bible institutes, and the communication machinery of radio stations and publishing houses have been the points at which indigenous thinking has found it more difficult to penetrate. Some of the voices from Latin America that are heard in ecumenical circles do not represent this dynamic minority or express it. The kind of tired, reluctant, embarrassed Protestantism that is widespread in North America and Europe today does not express the dynamism of Latin American evangelicals.

Latin American history has been marked by conflict, domination, and change. The feudal order imposed by Spain and Portugal persisted through centuries, but internal developments as much as world events produced the social revolutions that marked the twentieth century. The Cuban revolution in 1959 opened an era of turmoil and a search for a way out of decades of frustration. Inside the Roman Catholic majority, these social conditions as well as the aggiornamento fostered a search for new social and political relevance. Liberation theology is one of the results of this process, though it is not the only Catholic option. Protestantism, on the other hand, though being a minority, was affected by this process and affected it in some places, as we have already seen. Marxism working at the academic level of the intelligentsia, as well as at the level of labor unions and party politics, became a substitute for the gospel in those segments of society that had left the Roman Catholic fold. Nominal Christianity could not be a rival to match this articulate and all-encompassing challenge. The church had to come to terms with both social realities and ideological challenges. The reflection about the role and mission of the church has taken in some quarters the option that is known as liberation theology. Evangelical reflection about the mission of Christians in Latin America today needs to take seriously both the eternal message of the gospel and the tremendous realities that surround the evangelical advance. Liberation theology is a loud voice trying to reinterpret Christian history and the Christian message. Evangelical missiology must evaluate it.

The Challenge to a New Historical Awareness

It is shocking indeed to find the history of your church described as the history of an institution that has been an instrument of oppression, and to find that the statement can be substantiated with systematized data. Thus, for instance, Stefano Varese talking about Catholic missionary work in Peru describes it as “a mission effort that, save for very rare and individual exceptions, has never realized or even wanted to realize that it operates as a colonialist dominating force. And we are talking of a church that was founded by a revolutionary and oppressed Man, and preached in Peru, during the four and a half centuries of its presence here, by a mission that has been consciously or unconsciously at the service of oppressors.”8

Evangelicals would hasten to agree with this conclusion in Latin America, because in fact they were saying the same thing long before liberation theologies. Both evangelical and liberation theologians can provide concrete data for this kind of statement.9 However, evangelicals criticized the Roman presence and action from the perspective of their missiology, which they tried to base on biblical principles. Liberation theologians, on the other hand, speak from a different ground, applying two principles: (1) an analysis of the social, economic, and political aspects of the missionary enterprise itself; and (2) an understanding of the missionary enterprise within a global view of human history. When those principles are applied to the study of evangelical missionary history in Latin America today, a conclusion similar to the previous one is drawn up in the process, so that both Catholics and Protestants go through an agonizing experience of self-criticism: “It is a crisis of conscience, when Christians discover that their churches have become the ideological allies of foreign and national forces that keep the countries in dependence and the people in slavery and need.”10

This conclusion would be rejected by the average evangelical missionary, but it is important to understand how liberation theo-
logians have arrived at it. It presupposes not only a way of per-
ceiving the history of missions but the history of Christianity and 
human history as a whole. The key elements of the analysis are 
evident in the language: “colonialist dominating force,” “op­
pressed Man,” “ideological allies,” “dependence.” The words re­
fect a conception of history as struggle: the tension of opposing 
forces, the struggle of groups of people that are defined by their 
economic activity and capability, that is, class struggle.

Here we have the same kind of analysis that was the basis for 
the now famous and controversial Barbados Declaration. This is a 
good example of how twelve social scientists evaluated missionary 
work among Indian minorities in Latin America. They described it 
in the following way:

Evangelization, the work of the religious missions in Latin America, 
also reflects and complements the reigning colonial situation with 
the values of which it is imbued. The missionary presence has al­
ways implied the imposition of criteria and patterns of thought and 
behavior alien to the colonized Indian societies. A religious pretext 
has too often justified the economic and human exploitation of the 
aboriginal population.11

The factual basis for supporting that kind of statement is ac­
cumulated in 500 pages of dense reading. Data which are usually 
absent from missionary studies have been assembled and analyzed 
systematically using Marxist theory as a frame of reference. Eco­
nomic life of the Indians, patterns of production, relationships 
among tribes and with the rest of the nations under consideration, 
economic data about the missionaries and analysis of their com­
mercial and industrial enterprises have all been taken into consid­
eration. It is important to point out that here we are confronted 
with facts that are usually overlooked in the evangelical approach 
to missionary history and missiology. Attention to those facts will 
always have a clarifying effect on our perspective.

On the other hand, the text of the Barbados Declaration and the 
study basis show also how Marxist presuppositions have ob­
scured the analysis and the perspective at several points. For in­
stance, the Marxist concept of the role of religion in society has 
caused a selective reading of data. Some facts were simply not tak­
en into account because of ignorance or prejudice. Others were 
dismissed because they would not be significant from the perspec­
tive of liberation and class struggle understood in Marxist terms. 
No wonder that the conclusion, which is presented as a practical 
proposal by the signers of the declaration, is far from expressing 
Christian conviction: “The suspension of all missionary activity is 
the most appropriate policy on behalf of Indian society as well as 
the moral integrity of the churches involved.”12

The growing number of lively and missionary-minded 
churches that are developing among Quechuas, Aymaras, Aguar­
unas, Miskitos, Tobas, Matacos, covering the geography of Latin 
America, would never accept this kind of “liberation” proposed by 
the scientists at Barbados.

The second principle at work in the liberation theologians’ 
view of history has been taken also from Marxism and is the mes­
sianic and eschatological bent. Miguez Bonino has pointed out this 
“projective” nature of Marxist analysis, which is “anticipatory” 
and involves “a certain discernment of the future.”13 Here we have 
the secret of its dynamism, but at the same time the sources of its 
failure in handling adequately all facts. Because Marxism believes 
in the inevitable march of history toward a certain goal, it analyzes 
present social situations in the light of that projected goal. Making 
class struggle the key to understanding social reality today, it also 
announces the movement of history toward an end to that struggle 
in the classless communist society that revolution (or “liberation”) 
will bring.14 And Marxism is possessed by a messianic sense. First, 
it sees the particular historical moment in which it appears as a 
moment filled with revelatory and decisive meaning. Second, the 
uniqueness of this moment is related to the end of history that 
gives meaning to the process of which it is a part. Third, part of the 
uniqueness of this moment is that at this point the necessary tools 
have been developed for an enlightened view of reality that sur­
passes all previous views. Thus Miguez Bonino interprets a mo­
ment of Latin American history:

Liberation theology appeared in the wake of political events 
that apparently were taking Latin America to a social order de­
scribed by the very vague term “socialism.” Chile (1970), Argenti­
na (1973), and Peru (1968) seemed to be moving in that direction in 
the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in those countries much of this 
theological reflection took place. In those national situations many 
Catholics and a few Protestants joined Marxist-directed move­
ments that described their aims and projects with the term “libera­
tion.” Gutiérrez and Miguez Bonino state very clearly that they 
reject political options that could be described as “developmenta­
lism” or “reformism.” They also say that this choice was the result of 
a “scientific” analysis of social reality. Thus Marxism provided 
a mixture of “science” and “anticipation” in the political choice 
that preceded theological reflection.

But today we are confronted by the sad history of Latin 
America after 1973. The coups, the violent and bloody repression, 
terrorism of the left and the right, dogmatism and internal warfare 
among Marxist factions, the systematic destruction of historical 
options in politics, and the hardening of international relationships 
have turned the liberationist dream into a nightmare.

Evangelical missiology needs to understand this historical mo­
ment. It must also recapture the dynamism of the gospel that 
brught holistic liberation to Latin Americans in the earlier days of 
evangelical missions. The aftermath of the historical development 
of the 1960s and the 1970s is life in a continent where social ills 
have multiplied, where the weak and the poor are now more de­
fenseless in face of repression and cold pragmatism, where vi­
olence is finding easily accepted ideological coverage. Even totally 
apolitical churches and missions are being affected by this process. 
This is not a time to accommodate the gospel but to ask for a new 
empowering from the Spirit in order to resist the spirit of this age. 
More than ever, evangelicals are looking for discernment to find 
the most faithful way of being God’s people in Latin America.

Our evangelical missiology is learning to approach missionary 
history with a less naïve and more mature attitude. We can no 
longer afford a missiology that refuses to take seriously the social 
and political realities. From an evangelical perspective that stresses 
God’s initiative and the Spirit’s dynamic in mission as well as the 
authority of God’s Word, we need to evaluate missions today. 
Twenty years ago in the United States, in the wake of the “China 
lesson,” the famous Inter-Varsity Urbana missionary convention 
dared to acknowledge the fact of Missions in Crisis.16 Evangelical 
missiology in some quarters has not gone beyond that point. What 
is worse, a superficial triumphalism tries to turn the clock back­
ward. Max Warren’s words have a tremendous relevance for us:

Research into the history of the past, even the relatively recent past, 
demands of the historian the protracted and never ending task of 
distinguishing between pious legend and fact, never forgetting that 
belief in a pious legend may itself be a not inconsiderable fact. What 
is true for historical writing as a whole is particularly true for the
It is important for North American evangelicals engaged in missiology to take seriously another element in the dialogue with their Latin American colleagues. Our critical stance in the face of the easy acceptance of Marxist eschatology as "science," which we find in liberation theology, does not mean an uncritical acceptance of North American social sciences. Marxism is attractive for Christians in Latin America because it deals with the facts of oppression, in the face of which Christian ethics is never neutral. Functionalist anthropology and sociology claim a "value free" neutrality that has to be questioned, because it presupposes a concept of humankind that is contrary to biblical teaching. Some North American schools of missiology have to engage in a double critical task: first to understand how their principles and practices are conditioned by social sciences in the United States; second, to move toward a critical stance on the basis of biblical revelation. Unless this is done, we shall see an increasing accommodation of the gospel through American missiology and American missionary practice, to the godless presuppositions of this mechanistic age. This brings us to the second challenge that evangelical missiology is facing, the hermeneutical task.

The Challenge to Evangelical Hermeneutics

The written Word of God played a key role in the coming of evangelical missions to Latin America. In many places the Bible was a forerunner of the missionary. Liberation from the chains of illiteracy was an immediate result of conversion in evangelical churches, because of the central role of the Bible in worship and discipleship. It is yet a matter to be researched as to the extent to which the biblical renewal in the Roman Catholic church in Latin America is a direct or indirect effect of the explosive missiological value of the Bible in evangelical work. Theological and missiological reflection acknowledged this fact in the work of men like John A. Mackay, Alberto Rembao, Gonzalo Báez Camargo, and other early evangelical thinkers of Latin America. Later generations continued with this emphasis in spite of ecumenical dialogue. A man like José Míguez Bonino could thus express evangelical conviction two decades ago:

When Roman Catholicism sets Scripture and tradition on the same plane (or level), she destroys the only possibility of listening to that voice which judges, calls and forgives her. . . . By making Bible and tradition equal the Church has equated her voice with that of Jesus Christ, has set her humanity, her faith, her experience in the place where only the redemptive humanity of Jesus Christ, to which the Bible witnesses, must be. Who will be able to reform the Church when she does not listen to the voice of her Pastor but only to her own voice? It is here where we see revealed the fundamental opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism. Protestantism as a human church is not more faithful than Rome. Her doctrines run identical risks. We also hide our own mariology and our own mass under different names. But the Evangelical Church refuses to be left to herself, she refuses to sit in the place that belongs to her Lord.

More recent evangelical reflection has kept the centrality of Scripture in the process of theological and missiological work. Revelation, inspiration, hermeneutics, and the authority of Scripture were central in the first gathering of the Latin American Theological Fraternity in 1970. It was there that Peruvian theologian Pedro Arana, evaluating the "theology of revolution" as it was then expressed by the Protestant group of ISAL (Church and Society in Latin America), came to this clear conclusion: "In the ideology of ISAL, God is translated as revolution. The people of God as revolutionary hosts. The purpose of God as humanization. And the Word of God as revolutionary writings. No one could fail to see that this is Marxist humanism." But the Catholic theologians of liberation represent a different moment in the life of their church. Gutiérrez, Croatto, Segundo, Boff, and Miranda are people who have delved deep into the biblical message. Their debt to Bible scholars, mostly Protestant but also Catholic, from Europe and North America, is evident to readers of their books. And it is also important to notice, as the Theological Fraternity did with alarm, that evangelical scholarship in the biblical area has not developed in Latin America, in spite of the vitality and basic biblical orientation of evangelicalism.

Liberation theologians have clearly defined their way of doing theology and their hermeneutical approach. There may be clearcut differences in the final product of their task, but there seems to be unanimity as to the hermeneutical procedure. Argentinian Severino Croatto is explicit in this regard:

. . . it is not by deepening theoretically in the study of Scriptures or the Christian faith that one comes to acknowledge God in the events. Truth is in the opposite way: because the Christian has "grace" (that comes from the prophetic "Spirit" which is given through baptism) he is able to discover God in his history, not only individually but also communally and universally, and he has also the gift of penetrating the unsearchable riches of God.

Theological itinerary is clear: you first perceive God moving in history and consequently throw your lot with him; only then do you go to Scripture or to Christian truth in order to read. You can read only when standing on the ground of commitment. Because that ground is true your reading is correct; standing on different ground (on another type of commitment) you do not have access to the reality of biblical truth. This means that in Latin America you must throw in your lot with the cause of liberation (as defined by a Marxist analysis of reality and history), and only then can you understand what the Bible really says, and the biblical message can illuminate your commitment. To quote Croatto again:

A theology of liberation is not worked out with books, not even with the deep knowledge of biblical exegesis. The biblical message springs out of the Event. . . . Theology was a logos about the biblical God who is the God-of-history, before being "dried out" into a rationalist system. The saving event is the starting point of all theology. For a Latin American Theology of Liberation there is no other primary source than the Latin-American-facts-of-liberation. Again, the facts "un-cover" the meaning.

