The French Catholic writer Charles Péguy is said to have remarked that everything begins in mysticism and ends up in politics. What we are witnessing today in many parts of the world is the phenomenon of politicized religion, whereby a basically admirable religious impulse winds up in the depraved service of some political ideology. This problem is by no means new, but it has acquired special urgency of late. Those involved in Christian mission have often been caught in the crossfire of such developments, and need all the help they can get from research and experience. This issue of the *International Bulletin* tries to contribute toward such a formidable task.

Guillermo Cook’s article points out that many of today’s mission institutions have become excessively institutionalized and politicized, and need to be drawn back to their “base community” origins in order to share the gospel more effectively with humble folk.

In the midst of politicized religions such as one encounters in contemporary India, Stanley J. Samartha observes that Christians need to practice dialogue and genuine cooperation as never before.

Cynthia McLean’s article examines the research of M. Searle Bates as to how and why the ideal of the Three-Self Church in China never materialized before 1951. This was due to misapprehensions both by Chinese Christians and by missionaries, fueled on both sides by cultural, ideological, and politicized elements.

David A. Kerr reminds us of the harm done by Christian polemicists in their depictions of Muhammad as a pseudo-prophet who allegedly manufactured a religious creed in pursuit of worldly power.

In a careful analysis of the work of two contemporary Roman Catholic missiologists, James J. Ferguson contrasts the mission paradigm of an emphasis on planting the church with that of a focus on dialogue and development.

Our continuing Legacy series on great missiologists presents the work of two leading Protestant authors and church leaders. Dana L. Robert deals with the legacy of Arthur Tappan Pierson, who stimulated mission concern among Protestants at the end of the nineteenth century, through his voluminous writings and personal contacts, even though he never served in overseas mission himself. On the other hand, Karl Hartenstein served overseas and also in the midst of turbulent political events of Hitler’s Third Reich, and thus—as Gerold Schwarz suggests—was “burdened by heavy responsibility in an exposed position on the cutting edge of the issue of church and state.”

As Péguy was to experience firsthand, there is no easy resting place in the shifting sands between mysticism and politics. Christians engaged in mission have a constant struggle to maintain the integrity of the gospel in the midst of political ambiguities.
The Protestant Predicament: From Base Ecclesial Community to Established Church—A Brazilian Case Study

Guillermo Cook

The debates in current Protestant mission circles tend to focus upon dichotomies: evangelism vs. social action, church planting vs. interchurch aid, qualitative vs. quantitative growth, missions vs. mission, institution vs. charisma—the list is long. For the most part the debates are academic and miss a fundamental point, namely, that church leaders and institutions at both ends of these debates are caught up in what church-growth researcher William Read has aptly termed “the Protestant predicament,” that is, the church’s upward mobility, and consequent loss of vitality.

The “institutionalization process” exerts an inexorable pull from “charismatic” community to fully structured institution. The fruits of institutionalism are usually self-sufficiency, authoritarianism, narcissism, self-justification, and dogmatism. But institutionalism, in time, will produce new “charismatic” reactions, and the process begins anew. These reactions usually take the form of grassroots movements, in many cases involving marginalized and alienated sectors of society.

The thesis of this article is that most of today’s mission institutions—whether fundamentalist, evangelical, or “mainline” Protestant—have become excessively institutionalized. They have forgotten their charismatic heritage and grassroots origins. The results can often be seen in a number of ways: unbalanced priorities, community entropy, institutional defensiveness, and congenital paternalism. This is true not only in the so-called sending churches; lamentably, the maturing Latin American churches are following the same path. In the face of this, it is of the utmost urgency that we look back to our ecclesial roots, seeking to understand the dynamics of the grassroots movements whence many of our churches came. And more immediately, the Catholic base ecclesial communities (BECs) in Latin America can both challenge and teach us some valuable lessons.

The key to the whole matter is our understanding of the word “base,” a term that means much more than “basic” or “fundamental.” It refers to the millions of people—approximately 80 percent of the population of Latin America—who are at the base of the social pyramid. They must be not only objects of our mission but subjects of their own history as well.

Base Communities in Early Church History

The New Testament church was, in many ways, a base community. At the beginning, it was composed of a sizable group who, along with their leaders, would be desirously called “illiterate” by their enemies. Over the centuries the simplicity of the early ekklisia gave way to imperial pomp, elaborate ritual, and hermetic dogma. The myriad heresies that surfaced during the millennium and a half that preceded the Reformation were often grassroots reactions against the deadness of official Christianity.

Early Protestant Base Communities

As Martin Luther testified, many of these movements flocked to the banners of the Magisterial Reformation, then diverged into the Radical Reformation. The Radical, or Anabaptist, Reformation was a grassroots protest against Luther and Zwingli’s turning back from their earlier espousal of base community Christianity. Though at first the Reformers had encouraged small collegia, they later labeled them seditious, blasphemous, and heretical. In time the Anabaptist base communities coalesced into larger movements, most notably the Mennonites, or spun off into numerous Baptist groups, most of which have become quite institutionalized.

By the time Anabaptism reached England, there was a long history of grassroots dissidence in England. And from another quarter, Calvinism had instilled in small grassroots sects—the forerunners of the Congregationalists—a strict code of ethics and, later, a revolutionary fervor that would eventually overturn the monarchy. Presbyterianism had a broad popular base during the Scottish wars of independence. But when the clergy and nobility made their peace with the English crown, the grassroot Covenanters worshiped in outlawed base communities or conventicles. Today’s militantly anti-Protestant United Irish began as a joint Presbyterian-Catholic protest against Anglican supremacy, which was supported by a number of radical grassroots communities of both faiths.

Jacob Spener’s Lutheran collegia pieta tis, and particularly the variant that later proliferated in Swabia, were far more radical in their practice of Christian piety and understanding of the meaning of sanctification than the masqueraded version of Pietism that is known today. Dutch Reformed ecle siolae became a vital force in holistic evangelism and Christian nurture during one phase of the American Great Awakening. Responding to the spiritual needs of a small group of seekers, and to the social needs around him—in the heat of a grassroots evangelistic movement—John Wesley initiated the first of a unique family of base communities. The early Methodist classes were more than small Bible study, prayer, and evangelism groups. They were action-cells, which demonstrated a vital and very practical concern for the poor in a revolutionary time in history.

Historical Factors in Protestant Base Communities

There is a striking similarity between the socioeconomic conditions existing in the time of the Protestant BECs mentioned above and the situation obtaining in present-day Latin America. These grassroots communities all appeared during times of profound social change and unrest. The common social factors were: (1) feudalism, the land problem; (2) the beginning of rudimentary forms of national and international capitalism; (3) urbanization and the appearance of slums and of unemployment; (4) a growing popular self-confidence; (5) civil unrest; and (6) more efficient means of...
The Demise of Base Ecclesial Community in Brazil

The irony of the Brazilian ecclesial experience is that the very churches that were born in Europe as radical base communities have today become comfortably established and prosperous institutions. Meanwhile the monolithic churches that sought to crush some of these movements, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church, are experiencing, each in its own way, noteworthy base community revitalization.

The North American experience played an important part in the process from radical base community to established church. United States Protestant missionaries were sent to Brazil during a period of profound social upheaval—the Civil War and its aftermath—when ideological and theological positions were extremely polarized and ecclesiastical structures had begun to congeal. These missionaries were marked by American civil religion, voluntarism, denominationalism, and the so-called “Methodist era.” This supercharged religiosity, for all its notable accomplishments, was theologically impoverished, reductionist, and lacking reflection upon the crucial issues that had wracked the nation for more than a generation.

By the time Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists had reached Brazilian shores, their churches were showing many of the signs of institutionalism. Despite the grassroots nature of some of their initial church-planting efforts, it was not long before they began to move upward and away from a true base community experience. The same would happen to Congregationalism, which arrived from British shores.

The extraordinary growth of Protestantism in Brazil began not only with Methodist Scripture distribution (in 1828), but also with a Scottish Congregationalist doctor’s dream (1855) of evangelizing Brazil through a revitalized Catholic Church. This pretension, in the heyday of Jansenism, never came to pass despite strong support from members of the imperial family. This was a portent of things to come. Although Congregationalist Robert Reid Kelley initiated a pattern of free-style house churches, which would soon be adopted by other groups and would be a factor in the rapid spread of Protestantism in Brazil, his target was the upper class.

Historians have noted the remarkable “adhesion to Protestantism of a relatively large number of members of the Brazilian aristocracy, during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century” so that Protestantism found in them “the same kind of support and example that the manorial families who became converts of the Reformation had given to Europe in the sixteenth century.” A number of landholding family names appear in the origins of Brazilian Protestant churches. “The majority of these communities were born on the very fazendas [plantations].” This is not to say that grassroots Protestant communities do not exist today. But this kind of church, though probably quite numerous in the Brazilian hinterland, is not the ecclesial norm. The orientation of these congregations both originates from and moves toward middle-class ecclesiality. Quite the opposite is the case in the Catholic BECs.

Loyal to their Wesleyan heritage, Methodists, more than any other group that came to Brazil, were conscious of their responsibility to the poor and disfranchised. Though they did not direct their evangelistic efforts primarily to the marginalized, “there is evidence of a significant number of blacks” in their early congregations. But when Methodism shifted its sights to the upper classes it found that “protracted meetings” were no longer effective and turned to education as an evangelistic tool. With the gradual de-
It lost not only its spiritual vitality but contact with its grassroots origins. Indeed, both losses may be two sides of the same coin, and are related to the creeping loss of community and the extremely slow growth of Brazilian Methodism. In recent years Methodist churches and theological institutions have “discovered” the Catholic base communities. Methodist seminarians are doing apprenticeship in several comunidades in the working-class suburbs and shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The problem with this, of course, is that these concerns “were parachuted into the Methodist church by Catholic liberation theology.” They have not risen out of the Methodist Church’s own living experience as a church of the poor.

The established Presbyterianism that sent missionaries to Brazil in 1859 had long since abandoned the grassroots concerns that had characterized their Scottish and Ulster ancestors. It had emphatically rejected the kind of social concerns that were being espoused by Charles Finney and his followers. The missionaries brought with them a respect for intellectual endeavor together with frontier Wesleyan methods of evangelism, and quickly adopted the Congregationalists’ austere worship in the home, which seems to have lacked the qualities of a true base community. The rigidity and centralization inherent in the connectional polity of Presbyterianism inhibited its growth in Brazil. Presbyterian missionaries usually maintained newly organized groups “in the dependent status of unorganized congregations longer than Baptists, who established autonomous churches with smaller constituencies.”

Control was maintained through the theological training system. Paul Pierson points out that one result of the Presbyterian policy of “sharply limiting the number of pastors and elevating those who completed seminary into the middle class was to restrict numerical growth.” It also served to isolate urban pastors “culturally, economically and spatially from the poor.” In practical terms this has meant, for example, that Presbyterian work has disappeared on the Amazonian frontier where Pentecostals, Baptists, and the BECs have thrived.

Baptists were the last of the major denominations to come to Brazil (in 1881–82). Children of the defeated American South, they did not arrive with the same sense of “manifest destiny” as their northern brothers. But this did not hinder them from engaging in aggressive evangelism. As Reformed historian Klaus van der Grijp observes, the most obvious fact in the history of Brazilian Baptists “is their desire to occupy, as soon as possible, every state in their national territory.”

Many early rural Baptist congregations could be called base communities, with their Sunday schools and characteristic emphasis on Christian education. Their rural origins kept them much longer than other denominations from initiating institutions of higher learning. But once they had decided to do so, they wasted little time in catching up. They eschewed universities in favor of primary, secondary, and theological education, as adjuncts to evangelism and the local church. This heavy investment in education spurred the upwardly mobile drive of Brazilian Baptists, who today are a middle-class church that is rich in properties and proud of the number of its members who have achieved status in the professions and in government.

Brazilian Baptists tend to measure their success numerically. Indeed, Baptist growth for several decades was phenomenal. However, recent indicators point to a slowing down and gradual leveling off. Despite their roots in the rural United States South, Baptists in Brazil have concentrated upon the cities, where more than two-thirds of the population now resides. But upward mobility and increasing institutional respectability have, in effect, built an insurmountable barrier between most Baptist churches and the masses, which make up 85 percent of the population of Brazil. It is also ironic that a denomination whose cardinal ecclesial doctrine is the sovereignty of the local congregation has begun to experience a reduction in basic community lifestyle. This is hinted at by the large numbers of Baptists who leave their church by the back door.

**Conclusion**

This study of Protestant churches in Brazil in the context of the Catholic base ecclesial communities points to the following conclusions:

1. Socioeconomic betterment is a corollary of the gospel. The life changes that Jesus Christ effects upon those who submit to him will have socioeconomic by-products. This is, after all, a dimension of the struggles of the poor in the BECs. (What we so assiduously strive for do not deny our poorer brethren!) But, whereas Protestants experience this as individually achieved upward mobility, BEC Catholics strive for it in community. The Protestant ethic has taught us that it is right and proper to work hard, save our money, and move up with our family into another social strata. The grassroots solidarity of BEC Christians is concerned not only for the betterment of its own small group, but also for the welfare of the wider community.

This fundamental flaw in the Calvinist ethic—our rank individualism—is responsible, I believe, for the superficiality of much of Protestant evangelism. We call people to Jesus Christ as individuals, but grow into his family as members of a community experience into Protestant evangelism and social witness.

2. The problem we face is not merely methodological. It is also theological, and it should send us back to the Bible in search of the right priorities. It is also an ideological problem (a middle-class option), which hinders us from proclaiming “good news to the poor . . . freedom for the prisoners” of oppressive structures, while we concentrate upon a merely spiritual “recovery of sight to the blind.”

3. Finally, our problem is historical. We are more interested in the present and in the future than in learning lessons from the
past. We tend to see our base community roots as heretical aberrations that are best forgotten. Protestants of all stripes need to be more “radical,” that is, oriented toward their roots (radices), seeking to apply experiences from their various rich heritages to the challenges of the present, particularly as this refers to the evangelization of the poor. This is the only way in which we may be able to overcome the inherent contradiction of our “Protestant predica-

ment.”

Notes

1. William R. Read, New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 222. Read calls it an “Evangelical” predica-

tment. I submit that all of our affluent church-mission institutions are in the same predicament.

2. I am using “charismatic” to refer to loosely structured social and reli-

gious movements that arise, whether out of group consensus or messi-

anic challenge, to revitalize institutions that no longer respond to the felt needs of their members.

3. The number of comunidades eclesiales (eclesias in Portuguese) de base in the Latin American Catholic Church may surpass 150,000. They need to be taken seriously by anyone truly concerned about the mission of the church. Cf. my doctoral dissertation: “The Expectation of the Poor: A Protestant Missiological Study of the Catholic ‘comunidades de base’ in Brazil” (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. Catalog # 8216810).

4. The Iberian word base is difficult to render accurately in English. One of its meanings is, of course, “basic,” in the sense of fundamental (from the Latin word basis = pedestal). But this does not do full justice to the Latin American understanding of the term. Though “base” from Middle Latin bassus = flat or low) can be pejorative and condescending, I am using it here to refer to the sociological base, to the poor and mar-

ginalized of the world. It will be used interchangeably with the more descriptive term “grassroots.”

