In his classic study on *American Protestant Women in World Mission*, R. Pierce Beaver—the founding editor of this journal—traced the contributions of American Protestant women to the missionary movement from the nineteenth century. "Here is the font," wrote Beaver, "of all organized women's activities in the churches and to some extent in the community." In this issue of the *International Bulletin*, which focuses on "Women and Mission," all the articles have been written by women.

In her address to a Catholic Mission Congress in Baltimore, Melinda Roper, president of the Maryknoll Sisters, called attention to the need for missions to embrace diversity and communion in many forms. This appeal is based on her experiences in a remote Indian village in Mexico where, she recalls, "I began my romance with the pre-industrial, pre-technological, pre-urban peoples of our globe."

Joyce M. Bowers tells of her participation in a project for rethinking the roles of women in Lutheran missions, with the lessons of history and of the women's movement behind them in the late 1970s. On the Catholic side, Mary Motte examines some of the major changes for women in mission that came in the wake of Vatican Council II. It may be too early to take an accurate measure of all the changes that are still taking place, in both Protestant and Catholic circles, but it is crucial to take note of them for further research, reflection, and action.

Amy Glassner Gordon presents a ground-breaking study of what was actually the first Protestant missionary effort, in Brazil in the 1550s. The whole enterprise lacked any prospects for permanence from the very start, for it was carried on by some 600 Frenchmen—but no women!

In our continuing Legacy series, we have articles on two British mission leaders whose careers had mutual influence. Kathleen Bliss tells of the work of J. H. Oldham, whose contributions to the mission movement in this century are incalculable. Among his numerous writings is a book that introduced the work of Florence Allshorn to many readers, and it is her legacy that is introduced here by Eleanor Brown. The lessons that Florence Allshorn brought to Christian mission workers—not in writings but in the experiences of life in St. Julian's Community—have only grown in importance with the passage of time.

With such accounts of pioneering contributions by women to the work and study of the Christian mission, our readers are urged not just to look at the past and the great things that have been done by our forebears, but to join in the creative tasks of mission in the future, to share what Melinda Roper calls the "visions and dreams of the coming of the reign of God in a particular culture, time, and place."
Faith and Pluralism in Global Mission Experience

Melinda Roper, M.M.

Until my early thirties I was a product of the fading industrial and emerging technological society of the United States, with a smattering of questions from having lived for seven years in the semiurban, emerging industrial cities of Merida, Mexico, and Guatemala City. In 1971 I concluded two years of study during which time I forced my experience into the required academic molds. I had asked to do my final seminar paper on mission, but was told the theme wasn’t relevant. I produced something on during which time I forced my experience into the required academic molds. I had asked to do my final seminar paper on mission, but was told the theme wasn’t relevant. I produced something on the comparison between the episcopal traditions of Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch. I then packed my things—mostly books—and headed for Chiapas, Mexico, ending up in a remote Indian village of about twenty-five families where no one spoke Spanish except the sister I was living with. Frequently after praying together, the people would gather outside their mud chapel to dance. Their dance was that of their Mayan ancestors. My questions broke loose from their academic casings and I began my romance with the pre-industrial, pre-technological, pre-urban peoples of our globe. Their sense of family and of community, their oneness with the earth and their struggle with life and death; their sense of reverence, celebration, and prayer—all these captivated me, for in some wondrous way they drew me into a harmony and mystery I had never experienced. One short year of my life; a romance that has become a living parable of the wisdom of God in the poor of our earth. Perhaps one must take some experience of the past and purify it of all its frustration, pain, and suffering and let it become a beam of light that permits us to dream of the reign of God.

On a recent Sunday in our chapel at Maryknoll, we sang the joyous, hopeful song:

Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
Has turned the night into day!

Whether our hope springs from purified images of the past, or from poetry and song that move our hearts beyond our experience, we know that visions and dreams are vital to our faith.

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"Whether our hope springs from purified images of the past, or from poetry and song that move our hearts beyond our experience, we know that visions and dreams are vital to our faith."

Melinda Roper, President of the Maryknoll Sisters, has been a missioner in Guatemala and Mexico. This article is taken from an address given at the Mission Congress in Baltimore, Maryland, March 17-21, 1983, sponsored by the United States Catholic Mission Association.
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Roles of Married Women Missionaries: A Case Study

Joyce M. Bowers

A Historical Perspective

The involvement of American Protestant married women in world mission has changed drastically several times during the past 200 years. R. Pierce Beaver's American Protestant Women in World Mission is the definitive historical study on these issues.

Prior to 1800, Protestant women had almost no involvement in world mission, except for a few who accompanied their missionary husbands. Those women generally were limited to the role of caring for the home, husband, and children. American women first began to organize themselves to support foreign missions in 1800. During the first half of the nineteenth century this support grew, but was mostly limited to fund-raising, study and education, correspondence, and prayer. At the same time, roles of missionary women (both single and married) began to expand to include evangelistic work among “heathen” women and children, medical, educational, and numerous other kinds of work. Some individual women, blessed with great stamina and other gifts, performed amazing pioneer mission work; and their reports greatly inspired their female supporters at home.

The year 1860 marked the beginning of women's missionary societies as sending agencies, though the movement did not gain momentum until after the Civil War. At that time, women who had undertaken new responsibilities while their menfolk were at war found a new outlet for their talent and zeal. This movement grew until the end of the century; by 1910 there were forty-four sending agencies and nearly 2,000 missionaries, mostly single women doing work that focused on women and children. Support and administrative personnel were all female and mostly volunteers.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, missions provided an outlet, which was mostly unavailable in the American churches, for women's dedication and zeal. SENDING the gospel to “poor benighted heathen women in exotic foreign lands” captured the imagination, enthusiasm, and pocketbooks of countless American Christian women who had little official influence or recognition in their male-dominated home churches and denominational hierarchies. Beaver calls this burgeoning involvement the “First Feminist Movement in North America.”

By 1910 executives of the denominations or general mission boards were looking with envy at the support and womanpower being channeled into women’s missionary societies. A trend was initiated to consolidate the women’s societies with established church mission boards. By 1930 few women’s sending agencies remained. At first some women held administrative positions in the consolidated agencies, but gradually they were replaced by men. One exception was the Methodist Church, which retained a woman’s division in foreign missions.

As the middle of the twentieth century approached, women’s groups continued to support overseas work, but the level of intense commitment to missions that characterized the decades before and after 1900 had gradually faded. By the 1960s, in many main-line denominational mission boards, women had taken a back seat. Though there were still many married women who served overseas with dedication, skill, and effectiveness, their work was largely ignored by the denominations as a whole. The women’s missionary societies, which had once supported and publicized their work, had shrunk in size and effectiveness, and in some cases were absorbed into general women’s organizations. A lack of recognition affected single women missionaries to some degree, but was even more characteristic of missionary wives whose husbands’ work was often seen to be the “real” mission work.

The Story of a Recent Study

As the women’s movement, or “women’s lib,” brought attention to female roles in society in general during the 1960s and 1970s, some people began to take a new look at what was happening with women in missions. During the 1970s a few denominational mission boards made studies of women’s roles in their organizations. The remainder of this article will focus on one such study, which was done by the Division for World Mission and Ecumenism (DWME) of the Lutheran Church in America during 1980 and 1981. Most of the issues that were raised prior to the study had to do with married women rather than single women missionaries, so the study was limited to missionary wives.

The DWME had always considered both partners of a missionary couple to be missionaries. Both went through a lengthy application process, and both were included in the commissioning ceremony. However, with few exceptions, the husband was the only person called to a particular assignment. The wife accompanied him and was largely on her own in finding avenues of service that fitted her training, gifts, and preferences. While there was neither official requirement nor informal pressure for the wife to do “mission” work in addition to caring for her home and family, by far the majority of women became involved at least part time in activities supporting their husbands’ work or that of the mission or local church.

Salary was in the form of a single check made out in the husband’s name; Social Security, retirement benefits, and so forth accrued in the husband’s name also. DWME did not consider the salary to be a reward for services performed, but rather, a living allowance that enabled the missionary couple or family to carry on...
their work unhampered by financial strain. Couples and families received 1.5 times the salary of single missionaries, as well as assistance for children’s education and other benefits. Compared with other mission organizations, DWME provided very well for its missionaries.

By the late 1970s some married women missionaries were dissatisfied enough with their status in the DWME to raise issues within the organization. They felt that the work of married women was not adequately recognized or appreciated by either the national churches, the DWME, or the supporting churches in the United States. There were few records in DWME files of the work that wives had done, and articles in mission and church publications gave disproportionate attention to men’s work. When area secretaries visited missionaries on the field, discussion focused on the husband’s work and mostly ignored the wife’s work. Little assistance was given to wives in locating suitable work or in increasing their involvement as children matured and less time was needed in the home.

In 1978 and 1979, at the annual DWME missionary conferences at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, these and other concerns were aired. One of the focal points became the issue of salary. Some women felt that the only way in which their work could adequately be recognized would be to have a separate salary in the wife’s name, along with Social Security, retirement benefits, and a valid work record. Since the most vocal women were those who were most dissatisfied with the status quo, it was decided that a survey should be taken of all DWME couples to discern how pervasive the dissatisfaction was.

In early 1980 Norman Nuding, personnel secretary for the DWME, sent separate questionnaires to all husbands and wives employed by DWME at the time (ninety-three couples in all). The questions were mostly open-ended; for example: “Describe your role as a missionary wife.” “How is your missionary work given recognition?” “To what extent is satisfaction or lack of satisfaction in your work related to receiving salary and benefits in your name individually? Explain.” Nuding then studied the responses, which were received from more than fifty couples, and prepared a survey report, which excerpted from and summarized the range of answers. This report was presented at the annual conference in Kenosha in July 1980.

The 1980 Kenosha conference became a watershed; it was then that the most insistent and even angry demands for change were made. Previously discussions had been polite and relatively low-key. By 1980 some women had run out of patience and felt that in order to overcome the inertia of a sexist and male-dominant mission structure their needs had to be stated in no uncertain terms. Other women were present who who were generally satisfied with the system as it was, but they were not as articulate as the advocates of change. The resulting tension was feared by some to threaten the unity of the missionaries as co-workers.

In response to growing tension and demands for change within the DWME, a Consulting Committee, or study commission, was appointed. It included some of the most vocal present-missionary wives, a missionary husband, former-missionary wives (including the author), several top-level male executives within DWME, and female staff representatives; the committee was chaired by Sue Lane, a DWME Board member (nonstaff). A wide range of philosophical positions, life experience, and ages was represented by committee members.

During the first two-day meeting of the committee in February 1981 in the New York offices of DWME, issues were again articulated. Correspondence containing suggestions and demands from individuals and groups of missionaries from around the world was carefully noted. There were several “background-papers” presentations on related topics, such as an overview of the women’s movement in the United States, the structures of the Social Security benefit system, and DWME policy and philosophy. A spirit of open-mindedness, hard work, and Christian commitment characterized the sessions. However, the opinions expressed as to what the problems and needs actually were seemed so disparate as to be irreconcilable. The meetings closed with a listing of issues, which were grouped under the categories of role, recognition, communication, and compensation.

At the time the committee met, the author of this article was taking a research course as part of a Master’s degree in social work, and she decided to write a research paper on “The Role of the Missionary Wife.” A literature search revealed that very little has been written on this topic except biographical, anecdotal, or advice-giving/inspirational material. However, William Douglas’s 1961 work on the role of the minister’s wife was very helpful, along with other material on the role of the ambassador’s wife.

Using the fifty-three questionnaires that were returned by DWME missionary wives in 1980, an analysis was made of role patterns (described below), using an adaptation and expansion of Douglas’s categories. Study of the questionnaires revealed clearly that although only about 20 percent of the wives were dissatisfied with the DWME single-salary structure, an overwhelming majority had problems or concerns related to their roles—especially the lack of definition and recognition of roles.

When the Consulting Committee reconvened in July 1981, this author’s paper was presented. The scheme of role patterns provided a framework for discussion and thus facilitated the deliberations. It was discovered that many of the issues raised were related primarily to the “parallel worker” (see below).

David Vikner, executive director and “grand old man” of DWME, at that time nearing retirement after a lifetime of involvement in overseas mission, made a poignant and unforgettable point during the deliberations, which sharpened the committee’s awareness of the conflicting values inherent in being followers of Christ in contemporary American society. Vikner stated that his mother, serving faithfully with her husband in China during Vikner’s youth, could not have comprehended either the content or the spirit of the demands now being made. Such concerns as a validated work record, career development, a desire for self-fulfillment, and public recognition of one’s work may be defensible, but they somehow smack of the “me-ism” that is the curse of our age. Such concerns are fundamentally, intrinsically incompatible with the biblical images of the missionary as servant, unencumbered with even an extra pair of shoes, a lamb among wolves. To demand one’s rights is not the stance of a servant.

Attempting to keep this and dozens of other considerations in mind, the committee worked very hard, even continuing dialogues into the night in hotel rooms. Recommendations were hammered out by the four subcommittees on role, recognition, communication, and compensation. On the last day, when the subcommittee reports were finally presented, the committee was amazed and gratified that a clear consensus had emerged out of the seeming morass of varied and sometimes conflicting views and opinions.

The final report reflected this writer’s study as well as many other contributions. The following are (a) excerpts from the introduction and (b) the full text of the section dealing with role.

God calls men and women to himself in Jesus Christ. The primary vocation of each of us is, then, to be Christian. Each of us becomes part of the body of Christ. Each is given special gifts for the upbuilding of the body. It is always God who calls. We rejoice in the diverse ways in which Christians fulfill their individual callings, each contributing to the workings of the body of Christ, and therefore acknowledge no hierarchy of vocations or persons. We
believe that wherever stereotypes and culturally defined roles deny or limit any individual's possibilities for participation and personal growth, the working of the body of Christ is diminished and Christian freedom thwarted.

As Western society has undergone dramatic changes during recent years regarding the status and role of women, the missionary community has likewise been affected by these changes and has felt the need to reexamine its view on the involvement of women in mission. We do not wish to disavow the traditional model but, rather, hope to adjust policies and practices whereby changing roles can be accepted and full participation and recognition of women in mission can be affirmed.

The Role of the Married Woman Missionary

A role is a cluster of behavior patterns that carries with it expectations on the part of the person filling the role, and also expectations on the part of others who are related to a person in the performance of the role. In the case of the missionary there are expectations on the part of the family, the sending agency (in this case, DWME), supporting congregations, the missionary community, the national church, and the local culture. The missionary role is a representative role; the missionary represents the Christian faith, the sending church, and his or her home country to the people of the country in which he or she serves. Generally speaking, the more representative a role is, the more pressure there is to fulfill role expectations.

The role of the married woman missionary has usually been a derived role in that her role was largely defined by her husband's assignment. She has been expected to support and adapt to his vocation. Within this framework, several role patterns, or "wife-styles," have emerged, depending on individual situations and preferences. They may be categorized as follows:

1. Homemaker. She is primarily a full-time wife and mother. Her main focus is on the home and the support and nurture of the family. She is an enabler to her husband in his work. She may have very young children and/or may teach her own school-age children.

2. Background Supporter. She actively supports her husband and his work. She is moderately involved in outside activities, many of which relate to her husband's assignment. Her main focus may be on ministry that can be carried out within the home, such as entertaining, listening/counseling, Bible classes, or language classes.

3. Teamworker. Her main focus is on a team ministry with her husband, and both work full time. She feels free to choose a variety of activities, some of which relate directly to her husband's work. She may have part-time paid employment, but it does not detract from her sense of teamwork with her husband.

In addition to these role patterns, another pattern has emerged in recent years:

4. Parallel Worker. She sees her missionary role as distinct from her husband's role. She may work within the same organizational structure as her husband, or she may have full-time paid employment unrelated to her husband's assignment, which may be in a church-related setting or a nonchurch-related setting.

In the last category, a sense of a teamwork expresses itself in mutual support as persons, even though the work assignments may be functionally unrelated. Both husband and wife are involved in creating a nurturing home environment, and ideally both are enabled to find fulfillment in the stewardship of their abilities and gifts.

All four of the foregoing role patterns are valid for married women missionaries. However, not all options are viable in every location. Individual wives may not fit clearly into one category or another, because of the diversity of situations.

The diversity of roles, individual differences, and conflicting expectations may pose a dilemma for the married woman missionary when: (a) there is a lack of role definition; (b) there is a lack of job description; (c) there is a lack of role recognition and acknowledgment; (d) there is a change from one role pattern to another without corresponding changes in the expectations of others.

Recommendations and Changes

Committee recommendations for change that were later approved included giving more specific attention to married women's roles and options during the selection procedures and orientation of new missionaries, and during the first year on the field. Annual reports that include goals for the year, a record of activities, and a self-evaluation are now strongly encouraged (though not required) for all missionaries. These reports can form a basis for discussion with area secretaries during their annual visits to the fields as well as providing documentation for the work done by all missionaries.

One group of recommendations made by the Consulting Committee, which has not been acted upon by DWME as yet, concerns making resource persons available to all missionaries to help in adjustment on the field and "reentry" after return to the United States. Many individuals have expressed a need for counselors, seminar leaders, or other support persons to aid in sorting through issues such as role, vocation, marital and family relationships, and reentry into American society. While DWME has funded career-counseling and vocational-training programs for some individuals, there is a felt need for much more aid in these areas. DWME does officially encourage seminars, regional meetings, and other kinds of group discussions at the missionaries' initiative. These can go a long way in helping individuals and families examine their own issues, but they are not a full answer.

The salary issue occupied a major share of time and attention before, during, and since the committee's deliberations. While salary may not be the central issue for most women, it has been one of the most controversial issues, partly because of budget considerations. The recommendation of the committee, which was approved by the DWME Board of Managers in October 1981 but did not go into effect until the 1983 budget year, was to provide for a dual-salary status for certain missionary couples. In order to qualify for this status, in which each partner receives a salary and benefits equivalent to that of a single missionary salary, or two-thirds that of a couple or family salary, rather stringent conditions must be met. They are: (1) a local church institution or related agency must request that the missionary spouse fill a full-time position it has defined as essential and which the missionary is qualified to
fulfill; (2) an activity description must be drawn up describing the position, including the way it meets the criteria above; (3) the position must be recommended by the area secretary for approval by the DWME Cabinet of Directors within DWME programmatic and fiscal guidelines.