This hermeneutical approach has been taken by Gutiérrez as the basis of his theological work and defined also by Hugo Assmann. It is now widely practiced at academic and popular levels. There is an open recognition from these theologians that they do not interpret Scripture from a neutral standpoint. The methodology has been applied to chosen subjects of decisive importance for missiology: the exodus, the poor, and Christology. Let us see it at work in their Christology, because the controversy around it illustrates the basic weakness of an ideological hermeneutics. Coming at it from the Argentinian political context, where guerrilla warfare produced strange alliances of fascism and communism like the Montoneros, Croatto criticizes the effort to see Jesus as a Zealot:

Those who identify Christ as a Zealot, do not perceive that they are doing a disservice to the cause of liberation. Actually the Zealots were reactionary groups of the "extreme right." If they tried to ac-
complain the expulsion of the Romans from Palestinian soil it was not first of all to save man for an integral development in all aspects, but to restore the law and the lost religious and political institutions. ... To seek out of nostalgia for a Zealot Christ would be to join in the following of a reactionary, religious-nationalist, fascist Christ. 25

At the other end, in Cuba, another liberation theologian, who has identified openly and clearly with Castro’s regime, comes to an opposite conclusion. Sergio Arce says:

To say that a pre-Zealot, if not Zealot, revolutionary character of Jesus Christ is evident, through simple observation, in the gospel is not true. . . . Getting away from biblical scholarship, let us go to concrete reality. Jesus was not a Pharisee, nor a Sadducee, nor a publican, nor an Essene, nor a Herodian. What was he? With whom were his sympathies? To whom did he offer his help? With what ideology did he feel sympathies? Whom did he join? There is only one possibility; the only possibility that the gospel history itself opens to us . . . he was Zealot. 26

Arce’s reasoning is that we easily tend to accept the radical or revolutionary character of Jesus’ life and work but we qualify it as “heavenly revolutionary” or “true” revolutionary. However, by denying that he was a Zealot we are making him Pharisee, Essene, Sadducee, or publican, and that would be a contradiction. Even if we say that he was nothing of that sort, we fail, because that is making him the worst kind of Pharisee, the one who in a pharisaic way denies his pharisaism.

To say it another way, either he was a Zealot or at least pro-Zealot inasmuch as he was the Christ, or he was a Pharisee, or at least pro-Pharisee and then he was not the Christ of the Gospels, the Son of the Living God. And for us, either we believe in a Zealot or pro-Zealot Christ, or we are crafty atheists, according to the Gospel. 27

We are shocked by the arbitrary hermeneutical procedure of Arce. Here we have a case in point in which the theologian does what Miguez Bonino was warning liberation theologians against: “The text of Scripture and tradition is forced into the Procrustean bed of ideology, and the theologian who has fallen prey of this procedure is forever condemned to listen only to the echo of his own ideology.” 28

For evangelical missiology, Christology is a fundamental subject. The whole theology of discipleship, developed in recent years, pays much attention to the question of who Jesus Christ was in the context of his day. Evangelical hermeneutics acknowledges that it needs to be purified constantly from ideological presuppositions. Precisely the missiological question about Jesus is opening up an examination of the many inconsistencies in evangelical thinking. Theological battles have been fought in recent decades about the historicity of Jesus. Evangelical scholars have tried to go beyond the rationalistic simplifications of nineteenth-century German liberals who influenced Marx on this issue. But in the English-speaking world only a few theologians—such as P. T. Forsyth and John Howard Yoder—have brought the hermeneutical task to bear on missiological reflection. Maybe this explains why the Jesus of many evangelical books and films appears to be more like a Dale Carnegie than like the rabbi of Nazareth. It has been in the mission fields of Africa, Latin America, and the youth subculture of North America that evangelicals have rediscovered the meaning of the humanity and the historicity of Jesus. Similarly, in face of Nazi oppression the German church rediscovered the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and many Latin Americans are rediscovering it today in the context of political forces of the right and the left that are becoming demonic in their demands and their oppressive power. 29

Evangelical missiology in Latin America would like to engage in a systematic and critical reflection that will undergird the evangelical missiological presence there. What René Padilla expressed at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 corresponds with the evangelical tradition and the conflictive nature of Christian existence in Latin America:

Without the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord of all, in the light of whose universal authority all values of the present age become relative, there is no true evangelism. To evangelize is to proclaim Jesus Christ as the one who is reigning today and who will continue to reign “until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).

New Testament cosmic Christology is an essential element of the Gospel proclamation. 30

**Evangelical Obedience Today**

The challenge of liberation theology is also strong at the level of praxis. It is true that only those who are ready to obey God will really understand what he is saying. Jesus’ statement of that truth has always been regarded as fundamental in the evangelistic practice of evangelicals (cf. John 7:17). Christian obedience is the ground of true Christian reflection. Millions of believers are joyfully living their new life in Christ and trying to follow him in Latin America. Most of them are part of the poor masses of that exploited continent. But they have been liberated by Christ from the fatalistic belief that one cannot do anything about poverty, corruption, exploitation, and every form of personal and social evil. Evangelical missiology will be forged with them and from them. Evangelical reflection is preceded by evangelical commitment in the midst of God’s people.

Measured by Marxist standards, the life and testimony of these people may not count for much because they do not have political intentionality, or because they do not contribute to liberation understood within the Marxist framework. God has different standards—higher ones, in fact. Asked by a theologian about the fundamental principle of true life, Jesus accepted approvingly his summary of Old Testament teaching: Love God and love your neighbor. And he added: “Do this and you will live” (cf. Lk. 10:25–28). It is the matter of praxis. There are the two key elements for evangelicals who take Jesus’ words seriously in their missiological reflection. Neither a mystical experience without ethics, as in the predominant Catholicism of the four centuries past, nor an ethical demand without the experience of God, as Marxism proposes today, thus ending in idolatry, but the way that Jesus revealed and made possible through his cross and resurrection.

**Notes**

5. A third of Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (parts II and III) is dedicated to explaining his option after an analysis of the Latin American situation.
6. Miguez himself calls attention to this fact in *Doing Theology*, p. 61.
7. Figures for Catholicism are taken from Pierre M. Hegy, *Introducción a la
Ethical Decision-making and the Missionary Role

Robert L. Ramseyer

Thanks to the development of liberation theology, men and women involved in what has traditionally been called Christian missions have been forced to think about the ethical implications of the enterprise in which they are involved. In some cases missionaries have been led to see themselves as unwitting agents of cultural and ecclesiastical imperialism, guilty of depriving their fellow Christians of their right to become autonomous human beings.

The missionary enterprise itself has been perceived as aiding and abetting the economic and political enslavement of the people among whom missionaries minister. In such situations those involved in mission usually decide either to remove themselves entirely from the situation, or to take aggressive action on behalf of the poor and oppressed.

At the same time an increasingly sophisticated science of communications has forced missionaries to think more seriously about the implications of the way in which they live and the methods that they use to carry on their work. But communications theory has often led the missionary to utilitarian expediency in making ethical decisions.

Neither the theology of liberation nor communications theory is concerned with the theological and ethical implications of the unique sociocultural position of the missionary. Yet as missionaries, their unique position often forces them to make ethical decisions for which they are ill prepared and at the same time confronts them with the necessity of choosing to speak out or remain silent on ethical issues that they see in the church and society around them.

I. The Role of the Missionary in Determining Ethical Issues

What role, if any, can and should missionaries play in determining what the Christian life should look like in the countries in which they work? The function of a missionary, after all, is the sharing of good news, not the implementation of a program of moral reform. The gospel is a message of freedom and liberation, not a new form of slavery under a new ethical code.

Before we can outline a missionary role in defining ethical issues, there are two basic questions that must be answered: (1) Is it possible for a person who has been reared outside a given cultural tradition to make ethical judgments about life within that tradition? An affirmative answer here leads to the second question. (2) Is it appropriate for a missionary to speak out on such issues?

Students of society and culture have long realized that culture is not a hodgepodge of miscellaneous cultural traits but a system in which each part has meaning in terms of the whole. The meaning of any particular trait then can be understood only in terms of the role that it plays as part of the whole. Therefore we obviously do well to avoid snap judgments on the basis of a surface acquaintance with an alien sociocultural tradition.

At the same time, while an earlier generation of anthropologists emphasized discontinuity among cultural traditions, more recent studies have reminded us that there is also a great deal of cross-cultural commonality. Human beings are, after all, human beings, and we all wrestle with a wide range of similar problems. There are thus a great many occasions when things that appear similar to things the missionary has known “at home” do, in fact, mean the same things.

Many veteran missionaries are capable of making valid judgments about much of what they observe in the societies in which they work. They can, in fact, go a long way toward learning to see the world as the people who have lived all their lives in that society see it.

But is it appropriate for missionaries to make ethical judgments? Missionaries are frequently referred to as guests and told that it is inappropriate for guests to be critical of the way that their

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hosts do things. But "guests" go where they are invited and play an essentially passive role. Their hosts are responsible for entertaining and caring for them. This is hardly the missionary role in any society. The missionary role is much more closely related to local society and involves both identification with that society and separation from it: identification because missionaries are all part of a common humanity, separation because missionaries come as representatives of the God who is not the captive of any cultural tradition.

Missionaries are God's agents of reconciliation, commissioned and sent by God to share the good news with others. At the same time they are ordinary sinful human beings, identified with the people with whom they would share God's good news.

So what is the missionary role in ethical decision-making? In the mid-1960s the International Review of Missions published an article by a missionary in India describing his own dilemma.1 If he spoke out forthrightly he would seem to be aligning himself with dissident factions in the church who were always ready to bring down its leaders. If he remained silent he would seem to be supporting the present leadership faction, including their practices, which he believed were flagrantly wrong. Missionaries need to be very careful that such ambiguity does not lead to paralysis. They are God's agents for his gospel, a gospel that is a way of living. A missionary who could remain silent on so-called ethical issues would not be sharing the gospel at all.

In the Japanese setting, where this writer serves, one of the best ways to communicate is through asking questions. Dogmatic declarations are usually counterproductive. If missionaries are genuinely concerned about helping people become servants of the living God they will do well to remember that all of the law is summed up in love of God and love of neighbor; they will learn from Japanese society and try to avoid situations that will force their neighbor to admit publicly that they have been right and the neighbor has been wrong all along.

The position that one takes on specific ethical issues outside the church, as by statements to the government or letters to the newspaper, will probably depend on how serious one feels the matter to be, how well one understands the situation, and how useful one feels that intervention might be. Probably none would stand idly by who saw someone setting fire to a house in which the observer knew that a neighbor's family was asleep. On the other hand, if I heard my neighbor come home and tell his wife how hard he had been working all day when in actual fact I had seen him spending the afternoon in the local pinball parlor, I might well decide to remain silent.

There is yet one other aspect of the missionary position that we need to consider. Because missionaries are citizens of foreign countries, they may be aware of ethical issues that will bring suffering on faithful Christians in the countries where they work, but will not bring similar suffering on the missionaries themselves. I may know that I am called upon to be true to Christ and follow him even through suffering and persecution, but must I also tell my brothers and sisters when and how they must suffer for Christ? For example, in the church to which I belong, we believe that one cannot at the same time be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and participate in military activities. However, during the past century most Mennonite missionaries working in countries dominated by military regimes have played down this aspect of the gospel because they felt that the resulting persecution would be too much to ask of new Christians. As a result, Mennonite churches in those countries today understand the gospel much as other evangelical Protestant churches do and their young men take their assigned roles in the military activities of their countries.

I would suggest four considerations for missionaries to keep in mind. The first is the universality of the gospel. Their differing backgrounds and the situations in which they live and work may give missionaries different perspectives on and understandings of the gospel, but the Christian message is one message for all people.

Second, all Christians within the family of God are responsible to and for each other. This means that on occasion we shall be called upon to admonish one another.

Third, cultural differences between missionaries and the people among whom they work often give rise to very different points of view as to just what is relevant in making an ethical decision in a specific cultural context. Thus it is very possible that a missionary and a local Christian will quite sincerely arrive at different decisions as to just what God is asking of his followers in a specific situation. In that situation it would be irresponsible for missionaries to remain silent, saying in effect that as outsiders they have nothing to contribute to this ethical decision. When persons have spent their lives within one cultural tradition they are often unable to see the ethical inconsistencies with which they live, and outsiders can have a great deal to contribute to their understanding of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. This principle of course works both directions.

Fourth, the degree to which missionaries are involved in the consequences of an ethical decision does make a difference. As missionaries in Latin America have discovered, if one tries to counsel patience and nonviolence to people living under conditions of poverty and oppression, the conditions in which the missionaries themselves live determine how that counsel will be heard.

II. A Missionary Perspective on Ethical Issues in the Society in Which They Work

Missionaries are likely to be sharply aware of ethical issues that arise at those points where the new society differs from their native society. It is precisely at these points that missionaries, at least potentially, can make their greatest ethical contribution. But it is also at these points that missionaries are least likely to be able to understand ethical dilemmas that Christians in this society may feel acutely. For example, although Japan technologically looks much like any Western industrial society, Japanese social relationships are much more like those usually found in preindustrial agrarian societies than are those in a comparable Western society. While the reasons for this are not entirely clear, it is probably related to the fact that in spite of a surface cosmopolitanism and interest in world affairs, Japanese society has developed in a setting of much greater cultural isolation and homogeneity than have Western societies.2

The facet of Japanese society that is most likely to strike Westerners who have lived and worked there long enough to feel that they understand what is going on is the strength and cohesion of natural social groups. Family, larger kinship groups, and the community, where it exists, are all strong and have a very high priority in the lives of their members. In Japanese society the individual is always submerged within these groups and the needs of the group always take precedence over individual needs. The group requires a quality of loyalty virtually unknown in individually oriented Western societies. Moreover, these groups into which a person is born or automatically enters at a certain stage in life are always more important than voluntary associations that individuals join on their own initiative. Japanese society attaches far more importance to ascribed characteristics, characteristics that result from family status, position in the family, age, sex, etc., than it does to a person's abilities. For example, Japanese politicians survive without the respect of their constituents because they are bound to them by a variety of ties that are important in
It is precisely here then, in the matter of the relationship of the individual to the group, that one might expect missionaries from the West to have a unique perspective, to be able both to learn from and to contribute to the definition of the Christian life in Japan. Because family ties in Western societies are neither as all-encompassing nor of as high priority, missionaries are likely to be very much aware of conflict between loyalty to family and loyalty to God in Japanese society and to be relatively intolerant of Christians who cannot lightly dismiss family loyalties. Furthermore, in Japan, where most Christians are first-generation Christians, they have not yet learned traditions to rationalize compromise between competing loyalties as in “Christian” societies.