5. A great deal has been written about the sociology of the New Testa-

ment church. Cf. Robert M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society: Seven Studies (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); Abraham J. Malherbe, Social Aspects of Early Christianity (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977); Gerd Theissen, Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity (Phil-


6. The long list includes the Montanists, Donatists (with their revolution-

ary wing, the circumcellions); the Armenian Paulicians and their spiritual successors, the Bogomils and Albigenses; the Publicans, Humiliati, Waldensians, and Franciscans. The fact that many of these were heretical movements is beside the point. Heresies is almost always a polar reaction to extreme dogmatism. In the apt words of Gordon Lee, in the Middle Ages “heresy was born when heterodoxy became dissent.” And “more specifically,” he adds, “when the appeal to the Bible and to evangelical virtues of poverty and humility became, or were treated, as a challenge to the church” (Heresy in the Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c. 1250–c. 1450., 2 vols. [Manchester, England: Manchester Univ. Press, 1967], pp. 1–3).

7. Luther wrote, “In our times the doctrine of the Gospel, re-established and cleansed, has drawn to it many who in earlier times had been sup-

pressed by the tyranny of the Antichrist, the Pope; however, they have forthwith gone out of us . . . for they were not of us even though for a while they walked with us” (quoted by Leonard Verduin, in The Reformers and their Stepchildren [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1964], p. 18).

8. Luther had enlightened ideas concerning a “truly evangelical order” of base communities. But he never put them into effect because he was unable to find people “who want to be Christians in earnest and who profess the Gospel with hand and mouth.” (Franklin H. Littell, in The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism [New York: Macmillan, 1964], pp. 9–15).

9. Though by then Congregationalism had become largely a middle-class movement, grassroots militancy was kept alive in numerous quasi-


11. Cf. F. Ernest Stoefferl, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968) and Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity (Grand Rap-


12. Wesley described the first class as “a company of men having the form, and seeking the power, of godliness: united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may each help each other work out their own salvation” (John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies [London: Epworth Press, 1937]).

13. Early Methodism was a working-class movement; cf. Richard M. Cam-

eron, Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective, vol. 1 in Methodism and Society (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1961), p. 41; see also H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: World Pub-

clishing Co., 1957), pp. 60–62. For an insightful analysis of the radical base community nature of early Methodism from an evangelical per-

spective, see Howard A. Snyder, The Radical Wesley and Patterns of Church Renewal (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1980).


row Ground, pp. 101–3; Stoefferl, Evangelical Pietism, pp. 181, 182; and Methodism and Society, pp. 27, 28.

15. The fact that the majority of the early missionaries came from the American South, and that several Presbyterian missionaries had southern sympathies, is not without significance for the kind of ideology that would plant the seeds of the gospel in Brazil (cf. Duncan Reilly, “Historia Documentada do Protestantismo no Brasil,” unpublished manuscript, 1981, pp. 6–15). It was during this period that the Method-

ist Church split over the issue of slavery and that Presbyterians were bitterly divided between old-school conservatism and evangelist Charles Finney’s radical social activism (cf. Donald W. Dayton, Dis-

covering an Evangelical Heritage (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). The ear-

liest Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist congregations served Confederate expatriates who had settled in slavist Brazil hoping to estab-

lish a plantation society in the fertile interior of São Paulo state (cf. Paul E. Pierson, A Younger Church in Search of Maturity: Presbyterianism in Brazil from 1910 to 1959 [San Antonio: Trinity Univ. Press, 1974], p. 26; see also A. R. Crabtree, Baptists in Brazil. [Rio de Janeiro: Baptist Pub-

lishing House, 1953], pp. 1–55).

16. Jansenist ideas, which were ripe among the elite and members of the higher Brazilian clergy, were disseminated from Portugal during the ten-year period (1760–70) when the Portuguese Catholic Church was independent from Rome.


19. While not base communities, the small Congregationalist and Baptist churches of Brazil, as local cells of believers, are certainly basic ecclesial communities. Unlike liturgical and presbyterian (connectional) churches, congregationalism knows no other form of the church. At the heart of congregationalist polity is the local community of those who have made a voluntary commitment to Christ. It was precisely this congregational dimension of grassroots Brazilian Protestantism that inspired one of the earliest Catholic BEC experiments (cf. International Re-


21. Brazilian Methodism is, of course, not alone in this trend. As Methodist historian Reilly has pointed out, “Methodists have a curious mixture of clericalism and laicism, which they inherited from Wesley and North American Methodism. The ecclesiolas in ecclesia at the local level were directed by the laity, and their preaching was permitted. But ... the conferences, where policy, doctrine and the great administrative questions were determined, were totally in the hands of bishops and itinerant preachers” (“Os Metodistas no Brasil,” p. 113).

22. A remark attributed to liberationist Hugo Assmann, currently a professor at the Methodist University in Piracicaba, Brazil, during a 1981 talk to students at the Faculty of Theology of the Instituto Metodista de Ensino Superior in São Paulo.

23. Kalley wrote home about these early house churches, small basic communities, telling how “on the Lord’s Day” they “sat around the dining room table, reading verses from some Scripture passage .... We always discuss them as familiarly and freely as we would at any other kind of social gathering. We pray and sing some stanzas without any particular order of service (Reilly, “Historia Documentada,” p. 18).

24. Pierson, A Younger Church, 124.

25. As Paul Pierson observes, “There were no Presbyterian pastors who were also shoemakers or industrial workers, living in the poorest sections of the cities. ... The isolation of many pastors from the humble made it difficult to state the message in terms meaningful to the poor” (A Younger Church, p. 125).

26. Pierson, A Younger Church, p. 133.


28. As a church growth adviser to the Board of Evangelism of the Brazilian Baptist Convention in 1976, I researched a sampling of churches in São Paulo state and analyzed available statistics. We found nongrowth in rural congregations and only average growth in large metropolitan churches. This may indicate that Baptists have lost touch with the poor, both in the depressed interior and in the overcrowded megacities. They continue to grow rapidly in medium-sized and small cities, primarily among the middle class. Comparing figures in William R. Read and Frank A. Ineson, Brazil 1980: The Protestant Handbook (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1973), p. 95, with data published in the Jornal Batista, no. 8 (1981), p. 3, it became clear that Baptist yearly growth had dropped from 5.9% in 1970 to 4.8% in 1979, precisely during the period of greatest social change. A growth of 76.8% during the 1960–70 decade decreased to 60% during the following decade.

29. This was clearly shown in my research, which also turned up the significant fact that house churches, once a staple of Baptist life, had fallen into disuse—while mass evangelism was on the increase.
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Dialogue and the Politicization of Religions in India

Stanley J. Samartha

The focus of this essay is on the contemporary situation in India. But lest we forget the larger perspective of the world we live in, let me make a few brief observations. The connection between religion and politics is not always easy to recognize. People tend to forget that international issues and interreligious relationships are often connected. There are several reasons why people ignore or minimize this relationship.

The assumptions of secularism miss the powerful hold religions have on the lives of millions of people, particularly in cultures other than the Western. In countries where the church and state are constitutionally separate, people forget that in other countries, and sometimes in their own, religious beliefs and political attitudes are often intermixed. The theologically negative attitudes taken toward other religions and cultures inevitably affect the political perceptions and attitudes toward nations where the majority of people profess religions other than Christianity. In some countries religion is regarded as a part of life. In others, religious life is the very ethos in which people live and breathe and work. Ideological, ethnic, and economic factors are undoubtedly related in international relations. But it would be a serious mistake to ignore the consequence of religion on political attitudes.

There are indications, however, that in the United States greater recognition is being paid to this subject. Let me give a few examples. Charles J. Hanley, an Associated Press writer, draws pointed attention to the fact that religion shapes much of the world violence, for example, in Arab-Israeli and Iran-Iraqi wars, in Afganistan, in the tragic conflicts of Lebanon and Northern Ireland, and in the tensions between India and Pakistan. He quotes Moorhead Kennedy, the former director of New York’s Council for International Understanding, who makes the confession, “We Americans just don’t understand religion as a force in international affairs” (Indianapolis Star, Nov. 27, 1983). Robert Peel, a historian and literary critic, points out that today there is a crisis in secularism itself. He warns against the danger of religious liberalism dissolving itself entirely in social ethics, and goes on to say, “Pervasive doubt has not succeeded in putting out the light and the passionate dedication of great individuals or the evidence in humber lives of a reality transcending human formulations” (Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 21, 1983). Secularism has not succeeded in sweeping away religions from the highroads of modern life. On the contrary, there is enough evidence to show that there is a religious resurgence in many parts of the world today. Many communities, particularly oppressed people and ethnic minorities, tend to shape their identity and self-respect in terms of their religious and cultural resources. The church cannot ignore this dimension in seeking to fulfill its political ministry in the world today.

The increasing politicization of religions is a disturbing feature of contemporary Indian life. Politicization is the use of religion by political or religious leaders for the benefit of one community at the expense of others.

Religion and politics were always mixed up in the long history of the country. Buddhism, at least partly, was a protest movement against the domination of the upper castes over the rest of the people. The conversion of Ashoka to Buddhism had political consequences. The entry of Muslims for trade, and later the establishment of Muslim kingdoms in Delhi, led to tensions between Hindus and Muslims, the consequences of which are with us even to this day. Although the Portuguese and the British came to India mainly for trade, Christianity was not far behind. Many reform movements within Hinduism were a reaction against Western missionary expansion, and had political repercussions. Sikhism, a religion born out of the confrontation between Islam and Hinduism, is now becoming increasingly militant.

Although religion and politics were thus closely related in the history of the country, what is new today is the intensity of communal passions that go against the very spirit of religion. The politicization of religions threatens the secular character of the state, hinders the process of national integration, gives rise to anxiety, fear, tension, and conflicts in society, and has global implications as well because the major religions of India extend beyond the frontiers of the country.

One of the marks of Indian life today is that in spite of secular developments and the influence of science and technology on human life, people take religious life seriously. The visible expression of religion in the daily life of the people is in marked contrast to life in Europe. Catholic and Protestant churches are crowded. Whether in the village or in the city, Sunday worship in the churches is very well attended. The daily puja in Hindu temples is regularly done by thousands of people. Birthday celebrations of Rama, Krishna, the Buddha, and Mahavira are celebrated joyfully in public meetings in which thousands of people participate.

In Andhra Pradesh (one of the states in the south of India) Sri N. T. Rama Rao’s party was elected (January 1983), utterly defeating the Congress party of Indira Gandhi. At least one reason for his popularity is the fact that he is a cinema actor who has specialized in the roles of Rama and Krishna in many of his movies. It looks as if ancient gods such as Rama and Krishna are coming to the forefront of politics whereas modern heroes such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru have receded to the background. Pilgrimages to holy places are even more popular, with millions of people annually attending to them in spite of difficulties in travel and the expenses involved. The treasuries of well-known temples all over the country are overflowing with money.

Further, in spite of the uneasiness caused by recent conversions, interreligious cooperation has not diminished. People of different religious do come together for common purposes in society. Sometimes this may be because of religious imperatives; sometimes in spite of religious differences. Some examples should be enough to illustrate this.

At a recent meeting of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, in Bangalore, I was astonished to find Swami Agnivesh of the Arya Samaj sitting across the table from me. The
Arya Samaj (founded in 1875) is a very militant Hindu group strongly opposed to Christian and Muslim missions. They have, over the years, reconverted many Christians and Muslims back to Hinduism through *shuddhi* (a ritual of purification). The reason he was with us was not far to seek. He was so upset by the sufferings of thousands of laborers who were at the mercy of rich contractors in Delhi that he led a protest procession to the Parliament. And since Christians too were concerned with issues of economic and social justice he had joined them in that particular program. Whether it is in the struggle of oppressed people fighting against untouchability or for the emancipation of women suffering under the evils of the dowry system or of workers demanding safe conditions of work and a living wage, people of different religions are indeed working together.

It is not just the social dimensions of religion that bring people together. At deeper levels neighbors of other faiths are asking not how much money Christians (or Muslims now) are spending on development projects, but what is the essential message that brings peace to the heart and renewal to life, that puts the human in touch with the divine in order that the whole of human life might be transformed. At an interreligious meeting during Lent a Muslim lawyer spoke on the meaning of Christ’s suffering and death.

At an interreligious meeting in 1982, where I was asked to speak on recent developments in dialogue, the questions that came after I spoke were concerned with how people of different religious persuasions could share in the quest for and the experience of salvation. They were less interested in academic concepts of religion than with the living dimensions of faith. This group consisted of lawyers, businessmen, managers of industry, professors at institutes of science, medicine, and psychology, and at least one retired judge of the high court. Not that a group like this was uninterested in social concerns. But their basic interest was less in changing social structures than in transforming the inner life of men and women in order that the root causes of social injustice might be removed. The most marked characteristic of contemporary Indian life is not so much its secularity as its hunger for transcendence.

Many Christians feel uneasy in this situation. Of course, there are many groups and individual Christians involved in these concerns together with their neighbors. But, by and large, the church finds it difficult to enter into more meaningful relationships with neighbors of other faiths. The church is in touch with society mostly through its institutions and development projects rather than through involvement in the life, struggles, and aspirations of people. This is partly because of inherited attitudes, partly because Christians are a minority in the country, and partly because of the fear of losing their identity as Christians in the midst of vast numbers of people of other faiths. Politicization of religions frightens them.

Not long ago, two interreligious marriages took place in Bangalore and were blessed in the church service. In one the bride was a Christian and the bridegroom a Hindu, and in the other the bride was a Hindu and the bridegroom a Christian. Hindu parents and quite a few of the relatives attended the service, probably entering a church for the first time in their life. In one case the pastor preached a sermon on “Believers and Nonbelievers,” implying that before long he expected the “nonbeliever” to become “a believer.” In the other, the pastor, while drawing attention to the marks of a Christian marriage, also pointed out that an interreligious marriage could be the sign of a new kind of family where, through the young couple, two different families, two religions, and two cultures could grow together with possibilities of mutual enrichment. It is unlikely that such marriages will take place in large numbers. But the attitude of pastors and lay people to such events shows the confusion and uneasiness felt by many. The feeling that a son or daughter is “lost” to the community because of such marriages often obscures the strength of human love that overcomes the boundaries of religion and the inclusiveness of God’s love that holds together all people. The politicization of religions in the country intensifies such fears. Basic experiences of life such as marriage bring out the deeper human feelings of people of different religious communities toward each other in a stronger measure than theological discussions about interreligious marriages in the abstract.

**II**

Attention is drawn to the cooperation that is going on between different religious communities and the possibilities of new kinds of relationships emerging to put the matter of politicization in its proper perspective. Recent conversions from Hinduism and Christianity to Islam and from Christianity to Hinduism (1981) have brought into prominence their political implications.

In the recent history of India perhaps the most publicized conversion was that of Dr. Ambedkar, the well-known leader of Harijans (now calling themselves Dalits) and a member of the Nehru Cabinet. In 1956 Dr. Ambedkar, along with a half-million of his followers, embraced Buddhism. On that occasion he is reported to have declared, “I was born a Hindu. I will not die a Hindu. By discarding my ancient religion, which stood for inequality and op-

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"The most marked characteristic of contemporary Indian life is not so much its secularity as its hunger for transcendence."
sions. Already with the experience of the division of the country in 1947 on the basis of religion there is a feeling that increase in the number of Muslims through conversions may bring further political danger. Moreover, with the resurgence of Islam all over the world, and the power of its new-found affluence, Hindus feel that their religion is in danger in their own country.