At this writing, six couples have been approved for dual salary status, and others are in the process of making application. While they are a small minority of DWME couples, the presence of an additional salary option has brought attention to the importance of missionary wives' roles. (In only one situation has the "spouse" been a husband.)

Some Reflections

The work of the Consulting Committee on the Married Woman Missionary was done with insight, integrity, and a spirit of understanding and cooperation that are rare in discussions of controversial issues. Having completed a fine piece of work, the committee members felt a strong sense of accomplishment and unity. When the committee's findings and recommendations were presented by the author to the 1981 Kenosha conference, there was a deep sense of relief and gratitude that women's issues were not going to become divisive within the missionary fellowship, but that a broader range of options was now available and affirmed.

At this writing, two years have passed since the committee's work ended. It has been rediscovered that, difficult as it may be to agree on recommendations and effect changes in policy, it is far more difficult to change attitudes and time-honored practices. While the male executives and area secretaries of DWME have become more sensitive to women's issues, there is a long way to go before women, especially those who are missionary spouses, take their place as fully recognized equal partners in mission. Of course, attitudes toward women in the local cultures where missionaries serve frequently stand in the way of equal partnership for women, and there is always a tension between respecting local cultural values and working for change. But a good beginning has been made and it is incumbent upon both women and men to continue their quest for attitudes and practices that honor the Creator who made both male and female in the image of God.

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International Bulletin of Missionary Research
The Involvement of Roman Catholic Women in Mission since 1965

Mary Motte, F.M.M.

Missionary involvement has changed significantly in the Roman Catholic Church in the years that have followed the end of Vatican Council II in 1965. The council opened new ways for both laity and clergy to become involved in the life and mission of the church. Much of this change found expression through groups organized for missionary activity, such as the religious and missionary institutes. At the same time, the expanded understanding about the missionary nature of the church led increasing numbers of women and men, married and single, to dedicate themselves to full-time missionary work for a certain number of years. This major development among the laity is already beginning to impact upon missionary activity. Some of the most recently organized groups are from the Philippines, Bolivia, and Peru, and have begun to move in mission to other countries. This growth of lay involvement will be one of the important factors determining the shape of missionary activity in the years ahead.

Among other influential forces bringing about changes in the way of being involved in mission has been the renewal required of religious congregations as a result of the council. This call to renewal coincided with the rebirth of the women’s movement in the United States in the mid-1960s. It is especially in this coincidence that the involvement of Roman Catholic women becomes more universalized and ecumenical, i.e., moving beyond the parameters of religious congregations as well as of confessional groups, to include involvement and collaboration with all women. The examination of the scriptural and theological foundations of ministry are due in large part to the interrelation of these two renewals. The principal aspects focused upon are the essential relationship between ministry and mission in the church, the sharp differences about the ordination of women, the understanding of the role of the feminine in relation to Scripture and tradition, and the growing number of women who experience a calling to deeper engagement in ministry. Increasing numbers of women have acquired the competence in law and theology to examine these questions concerning their relationship of feminine experience in a religious tradition that has defined itself in patriarchal terminology. Renewal in religious congregations has also contributed to some extent to the demise of the “eternal woman,” that romanticization of woman as symbol. Many sisters (nuns) have literally removed their veils and now dress in a simple, ordinary manner in order to provide a more meaningful witness to the simplicity and poorness of the Beatitudes in today’s world. At the same time, they have left aside outdated rituals that accumulated over the years, and have entered upon a journey toward more integrated spirituality. A profound transformation in ministry/mission is resulting from this more holistic understanding of their relationship with God.

Roman Catholic theology developed the eschatological dimension of religious life. This dimension, especially related to the three vows taken by religious—poverty, obedience, and chastity—has begun to be interpreted in more relevant ways in relation to working for justice and mission for the kingdom.

Inspired by the expanded understanding of mission among Christians, members of some of the traditional mission/overseas congregations of women have come to think of mission in terms of six continents, without lessening their commitment to overseas and trans-cultural mission. Women in other congregations, which had not been considered missionary in the more traditional understanding, reexamined their ministries from the perspective of the universal missionary obligation of the church and every baptized person. Many of them have taken on cross-cultural and overseas mission as part of their overall ministry in the church. In nearly all of the women’s congregations there has been a move from large institutional works, where most of their members carried out apostolates (usually health care, education, or social service), toward small insertions among the people and more direct engagement in different forms of pastoral ministry, especially among the poor. There are places, including the United States, where sisters are associate pastors in parishes; in other places there are those who are engaged in youth or campus ministries, justice ministries, ministries to the sick, the dying, and the imprisoned.

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The mission of the poor who have beard the gospel has had a special effect upon sisters’ communities/congregations. They have seen that their vow of poverty did not mean being poor in the way that so many persons are poor; they have searched for a simpler lifestyle; they have sought to be among and with the poor. They have questioned their ministries, and have often transformed them radically and at great cost to bring them more into focus from the eyes of the poor. Conviction about the integral relationship between justice and evangelization has led numerous women to ministries among the oppressed, handicapped, and prisoners. This conviction is at the source of their search to uncover the root causes of oppression in society, and their consequent engagement in ministries that seek to influence government leaders and decision-makers in favor of the poor and oppressed. Most commitments with and on behalf of the poor have political implications, and on more than one occasion have resulted in conflict with some other members of the church, as well as with government officials.

Many of the women’s congregations have become more international in their membership. While at times this increase has been due to an intentional search to shore up numbers of vocations lacking in Europe and North America, more of the increase is due to growing awareness of the meaning of universality in the church, and a genuine desire on the part of women from various places in the world to participate in that universality. With the increase in internationality, a gradual change is beginning to emerge in the orientation and structures of those congregations founded originally in Europe.

Sisters in situations where communities of other religious traditions are present have developed a style of missionary presence based upon respect for the other as person and respect for the mystery of God present in the lives and history of those persons. Experiences in India, Sri Lanka, and North Africa, among others, have demonstrated how dialogue first of all needs to be lived out in the daily sharing of life events; how this dialogue of life is indeed a form of evangelization in which the Word is spoken and the Name named through living testimony.

An essential aspect of women’s missionary involvement in recent years has been inculturation, a genuine encounter between the Word of God and the cultural/historical reality in a given place. In international congregations some of this inculturation has perhaps been easier in places where there are women who are from the local culture. In all places, inculturation touches upon such specifics as language spoken in a group, style of furnishings and living quarters, location of living quarters, manner of dress, food, style of prayer. Naturally, there are many variations in the degree of inculturation, and even in the understanding of what is possible and best.

The foregoing description presents an overview of the major lines of development that have been emerging among Roman Catholic women engaged in mission. This development has had various stages, and it has not been uniform among all Roman Catholic women. The overview has been mainly in terms of what has happened in women’s religious congregations, since these represent a concentrated effort at renewal and change during the period of time elapsed since Vatican II. At the same time, it is important to remember the new strength of the laity, both men and women, in mission.

Categories for interpreting new ministries, new ways of being in mission are often not adequate, and consequently many of the experiences of women in mission today are not understood by authorities in the church. At the same time, the role of religious congregations belongs to the charismatic life of the church, and members of these congregations, both women and men, are meant to be ground-breakers—a task never much appreciated, much less immediately understood by those whose task is to preserve.

References


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The First Protestant Missionary Effort: Why Did It Fail?

Amy Glassner Gordon

In November 1555 a group of some 600 Frenchmen, under the leadership of Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon, reached the Bay of Ganabara (Rio de Janeiro) and there proceeded to establish a colony named Fort Coligny, on an island off the coast of Brazil. The brief history of this colony is one of failure, and moreover, a failure that came primarily from within. The result of internal dissension among the colonists, which left them unable to offer any effective resistance to a Portuguese attack in 1560. Indeed, by 1560 the colony in any meaningful sense had already ceased to exist. Villegagnon had returned to France, and it had been impossible for him to persuade the colonists to continue to live in the colony. The French enterprise in Brazil failed because there was very little sense, in mid-sixteenth-century France, of what was entailed in establishing a colony. Or even of what function in general a colony ought to serve, much less of any clear purpose behind the Brazilian colony in particular. Gaspard de Coligny, admiral of France and the colony's most influential backer, does seem to have had a colonial policy of sorts, aimed primarily at gaining for France a foothold in the overseas world and at the same time striking a blow against Spain and Portugal, but Coligny was too involved in domestic French politics to devote much energy to his colonial dreams; moreover, he was unable to gain consistent support for French colonial ventures from the government. The problems caused both by Coligny's purposes in establishing colonies and by his failure to provide adequate resources are evident in the Brazilian venture. Brazil was chosen as the site of the colony precisely in order to establish the French presence in an area claimed by Portugal, thereby challenging Portuguese possession, which Coligny wished to do. Yet, having sponsored this act of defiance against Portuguese claims to sovereignty in this area of the New World, Coligny and his chosen leader, Villegagnon, did not provide the manpower and weapons sufficient to defend the colony from the inevitable Portuguese effort to dislodge it. Moreover, there seems to have been, from its inception, a very real confusion and indeed disagreement as to why the Brazilian colony was being established, beyond the desire to encroach on the Portuguese monopoly. Much of this confusion related to the issue of religion.

The religious problems, which ultimately helped to destroy the colony from within, stemmed from the religious conflicts in France itself. The colonists who went to Brazil were recruited from both Catholic and Protestant elements in France, and they brought with them to Brazil the quarrels that would, in the next half-century, plunge France into repeated civil war. Coligny, from the beginning, apparently envisioned the colony as a place where Protestants would live alongside their Catholic brethren and be free to follow their own faith; Villegagnon, too, was initially sympathetic to the cause of religious reform and in fact actively sought Protestant recruits for the venture. Indeed, when the original colonists proved difficult to discipline, Villegagnon wrote to Calvin in Geneva, asking that ministers be sent to help establish order and religion among the colonists. A group of ministers, all Frenchmen living in Geneva, was sent by Calvin in 1556 as part of the second expedition of colonists, and their arrival spelled the beginning of the end of the colony.

Almost as soon as the new colonists arrived, disputes broke out between Villegagnon and the Genevan contingent over such crucial theological issues as the nature of the Mass and whether or not to use oil and salt in baptism. Villegagnon expressed horror at the theology of the Genevans, eventually expelling them from Fort Coligny and killing several of them. Not content with forcing the Genevans out of his colony, Villegagnon also sent a secret message with the captain of the ship that eventually took them back to France, accusing them of heresy and calling on the authorities to arrest them. Only the captain's revulsion at being part of such a plot, and his revelation of the plot to his Calvinist passengers, enabled them to escape and go their separate ways in freedom. Meanwhile, the remaining colonists, already divided over whether they were in Brazil to build a fort or to seek easy fortunes, now split apart over the religious question. Villegagnon left Brazil to defend himself against Protestant attacks in France, and the colony that he had abandoned staggered on to its inglorious end.

One interesting side issue of the conflict between Villegagnon and the Calvinists did continue even after both he and they had returned to Europe. Villegagnon tried to enter into a debate with Calvin, in order to justify his behavior toward the Genevan contingent and to reaffirm certain aspects of Catholic theology. Calvin refused to enter into public controversy, but in 1561 Villegagnon published several pamphlets defending his views on the Eucharist and denying those of Calvin. In reply, and probably with Calvin's approval, Pierre Richier, one of the ministers who had been in Brazil, published in Geneva a bitter attack on Villegagnon, both personal and theological in nature. The colony was no more, but the bitterness lingered on, and became a part of the increasing hostility and violence that existed between French Catholics and Huguenots in the second half of the sixteenth century.

This, in brief, is the history of the French colony in Brazil. Villegagnon and the Brazilian venture reveal much about sixteenth-century French views on colonization, as well as a good deal about French religious conflicts. The colony failed because it was ill-conceived in terms of its purposes—not just its religious purposes but its function in other areas as well. Villegagnon did
manage to harness the energies of his colonists sufficiently to build a fort, but one fort does not a colony make. He and many others, at least in France, had not yet thought through what the purpose of a colony was to be. What was it to live on? Were people to settle there permanently? If so, why were no women included among either the first or second group of colonists to arrive in Brazil? What ought to be the relationship between the colonists and the indigenous peoples? These questions, as well as the religious one, were left unsettled. The colonists came for a variety of reasons and were generally disappointed with what they found. There was disagreement between Villegagnon and his colonists in virtually every crucial area. The religious issue, unsettled in France, could not be settled in Brazil.

Sixteenth-century France tore itself apart through religious conflict, and Fort Coligny is a fascinating microcosm of the religious struggles of France itself. Claude Lévi-Strauss has left us a wonderful image of both the colonists’ lack of awareness of the process of building a colony and their bitter division over religion. The story took so bizarre a turn that I wonder why no novelist or dramatist has yet used it. What a movie it would make! Isolated on a continent as unknown as another planet, knowing nothing of its nature and its inhabitants, incapable of cultivating the earth to assure their subsistence, dependent for all their needs on an incomprehensible population who despised them, this group of Frenchmen who had faced all sorts of perils in order to escape the battle at home and found a refuge where beliefs could exist in tolerance and liberty, were caught in their own trap. The Protestants tried to convert the Catholics, and the Catholics the Protestants. Instead of working for survival, they passed weeks in foolish discussions: How ought one to interpret the Mass? Was it necessary to mix water and wine for consecration?

As Lévi-Strauss shows us, the sixteenth-century Frenchmen in Brazil had neither a clear sense of colonial mission nor, given their religious problems, the ability to work together to ensure their mutual survival.

If there was no clear sense of colonial mission in sixteenth-century France, if there was an absence of both the will and the means to establish France as a colonial power, was there, nonetheless, a sense of mission in relationship to the inhabitants of the New World? Was there any expectation that part of the colony’s function ought to be to bring the message of the gospel to the Amerindians? There is no evidence to indicate that Villegagnon, his mentor Coligny, or the French government conceived of the purpose of the colony in terms of missionary activity. Villegagnon himself seems to have held the Indians in utter contempt and to have directed his efforts to maintaining as great a distance as possible between the colonists and the Brazilian Indians. Coligny’s interest in religion lay not in converting the Indians but, rather, in establishing safe havens overseas for French Huguenots while at the same time checking Spanish/Portuguese expansion. Even the presence of the French monk (and later royal cosmographer) André Thevet among the original colonists does not indicate any commitment to missionizing; Thevet was an insatiable traveler far more interested in learning about the New World and the Indians than in attempting to bring the Indians to Christ. In general, then, to the original colonists the Indians were seen as potential subject matter for a book (such as Thevet’s Singularitez de la France Antarctique, published in 1557), or as potential allies against the Portuguese, or as potential source of a food supply for the colonists. But as potential Christians? Nobody seems to have cared very much.

What, though, of the second group of colonists, and most particularly, of the ministers sent from Geneva? Who were they, and did these disciples of Calvin envision part of their task, in coming to America, as being that of bringing the Brazilian Indians to Christ? In a sense, the “who” may answer at least part of the “why,” part of the reason for which these men chose to make the hazardous journey across the Atlantic to a small island in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro. All the men from Geneva who volunteered to go to Brazil, ministers and laymen alike, were already refugees; they were Frenchmen who had fled persecution in France because of their adherence to the Calvinist faith and had thus come to reside in Geneva where they could worship according to their beliefs. No native Genevans had responded to the call for godly men to go forth to join the overseas colony. The Frenchmen, on the other hand, were already homeless and thus far more likely to find the possibilities offered by the New World appealing.

The leader of the Genevan contingent to Brazil, Phillipe de Corguilleray, was, moreover, not only an exile from his native land but also a longtime friend of Coligny. Corguillera would therefore have had a particular interest in the Brazilian colony, since it was being sponsored by someone whom he knew and respected. Pierre Richier, who clearly became the spiritual leader of the group of Genevans, seems to have looked forward to the challenge he knew would be awaiting him in Brazil among the erring colonists, men who obviously needed his ministry far more than did the inhabitants of Calvin’s city. As for the remaining volunteers, several of whom were ministers like Corguilleray and Richier, others of whom were craftsmen of various kinds, all had in common not only their Calvinism but also their status as refugees in Geneva, men without a real place of their own.

The Calvinists from Geneva, then, may have been attracted to Brazil at least in part because, as refugees, they were more likely to be interested in making a home—as well as converts—in the New World. Yet it would be too simple an answer to conclude from this that they went to Brazil only because they were exiles from their own homeland; the question still arises as to the extent of their interest in converting the Indians of that faraway land. In order to try to find an answer to this question, we must rely primarily on the evidence given us by Jean de Léry, one of the ministers sent out from Geneva by Calvin. Léry’s Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre de Brésil, first published in 1578, twenty years after his return to France, may be suspect in its interpretation of Villegagnon’s religious policies and in its treatment of the Protestant role at Fort Coligny, but it provides invaluable insight into the author’s own motives in coming to Brazil, and into his views of the Indians and whatever obligation he may have felt toward them in terms of missionary activity.

Léry believed that he had been sent to Brazil as a missionary, but he also believed that he and his fellow ministers had been sent to establish the true (i.e., Reformed) faith among the French colonists already present in Brazil fully as much as they had been sent to spread the gospel among the Indians. In the beginning of his preface, in explaining the purpose of his book, Léry writes: “... my intention is to perpetuate here the memory of a voyage to America made expressly to establish the service of God, as much among the French who had already gone there, as among the sav-
age inhabitants of that country."\textsuperscript{14} Clearly, in Léry's mind, the French settlers were as much in need of the Genevan delegation as the Indians, and his mission was thus a double one.

Léry gives further evidence of this double mission in his summary of Villegagnon's letter to Calvin, the letter in which Villegagnon requested that ministers be sent to Brazil. According to Léry, Villegagnon asked for the Genevans in order that they might "better reform him and his people, and also to bring the savages to a knowledge of their salvation."\textsuperscript{15} The "savages" seem to be an afterthought, and indeed the whole tenor of Villegagnon's letter, as reported by Léry, is to describe the difficulties created by the colonists' unruly behavior and to beg for ministers who might, through religious teachings, help him to control and even alter the behavior of those colonists who were causing him so much trouble.