Thus Japanese Christians are likely to be presented with an apparently irreconcilable conflict between the First Commandment and the Fifth very early in their Christian lives. What does one do when parents equate honor with obedience and expect their wishes to be followed in such things as the choice of a vocation or a marriage partner, things that have nothing to do with religion as traditionally defined, but that are clearly related to service to God in the Christian understanding? In such situations young Christians often come to missionaries for counsel and receive very little that is helpful.

Japanese society is remarkably open and free in religious matters. Religion is relatively low in priority and unlikely to come into conflict with anything important. One is free to believe whatever one pleases as long as one faithfully performs those duties expected of a responsible member of society. Japanese Christians experience ethical tensions when the Christian faith does not fit neatly into this innocuous religious slot because it claims for itself a priority over social groups such as the family. These conflicts may be over marriage, memorials for ancestors, support of a local political candidate, participation in local shrine activities, participation in exploitative company practices, and in many other areas of life. The relative sparsity of Christians in rural Japan testifies to the strong demand for loyalty that traditional society maintains. Christians in Japan who would like to be loyal to God but would also like to maintain strong community and family ties so that they can share God’s love with others often feel themselves to be trapped between two opposing forces in a situation that has no possible satisfactory solution. Missionaries who have never experienced the strength of these social demands are often tempted to be impatient.

Many of the things that appear to the Western missionary to cause ethical problems in Japanese society stem from the surface appearance of harmony that Japanese group loyalty demands. Important social groupings in Japan demand an appearance of unanimity even when there may be a great deal of serious dissension within the group. The behavior resulting from this demand may appear to be sheer hypocrisy to the Western missionary who has been brought up to believe that openness and candor are universal Christian virtues. What is the missionary role in this situation? Does one call a spade a spade and prophetically point out apparent hypocrisy? For example, the traditional understanding in Japanese society of what constitutes verbal honesty has long been a problem for missionaries. So often people seem to say one thing and mean something else. This led some Jesuits in the sixteenth century to declare that the Japanese were an extremely deceitful people. Yet that which seems less than honest to an outsider may not seem so at all when one understands clearly when Yes means Yes, and when it means No. In many situations no deception is intended and no one has in fact been deceived. However, a formal appearance of harmony has been maintained and honor as it is defined in this society has been preserved. Yet is this what one would expect of those who follow the one who said, “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ “ (Mt. 5:37)?

Or what does one say about the strong concern with giving and receiving honors in this society? Jesus told his followers, “You are not to be called sensei,”4 for you have one sensei and you are all brethren” (Mt. 23:8). Have you ever met a missionary who has not been called sensei since he or she first set foot on the soil of Japan?

Or, how do missionaries handle the giving and receiving of gifts, which so often continues in ever escalating exchanges? How do we participate and what do we say, who follow the man who told us to give expecting nothing in return (Lk. 6:34)?

Or what about the motif of revenge, which so permeates Japanese society? What does “Love your enemies” mean when loyalty to one’s group seems to require one to put down a person who has somehow scarred the honor of the group?

III. Ethical Issues in Evangelism and Church Planting

Discussions of ethical issues in mission and evangelism are likely to focus on unfair practices between mission groups in competition for converts, on offering material inducements to people in order to make converts, etc. There is, however, an ethical issue in the proclamation of the gospel itself. Throughout much of mission history, Christians have failed to see any intrinsic relationships between the content of the gospel and the way that it is to be communicated. This can be seen in new “how-to-do-it manuals,” which attempt to apply contemporary communications theory to the communication of the gospel. It can also be seen in the sheer methodological pragmatism of missionaries who have been very concerned to keep the content of their message true to the biblical word as it is received in a new cultural setting. As a result, a message that is peace, joy, and freedom often comes through as religious and cultural imperialism.

Why have we failed to see that Jesus’ message has to be shared in Jesus’ way? In order to share his message with human beings Jesus emptied himself and became a servant. Jesus in his period of testing in the wilderness considered and rejected the use of what human society considers powerful in the sharing of the gospel. Missionaries trained in the Western tradition, instead of learning powerlessness from Jesus, are tempted to use the social and behavioral sciences and their knowledge of Japanese culture and society to find ways in which they can maneuver people into the kingdom of God. In the process they treat the Japanese as things rather than as fellow human beings. Manipulation in evangelism is evangelism from a position of power. The inevitable result is a distorted gospel, because the gospel was designed to be shared from a position of powerlessness.

In Japan missionaries face particular temptations in evangelism because the response to the gospel seems so very small. They are tempted to remove stumbling blocks and make the gospel as palatable as possible. In Japan religious groups have grown most rapidly in recent years when they have been able to cater to the immediate self-interest of the individual. Much is promised, very little is demanded. The leader of one well-known religious group, for example, promised solutions to virtually all of life’s problems if the convert would engage in a very simple thirty-minute spiritual exercise each day. With this kind of competition, missionaries may be tempted to adjust their message to what people want to hear, to concentrate on what seems to get results, and to play down or ignore the ways in which Jesus expects his followers to change, which may not be popular in Japanese society. This is especially easy to do if the missionary comes from a Christian tradition that divides the gospel from ethics. The gospel then becomes the easy things, which are preached to lead people to salvation; ethics becomes the more difficult things, which will be explained to the
people at some more opportune time after they have become Christians.

In Japan this temptation to modify the Christian faith for the sake of an easier reception is seen most clearly in the life of the church. The idea of giving ultimate loyalty to God is not too difficult, since loyalty to a supreme ruler is a basic part of this cultural tradition. But the church in Japan has been seen as a voluntary association like other religious organizations, which people join of their own volition. Such voluntary associations have very low priority in Japanese society and offend no one, precisely because the really significant relationships in Japanese society all take precedence over these voluntary associations. However, it is clear in the New Testament that the church is not a voluntary association in this sense. In the New Testament the followers of Jesus form a new race, a new people, a new family, which cuts across all existing natural groups. Thus the nature of the church as we find it in the New Testament is in conflict with the basic premise of Japanese society. Evangelists who preach this forthrightly may find an opposition to their message that is not encountered by others who preach a gospel that does not call for a new people of God.

**Notes**

4. Japanese term of respect for teacher, pastor, etc., used in the Japanese translation of this passage to translate rabbi.

**The Uneven Growth of Conservative Evangelical Missions**

Robert T. Coote

Common perceptions today about the sectors of growth in the North American conservative evangelical mission community are less than adequate.

In the eleventh edition of the *Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas* (Monrovia, Calif: MARC/World Vision, 1976) it was observed that the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) had "increased significantly in number of missionaries... whereas IFMA [Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association] has increased slightly in missionaries." This statement is repeated in the latest edition, the twelfth (1980). An impression has understandably been gained that, while IFMA agencies have not contributed significantly in recent years to the growth of the conservative evangelical mission community, EFMA (along with a growing group of unaffiliated agencies) is playing an important part in this growth.

It is well known that the North American conservative agencies, taken as a whole, have experienced dramatic growth since the late 1960s. By 1980 they accounted for ten out of eleven North American Protestant career missionaries working overseas (see tables 1 and 2). The fact of the matter is, however, that neither EFMA nor IFMA have contributed significantly to this growth. The "typical" EFMA agency has actually decreased slightly in personnel since 1968, while the "typical" IFMA agency has experienced a slight increase. The net increase for IFMA agencies amounts to about 200 missionaries, while the net decrease for EFMA agencies amounts to about 300. In other words, virtually all of the growth in North American conservative missions must be attributed to the unaffiliated agencies.

The *Mission Handbook* figures for EFMA and IFMA are entirely accurate, but they apply to the two associations as associations—not to net growth in missionary personnel, which is another matter. In order to determine the latter, individual agencies must be followed year by year. When this kind of analysis is made, it is seen that the familiar EFMA/IFMA statistics are somewhat misleading (see graphs 1 and 2). Another clarification to come out of this study is the discovery that the decline in total personnel within the National Council of Churches' Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) would not have been nearly so drastic if all the agencies associated with DOM in the 1950s had retained their DOM connection. Rather than a drop of 65 percent in overseas personnel, the figure would have been 29 percent. For every three missionaries lost to DOM through attrition within present DOM agencies, four missionaries were lost by virtue of agency transfers out of DOM affiliation. As of 1980 the latter realigned group numbered more than 4,000 persons; half were affiliated with EFMA and half were unaffiliated.

In 1960 IFMA sponsored the Wheaton Congress on World Missions. Based on a survey of projections and personnel needs of 87 agencies (mostly EFMA/IFMA), a call went out from the congress for 18,000 additional missionaries. The total EFMA/IFMA overseas missionary community at that time numbered about 11,000. In other words, what was envisioned was a conservative evangelical missionary force of almost 30,000.

**Conclusion**

Missionaries face unique ethical issues at many points related both to the society in which they work and to the missionary vocation itself. As witnesses to a universal gospel in societies to which they are foreign, missionaries are called on to speak on ethical issues that they may not fully understand. As outsiders they may be aware of ethical issues that Christians reared in that society have not even felt. Because of the ambiguity of their position, missionaries need even more sensitivity than other Christians in determining when and how they should speak.

Missionaries also face unique ethical issues because their vocation focuses so specifically on evangelism and church planting. In the interests of more rapid or effective evangelism, missionaries are tempted to ignore Jesus' way of sharing his gospel and to use the power provided by modern society, not realizing that by so doing they corrupt the very message that they would share. Missionaries are first of all disciples of Jesus Christ. Disciples are never above their master.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mission Handbook edition</th>
<th>Total as First Reported</th>
<th>12th edition Adjusted</th>
<th>Amount of Adjustment</th>
<th>Career as First Reported</th>
<th>Amount of Adjustment</th>
<th>Career as Adjusted</th>
<th>Short-Term as First Reported</th>
<th>Amount of Adjustment</th>
<th>Short-Term as Adjusted</th>
<th>Grand Total as Adjusted</th>
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<td>29,380</td>
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<td>1,641</td>
<td>28,680</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28,827</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>3,717</td>
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<td>37,602</td>
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<td>31,186</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>31,643</td>
<td>5,764</td>
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<td>37,602</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of 1980 there was indeed a North American conservative missionary force of that size; in fact, the figure exceeded 32,000. But this growth stemmed almost entirely from non-EFMA/IFMA groups, that is, from the unaffiliated conservative mission agencies.

What, then, has been EFMA/IFMA’s part in the surge of conservative evangelical missions? From 1960 to 1968 EFMA/IFMA contributed a net increase of about 1,200 missionaries (based on the 93 representative agencies presented in graphs 1 and 2). From 1968 onward the modest gain of IFMA has been countered by the slightly larger decline of EFMA.

Of course, the fact that EFMA/IFMA presents a small net de-
crease in personnel does not mean that individual agencies have not registered notable growth (table 3). But the impressive gains of such agencies have been offset by attrition within the ranks of their co-members in EFMA/IFMA.

Notes

1. The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) was founded in 1945. In its early years of operation, EFMA appealed principally to a number of small denominational agencies that had become disaffected with the major mission association of pre-World War II days, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (now continued as the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches [abbreviated DOM]).

The interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) was founded in 1917. It consists of a group of missions that draw their personnel from a variety of denominational backgrounds. IFMA agencies are often referred to as "faith missions," reflecting the fact that their work is not supported from regular denominational budgets but from voluntary contributions received from supporting churches and friends. Most IFMA missions were organized in the late 1800s or early 1900s, partly in response to the challenge of unevangelized "inland" areas of the major mission fields, and partly as an expression of disaffection with perceived modernism in mainline Protestant mission boards.

EFMA/IFMA agencies are generally spoken of as "evangelical" missions, while DOM agencies are spoken of as "ecumenical.

2. The 10:1 ratio pertains specifically to career missionaries. Table 2, which focuses exclusively on career missionaries (as do graphs 1 and 2), indicates that "Evangelical" career personnel number 32,101 (table 2, 1980, col. m), while "Ecumenical" personnel number 3,116 (col. d). The relationship of short-termers to career missionaries will be seen in table 3. Strictly speaking, all statistics indicated for 1980 reflect 1979 data, inasmuch as it was in 1979 that the latest MARC (Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center) survey was conducted. However, in this article the date 1980 is used, in keeping with the date of publication of the twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook. The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) was founded in 1917. It consists of a group of missions that draw their personnel from a variety of denominational backgrounds. IFMA agencies are often referred to as "faith missions," reflecting the fact that their work is not supported from regular denominational budgets but from voluntary contributions received from supporting churches and friends. Most IFMA missions were organized in the late 1800s or early 1900s, partly in response to the challenge of unevangelized "inland" areas of the major mission fields, and partly as an expression of disaffection with perceived modernism in mainline Protestant mission boards.

EFMA/IFMA agencies are generally spoken of as "evangelical" missions, while DOM agencies are spoken of as "ecumenical.

3. The growth of EFMA personnel, noted by the Mission Handbook, is attributable substantially to the number of agencies that have entered into EFMA affiliation in recent years, rather than to an overall increase in personnel within the various agencies.

4. It remains true, nevertheless, that the present DOM agencies have experienced a drastic decline. In 1952 they totaled 5,950, whereas today these same agencies total 2,751. This is a 54 percent decline.

The 1980 total of DOM personnel, as reported in the twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook, p. 131, is 3,463. However this figure erroneously includes 650 attributed to United Methodist Committee on Relief (COR). COR’s North American overseas personnel are limited to short-termers (which are properly reported in the Mission Handbook as 985). Therefore the 1980 DOM total must be adjusted to 2,813 (3,463 minus 650). The difference between the figure of 2,751 and 2,813 will be found in two agencies that did not appear in the 1952 report:

Church World Service (founded 1946)
Ludhiana Christian Medical College Board (founded 1953 in U.S.A.)