One of the points that is now more openly admitted than before is that conversions can be, and often are a form of social protest. People who became Muslims were aware of their degradation in society and wanted to escape from it. The failure of the political system to help them and the fact that legislation was ineffective to give them the status they desired in society were strong factors that influenced their decision. Moreover, the presence of an alter-

-native in Islam, which promised better social equality than Buddhism or Christianity, helped them to decide. Religion is not just a matter of spirituality or otherworldly concerns; it is very much linked to the economic, social, cultural, and political life of communities within the larger life of the nation.

The politicization of religions in India has at least three serious consequences. First, it becomes a hindrance to the task of nation-building. At a time when, with so many dividing factors like language, caste, and region working against national integration, to bring the religious factor to the forefront of politics arouses deep passions. Communal riots inflamed by religions have always been an unfortunate feature in multireligious societies.

Second, it becomes a threat to the secular, democratic, and socialist character of the Indian state. Organized large-scale conversions can bring about structural changes in Indian society drastically altering its voting patterns and political balance. In the international context the success or failure of the Indian state as secular will very much depend on how this issue of conversions is handled, not just by the government but by the different religious communities as well. The dangers of a theocratic state are obvious. In any case, in a multireligious society it is only an open, secular state that can provide the freedom to people of different religious and ideological convictions to make their critical contribution to the growing life of the nation. Christians should also consider responsibly what kind of “mission” it is to which they are committed in a pluralistic society. Does Christian mission mean the extension of the Christian community and the extinction of all other religious communities? What if Hindus and Muslims also decide on the same procedure? The fact that not just Christians but Muslims and Hindus too have their “missions” demands that the whole matter of the content and practice of mission has to be reconsidered, maybe with all three coming together in dialogue.

Third, the politicization of religions in India has global consequences. Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam are not confined to the boundaries of India. Now Hinduism too has its “diaspora” communities and “missions” in other countries. With the resurgence of Islam along with its economic power and with Pakistan and Bangladesh becoming Islamic states in the neighborhood, more tensions are generated. Other countries in the world also get involved. The possibility of the religious factor intensifying conflicts between nations that have strong religious communities cannot be easily dismissed.

Announcing

The next meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies will be held at the University of Zimbabwe, in Harare, January 8–14, 1985, on the theme “Christian Mission and Human Transformation.” Further details about the program will be sent to members in the near future. Inquiries about membership and activities of the Association may be sent to the General Secretary of IAMS, Rapenburg 61, 2311 GJ Leiden, The Netherlands.

It is not difficult to see that the politicization of religions in India is a setback to dialogue. The recent conversions have brought to the forefront the ancient fears, suspicions, and mistrust in community relations. “Communalism,” the identity and interest of a community determined solely on religious affiliation, is the bane of Indian society. The motivations and the genuineness of dialogue initiated by any one group are likely to be questioned by others. Many Christians still think of dialogue within the framework of mission, and very often emphasize its instrumental usefulness for conversions rather than its intrinsic value for community relations. The integrity of dialogue is thus seriously threatened. Unless both “dialogue” and “politicization” are rescued from their bondage to narrow communal ends, it is unlikely that more positive relationships can develop between different religions.

However, it can also be said that precisely because of the difficulties now encountered, the practice of the way of dialogue becomes even more necessary and urgent. The Vatican and the World Council of Churches have both openly recommended the way of dialogue to Christians in the world. The World Council of Churches in its Guidelines (1979) has pointed out that dialogue is “a most welcome way of obeying the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself.” Dialogue helps us “not to disfigure the image of our neighbors.” It is “a participation with all who are allies of life in seeking the goals of a better human community.” It is “a means of living our faith in Christ in the service of our neighbors.”

This means that in the midst of the fears and difficulties caused by the politicization of religions, Christians should not hold back and isolate themselves, but seek new ways of working together with their neighbors. Dialogue can then truly become an expression of Christian neighborliness.

We should all recognize with gratitude that today within different religious communities there are individuals and small groups who have a new vision of society and a strong commitment to the future, who seek new ways of living and working together in multireligious societies, which are critically different from the sterile ways of the past. It is unlikely that the existing structures and institutions of religions in India, including Christianity, can provide the spiritual support and psychological space for such people to move forward with courage and hope. Such individuals and groups within different religions need to come together. Conversion in this context should not be a horizontal conversion, in the sense of transferring from one religious community to another, statistically increasing the one and diminishing the other. Conversion should become a vertical conversion, a conversion to God, a changing of one’s life-direction, finding a new way, truly a punar­jīvam (a rebirth). This should make it easier for such people to join hands with those others who, whatever their religious affiliation may be, have also caught that vision and so are willing to join new communities in formation cutting across the hedges of existing religions. The border between religions then becomes not a boundary that separates people but a threshold to cross in pursuit of the new vocation of dialogue.

The fear of politicization should not lead people to suspect all religions to be dangerous to the growth of a responsible political culture. Neither should it lead people to take a “neutral” attitude toward them or to become indifferent to their enduring values.
What is necessary is to reject openly the ideological distortions of religion for the sake of short-term political ends. Such notions as “Christendom” or the Hindu Rashtra (Hindu state), or dar-al-Islam (territory surrendered to God, Islamic, in contrast to dar-al-harb, territory not yet surrendered to God, non-Islamic) are a threat not only to the integrity of the nation but also to global peace because religions easily get mixed up with competing ideologies to support certain political, economic, and military structures. Instead of being fingers pointing to the moon they become missiles aimed at the heart of each other.

This means that the context of politicization offers to religions an opportunity to discover what their political ministry could be today in the midst of the clash of religions and ideologies. This discovery can only come through the experience of dialogue as people seek religious resources for the struggle of all people for a life of freedom, self-respect, and dignity. At least three elements should go to the making of this political ministry: working together for peace in the larger community, seeking the kind of freedom that will provide the climate for all religions to exercise their prophetic function in society, and drawing attention to the transcendental element without which human life would be imprisoned within the bounds of history.

Every multireligious community has within it seeds of conflict. In countries like India this is unfortunately part of the history. With religious and ethnic minority groups in Western countries the tensions there can also erupt into dangerous conflagrations. Once conflicts start it is difficult to control roused passions. Therefore the peace potentialities within religions should be harnessed before conflicts arise. There should be a vigilant group consisting of people from different religions in every country and in every community, town, or village, to watch out for troubles and to smother the fires before they can spread.

To do this openly and without being misunderstood demands a certain kind of freedom, which the state is not always willing to concede. The freedom to worship inside the temple or church or mosque is one thing; the freedom to exercise a prophetic calling, that is, to be critical of the state and of political ideologies, even if the structures of religion itself on the basis of religious imperatives, is quite another. The state is often willing to concede the former, but is likely to interpret the latter as “interference.” People of different religions should join together to demand that kind of freedom which all religious people need in order to exercise a critical function in society. If the freedom they demand is only the freedom to do their own puja, and the right to convert each other, it is most unlikely that they will get that quality of freedom which alone can transform the other two.

That there is a hunger for transcendence in the world is a point that is usually recognized today. One can sense this in spite of an excess of religiosity or through a seeming secularity. This transcendence is to be discovered not outside or beyond history, but at the intersection where the eternal and the temporal meet. Drawing attention to this element in human life and bringing out its implications to the making of political cultures should become one of the responsibilities of all religious people. Without a sense of the transcendent the provisional goals of life tend to be identified with the ultimate, human achievements are exposed to the sins of pride and self-righteousness, and life itself loses its spaciousness and freedom and becomes imprisoned within the coils of history. Through cooperation between people of different religions a wider conceptual framework needs to be worked out that can do justice both to the notion of transcendence and to its different apprehensions by people of different faiths.

Bibliographical Note

Since 1981 a great deal has been written on the matter of conversions and the politicization of religions in India, including several books and many articles in journals, weekly magazines, and daily newspapers. Several case studies also have been published. A full documentation is difficult at this stage. Attention is here drawn to some published material that may be useful in reflection on this matter at the moment.

Banerji, Brojendra Nath. Religious Conversions in India. New Delhi: Harnam Publications, 1982. In addition to chapters on conversion it has a number of appendices, including the text of the Freedom of Religion bill (1980) and statements by a number of Christians leaders.

Mathew, George. “Politicalisation of Religion,” Economic and Political Weekly (New Delhi), vol. 17, no. 25 (June 19, 1982) pp. 1027ff., and no. 26 (June 26, 1982), pp. 1068ff. This outstanding two-part article analyzes the historical background, gives a brief description of what happened at Meenakshipuram, and suggests a balanced interpretation of the political effects of conversions on the life of the country.


Seminar Annual, January 1982 (Malhotra Building, P.O. Box 338, New Delhi). The issue is devoted to the subject of conversion.

“Tamil Nadu Conversions to Islam,” Religion and Society (Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore), vol. 28, no. 4 (December 1981). Contains case studies, sociological analyses, and discussion on conversions as social protests. Includes an excellent article by a Muslim scholar, Professor Mumtaz Ali Khan of Bangalore.

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The Protestant Endeavor in Chinese Society, 1890–1950: Gleanings from the Manuscripts of M. Searle Bates

Cynthia McLean

Miner Searle Bates, 1897–1978, was a graduate of Hiram College, Ohio; a Rhodes Scholar at St. John’s College, Oxford, England, where he received both the B.A. and M.A. degrees; and earned his Ph.D. at Yale University in 1935. He taught history at the University of Nanking 1920–50, as a missionary of The United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), then served as Professor of Missions at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1950–65.

When M. Searle Bates died in October 1978, he left boxes, drawers, and shelves full of manuscripts, most of which pertained to his work-in-progress: “The Protestant Endeavor in Chinese Society, 1890–1950.” Dr. M. O. Williams collected, sorted, and filed the papers, producing at the same time an essential outline to the entire opus based on notes and memos Bates himself had written. Initially it was thought that, with the addition of some missing footnotes and careful editing, Bates’s work could be produced as a book. When this was found to be infeasible, the hope remained that some of the chapters might be able to stand alone as essays. Yet, even individual chapters were several drafts away from completion. The final decision, then, was to send the topical drafts, the notes, and copies of the manuscripts to the Yale Divinity School Library to be catalogued for its archives, and to prepare a content-guide for the papers that Williams had determined belonged expressly to the work-in-progress. A content-guide was felt to be a necessary tool for researchers who would wish to know something of the style, types of information, and sources contained within the manuscripts. The final result is a text of approximately 100 pages entitled “Gleanings from the Manuscripts of M. Searle Bates,” plus an introductory essay and an outline of the register of the Bates papers.

In view of his other writings on Christianity in China, Bates legitimately might be called a “popular” historian who wrote more for the edification of the lay person than for the scholar. Although an impeccable researcher who worried every fact to its source, Bates was sparing with his footnotes and documentation. In one of his many memos pertaining to this history, he stated clearly that he hoped his text would provide the schoolteacher with the insights necessary to integrate the Christian experience into a general picture of Chinese society during this period. This intent then—to give the educated reader an overview of the Christian experience in China—became a major guiding principle in the preparation of the content-guide. “Gleanings,” therefore, represents not only a guide to the manuscripts to be found at the Yale Divinity School Library, but also an attempt to produce a readable account of this history for the interested beginner.

Most of the words, paragraphs, and style of “Gleanings” were lifted directly from the manuscripts. The effort was made to capture the “authentic Bates” as much as was possible. Of course, the editor was responsible for selecting the fragments used and weaving them together into coherent prose, which presupposes a certain subjectivity. This subjectivity, however, was checked by constant consultation with M. O. Williams, who not only was a colleague of Bates’s but was, moreover, very familiar with the content of the manuscripts themselves. The one subject consciously given more attention was the Chinese context. A major stated purpose by Bates was to root this history in the China scene, with the result that more space has been given to data pertaining to Chinese social, cultural, and political conditions, as well as to the words of Chinese Christians. Consequently, the amount of attention paid to a certain subject in “Gleanings” may not correspond proportionately to the number of pages contained in the original manuscripts.

The terrain covered in these manuscripts is very uneven. Whereas sections I (1890–1907) and II (1907–22) represent the results of well-digested research, sections III (1922–37) and IV (1937–50) often are little more than paraphrasings of articles gathered around a subject. Dr. Bates himself advised us that materials concerned with the Sino-Japanese War period are very scanty in the literature of any language. The documentation in the papers is also of uneven quality. Nearly full footnotes accompany a number of the early chapters, but critical names and dates may be missing. Later, in sections II through IV, most of the bibliographic material is contained within the text. Again, much information is missing. As for the sources used, Bates seems to have drawn primarily from The Chinese Recorder, The International Review of Missions, missionary “study books” of the times, biographies, dissertations, institutional histories, and fairly recent historical studies. There is no evidence that he made great use of Chinese materials, material in languages other than English, letters, or oral histories.

Content

Bates’s vision of the Protestant endeavor in Chinese society was genuinely comprehensive. He touched on almost every conceivable subject, made reference to the work of almost every denomination, and noted the words of a host of individuals. His references to particular persons or missions, however, were illustrative rather than exhaustive. A researcher interested specifically in the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in Fukien, for example, is unlikely to find even a full paragraph devoted to
the subject, although throughout the 4,000-odd pages of manuscript, it will be mentioned several times. Bates was aiming for a picture of the whole Protestant effort, looking for commonalities and problems that confronted every foreign missionary in the China field. Consequently, there are many lists of statistics in the manuscripts. These are not noted in "Gleanings" because without full documentation they were impossible to evaluate, and moreover, they would have impeded rather than furthered the flow of the story.

Although Bates wanted to set his story securely within China, his narrative indicates that this meant covering the Chinese Christian, rather than the Chinese national, scene. Chinese political history is not well covered, especially after the Nationalist Revolution in the 1920s. There is scant reference to the Kuomintang Anti-Red Suppression campaigns, the Long March of Mao Tse-tung and the Communists in 1935, or the development of the Chinese Communist soviets. Similarly, the encroachments of the Japanese, Japan's open invasion of China in 1937, the Rape of Nanking, and Japanese involvement in the narcotics trade are noted only in connection with the Christian community, if at all. Chinese intellectuals, writers, statesmen, and political leaders are not included unless they happened to be Christians. This may point to the position that the Christian community occupied in China during these periods. A final omission is that of the foreign community settled in China. The foreign bankers, traders, diplomats, and military personnel remain largely invisible. On the other hand, issues revolving around the Unequal Treaties and Extraterritoriality figure prominently in the text. The angle of vision, one should note, is primarily American, although reference is made throughout to missionaries of other nationalities, especially the British.

Some of the omissions in Bates's work may be due to a determined effort on his part to avoid highly controversial debates of a political nature. Ideological differences concerning the nature of the Chinese Communist party and its triumph in 1949, the involvement of the American government with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, and the American missionary role in these political proceedings make these subjects enormously difficult to deal with or to pass judgment upon, even now. We must also remember that, for Bates, this was not history as much as fairly recent memory. It is not noteworthy that there is no mention of his own role in the events that followed the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. As attested to by others, he played a significant part in challenging the Japanese on both the narcotics trade and their heavy-handed occupation of eastern China. This removal of himself from the story may also explain why he did not "name names" with regard to certain events or situations. There is little personal opinion expressed about individuals he must have known. While understandable, especially since a number of these historical actors were still living as he wrote, this consistent omission is a loss to the historical record.