Yet, if Villegagnon's concern was over the morals and intractability of the French, and if Léry himself perceived a double mission with the souls of the colonists perhaps higher on his list of priorities, he also shows us, in his discussion of Geneva's response to Villegagnon's request, that the church in Geneva saw a welcome opportunity to begin missionary work among the Brazilian Indians.\textsuperscript{16} Léry's summary of the reaction in Geneva to Villegagnon's letter makes this clear.

The Church of Geneva, having received his [Villegagnon's] letters and heard his news, first gave thanks to God for the extension of the reign of Jesus Christ in a country so distant, in a land so foreign, and among a nation which clearly was in total ignorance of the true God.\textsuperscript{17}

They could be of service to the French colony—but they could do so much more than that! And indeed it seems, from what Léry says, that the recruiting of the ministers and other godly folk who were to go to Brazil was based on an appeal to them to avail themselves of precisely this opportunity to bring the gospel and the true faith to the Indians, rather than on any particular emphasis on the needs of the colonists.\textsuperscript{18} Certainly, for Léry, the excitement of making the voyage to the New World lay in the possibilities offered by the very newness of that world and its people, and the chance to bring God's true message to virgin territory.

If the Genevans set out with high hopes, however, they were to have virtually no success in either aspect of their missionizing role. Villegagnon soon discovered that he wanted no part of their band of Christianity for himself or his colonists, and the short tenure of the Genevan ministers in Brazil was spent largely in quarreling with Villegagnon, who allowed them no opportunity to spread the Calvinist faith among the French colonists. Given their difficulties with Villegagnon, moreover, the ministers had little time or energy for working with the Indians. When their chance did come, it was because Villegagnon finally exiled them to the mainland where they lived for two months while awaiting a ship to take them back to France, and these few months provided the only opportunity that they had to preach to the Indians. From what Léry tells us, the Indians were not an eager audience, and with so little time at their disposal, the Genevans were unable to make any converts.

It is not surprising that, even during their stay on the mainland, the missionary activities of the Genevans were both limited and unsuccessful. The experience with Villegagnon had been traumatic, and their minds were already fixed on returning to France to justify their own conduct and condemn that of Villegagnon. Undoubtedly, under such circumstances it was hard to put one's mind on converting the Indians. This must have been all the more true since the ministers were aware that there would be no sustained contact with the Indians, and that their efforts would soon be terminated by their departure from Brazil. Whether or not they had any deep sense of missionary vocation, it would have been extremely difficult, in such a situation, to fulfill the hope, which Léry at least expressed, of carrying out an active program of missionary work among the Indians. They had so little time, and furthermore they could not risk antagonizing their Indian hosts, upon whom they were completely dependent.

If, then, the French Protestant mission to Brazil must be deemed, like the ill-fated colony itself, a failure, if it did not succeed in spreading the Protestant faith to the French colonists or to the Indians, can we then learn nothing from the incident? Despite the colony's lack of success, and despite the missionaries' unfilled hopes, there are issues worthy of consideration. In part, these revolve around the insights we can gain into mid-sixteenth-century French religious conflicts as these were mirrored in the quarrel between Villegagnon and the Genevan ministers. We can achieve a greater understanding of the intolerance and confusion on both sides of the religious issue, the points of theology that divided the two sides, and their mutual lack of comprehension of each other's beliefs and motivation. An analysis of the microcosm provided us by Fort Coligny can be of great help in unraveling the positions taken in the religious conflicts in France itself. We can also learn about Calvinist attitudes toward the question of missions in the mid-sixteenth century.

First of all, it is not surprising that the Brazilian venture demonstrates that the Genevans came, at least in part, in order to missionize among the French. Nor should we wonder at the fact that the Calvinist church made virtually no other efforts at overseas mission work in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{19} In general, Protestants in Europe were far too involved in fighting for their own existence at home to disperse their energies in the overseas world, and their missionary efforts were directed primarily toward spreading the gospel at home. Thus it was natural for the Genevans to see the French colonists as a proper subject for missionary effort, and also evident that the resources for work among the Indians on any large scale simply did not exist.

Yet, even had the resources existed, was there a clear position among Protestants as to either the obligation or the possibility of bringing the Indians to Christ? Did the Protestant churches have a sense of the missionary vocation, the kind of sense possessed by many of the Catholic orders? Here, again, we may turn to Léry in order to seek some answers—if not definitive answers, at least fruitful indications of the Calvinist view of missions.

Léry's feelings about the potential for converting the Tupinamba Indians of Brazil to the Christian faith must be set within the context of his total portrait of Tupinamba life. On the whole, the portrait painted by Léry in his Histoire is remarkable for its perceptive, its degree of objectivity and, at the same time, its sympathy. In the words of Lévi-Strauss, Léry's book is a "masterpiece of ethnographic literature,"\textsuperscript{20} because its author goes beyond careful observation and description to make a real effort to understand the inner logic of an alien culture, as well as its surface manifestations.

\textsuperscript{14} International Bulletin of Missionary Research
The authors present an accurate description of the four theories of mission that dominate today: the conciliar, liberationist, Roman Catholic, and evangelical. These four divide into what the authors call "two contradictory streams": the conciliarists and liberationists on one hand, the evangelicals and Roman Catholics on the other. These two streams disagree on what is "the most grievous suffering known to man." For the former it is "an unequal distribution of land, food, wealth, learning, and security." For the latter it is "living, on any economic level, separated from God, subject to sin and Satan, with no hope of life beyond death, and no sure basis for ethical action." For each of the four theories of mission, the authors reconstruct its historical background, then describe and evaluate it.

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Léry was fascinated by Tupi culture, and he also came to feel a true love for its people. In fact, in the Histoire, reflecting back on his Brazilian sojourn, he says: "... I often regret that I am not still among the savages, ... among whom I knew more charity than among many over here who, to their shame, carry the name of Christians."21

Léry found much to admire among the Tupinambas. But, could they be saved? This was the critical question, and Léry seems uncertain of the proper response. This uncertainty on Léry's part reflects the general confusion among his co-religionists about the issues involved in missionary endeavor. Certainly, Calvinism of the 1550s preached a clearcut predestination. Were the Tupinambas among the damned? That they were not Christian need not necessarily imply damnation; it could be a part of God's plan for them to be brought to the True Faith at this point in time. Predestination need not, and indeed did not, mean for Calvinists a passive acceptance of God's will, but rather led to an activism generated by the belief that the elect were called upon to do God's will and spread his Word in the world. Missionary activity was certainly suited to this commitment to extending the kingdom of God on earth. Yet the Tupinambas were resistant to any effort at instructing them in the Christian faith. Did not their unwillingness to pay attention to the Christian message perhaps indicate that they were in fact among the reprobate?

Moreover, there was a still more fundamental issue. The theologians of Geneva accepted the idea that Christ had ordered the gospel to be preached throughout the world. The apostles had done so. If the message had once been announced, was it necessary to spread it again?22 This was a matter of vital concern for Catholics and Protestants alike. One possible interpretation was that all people had heard, and had chosen to accept or had failed to accept that message. Those who had turned a deaf ear were damned, and missionary work was both futile and unnecessary. At times Léry seems to accept this view. He speaks of a flood legend among the Tupinamba Indians and of their story of a man who hundreds of years ago had come to tell them of the Christian God, and he concludes that the Indians had in fact been visited by one of the apostles. They had heard and rejected, and, Léry emphasizes, "the savages will therefore not be excusable at Judgment Day."23

Léry also points out that a failure to acknowledge God is in itself inexcusable. God testifies to his existence in so many ways that "when men do not know their creator, that is the result of their malice. ... They will not be excused by pretending ignorance."24 Here Léry seems clearly to be saying that the Indians are among the damned. He also says, however, that if Villegagnon had not betrayed everyone, he and his fellow pastors would have been able to bring many of the Indians to Christianity.

Yet the ministers did not try very hard to convert the Tupinambas, and perhaps this was at least in part because Léry, and Calvinists in general, were as yet uncertain as to whether the Indians were in fact redeemable. Perhaps, like the Brazilian colonial venture itself, the missionary venture failed because there was no clearcut agreement among the Calvinists as to their responsibility for the souls of the Indians. Not only were the ministers sent out to Brazil by Calvin burdened with a double mission, to both the colonists and the Indians, but they were also not quite certain about whether bringing the Indians to Christ was something they could or should be trying to do. Under such circumstances, how could their missionary work among the Indians be more than half-hearted at best? It may be difficult to reconcile a commitment to converting the Indians, which Léry certainly expresses at times, with the doubts which he also seems to experience, but such an ambiguity perhaps reflects the pioneering nature of the mission to Brazil, and its occurrence at a time when Protestant missionary efforts in general were at such an early stage.

There is a final paradox arising out of the uncertain Protestant response to the issue of missionary work and the saving of Indian souls. The sense of mission was not clear. The Indians were perhaps hopelessly damned in any case. Does this very lack of commitment to the conversion of the Indians account for Léry's remarkable success as an ethnologist—and, in fact, for the possible existence of a distinctly Protestant outlook on the Indians in the sixteenth century?25 In the case of Léry, he did not get deeply involved in missionizing. Instead, he became an observer of Tupinamba life, and even a participant in that life at times, but not a participant who was trying to alter the culture. Had he cared more deeply about conversion, could he have seen and reported so well? Was Protestantism, then, more conducive to an objective view of the Amerindians precisely because it had not yet fully developed a missionary goal? In part, Léry's positive evaluation of Tupinamba culture may come from his own human disposition, as well as his youth and his eagerness to absorb as much as possible of this strange, new world. Yet it also seems that Léry's position as an outside observer, rather than an active missionary, lent him both the time and the mental distance to observe with greater clarity.

There is, as well, the possibility that the Calvinist view of human beings, nature, and God could lead to a greater ability to appreciate other cultures. The Calvinist attitude toward the corruption of human nature and the inability of human beings to contribute anything to their own salvation puts all human beings on an equal plane.26 God chooses without regard to merit, and the Calvinist cannot exalt his or her own abilities. If the Tupinambas are morally corrupt and evil, as Léry sometimes suggests, so too are all human beings, and it does not behoove the Calvinist to condemn others, except insofar as God may have condemned them, and no one knows for certain whom God has condemned and whom he has chosen. Ultimately, one can argue that the Calvinist view of election and damnation led, in the seventeenth century, to a justification of the dispossession and destruction of the Amerindians. In the mid-sixteenth century, however, long before the Protestant nations had really entered the colonial race and had come to the point of working out their views on the Indians, Léry illustrates a point at which Calvinist theology contributed to a clearer perception of and a greater sympathy for Amerindian culture. From this perspective, a fundamentally negative view of human nature may have led, in a paradoxical sense, to a greater understanding of other cultures and, at the same time, it may also have created a sense of futility that made Protestants in general slow to give wholehearted commitment to missionary work.

What were the French doing in Brazil? On every level, there was confusion. They came for a variety of motives, which were often at cross-purposes. Villegagnon wanted to build a fort to secure a French outpost against Iberian expansion, but many of his colonists wanted only to get rich quickly. Villegagnon seemed to be offering a home for religious reform, but what he meant by reform turned out to be very different from what the Reformers wanted. And the Reformers themselves, the French ministers sent out from Geneva by Calvin, found themselves unable to do any of the things that they had come to America to accomplish. They could neither establish a Reformed Church nor minister, in any sustained way, to the heathen. Because neither the Protestant pastors nor anyone else in the colony really knew what they were doing there, the entire enterprise was a failure.

Yet it was a failure that led the French to begin the process of defining what their colonial policies were to be in the future, and which also perhaps led Protestants to begin to think more seriously about both the Amerindians and the nature of missionary work,
so that later on they would be better able to understand why they were there. Later generations of Protestants were able to come to grips with some of the questions that Léry could not answer, and so, for good or for ill, they were able to succeed where Léry and his fellow Calvinists had failed. If the mission to Brazil accomplished nothing else, at least it raised for Calvinists, and indeed for tory of the colony itself.

so, for good or for ill, they were able to succeed where Lery and his sode in Brazil, seen from this perspective, takes on an importance so that later on they would be better able to understand why they Calvin himself, some of the fundamental issues that needed to be dealt with before the Protestant churches could become seriously involved in and conscious of their missionary vocation. The episode in Brazil, seen from this perspective, takes on an importance in Protestant missionary history that extends beyond the brief history of the colony itself.

Notes

1. The most complete, although somewhat dated, history of the French colony in Brazil may be found in Paul Gaffarel, Histoire du Brésil français au seizième siècle (Paris, 1878). There is also considerable discussion in C. A. Julien, Les voyages de découverte et les premiers établissements (Paris, 1947). The major contemporary sources are Jean de Léry, Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre de Brésil (Geneva, 1575; originally published Paris, 1578) and André Thevet, Les singularités de la France Antarctique (Paris, 1557).

2. Examples of lack of real colonial policy can be seen in Villegagnon’s failure to plan for any kind of independent food supply for the colony, which had to rely totally on purchases from the Indians (who were not themselves engaged in extensive agriculture), and also in his failure to include any women among the colonists while at the same time making sexual contact with Indian women punishable by death.


4. Villegagnon later denied having written such a letter. Léry, however, includes the text of the letter in his Histoire; and there is independent evidence, in a letter written by one of the ministers sent to Brazil (Pierre Richier), which refers to Villegagnon’s letter to Calvin. Pierre Richier also discusses the letter in his La Réfutation des folles rassorieurs, extréables blasphèmes, erreurs et mensonges de Nicolas Durand (n.p., 1561), p. 21.

5. On the fate of the Calvinists who returned to Europe, some of whom remained in France while others returned to Geneva, the best source is Léry’s Histoire, in which he discusses the extremely difficult return voyage as well as Villegagnon’s plot to have the Calvinists arrested on their return to France. There is also some information in Richier, La Réfutation.

6. For a brief summary of this battle of words, see O. Reverdin, Quatorze Calvinistes chez les Topinambous (Geneva, 1957), pp. 68–72.

7. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Tristes tropiques (Paris, 1955), p. 66. In fact, the experiences of the French in Brazil have since provided the basis for a film, How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman, made in 1971 by the Brazilian director Nelson Pereira dos Santos. The film is about a French prisoner captured by the Indians, but does cite Léry and Thevet on the Indians.

8. Villegagnon’s description of the Indians shows his dislike for them. “Il n’y avait point de maison, ny de toicts, ne aucune commodité de bled. Au contraire, il y avoit des gens farouches et sauvages, esloignez de toute courtoisie et humanité, du tout differens de nous en Facon de faire et instruction: sans religion, ny aucune cognoscience d’honnesteté ny de vertu, de ce que est droit ou injuste: en sort qu’il me venoit de penser, assavoir si nos estions tombez entre des bestes portans la figure humaine.” The letter by Villegagnon from which this passage is cited appears in Paul Gaffarel, Histoire du Brésil français, p. 393.

9. Virtually every discussion of Coligny’s interest in colonization stresses this double motive; there is no evidence that he had any interest whatsoever in missionary activity. His interest was, in fact, far more strategic than religious, and it was part of his responsibility as admiral of France. On this aspect of Coligny as admiral, there is an interesting discussion in Paul Gache, “L’Amiral de Coligny dans ses domaines,” Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme français 118 (1972): 573–89.

10. On Thevet, see Jean Adhémar, Frère André Thevet (Paris, 1947). See also Thevet’s own account, in his Singularités de la France Antarctique and also his Cosmographie universelle (Paris, 1575).


13. I am grateful to David J. Bosch for pointing out to me even more forcefully than I had realized the extent to which Calvinists saw their primary mission as being among their fellow Europeans.


15. Ibid., pp. 4–5.

16. Calvin certainly saw it this way, as is made evident by his cooperation in personally selecting several of the missionaries. On this, see David J. Bosch, Witness to the World (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1980), p. 122.

17. Léry, Histoire, p. 5.

18. Ibid., p. 6.


22. For a brief discussion of these issues, see Reverdin, Quatorze Calvinistes, pp. 9–10. For a fuller statement of Calvin’s position, see Bosch, Witness to the World, pp. 121–23.


24. Ibid., p. 240.


27. The rethinking, both of colonial policy and of missionary activity, does not seem to have taken place immediately, at least in France. It is true that there was another French attempt, again sponsored by Coligny and again at least partly Huguenot, at establishing a colony in the New World, this time in Florida in the 1560s. Although efforts were made to maintain good relationships with the neighboring Indians, there seem to have been no attempts made to convert the Indians; indeed, the original group of colonists did not even bring along a minister to supply their own religious needs. Moreover, in terms of colonial policy in general, the Florida colony suffered from a general lack of forethought, planning, and supplies—although women were included among the second group of colonists.

28. Léry’s book was evidently popular, since it went through numerous editions in the sixteenth century. It also formed an important compo-
The Legacy of J. H. Oldham

Kathleen Bliss

Joe Oldham (as he was almost universally called, even in an age of sparse use of Christian names) was the organizing secretary of the World Missionary Conference usually spoken of as “Edinburgh 1910.” Thereafter he was secretary of its Continuation Committee and, from 1921–38, a secretary of the International Missionary Council. Cooperating with the Life and Work Movement, he organized the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State (1937), and then took the crucial steps that led to the emergence of the World Council of Churches, of which he became in his last years, honorary president. Throughout his long career he worked for fruitful cooperation among missions, fought battles for their freedom, opened new doors for their service, found them new resources of materials and people. Yet this more-than-busy life was underpinned by a constant reflection on the meaning of the Christian gospel, the nature of the missionary task, looking always beyond the succession of problems and duties presented by each day to the unfolding of God’s mercy and his beckoning call to his church.

Oldham was a prophet, looking out on the world with a keen eye for the acceptable moment at which a blow could be struck against oppression and for justice. “A wily saint,” and “the arch-intriguer for good,” he was called. Yet well on in his eighties he wrote to a friend, “I think that really I am still the missionary at heart that I used to be in practice in my youth.” As his biographer, I can regret that he never wrote a diary or kept letters; he did not want to justify or explain his actions, even the most controversial of them. When I expostulated that a bonfire at the bottom of the garden might be consuming several Ph.D. theses, he replied, “Thank God for that; young men should be thinking about the future.” He thought of himself as an enabler. And so he was—on the grand scale.