Note: When thinking of the decline in personnel of DOM agencies, one may focus on either the percentage of decline, or the number of missionaries involved. The percentage of decline is 54, as noted immediately above, and the number of missionaries this decline represents is 3,199. On the other hand, the total number of missionaries lost to DOM as an association, 1952 to 1980, is 7,031, (9,844 in 1952, to 2,813 in 1980). This does not mean, however, that there was a net loss of 7,031 missionaries to the North American mission community, for more than half of the "loss" was the result of agencies transferring out of DOM affiliation, either to associate with EFMA or to become part of today’s large unaffiliated group of mission agencies. (In 1980 only one agency that held dual DOM/EFMA affiliation in 1952 still maintained affiliation in both associations: American Leprosy Missions, with 6 missionaries.)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mainline Protestants</th>
<th>EFMA/IFMA</th>
<th>All Other &quot;Conservative Evangelicals&quot;</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&quot;Ecumenicals&quot;)</td>
<td>(&quot;Conservative Evangelicals&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Council</td>
<td>DOM/CWC</td>
<td>EFMA/IFMA</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Churches,</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Council</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Churches,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>DOM</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>CIF</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CWC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>523</td>
<td>9,457</td>
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* TAM = The Association of Missions; FOM = Fellowship of Missions. TAM was organized in the early 1950s, under the leadership of the Rev. Carl McIntire, to represent a group of separatist agencies. Several of these, including some large Baptist agencies, separated from TAM in 1969 to form FOM.

+ Column o is the sum of d + m - n. This column reconciles with column F of table 1.

+ Total columns, excluding columns for EFMA/IFMA, are for individual agencies.
fact that the data collected from the mission agencies was not necessarily complete or uniform. Thus, the totals in the above table, specifically under columns j, m, and o for the years 1962, 1964 and 1966, must be considered approximate at best. In any case, no attempt has been made to supply adjusted figures for these years (to reflect such agencies as were operating but that did not report during the years 1962, 1964 and 1966). On the other hand, MARC has supplied adjusted figures for the years 1960, 1968 and following, and a prudent use of the above table will concentrate on these years with their adjusted figures.

In the course of processing data and publishing the ninth edition of the Directory, the editors realized that the “short-term” category was no longer an inconsequential category as in former years but, on the contrary, constituted a significant portion of the total number of overseas personnel. Therefore the editors, in all subsequent surveys of agencies, asked respondents to distinguish short-term personnel from career personnel. In lieu of an authoritative breakdown between career and short-term in the ninth edition of the Directory, the author has provided a second entry for the year 1970, indicating the approximate impact of short-term personnel (note italicized figures). These short-term figures are estimates, based on proportionate extrapolation from 1973 data. Although the result of such extrapolation must be considered approximate at best, it is nevertheless likely to be more accurate than the original data published in the ninth edition, for MARC has estimated that the original career figures included 1,300+ short-term personnel (which, for the purposes of the above table, must be distinguished from career personnel).

A figure of 763 is derived from pp. 384–85 of the eleventh edition of the Mission Handbook. Of the 763, fourteen are short-termers and therefore must be subtracted from 763 (= 749) for use in this table.

Figures for 1980, specifically those pertaining to the unaffiliated group, are subject to adjustment in future editions of the Mission Handbook.

The twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook erroneously credits the United Methodist Committee on Relief (COR) with 650 overseas career personnel. (COR’s overseas career personnel are limited entirely to overseas nationals; all U.S. overseas personnel are short-termers.) Therefore for the purposes of the table 650 has been subtracted from the Mission Handbook figures (columns a, d, and o).

The twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook, p. 130, lists only one agency with 10 missionaries. This involves an error of omission, for five additional agencies were associated with CCC/CWC in 1980, bringing the correct total to 303. (This correction is reflected in Wilson, International Bulletin, 5, no. 2 [April 1982]: 75, except that in the Bulletin the original 10 missionaries are mistakenly transposed into the total for DOM and omitted from CCC/CWC.)

The twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook, p. 133, reports 8190 EFMA missionaries and omits American Leprosy Missions (6 missionaries). Samuel Wilson (International Bulletin, 5, no. 2 [April 1982]: 75) uses the figure 8196, evidently and properly including ALM. (Note: ALM holds affiliation in both DOM and EFMA; this duplication is noted in col. n = 6.)

### Table 3
**Principal “Gainers” Among EFMA/IFMA Agencies**

<table>
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<th>IFMA</th>
<th>Founding Date</th>
<th>1952</th>
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<th>1968</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>% of Increase:</th>
<th>% of Increase:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>over 1968</td>
<td>over Previous</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Point</td>
<td>High Point</td>
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<td>Africa Inland Mission</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>African Evangelical Fellowship</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Outreach Missiona</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>400%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Europe Missionb</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>146%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janz Team</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>146%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Aviation Fellowship</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regions Beyond Missionary Union</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>167**</td>
<td>178%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unevangelized Fields Missionc</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFMA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany Fellowship Missions</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Crusade for Christ International</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>510%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Congregational Church</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Free Church</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Mennonite Brethren</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Free Will Baptists</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigators</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMS Internationalc</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal Holiness Church</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The criteria for composing this list of agencies that have increased significantly in personnel since 1968 are as follows:

Minimum increase of 12% (1% growth per year) since 1968.

Listing of agency, with report of personnel, in 1968 Directory.

Current EFMA or IFMA affiliation (Mission Handbook, 1980).

50 missionaries or more, per the Mission Handbook, 1980.

Note: The Janz Team (IFMA), Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), and several of the other EFMA agencies listed above are not represented in the selected groups in graphs 1 and 2. These selected groups consist of agencies affiliated with EFMA or IFMA as of 1960 or earlier; Janz, CCC, and some of the other EFMA agencies do not meet this qualification.

**Includes both Canadian and United States organizations of the same name (formerly listed under a single United States entry).

NL = “not listed”

? = reported as a question mark in the Directory

a = Formerly South Africa General Mission

b = Formerly European Evangelistic Crusade

c = Formerly Belgium Gospel Mission

d = Formerly Mexican Indian Mission

e = Formerly Oriental Missionary Society

July 1982
Agency membership in North American mission associations is not constant. Mergers occur (16 agencies have been affected by mergers within the IFMA community since 1960), agencies join or withdraw, and some cease operation. As the Mission Handbook cautions, the situation is so fluid and complex that valid comparisons over time are difficult to make. In seeking to make a valid analysis, despite the problems, the following approach has been taken: a major set of agencies (42 in number) associated with IFMA in 1960, most of which were still IFMA-affiliated in 1980, has been followed through from 1960 to 1980 without regard to changes of affiliation that may have taken place.

Conclusion: One might think that the "typical" IFMA agency had declined 4% from 1968 to 1980, based on the Mission Handbook figures for IFMA. Actually, however, the "typical" IFMA agency gained 3.6%, as indicated by the lower line on the graph.

* In one sense, IFMA has fewer member agencies today than in the 1960s and 1970s. Of the 49 member agencies listed in 1980, 10 are newly listed Canadian units of long-established United States agencies (formerly these Canadian units operated as branches of United States headquarters). The Canadian units are now legally constituted as separate agencies in cooperative relationship with their United States counterparts.

b The rise in the bold line for 1968 is misleading. It occurs not because of a net increase in number of missionaries but primarily because an unusually large number of agencies opted during this period for dual membership in EFMA/IFMA. (There were 265 missionaries in 1960 represented and reported in both associations, and 414 in 1980, but more than 1,000 in 1968.)

c A comparison of the selected list of 42 agencies with the complete IFMA roster for 1980 shows that five of the selected group are no longer members of IFMA. Three small agencies (never more than 50 missionaries among them) are no longer active (or at least supply no current information), and two larger agencies have withdrawn from IFMA, as follows:

- Latin America Mission—127 missionaries in 1960, 164 in 1980. Withdrew subsequent to the publication of the eleventh edition of the Mission Handbook. Retains affiliation with EFMA. Note: Although GMSA and LAM were not IFMA-affiliated in 1980, they are included in the graph line in order to reflect the true growth of the entire selected group of 42 agencies.
Graph 2: Personnel total as reported for EFMA in Mission Handbook, compared with growth trend of 51 selected EFMA agencies.

Agency membership in EFMA has shifted over the years (in the same manner as indicated for IFMA). To enable valid conclusions to be drawn about the growth of the "typical" EFMA agency in the 1960s and 1970s, 51 agencies were selected for review; all were members of EFMA during some portion of the 1960s and 1970s and the great majority were EFMA throughout the period.\(^2\)

**Conclusion:** One might think that the "typical" EFMA agency had increased 11% from 1968 to 1980, based on the Mission Handbook figures. Actually, however, the "typical" EFMA agency declined about 4.5%, as indicated by the lower line on the graph.

In other words, although it is true that EFMA-related personnel has increased in recent years, this is basically because additional agencies have joined EFMA, not because the agencies as a whole have experienced a net increase in missionary personnel. Furthermore, these additional EFMA members are generally long-established agencies. Only 8 agencies out of EFMA's 1980 total of 79 were founded in the last 20 years, and these 8 accounted for only 275 missionaries in 1980. (In the case of IFMA, only one agency out of the 1980 total of 49 was founded since 1960, with 7 missionaries in 1980.) When one considers the fact that some 130 sending agencies have been founded in the last 20 years, it is clear that the newer agencies are opting to remain unaffiliated.

\(^2\) Those not listed as EFMA in 1980 are only two: Far Eastern Gospel Crusade (now "Send, Int'l") and World Radio Missionary Fellowship (135 and 161 missionaries, respectively). Both agencies held dual affiliation in EFMA/IFMA for many years, but as of the twelfth edition of the Mission Handbook they are listed as IFMA only. (Note: Although FEGC and WRMF were not EFMA-affiliated in 1980, they are nevertheless included in the graph line in order to reflect the true growth of the entire selected group of 51 agencies.)
The best comment I can make on this stately volume is that, if I had a little more leisure, I would like to sit down and read every one of its 830 pages, confident that by doing so I would learn much that I do not know, even in areas in which I believe myself to be reasonably well informed. The qualifications of the many contributors, though some expected names are missing, are a satisfactory guarantee of general accuracy. In view of my own special interests, I note with gratitude the attention paid to South Indian language and religion, and especially to the bhakti form of Hinduism.

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

Decisions as to what should be included, and what space should be allocated to each article, raise agonizing editorial problems. I was sure that the Qumran scrolls must be included somewhere, but looked for them in vain, until it occurred to me to turn up the article "Essenes." The long articles (e.g., Hinduism, Islam) are almost without exception good. Some of the articles of middle length (e.g., Marty on Protestantism, and Endy on Friends, Society of) are models of compression. Many of the short biographical articles are tantalizing in their very brevity, giving hardly a clue as to the character and achievements of those with whom they deal. The seven lines on Teilhard de Chardin do not mention his services to palaeontology in China. Six lines on St. Vincent de Paul might be thought a little skimpy, especially as no bibliographical note is appended. Three (not very accurate) lines on William Temple, as against thirty-nine for Reinhold Niebuhr, and seven for Kierkegaard as against fifty-seven on the same page for Kimbanguism, seem to suggest a certain disturbance of balance. The bibliographies are of very uneven value. Some are excellent, a good many stand in need of correction or amplification. If a second edition is called for, as may be confidently expected, greater care should be directed to proofreading.

But these are minor criticisms. Taken as a whole the work stands as a notable contribution to knowledge, and I am very glad to have it on my shelves.

—Stephen Neill

The Public Church: Mainline—Evangelical—Catholic.


The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life.


In a nation whose very Constitution compels religion to have no official position in the political structure of society, what can be the public role of a religion whose own theological constitution requires it to seek such a role? The question is old in American church history, and the 1980s should see a spate of books on the subject from a great profusion of perspectives. The Crossroad press has served some of us well indeed by its publication of these two books. They are among the early replies of the much buffeted "liberal church" mind to the upsurge of rightist political activism among the "evangelicals" of the late 1970s. Both books deserve reading by church members who are subject, like me, to a discomfort that often compels one to put the words "liberal" and "evangelical," "political" and "public," in quotation marks. Such discomfort is a sure sign that many of us need new, clarified definitions for such words, fitting them to realities that we know well but that have not been taken into account by many others who use the words so confidently.

To review such books briefly is not to slight them. These scholars represent a large number of American church members who believe that biblical faith has something profound to do with both the private and the public realms of human life. In part these books are aids to the definition of such words: as when Palmer calls for our seeing public life as something wider and more inclusive than political life, and when Marty proposes to locate "the public church" in three overlapping organizational circles: "Mainline—Evangelical—Catholic."

The key social-political reality addressed by both books is the new stage to which pluralism has advanced in American life. The public church is that which takes pluralism as an empirical fact with divine intention in it, for the church's internal and external relations in this historical time. For the public church, by Marty's definition, is one "whose communities are open to each other," on the level of the smallest congregation or the most global interaction. The public church is liberal in the sense that its members see themselves as freed by the gospel for each other and for the world of humanity in all the baffling variety of value, con-


It has been a long and uncertain journey—a journey in quest of theological authenticity faithful to “the critical Asian principle.” The All-Asia Consultation on Theological Education for Christian Ministry held in Manila, March 1977, out of which came the papers, comments, and reports collected in this volume, was clearly a bus stop, as it were, on the way. The consultation looked back in bewilderment and wonder. It also looked ahead with anticipation and hope. In the words of the foreword by Dr. Shoki Coe, a veteran theological educator in Asia for the past thirty years, through interaction between the search for quality and the search for authenticity “a third search inherent from the start is now coming out into the open, namely, the search for creativity” (p. v). What the reader will find in this volume is thus more than just “perspectives,” even if “Asian” perspectives. One will feel in it rhythms and echoes out of the depths of theological souls engaged in reflection, conversation, and struggle with “the Human and the Holy” in Asia.