Theme

M. Searle Bates gives us the Grand Tour of the Protestant effort in Chinese society, but is there a theme to this enormous compilation of facts? Nowhere did he conclusively set out a theme or thesis, and at first glance the papers look to be countless trees with no discernible forest. Yet, after reading pages of facts and figures, it did seem to this reader that Bates was circling around, hovering over, pointing toward one central phenomenon: the development of the Three-Self Church in China.

It can only be surmised, but it does seem that Bates was somewhat affronted by the Chinese Three-Self Patriotic Association, which appeared in 1951 under the leadership of Y. T. Wu after the missionaries had been ousted as the "running dogs of the imperialists." The development of a Chinese Three-Self Church had been the ideal and goal of the missionaries since the middle of the nineteenth century, when the formula had been devised concurrently by Henry Venn in England and Rufus Anderson in the United States. To promote self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches able to permeate their surrounding communities with Christian principles was the raison d'être of the missionary movement, which distinguished its personnel from the merchants who came to China for gain, the soldiers in search of conquest, and the diplomats who proceeded on the basis of a particular national interest. Bates does not appear as an ideologue in his manuscripts; in fact, he was sympathetic to the aspirations of the bulk of China's population who turned to Communism with the desperate hope of a better government. He was, however, a staunch churchman and defender of the Christian enterprise, which, despite its many glaring errors and foibles, he felt had given China something of great value. And this value transcended (but included) the material benefits offered by the Christian-sponsored schools, hospitals, and social services.

With this point in mind, it is not surprising that although Bates did touch on every facet of the Christian effort, he emphasized the work of the mainline Protestant denominations and repeatedly noted that they were responsible for the majority of the personnel, funds, and work in China. The China Inland Mission

"Bates was circling around, hovering over, pointing toward one central phenomenon: the development of the Three-Self Church in China."
and the flight of countless others in 1927–28. With the triumph of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang in the late 1920s, the political situation stabilized and the missionaries were invited to return, which they did, although in reduced numbers. Throughout the 1930s the missionaries increasingly worked in partnership with the government and were important agents in the relief and refugee work carried on throughout the Sino-Japanese War. But, after all this activity, had they accomplished their purpose of establishing Three-Self churches in China? Regrettably, the answer seems to be that they had not.

By the early 1930s thoughtful commentators were lamenting the absence of vital congregations functioning independently across the Chinese landscape. Moreover, they were increasingly aware that aspects of church life, which they took to be essential, were not evident in China: (1) Sunday had not become institutionalized, even for Christians, as a day of rest. (2) Corporate worship did not seem to appeal to the Chinese. (3) Voluntary giving was minimal, and tithing almost nonexistent, even in parishes whose members could afford it. (4) Fewer and fewer men of high caliber and advanced education were offering themselves for the ministry, and trained lay leadership was dwindling. (5) There was a dearth of Chinese Christian thinkers or theologians. (6) Students and young people were treating the church as irrelevant to their needs. (7) A decided aversion to the creeds and dogmas of denominationalism was evident. (8) The Chinese seemed content to leave religious education and nurture to the missionaries. Moreover, a number of Chinese Christians were voicing great disagreement with what, to many missionaries, was almost a sacred principle: the separation of church and state. These conditions did not change a great deal during the 1930s, and what progress had been made was completely disrupted, if not destroyed, by the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45. It is therefore almost impossible to posit functioning Three-Self Chinese churches at the time of the Communist victory in 1949. They simply did not exist in any Western understanding of the term.

Bates gives us a number of important insights concerning this unrealized ideal, drawn from both the Chinese context and Western presuppositions about the nature of a church. On the Chinese side he notes an excessive racial pride and ethnocentricity stemming from China’s 2,000 years of seeing itself as the “Center of the Universe,” and therefore tending to reject Christianity solely on the basis of its “foreign” introduction. China’s rulers, whether during the dynastic, Republican, National, or Communist periods, also viewed religion as a utilitarian commodity to be turned toward the benefit of the state. Even some Chinese Christians saw Christianity as a potentially useful tool for achieving China’s national salvation. The Chinese state had never admitted to any kind of pluralism that allowed an institution to function independently of the state bureaucracy, thereby precluding any principle of the separation of church and state. In addition, China had no institution in its history that even faintly resembled a church with corporate worship and members whose loyalties transcended clan and familial lines. A general disdain for Buddhist priests, who begged from town to town, led to a scorn for ordained Christian ministers and a disbelief that the free love of Jesus Christ should be paid for by contributions or tithing. Nurtured in the Confucian tradition, the Chinese were a practical people, concerned with ethics and morality, uninterested in metaphysics and abstract thought. The plethora of denominational systems, creeds, and dogmas seemed useless to the Chinese, who were drawn by the love and character of Jesus and not by the dictates of Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. And finally, China itself was undergoing enormous upheaval in all realms of national life and fighting to maintain its territorial integrity from foreign invaders. If Christianity was unwilling or unable to lend its moral force to these struggles, then many Chinese were inclined to view the church as irrelevant, if not reactionary, in the Chinese scene. Chinese Christians were to voice disappointment and bitterness over the fact that too few missionaries appreciated the depth of feeling all Chinese felt over the humiliations of foreign control. Missionaries just did not seem to realize how enmeshed Christianity was in the privileges of this foreign domination by dint of the Unequal Treaties and Extraterritoriality and did not understand the burden Chinese Christians had to bear in the face of being reviled as “denationalized Chinese” or the “dupes of the imperialists” by their compatriots.

On the Western side Bates seems to suggest that it was the institutions spawned by the Christian enterprise that swamped the Three-Self Church. Although evangelism and establishing churches were the aim and goal, schools, hospitals, and social-reform agencies followed closely on the heels of those first itinerating missionaries. The needs were so great, the poverty and backwardness of the ordinary people so profound, that Christian compassion dictated the setting aside of workers for educational and medical work, for flood and famine relief, for the anti-foot-binding and suppression-of-opium campaigns. It is interesting to read of the debates that occurred in the missionary community over the pros and cons of this auxiliary work. Some missionaries, intensely evangelistic, saw these works of mercy as diverting personnel and funds from the main task of bringing the Chinese to a saving belief in Jesus Christ. More liberal missionaries, however, defended their efforts in the social realm by pointing to Christ’s frequent healings and concern for the poor in the Gospels. Moreover, famine relief, medical assistance, and modern knowledge often drew persons into the Christian circle who otherwise would never have attended a street chapel or had any contact with the church. These debates, especially over the nature and content of Christian education, continued through the 1930s, but the reality was an ever increasing number of primary, middle, and high schools; colleges and universities; hospitals and medical establishments; social and welfare agencies—all springing up primarily in urban areas.

From start to finish, most of these institutions were foreign-supported, foreign-directed, and propagators of foreign ideals. There is no question that these institutions served the Chinese people mightily and provided China with a modern institutional infrastructure that it had to have, but because of their bulk and expense, they inevitably remained under the authority of the missionaries and their home boards, who paid the bills. This increasingly came to be viewed by the Chinese as a serious infringement on their sovereignty and ability to control their internal affairs. Moreover, although the missionaries undoubtedly saw this work as necessarily rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and worshiping communities of Christians, this assumption seems not
to have been taken for granted by the Chinese, Christian or other­wise. In the nineteenth-century West, these ameliorative institu­tions had sprung from churches enflamed by the Second Great Awakening and the social dislocations caused by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. The social passion was rooted in a deep piety and evangelical purpose fueled by fiery preachers and churchgoers. Not so in China.

In addition to the development of massive institutions in Chi­na, which, in terms of Christian history, seemed to put the cart be­fore the horse by building up the schools and hospitals ahead of the church, Bates gives us the impression that most missionaries retained their Western ideas about the nature of the church despite the radically different Chinese reality. Although it was increasing­ly obvious that Chinese were rejecting denominationalism, creeds, theology, tithing, a paid clergy, and the absolute separation of church and state, most missionaries seem not to have noticed. One senses from these manuscripts that many missionaries continued to believe that when the Chinese churches “matured,” they would come to see the value of these “essential” trappings of church life. Missionaries, alone in their own patches with a handful of individual Chinese Christians, could see enough to reinforce their ideas to discount criticisms, even from leading Chinese Christians. As a group, the missionaries just never seemed to consider that in China, because of its different history and culture, the church might take on a form other than that which they had known at home.

Finally, in connection with both the institution-building of the missionaries and the unexamined theological assumptions they had brought with them from abroad, the personnel employed by the missions and Christian agencies were not such as to lead Chinese Christians into a deeper understanding of the church as an ecclesiastical organization. Bates did not dwell on the subject but pointedly noted that by 1900 the bulk of the American missionary force was female. When missionary wives, who also ran schools, clinics, and craft cooperatives, are figured into the totals, women constituted almost two-thirds of the foreign missionary presence in China. When this ratio is placed alongside the male doctors, teachers, road engineers, agricultural experts, scientists, and YMCA workers, all of whom were sent out under Christian auspices, the picture emerges of a decidedly lay, social-minded, and activistic group of persons, but not trained church-builders. These were individuals who, again, assumed the church at the center of their endeavors but whose energies and skills lay elsewhere. Moreover, of the strictly evangelistic missionaries, many had had minimal theological training beforehand, were biblical literalists who themselves eschewed theological grappling, and who had only a dim sense of the church as a divine institution in history. Is it then to be marveled at that the Chinese, under such tutors, never came to a sure grasp of the place, the role, and the meaning of the Three-Self Church?

Ultimately one has to wrestle with the church—in fact and fancy—in order to come to terms with the Protestant endeavor in Chinese society.

M. Searle Bates hoped to accomplish a number of purposes by writing this history. He wanted (1) to establish the record, as de­pendably as possible, from within the Protestant effort in a China that was immense, complex, and changing; (2) to provide a per­spective of reference for other, more specific, studies of missions, individuals, and institutions; (3) to contribute to various historical stuctures, such as the Christian factor in the modernization of Chi­na, the Christian dimension in the international and intercultural relations of China with special reference to the questions of imper­ialism and Asian nationalism, and the Chinese element in universal church history.

During the thirty-year hiatus of relationships and contact be­tween Chinese and Americans, a number of studies have been published that concentrate on individuals and institutions, partic­ularly within the framework of the theory of imperialism and Sino-American relations. Dissertations and books have been written on the schools, the medical establishments, and the social re­construction undertaken by missionaries. Work is underway which places the Western missionary endeavor more securely within the context of modern Chinese history. Very little research and writing, however, have been done on the peculiarly Christian element of this vast enterprise. No one has yet tried to place the Chinese experience in the context of universal church history, or to explore seriously the Chinese Christianity that did take shape under the guidance and patronage of Western missionaries. Thor­ough denominational studies through 1950 are rare, and the eccle­siasiastical, theological, and doctrinal questions wait to be addressed. Biographical information on leading Chinese Christians is minimal, and Christian scholars have not pursued the subjects of reli­gious education, evangelism, and seminary training. Meanwhile, the participants in this Protestant endeavor—both Chinese and American—are dying without having recorded their experiences. M. Searle Bates’s manuscripts challenge Christian scholars with a story that has not yet been told: the building of the church in China.

In light of the possibilities for new and renewed relationships between Chinese and American Christians today, it seems imperative that the historical inquiry initiated by M. Searle Bates be con­tinued, expanded, and placed in the hands of seminarians and American Christians. There is no basis on which to understand the Chinese Three-Self Patriotic Church today without an under­standing of the Three-Self churches that our missionaries attempt­ed to erect in China prior to 1949. Many illusions, self-deceptions and sheer fantasy persist in American recollections of this mission­ary enterprise, which, if left unchallenged, belie the integrity of our professed desire for friendship and Christian fellowship. The questions Bates raised about the nature of a church, about the ne­cessity, or lack thereof, of denominational systems, creeds, theolo-
David A. Kerr

The real nature of the Prophet Muhammad (may God’s mercy and blessing be upon him) is perhaps the central issue of Christian-Muslim dialogue, for if Muhammad is a true prophet who delivered his message faithfully, what is there to prevent a sincere man to accept his call to Islam?

This question, put by a European staff member of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester (U.K.) in an article in the widely circulated Muslim magazine Impact International, does indeed direct us to one of the most critical areas of Christian-Muslim debate. It raises direct questions about our respective theological understandings of divine revelation and its human reception, and as directly it raises issues regarding human responsiveness, both individual and communal. So complex are these matters that few Christians, however desirous many may be of cordial relations with Muslims, have been able to reply affirmatively to the age-old Muslim question: “Since we [Muslims] accept Jesus as a genuine prophet and messenger of God, can you [Christians] not reciprocate by accepting the genuineness of Muhammad’s prophethood?”

However, it remains deeply hurtful to Muslims that Christians so easily reply in the negative, and that their reply is prompted more characteristically by an uncritical acceptance of a long Christian polemical tradition than by serious historical and theological reflection.

The depth of Muslim injury can be measured by the fact that the question and the reply are as old as the Qur’an itself, taking us back to the experience of Muhammad in Mecca and Medina. The divine revelation that Muhammad believed had been vouchsafed to him called for radical human obedience (= ‘islam) to God (Q. 6:163–66)* in the reordering of individual lives in congruity with the divine will (= muslīm; fem. muslima; Q. 3:102), and the consequent restructuring of human society (‘umma) as the ‘umma muslīma; (Q. 3:104; cf. 3:110). This was not conceived in terms of the creation of a new religion, unlike all religions that had previously existed in human history. On the contrary, Muhammad clearly understood his task as being, under divine guidance, the restoration of primordial monotheism, the religion of God (Q. 3:18–19), revealed from the beginning of human history, and identified characteristically (though not exclusively) with Abraham (‘Ibrahīm; Q. 6:162), the “pure in faith” (ḥānīf; Q. 3:67), the “leader (‘imām) of humankind” (Q. 2:124). Both before and after Abraham, however, the Qur’an attests prophets to have been sent by God to human communities, and with particular frequency to the Children of Israel (banū ‘isra’īl). The Qur’an 42:13 gives special mention to Noah, Moses, and Jesus along with Abraham, and assures Muhammad that God had ordained for him the same religion (dīn) as He had for them. At the close of Muhammad’s ministry, the Qur’an declared Muhammad to have succeeded, by divine favor, in bringing to perfection the religion of God revealed to all his prophets, and the designation al-‘islam was confirmed (Q. 5:3). The Qur’an therefore propounds a doctrine of unity and universality in divine revelation from the beginning of human history, completed in the revelation of the Qur’an to Muhammad as “the Messenger of God to you all” (i.e., to the whole of humankind; Q. 7:158) and therefore “the Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40).

Within this perspective the Children of Israel have considerable importance in the Qur’an as recipients of divine favor (Q. 2:40; cf. 2:47) not as an “elect” people in a sense comparable to Jewish or Christian thought, but as a historical case study of divine revelation and human response—a case study full of instruction for Muslims themselves. The Qur’an acknowledges the authenticity and truth of the revelations sent by God to the prophets of Israel, particularly in the scriptural forms of the Torah (tawrāt), Psalms (zabūr), and Gospel (‘injīl), (Q. 3:3; 4:163). It criticizes Jews and Christians, however, for in the most part refusing to recognize Muhammad as a genuine prophet (Q. 2:104–5). Given the Quranic view of the unity and universality of divine revelation, Jewish and Christian obstinacy regarding Muhammad cannot be attributed to their Scriptures as vouchsafed to their prophets. Indeed, the Qur’an understands the coming of Muhammad as “the Seal of the Prophet.