The Educating of a Missionary Internationalist

Joseph Houldsworth Oldham was born in India on October 20, 1874. He was the eldest son of Colonel George Oldham of the Royal Engineers, whose work in Bombay was the building of the railways that did so much to alleviate the scourge of recurrent famine. George Oldham’s conversion led him to leave the fashionable suburb of Bombay, where his position entitled him to an excellent house, and to move to a poor part of the city where he shared a mission bungalow with an Indian family. Joe Oldham thus spent the first years of his life with Indian children as playmates. His schooling was in Scotland; he passed from Edinburgh Academy as “dux” of the school (1892) to Trinity College, Oxford. He was attracted to the idea of the Indian Civil Service as a career, but two events changed his course: his conversion at an evangelistic meeting conducted in Oxford by the American evangelist Dwight L. Moody, and his signing of the pledge of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union. Through the latter he met John R. Mott on his first visit to Oxford. Mott made a note of him as a “likely lad.”

After a year as the first full-time secretary of the Student Christian Movement, Joe Oldham sailed for India in 1897 under the Scottish YMCA, to work in Lahore among students and young Indians employed in government offices. In Lahore Cathedral he was married (October 1898) to Mary Fraser, daughter of the future governor of Bengal Province and sister of Oldham’s Oxford friend, Alec Fraser, one of the greatest of all missionary educationists.

Thus began a partnership of sixty years. Childless, they made their home a place of welcome for nephews, children of colleagues abroad (such as the Patons), and for overseas students. Mary, with her fluency in languages and her self-taught shorthand and typing, was an equal partner in much of the personal side of Oldham’s work.

Early in 1901 both the Oldhams contracted typhoid. He hovered for days at the point of death and she, less ill, struggled to nurse him. The medical verdict was absolute: immediate return home to Scotland and no return to India. To Oldham the blow was bitter. He was intensely happy in his work, living all the time with Indians, learning Urdu and thinking deeply about the future of Christianity in India. His letters show his early conviction that only an Indian church could win India for Christ. Sherwood Eddy, an American fellow secretary in the Indian YMCA, and associated with Oldham in the founding of the Student Christian Movement in India, wrote that anyone who sat with him in committee knew “his spiritual consecration and the drive of his strong will.” S. K. Datta, who knew him in Lahore, wrote of his brief period there: “He left no buildings or institutions, but he built mightily in the hearts of a few men,” men who, like Datta himself, became dedicated servants of their country and of the Christian church.

Since much of this article will be concerned with Oldham’s relations with institutions, it is important to stress this personal side of his legacy. Hundreds of men and women have treasured some conversation with him that set them thinking or persuaded them toward a new job. Comparative strangers would find themselves invited to lunch; overseas visitors to a weekend at the Old-
hams' home. He had "read your book or article or letter in the press and would like to have a talk." It is greatly to the credit of the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York that, realizing the crippling disadvantage of Oldham's severe deafness, they provided him with a hospitality allowance. "As always, it was a memorable thing to meet you. You say a lot without saying it. I have chewed the cud since." That is from one of England's foremost educationists, Sir Michael Sadler. But it could have been a young YMCA secretary, or a young man in industry whose headmaster had pointed him out as a promising fellow.

Back from India in 1901 Oldham entered New College, Edinburgh, to study for the ministry of the United Free Church of Scotland. His academic record includes prizes in Hebrew, Greek, and New Testament. During the duller lectures he worked at German vocabulary (Mary was a fluent German speaker), and after his course went to Germany, to the University of Halle to study under the foremost professor of missions, Gustav Warneck. Several of the guiding principles of his life in the service of missionary cooperation derive from this period of study.

Oldham was never ordained as a minister, but he held an important assistantship at Free St. George's Edinburgh. (He remained an elder in the church until he moved to England in 1921, when he became an Anglican layman.) He had renewed his contacts with the Student Christian Movement while studying and became, and continued as, chairman of its theological college department. With its secretary, Tissington Tatlow, Oldham started a movement for mission study among the theological colleges and organized a number of joint missions to leading Scottish towns. Even more important for the future was the work he did as organizer of mission study in Scottish churches. From a small office on the Mound in Edinburgh, hundreds of study groups were registered and supplied with materials (written or edited by Oldham) and training schools for lay leadership were organized. The novelty and scale of this work attracted visitors from England, Europe, and America.

All this helps to explain why there was in Scotland not only the enthusiasm for inviting a World Missionary Conference into their midst, but the large number of dedicated volunteers willing to do the work needed. It also explains why Oldham was chosen in 1908 to become its secretary.

Steering a New Course

Much has been written about "Edinburgh 1910"; its role as the starting point of the modern ecumenical movement has perhaps been overwritten. It was after all a missionary conference and it stood firmly in the tradition of the evangelical revival that had done so much to kindle among Protestants the zeal for evangelism to the ends of the earth. So it ought to be assessed as a mission event, and Oldham's role is set within that event and its outcome. At the end of the conference, when he rose to give out a few notices (he played no part in the debate), the whole company gave him a standing ovation. This was a tribute to the immense thoroughness that he had put into the preparation of the conference, and the skill with which he had brought the mass of preparatory material to ordered form in printed volumes by working closely with the chairmen and secretaries of the commissions, crossing the Atlantic by sea, moving from one continental country and language to another. Certainly one of Oldham's legacies was this pattern of thorough preparation for any world conference of the future.

A more solid tribute to Oldham's achievement as the secretary of the Edinburgh Conference was his appointment to an entirely new post. The conference decided—and it was by no means an easy decision—to set up a continuation committee. The Germans had been pressing for some time for a permanent organ of cooperation. The Americans were won over; the British took more convincing. Once the decision was taken, however, Oldham was the unanimous choice as secretary. But he did not accept with any alacrity. There were no precedents for such an appointment, no United Nations or League of Nations secretariats. Later he said, "I was thrown out on an uncharted sea and told to steer a course."

Temperamentally Oldham was not a man to jump into a situation and hope for the best. Careful preparation was always his watchword. So he prepared meticulously for the first meeting of the Continuation Committee in 1911. The conference report was published and its nine volumes (thanks to the widespread publicity the conference had received, and the amazingly low price) sold like hotcakes. The profit provided a small balance on which to start work until mission boards could decide on permanent financing. Many of the commissions continued the work they had begun at Edinburgh, and there were some lasting achievements, notably in missionary training, in the cooperative production of literature, and in education.

The most important memorandum the first meeting of the committee received was a proposal from the secretary himself. He was concerned with keeping communication alive, and with

"Later [Oldham] said, 'I was thrown out on an uncharted sea and told to steer a course.'"
the legacy of the Reformation. To work with them, bringing their leaders into personal knowledge and trust of one another, encouraging them in cooperative projects in literature, missionary training, education, and the study of certain intransigent problems faced by missions (the approach to Muslims, for example), was important work. Oldham threw himself into it with characteristic energy and that gift as a catalyst with which he was so generously endowed. But he knew all the time that there was no future in the Continuation Committee as such. The war only gave the coup de grace to what was bound to be a dying institution.

Steering through the Storms of War

When war broke out in 1914, Oldham and Maclennan transferred their services to the Conference of British Missionary Societies (CBMS) "for the duration." Every accessible member of the Continuation Committee agreed with this step, for the main action on behalf of missions had to be taken in London. All missions suffered shortages and restrictions, but none suffered as did the German missions. German colonies rapidly became theaters of war. In British colonies and India—and the majority of German missions had most of their work in those territories—nearly all German missionaries were repatriated or interned; their mission properties were commandeered by government. It was Oldham’s role, as the convener of the Committee on Missions and Governments, to back up the efforts of local missionaries to mitigate the sufferings of German missionaries, to get them released from internment, and (within their limited resources) to carry on some of their work. In India they had considerable success in using the National Missionary Council for a joint approach to the government in Delhi. Oldham did the same in London. Officials at the India Office, the Colonial Office, and even the Foreign Office greeted with astonished relief his mandate to speak on behalf of all the main Protestant missions. He was a frequent visitor and established himself as one who always knew his facts and never went beyond them, who would listen as well as present a case.

William Richey Hogg, in his history of the International Missionary Council, reckons that the principles on which the council always acted in relation to governments were laid down and exemplified by Oldham in these critical war and postwar years, before the council itself had come into being. It is worth saying what they were: Have as little to do with government as is strictly necessary and keep the distinctions clear. Missions have a spiritual task but, as he often used to say “the first duty of government is to govern,” a maxim often ignored by protesters, to their own disadvantage. If you have to negotiate, act together, prepare and know your facts, be consistent in what you are asking, listen to how the government’s spokespersons see things (and it will be a help if, in general, missions have been appreciative of any government actions that have been on the side of justice and the welfare of the governed). Lastly, know your officials and let those who have an underlying sympathy with the Christian cause do some of your work for you!

Late in 1917 everything blew up into a crisis. The Colonial Office informed the Basel Mission, through the British ambassador in Bern, that its properties in West Africa, already in government hands, were to be sold by auction to the highest bidder. Fortunately Oldham already had an unwritten understanding with officials that he would be told of any government moves toward missions. He managed to get a stay of execution; but the real trial would come over the making of a peace treaty. By the time that operation got under way there was a new alignment of missionary forces: American, British, and neutral countries’ missionary representatives formed the War Emergency Committee to deal with all matters affecting missions as the result of war and its aftermath. Mott was chairman; Oldham and Maclennan were secretaries.

There were two main issues for the committee’s endeavors. One was the German mission properties. Painstakingly the Americans conducted a country-by-country survey of these, and went armed with the results to Versailles, only to discover that the clause confiscating German properties as part of “war debts” was already drafted and they were too late. However “The wily saint” had been there before them and clause 438 included an exemption for German mission properties. Far more dangerous than the possible loss of properties was the threatened loss of missionary freedom in British dependencies and in former German colonies that became mandated territories under the League of Nations. Not just the India Office and the Colonial Office were involved. Their policy was dictated by the all-powerful Foreign Office. The British government was adamant that German missions with their large stake in education and their famed knowledge of native languages, should be kept out, probably forever, certainly for the foreseeable future, and all other foreign missionaries should be let in by license. This was an issue demanding high-level treatment. The British foreign secretary would recognize in the archbishop of Canterbury (Randall Davidson) his equal in a different realm of affairs of state. Davidson happened also to be a man sincerely committed to the missionary cause and a warm admirer of both Oldham and Mott. He presented Oldham’s brief to enormous effect, putting into the official mind considerations that had not occurred. How would Americans (with whom the British government was particularly anxious to keep on good terms) react to having their missionaries “vetted” by British officials? What about retaliation against British nationals by other powers? How could they justify letting in traders without limit, who could scarcely be said to be there in the disinterested service of local peoples, and exclude missionaries? As the result of these endeavors the preliminary licensing of missionaries passed to those cooperative bodies that had proved their value in wartime. The system later became a nuisance, but it tided over a difficult period. In the long run German missions recovered almost all their property, and missionaries gradually returned.

Into the picture of the busy activist in the corridors of power let me insert the following from a letter from the Swedish Mission leader, Karl Fries, to Frederich Wurz of the Basel Mission. He visited Oldham and others in London in February 1919:

"It may seem to you that the results are meagre, but the difficulties he had to overcome were quite enormous. He has sacrificed himself to the point of affecting his health. When we joined in prayer for the Mission, I realized how deeply he has taken the matter of the German missions to heart."

Henry Hodgkin, Quaker member of the Continuation Committee, wrote in the same vein. Prayer runs like a thread through Oldham’s life and W. A. Visser ‘t Hooft opened his address at the memorial service for Oldham, held in London in June 1969, by
referring to the evening prayers in the Oldham household as they met on the eve of the outbreak of World War II. At the busiest period of his life in the mid-1920s, Oldham compiled and published his Devotional Diary, and revised and enlarged it two years later. It broke new ground in manuals of devotion and was by far his most popular book. "What did I learn from Joe Oldham?" asked a period of his life in the mid-1920s, Oldham compiled and published broke new ground in manuals of devotion and was by far his most popular book. "What did I learn from Joe Oldham?" asked a prominent headmaster, "How to pray in a new way."

Missionary freedom is, of course, a part of the wider issue of religious freedom. It was greatly in peril at the end of World War I and several groups were concerned to get it established in the peace treaty. Oldham took one highly significant step. He realized that resolutions even from weighty bodies are liable to bounce off the official mind without leaving a dent, while the quotation of a legal precedent will be fastened on as an acceptable way out of a difficulty. So, on his own initiative, Oldham asked the question, "Why not take the provisions of the Berlin Act of 1885 [by which the colonizing powers in Africa guaranteed, in a central strip of the continent, from the Atlantic to the Indian oceans, free trade, freedom of religion and worship, and protection for traders, scientists, and missionaries] and apply them to all colonial dependencies and former Germany colonies mandated under the League of Nations?" Why not, indeed? It made an essential point of departure. Others completed what Oldham, by this simple action, began.

During the war Oldham thought constantly about the future. What should be the pattern of missionary cooperation? And toward what goals should the missionary effort be directed in what would be, he was sure, a different world?

The first question Oldham answered in a series of exchanges with American colleagues culminating in a proposal drafted by him for an ad hoc advisory conference, subsequently held at Crans, Switzerland (June 1920). Here the International Missionary Council was born, designed to be a council of national or regional councils. Only three such existed: the Auschuss in Germany, the Conference of British Missionary Societies, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. All three represented boards and societies sending missionaries, not missions or churches in the field. In a remarkable tour of the Far East in 1912, John R. Mott had gone a long way toward the establishment of such councils when he held follow-up meetings to the Edinburgh Conference and insisted on at least one-third indigenous leaders in their membership. Oldham went out to build on this foundation in India, spending four months in 1922 partly in visiting former German missions, but mainly in sounding out Indian Christian opinion, which was fretting under the tight control that many missionaries and home boards kept on overseas missions and churches. He presented to the National Missionary Council, meeting at Poona, a scheme for a national Christian council, including a proposal that the young and inexperienced YMCA secretary, William Paton, should head a staff that he hoped would be mainly Indian. He saw urgency. Home boards saw precipitate action and unmeetable financial obligations. Oldham went to Canada to follow up promises of support and back again to India in the following year, with a visit to China crowded into the same period. No one who knew the National Christian Council of India would doubt its importance to the Christian churches in India in the ensuing years. Oldham paid a heavy price in health for this travel.

The second question, that of the goals of Christian mission in the changed world of the postwar period, Oldham tackled in his book The World and the Gospel. Published in 1916 at the darkest period of World War I, it had the effect of lifting the sights of Christians beyond the horrors of the present to a renewed faith in God's call to mission. Twenty thousand copies were sold in Britain alone. Soberly he reflected that so-called Christian nations had lost all credibility. The church was standing beneath the cross sorely in need of pardon and renewal. That renewal would not come by self-absorption but, as in the past (and he has striking examples), by responding to some new challenge of the gospel. His whole emphasis was that there is one gospel; and it is entrusted to Christ's one church, broken though it may be. There was also emerging one world, whose problems, though having different local manifestations, were in essence the same. Oldham held to these views to the end of his life. Wherever the church preaches and exemplifies its gospel and offers its worship, there it stands for the whole church.

Oldham took his understanding of "one world" from a book by Graham Wallas called The Great Society, in which the author spoke of the inexorable grasp on individual lives of worldwide economic and political forces. Today we take for granted that the causes of local poverty or oppression may be half a world away and that the local church needs the wider church. We have institutionalized these insights in organizations for aid. But still we ask, as Oldham did, "Is this not part of mission? Of doing the gospel we preach?" Like, let us say, any priest organizing a trade union or a boycott, Oldham too went through the hoops of criticism. The battle, he believed, must be engaged where and when the challenge presented itself. From this conviction arose his long concern with Africa. In The World and the Gospel he wrote:

"...What did I learn from Joe Oldham?..."

The first encounter came in 1919 when the government in Kenya authorized what amounted to forced labor by African men, women, and children on the private estates of European settlers. District officers were ordered to put on "every legal pressure"; one or two actually refused to comply. Missionaries on the spot said that no more could be done than to ask for some safeguards for women and children. But Oldham (closely in touch with the Anti-Slavery League) thought the issue demanded a sharp challenge to the British government. He therefore wrote a strong letter to the secretary of state for the colonies, but he first had it read and assented to by every member of the Conference of British Missionary Societies. He then published it in the Times (London) and orchestrated a massive press campaign. The order was rescinded; the governor was recalled. Oldham never regarded this as a pattern the British government. He therefore wrote a strong letter to the secretary of state for the colonies, but he first had it read and assented to by every member of the Conference of British Missionary Societies. He then published it in the Times (London) and orchestrated a massive press campaign. The order was rescinded; the governor was recalled. Oldham never regarded this as a pattern...
the statement that “the interests of Africans must be paramount.” This was endorsed by Parliament in an official statement of policy (July 1923). Thus Oldham was the source of this concept of paramountcy, used most recently by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in relation to the Falkland Islanders. As the price for that hand with this went the delicate persuasion needed to get missions government. Missions cannot possibly provide an educational system for providing an educational system for the people of its approach to the British government to persuade it to accept responsibility. Missions cannot possibly provide an educational system, he argued, but they have a vital contribution to make, which should be a contribution of quality. He did not mean by that the large prestigious school; “the rural school beside the rural church” was also in his thoughts. Oldham got missionary educators to meet with pioneer thinkers and experimenters in education, and with government officials who would have to implement the policies. He visited centers for education of blacks in the United States, sent out a commission on rural education as part of community development, and threw his support behind Florence Allshorn, whose genius was shaping a new form of missionary training and whose biography he later wrote.

Oldham was greatly influenced by the writings of the American philosopher William Ernest Hocking. He took the title of Hocking’s book, Human Nature and Its Re-making, and reshaped it for a book that he wrote with Betty Gibson as The Remaking of Man in Africa. Later this title was misunderstood. Had he been trying to remake Africans in the Western image? Certainly not. Oldham understood the effects on African traditional life of the incursion of the white person, the breakdown of the tribes and the loss of their land. He wanted to equip Africans, through education, with the tools of a new life, without which they were ripe for exploitation.