The subject, “the Human and the Holy,” is dealt with in three sections: (1) Man and the Holy; (2) Man and Nature; and (3) Man in Society and History. Each section carries a perceptive Bible study and biblical exposition, followed by a major paper from an Asian theologian. The paper is then commented upon by other colleagues from various countries in Asia. The sections also contain workshop reports summarizing the thoughts and insights that have emerged from lively discussions.

The Bible, theology, and Asian cultures have come to an exciting rendezvous in this volume. The whole effort can be put in a simple phrase: to grasp the elusive human being with the help of God, nature, and history. Humanity is the theological subject here—a possibility of theological humanism within the humanistic culture of Asia? Healthy relation of nature to humanity is affirmed as essential to the latter’s salvation—a theological Yes to re-naturalization of human being evident in the longing of Asians for nature? Rediscovery of “people” as subjects of history and agents of change—a political theology that would touch the right chord with the oppressed masses in feudal societies of the past and under repressive regimes today?

In the last part of the volume are six background papers prepared in advance for the consultation. Themes such as “Is an Asian Theology Possible?” “Toward a Framework of Doing Theology in Asia,” and “Emerging Themes in Asian Theological Thinking” will no doubt whet the reader’s appetite for more “Asian” discourse on some perennial subjects of Christian theology reflected upon in cultural, religious, and historical settings of Asia that happen to exist outside the Judeo-Christian traditions. The volume is clearly not a definitive Asian theology. But it represents a definitive thrust of Asian theological minds into the mystery of God that has begun to respond to the thrust. The Human and the Holy is therefore a promise—and a major promise at that—of more to come. It only marks a station on the way, but a very important station.

—C. S. Song

Compassionate and Free. An Asian Woman’s Theology.


This is a short, easily readable, and important book. Marianne Katoppo is a well-known Indonesian novelist and journalist as well as a theologian. Her deep insights and rich experience are reflected throughout the book, which is “an effort towards an Asian woman’s theology.”

Does a woman have the right to contribute to the richness of Asian theology? After all, “her personal encounter with God is denounced as heretical or hysterical.” She is considered as “different,” “the Other,” “the discordant note, the threat to harmony.” Katoppo argues that there is an “other-
ness” in woman, but she denies that there is anything threatening about it. She can be “the Other” in all her fullness and variety of gifts. That will be a liberating experience both for woman and for man.

The author presents a realistic picture of the Asian woman’s status and condition. She explains how the image of woman has suffered damage through the ages, how “from the exalted, the sovereign, the mother, she became the slave and the sex object.” The process of liberation must begin with the recovery of woman’s own awareness of her self-worth. Katoppo’s choice of the ideal, truly liberated Asian woman is none other than Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is “the first fully liberated human being, whose Magnificat is central in the theology of liberation.” Her worth is to be understood “in the wider context of love and self-giving.” “Her sensitivity to social injustices and her readiness to take moral risks for the sake of needed social change.”

The author formulates her theology from within the context of the sociopolitical realities of Asia. Her description of those realities is vivid and brilliant. With striking illustrations of evil practices like prostitution, rape, and dowry she brings home to the reader how cruelly women are exploited in various ways. The situations arising from the way people are enslaved to craze for money and power are, generally speaking, the same in most Asian countries. It is in the light of a proper awareness of such situations that an Asian theology should emerge. In this regard the author gives only a few guidelines, valuable as they are. In a chapter entitled “Theological Motifs” Katoppo talks mostly about God and the way a proper understanding of God on our part can become significantly relevant to human living. An honest and sincere attempt is made to present the case from a woman’s perspective with adequate biblical references and citations from church fathers and theologians. She draws heavily on the rich variety of metaphors used for God and indicates that since God, in an ontic sense, is neither male nor female it is foolish and unfair to claim superiority for men over women on the pretense that God is male. At the same time she thinks it appropriate to consider the concept of the “motherliness of God” as important for an Asian woman’s theology. “There is nothing new or strange in acknowledging the motherliness of God. Yet why do so many apparently still recoil at the thought?”

The final chapter is too condensed and the conclusion abrupt. Especially the attempt to place woman within the scheme of God’s plan for the world’s salvation as given under the caption “the theology of the womb” is inadequate and lacks clarity.

However, this small volume is valuable from the point of view of what the Asian churches can hope for in the future from women in terms of their theological contributions.

—Leelamma Athyal


This book has opened up new paths in missionary historiography, which it is to be hoped many others will follow. The basic work on the book was done a number of years ago in the form of a doctoral dissertation at the Australian National University, and already before its publication a number of scholars have begun to follow the paths that it opened. Among these have been several in the distinguished series of doctoral candidates whom Neil Gunson has guided at the Australian National University. Understanding of missions in the South Pacific has taken on whole new dimensions through his work and the work of his students.

In this book we have a most detailed and penetrating examination of missionaries, their life and work, their beliefs and attitudes. Gunson shows how the early missionaries came from humble backgrounds in England, and how they advanced up the social scale through their missionary work. He also shows how the first men were willing to live in a simple indigenous style, using local foods and local housing, but how the second generation of missionaries required more of the comforts of Europe, somewhat to the dismay of the pioneers.

It is not true to say that the missionaries advocated European dress for Christian converts. In fact, there was more distaste among them over the popular desire for European clothing than there was over immodest traditional dress. The first missionaries to Tahiti commended the dress of the people. Nevertheless, when the time for baptisms and attendance at church services came, full-length dresses for women and cotton coats for the men were recommended. Other aspects of the culture were likewise changed. The old stories, myths, and poems were displaced by the Bible. Wood-carving and most types of dancing were condemned because of their lasciviousness and their ties to the old religion. In Tahiti almost all the games and sports were also stopped because they were considered barbarous and useless.

Gunson stresses that there can be no understanding of the missionaries without an understanding of the kind of religious life that produced them. They all came out of the intense evangelical revivalism of England. The early missionaries in the South Seas were either Calvinists sent out by the London Missionary Society, or Wesleyans sent out by the Methodist Church. There were significant differences between the evangelicism of these two types. The Wesleyans stressed love to God and love to souls. The Calvinists stressed more the need for reparation for past and present sins by the exaltation of the glory of God who had saved them. Hence there was more of inner conflict among the Calvinists. But in both types the intensity of religious conviction and emotion is the most noticeable quality.

Many other aspects of the missionaries’ thought in action are covered in these pages. Their attitudes to war and imperialism, their racial views, their teaching methods, and their methods of church extension are all set forth carefully. Seldom have we been privileged to know so well the missionaries of a past generation.

—Charles W. Forman

Charles W. Forman is Professor of Missions at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.
Liberation Preaching: The Pulpit and the Oppressed:


This book belongs in every preacher's library. It is one of the most lucid expositions of liberation theology to have appeared as a pastoral resource, and it also breaks some important new ground. That it fails to develop the full potential of its central thesis makes it, if anything, more compelling.

There is a helpful and reliable overview of liberation theologies by way of introduction, and the task of preaching liberation is then identified as listening anew to the biblical text. Making use of Juan Luis Segundo's "hermeneutic circle," the authors advocate for preachers an ideological and hermeneutical suspicion, not only in their interpretation of Scripture, but also in their use of lectionaries and commentaries, tools that may have hidden or selective agendas. In practice this means, for example, the examination of a text's political dimensions, or the casting of biblical characters in contemporary roles—an exercise that often results in surprising alignments.

All of this offers much practical guidance for sermon preparation, and the book will provide many an illumination for the preacher who has not previously approached a text with these perspectives. Its most important contribution, however, is at a deeper level. There is a recurrent warning that when liberation theology is espoused by those who are generally thought of as oppressors, it tends to be co-opted as something of a fad. "For such people, liberation theology—which often is no more than liberation vocabulary—is a new insight to be added as an addendum to their list of useful insights" (p. 32). This warning culminates in a two-fold cri de coeur. Using the hermeneutic circle as an autobiographical model, the authors recount how they made "the joyful discovery that the Bible was much more on our side than we ever dared hope, and that there were throughout the world a host of others who had gone through parallel struggles and had arrived at similar methodologies and conclusions" (p. 32). This is a poignant disclosure, and the sequel is hardly less so. "[One of the reasons why] women and minority preachers are generally more biblical in their preaching than are many other people [is that they] know quite well that when they preach they have no status given them by society... [The] explanation and application of a specific biblical text becomes their chief source of authority in preaching, in a way and to a degree that is not necessary for the white, male preacher" (pp. 95-96).

It is precisely at this point that the authors, having set a bold agenda for the pulpit, stop short. Arguing throughout that traditional biblical interpretation has been a major source of white and male oppressions, they nonetheless stay with biblical interpretation as their criterion for preaching.

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The possibility they open up for us, on the other hand, is a praxis preaching—a message delivered directly out of the sufferings of the world. Such preaching would still be grounded in the Scriptures and teachings of the Church, but its wellspring would be the indwelling Christ, and its power would be the Spirit of God at work in the world, most especially among the poor and oppressed. To forge such a homiletic method would be not only the preaching of liberation, but liberation of preaching.

The authors’ hesitation to press for this may well be due to their concern for a realistic pace in the conscientization of the white male preachers to whom their book is primarily directed. It may further be due to their rightful censure of preaching that abuses Scripture as a mere “jumping-off point,” a symptom of what they perceptively describe as “Lone-Ranger” Bible study. It may also, however, point to what is often a blind spot in liberation theology: an unwillingness to grant the validity of piety as a hermeneutic alongside history.

—David Lowes Watson

African Widows.


Michael Kirwen’s African Widows is an honest and scientific attempt at analyzing the problem of compatibility or incompatibility of an African institution with Christian religious tenets. It is thus an important contribution to the study of the changing European-African cultural interaction. Kirwen incisively but judiciously shows how the indigenous church, if it is to be so successfully adapted to the African cultural milieu as to be “self-supporting, self-propagating and also at the level of cultural forms self-designed,” must depart from the Western epistemic assumptions and ideological standpoints of which missionaries have been among the dedicated protagonists. He raises many important questions and provides one possible framework that can orient the needed research into adaptation of the Christian church to the African cultural milieu.

African Widows is not a study of the status, state, inheritance, or marriage patterns and problems of widows. It documents attitudes and attitudinal changes toward African leviratic arrangements for the care of widows as a concrete example of the difficulties and problems present in an attempt at evaluating and understanding a non-Western marriage custom and thus adapting it to Christian morality. Leviratic union generally involves inheritance of a widow by a brother-in-law who acts on behalf of a deceased brother as a surrogate husband to ensure protection, material provision for, and continued participation of the widow in procreative processes. The goal is to maintain the identity and continuity of the family established at marriage.

The central question Kirwen raises is whether “leviratic union is truly compatible with Christian theology” or is merely at variance with Western marriage custom. The distinction that he makes between essentially Christian and Western culture is of central importance to his analysis: it makes his contribution to the ongoing debate original and fresh. His answer is rooted in a sociological study of four Tanzanian ethnic groups who differ with respect to language, social structure, system of inheritance, and exposure to missionary influence. His analysis is buttressed with data from anthropological literature on African marriages in general and leviratic union in particular.

Judged by its own goals, African Widows is largely successful and well worth reading. Kirwen deserves credit for exposing, critiquing, and transcending Western cultural arrogance and making an honest attempt to differentiate between Western cultural practice and essential Christian tenets. His study marks an essential turning point in the study of the complexity of culture contact that has largely resulted in the Westernization of African culture. It is additionally an invaluable contribution to the sociological interpretation of African religions and institutions.

Kirwen deserves credit for transcending European epistemic assumption in his analysis of leviratic institution. This enabled him to make a penetrating analysis of African marriages as a developing process, with African concept and use of one’s sexuality especially in its relationship with procreation. His recognition and analysis of the link between marriage, leviratic union, and concept of immortality is an added strength of the book.

African Widows is of unquestioned value to the Africanist. It will claim the attention of a wider audience, the church, its lay and clerical members, and anyone who is interested in the complexity of culture contact by virtue of its innovative and critical approach to the interaction between African and European cultures. It has a timely message for protagonists of “technological transfer.”

—Felicia Ifeema Ekejiuba

Fides pro mundi vita.
Missionstheologie heute.


This collection of essays in honor of Professor Hans-Werner Gensichen, presented to him on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, discusses “missionary faith” under four headings: its biblical and theological basis, its place in history, and its relation to the religions and to the churches respectively. The pattern of approach roughly corresponds with that found in Dr. Gensichen’s Glaube für die Welt, a work that immediately established itself as a classic in its field and to which naturally frequent and favorable references are made by the contributors in the Fest­schrift.

It is difficult to mention names. Suffice it to say that the articles here provide a wealth of information about the issues with which they deal. His-
Towards a Church of the Poor.


The central agencies of the World Council of Churches have the poor very firmly in the center of their theological and practical activities. At least since 1966 the issue of justice for the powerless, marginalized majority of the Third World nations has been the focal point for both theoretical debate and controversial decisions.

The Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) brought together a small working party of theological perspectives and contemporary concerns are given their due consideration. One is impressed by the diversity of thought reflected in this unique presentation of "the theology of mission today" (the subtitle of the volume). Fide pro mundi vita is a convincing testimony to the truth that, in the words of one of the contributors (W. Kohler), "nothing is more important than mission," because the task of mission, rightly understood, is to help people everywhere to realize their destiny and their identity. These essays deserve the serious attention of anyone seeking a deeper grasp of the problems—both theological and practical—with which the world mission of the church is wrestling in our time. Taken together they are a worthy tribute to a man who is universally recognized as one of the world's leading missiologists today.

Strangely enough, the list of writers includes no person from the Third World. We regret this omission. It ought to have been possible to secure contributions also from non-Western scholars, especially from Dr. Gensichen's former students in India. We also miss an overall assessment of the distinguished Heidelberg professor's achievements in the twin fields of Missions- und Religionswissenschaft, including his outstanding contribution to the formation and development of the International Association for Mission Studies. (The "Word of Greeting" indicated in the table of contents to be found on p. 9 is, at least in the reviewer's copy, nonexistent.)

—Olav Guttorm Myklebust

Olav Guttorm Myklebust, Emeritus Professor of Missiology at the Free Theological Faculty in Oslo, was the founding director of the Egede Institute for Missionary Research, and also founding secretary-treasurer of the International Association for Mission Studies.