*All references to, and quotations from, the Qur’an are from M. M. Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (New York: New American Library, n.d.).
"This Quranic invitation to interfaith dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims has rarely been heeded in the subsequent history of relations among the three religions.

medieval polemical description of Muhammad was no way to evaluate his historical or religious significance; his moral teachings were, in Carlyle's judgment, "the true dictates of a heart aiming towards what is just and true." In Carlyle's audience sat the liberal Christian theologian Frederick D. Maurice, who was much impressed by what he heard, and later wrote: "I felt throughout how much more kind and tolerant towards the truth in all forms of faith and opinion he can be, and should be, who does in his heart believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and that all systems are feeling after Him as the common centre of the world."

In the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century many Christian scholars are to be numbered among those Western Orientalists who have tried, with varying degrees of success, to rescue Muhammad from the fire of polemics and to
restore him to the sight of history through careful analysis of the
Arabic and Islamic sources. Preeminent in this field stands William
Montgomery Watt, longtime professor of Islamic studies at Edin­
burgh University and an ordained clergyman of the Anglican
church. His two volumes on Muhammad at Mecca and Muhammad at
Medina are unsurpassed as reference works, much valued by
Muslims themselves. But they are the work of a historian, and
beyond recognizing in Muhammad a man of religious genius who
affected an enormous and positive socioreligious reform in sixth­
century Arabia, Montgomery Watt withholds theological evalua­
tion, other than to consider Muhammad worthy of comparison
with the classical prophets of the Hebrew tradition.14 One looks to
his contemporary, Kenneth Cragg, fellow Anglican cleric and
Christian scholar of Islam, for deeper theological insight, but here
we encounter an equivocality typical of Christian thought in the
twentieth century. In his book The Call of the Minaret, which
marks an important positive stride in Christian appreciation of
Islam, Cragg portrays Muhammad as being a man of “a sure
monotheism and a prophetic mission in which a divine relation­
ship of revelation, through a scripture, created a community of
faith.”15 Recognizing the historical importance of Muhammad’s
awareness of himself as a new and final figure in prophetic contin­
uity, Cragg asks by what criteria his ministry is to be evaluated.
Is it by those of Arabian paganism, which would show Muham­
dad to be a great reformer? Or by those of early Islamic develop­
ment, which would show Muhammad to be “one of the rarest
potentials in human history”? Or by those of the classical He­
brew prophets, which would show in Muhammad “a strange and
yet unmistakable shift in the whole concept and expression of pro­
phethood”? Or by those of “the hills of Galilee and Judaea where there are criteria of almost insupportable contrast”?16 As his anal­
ysis proceeds Cragg clearly opts for the last, and in answering the
question “How should prophethood succeed?” he makes the fol­
lowing contrast: “The Muhammedan decision here is formative of
all else in Islam. It was a decision for community, for resistance, for
external victory, for pacification and rule. The decision of the
Cross—no less conscious, no less formative, no less inclusive—was
the contrary decision.”17

In drawing this sharp distinction Cragg focuses upon the
Medina period of Muhammad’s ministry as presenting Christians
with the greatest theological difficulty, though he was not the first
to do so. The Dutch Protestant missiologist who dominated mis­
sionary thinking in the middle of the twentieth century, Hendrik
Kraemer, wrote in his The Christian Message in a Non-Christian
World that “Islam is radically theocentric and therefore pro­
claims in the clearest possible way its prophetic origin. . . . Mu­
hammad was possessed by two great religious aims—to proclaim
God as the sole, almighty God, the Creator and the King of the
Day of Judgement; to found a community, in Arabic called ‘umma,
rulled by the Law of God and His Apostle. These two objects con­
stitute the core of Islam, its strength and its weakness.”18 The
strength of Islam Kraemer estimated in terms of the brilliance of its
historical success; its weakness he judged to be Muhammad’s pre­
occupation with the affairs of the ‘umma in Medina, which result­
ed, in his view, in “the externalisation and fossilisation of
revelation in Islam which seems to us to be one of the great marks
of its religious superficiality.”19 In this connection Kraemer quoted
from Pascal’s brief reflections upon Islam in his Pensées, where he remarks: “Mahomet a pris la voie de réussir humaine­
ment, Jésus Christ celle de périr humainement” (Muhammad chose
the way of human success, Jesus Christ that of human defeat).20

In summary we may say that twentieth-century Protestant
Christian thought about Muhammad has conscientiously attempt­
eted to step outside the polemical tradition in accepting Muhammad
as a man of religious genius who affected the course of human his­
tory under the sovereign rule of God; in this sense he was a man of
prophetic inspiration, but in the light of Christ and the gospel his
prophethood is attenuated by the ambiguities of temporal power in
Medina.

Contemporary Catholic thought has no more to offer. While
acknowledging that “the plan of [divine] salvation also includes
those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place among
whom are the Muslims,” the Vatican Council II constitutions Lumen
Gentium (November 1964) and Nostre Aetate (October 1965) pass
over any specific reference to Muhammad or the Qur’an in prefer­
ence to attributing the quality of Muslims’ faith to their profession
“to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of
God just as Abraham submitted himself to God’s plan.”21 One of
the principal interpreters of the council’s statements about Mus­
lims, Father Maurice Borrmans, outlines in his book Orientations
pour un Dialogue entre Chrétiens et Musulmans what the Vatican Secretariat
for Non-Christians sees to be the most hopeful Christian attitude
toward Muhammad.22 The advice is essentially of a moral order
and encourages Christians “loyally to respect the deep affection
which Muslims feel and show towards their Prophet.” In this spirit
Christians should eschew the polemical tradition and attempt “to
discern ‘in faith’ [Muhammad’s] inspiration, sincerity and fidelity
in the context of his personal response to the commands of God
and, more widely, in that of a providential history of the world.”
Along these lines Borrmans speaks of Christians who “feel moved
to recognize that Muhammad was a great religious, political and
literary genius, and that particular graces were not lacking in him
for multitudes to be led to the worship of the true God.” He adds,
however, that such specific graces may have been paralleled by
“ignorances particulières” or “erreurs invincibles.” He emphasizes
what he terms the “prophetic accents” in Muhammad’s ministry:
his faith in the One God, his call to justice and to respect of the
human person, none of which should be ignored by Christians. In
conclusion he quotes the eighth-century Assyrian Patriarch Timo­
thy who, in dialogue with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi in Bagh­
dad, declared his view as an oriental Christian that “Muhammad
followed the way of the prophets” (salukuhu fi tariq al-anbiyâ’).
Borrmans qualifies this, however, in terms of Muhammad’s imitat­
ing the example of the Hebrew prophets without fully meeting
him whom they announced.23

Given the potentialities inherent in the documents of Vatican
Council II, one might wish that Borrmans had explored the issue
of Muhammad’s prophethood more deeply from a Christian angle.
That he does not, and that no other Catholic theologian scholars of
Islam have taken the matter further,24 may have contributed to­
ward what is beginning to appear as Muslim disappointment with
the effects of the council.25 We must not detract, however, from
the positive value of Borrmans’ Orientations in the sense that they
encourage Christians to engage Muslims in a dialectical relation­
ship of two peoples of Scripture—a view that Kenneth Cragg
would certainly share. It may well be asked whether Christians
can be expected to go further in a positive appreciation of the Qur’an
and Muhammad without actually becoming Muslim in the fully
confessional sense of the word. This is what Borrmans means in
reminding his reader that “dialogue invites a respect of different
definitions of ‘perfect prophethood’ and should no more seek to
constrain a Muslim to acknowledge Jesus with the Christian affir­
mations of Christian belief than to require a Christian to accept
Muhammad as prophet in the fullness of Islamic meaning attached
to his designation ‘Seal of the Prophets.’ ”

However, it might be asked whether the question “Can the
Christian go further?” could not be otherwise put. Could it not be
restated thus: “Can Christians go deeper into the biblical under-

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standing of divine revelation throughout human history, stripping away the sociopolitical overtones of medieval European thought, so as to avail themselves of new perceptions of the place of other religions, Islam included, in providential history?" If so, the issue of Muhammad in Christian perspective may take on new, less threatening proportions.

The question is implied by one of the more fascinating Orthodox Christian (Chalcedonian) theologians in the contemporary Middle East, Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mount Lebanon. In his challenging article entitled "Christianity in a Pluralistic World—The Economy of the Holy Spirit," he mounts a major critique against what he sees to be the essentially Western (Latin) understanding of salvation history. This, he criticizes, is based upon a merely linear view of history, bound up with a monolithic ecclesiology, which "while rightly rejecting the Graeco-Asian idea of eternally recurring cycles, turns its back on the idea of an eternally transcending history." According to this Western view, which sees Christ chronologically as the end of what Christians too easily call "the Old Covenant," truth falls within the monopo­l y of the church, which is identified with the Christian empires of the medieval age and more loosely with the West. This sociological view of the church, rooted in the Constantinian era of the Byzantine empire, was further emphasized as a result of the political and social expansion of Islam from the seventh-century A.D. and its challenge to the Christian world-view. Thereafter, Christians, like Muslims, divided the world into realms of faith and unbelief; each identified themselves with the former, politically as well as religiously, and vied with one another in seeking to vanquish, subject, or at least control the latter. Hence theology became enmeshed in the power politics of imperialism from which it has hardly yet been liberated.

As an alternative to this view, Khodr recalls us to the biblical sense, in the Acts of the Apostles and some of the Pauline epistles in particular, of the universality of divine revelation, which links all humankind with the eternity transcending history, as signified in the economy of Christ—the universal sign that all human beings are made participants in the creative and salvific activity of God, a sign that is eternally present in the mystery of the omnipresent Holy Spirit. "To say mystery," he stresses, "is to point to the strength that is breathing in the event. It also points to the freedom of God who in His work of providence and redemption is not tied down to any event." Hence Khodr appeals to Christians to repossess a faith in God's revelation in Christ that is seen "not merely chronologically but also and above all ontologically," as expounded by such church fathers as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.

The only example that Khodr can offer of a Christian tradition entirely independent of the stifling Western ecclesiology is that of the ancient Assyrian Church, one of whose patriarchs, Timothy, we have already mentioned. Khodr writes:

... the Nestorian [i.e., Assyrian] Church ... is almost unique in its effort to nurture the spiritual development of the religions it encountered by "improving" them from within [Buddhism in Tibet and China] while not "alienating" them. Mission in this way spiritually adopts the whole of creation. We find within the Persian Church in Mesopotamia the boldest attempt at an approach to Islam. The prophetic character of Muhammad is defined in Nestorian texts on the basis of a specific analysis of the Muhammadan message. But there is no blurring of the centrality and ontological uniqueness of Christ Jesus.33

To illustrate this point we might usefully quote the relevant passage from the dialogue between Patriarch Timothy and Caliph al-Mahdi, which was mentioned by Borrmans in his Orientations:

**AL-MAHDI**: What do you say about Muhammad?

**TIMOTHY**: Muhammad is "worthy of all praise" and "walked in the path of the prophets" because he taught the Unity of God; he taught the way of Good Works; he opposed idolatry and polytheism; he taught about God, His Word and His Spirit; he showed his zeal by fighting against idolatry with the sword; like Abraham he left his kinsfolk rather than worship idols.34

This quotation brings us full circle in this brief and necessarily superficial essay, which began with early Eastern Christian views of Islam and Muhammad, and progressed through the long centuries of turgid polemics into the more searching yet still hesitant spirit of modern Christian thought, returning finally to the early Eastern church, though with the important difference that the Assyrians, because of their persecution by Byzantium, lived outside the area of civilization rivalry between Christendom and the Islamic caliphate in the Mediterranean basin. The Assyrian Church, with a strongly biblical theology influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, and other early Syrian Christians, and much less constrained by Mediterranean power politics than their co-religionists in the West, could accept Muhammad as being unquestionably "in the way of the prophets." Their understanding of revelation was clearly inclusive of the wide and diverse religious expressions in human history, and this without prejudice to—indeed because of—their grasp of divine revelation as they perceived it in Christ.

In similar spirit this essay would suggest, by way of conclusion, that a modern Christian theological response to the Muslim question "Do you accept Muhammad as a prophet?" might be formulated upon the following considerations:

1. God's revelation of his word as the power over, within, and beyond creation is universal, and is universally performative of his purposes in achieving what the Bible terms "the kingdom of God" (which in meaning is by no means strange to the vision of the Qur'an).

2. Divine revelation is evidenced universally in nature and in human history, through communities and individuals, and in the deepest apprehensions of the religious traditions that have evolved around them.

3. The Bible, in its Hebrew and Greek parts, provides us with a centuries-long set of interpretations of divine revelation through the graphic record of God's actions in the history of Israel, exemplifying the universal pattern of divine activity in the analysis of a particular people and, in the New Testament, a particular person, Jesus, and the apostolic church.

4. The gospel in Christ, for the Christian, signifies the performative pattern of universal divine revelation of which the church is called to be the doxological sign in the world, pointing however wretchedly in its history to the ontological dynamics of the kingdom of God.

5. As God has left no people without witnesses to his divine revelation, so the church in the power of the Holy Spirit should explore the many extra-biblical testimonies positively and with imagination, searching them for complementary signs of the mystery of divine providence and critically adopting them into its own doxology.

6. Muhammad is manifestly such a sign "in the way of the prophets," the Qur'an witnessing to the universality of divine revelation, reiterating many of the fundamental perceptions of the Bible, and providing as it were a critical commentary on the more dogmatic aspects of particularly New Testament belief, and Muhammad exemplifying the application of the Qur'anic vision in society.
Along these lines may not the Christian with integrity join with the Muslim in responding to the Qur'an's invitation to "ask blessings upon him [Muhammad] and salute him with a worthy salutation" (Q. 33:56) in the spirit of Jesus' own command: "Let there be no limit to your salutation as your heavenly Father's goodness knows no bounds" (cf. Mt. 5:48, RSV and NEB). Such salutation commits us, however, to work together as Christians and Muslims, together with all other human respondents to the universal divine revelation, for the fuller realization of God's rule on earth. It is not a concession to the dogmatic postulates of a particular religious tradition, nor is it to surrender one inadequate, chronological understanding of "finality" in revelation for another. Rather, it is to participate creatively in the universal activity of God, which challenges us to relive the experience of all the prophets, particularly Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad as they wrestled with the task of "creating peace in the city": Moses as he withstood the tyranny of pharaonic Egypt in an exodus that brought the Children of Israel to the land of Canaan and eventually Jerusalem; Jesus as, entering upon the climax of his ministry, "he drew near and saw the city and wept over it, saying: 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace'" (Lk. 19:41–42); and Muhammad as he made his hijra (migration) to Medina in his search for the "umma muslina." Only thus, in the streets of our modern cities, laboratories of religious, ethnic, social, and political pluralism, can we authenticate the meaning of prophethood in the contemporary world.

Notes


2. From the earliest years of Islam we have evidence of Muslim identification of Muhammad with the Paraclete of St. John's Gospel, here rendered in Arabic by 'ahmad, which is almost synonymous with the word muhammad.


14. Watt does address himself obliquely to the theological issue in other of his writings, notably Islamic Revelation in the Modern World (Edinburgh: Univ. Press, 1969), where, in the conclusion, he suggests that all great world religions "must be based in some sense on a divine revelation," for which reason they should "advance in dialogue," learning "to accept one another as complementary, at least for the time being" (pp. 126–27).