What Oldham’s critics perhaps did not know was that at the same time he was working to get a proper system of education established by government, he was putting an equal effort into organizing for the study and preservation of African languages and cultures. Alerted in the first instance by American missionaries working in French and Belgian colonies where government policies made French the medium of instruction in schools at so early an age that native language was rapidly lost, Oldham and his German colleague, Hans Westermann, took the lead in creating the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. Oldham secured large grants from Rockefeller. The important journal Africa started its distinguished course; monographs on aspects of African culture began to appear; researchers were helped. Perhaps most important were the seminars, conducted by the distinguished anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, for young anthropologists. Almost all of these students later filled important professorial chairs. With them in the same seminars were missionaries, hand-picked by Oldham to share a unique experience of learning and contributing. When funds ran low in the recession of the early 1930s, Oldham took on the post of administrative director, and the institute contributed a quarter of his salary to the International Missionary Council (1931–38).

In 1924 Oldham published his most influential book, Christianity and the Race Problem. A whole generation of Christian students—not to mention many of their elders—had their eyes opened to the challenge of racism by this book. He was invited to South Africa and met church and political leaders. He was present in the Cape Parliament as the first stages of the apartheid policy passed into law with the Colour Bar Act. He was appalled by what he foresaw. On a sheet of paper now in this writer’s possession, Oldham wrote: “Agenda for a possible return visit: (1) Race discrimination—the greatest enemy of a humane society. . . .” He never returned but went to fight the same battle in East Africa and to serve on the Hilton Young Commission on Closer Union. When the chairman and the government rejected the report, Oldham was left alone to try to rouse public opinion to the issues at stake. He wrote, at the request of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, What Is at Stake in East Africa: An Appeal to the Christian People of Great Britain (1930). But Britain was deep in the recession and the old will to fight injustice, so much alive in 1919, seemed now asleep. Some of Oldham’s American colleagues grew sharp in their criticism; what business was it of an officer of the International Missionary Council to rescue the British empire from its follies? He was ready to resign, if that was their wish.

Oldham’s task in Africa was now over except for one punch­-ing blow. In 1930 the South African premier and popular World War I hero, General Christian Smuts, delivered the Rhodes Lectures in Oxford and repeated the gist of them on what was then called “the wireless.” This writer can still hear that melifluous voice coming through the crackling of the old crystal set. There was a new task for white Christian civilization, to spread it from Cape to Cairo up the broad highway of the East African High­-lands. Stirrings of an old imperial dream! Oldham slammed back with White and Black in Africa. Fifty years later the opening of government papers revealed Smuts in close contact with L. S. Amery, the colonial secretary, urging the necessity to counter movements toward the establishment of native states on the route of his projected civilizing march, and referring to paramountcy as “stupid.”

Still the Missionary, But in a New Field

Oldham did not resign—Mott would not let him, for Mott saw that, although Oldham had not been present at the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in 1928, he was already thinking how to make a start on its most important finding. The Council identified the growth of a secular view of the world, based largely on science and technology as a worldwide phenomenon. People’s hopes were being directed towards new possibilities of life; religion—all religions—seemed increasingly irrelevant. Oldham saw in these developments a new challenge to evangelism. When he addressed the next meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1929 on “The New Christian Adventure” he commented that more books worth reading were written from the standpoint of scientific humanism than by Christians taking account of the realities of the modern world. This was a new task that ought to be taken up by a rising generation of theologians. He called together a first conference of young theologians from Britain and the continent, held at York, England (this included the young Visser ‘t Hooft and Michael Ramsey, future archbishop of Canterbury). Oldham then went to the United States where eager young theologians readily set up for him the sort of groups he could so ably chair and guide.

What then was his missionary message? Emphatically it was not anti-scientific. He welcomed the ability of science to lift from people’s backs the burdens of poverty, ignorance and disease. But in so far as science tended to present a view of the world as a series of problems that could be mastered by knowledge, it was inadequate. Life does not consist of achieving power over things and people: it is fundamentally relational. A person meets another person not as an object but as another autonomous self. One has to learn or re-learn what this means. God can never be the object of
scientific enquiry or technical manipulation; He is the Other, with whom we have to do. Oldham drew on his rich store of reading and his personal friendship with Swiss and German philosophers. He expounded to students Martin Buber’s little classic Ich und Du long before it was translated into English as I and Thou. Around Oldham there grew a group of intellectuals who called themselves “the Moot”—among them, T. S. Eliot, Karl Mannheim, and Michael Polanyi. All of them acknowledged Oldham’s influence.

Besides the intellectual task of mission, aimed at bringing Christianity into encounter with the currents of modern thought, there was another task that occupied Oldham. This was the relation of the church to the contemporary lives of people in society and to the modern state. It has two strands; one is concerned with the problems of the Christian lay man or woman trying (to quote his words) “to find out how the Christian faith bears on the questions which they have to deal with in their daily occupations”; the other is concerned with the far larger questions of the church as an institution in relation to other institutions. For the first, he established the Christian Frontier Council; for the second he accepted the chairmanship of the research department of the Life and Work Movement and carried out the preparations for the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State (1937). As a follow-up to the latter he launched in 1939 the weekly Christian News Letter which he edited till 1945; it was owned by the Christian Frontier Council.

Thus Oldham had what would have been for other men a life’s work after he left the sphere of overseas mission, and it is impossible to do full justice to it here. His books are witnesses to that work. In 1952 he retired to the YMCA college at Dunford near Midhurst in Sussex, where he continued his writing and his friendships. There was a brief African postscript when he wrote for his friends in the Capricorn Africa Society who were trying to reconcile black and white in central Africa by creating a common citizenship, his last book, New Hope in Africa. He was over eighty but his intellectual vigour was unimpaired and his capacity for making new friendships with younger men and women flourished in the atmosphere of this beautiful house (home of the famous 19th century social reformer, Richard Cobden). Always a man for walking he grew to love the Sussex countryside and as physical strength began to fail he and Mary moved to a nursing home in St. Leonards on sea where he built up yet another library and Mary plied her typewriter, sending letters and memoranda to friends, helping them to sort out their ideas and write their books. Pre-deceased by Mary, he died on May 16th, 1969.

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**Selected Bibliography**

**Books and Pamphlets by Oldham**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>The Progress of the Movement for Co-operation in Missions. Swanwick: Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
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**Articles by Oldham**

(_IRM = International Review of Missions_)

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>“German Missions.” <em>IRM</em>, October, pp. 459–78.</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>“Five Conferences in India.” <em>IRM</em>, April, pp. 262–76.</td>
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January 1984 23
The Legacy of Florence Allshorn

Eleanor Brown

Florence Allshorn? Who was she? ... She seems hardly to belong in this gallery of missionary statesmen, writers, influential figures in the international church scene: this Englishwoman who was known to only a comparatively small circle, who wrote nothing for publication, who was only directly involved in the missionary enterprise for the twenty years between 1920 and 1940.

Yet J. H. Oldham, who must have met most of the outstanding missionary leaders of his day in his work for the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, could say that of all of them Florence Allshorn was “one of the most remarkable”; she “saw further than most into the meaning of the missionary task and the nature of its demands.” Who then was this woman who made such an impact on men like Oldham and William Paton, secretary of the International Missionary Council who said of her: “I think she has the greatest spiritual insight of anyone I have ever known”?

Early Life

Allshorn’s life had very inauspicious beginnings. She was only three when first her doctor father and then her mother died, and she and her two brothers were brought up in Sheffield, England, by a governess, a kind but undemonstrative lady of strict religious outlook. It was a home without brightness, stifling to a child with a naturally lively, beauty-loving temperament. Her brothers went away to boarding-school, and Florence had a lonely and cramped adolescence. This hard early experience gave her much sympathy later on with people who had been deprived of a happy home life, but it also gave her confidence in human courage and resilience.

“You don’t give people credit for enough courage,” she would say to someone who was handing out enervating sympathy.

Florence’s promising beginning at the Sheffield School of Art was cut short by serious eye trouble: after a rest of six months in almost complete darkness her sight improved enough for her to take a four-year course in domestic science, from which she emerged with a first-class diploma. She used to say later, in her training of missionaries, that she thought the disciplines of art and homecraft were especially valuable in that they taught one really to look at things (and people) appreciatively and objectively, and to express one’s seeing practically.

The first influence to draw her into a living relationship with the church was that of Dr. Gresford-Jones (afterward bishop of Uganda), who came to work in Sheffield. He and his wife recognized at once in Florence an unusual potential, which in the warmth of their friendship quickly flowered into vivid life. She worked with them on the cathedral staff, enlivening factory girls and Sunday-school teachers alike: forty years later one of them wrote of her, “She inspired every girl with her intense love of beauty, not only to look at, but beauty of mind and thought; and everything we did had to be of the very best.”

At some time in these years she “fell in love with Christ’s way of seeing things,” as she sometimes put it, in a new way. In her letters to friends there comes a note of passionate longing for “the one supreme thing.” “I’m not content with goodness and niceness and duty, which I’ve struggled for. Now I want Him.” And with a prescient note: “I’m so troubled about not loving enough. I feel as if I’m not awake yet ... I used to think that being nice to people and feeling nice was loving people. But it isn’t, it isn’t. Love is the most immense unselfishness and it’s so big I’ve never touched it. I hope I shall have enough courage to want it even.”

Uganda

In 1920 Florence was accepted by the Church Missionary Society for service in Uganda, and at the age of thirty-two found herself in charge of a girls’ boarding-school at Iganga in Busoga country; they spoke no English and at the beginning she spoke no Luganda. She spoke no Luganda. The climate of Busoga is exceptionally unhealthy: in the early days Bishop Tucker had written of it that all nature seemed to be suffering from limpness and lack of energy. Seven young missionaries had been sent to Iganga in as many years, but none had stayed. The trouble was not only the climate but the temperament of their senior missionary, who had struggled on heroically but at considerable cost to herself and to anyone who tried to live with her.

The crucial battle of Florence’s life, which was fought and
Florence Allshorn was a born educator in the true sense and, in the few years she was at Iganga, brought the school to a point that was described in the Phelps-Stokes Report on education as "first-rate." She discerned the potential for growth in her apparently slow and lethargic pupils, and could write "it is a work fascinating in the extreme, full of hope always." Underneath the hard but rewarding work in the school, however, Florence was aware all the time of a basic failure, a failure in personal relationship that was undermining all that was being taught.

My colleague is a dear in some ways, but the matter of fact is that Iganga is a hopeless sort of place. My colleague has stuck it; it just happens not to have affected her health, but it has absolutely rotted her nerves, and she has the most dreadful fits of temper. Sometimes she doesn’t speak at all for two days. Just now we’ve finished up three weeks with never a decent word or smile! [And then, typically:] I’m sure it isn’t the right thing just to leave her to it.

She was almost in despair. The children were fully aware that the atmosphere was wrong; words about the love and power of Christ sounded hollow. She had come to the crisis of her life. What followed is told in her own words:

One day the old African matron came to me when I was sitting on the verandah crying my eyes out. She sat at my feet and after a time she said: "I have been on this station for fifteen years and I have seen you come out, all of you saying you have brought us a Saviour, but I have never seen this situation saved yet." It brought me to my senses with a bang. I was the problem for myself. I knew enough of Jesus Christ to know that the enemy was the one to be loved before you could call yourself His follower, and I prayed, in great ignorance as to what it was, that this same love might be in me, and I prayed as I have never prayed before in my life for that one thing. Slowly things lightened. Whereas before she had been going about upsetting everybody with long deep dreadful moods, and I had been going to my school depressed and lifeless, both of us found our way to lighten each other. She had a great generosity and I must have been a cruel burden to her, worn out as she was. But I did see that as we two drew together in a new relationship the whole character of the work of the station altered. . . . The children felt it and began to share in it, and to do little brave unselfish things that they had never done before.

For a whole year Florence read 1 Corinthians 13 every day. Though she rarely spoke of this experience again, her later teaching of missionary students was founded on it, and in a talk given on the eve of her last illness, the hard-won truth is in every sentence:

To love a human being means to accept him, to love him as he is. If you wait to love him till he has got rid of his faults, till he is different, you are only loving an idea. He is as he is now; I can only love a person by allowing myself to be disturbed by him as he is. I must accept the pain of seeing him with helpfulness and expectancy.

To the end of her life she accepted the pain of seeing with helpfulness, suffering frustration and disappointment often, but never denying her central belief that "we are made to love as the stars are made to shine."

**Training of Missionaries**

When Florence returned to England on leave at the end of four grueling years, she was found to have a cavity in one lung. Having lost her mother and her much-loved brother through tuberculosis, it felt like a death sentence. But she had a strong faith that, as she said, "God is with life, and sickness is the enemy." She refused an operation, which would have meant living with one lung, and set her purpose toward healing. In one of her later talks she referred to this experience:

Faith is not an easy thing to come by. You are fortunate if you have been ill enough to think that only faith will save you. Then you have to have it, when your body is saying the opposite. You can gull yourself about the soul, not the body. To believe that God is stronger than the enemy and he has looked on you, His creation, and said, "It is very good."

After a winter in Switzerland and a year in a curious little colony of "dropouts" in the Sussex countryside—a year of bohemian existence that she found fascinating and freeing—Florence Allshorn was sufficiently recovered to work again, though she had to contend with precarious health for the rest of her life. At this point the Church Missionary Society (CMS) invited her to fill a temporary gap in one of their two small training colleges for women missionaries. The CMS did not know what the "temporary appointment" was going to mean. In the next eleven years Florence was to effect a quiet revolution in the whole concept of missionary training, a revolution whose effects have been spreading ever since, and which has changed the attitudes of people who never knew her. This was partly because she brought a completely fresh mind to the situation. She had never had missionary training herself; she was not greatly interested in church controversies or parties; her Christianity was founded more on her personal experience than on family influences. She had no academic qualifications for the post, only a quick and penetrating intelligence, wide reading, and a natural grasp of the essentials in a given situation. Above all she had learned in a hard school the meaning of those three words so often emptily used in Christian teaching: Faith, Hope, and Love. Armed with these not-always-available qualifications for a trainer of missionaries, she threw herself into her new work.

To begin with, Allshorn's unorthodox approach alarmed the more conservative elements in the CMS, and it was probably only because some of the secretaries recognized her rare qualities that she was allowed to continue. Suspicions gradually died down as those persons who were worried by her "liberal" ideas at one moment found themselves challenged at the next by her single-minded devotion to Christ. When the two colleges were amalgamated in 1934, she was appointed principal of the combined institution.

Allshorn's quiet revolution was not primarily in changes in
the curriculum, but in her conception of what was the essential purpose of the training. She enlisted the help of excellent lecturers, and broadened the range of speakers on topics of the day; she developed the practical training—all things that are a usual part of training. Underlying all this was her burning conviction that the prime necessity was for the Christian witness to be real. Her years in Africa had shown her the inadequacy of conventional religion up against the reality of conflicting personal relationships. This was by no means only a projection of her own experience. Her clear eyes had made her aware of what she called “the silent disasters” that went on in many missionary lives underneath all the hard work and the building up of successful institutions: the loss of vision, the hardening of attitudes, the acceptance of mediocre standards.

Florence Allshorn’s first aim was to develop in her students some real experience in holding together belief and action, theory and practice: far more important to her than any technical or academic training (though she valued both) was that they should be growing in their love for God and their capacity to live with their fellow students. She considered doctrine to be “of such importance that it must not be separated from the rest of the programme. Its position in this training is that it is related directly to the total experience of each person. The truths we know and teach must be ‘proved upon the pulses.’” So pious words in chapel followed by complacent or contemptuous attitudes in conversation would meet her quick challenge: lofty sentiments about beauty would be held up against sloppy standards of practical work; new insights into the great Christian truths emerged from discussion of some small-seeming argument or breakdown in the common life.

For many of Allshorn’s students it was a revelation of the wholeness of life. Everything was to come under the discipline of Christ’s two great commandments; but within that discipline there was a sense of freedom, freedom to learn, to grow, to take risks, to rebel, to have fun. Florence’s deep seriousness about basic issues was balanced by an irrepressible gaiety: as one of her friends said, unlike the self-conscious obedience that in many of us drains life of color, “her obedience put the colour into life, and enabled others to see a new world, informed by beauty and light.” “Religion to me really is a song,” she said one day. She was an artist rather than a moralist in her approach to people, and she had the patience of an artist as well as the artist’s care for perfection.

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It was just because of the possibilities Florence Allshorn saw in the young women coming into training that she was able to confront head-on not only their own weaknesses but what she felt to be the unfaced failures of the mission field. “I believe our great trouble is that we won’t stir up courage to look at failure.” In her only published article, “Corporate Life on a Mission Station,” she set out forcefully what she saw that failure to be:

The failures amongst missionaries are those who have lost the forward vital impulse, the life of the Spirit, because they have never got through their own spiritual, personal and social problems. This may be due either to the fact that they were the wrong kind to send out—people whose spiritual life was unreal—or because they have become caught in the cog of the mechanical routine of too much work, and have become exhausted and unable to deal with their problems. Failing to find success in their spiritual and mental life they are seeking it by putting almost all their vitality into “the job.” But womanhood may not do that. Womanhood means more than a bright vision of success in a job; it means patience and longsuffering and the deepening of gentlenesses; it means going down into deep places.

In this article, much of which is relevant fifty years later, she goes on to speak of how, in training, the emotional life of the student has been left to take care of itself—“this queer hinterland where there huddle the anxieties, timidities, antagonisms, self-deceptions, which somehow our spiritual life does not go deep enough to touch.” Florence was considerably ahead of her time in getting all the help she could from psychology, and some of the books that are now considered classics were on her shelves soon after they appeared. But what she read only confirmed her growing conviction that any deep change in a person needs time. She was finding as the years went on that the year allotted to missionary training was only the first stage of a process. “You really cannot do much in the initial training,” she wrote to a colleague. “They have not come to the end of themselves; you can only gently try to make them more real.”

The first furlough was crucial: watching her own students coming home after what was often a very testing first tour, Florence saw that as well as those who seemed satisfied with their life and service, there were “those who had gone out on a big spiritual adventure, but were rather immature in Christ and found they could not cope.” For these especially it was necessary to have time for quiet thought and for guidance from someone further on, for regripping their vision in a deeper way.