New Books on COURAGE,
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The Voice of Blood has a place in the contemporary memory of the church. A new martyrology is emerging that is not a dull rehearsal of ancient names and forgotten places. Rutilio Grande, John Bosco-Burnier, Chris Shepherd-Smith, John Conway, and Martin Thomas, all Jesuits and all martyred in a six-month period in 1976-77, were unlikely heroes. They were simply persons committed to serve God and their fellows whatever that cost might be. We could add Steve Biko, Oscar Romero, Nestor Paz, and a cloud of witnesses of the 1970s and the first months of 1980.

Rutilio Grande, S.J., Salvadoran, came to realize that standing for the truth was a flirtation with death. He worked closely with the later slain Archbishop Oscar Romero. He had proclaimed in the Cathedral of San Salvador to the highest government officials and the diplomatic corps that Jesus was the foremost revolutionary of all times. He said that Jesus called for conversion and the transformation of all of human existence. A once shy, self-doubting man, Father Grande walked with his eyes only on the Lord. Within seven months of his brutal death, thirty-three young men applied for seminary training to his province.

John Conway, Martin Thomas, and Chris Shepherd-Smith, and four Dominican Sisters (why did the author not lift up equally their sacrifice?) died in the night at a mission compound north of Salisbury, Rhodesia, at the guns of terrorists. These martyrs trusted that all would be well "since we have not taken sides." Yet a terrorist responded to the question, "What do you want here?" with four words: "We want our country."

John Bosco-Burnier, Brazilian, a "frontier" vice-provincial in San Felix, had been a less-than-successful master of novices. Yet when the hour came to confront an army corporal in front of a tiny country jail and demand the release of two women held under torture, Bosco-Burnier stepped forward "slope-shouldered, squat, surely uncompromising...." He answered God's call like Isaiah, "Here am I, send me."

—John H. Sinclair

Readings in Philippine Church History.


In this interesting volume, Father Schumacher (an American Jesuit, now a naturalized Filipino citizen) introduces the broad panorama of Philippine church history as seen through the eyes of those who either made it or witnessed its unfolding process. As the author frankly states, this present work is modeled after the volume titled Readings in Philippine History, by the doyen of Filipino Catholic church historians, the late Horacio de la Costa, S.J. Those who appreciated that volume would find in Father Schumacher's present work a parallel story of nearly four hundred years of Christianity in the Philippines, ending with the year 1945.

Chronologically woven together is a wide collection of excerpts judiciously chosen from a good number of sources, mostly from archives in Spain, Rome, and the Vatican. Thus the chief value of this present work lies in its making accessible to the English reader for the first time many primary sources for Philippine church history which otherwise would have been available only in the original Latin or Spanish, not to mention Tagalog.

Father Schumacher divides his compilation of documents into eleven chapters, introducing each section with an appropriate paragraph or two. Starting with a chapter on the Spanish Church in the Indies, the volume car-

of about twenty people in 1978 to reflect on the main tendencies apparent today in relations between the poor and the churches, and to make proposals to the churches designed to ... strengthen their efforts to play their part in the development of the peoples to whom they belong and whom they are seeking to serve. This book is the fruit of their labors.

The study comes in three parts. The first is devoted to a description and analysis of the plight of the poor. Divided into seven chapters it deals with the crude reality of poverty, the mechanisms by which affluence and poverty are simultaneously created, signs of greater Christian commitment to reversing the situation of the poor, and suggestions for ways forward in the struggle against poverty. The second part explores the present reality and future possibilities for Christians in the light of the existence of the poor within, alongside, and over against the church. It includes two theological appendices, one from Gutierrez and the other from the 1979 Asian Theological Conference. The final part looks to the future and makes concrete proposals for changes in the life, witness, and beliefs of the churches, which would enable them to free resources for the struggle to create a new society.

In the first part of the book several examples from around the world are cited to illustrate the various arguments. This is to give weight to the claim that the group embarked on a method of action-reflection. However, later on the study reverts to a more turf, ecclesiastical style.

The argument is based on the assumption that poverty must be felt as a scandal with both a clearly definable cause and a real possibility of solution. It criticizes the West—and many Westernized churches—for being willing to listen to only its own wisdom. These points are strong and represent the current consensus of World Council of Churches leadership. Three weaknesses I felt, were the relative absence of signs of encouragement, a depressingly moralistic tone, and too much repetition in the denunciation of theologies that legitimize oppression. The bibliographical material in the notes is extensive and well chosen.

—Andrew Kirk
ries the story of the church in the Philippines through nearly four centuries of trials, turmoils, tribulations, and triumphs. Valuable footnotes help explain otherwise obscure terms or dated concepts, while a glossary at the end provides the English reader with a good tool for understanding Latin, Spanish, Filipino, and technical terms used in the texts.

The story told, however, is practically only that of the Catholic Church in the Philippines; the Aglipayans and the Protestants entering the scene only insofar as they illustrated (or aggravated) the internal chaos in the Catholic Church at the turn of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, in this volume, the author has called forth a host of witnesses to tell a story as only they can tell it, and—given the limitations Father Schmacher himself acknowledged—he has placed all students of Philippine church history deeply in his debt.

—T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr.

T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr., a Filipino, is Professor of Christian History and concurrently Dean of the Divinity School of St. Mary’s University (Dumaguete City, Philippines) and Area Dean for the Philippines of the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology.

The Church and the National Security State.


José Comblin has in this volume provided the reader with a useful summary of the development of liberation theology in Latin America. He has also highlighted the new approach and method for engaging in theological reflection which liberation theology espouses. But that is not the main focus of Comblin’s new book.

In this volume Comblin articulates with clarity and much perception the growing “new” phenomenon that is emerging from the present political context of many Latin American countries: the National Security State. He explores the human and social pathology that national security systems promote by analyzing the ideologies that they embody, the conception of human freedom and responsibility that they foster, and the perverse social ecology that they both engender and seek to maintain. Comblin also explores ways in which the local churches themselves on an official level have at times been co-opted to serve the ideologies upon which national security systems are built.

After considering the churches’ past and present complicity with such ideologies, the author offers his reflections upon the role and mission of the church in Latin America. It is a rewarding book to read and offers the reader an articulate presentation of a growing social evil whose consequences are devastating regardless of both personal life and the human social environment.

—Gerald Persha, M.M.

Theology Encounters Revolution.


J. Andrew Kirk provides, in this brief book, a very fine introduction not only to a theology of revolution, but also to the history of “revolutionary theology” across the centuries. Even if a potential reader were not too interested in revolution, or the theology of revolution, this book would provide a helpful entry into the thought of Marx, Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Moltmann, Metz, Hromadka, Cone, and others. The lay person will find it most useful. Students of theology at some depth may find these sketches unduly brief and incomplete, but they too will want especially to

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Gerald Persha, M.M. worked in Venezuela (1970–76) and is now Assistant Professor of Theology at Maryknoll Seminary.
wrestle with the final section of the book on "Where Do We Go from Here?"

Not only does Kirk reveal in his writing a carefully disciplined mind when dealing with theological subjects and hermeneutics, but also there is an evident influence on his writing from his experience in the Third World. He spent ten years in Argentina and the impact of Latin American liberation theology is clear, even when he rejects some aspects of it.

To this reviewer's mind there are several particularly important reasons to read this volume:

1. For contemporary faith to be relevant it simply has to face the meaning of revolution. Even the most conservative theologian cannot presume to be aloof from the issues of change, violence and nonviolence, the biblical basis of revolutionary thought, and the ideological pressures of liberation theologies, which challenge the status quo in both society and theology.

2. The way in which Kirk analyzes the current ideological arguments for the use of violence challenges those who too easily assume, along the lines of a "just-war" theory, that violence for the sake of liberation is justified by the structural or overt violence of oppressors. Whether or not one is convinced by his arguments, they are well worth confronting.

3. Kirk's effort in the final section of the book to outline a hermeneutical approach to the question of "Is there revolution in revelation?" in an admittedly preliminary, and far from definitive, way provides a basis for considerable thought and, one hopes, biblical honesty. I, for one, found it stimulating and thought-provoking.

Since current conflicts between "ecumenicals" and "evangelicals" are very much with us, however unnecessary, it is refreshing to read a book such as this from a genuinely evangelical author who has an ecumenical breadth of mind that invites all of us, if we are open to it, to renew and revamp our understandings with some careful biblical understanding and integrity. This book is well worth reading. I commend it most especially to those who eschew heavy theological tomes but are willing to take on readable and lucid expositions of biblical-theological issues that make eminent common sense.

—Eugene L. Stockwell

Eugene L. Stockwell is Associate General Secretary for Overseas Ministries, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Communicating Christ Cross-culturally.


Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective.


These monographs in the "Contemporary Evangelical Perspective" series are welcome contributions to missiology, communication theory, and anthropology, and will be read with benefit by scholar and student of like and different theological persuasion. Both works are written for and by persons of "the theological mainstream of evangelical Christianity" (Grunlan and Mayers, p. 13).

Hesselgrave's volume is aptly described as "an encyclopedic work." The entire book "relates to the determination of meaning" (p. 46). Beginning with an analysis of New Testament terms used in connection with the apostolic ministry, Hesselgrave, a former missionary to Japan and currently professor of mission and director of the School of World Mission and Evangelism, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, proceeds to discuss communication as the divine imperative to humans. The science of communication has identified the symbols and subtleties by which meaning is shared, and has developed a number of models useful to the Christian worker.

Cultures include world-views, perhaps the most effective starting point for missionary communication. Defining six major world-views—naturalistic, tribal, Hindu-Buddhistic, Chinese, monotheistic, and syncretist/multireligion—Hesselgrave presents a schematic summary of the Christian message to each. Recognizing that communication is verbal and non-verbal, the author develops one of the relevant sections, 'seven aspects of the behavioral dimension' (pp. 293–316), valuable precisely because emphasis usually is placed upon verbalization to the neglect of other forms of behavior. All communication occurs within social structures; hence, just as the first rule of teaching or preaching is to know one's audience, so, too, the missionary must know his or her audience and their social context.

Grunlan, assistant professor of social sciences at St. Paul Bible College, and Mayers, professor of linguistics and anthropology at the International Linguistics Center, Wycliffe, and adjunct professor of linguistics, Texas-Arlington, attempt "to introduce the reader to the discipline of cultural anthropology, not only as an academic discipline, but also as an effective tool for the missionary, pastor, and layman in their task of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ" (p. 14). Their topics include subjects standard for introductory texts, and also "Anthropology and Missions," "Anthropological Research," and "Anthropology and the Bible." Citing examples of problems and successes encountered by missionaries, tourists, and American politicians, the authors sympathetically address the phenomena of culture shock and cultural boundaries.

Grunlan and Mayers develop a strategy of "biculuralism" (p. 29) to reconcile the positions of biblical absolutism and cultural relativism. This strategy affirms the unique position of the Bible for theology and behavior, while commending the Christian to approach members of other societies and practitioners of other cultures with respect. Christian workers participating in different cultural milieus must develop "ethnotheologies" with their hosts, "relating the gospel in cultural patterns relevant to the receiving culture" (p. 58).

Exceptions must be taken by this
reviewer to their treatment and statements on several subjects. First, a summary of the basic principles of evolution are presented (p. 39), but a thorough analysis of science and Christian faith as alternative and not necessarily conflicting—indeed, complementary approaches to the universe, life, and society, would be helpful. Such a treatment would provide a more adequate coverage of the biological bases of human culture. Second, it is this reviewer's opinion that Harris's *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* is not "the only recent history of anthropological theory" and is not "a good place to begin to get a historical overview of the field of anthropology" (p. 71). Harris is quite polemic and assumes familiarity with issues, which he often glosses over. During the past decade, a dozen or so "histories" have appeared, among them Fred W. Vogel's *A History of Ethnology* and John Honigmann's *The Development of Anthropological Ideas*, any one of which would provide a much better introduction to the history of anthropology. Third, while the authors discuss the importance of technology and economics (pp. 133–34) and the work of Julian Steward in cultural ecology (pp. 121–22), the book suffers a serious deficiency in its treatment of the linkage between habitat-technology-social organization-ideology, and a total omission of systems theory. Finally, language is not "always verbal"; indeed, language is a cultural construct inferred from speech, the behavioral form, which is always verbal.

—Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr.

**The Contagious Congregation. Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth.**


Hunter's book is a synthesis of Donald A. McGavran's concept of evangelizing "receptive" peoples and Donald O. Soper's strategies for communicating the gospel to "resistant" secular people. It is targeted for the mainline Protestant audience of North America. In a sense the title of this book is misleading, since it deals not with the congregation itself—which conceivably could be or become contagious—but with conceptual and programmatic aspects of outreach.

Dr. Hunter is the secretary for evangelism of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. He has been a pastor and also professor of evangelism at the Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University.

The author is optimistic that such churches as the United Methodist can and will "once again become a contagious movement" (p. 19), and his book is offered to help this become a reality. The beginning point of his approach is his definition of evangelism as appealing to people to become Christian disciples, but in a process that may begin at any of four points: "Evangelizing happens when the RECEIVER (recipient, respondent) turns (1) to Christ, (2) to the Christian message and ethic, (3) to a Christian congregation, and (4) to the world, in love and mission—in any order" (pp. 30–31).

Paul R. Orjala spent fourteen years in Haiti as a missionary and has now served sixteen years as Professor of Missions at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri.

Hunter contends that the older deductive model of Christian witnessing is inadequate today. This is an approach in which "an umbrella commitment to a general gospel" is called for with the assumption that the person will later work out the personal and social implications—which many people fail to do. He proposes an inductive model as more "indigenous" to the modern mind, which would start by showing how the gospel is relevant to an individual's specific need or interest—assuming a background knowledge of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs—and then proceed by using this beachhead to lead a person ultimately to a total commitment to Jesus Christ.

After a middle section on communicating the gospel, which exegetes Aristotle's model of rhetoric and Soper's strategies for reaching secular people, the last third of the book relates in a very practical way to discovering receptive people and steps to the growth of the local congregation.