16. Ibid., p. 75.

17. Ibid., p. 91.

18. Ibid., p. 93.


20. Ibid., p. 220.


22. Ibid., p. 223.

23. For a full analysis of these statements, see "The Muslim-Christian Dialogue of the Last Ten Years," Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin (Brussels) 74 (Sep­tember–October 1978).


25. Ibid., pp. 80–82.

26. Mention must be made of the Second Congress of Muslim-Christian Friendship held at Cordoba, Spain, March 1977, bringing mainly Cath­olic and Muslim scholars together to reappraise the prophets, and in particular Muhammad. The papers dealt substantively with Muham­mad in Muslim testimony and Christian evaluation, and to a lesser degree with Jesus. Clearly the discussions were "frank" and neither the papers nor the proceedings of the conference have been published. For a summary report, see M. Bormans, "The Muslim-Christian Dialogue of the Last Ten Years," Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin 74 (September–October 1978): p. 30–31.

27. E.g., von Denffer, "Muhammad," p. 3.


31. Ibid., p. 43.

32. Ibid., p. 42.

33. Ibid.


35. The universal aspect of living revelation is emphasized in the Genesis account of creation and the Noahic covenant (ch. 1–9), and is never being lost sight of thereafter, though the Bible focuses upon the Abra­hamic covenant through the lineage of Jacob (Israel) (Gen. 17). However, the Abrahamic covenant is richly suggestive of a biblical perspective upon Muhammad, whose lineage in the Islamic biographies is traced back through to the descendants of Ishmael. The latter, in Genesis, is placed firmly within God's covenant with Abraham, for which reason he was circumcised (17:26–27), and 17:20 records the divine assurance that "I shall bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceed­ingly; he shall be father of twelve princes and I will make him a great nation" (cf. Isa. 60:7–8).
A Paradigm Shift in the Theology of Mission:
Two Roman Catholic Perspectives

James J. Ferguson, C.S.C.

The contemporary missionary is facing serious problems and attempting to answer perplexing questions, which, fundamentally, are deeply theological. These questions are concerned with the meaning of mission, the understanding of salvation, the value of world religions, and the process of inculturation. Missionaries expect and deserve assistance from theologians in answering these questions, as well as practical advice to enable them to determine future planning. Ultimately, for Roman Catholics, these responses will be based on the theology found in the documents of Vatican Council II.

As a missionary in Uganda, Africa, from 1965 to 1979, I have participated in the debate pervading the contemporary missionary movement. I have found that questions raised by missionaries are not being answered univocally by theologians. Should missionaries leave the local church once it has been established? If they stay, what should they do? Should they be involved in sacramental ministry or in works of development and liberation? Should they attempt to establish churches among the members of the world religions? Can they find the presence of God in indigenous religiosity and customs? Should they return to their native lands to raise the consciousness of their own people about the global church and community? Is there a mission to the no-longer-Christians?

Two authors have been selected not only because they have written extensively on matters pertaining to mission theology but “mission” as the proclamation of the gospel continues on all six continents. Consistent with his understanding of Vatican II, which taught that the whole church is missionary by nature, Bühlmann uses the term “evangelization” to signify this broader, dynamic concept of mission. This does not mean that he has opted for the position of Schmidlin, as can be seen from his understanding of Christianization. Christianization, the official entry of the evangelized into the church or the society of Christians, is in God’s hands and should not be considered as the criterion for the success of evangelization. The proclamation of God’s saving activity must still continue by the church, the universal sign of salvation. Bühlmann, in his early writings, assumed Seumois’s position, equating mission and missionary activity and agreeing that the purpose of missionary activity is to implant the church. But in his later writings, he states that this activity is, for the most part, finished. The church has been implanted everywhere it is politically and culturally possible. “Missions,” in the plural, is an anachronism but “mission” as the proclamation of the gospel continues.

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To investigate the tensions involved in these questions, a study of the thought of two eminent contemporary Roman Catholic missiologists, André Seumois and Walbert Bühlmann is instructive. These two authors have been selected not only because they have reached prominent positions in their fields, but also because they are representative of two dominant currents in mission theology, one stressing a classical or metaphysical methodology, the other emphasizing the historical. These conflicting tendencies are most evident in their writings and, in the case of Bühlmann, the paradigm shift in his later writings is most evident. Both authors have written extensively on matters pertaining to mission theology. Seumois has written ten books and over 100 articles, mostly in French and Spanish. He presently teaches at the Urbanian University in Rome. Bühlmann has authored fifteen books and over 250 articles, mostly in German. His last five books have been translated into English and he has been the secretary-general for Capuchin Missions.

The Purpose of Missionary Activity

This has been the fundamental disputed question in Catholic mission theology and so a brief consideration of the parameters of the discussion would be helpful. At one extreme, if salvation is seen to be mediated only by the church, the church must be established everywhere as soon as possible. So ecclesiocentricity becomes the purpose of missionary activity. At the other extreme, if salvation is understood as an individual, personal conversion to Jesus Christ, evangelization becomes the purpose, and the institutional church is hardly necessary. The Roman Catholic position would fall somewhere between these two ecclesiocentric and Christocentric extremes.

Seumois, accepting the position of Pierre Charles that the purpose of missionary activity is to plant the church, sees, as well, the need to include the concept of conversion. He does this by defining missionary activity as a species of apostolate whose generic end is conversion. He insists that evangelization is only the means of implanting the church, as seen from Vatican II’s Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes), no. 6. Seumois consistently opposes Joseph Schmidlin and the Münster School, which, following the lead of the Protestant missiologist Gustav Warneck, speaks of Christianization as the goal of missionary activity.

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Seumois describes eschatological salvation with the Pauline categories of pleroma, recapitulation, and heavenly doxology. The pleroma refers to the heavenly assembly of the just in the glorious

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humanity of Christ. The recapitulation is the collection of religious and human values restored in Christ. The heavenly doxology is the glorification of God, the fundamental motive for creation and the history of salvation. The prerauma reflects the social dimension of eschatological salvation, the prolongation of the humanity of Christ to the humanity of the saved through their participation in glory. Likewise, there is a historical aspect of the social dimension, namely, the responsibility and the conditioning that individuals have for the salvation of each other, above all, in the koinonia. The koinonia is the Christian community, which is based on the unity of faith, the common life according to the gospel, and the fraternal exchange of all aspects of ecclesial life.

In discussing the salvific value of world religions, Seumois takes particular note of the distinction between premessianic and postmessianic economies of salvation. In the paleo-Christian systems of the premessianic economy, such as Hinduism and Budhism, salvation was based on a faith in God the divine remunerator who was vaguely known through the primitive revelation. This primitive revelation was necessary as the objective motivation for the act of salvific faith. The salvific activity of the church took place in an anticipatory manner through the religiosity of the people, manifested in their rites and ministries of cosmic priesthood and prophecy, but not through the religions themselves, which are already in the order of salvation when they direct their lives in accordance with their conscience. The relationship of mission to salvation is, for Seumois, one of causality. Salvation is never independent of the church, even in the premessianic economy of salvation. In the postmessianic economy, where mission is identified with missionary activity whose purpose is to implant the church, it must be concluded that salvation is the motivation for the mission of the church, and mission is the instrumental cause of salvation, that is, the justification and sanctification of the members of the church. The two prominent characteristics of Bühlmann's understanding of salvation are his views on universal and integral salvation. Both of these have, as their foundation, his synthetic concept of creation and salvation, nature and grace. Where Seumois might emphasize the discontinuity, Bühlmann stresses the continuity, basing his position on the theological anthropology of Karl Rahner.

First, Bühlmann holds that the concept of the universality of the divine salvific will has been too narrowly interpreted. God's will is surely effective and it is dependent on neither human effort nor explicit faith in Jesus Christ. All humans possess what Karl Rahner calls a supernatural existential that orients them toward God and enables them to make an effective response to his grace. Bühlmann believes that the social sciences have a place in theology. Demography, for example, has shown that Christians are an ever-growing minority to the world and this fact demands a theological interpretation. He holds that the world religions are part of God's plan for salvation. Since salvation is achieved by following one's conscience in cooperating with the grace of God, and conscience is formed usually in the ancestral religious traditions, these religions are foreseen and willed by God and one is saved in and by practicing them. They remain the ordinary way of salvation even after the coming of Christ, quantitatively speaking. Bühlmann argues his point theologically from creation, the common understanding of the deity, and the common expectation of salvation.

Bühlmann's affirmation of the social dimension of salvation also differs from that of Seumois. Eschatology is a future reality and eschatological salvation is entirely gratuitous. But final salvation is already present and operative in history, and he uses the Christological image of kenosis to show that involvement with the poor and unfortunate relates to the final eschatological fulfillment. He sees unjust structures as the source of danger to the social dimension of salvation. Personal conversion must be oriented to the conversion of unjust structures.

Bühlmann bases his argument for the continuity between eschatology and history, evangelization and humanization, the vertical and horizontal aspects of salvation, on anthropology, theology, and the gospel. Anthropologically, he cites the unity of the person and criticizes those who are interested only in the salvation of souls. Theologically, he speaks of nature being graced at creation and criticizes those who separate life into two spheres, the sacred and the profane. Christologically, he argues from the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who took people seriously in all their aspirations.
Thus his understanding of salvation is characterized by not only universality but a concept of integral salvation based on the continuity of the orders. He rejects the distinction between direct and indirect missionary methods and holds that evangelization is the best way of development and that development is implicit evangelization.

For Bühlmann, the mission of the church, the universal sign of salvation, is related to salvation in the order of sign or disclosure. The church as the highest concentration of God's saving activity must proclaim God's salvation in the world and to the world. Therefore the authenticity of the sign demands a church that is constantly renewing and purifying itself, a church that is fully inculturated, and a church engaged in works of development and justice as the touchstones of eschatological salvation in history.

**The Future of Mission**

Both Seumois and Bühlmann believe that the mission of the church must continue and they make suggestions accordingly. But since their concepts of both mission and salvation differ, so also will their recommendations. Identifying mission with the specific activity of implanting the church, Seumois holds that the mission of the church will be finished only when the church is fully established everywhere and all religions are fulfilled in Christianity. Therefore territorial expansion of the church is absolutely necessary and even could be said to condition the eschaton. Missionaries, those professional people with the missionary charism, and the missionary societies that train, send, and support them will continue to be needed. Care should be exercised that they do not become permanent clergy in a local church but, rather that they move on to another area after the church has been established. The primary concern of the missionary, then, should be conversion and implanting the church.

Bühlmann argues, first, that this system is truncated, since only a few professionals are involved in mission. Since mission is part of the very nature of the church, the whole People of God must participate in mission as evangelization, proclaiming God's salvific activity and making it visible through works of human promotion. Second, mission as establishing the church is, for all practical purposes, finished. The transcontinental aspects of mission continue on the basis of interecclesial koinonia. There still is a role for missionaries and mission societies within this wider meaning of mission. But new missionaries will have to immerse themselves more in the local culture, act not as masters but as servants, seek not the conversion of non-Christians but dialogue and to discover God's presence among them, and so become engaged in development and working for justice. Missionaries are called, as well, to practice a reverse mission in their own countries in order to raise the consciousness of their people regarding the global church. They should foster the mission consciousness of all local churches, young and old, to assure that they do not remain merely local churches.

Seumois and Bühlmann, in their understandings of the theology of mission, illustrate the different classical and historical methods of theology respectively. Seumois, the classicist, employs a methodology that is deductive, characterized by universality and permanence, and using Aristotelian analysis, concepts, and vocabulary. Bühlmann, the historicist, is inductive in his method, a method that is characterized by development and uncertainty. He uses a conceptual apparatus that while being biblical, is also a result of phenomenological, existential, and personalist reflection. The conclusion, therefore, would be that the theologies of Seumois and Bühlmann are conditioned by their respective methodologies. Considering them as representatives of a paradigm shift in the theology of mission, this shift in methodology would also account for the conflicting answers that theologians give to questions posed by today's missionaries.

**Notes**


3. Ibid., p. 124.


8. Ibid., p. 35.


14. Bühlmann uses this line of reasoning to argue for the salvific value of the world religions.


16. Ibid., p. 190.

17. Bühlmann, The Coming of the Third Church, p. 113.

When the Rev. Dr. Arthur T. Pierson died in 1911, the missionary movement lost a man who had edited the interdenominational Missionary Review of the World for twenty-four years, written over fifty books, and spoken at hundreds of major mission and Bible conferences in the Western hemisphere. His protégé, Robert E. Speer, memorialized Pierson as the greatest popularizer of missions of the age, a man who had revolutionized missionary literature. In 1886 at a Princeton University revival, Pierson had brought Speer to Christianity and then in 1891 suggested him for a secretaryship with the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Comrade of A. J. Gordon, J. Hudson Taylor, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and Dwight L Moody, Pierson participated in the great evangelical movements of the era. He originated and promoted the watchword of the Student Volunteer Movement, “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” The churches of which he was pastor included the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, and Bethany, the institutional church in Philadelphia.

Though a self-styled conservative Presbyterian, Pierson’s influence was astonishingly broad. Living in the generation preceding the division between ecumenical and evangelical parties within Protestantism, Pierson’s legacy extends to both camps. On one hand, he supported the established denominational mission boards with promotional tours and publicity. He insisted that missions were the work of the whole church, calling repeatedly for a world missions conference and a world federation of churches. He was a delegate to the World Conference on Missions in London, 1888, and he addressed the great Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions in New York City, 1900. On the other hand, he defined evangelization as “bringing the gospel into contact with unsaved souls,” stressing the presentation of the gospel message to individuals over building up indigenous churches, or social, or educational aspects of evangelism. He helped to create faith missions such as the Africa Inland Mission, Believing in an infallible Bible and the premillennial return of Jesus Christ, Arthur T. Pierson preached a divine mandate for the missionary enterprise.

Early Career

A native New Yorker, Pierson was born in 1837 in an apartment across from Charles Finney’s Broadway Tabernacle. His father was a confidential clerk for the famous evangelical merchant and abolitionist Arthur Tappan and named his son after his boss. A. T. Pierson never outgrew his childhood abhorrence of slavery: during his later years, he opposed southern convict-leasing and colonial exploitation of natives. He attended Hamilton College in upstate New York. Phi Beta Kappa, prize orator, and language scholar, he there perfected the Greek and Hebrew that he used daily in his study of Scripture. In New York City, Pierson became one of the first 100 members of the city Young Men’s Christian Association. A passion for YMCA work lasted his lifetime. He received the first of several special experiences of the Holy Spirit during the urban revivals of 1857. His seminary classmate, George E. Post, decided on a missionary career in 1858, and though Pierson agonized, he chose regular parish work over a foreign missionary career. Pierson was graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1860 and was shortly thereafter ordained an evangelist in the Presbyterian Church.

Marrying Sarah Benedict and taking a job with the First Congregational Church of Binghamton, New York, Pierson settled into a highly successful career as a parish minister. Renowned for his pulpit oratory, he also was a prolific writer, publishing hundreds of poems, journalistic articles, and sermons. After three years in Binghamton and six at a larger Presbyterian church in Waterford, New York, the Fort Street Presbyterian Church of Detroit, Michigan, extended him a call, which he accepted, in 1869.