But what was happening (what still happens) was that they were being plunged into a succession of courses, conferences, meetings at which they had to give a “good” picture of their work, all conspiring to mask the things that were troubling them; so that often they returned to the same situation no further along, more likely than ever to be dominated by obvious needs, and to stop growing—in Florence’s eyes the only real defeat.

With her usual incisiveness Florence Allshorn wrote in a memorandum:

Some very clear thinking has to be done about what is real vocation. If they go out primarily to do medical work then obviously the first claim on their time and energies is this period of readjustment to Him and fresh vision of Him, and nothing must be allowed to take its place.

Toward Community

It was largely her awareness of this need which led Florence Allshorn to resign from the Church Missionary Society training and to launch into the final, the hardest, and the most creative adventure of her life: the founding of St. Julian’s Community in Sussex.
She expressed some first thoughts about this in a letter to her old students:

I want to do something where I can still go on serving you with what I have of experience and real caring for you. I have a dream of a house in some lovely quiet place where you could come and be quiet and rest and read and talk—where things could be refreshed and recreated before you went off on your new courses. . . . Also for Church people at home who go on and on in the same rut.

Beneath this thought was another, which was pressing increasingly on Florence Allshorn’s attention, and which was to become the dominant aim of the St. Julian’s experiment. For some time she, like many others, had believed that the Christian witness needed by the twentieth-century world was not so much that of outstanding individuals as of groups committed to working together. She saw also that, while this was happening to a certain extent, matters were becoming too cramped for its purpose, and at the beginning of 1950 the community moved to its present location at Colham, near Horsham in Sussex, a spacious house, with outbuildings and cottages, in beautiful grounds looking out over a lake and wide fields to the South Downs. It was a brave and risky act of faith, fraught with financial difficulties, but has proved to be a most blessed one for the community and the thousands of people who have visited it since then, not only for rest and quiet but to work alongside the community, learning from them and with them.

Florence was undaunted as one seemingly insuperable obstacle after another was surmounted. When the move to Sussex was finally accomplished, she wrote to a friend in Africa: ‘You’ll love this place when you come home. It could be a lovely place for God’s children for a hundred years.’

Through all the difficulties the four held together, gradually becoming a real community united in a common purpose and in a growing experience of “the peace which lies at the other side of conflict.” From the beginning the house was filled with people of all sorts, both individuals and groups, grateful for an oasis of peace and order in the harshness of wartime Britain, and also looking for help in their own relationships. The community began to discover that, in a way they hardly understood, their guests seemed to find renewed strength and fresh vision just when their own struggles were most acute. This gave them confidence that they were being led in the right way, untied as it was.

Within three years the experiment was sufficiently established for a Trust to be formed and a larger house to be bought on a mortgage: the community grew to eight and then twelve, and launched into the running of a farm and the beginning of a children’s house. This was all accomplished during the exigencies of the war and of the drab war-weary period that followed it. Those of us who came to stay at St. Julian’s Community can still remember the sense of vitality, of gaiety of spirit that met us, as well as the warmth of hospitality and the ordered beauty of the house and garden, somehow achieved in those penurious years: a quality of living that communicated the hope and grace of God much more effectually than words.

By the end of the decade the lovely old house at Barns Green was becoming too cramped for its purpose, and at the beginning of 1950 the community moved to its present location at Colham, near Horsham in Sussex, a spacious house, with outbuildings and cottages, in beautiful grounds looking out over a lake and wide fields to the South Downs. It was a brave and risky act of faith, fraught with financial difficulties, but has proved to be a most blessed one for the community and the thousands of people who have visited it since then, not only for rest and quiet but to work alongside the community, learning from them and with them.

Florence was undaunted as one seemingly insuperable obstacle after another was surmounted. When the move to Sussex was finally accomplished, she wrote to a friend in Africa: ‘You’ll love this place when you come home. It could be a lovely place for God’s children for a hundred years.’ But Florence was not well; in May she developed an acutely irritating skin rash, which was finally diagnosed as Hodgkin’s disease, and after some weeks of very painful illness she died on July 3, 1950. She was sixty-two.

It was a desolate shock to the community and all the friends for whom Florence Allshorn had been a strength, a challenge, and a light. Many thought that St. Julian’s could hardly continue without her. But Florence had the ability, often lacking in strong personalities, to inspire rather than control; and because the inspiration came through her from beyond herself, from the Master she loved, it did not die with her. Many of the experiments in communal living that were made in the postwar years have passed into oblivion. But the strong foundations that were laid at much cost by Florence and her companions have enabled St. Julian’s Community to live and grow, through the years since her death, as a center of refreshment and re-creation for men and women of many walks of life and of varying religious allegiances, or of none. Many things have altered in those years, in response to changing conditions, and at many times the church has not been able to do what the group had planned to do. But the group’s deepest purpose was to build a center where some would make the devotion to an ideal, and clear-eyed realism than the bringing of the Christian gospel and the true life of the Spirit.”

"[Florence] wrote to a friend in Africa: ‘You’ll love this place when you come home. It could be a lovely place for God’s children for a hundred years.’"
needs and new insights; most of the present community never knew Florence “in the flesh”; but they still keep steadfast in their living witness to “the peace that lies on the other side of conflict” and to the healing alchemy of love.

In Florence’s last address, given when she was already ill, she spoke of something she had “proved upon the pulses”:

It is a hard way, but everyone who has known this “losing your life to find it” tells us how, as the mind and desire go the way of self-naughting more simply and readily with practice, you do know that you are living in a new and fresh world: that at the root of you, instead of the old unease, the old feeling of guilt, the lovelessness, there is a content happy shining, whatever comes. If God is love, and we were made to love as the stars were made to shine, then every creature is desirous of finding this disinterested love.

This faith lived out within a small company is the legacy of Florence Allshorn to all those who were and are willing to receive it.

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**Bibliography**

Although Florence Allshorn wrote nothing specifically for publication, some of her writings have been published.


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**Noteworthy**

**Meetings**

The American Society of Missiology will hold its 1984 annual meeting at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, June 22-24, on the theme “Third World Theologies and the Mission of the Church.” The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 21-22 at Princeton in conjunction with the ASM. The ASM/APM annual meeting in 1985 will be held at Trinity Evangelical Theological Seminary, Deerfield, Illinois, June 20-23, and in 1986 at North Park Seminary in Chicago, June 19-22. Further information may be obtained from Wilbert R. Shenk, Secretary-Treasurer of the ASM, Box 1092, Elkhart, Indiana 46515. President of the ASM for 1983-84 is William Richey Hogg, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

**United States Catholic Missionaries**

There were 6,246 Catholic missionaries from the United States serving abroad in 1983, according to the latest report in *Mission Handbook 1983*, published by the United States Catholic Mission Association. Counted in the annual survey are United States citizens serving for at least one year outside the 48 contiguous states. Not included are 162 overseas workers of Catholic Relief Services who are working in 70 countries. Trends over the last twenty-seven years can be seen from the following statistics:

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<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6,393</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>6,246</td>
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The major sending groups are the Jesuits with 561 (671 in 1976), the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers with 542 (676 in 1976), and the Maryknoll Sisters with 399 members (493 in 1976) serving abroad.

There are 1,533 serving in South America, 1,468 in Asia, 990 in Africa, 640 in Oceania, 650 in Central America, 517 in the Caribbean, 68 in the Middle East, and 34 in Europe. The individual countries with the largest are Brazil (456), Peru (459), and the Philippines (385). Copies of the report may be ordered from USCMA, 1233 Lawrence Street N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017. Cost: $1.50 domestic; $3.00 overseas airmail.
Women and Ministries!

**Women, Ministry and the Church**, Sr. Joan Chittister. Applies the Christian tradition to the questions of how women can function ministerially within the community of the church. 2528-5 (pb) $5.95

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**Woman Sealed In The Tower, The**, Betsy Caprio. Jungian and Christian exploration of the four “inner women” present in women of all times and places. 2486-6 (pb) $5.95

**Women and Religion**, A Reader for the Clergy, edited by Regina Coll, C.S.J. Some of the most creative contemporary religious thinkers have contributed to this effort to explore the role and meaning of the woman’s movement and its significance for religion. 2461-0 (pb) $4.95

**Seasons: Women’s Search for Self Through Life’s Stages**, Anita Louise Spencer. The changes of crisis and growth in the life process of women. 2437-8 (pb) $4.95

**Bringing Forth In Hope**, Being Creative in a Nuclear Age, Denise M. Priestley. Examines the basis for hope in a seemingly hopeless world of nuclear confrontation. In the face of the absence of any future, giving birth seems to be ultimately futile. Is it possible for Christians to know the realities of nuclear annihilation and to possess a deep hope that moves us to bring forth life? 2551-X (pb) $3.95

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Book Reviews


This volume is an important missiological document, not only for the “experts,” but very much as a major resource for missionaries in the field. Further, it is spirited ecclesial documentation portraying the pilgrim church on its journey to reflect deeply on its praxis and move into the future with clearer insight and vision.

The main part of the book is divided into eight major sections: (1) The Missionary Dimensions of the Local Church; (2) The Mission of the Local Church in Secular Society; (3) Christian Mission and Ecumenical Relations in the Context of the Local Church; (4) The Mission of the Local Church and the Missionary Institutes; (5) Mission in the Local Church in Relation to Other Religious Traditions; (6) Religious Freedom and the Local Church’s Responsibility for Mission; (7) The Mission of the Local Church and the Inculturation of the Gospel; (8) The Liberation and Justice Dimension of the Mission of the Local Church.

In each of these sections theologians, pastoral agents, and missionaries representative of the six continents listen carefully to their local church and present papers in response to the questions above. In general the essays, often including useful bibliographical material, give a historical overview of the missionary activity and its development in nations or geographical areas that can be called “local church.” In these papers critical hindsight is given of previous missionary activity. Mission theology then unfolds to present the author’s understanding of mission and the role of the missionary today.

If a key direction can be singled out, the essays refer over and over again to the movement of inculturation of the gospel message. Aloysius Pieris in his provocative essay “Non-Semitic Religions of Asia” asks key questions of the “inculturationists”; Pearl Drego, writing on India, and Robert Schreiter on “A Framework for a Discussion of Inculturation,” offer models for analysis, to name but a few furthering the discussion.

Summary statements as agenda for the future speak to the major directions of the “how” of mission today: proclamation, dialogue, inculturation, and liberation. These areas, along with that of the central role of the local church and the task for missionary institutes, surfaced from the actual experience of the seminar held in Rome 1981 and are only a short entry in the volume.

In the representative essays of the local church there is some noticeable imbalance (little from Europe, which may have been purposeful). However, it is understood that all local churches on six continents could not be represented. (A note tells us, for example, that the papers of the local church in China were not possible to incorporate.) Besides the difficult task of representation there are heady attempts to cluster the vast wealth of insights into ready categories.

The editors, Mary Motte, F.M.M. and Joseph Lang, M.M., members of the SEDOS (Documentation and Study Service) executive committee who planned the seminar, have presented us in this volume a stimulating taste of the universal and local church. It verifies many times over that old paradigms and models of mission have radically changed and that the missionary church in receiving, sending, and becoming must take the necessary steps to incarnate a new vision of church and mission in deep faith and commitment. More than several settings will be necessary to absorb its diverse and rich fare. As stated in the concluding essay by the present executive secretary of SEDOS, Willie Jenkinson, “The changed conditions of the world and church call for new breakthroughs in the years ahead, for a fantastic hope, for creativity that goes beyond adaptation, for a conversion on the part of all those engaged in mission.”

—Marcella Hoesl, M.M.

The Last Age of Missions: A Study of Third World Mission Societies.


It is probably too early to call the emergence of Third-World mission societies the “Last Age of Missions,” as Keyes does, or “the most significant new factor since William Carey sailed for India,” as Pierson does on the back cover of this book. Nevertheless, the movement that is documented in The Last Age of Missions is manifestly important. There is little room to doubt, as the author asserts in Part One of this work, that the locus of missions is shifting toward the Third World, that the relationship between Western and Third-World missions is becoming a partnership, and that Third-World missions are integrally linked to and have been affected by the emergence of contextualized Third-World theologies.

In Part Two, Keyes identifies 368 mission agencies in the Third World that have sent over 13,000 missionaries into cross-cultural ministries. His missionary experience in Brazil and his access to research facilities at MARC-World Vision have enabled him to make invaluable data available to us. This report would have been stronger if it had stopped with description. The efforts to make longitudinal and regional comparisons and to extrapolate...
trends from these kinds of data are too tenuous to have much meaning.

The last part of the book explores areas of cooperation between Western and Third-World missions. The author urges both Western and non-Western missions to “join friendly hands...accept each other as equals, and cooperate together as partners” (pp. 120–21). His suggestions regarding how this may be accomplished will provide a springboard for fruitful discussions in mission classes and in gatherings of mission leaders.

Some readers will disagree with the author’s appraisal of mission assemblies at New Delhi (1961), Green Lake, Wisconsin (1971), and Edinburgh (1980). Others will wish for a more balanced focus upon both sodalities and modalities, and upon both structure and nonstructured missionary movements. Still others will hope for more theological, historical, and ecclesiological reflection than the author provides.

Even this dissatisfaction attests to the importance and complexity of the issues surrounding the emergence of Third-World mission agencies. Keyes has done us all a service by introducing them to us.

—Lois McKinney

Lois McKinney, Associate Professor of Mission, Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois, was for nineteen years in theological education in Portugal and Brazil with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society. She is former director of the Committee to Assist Ministry Education Overseas (CAMEO).


For three hundred years Mennonite women have helped to build the church and the home in North America. Elaine Rich, a columnist in the Mennonite press and author of several books, here writes a brief history of Mennonite women in North America. The source materials were solicited by the Women’s Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church (WMSC) from church women across the continent who sent in the stories of their predecessors. Rich, with addition-

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January 1984

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What do the libraries of the Vatican, Gordon-Conwell, Harvard, and Tübingen share in common? UPDATE.

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New Communities, New Ministries: The Church Resurgent in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.


Michel Bavarel is a Swiss journalist who has spent more than ten years visiting small Christian communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The book is described as "a journey to the land of faith" and consists of short descriptions of various ministries and communities that the author originally wrote as a series of reports for the Centre International de Reportages et d'Information Culturelle (CIRIC). Francis Martin has provided a very readable translation and Robert Masson has written an epilogue entitled "Faith is the World in Its Youth."

The book is essentially a personal journey to a variety of mainly Catholic communities, which are notable to Bavarel because they impressed him with the culture and nobility of their people and because they portrayed the universality of the church. He feels that these are places where poor people and the Word of God come together in a particular context and provide a challenge to Western-influenced Christianity.

In each of the four subsections—
1) The Church: Indigenous or Extran­e­ous?
2) New Communities, New Min­is­tries; (3) On the Side of the Rich or the Poor?
4) Repression or Libera­tion?—a short introduction sets forth the author's missiological concerns. Each section is then followed by descriptions of communities and ministries that illustrate these new needs and directions. His description of an Ethiopian pilgrimage, the slum-dwellers of Bombay, the plight of plantation workers in the Philippines, and the living conditions of the ragpickers of Cairo vividly portray communities and ministries in various parts of the Third World. In the fourth section describing the Nicaraguan revolution he makes the telling comment: "If—and, please God, it will not happen!—the Nicaraguan revolution becomes perverted into another totalitarian regime, this

Sister Joan Delaney, M.M., was a missioner in Hong Kong for nineteen years. She served as execu­tive secretary of Sedos in Rome from 1976 to 1980, and co-ordinator of the Overseas Ministry Research Program of CARA in Washington, D.C., 1980–83. She is now a consultant, appointed by the Vati­can, to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland.

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would not mean that the Christians made a mistake in having worked along with it. It would only mean that they have to continue their struggle’ (p. 85).

While the reader welcomes an opportunity to have portrayed various new communities and new ministries, one cannot help feeling that a more judicious selection of ministries might have been chosen. There is a very heavy emphasis on priestly type ministries exercised by laymen. One is halfway through the book before ministries concerned with health, education, or development are mentioned. The examples of women in new ministries are confined to Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Sr. Emmanuelle working among the ragpickers, and a Sr. Nico’s work in a base community in El Salvador. In spite of this weakness, the book could, however, provide a useful tool to stimulate discussion or missiological issues among parish and student groups.

—Joan Delaney, M.M.

Meaning across Cultures


It is rare to find a book that deals with a difficult and complex issue, and does so with clarity and deep insight. This is one such book. Nida and Reyburn discuss the relationship of form in meaning in Bible translation, and in doing so lay an epistemological foundation that can be used for dealing with the nature of theology, sacred symbols, rituals, and other forms of communication.

Nida and Reyburn have played key roles in the move from formal Bible translation in which forms are considered unalterable, to more dynamic translations in which the retention of meaning is stressed. But how far can one go in sacrificing forms in order to gain meaning? As the authors point out, greater liberty can be taken in Hindu theosophical texts or Buddhist meditative discourses, for these religions do not take history so seriously. But the biblical texts do take history seriously and one, therefore, cannot alter historical facts in order to communicate some particular meaning in another culture. The historical record itself is a central part of that meaning.

Where, then, must forms be kept, and where is there greater freedom in their translation? After giving a brief overview of communication and translation theory, Nida and Reyburn present an excellent analysis of the relationships between forms and meanings in the various genre of written communication. In each of these the relationship is different. In some, such as the translation of names and figurative language, the translator has considerable liberty to adapt the form. In others, such as historical discourse, the retention of the forms is vital to the message.

The authors then turn to a discussion of the content of the message and how it affects the liberty of the translator to modify the text in order to make it clear in a new cultural setting. Meaning, they point out, lies not only in the “meaning of the utterance,” but also in the meaning of the events and objects

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Christianity and Other Religions

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that form integral elements of the message. With this in mind, they deal with five different types of content, and their significance for translating formal features of the message.

Finally, Nida and Reyburn deal with an often neglected aspect of translation, namely, the attitudes of missionaries and nationals to the receptor language and culture. These range from a negative valuation that treats anything indigenous as evil, to a naive romanticism that preserves the cultural forms at any cost. A good translator must have not only a thorough knowledge of the form and content of both the source and receptor languages and cultures, but also a balanced appreciation of the culture in which he or she is working.

While this book deals primarily with Bible translation, the insights it provides are essential for all those working in crosscultural communication and those interested in the nature of meaning, particularly as this relates to forms.