The prime value of Hunter's book is its insights into the psychology of evangelism, which he has garnered from many sources and put together in his own unique way. Do not look for a biblical or theological treatment—his approach is conceptual and applied. It is as author of possibly the first book-length treatment of receptivity that Hunter has made a noteworthy contribution to missiology.

—Paul R. Orjala

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Liberation Theology: An Evangelical view from the Third World.


The title, table of contents, length, and price of Kirk’s Liberation Theology would lead one to expect that it would be the most comprehensive study of the theology of liberation published thus far in English. Though it proves to be less, the author does achieve what he sets out to do, namely, to engage in “a critical dialogue with the theology of liberation” (actually with some theologians of liberation), to analyze how theology should be done “in a situation marked by exploitation, institutionalized violence and increasing poverty,” and to set forth an alternative hermeneutic to that of the representatives he cites.

Herein, however, lies one of the major problems with the proposed dialogue. Kirk, who taught theology in Argentina for twelve years, limits the scope of the exchange by citing the works of five Latin American Roman Catholic theologians—Hugo Assmann, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Juan Luis Segundo, Severino Croatto, and José Porfirio Miranda—who, Kirk contends, are “the chief protagonists of the theology of liberation and its most faithful representatives.” He virtually ignores other Latin American Roman Catholic representatives such as Enrique Dussel, Rafael Ávila, Leonardo Boff, and J. C. Scannone, and does not discuss in any significant detail Protestant, women, Black, or Chicano theologians of liberation.

The strength of the book lies not so much in Kirk’s analysis of the hermeneutical method of the five theologians, but in his reversing of their theological procedure and the presentation of his alternative hermeneutic of sola scriptura, which does not mean Scripture alone, but rather, “that the task of modern theology should be a consciously critical reflection on God’s Word in the light of a contemporary praxis of liberation.” Otherwise, Kirk insists, the Bible becomes a dispensable tool rather than an indispensable source of revelation. He agrees with the criticism made repeatedly by liberation theologians that modern exegetes are far more aware of the cultural conditioning of the biblical writers than they, the exegetes, are aware of their own cultural conditioning. But, he contends, liberation theologians have “not fully considered the Bible’s profound questioning of every pre-understanding,” including that of liberation theology.

The chapter on the historical background would be adequate were the antecedents only Roman Catholic. Unfortunately, there is more to the story. Is Kirk unaware of the Protestant antecedents? Moreover, he repeats the common assumption that Paulo Freire “coined the word conscientização”—which Freire himself denies—and then translates it as “making aware.” Conscientização does involve becoming aware of the contradictions in society. But it also involves commitment and action to change these contradictions, action that is dialectically altered by critical reflection on praxis.

Migliore’s Called to Freedom is a concise and cogent reformulation of five basic Christian doctrines—the Scripture, Jesus Christ, God and the Trinity, the Christian life, and the Christian hope—from the perspective of “God’s liberating activity in which we are called to take part.” Though the reinterpretations are brief, they are not superficial. The chapters on Scripture and the Christian hope expose the contemporary alternatives to freedom and are superbly written. The discussion of liberation from the bondage of death is a powerful and persuasive call to understand the this-worldly implications of the kingdom of God as it stands “in opposition to every acceptance of death that amounts to renunciation of suffering and injustice.”

Though admittedly an introduction to the theme, Migliore, professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, has initiated a stimulating systematic theology of liberation.

—Alan Neely

Eastern Paths and the Christian Way.


I first met Paul Clasper in 1957 at a missionary training conference at Allegheny College. Fresh from his first term in Burma, he conveyed an enthusiasm for mission and a cultural sensitivity that impressed and inspired those of us who were “going out to the field” for the first time. Through the years Dr. Clasper and I have touched bases from time to time, and my initial impression has always been reinforced, as it was again upon reading Eastern Paths and the Christian Way. As a historian of religion Dr. Clasper has been a sympathetic student of the religious traditions about which he writes. In this book they are Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism (chaps. 2–4). As a theologian, having “passed over” to those faith expressions, he “comes back” with renewed insight into his own faith understanding and enthusiasm for both the uniqueness and the universality of Christianity (chaps. 5 and 7). In the book he also places his own approach to interreligious dialogue within the context of other models (chap. 6). These include the “dungeon approach,” which consigns all non-Christian to darkness (if not damnation!); the “round-table” stance, which relativizes all religious truth; the “scientific-stage” position, which sees all traditional religious formulations as outmoded; the “higher synthesis” of

Donald K. Sweareng, Professor of Asian and Comparative Religion at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, was a United Presbyterian fraternal worker in Thailand, 1957–60.
liberal Christians of the likes of Arnold Toynbee, F. S. C. Northrup, and William Ernest Hocking; and "Christ-the-fulfillment" approach of those who see Jesus the Christ as "the summation and fulfillment" approach of those who see the richest tendencies of [other religious] crystalization of the highest insights and quests and insights are embodied in these other paths," (p. 111). In my judgment and by his own admission ("The Christian Gospel . . . fulfills whatever God-given quest and insights are embodied in these other paths," p. 66). Dr. Clasper's own position stands closest to the last approach. Allowing for some significant differences among them, Dr. Clasper would seem to include Justin Martyr, C. S. Lewis, Karl Rahner, J. N. Farquhar, and John Dunne in this camp. Throughout the volume each contributes to the author's own positive interpretation of dialogue.

Having indicated by appreciative description the scope and content of the book, and having suggested the author's general posture toward interreligious dialogue, I propose to reflect critically on Dr. Clasper's book from my own dialogical perspective. At its best, dialogue is an entry into the cultural institutions and faith expressions of particular traditions and religious persons. This calls for the kind of experience and assiduous study that Dr. Clasper has had and made. But what do we do with this experience and study? I would argue that we try to convey the complexity, dynamism, multivalency, uniqueness, and universality that we have encountered, which—regardless of the nature of the truth claims—characterizes all religious traditions. Unfortunately, despite its sensitivity, Eastern Paths and the Christian Way fails to convey these qualities. The chapter on Christianity—three times the length of each chapter on Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism—evidences a much greater sensitivity to diversity within the tradition (cf. p. 65) than is true of the other chapters. The author uses such phrases as "the Hindu believes" and "the Hindu feels," and in attempting to "unfold the central vision" of Theravada Buddhism he rather unimaginatively summarizes in seven pages the life of the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, and Nirvana. Who is the Hindu? How would a Ramanuja respond to Dr. Clasper's rather neo-Vedantist interpretation of Hinduism? Without denying the universality of the Theravada formulae of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, is the vitality and diversity of the living tradition conveyed by such a recapitulation? Or do we not, thereby, so neatly and concisely package the tradition as to undermine the very possibility of encounter and growth for which Dr. Clasper pleads in his last chapter? In short, and to be as provocative as I can in dialogue with an old friend, I would argue that Eastern Paths and the Christian Way does not live up to Dr. Clasper's dialectic of "passing over" and "coming back": "To 'pass over' is to enter a new world; to 'come back' is to return a different person" (p. 126).

Finally, although Dr. Clasper does not take upon himself the burden of working out a methodology of dialogue, more attention needs to be given to this enterprise. Many different perspectives are being taken, ranging from firsthand descriptions of empathetic encounter (e.g., Klaus Klostermeier's inspiring In the Paradise of Krishna), to philosophers of religion (e.g., John Hick, Ninian Smart, Peter Slater, William Christian) and theologians (e.g., John Cobb, Wilfred Cantwell Smith), to anthropologists and historians of religion. I am not advocating that we should make interreligious dialogue into a metatheoretical inquiry; however, I am convinced that in addition to in-depth and in-breadth encounter and study we need to work harder at developing and refining our analytical tools.

—Donald K. Swearer
Asian Christian Theology:
Emerging Themes


This book has two important contributions to make: one is to enrich, stimulate, and nurture theological thought in the West; the other, to encourage further development of indigenous theology and contextualize the gospel in the Asian milieu.

The book is a collection of articles written by living Asian Christians who are active in church and educational life. The topics of the articles deal with social issues, human rights, ecology, development, systematization of Christian theology in the context of Asian ideology, theology of mission, and Christian encounter with other beliefs, and include some important theological statements of Asian churches in protest to political oppression.

This is a useful textbook for learning about contemporary Asian theological thinking and the status of Asian churches. The book is lacking, however, in the area of Christian reflection on the encounter with Islam in Asia, except for the brief “Joint Catholic-Protestant Statement on Christian Presence among Muslim Filipinos,” in the appendix. It is also weak in terms of articles written by “evangelical” theologians in Asia, with only one article by Saphir Athyal.

The editor of this collection of theological papers is an experienced American missionary and professor of theology at Silliman University in the Philippines. He also taught at St. Andrews Theological Seminary in Manila, Tainan Theological College in Taiwan, and Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines.

—Wi Jo Kang

Decolonizing Theology: A Caribbean Perspective.


Dr. Noel Erskine is a Baptist minister from Jamaica, who received his basic and theological education there, and served in the pastorate of his church before coming to the United States for graduate studies, where he now lives and teaches at Emory University.

This book is in the main an excursion of the contribution of the early Baptists in Jamaica to the quest for personhood and identity of the masses of people of African descent there, during the time of slavery and the early years after emancipation. Interspersed in this excursion (the first six chapters) are some descriptions of African traditional religions, black/liberation theologies of the Americas, and revivalism and Rastafarianism in Jamaica. There are also some references to Moltmann’s theology of hope. It is only in the final chapter that Dr. Erskine deals with his suggestion for a Caribbean theology.

He states that his book is “an attempt to relate Caribbean spirituality to other Third World experience” (p. 1). The name “Caribbean” occurs frequently as a focus of concern, but in fact the real concern of the book is about Jamaica. Virtually nothing is said of the spirituality of the other peoples of the Caribbean.

His treatment of “Third World experiences” is rather disappointing. He purports to write a theology for the Caribbean today, yet omits any substantial critiques of the contemporary realities of life in the Third World or in the Caribbean. He gives a cursory decription of African religious thought (pp. 33f.) and occasionally refers to the works of some Latin American theologians. It is as if slavery and manumission are the only experiences that make Jamaicans what they are today. It is not surprising, therefore, that he regards identity as the greatest need of contemporary Jamaicans.

In the final chapter, Dr. Erskine joins with others from the Caribbean to call for a “Caribbean theology” as a corrective to the colonial theology in the Caribbean. He suggests that that theology must be a “theology of freedom.” But what he means by freedom is not clear. He differentiates between freedom and liberation and claims the former to be the goal of the latter (p. 118). In essence, however, this “theology of freedom” seems to be a syncretism of Moltmann’s theology of hope and the black/liberation theologies of the Americas. Unfortunately, this suggestion is not developed by the author but remains as a pointer toward the future development of a truly Caribbean theology.

—Albert Aymer

Asia’s Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology.


The title of the book captures the theme of an Asian theological conference held in Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, in January 1979, and convened by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians. Participants included church leaders, theologians, and people from grassroots organizations. The conference was unique in beginning with a three-day “live-in experience” in villages, slums, and plantations on the island of Sri Lanka, which reflects the cultural, religious, and social realities of Asia. The results of this inductive case-study approach provided the starting point for the discussions. The book includes six major conference papers by representatives of four Asian countries, the most provocative being the one by Aloysius Pieris, S.J., director of the Center for Research and Encounter, near Colombo, under the title, “Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation: Some Religio-Cultural Guide-
lines.” In addition, the volume includes preparatory papers and postmortem assessments as well as descriptive reports on the live-in experience.

At the conference there were obvious tensions between professional theologians and people involved in grassroots action groups, between those within the church structures and those actively involved in the political life of their countries, and between the emphasis on the religio-cultural and the sociopolitical dimensions of Asian reality. For example, Father Pieris stressed the point that an Asian theology of liberation could not avoid the "multi-faceted religiosity” of the Asian context. The condition of being a tiny minority in Asia, he said, should move the Asian Christians to create a “Third World theology that will radically differ from the South American and the African theologies” (p. 80). But the Filipino delegates, led by Carlos Abesamis, S.J., sharply replied with their emphasis on “socio-political liberation.” It is clear that neither the Sri Lankans nor the Filipinos completely denied the other’s emphasis, but each group was concerned that their emphasis did not receive sufficient attention.

Perhaps the real significance of this Asian conference was that it exposed the growing resistance among Asian theologians to what some of them perceive as the “dogmatic approach” of the Latin American liberation theologians. In the words of Pieris, "A Liberation Theopraxis in Asia which uses only the Marxist tools of social analysis will remain un-Asian and ineffective till it integrates the psychological tools of introspection which our sages have discovered” (p. 88). One of the Latin American fraternal delegates left the conference with the distinct impression that, “although we can distinguish some common elements of a theology in the poor countries of the so-called ‘Third World,’ we cannot talk at this moment of one theology of the Third World. It would be better to talk about the theologies in the Third World” (pp. 195f.).

—Douglas J. Elwood

Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order.


Discovery of the “hunger problem” by North American churches has given rise to a veritable library of books, many of which cover essentially the same ground while aiming at essentially the same constituency of conscience. James B. McGinnis, a founder and member of the Institute for the Study of Peace and Justice, has contributed yet another title to this growing collection. This book’s uniqueness does not lie so much in original insight or ground-breaking research as in its encyclopedic introduction of the reader to the wide-ranging resources that now exist for those who are interested in serious study and action.

The book’s subtitle points to the roots of the hunger problem in global economic and political structures. Affirming the new international economic order theme, McGinnis argues that "underdevelopment is a social or political problem requiring far-reaching changes in the economic institutions and arrangements whereby the First World continues to dominate the Third World” (p. 258). The economic problems of the Third World’s billions are not rooted in their inadequacies or population-growth rates but in the dominance of the First World. But these are not simply relationships between rich and poor lands as such. There is also need for a new “internal economic order” within many of the Third World countries themselves.