Pierson remained at the Fort Street Church for fourteen years, becoming ever more prominent as a pulpit power and a leading Presbyterian. The Fort Street Church had a large, elite congregation of wealthy Presbyterians, rented pews, and a building that was one of the landmarks of Detroit. The church grew rapidly under Pierson’s leadership, and he instituted monthly prayer for missions and eventually, five separate missionary bands, one of which supported its own missionary. He became so famous for Bible Study that he led a weekly Bible Class and Teachers’ Institute for all the Sunday school teachers in Detroit. Committed to city mission work, he helped to found both the Presbyterian Alliance to help struggling churches in Detroit, and the Tappan Presbyterian Association at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Though powerful, busy, and immersed in Scripture, Pierson was unhappy with his own level of spiritual consecration. From the stately pulpit of his prominent church, he could not reach either the urban poor of Detroit or the non-Christian multitudes of the mission field. His biblical conscience left him guilt-ridden with his own comfortably worldly response to Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Several events led him to turn his back on an upper-class ministry and to fulfill his ordination vows as an evangelist and then as a mission theorist. First, in 1874, the revival team of Major D. W. Whittle and P. P. Bliss conducted a Detroit campaign for six weeks. Struck by their simple gospel style, Pierson housed the evangelists in his own home for a month. He became increasingly restless at his own ambition for literary fame, and after a year-long struggle renounced his am-

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A deep peace filled Pierson’s heart, and he permanently changed his preaching style from a literary one to an extemporaneous biblical exposition. Feeling himself on the verge of a crisis in his ministry, he decided to pray with members of his church about his desire to save souls. At a Friday evening prayer meeting, March 24, 1876, Pierson met with sixty or seventy of his parishioners, citing the promises of God to answer prayer and praying that any obstacles between the Fort Street Church and the evangelization of the masses would be removed. Unknown to them, while the congregation prayed, the costly church edifice was burning down. By the next day, the entire church was in ashes with the exception of Pierson’s Bible notes, even though the desk in which they were stored had been completely destroyed. Seeing the burning of Fort Street Presbyterian as the answer to prayer, the church hired the local opera house, where Pierson held open evangelistic services for sixty-three weeks. During this time, hundreds of people were converted under his revival preaching. When the leading men of Fort Street Church rebuilt their building and reinstated a pew rental system, Pierson felt that the church was turning its back on the unevangelized poor. Believing that the purpose of the church’s existence on earth was to evangelize in obedience to Christ’s command, he felt that God no longer wanted him at the Fort Street Church.

Pierson resigned in 1882 in order to take a church in Indianapolis, which promised to help him reach the poor unchurched of the city. wooed by John Wanamaker and dissatisfied with the Indianapolis job, in July of 1883, Pierson began a six-year pastorate at Bethany Church in Philadelphia. Bethany began as a Sunday school founded by Wanamaker, who was a businessman, philanthropist, evangelist, and the postmaster-general under President Benjamin Harrison. By 1883 it had several thousand participants, mostly working-class folk from urban Philadelphia. Wanamaker and Pierson were united in their vision of an aggressive, urban, institutional church. Bethany held classes on all subjects, conducted city evangelism, established chapels for the poor, formed temperance and mission societies, and left its door wide open all winter for the needy. Here, at last, Pierson had found “a church for the people” whose commitment to city evangelism matched his own and whose personal support enabled him to launch a second career as a spokesman for the American missionary enterprise.

Mission Theory and Career

The American missionary movement of the 1880s and ’90s must be seen in connection with an immigrant America. Arthur Pierson and many others of his generation saw the problems of urban America to be the obverse side of problems of the non-Christian world. What both the poor immigrants who crowded into American cities and the heathen of foreign lands needed was the gospel, and the obligation of the more fortunate American Christian was to save both by proclaiming Jesus Christ to all people. Only changing people’s hearts could alleviate urban social problems such as poverty and intemperance. Pierson believed Christianity to be the only base from which world problems such as slavery and the oppression of women could be attacked successfully. This belief in the intimate linkage between world problems and American social problems and the single solution to both caused Pierson as early as 1881 to call, in print, for a united Protestantism to fight on all fronts at once. Pierson was a lifetime supporter of the Evangelical Alliance, which consisted of Protestants united for evangelism and for solving social problems. He sought to apply the model of the Evangelical Alliance to foreign missions. In 1885 at a Northfield Bible conference sponsored by evangelist Dwight L. Moody, Pierson called for an ecumenical council of evangelical churches to plan a worldwide missionary campaign. The conference ratified the call, signed by Pierson, Moody, A. J. Gordon, George Pentecost, William Ashmore, J. E. K. Studd, and others.

By 1885 Pierson’s reputation as an advocate of the worldwide mission of the church was established. Inspired by his pastor’s repeated sermons and articles on the missionary obligation of all Christians, John Wanamaker offered him $1,000 to lead a Christian colony to a foreign mission field. With seven volunteers, Pierson set forth a proposal for a Christian industrial colony, before the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in a paper called “The Problem of Missions.” He felt that a Christian colony would provide an example of Christian life to non-Christians, as well as teach them industrial trades and help them to be self-sufficient. The Presbytery reached no conclusive action on Pierson’s proposal, and the colony was never launched.

Although he never went out as a foreign missionary, it was not because Pierson was unwilling to go. Repeatedly, God seemed to call him to promote missions at home and to struggle with “home base” issues. He stated in the “Problem of Missions” in 1885; “For twenty years, by tongue and pen, I have sought to spread knowledge of facts, and fan the fires of intelligent zeal; my own heart was meanwhile been strangely drawn out to the work, and I have bent all my energies to the solution of the question, how to secure a large increase of money, and especially of the working force in the foreign field.”

In 1886 Pierson published the major promotional book of the missionary era. The Crisis of Missions; or, The Voice Out of the Cloud, a masterful balance of crisp reasoning and emotional appeal, captured the attention of Christians everywhere and directed it to the foreign-mission fields. It begins by asking the question, Why missions now? Pierson argues that God’s plans for the evangelization of the world are being confirmed by history, and he relentlessly marches through the mission history of the world to show that doors to missions have been opening everywhere—in Japan, China, India, Africa, and South America. “Current events are God’s own commentary on his Word,” he writes. Then Pierson presents as immediate the crisis of missions, the turning point of history, the awesome combination of opportunity and responsibility for world evangelization:

Never, since Christ committed a world’s evangelization to His servants, have such open doors of opportunity, such providential removal of barriers and subsidence of obstacles, such general preparation for the universal and immediate dissemination of the gospel, and such triumphs of grace in the work of missions, supplied such inspiration to angelic zeal and seraphic devotion; but it may well be doubted whether there has ever been greater risk of losing the opportunity. We are in peril of practical apostasy, with respect to this stewardship of the gospel, this obligation to a lost world.

To Pierson, missions reveal God’s providence and act in history, and human duty to God demands cooperation with his plans.

In the last part of the book, Pierson outlines the reasons for the crisis of missions: the apathy of the church and “spiritual Darwinism,” which sees Christianity as only a stage in the evolution of religion. He exhorts Christians to support missions before the time God has allotted for them has run out. Pierson suggests things that Christians should do to expedite contact with non-Christians. Individual churches should support individual missionaries, shorter and more practical training (i.e., Bible schools) should be provided for prospective missionaries, and a world council for missions should meet regularly to organize the missionary enterprise.
Pierson’s premillennialism was attacked by postmillennialists as pessimistic and as cutting the nerve of missions. But Pierson defended the doctrine as being the basis of missions in the early church and as the basis of his and Gordon’s missionary interest. He expounded his premillenarian mission theory in an essay “Our Lord’s Second Coming as a Motive to World-Wide Evangelism,” delivered in 1886. The imminence of the Lord’s coming encourages activity and discourages idleness or time-consuming doctrinal controversy. The hope of the Lord’s coming provides the reward of salvation for missionary activity; it makes disciples unselfish and opposed to material returns gained from missionary activity. Christians are responsible for contact with non-Christians, but only God is responsible for actual conversions; therefore, discouragement over small results is illogical. “Thus, while premillennialism is charged with cutting the nerve and sinew of Foreign Missions, it in fact supplies their perpetual incentive and inspiration in teaching us that duty is ours; results, God’s.”

Critics argued that schools, churches, and other marks of social progress are superficial if the imminence of Jesus’ return be taken literally. Pierson considered this to be a travesty of his position. After all, Jesus said to occupy the world until he came. Jesus meant for Christians to take their social responsibilities seriously. In an editorial in the Missionary Review of November 1892, Pierson argued against a negative reading of his premillennialism.

Dr. Gordon and myself firmly believe that “preaching the Gospel as a witness among all nations” means setting up churches, schools, a sanctified press, medical missions, and, in fact, all the institutions which are the fruit of Christianity and constitute part of its witness; but that our Lord’s purpose and plan are that we should not wait in any one field for the full results of our sowing to appear in a thoroughly converted community before we press on to regions beyond. Missions begin in evangelization, but have everything to do with Christian education, and the printing press, and the organization of churches, and the training of a native pastor.

Pierson’s literary output was huge. The most frequent forum for his opinions were the editorial and articles each month in The Missionary Review of the World. He began to edit the journal in 1887 and continued until his death. A monthly interdenominational missions journal, The Missionary Review contained original articles, abstracts of foreign articles, statistics, and news from every mission field in the world. A body of editors, including the Methodist president of the International Missionary Union, J. T. Gracey, the English Baptist F. B. Meyer, and the American Baptist A. J. Gordon, sifted through over 500 articles and letters each month to compile material for the journal. The Missionary Review published articles on missions and politics, mission anthropology, mission history, mission biography, and analysis of a different mission field every month. It contained both popular and technical articles and was the major organ of ecumenical church events in the late nineteenth century.

Pierson’s other missionary writings include The Miracles of Missions (1891–1901), a series on missionary history; The Divine Enterprise of Missions, the Graves lectures for 1891; and Forward Movements of the Last Half Century (1900), a unique chronicling of various Christian spiritual and social movements. Missionary biography was one of his talents, and his best biography was of his friend Müller, George Müller of Bristol (1899), the rescuer of English orphans.

In 1888, Pierson attended the World’s Conference for Foreign Missions in London as a delegate-at-large. His speaking ability so
In the 1890s A. T. Pierson was at the height of his career as a mission advocate and conference speaker in both the United States and Great Britain. In late 1891 the ailing Charles Haddon Spurgeon of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London asked Pierson to take his pulpit while he left for a rest cure. Pierson agreed and preached so well that revival occurred at the tabernacle, despite the absence of the famous and beloved pastor. When Spurgeon died in 1892, Pierson preached his funeral sermon and was left as minister of one of the then largest Baptist churches in the world. Not being a Baptist, Pierson could not and would not continue indefinitely as the preacher, even though a majority of the congregation favored offering him the job. From England Pierson had to write several letters to his presbytery denying rumors that he had become a Baptist. Public speculation and controversy over Pierson’s future at the Metropolitan Tabernacle embarrassed him; and though he refused to take a permanent job as preacher, jealous supporters of other candidates for the position attacked him in the public press.

Pierson continued his rounds of lecturing and writing, preaching in long stretches at the tabernacle. But the strain of public controversy, constant travel, and late middle age began to wear him down. Economic recession, retrenchment of foreign missions, and world events such as the massacre of Armenians and advancements in weaponry depressed him. Doctrines of universalism and optimistic views of human nature, the theological liberalism of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, and higher criticism all seemed to deny the need for Christianity. The crudest blow of the decade occurred when his best friend and co-worker, the Rev. A. J. Gordon, died on February 2, 1895. That night Pierson wrote in his diary, “Gordon died today at midnight and the change it makes in my life is unutterable. Of all men on this side he was dearest to me, my counsellor in everything—no difference of opinion in anything important and perfect sympathy of heart and action.”

After Gordon’s death, Pierson assumed the presidency of Gordon’s Missionary Training School, a position he held until 1901. The Gordon Training School, a Bible school like that of Dwight Moody, later became Gordon College of Wenham, Massachusetts.

In the year before Gordon’s death, Pierson’s many discussions with the American Baptists had convinced him of the scriptural validity of believer’s baptism. He did not want to leave the Presbyterian Church, or to become a Baptist and thereby disfellowship all who adhered to infant baptism. But exactly one year after Gordon’s death, while in England on a lecture tour, Pierson felt that he had postponed obedience to God’s commands and was immersed in a private ceremony. The public outcry nearly wrecked his lecture tour, for many thought that he was plotting to obtain the permanent position at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Despite Pierson’s pleas that he wanted to remain a Presbyterian and that he deplored the exclusivist policies of the Baptists, the Presbytery of Philadelphia removed him from the Presbyterian Church. Pierson never joined another denomination, and he continued to worship at a Presbyterian church for the rest of his life.

Throughout the difficult years of the 1890s, Pierson held firmly to an infallible Bible. He engaged in daily Bible study, and he often presented the results of his study at conferences, in articles, and in the fourteen books he wrote specifically on Bible study. In the final ten years of his life, Pierson became as famous in Bible study as he was in missions. He gave three major courses of Bible lectures at Exeter Hall in London under the sponsorship of the YMCA. He taught at the Moody Bible Institute, and his final work of biblical scholarship was as an original editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909. Pierson’s dispensational premillennialism was the result of his many years of Bible study, his belief that the Bible was an internally coherent and con-

“Though wary of despotism, which could occur in faith missions dependent upon one person rather than a mission board, Pierson supported reputable faith missions because of their efficiency and spirituality.”
tions were not missionary societies per se, they supported mission­
mission service. Though the interdenominational Keswick conven­
live a holy life in God's service. The holiness teaching of the Kes­
wick conventions combined belief in the plenary inspiration of the
Bible with deep faith in the activity of the Holy Spirit. Pierson
Bible readings at Keswick conferences in Great Britain. The Kes­
spiritual life dominated Pierson's spirituality. Always a man with
consistent system of theology, and that higher criticism undermined
validity of the Word of God.

Beginning in 1897, Keswick conferences on the deepening of
spiritual life dominated Pierson's spirituality. Always a man with
tremendous faith in prayer, Pierson began to attend and to lead
Bible and Keswick work were in addition to, not in place of,
missionary activity. He addressed the Ecumenical Mis¬
missionary Conference in New York in 1900. He continued to edit and
to write for The Missionary Review, despite hands crippled with ar¬
thritis. He provided solid support from the pages of The Missionary
Review for the young ecumenical movement—the Edinburgh Con¬
ference of 1910, its continuation committee chaired by John Mott,
and the Laymen’s Missionary Movement. In 1910 Pierson celebrat¬
ed the jubilee of his ordination to the ministry and his golden
wedding anniversary. Much to his happiness, the 1910 General
Assembly of the Presbyterian Church saluted him in gratitude for
the service he had given to the world extension of God's kingdom. At
the end of the year he attempted to fulfill a lifelong dream by
touring various foreign mission fields. Though in ill health, his de¬
sire to inspect personally the missions he loved was so great that
his family permitted him to go to Japan, carrying a set of fifty
questions for a poll of missionaries. While visiting his daughter, a
missionary in Japan, he became too ill to continue, and he returned
to the United States. Arthur T. Pierson died in his Brooklyn home
on June 3, 1911, at the age of seventy four.