—Paul G. Hiebert

Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America.


This is a disturbing, even an infuriating book. But it is also an important book, and we dare not let its flaws lead us to ignore it.

Stoll is a British anthropologist, avowedly a non-Christian, who spent seven years researching the nature, history, activities, results, and reputation of the Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators. The bibliography of over 300 items, including many public and in-house SIL/WBT documents, attests to his effort to be thorough and fair. Though the focus is on Latin America, Stoll also deals with other fields, especially Vietnam, and with the International Linguistic Center (Dallas).

The problem is this: there is an enormous discrepancy between the way in which SIL/WBT sees and presents itself, and the way in which it is increasingly being seen in other countries. WBT presents itself to a North American supporting constituency as an evangelistic mission dedicated to Bible translation for the neglected tribal peoples. It presents itself to governments in its fields as a disinterested humanitarian and scholarly organization. But it is more and more seen as a deceptive, rich, and powerful organization, serving the interests of the United States government (e.g., the CIA) and United States business corporations at the expense of host countries and even of the tribal peoples they ostensibly are helping. The organization attributes the bad reputation to a demonically inspired conspiracy (though Stoll cites more critical voices inside). Stoll attributes the problem to SIL/WBT policy and practice, as designed by the founder, William Cameron Townsend.

It was this man’s particular blend of piety, pragmatism, and ideological bias that led him to create the two faces that inevitably have led to charges of sinister deception. It was his contracts with sometimes oppressive governments that led to the accusations of exploiting tribal peoples. It was his use of the power of the United States government and the money provided

Charles R. Taber, a contributing editor, is Professor of World Mission at Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee. He has been a translations consultant of the United Bible Societies and editor of Practical Anthropology and Gospel in Context.

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by rich donors with business and right-wing ideological agendas that led to the skepticism about the intentions of SIL. Granted, most of the rumors as such are untrue and unfair; but they had their origin in specific policies that backfired.

As far as I can see, the analysis stands even if one discounts, as I do, Stoll’s rejection of evangelism for conversion. It is to be hoped that SIL and the rest of us will learn the lesson of the dangers of allying the gospel with any form of worldly power, which always has its own agendas (which are seldom compatible with the gospel).

—Charles R. Taber

Communication Theory for Christian Witness.


Professor Charles H. Kraft of the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, has produced a very useful manual on the implications of communication theory for Christian witness. The purpose of this volume is clearly stated in the preface (see p. 12) in that it seeks to help the reader gain a clearer understanding of the dynamics of the communication process, to see the ways in which God has employed certain communication patterns for his own purposes, to develop ability to analyze one’s own communication activity, and finally to improve skills as a communicator.

In a series of twelve chapters Kraft covers most of the practical implications of communication theory for anyone who is really interested in effectively transmitting the message of the good news. In chapter 1 he indicates how he himself has changed his views with regard to biblical communication, and he makes an effective plea for imitating biblical methods. This is followed by a series of valuable observations concerning ten myths about communication. He particularly attacks the idea that the words of the Bible are so powerful that people need only read or hear those words in order to be brought to Christ. He also thoroughly rejects the idea that the Holy Spirit can make up for all mistakes if only the communicator is sincere, spiritual, or prayerful enough.

In chapter 3 Kraft relates communication to the broader implications of general behavior, and begins a discussion of small-group communication, public communication, and mass communication. It is this last type of communication that comes in for some rather rough treatment—and justifiably so. Throughout this volume there is constant emphasis upon the multiple messages that are being communicated, with very special attention paid to impact and to the role of the communicator. The communicator is the crucial medium.

Though this volume has excellent coverage, as far as various elements of communication theory are involved, a reader is likely to miss the illustrative material that brings home the significance of what the book aims to communicate. The reader should be told how effective communicators are actually doing the job. A reader may also be put off by some of the technical language, which sounds much like the vocabulary and grammar of the lecture hall. Nevertheless, Professor Kraft has done us all a service in relating communication theory to the needs of the average Christian who wants to be more effective in presenting the claims of Christ.

—Eugene A. Nida

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919 W. Huntington Drive
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Eugene A. Nida has been a translations consultant with the American Bible Society and the United States Bible Societies since 1943.

January 1984
Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1983 for Mission Studies

The Editors of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research have selected the following books for special recognition of their outstanding contribution to mission studies in 1983. We have limited our selection to books in English since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their continuing commitment to advance the cause of the Christian world mission with scholarly literature.


A Gospel for the Cities: A Socio-Theology of Urban Ministry.


The emerging Third World cities are visible signs of God's activities in the world, continuity with and, in some remarkable ways, climactic to all that God has been doing since creation. These rapidly growing cities are cultural systems, channels of reciprocal influence between citizens and communities both near and far away. "These [systems] will be the channels best suited to urban pastoral activity" (p. 38).

Meanwhile, salvation history, beginning in the mission incarnation of Jesus the Son of God, continues in the city, with the church as sign and sacrament. That church penetrates the values, roles, and structures of the city, and impacts with generic mission in solidarity with the city at every level and in the specific mission of evangelization.

The themes of God's city, on the one hand, and God's church and mission in the city, on the other, come together in Tonna's final chapter, "Church as Mission," with pleas for and illustrations of church models and programs.

Tonna makes many valuable contributions in this book for urban ministers everywhere. First, he articulates a marvelous mission of as well as to or in cities. He is able to see beyond the structures and the inevitable social pathologies, and to raise the theological questions about God's urban mission, in keeping with sound missiology, to be sure, but different from most of the programmatic urban literature of recent years. A second contribution that will be appreciated by urban church leaders everywhere is the way in which Tonna describes the contextual dynamics and social functions of cities. The contributions of Tonnies, Park, Burgess, Wirth, and others from the old school of urban sociology are nuanced with the contributions of contemporary cultural anthropology, and yet all this is done with clarity and with only enough technical material as will show precisely how it is significant for church and mission.

Urban life, development, social
networks, and other cultural phenomena are given theological interpretation. Tonna shows a beautifully balanced spirit of inquiry. A Roman Catholic, he learns from, and longs for, more cooperation with Pentecostals, mainline Protestants, the World Council, and the Lausanne movement.

The fact that his data in chapter 1 are a decade old means that his case is vastly understated. (As of December 1982 there were nearly 240 cities in the world having populations of 1 million or more persons). His low numbers serve now to amplify the urgency of his case.

There is little programmatic assistance for pastors or mission executives in this book. This reviewer has no problem with that. The most significant practical urban ministry skill is, after all, a way of thinking about and interpreting the big picture. The ability to grasp God's urban mission at the socio-theological level can provide the functional interpretive hermeneutic that would more than compensate for all the incoherent activity in cities everywhere.

With Tonna I pray also that the city will become the "tent" of God's reconciliation, a communion of integrally liberated persons.

—Raymond J. Bakke

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**Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa.**


This is a collection of excerpts from sermons, addresses and articles by the courageous Anglican bishop, Desmond Tutu, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. The selections, many of which are less than a page, are designed to help European and North American readers become more aware of the profound and urgent issues of justice and oppression in South Africa, which Tutu believes have far-reaching implications for the entire world.

This is simple writing—short, sharp, concrete, urgent. These are the cries of one who knows, lives with, and suffers from the legal obscenity that is called apartheid. Certain themes appear again and again seen through specific, concrete situations: outrage at the legal injustices and inhuman treatment of blacks, the need for blacks to recover a sense of their own dignity and worth in a dehumanizing system that tears at their humanity, the urgency of his call for a peaceful solution—"Please let us move away from the edge of the precipice. God is giving us perhaps our last chance" (p. 39)—and, above all, Bishop Tutu's indomitable conviction that this is God's world, that his love and his justice will triumph, even as the oppressiveness of injustice surrounds black people in South Africa.

Perhaps most impressive is Bishop Tutu's optimism and confidence in the face of overwhelming discouragement. "I want to assert that we shall be free. Do not despair. . . . We shall be free because our cause is a just cause. . . . He is a God who opposes injustice and oppression. . . . Let us rejoice" (p. 89). Crying in the Wilderness is a most impressive book.

—Roland Foster

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**The Refugees among Us: Unreached Peoples '83.**


The Refugees among Us represents a gigantic undertaking in the compilation of information and data. The book falls easily into three sections: the first deals with an update on the process that has transpired in identifying the unreached peoples; the second provides information on how to reach out to the refugees among us as a grouping of people to whom we should witness; the third is an extensive compilation of data by various categories, identifying the refugee communities. The book obviously represents a mammoth effort for which the writers and the editors in particular ought to be commended.

Having undertaken such a task I would have wished for a little greater clarity as to who is a refugee, perhaps citing the definition used by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or that used in United States immigration law (political versus economic refugees). Passing reference is made to the category of displaced persons (persons who have fled their home but not crossed a national boundary); while no distinction is made for refugees who are first asylum cases in the United States (refugees arriving directly to the United States). I would have hoped also for greater attention to the church's concern for the root causes that produce refugees. These distinctions and this concern help to define for the church its unique reason for identifying with the refugee.

Without doubt, beyond the value of the data presented, the guidance given to the local church to be sensitive to the experiences through which the refugee has passed, and the sensitivity to cultural differences are the strengths of the book. The case studies are most helpful as models worthy of replication. The volume is a valuable tool and, no doubt, only the first of many that should be written on the subject.

—Paul F. McCleary
God Has Many Names.


The latest book from John Hick's prolific pen takes the plurality of religions as its theme. In light of the increasingly intimate contact between religions, Hick claims that no one religion can be final, superior, or possess truth in such a way that it becomes the criterion by which all other religions are to be evaluated. He also rejects the common secular position that all religions are false, neurotic, or illusory. Rather, Hick defends the thesis that there is a divine Reality that is truly experienced through various grids, or filters, these grids being the personal, social, and religious traditions in which the believer stands. The divine Reality is the noumenal divine monism, while our human experiences of that Reality are always phenomenal. The various religions, thus, because they do experience the divine Reality, are not illusions or inherently neurotic; but each religion experiences that Reality through its own filter and, thus, cannot claim absoluteness or final truth.

To support his thesis, Hick appeals to various considerations. He tells about his own journey from a nominal Christian to a theological conservative, and from there to his current liberalism. He depends heavily on the notion of a "Copernican Revolution" in religion (especially in Christianity's self-understanding) and the notion of the "Myth of God Incarnate," both of which he has developed in detail in other writings. He also presents his ideal of interreligious dialogue.

I have three reservations about Hick's position, the first two being more basic. First, Hick clearly rejects Barth's position on the uniqueness of Christ as "sublime bigotry" (p. 90). While refusing to make his version of Christianity normative for evaluating other religions, Hick does make it normative for evaluating and even for rejecting other forms of his own Protestant Christianity, especially the Evangelicals. This utterly destroys the possibility of dialogue within the Christian world, which has a high priority for some of us.

Second, Hick's version of the Copernican Revolution ties Christianity to Western culture so closely that, at least by implication, decisions by non-Westerners to become Christians are also decisions to become Westernized. The non-Western situation I know best is Japan. While some Japanese have become Christian in order to be more Western (especially before 1900), I know several Japanese who were aware of Hick's earlier writing on the Copernican Revolution and were offended precisely by this implication.

Third, Buddhism seems strangely lacking in Hick's references to non-Christian religions. On p. 110 he mentions in passing the Void of the Buddhists. But it seems doubtful to me that the Void can play the role of being one way in which the noumenal divine Reality is apprehended.

God Has Many Names is written in a pleasing, informal style. At least some of the chapters, however, began as public talks. The various chapters have not been well integrated to form a single book. And there is much unnecessary repetition. Within each chapter, nevertheless, Hick's well-known clarity has not deserted him, and the result is interesting reading.

—Stephen T. Franklin

A New Beginning: An International Dialogue with the Chinese Church.

Edited by Theresa Chu and Christopher Lind. Toronto: Canada China Programme of the Canadian Council of Churches, 1983. Pp. viii, 186. Paperback $8.95. (Distributed in the United States by Friendship Press, P.O. Box 37844, Cincinnati, Ohio 45237.)

This volume is the record of a historic international gathering that took place in Montreal, Canada, in November 1981. Over 100 Catholics and Protestants, men and women, clergy and laity from all around the world came together under the sponsorship of the Canadian Church China Programme to spend eight days in serious reflection and dialogue on China around the theme "God's Call to a New Beginning."

It is not so much a book about the Christian church in China but, rather, in the words of the editors, "the product of an event that was accomplished with the Chinese church." It is "a sharing of stories and struggles, of sufferings and achievements, out of the deep joy and integrity, as well as the inevitable failings, of our common Christian calling."

All the major addresses delivered at the conference together with the various responses are included and centered around three themes: (1) People; (2) Being the Church; and (3) the Chinese Church and its International Relations.

Of greatest interest are the contributions of the ten Chinese participants who attended the conference and undoubtedly represent the present leadership of the Protestant and Catholic churches in China today. To list some who made outstanding contributions: Fu Tieshan, Catholic bishop of Peking; K. H. Ting, president of the China Christian Council; Zhao Fusun, deputy director of the Institute for the Study of World Religions; Chen Ze-ming, vice principal and dean of the Nanking Union Theological Seminary; Jiang Pei-fen, president of the Jiangsu Christian Council and the only woman in the Chinese delegation. Their addresses were straightforward and frank, and included a wide variety of subjects:

G. Thompson Bronn, born in China, served as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea, and was director of the Division of International Mission, Presbyterian Church in the U.S. from 1973 to 1981. He is currently Adjunct Professor of Mission and World Christianity at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia. His book Christianity in the People's Republic of China was published in 1983.
theological insights from the New China, the government policy of freedom of religion, church life at the "grass-roots level," church and state relationships, colonialism and the missionary movement, problems between the Catholic church in China and the Roman curia, church policies regarding international relationships.

The one overriding emphasis stressed throughout was the need for the Chinese church to be Chinese—the stress on its selfhood and integrity, the necessity for it to be free from Western domination, influence, and patronage.

The book, as a compilation of a number of addresses, impromptu remarks, and workshop reports, shares the limitations of any such collection. Its value is that it captures and communicates the mood of a significant moment when Chinese Catholic and Protestant Christians prayed and worshipped together in an ecumenical setting. Perhaps, according to K. H. Ting, this was the first time in history that this had happened! Indeed, this was "A New Beginning."

—G. Thompson Brown

Households of God on China's Soil.

Compiled and translated by Raymond Fung.

Raymond Fung is the secretary for evangelism of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches. In this small volume he gives us fourteen case studies of the jia ting ju hui ("house gatherings"), based on first-hand reporting by people who themselves are involved in the communities that they describe.

Households of God is about people of simple wants and profound trust in God. It is a clear description of the uncomplicated lives of rural Christians. An implied warning in this volume is that outside church bodies must not foist on them their own peculiar political and theological idiosyncrasies, such as seeing in the Christian communities of China a nonofficial church that is antagonistic to an official government-sponsored church. For, as the author says, in this study "nowhere have we discovered the lines of division that lend support to the theory that there are two Protestant churches in China ... " (p. xi).

Fung cites two important characteristics about the Christian communities in China that call for rejoicing by all Christians everywhere: (1) they are Chinese ("on China's Soil," as the title of the book states), and (2) they "exist," which, after decades of suffering, is a profound witness to God's grace, which has been more than sufficient.

To try to read any more into this pristine style of Christian faith in post-Mao China is to run the risk of claiming "proprietorship," says the author, over the Christian communities of China. They are, in the words of Emilio Castro, "disarmingly uncomplicated" (p. vii).

Having acknowledged what is fundamentally important in these Christian communities, Fung does not romanticize them. Instead, he sees them as very human communities struggling for survival amid tremendous scarcity. Like many zealously religious groups, they run the risk of...
self-righteousness, isolationism, and bizarre forms of religiosity. One of the groups studied would have nothing to do with the 'Three-Self Movement, not so much because of the latter's perceived "officialdom," but because of its perceived unbelief as compared to the former's belief.

On the whole, gratitude is the pre-dominant theme of Raymond Fung. As the secretary of evangelism of a world ecumenical agency, he looks forward to some serious reflection by the Christian communities of China on their mission on China's soil that grew out of over three decades of suffering and hope.

—Franklin J. Woo


It is not evident what purpose was intended to be served by the publication of this book. The reader is presented with twenty unconnected essays, of varying value, all by writers from the white race, with little reference to Roman Catholic missions, and heavily weighted on the side of Continental and particularly Scandinavian missions. The reader will do well to begin with the unusually frank comments by the editors on pp. 241–43.

It is clear that a number of the participants in the 1981 consultation at Durham, England, where these papers were presented, were ill-content with the choice of the mythologically loaded words in the title. Such words should be used only if there has been very careful semantic preparation, and agreement on precise definitions of meaning. In what seems to me to be the best of the essays, Charles Forman makes it clear (pp. 31–32) that even in a small area such as Papua New Guinea, it is impossible to generalize about missionary ideas and ideals — there are as many ideas and ideals as there are missionary societies, and almost as many as there are missionaries — for missionaries are well known as sturdy individualists.

The conference participants did, however, arrive at one generalization — all seem to have been agreed that in the period under discussion the clear aim of all mission boards and all missionaries was the proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ. This may seem a rather meager result of so expensive a conference; but, in view of the torrent of counterpropaganda that has poured in upon us during the last twenty years, it may be taken as a not inconsiderable achievement.

All participants were agreed that a great deal more research is needed in all areas. The missionary enterprise of the last century has been almost concealed by a dense mythological fog; the fog can be dissipated only by strenuous and continuous research carried out by highly qualified persons, on a level deeper than that attained by some of the contributors to this volume.

—Stephen Neill

Reader’s Response

To the Editors:

I congratulate the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, its editor, Gerald H. Anderson, and E. Theodore Bachmann on the publication of "Doctoral Dissertations on Mission," (7:97-132, July 1983). This is a significant bibliography covering literature which has too much and too long been neglected. Hopefully, the appearance of this bibliography will improve access and encourage greater use of unpublished doctoral dissertations.

To further the effective use of these materials, Yale Divinity School Library is pledged to acquiring, in so far as possible, all of these dissertations according to the following priorities:

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Stephen L. Peterson
Librarian
Yale Divinity School

By Adrian A. Bennett. Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 324. $28.00.