A certain eclecticism in the book’s use of a wide range of theoretical models and resources occasionally frustrates the reader who is in search of a unified conception of the present inter-
national economic order. For instance, in dealing with the multinational corporations, the author is content to outline the by now familiar problems and to indicate a number of strategies for dealing with them. The "tone" of this discussion suggests that the multinationals are to be opposed as such, but the book does not provide a breadth of analysis to back up the sweeping conclusions that are sometimes implied by the "tone" and the action proposals. Similarly, in dealing with the Nestlé controversy, the author clearly supports the boycott—and suggests various modes of implementation—but without suggesting the circumstances, if any, under which it could be determined that the objectives of the boycott had been reached and it could be ended. But this book (with a Teacher's Book available as a companion resource) will be very useful for serious study groups.

—J. Philip Wogaman

The Ordeal of Love. C. F. Andrews and India.


Three Christian missionaries have so far been celebrated with a postage stamp in independent India, the apostle Thomas, St. Francis Xavier, and C. F. Andrews, these last two standing at beginning and end of a historic phase, "the Vasco da Gama era." Andrews, moreover, was intensely aware of how the historical context determined the requirements of mission, to the point of feeling compelled to break with the Cambridge Mission to Delhi after ten years in India, and thereafter "participating in the life" (to use Wilfred Cantwell Smith's phrase—Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, April 1969) of the two greatest figures in the emerging nation, Gandhi and Tagore.

Hugh Tinker, professor of politics at Lancaster, United Kingdom, discovered Andrews while studying a particular phenomenon in British imperialism, indenture, "a new system of slavery," which Andrews, "virtually on his own," brought to an end. But the latter's extraordinary personality and achievements could not be confined in such a narrow frame, and so Tinker, fascinated, was drawn into this full-length biography. It is not the first. What distinguishes it is the huge body of data on which it is based, and the masterly way in which Tinker has handled it by separating out and emphasizing two themes, Andrews's capacity for eliciting friendship and love across the barriers of race and culture, and his penetration, as an outsider, of circles of power and influence. On his unusual personality, which helped him to do these things (though at a cost, to which the "ordeal" of the title points), Tinker is especially illuminating.

Because this book was written "as much for the humanist as for those with a religious faith," much that would be of great interest to students of mission is omitted, but that such a book could be successfully written points to a major aspect of Andrews's distinctive significance.

—Daniel O'Connor


In her dissertation Regina Pacis Meyer, a member of the missionary Community of the Franciscan Sisters in Thun, Switzerland, treats with painstaking systematic and exegetical skill a central question of the present missiological debate in Roman Catholicism: How does the modern optimistic expectation of universal salvation agree with the missionary obligation? Vatican Council II in its relevant declarations, especially Lumen Gentium and Ad Gentes, has maintained both ideas side by side without offering a theological mediation in this apparent tension. Where the council remained silent, Rahner dared to speak. He offered his own speculative solution, through which he first paved the ground for Vatican II and now interprets its rudimentary statements. He does so in his famous theory about the "anonymous Christians" and in his consequent evaluation of the other religions as "legitimate ways of salvation" for their members. Both concepts have been developed enthusiastically by his worldwide school, but severely criticized by systematic theologians like H. U. von Balthasar and by missiologists who felt that they choke the missionary motivation.

Sister Regina wants to show, first, that contrary to such criticism the idea of unchurched humankind consisting largely of anonymous Christians forms the core of a new theology of mission and even provides a better motivation. Second, she tries to substantiate this dogmatic theory through an exegetical study in the Epistle to the Ephesians, whose universal ecclesiology according to her comes closest to Rahner's way of thinking. The value of this intellectually demanding but equally rewarding book seems to me to be threefold: The first part is a concise presentation and clarifying comment on Rahner's controversial concepts, and places them into the context of his own understanding of mission, which he never unfolded but for which he contributed much scattered material. According to his speculative existential-anthropological theology, Christ is the given fulfillment of humankind's transcendental disposition. Saving grace is provided to every human being both by God's eternal will of salvation and by Christ's assumption of all humankind in his incarnation; but it is aimed at coming to its categorical explication and social representation in the organized church.

The exegetical second part is a note-
worthy unfolding of Ephesians’ missiological implication. The author proves convincingly that by the ecclesiological transformation of the cosmological idea ofpleroma the church through its very nature is given an apostolic function and equipment for the fulfillment of the divine plan to unify the universe in Christ.

The third part, which tries to show the Christological and ecclesiological analogies between the “two theological authors,” reveals to the critical reader that the author arrives at a result contrary to her purpose and claim; by conscientiously avoiding the temptation of an artificial harmonization she forces herself to admit the divergences between the soteriological outlooks of Rahner and the Epistle to the Ephesians: (1) Rahner’s existentialism implies a realized eschatology, while in Ephesians the futuric dimension, too, is maintained; (2) the significance of the cross as the central salvific event is veiled by Rahner, while in Ephesians it provides the basis of the redemptive rule of the uplifted Christ; (3) faith, in Rahner’s theology, is reduced genealogically to people’s becoming aware of their already existing communion with Christ, while in Ephesians it is the effective acceptance of forgiving grace—attacked to baptism and derived from Christ’s atoning death.

Thus, in spite of all alleged or real analogies, the reader (unlike the writer) is led to the conclusion that also the Epistle to the Ephesians—even in its illegitimate isolation from the corpus Paulinum and New Testament writings in general—does not provide proper exegetical support for Rahner’s “anonymous Christians” nor for any other theory of soteriological universalism.

—Peter Beyerhaus

Marists and Melanesians: A History of Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands.


Historian Hugh Laracy of the University of Auckland has given us a well-written and carefully researched study describing the activities of Marist missionaries in the Solomon Islands. However, if you are looking to discover the Melanesians’ understanding, interpretation, and response to these activities, then this book will disappoint you.

Laracy focuses on names, places, and dates, and with an occasional anecdote revealing missionary foibles, gives us an informative and interesting study. However, I would have preferred an ethno-historical study that dealt less with the chronicling of missionary activities and more with the cultural dynamics of change resulting from Marist and Melanesian interaction.

Laracy begins with a summary of the main features of traditional religion in the Solomons. Against this backdrop he then discusses the commencement of Marist activities in 1845. Having been outflanked by both Protestant missionaries and European entrepreneurs in Melanesia, they were anxious to establish themselves in Melanesia before the emissaries of Error and Mammon arrived. However, in the spirit of their time, they were concerned more with seeking personal holiness, maintaining community life, and perpetuating a semimonastic routine than with fostering effective cross-cultural communication and winning converts. After a decade of failure and the loss of eight lives, the Marists retreated from Melanesia in 1855.

After their initial debacle the Marists returned to the Solomon Islands nearly a half-century later, in 1898. In the intervening years not only had

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Marist models of mission undergone modification, but the cultural context to which they came had changed significantly. In this more receptive climate Marist strategy was to construct and maintain mission stations. In their evangelizing activities they perceived that their greatest enemy was not paganism as much as Protestantism. However, by the end of this period (1942) they counted 30,000 baptized Catholics. Contributing to this numerical growth was the Marist understanding of conversion, as Laracy notes (pp. 66-67): "The islanders' conversion was made to appear less a break with indigenous custom than adaptation of it by use of overt similarities between Catholicism and traditional religious beliefs: the externalisation of spiritual power in material objects such as the Eucharist, blessed medals, Holy Water and rosary beads, the belief in life after death and the practice of honouring the dead."

The last third of Laracy's study focuses on the way Marists responded to the period of Melanesian ferment following the devastation of World War II in the Solomons. For example, he gives a good description of the Marching Rule movement that so dominated parts of the British Solomons.

Laracy ends his interesting study with a discussion of "Solomon Islands Catholicism." Whereas this could have been his richest chapter, it is in fact the most sparse in both presentation (eight pages) and analysis. Instead of discussing what it means to contemporary Solomon Islanders to be Catholics in the Marist tradition, Laracy dishes out more facts and figures. This is fine for historical documentation, but inadequate for gaining an understanding of the social and religious significance of Solomon Islands Catholicism.

—Darrell Whiteman

The Hard Awakening


This book, on the tragic experiences of the tiny Episcopal Church in Iran since the 1979 revolution in that country, takes its title from a couplet by the Iranian classical poet Hafiz: "Love seemed at first an easy thing/ But ah! the hard awakening." Hassan B. Dehqani-Tafti, the book's author, bishop of that church since 1961 and the first Iranian to hold that office, is now in exile in London. Love, as expressed through the Christian witness and service of his church since it became a diocese in 1912, and throughout the previous fifty years of Anglican missionary work, was seldom if ever "an easy thing." But the church's rude "awakening" after the establishment of the new Islamic Republic in Iran has been nonetheless traumatic.

Why should the members of so small a church (less than 4,000 all told, including the congregations of British expatriates) have been subjected to such an outpouring of suspicion and wrath from Muslim extremists, ultimately reflected in decrees of the government itself? Partly because of the Episcopal Church's long associations with the British, no doubt, but also because its Iranian membership is composed very largely of former Muslims. As this reviewer noted in an article, "Is Christianity at Home in Iran?" (October 1979), Muslim protection of Christians as "people of the book" does not extend to converts from Islam.

The name of Dehqani-Tafti has been familiar to many Christians in the West since he published Design of My World (London: Lutterworth Press and New York: Association Press, 1959), a booklet describing his pilgrimage to Christian faith and call to the Episcopal ministry. The Hard Awakening is written in an equally personal and intimate style, much of it as a diary. He begins with an account of "The Gathering Storm" (1978), his own explanation of the Shah's political decline and Ayatollah Khomeini's assumption of power. The brief chapters that follow deal with Western missionaries in Iran; the bishop's reflections on the accomplishments of the Episcopal Church there, and his years of service to it; his frustrated struggles after the revolution to preserve the church's property rights, and even its legal right to exist; the restrictions on his freedom of movement and attempts on his life; documents forged to "prove" the "anti-revolutionary" activities of his church; the agony of his exile; and the murder in Tehran of his only son, Bahram.

The Hard Awakening is not a systematic, thoroughgoing analysis of the Iranian revolution. Neither does it represent the overall experience of the Christian minorities in that land. It is, however, an important tract of our time—a very poignant record of the tragedy that has befallen one group of Christians whose contributions to modern Iran through schools, medical services, welfare, and spiritual uplift have long been quite disproportionate to their numbers.

—Norman A. Horner

Mission-Church Dynamics:
How to Change Bicultural Tensions into Dynamic Missionary Outreach.


W. Harold Fuller, deputy general director of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), has provided us with a new and helpful book on an old and continuing problem—the relationship between the missions and the churches they have founded.

Fuller begins with history. Reaching back into the apostolic period and proceeding to the present hour, he reviews the tensions, patterns, and trends in church-mission relationships. Most helpful is his review of the various patterns of relationship developed in widely differing situations by the Church Missionary Society, Presbyterians, China Inland Mission, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Latin America Mission, and Free Methodists. In the second part of the book the author examines some of the theologi-
Tell It Well: Communicating the Gospel Across Cultures.


J. T. Seamands’s main thesis is that, to be effective, communication must be adapted to the background and needs of the listener. The author recognizes that this principle is not new in either communications or missiology, but he develops it in the light of today’s debate over contextualization of the gospel. Tell It Well is therefore a relevant study.

Keeping his principle in mind, Seamands communicates simply and clearly to three target readerships: the professional missionary, the lay Christian working in another culture, and Christians seeking to witness in their own increasingly pluralistic society.

W. Harold Fuller served with the Sudan Interior Mission in Nigeria for twenty-six years, and is currently Deputy General Director of the SIM. A Canadian, he works out of the Toronto area.


According to the subtitle, this book is a guide for home and foreign missions. The author has done an outstanding job of writing a book that is relevant and practical, and, I would say, basic for any church that desires to be a dynamic New Testament-type church fulfilling its primary reason for existence. According to the author, the primary mission of the church is “to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service, thereby planting new congregations throughout the world” (p. 20).

The qualifications of the author, David J. Hesselgrave, to write such a book as this include thirty-five years of serving Christ in local North American churches, in church-planting ministries in Japan, and now in teaching at the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His dedication to mission and evangelism is evident in every chapter.

In order to develop a strategy for existing churches in the cause of evan...
gelism and also in planting new churches, the author develops the "Pauline Cycle" using the logical elements in Paul's master plan of evangelism and church development. Using Scripture as a base the author lists the following steps, which he then develops in more detail, giving a chapter to each: (1) missionaries commissioned, (2) audience contacted, (3) gospel communicated, (4) hearers converted, (5) believers congregated, (6) faith confirmed, (7) leadership consecrated, (8) believers commended, (9) relationships continued, (10) sending churches convened. Seeing the overall task in these successive stages should enable more efficient planning and praying for the outreach of the church.

The author presents three basic sources of information for developing an effective missiology: (1) revelation (Scripture), (2) research (scientific observation), and (3) reflection (sound thinking). These three sources of information are used for the framework for each chapter discussing the specific components of each phase of the Pauline Cycle. He draws on biblical teaching, on relevant sociological, anthropological, historical, and communication findings, on past mission and church work, and then he gives practical reflection attempting to integrate it all in strategizing for church planting.

The organized church rather than the volunteer missionary or other outsiders is seen as responsible for analyzing the target area, searching out those who will be the messengers, training and praying for the job to be done. Conversion is not seen as an end product; the incorporation into the believing body of Christ involves acceptance of the new believer by the church so that he can be integrated into the family of God. The withdrawal of the pioneer workers from the work and the relationship of the new church to the mission and to other churches are important subjects discussed in this book. Throughout the book the author urges more carefully calculated attempts to reach the unreached for Christ. I recommend this book as a textbook for missions classes, a study book for adult Sunday school classes, a challenge and guide to sending organizations, and a guidebook for any local church staff interested in increasing their competence in and commitment to the mission of the church, whether locally or cross-culturally.

—Marguerite G. Kraft

Marguerite G. Kraft is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at Biola College, La Mirada, California. She has served as a missionary in northern Nigeria.

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OCTOBER 19-22
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OCTOBER 26-29
Where There is No Doctor: Mission and Primary Health Care. Kenneth Brown, M.D., University of Pennsylvania Medical School Faculty; former missionary doctor, Ethiopia and Mexico.

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Spiritual Growth in the Missionary Community. Maria Rieckelman, M.M., M.D., and Thomas E. Clarke, S.J.

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