Young J. Allen (1836–1907), a Southern Methodist from Georgia, was only the most active of an Anglo-American group of missionaries who published in Chinese the news and comment on the Western world that stimulated the Chinese reform movement of the late nineteenth century. These men, mainly in Shanghai and Peking, worked together in the buoyant faith that Christianity, science, and democratic institutions were integral parts of God’s plan for humankind’s material and spiritual progress. Allen in particular saw the emancipation of women as an index of civilized advancement. His education at Emory University had given him a grounding in the basic sciences, and while he continued preaching and promoted schools and a college for Christian nurture, his editing of Chinese periodicals emphasized secular learning, especially science and technology. His Church News (Chiao-hui hsin-pao) of 1868–74 he renamed the Chinese Globe Magazine (Wan-kuo kung-pao) 1874–83 and 1889–1907. In 1881–83 it received a subsidy from the Religious Tract Society, which purchased 800 copies (out of some 2,000 printed) for free distribution to Chinese officials. Because Allen served as superintendent of the Southern Methodist mission in China from 1881 to 1893, he suspended publication in 1883. But he revived the Wan-kuo kung-pao in 1889 and continued to put it out until his death in 1907. It had become the main focus of his effort. The need for it was evidenced by the publication of a half-dozen similar but less long-continued periodicals in the 1870s and ‘80s, in some of which Allen had a hand.

Adrian Bennett’s book on the translation work of John Fryer (Harvard, 1967), followed by his Research Guides to Allen’s two magazines (Chinese Materials Center, 1975, 1976), make him the best-qualified specialist on this subject. Missionary Journalist in China recounts Young J. Allen’s life to 1883 in three chapters, and then in two more summarizes analytically the content of his Chinese magazines. Although it goes only to 1883, this is a careful, informative, judicious, and very useful account of a major Christian contribution to the regeneration of China.

—John K. Fairbank

John K. Fairbank, Professor of History, Emeritus, Harvard University, has taught and written on Chinese history since 1933, with a special interest in Chinese-American relations including missions.

The Meaning of Other Faiths.


Willard G. Oxtoby, who teaches comparative religions at the University of Toronto, rightly assesses that the Christian attitude and approach to people of other faiths is “the most important unresolved theological ques- tion of our times” (p. 16). It is his judgment that “the dominant Protestant and Catholic views of recent decades have not proved adequate to what we now know of the religions. . . . A theological view of religions suitable for the decades to come will simply have to take a more adequate account of our plural, and pluralistic, world” (p. 55).

In this well-written, slender volume, the author attempts his own con-
For Christians, what is "beyond dialogue"? In John Cobb's pilgrimage "It is the effort to incorporate the wisdom and truth I have heard from Buddhists and to allow it to transform Christian faith... to 'Buddhize' Christianity..." (p. 119). And for Buddhists there is the same invitation to risk a self-invited guest who wishes to take over" (p. 66). After observing that "the major world religions... have shown themselves remarkably resistant to efforts at conversion," he urges that "Christianity must face the fact of minimal returns on a massive investment of money and talent, and it must ask whether continued efforts can be justified" (p. 67).

On the last page of his book the author acknowledges that as a Christian he has never felt he "would be justified in seeking to uproot an adherent of another tradition from his faithful following of that tradition." Rather, he says, "My Christianity... has commanded that I be open to learn from the faith of others" (p. 111). But surely that is only part of the Christian obligation to people of other faiths. This blind spot in the author's perspective is the weakness of the book.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism.


For Christians, what is "beyond dialogue"? In John Cobb's pilgrimage "It is the effort to incorporate the wisdom and truth I have heard from Buddhists and to allow it to transform Christian faith... to 'Buddhize' Christianity..." (p. 119). And for Buddhists there is the same invitation to risk change in encounter. After describing current interreligious dialogue, and examining more radical attempts to de-particularize Christian faith (Paul Knitter, John Hick, Wilfred Cantwell Smith), Cobb sets forth his own view of mutual transformation. As a participant in one of the author's Buddhist-Christian colloquies, the reviewer can testify to the personal and intellectual challenge of his proposal.

Using Mahayana Buddhism as a case in point, with particular reference to Pure Land in its Shinran expression, Cobb seeks to show Christians "how Buddhism has a depth of insight into ultimate reality which we lack" (p. 51). With the help of a Whiteheadian framework, he believes that we can re-interpret and appropriate aspects of Nirvana such as a spirituality of non-attachment and an ontology of emptiness. Buddhism can, in turn, recognize what we call Christ in its own Amida, and can enrich its understanding of him by learnings from the Jesus of history.

"Christ," for Cobb, while manifest in Jesus, is "the creative and redemptive activity of God." Or, in the language of the process philosophy that provides the intellectual content for the code language of a given religious tradition, Christ is "creative transformation." In making this move to substitute a current intellectual formulation for presumed-to-be-defunct classical Christian assertions, the scandalous particularities of Christian faith disappear, not to mention those of other world religions. The reason is that Cobb's process conceptuality functions in the discussion of world religions just as Whitehead's primordial nature of God does vis-à-vis actual entities, the lure toward creative advance. There are better ways to be in dialogue than this, ones that do not make a philosophical construct normative, and Christian identity relative.

—Gabriel Fackre


This symposium deals with the whole question as to whether Christians should have missions to Jews, Jews should have missions to Christians, or Christians and Jews together should have a joint mission to the world. The eight articles represent a wide range of theological perspectives, two articles representing the Catholic viewpoint, two the Protestant, two the Jewish, and two coming from the church in Africa and Asia. This mixture makes stimulating reading but as in any such composite work, the standard of essays varies considerably. The theological bias is fairly heavily weighted toward an ecumenical perspective. Richard De Ridder is the lone evangelical voice and this is clearly a weakness in a book that recognizes that ecumenically oriented missions are a "minority factor in Christian foreign mission today" (p. 83).

Eugene Fisher closes his helpful article on historical developments in Christian mission by quoting the statement of the Protestant Synod of the Rhineland "that the Church may not express its witness toward the Jewish people as it does its mission to the peoples of the world" (p. 38). It is true, of course, that the church cannot preach the gospel in the same way to Jew as to Gentile. The special relationship between Jews and Christians and the events of the holocaust render a distinctive approach necessary. Yet the message—that Jesus was the Son of God, who died on a cross and rose again—remains objective historical truth, which can never change even
when the means of communicating that message changes.

David Stowe writes that few, if any, ecumenical churches continue a mission to the Jews. Among many notable examples to the contrary one could note the Church’s Ministry among the Jews, one of the oldest Episcopal missionary societies, which was founded in 1809 and has the archbishop of Canterbury as its patron and the archbishop of York as its president.

Rabbi Daniel Polish has some very enlightening things to say about Jewish attitudes toward proselytization, but toward the end of his essay he becomes rather vindictive and betrays a remarkable ignorance of what is going on among many young Jewish people in the United States. He seems to be unaware that over 30,000 Jewish people in recent years have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. These Jews do not want to cease to be Jews. They are proud of their Jewish heritage and wish to maintain their identity with the Jewish community. They are not being deceptive or underhanded, as Daniel Polish implies. They deserve greater understanding and less prejudice than they receive in these pages.

—C. David Harley


Following the 1965 attempted coup in Indonesia, the armed forces of Indonesia established a “New Order.” Indonesian church leaders felt a need to be equipped to confront the impact of the “New Order,” and member churches of the Indonesian Council of Churches (ICC) formed a Study and Research Department. The ICC mandated Dr. Frank Cooley, who has taught in two Christian universities and two theological schools in Indonesia, to conduct research to assess the church’s progress in its pilgrimage toward unity and mature servanthood among and to the diverse Indonesian population.

As no other has done so far, this book reveals through the eyes of Indonesian researchers a wealth of data from inside the Indonesian church. It describes from an Indonesian perspec-
Dialogue in Community.


This Festschrift in honor of Stanley J. Samartha is sponsored by the Karnataka Theological Research Institute and edited by the principal, Constantine D. Jathanna, of Karnataka Theological College. That institution, of which Samartha was the first Indian principal, is one of those regional seminaries in India that are pioneering in vernacular theological education. Jathanna has provided inspiring leadership in this exciting task.

Samartha has, of course, had an exciting and fruitful life of his own. It is exceptionally fitting that his former institution has honored him. After several years of constructive labor in India, where he combined a flair for administration with a passion for theology and history of religion (a rare combination anywhere), he served for more than ten years as director of the Program on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies in the World Council of Churches. In that job he gained world attention and popularized the concept of interfaith dialogue. Now he has returned to his beloved Karnataka and is an associate of the well-known Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS), at Bangalore.

The Festschrift is divided into several sections with tantalizing titles: “Listening to the Scriptures,” “Emerging Cultures and Traditional Religions,” “Religions and the Quest for Community,” “Prospects for Dialogues,” and an “Epilogue” by his former student Wesley Ariarajah.

To choose from this collection of excellent articles is difficult, but I especially appreciated the article on the Bhagavad Gita by Harvard’s Diana Eck; a complementary article on the Sermon on the Mount by the Muslim scholar Hasan Askari, and the article on “Christian Witness as Community of Endeavor” by K. C. Abraham, director of the Ecumenical Christian Center in India. These three articles illustrate in concrete terms what Samartha’s thought is about.

On putting down this volume, one is left with two immediate feelings: first, the hope that it will become more easily available in the United States, and second, the necessity of dashes off and rereading Samartha’s marvelous collection of essays, Courage for Dialogue (which has been published in the United States by Orbis Books). A final thought: it is extremely gratifying to find that the labors of Paul Devanandan, which in 1962 came to a too early end, have found scholarly enhancement and worldwide recognition in the creative work of his student Stanley Samartha.

—Charles A. Ryerson


The story of the Methodist Church in Singapore and Malaysia is a fascinating study of the movement from mission to church. It is in the best sense a “suc-

cess” story that deserves to be widely known.

T. R. Doraisamy, a former bishop and long an influential leader of the church, is in a unique position to tell that story so that readers might know how the Methodists of Singapore and Malaysia have indeed “claimed the promises.” Unfortunately, however, the book, while of some general interest, is much too brief and sketchy to do justice to its subject matter. It will be very difficult for someone not already familiar with the history of the church to understand what is being discussed, because names, events, and institutions are presented with little or no background information to aid the reader. One gains the impression that what is being read is a condensed version of a summary.

While being grateful for the modest beginnings made by Doraisamy, let us hope that the full story will soon be told in all its complexity and rich detail.

—Guy Garrett

Christianity in the People’s Republic of China.


The Middle Kingdom has held a fascination for Americans, as the author points out, ever since the China clipper ships of New England “discovered” China. One important reason has been evangelical concern for the people of the world’s most populous nation. That concern has prompted a series of study books on China published by the churches in recent years, of which this is the newest.

While the title of Brown’s book leads one to expect a concentration on church and mission history in China since 1949, in fact the author has devoted well over half the book to early history of China and Christianity in China, to the rise of the Chinese Communist party and the functioning of party and government, and to descriptions of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the post-Mao period, and other key events in the political history of this period. Only three out of ten chapters deal exclusively with the church in China since 1949, or with theological analysis and reflection on these events.
In contrast, Fr. Angelo Lazzarotto's book, *The Catholic Church in Post-Mao China* (Hong Kong: Holy Spirit Study Centre, 1982), never veers from this topic, marshaling every scrap of documentation to describe and interpret the situation of the Catholic Church in China since the death of Mao. But Brown's is a church study book, written for the layperson, not for scholars. One must look elsewhere for full documentation, or for comprehensive history. This book meets the needs for which it was commissioned, addressing in various places throughout the book three questions raised in chapter 1: the theological, the missiological, and the ecclesiastical, that is, how does the experience of the church in China enlighten us on each of these questions?

While the overview of Protestant church and mission history in chapter 2 is quite complete, information on the Catholic Church is minimal, or, as in the discussion of institutional work and the rise of indigenous leadership in the twentieth century, entirely missing. Chapter 9, which describes the heartening revival of the church since 1979, devotes only two out of twenty-nine pages to the Catholic Church; yet Chinese Catholics have always outnumbered Protestants, and presumably still do today.

The final chapter, "The Meaning of the China Experience," offers helpful reflection for Americans, both theological and practical. Chinese leaders are quoted affirming the selfhood and unity of the Chinese church. There are twelve suggested guidelines for a responsible China policy for the American church; fifteen answers to questions commonly asked by Americans; and, finally, a four-point conclusion, which alludes to the fragmentary, incomplete nature of our knowledge of China, the ambiguity of the present situation, and the uncertainty of the future, ending on a strong note of faith, hope, and affirmation. Church study groups will find this an edifying and encouraging guide to understanding the church in China today.

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**Partners in Dialogue: Christianity and Other World Religions.**


Arnulf Camps, longtime professor of missiology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in Holland has specialized in the question of Christian dialogue with other religions. *Partners in Dialogue* binds between two covers three small books by Camps published in Dutch between 1976 and 1978. Unfortunately, Part Three fits into the dialogue theme only loosely, since it is little more than an eclectic survey of aspects of adaptation of Catholicism in several Third World countries. Part One surveys literature on the question of dialogue. Part Two discusses several dialogic events and their results. In reality,

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**Wiping Away The Tears From Their Eyes**

Donald MacInnis

Donald MacInnis is Coordinator for China Research, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. He served as a Methodist missionary in China (1948-49) and in Taiwan (1953-56).

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Donald MacInnis is Coordinator for China Research, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. He served as a Methodist missionary in China (1948-49) and in Taiwan (1953-56).
It is only in chapter 13 that he reveals his own presuppositions about what dialogue will contribute to salvation (as opposed to clarifying ideas about salvation). Dialogue about the basic issues (which are salvational for Camps) ought to help solve the problem of integral human liberation (in immanent terms) and final redemption (in transcendent terms). The problem is that this is a Christian mission goal, and defines dialogue in a way that will contribute to realizing a basically Roman Catholic liberal-influenced-by-liberation-theology formulation of that goal. This is fine for those who share Camps's own faith stance (as I do myself), and it may be that dialogue will help the Christian churches to attain these goals better. But is this not missiology rather than true dialogue?

Camps does not reflect systematically and critically about his own presuppositions in this book. He assumes positions, which are not accepted universally within Christianity, without giving his Christian warrants (from Scripture and/or tradition) in a serious and sustained manner. Neither does he seem aware that his thumbnail sketches of the basic positions of other religious traditions are little more than encyclopedia-article caricatures. Camps covers too much of the ground too superficially to help the specialist understand the problem of dialogue better. And there are too many unexplained references, elliptical arguments, and uncriticized assumptions to make the book useful to the beginning or seminary student. We need badly a book to cover this ground, but not this one, I regret to say.

—William R. Burrows, S.V.D.

William R. Burrows is teaching at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago after five years in Papua New Guinea. He is author of New Ministries: The Global Context and is currently working on a dissertation in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, critiquing the Catholic magisterium on other religious ways.

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Barriers and Bridges in Cross-Cultural Communication. Dr. Eugene A. Nida, United Bible Societies.

March 12-16, 1984
Evangelism and the Poor.* Vinay Samuel, Evangelical Fellowship of India.

March 20-23, 1984
Lessons from Northeast Asia for Global Witness. Dr. James M. Phillips, former missionary to Korea and Japan.

March 27-30, 1984

April 2-6, 1984
The Church's Role in Healing; Challenges and Opportunities in Community-Based Primary Health Care.* Drs. James and Jean Morehead.

April 10-13, 1984
Contextualization Then and Now: Perspectives from the Early Church and Contemporary Africa. Dr. Donald R. Jacobs, Mennonite Leadership Foundation, former Mennonite Bishop in East Africa. At Maryknoll, New York.

April 23-27, 1984
The Gospel and Urbanization: Contemporary Issues in Urban Evangelism—A Global Perspective (1).* Dr. Raymond Bakke, consultant to Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization; Raymond Fung, specialist in labor evangelism in Hong Kong, now editor of the WCC Monthly Letter on Evangelism.

April 30-May 4, 1984
The Gospel and Urbanization: Your Ministry as Pastor, Evangelist, and Catalyst for Change (2).* Dr. Roger Greenway, Westminster Theological Seminary; Professor Samuel Escobar, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students; Dr. Michael Haynes, Gordon Conwell Seminary. The above two weeks on the Gospel and Urbanization are co-sponsored by Inter-Varsity Evangelism, Latin America Mission, Theological Students Fellowship, and World Vision.
**Book Notes**

*Beechy, Winifred Nelson.*

**The New China.**

*Chatterji, Saral K., ed.*

**Essays in Celebration of the CISRS Silver Jubilee.**

*Christensen, Jens.*

**Christuszeugnis für Muslime.**

*Chupungco, Anscar J.*

**Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy.**

*Henkel, Willi and Guiseppe Metzler, eds.*

**Bibliografia Missionaria, Anno XLVI—1982.**

*Keller, Robert H., Jr.*

**American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy, 1869–82.**

*Kertelge, Karl, ed.*

**Mission im Neuen Testament.**

*Kinsler, F. Ross, ed.*

**Ministry by the People. Theological Education by Extension.**

*Kowalsky, N. and J. Metzler.*

**Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of People or “De Propaganda Fide.”**

*Koarme, Ole Chr. M., ed.*

**Let Jews and Arabs Hear His Voice: Christian Life and Ministry in the Encounter with Jews and Arabs in Israel Today.**

*O’Mahoney, Kevin.*

**“The Ebullient Phoenix”: A History of the Vicariate of Abyssinia, 1839–1860.**

*Turner, Mary.*

**Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787–1834.**

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**In Coming Issues**

*Roman Catholic Approaches to Other Religions: Developments and Tensions*
Paul F. Knitter

*Christianity and Judaism: Continuity and Discontinuity*
W. S. Campbell

*Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology*
James Stamoolis

*Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians*
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*Book reviews by*

C. G. Arevalo, S.J., John B. Cobb, Jr.,
Harvey Cox, Noel Leo Erskine, Thomas Hanks, Stanley S. Harakas, Pearl L. McNeil, Walter G. Mueller, Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., J. Robert Nelson, William Pennell, Yves Ragunin, S.J.,