Notes

1. Robert E. Speer, “As a Missionary Advocate,” The Missionary Review of
   the World, August 1911, p. 580.
   World, November 1889, p. 830.
3. For Pierson’s account of these occurrences, see his pamphlet “The Pillar
   of Fire: To the Brethren in the Ministry of Christ” (n.p., March 1880).
4. Arthur T. Pierson, “Estrangement of the Masses from the Church,” in
   Problems of American Civilization; Their Practical Solution the Pressing Christian
5. Pierson, “The Problem of Missions and Its Solution” (n.p., June 1,
   1885), p. 9.
6. Pierson, The Crisis of Missions; or, The Voice Out of the Cloud (New York:
7. Ibid., p. 273.
8. C. Howard Hopkins, John R. Mott (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerd¬
9. Arthur T. Pierson, “Our Lord’s Second Coming as a Motive to World-
   Wide Evangelism” (n.p., John Wanamaker, 1886).
    World, November 1892, p. 864.
11. Pierson, quoted in Delavan L. Pierson, Arthur T. Pierson (New York:
12. See Denton Lotz, “‘The Evangelization of the World in This Genera-
    tion’: The Resurgence of a Missionary Idea among the Conservative

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Bros., 1886.

The Legacy

The most inspiring part of Arthur T. Pierson’s legacy was the fer¬
vent supporters he made for foreign missions. John R. Mott,
ecumenical statesman; Robert Speer, secretary of the Presbyterian
Board; Samuel Zwemer, missionary to Arabia; and Henry Frost,
American secretary of the China Inland Mission, traced their initial “conversion” to
foreign missions all or in part to the words of Pierson. Pierson’s correspondence with missionaries such as Henry
Jessup of Lebanon and J. Hudson Taylor of China gave them much encouragement. In The Missionary Review, Pierson published their ideas and supported their plans. The years that Pierson spent in
Great Britain stirred up great enthusiasm for foreign missions, and
older missionaries still recall reading his books in their youth. Piern­
son’s contributions to mission literature and statistics were a great
help to local pastors as they sought to interest their congregations in
foreign missions. His legacy was strikingly demonstrated in that
all seven of his children became either home or foreign missionary¬
aries for all or part of their lives.

Many of Pierson’s ideas have endured, though some have vanished
as the outworn prejudices of an earlier era. For instance, Pierson’s anti-Catholicism and his parochial view of the “degraded
heathen and their needs” have largely disappeared. His vision of a
worldwide Protestantism united for missions and social services
still exists. His premillennial urgency and the slogan “the evangelis-
ization of the world in this generation” still survive in conservative
mission circles.12 His goal of evangelizing unreached peoples is
that of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and of the United States
Center for World Mission, directed by Ralph Winter. Schools such as
Gordon-Conwell Seminary and the Moody Bible Institute reflect Pierson’s legacy, as does the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellow­
ship.

Pierson’s reputation today rests partly on The Missionary Review of the World and partly on the fact that he was a man of prayer.
Ultimately, he wanted to resolve doctrinal differences in prayer,
and he prayed before every speech and for all evangelical enter-
prises. He went where he believed God wanted him to go, even at
the risk of public scandal, unpopularity, or personal loss. By his
devotional works Pierson is now remembered, and books such as
are still in print.

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The Legaev of Karl Hartenstein


"Free Churches." N.p., n.d.


Writings about Arthur T. Pierson


"Our Lord's Second Coming as a Motive to World-Wide Evangelism: An Essay delivered before the Prophetic Conference, Chicago, November 1886." N.p.: John Wanamaker, n.d.


The Legacy of Karl Hartenstein

Gerold Schwarz

Biographical Notes

Lord God, who has so conspicuously blessed my life, let me, as in the past five years, rise to ever greater knowledge and grant me Thy strength to become a good theologian."

The young man about to enter university who wrote this prayer in his diary was Karl Hartenstein, the son of a businessman, born in Bad Cannstatt near Stuttgart on January 25, 1894. To the surprise of his parents, he began to study theology in 1913. He did not complete his studies at the University of Tübingen, however, until 1921, having spent the years from 1914 until 1918 in military service at the western front. After lecturing at the Tübingen Stift he assumed a pastorate. The course of his life would lead from the church into missions and from missions back into the church. Thus, in a special way, he realized in his life and thinking the unity of church and missions. In 1923 he married Margarete Umfried; the marriage was blessed with three sons.

In 1926 the Basel Mission appointed the Swabian theologian, then only thirty-two years old, as its director. His new position in missions was for Hartenstein not a change in vocation but, rather, a God-given opportunity to fulfill his missionary calling on an ecumenical scale. In 1928–29, Hartenstein was in India and China, in 1931 in Africa, and in 1938–39 again in India. Besides his theological missionary work, he also dealt with a multitude of practical tasks during these visits to the field, including tasks of an organizational and business nature. Through many discussions on the mission field he promoted the growth toward independence of the young churches, especially in terms of their apostolic-missionary responsibility. Hartenstein's participation, especially on the level of theological deliberation, in the world missionary conferences in Tambaram near Madras, India (1938), in Whitby, Canada (1947), and in Willingen, Germany (1952) contributed materially to the ecumenical shaping and recognition of German missions. Walter Freytag wrote: "At each of these conferences he was part of the small group that decisively influenced the course and results of the conference, either as the editorial committee that influenced the formulation of especially controversial documents (e.g., in Madras, the statement concerning the Message in relation to the religions and in Willingen, the effort concerning theological reflection), or, in Whitby, as the steering committee."1

When World War II broke out, Hartenstein resigned his position in Basel, lest as a German he jeopardize the work in the mission fields. The board of the Basel Mission sent him as plenipotentiary to Stuttgart to assume the leadership of the Basel Mission Church in Germany.

In 1941 he was appointed prelate of the Landeskirche of Württemberg in Stuttgart. From 1949 onward, Karl Hartenstein was a member of the Assembly of the Evangelical Church in Germany, which represented all evangelical Christians in Germany. In addition, a series of important diaconal tasks accrued to him.

With the exception of his commentary on Revelation, the results of his mental labor, which spanned approximately three decades, are no longer in print. A large portion of his theological legacy lies unpublished in countless files in Basel and Stuttgart. Both the turbulence of the political events in the Third Reich, which he experienced at first hand, burdened by heavy responsibility in an exposed position on the cutting edge of the issue of church and state, and his early death on October 1, 1952, prevented him from presenting his thinking in a unified, systematic theological form. Furthermore, the true locus and wellspring of his theology was not so much the lec­

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ology led to proclamation in the full apostolic breadth of missionary thought and action. Many people still remember the sermons and meditations he gave in Stuttgart, which, born from the passion of faith, were able to provide true consolation and direction in the chaotic events of the war and the years after the war.

The “Yes” to Karl Barth: The Significance of Karl Barth’s Revelation Theology for Missions

An attempt to define Hartenstein’s theological position more precisely must first distinguish several antecedent lines in the history of theology of church and missions. Throughout his life, Hartenstein’s theological thinking was deeply rooted in the native soil of Swabian Pietism. He continually struggled to make the theological legacy of Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-82), Michael Hahn (1758-1819), and many others fruitful in the establishing of a basis and objective of missions.

In Tübingen he studied intensively under Adolf Schlatter and Karl Heim; especially with Heim he established a lifelong and close personal friendship, which enriched his missiological thinking with ever new and crucial stimuli. When in 1919 Karl Barth sounded the signal for attack against the bastion of idealistic-neo-Protestant religion with his Commentary on Romans, Karl Hartenstein joined the front ranks. He saw Barth’s crisis theology as a purifying fire that would subdue the liberal-humanistic principles, and passionately defended Barth’s dialectical theses while lecturing at the Tübingen Stift. His two expositions of 1926, on Ecclesiastes and Amos, unmistakably show the marks of this “dialectical” Sturm-und-Drang period.

Hartenstein follows the Barthian critique in a three-pronged attack: against the historicism in the interpretation of the Scriptures, against the moral-religious optimism in ethics, and against religion as the presumptuous human effort at self-redemption.

By studying Kierkegaard on his own, he deepened the dialectical-theological principle of an infinite, qualitative distance between God and man, reason and faith, heaven and earth, time and eternity. After assuming his position as director in Basel in 1926, his occupation with dialectical theology acquired a truly mission ary dimension. His publication “What Does Karl Barth’s Theology Have to Say to Missions?” (1928) initiated the dialogue between missions and dialectical theology, and thereby pointed German missiology as a whole in a new direction. His doctoral dissertation for the theological faculty at Tübingen, “Missions as a Theological Problem” (1933), also documents this effort to link missions and dialectical theology and shows how much Hartenstein saw himself as the advocate of dialectical theology who defended its essential tenets in the realm of missions. This encounter with dialectical theology resulted in a new and purifying awakening for missions.

The concept of missio Dei, which gained currency after Willingen (1952), was already coined by Hartenstein in 1934. Its locus in the history of theology is the dialectical theology of Karl Barth with its radical emphasis on the actio Dei, which precedes all human action and severs missions from any contemporary secular rationale by characterizing missions as participation in the redemptive work of God. “Thus, missions are fundamentally removed from the sphere of purely human activity, characterized and understood as God’s will and act, an inalienable indication of God’s revelation.” The mission of the church finds the ground of its existence and its limits in God’s mission. The proclamation of the sovereignty of God and the emphasis on his exclusive initiative in his liberating and saving dealings with this world, independent of any subjective experience or effort, places church and missions always anew under the crisis of God’s Word. This stress on the crisis of church and missions later became considerably more pronounced in Hartenstein’s thinking in the context of the salvation-historical basis of missions. The dialectical-theological starting point retains permanent significance for Hartenstein through the fall of the “walls of Jericho” in the form of the rapprochement between God and world, religion and culture in secularized cultural Protestant liberalism. Karl Barth has liberated the concept of God from the ghetto of the human understanding of self and reality, and has allowed God to appear once again as the confronting Judge and Savior who confronts of his own accord.

The “No” to Karl Barth: Further Development beyond Barth to an Independent Theological Approach

As early as 1933 Hartenstein veered away more sharply from Barth, back toward the heritage of his native church and above all toward the eschatological thinking of the Pietism of Württemberg. The “unfinished questions” of dialectical theology increasingly troubled him. Hartenstein felt that in the long run the sharply antithetical position of the early Barth toward anthropocentric thinking was too barren and one-dimensional. The rigid form of the “either-or” of Barthian logic insupportably curtailed the “historical and experiential [geschichtliche und seelische] reality” of faith so frequently disparaged by Barth. Barth’s ethical nihilism, which largely abandoned a material ethic, became a problem in the day-to-day reality of the mission field, where the question “What must we do?” in each new situation pressed for an answer. Also, Hartenstein’s eschatological perspective with its emphasis on the future aspects of salvation history came to stand in increasingly sharp contrast to the nonhistorical and transhistorical eschatology of Barth’s Commentary on Romans.

Hartenstein’s most important interlocutors now became Karl Heim and Emil Brunner, whose theology showed the same missionary inclination. Emil Brunner also separated himself during this time from the ranks of early dialectical theology. It was necessary for Hartenstein to develop beyond Barth if the salvation-historical elements of his Swabian heritage were to bear fruit.

It was Oscar Cullmann who enabled Hartenstein to develop his salvation-historical position in an exegetically responsible manner. In turning to biblical theology and to the prophetic word, he attempted to renew the tradition of salvation-historical thought that stretches from Irenaeus via Bengel to the salvation-historical theologians of the nineteenth century and to make this tradition missiologically operative. Hartenstein essentially provided the impetus for a basis of missions from a salvation-historical eschatological perspective with “a focus on the End” (im Blick auf das Ende), which had a deep impact on an entire era in German missiology and introduced an almost Copernican revolution in the traditional, “organic people’s” (volkorganisch) approach systematized by Gustav Warnecke. In contrast to the more noneschatological, Lutheran-romantic theology of missions of Warneck, Hartenstein’s strictly
biblicist and pietistic-eschatological basis of missions marked a significant new approach. His exegetical works “The Prophet Daniel” (1936) and “The Returning Lord” (1940), as well as numerous studies and sermons on apocalyptic New Testament texts, witness to his evergrowing occupation with the relationship between missions and eschatology during the last fifteen years of his life.

Hartenstein incessantly reminded the church of its prophetic word and complained in view of Matthew 25:6 that too little of the “cry at midnight” could be heard in the church. He sought to understand the world and history from a universal salvation-historical and cosmic view of the Christian faith. The doctrines of the last things were for Hartenstein not merely a final chapter of dogmatics, a no-man’s-land where generally fanatics and ideologists of all persuasions settle, but the indisputable and peculiar territory of the church, which the church must claim and defend against the manifold forms of “degenerate eschatology.”

The Salvation-Historical View of a Basis of Missions with “a Focus on the End”

Like Bengel, Hartenstein was convinced of the need for the cognitio oeconomiae divinae universalis (cognition of the all-inclusive plan of salvation of God) and drew from it the conclusion that the interpretation of the book of Revelation should enjoy the same rights as that of the Epistle to the Romans, or, stated differently, that Pauline theology should again be understood more in its salvation-historical context.

The central perspective that governs life and doctrine was for Hartenstein the returning Lord. Ever since World War I, his wrist-watch was always fifteen minutes fast, a symbol of the fact that his whole thinking was motivated and dominated by the dynamics of the hope of the future of the returning Christ and thus geared toward tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. He concludes a sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:15 by looking at the certainty that undergirds our existence, the return of Christ: “This certainty is the stongest consolation in the darkest nights, but it is also the highest responsibility for each day, because on ‘today’ rests the weight of the eternal decision for which we must prepare ourselves ever again anew. . . . And to be prepared for that hour when our Lord comes is worth the sacrifice and suffering of an arduous Christian life. Yes, come Lord Jesus. Amen.”

The return of Christ also gives missions their ultimate basis and urgency. Missions take place within the salvation-historical ordainate of the resurrection and return of Jesus Christ. In the framework of these ordainates the nature, course, and goal of missions are clearly defined:

The central salvation-historical meaning of the interim period between the Ascension and the return of the Lord lies in missions. As Gospel witness, missions are the continuation in the present of the line of salvation that leads toward the Parousia. Missions are the Lord’s tool, in and through which He carries out His plan of salvation. The missionary task requires one’s whole life, and even martyrdom. Is it perhaps the greatest weakness of the church and of missions that they no longer see themselves in this salvation-historical context as being the Lord’s tool for the execution of His plan of salvation? . . . But this is certain: the moment the church again recognizes these salvation-historical correlations, she will wake up to an entirely new, joyful attitude toward missions.

Hartenstein’s establishing the basis of missions by means of placing missions in their proper position in the historical theological context of the resurrection and return of Jesus Christ can, on the one hand, be traced to his intensive study of Bengel’s writings through which the fundamental recognition of the hope of the kingdom was revived in Germany. On the other hand, Hartenstein adopted Karl Heim’s basic contrast between the reconciliation of the world (the solution to the problem of guilt) and the consummation of the world (the solution to the problem of authority).

The temporal and salvation-historical break between redemption and consummation creates an interim period, “in which the anti-God power has been deprived of its right, but not yet of its control.” This eschatological interim, or pause, as Karl Heim could also say, is the milieu of the church of Jesus. The Great Commission is during this interim consequently the lifework and raison d’être of the church. The church exists “between the times.” It lives in the “already now” of the accomplished redemption and orients itself in all its manifestations toward the “not yet” of the coming consummation. “The cross and the Kingdom are the two acts of God between which the Lord ultimately wants nothing else and expects nothing else from His church than the obedient service of His servants, their unconditional faithfulness in calling and loving until the End.”

Hartenstein’s basis of missions with “a focus on the End” was materially supported by Oscar Cullmann’s New Testament study, Christ and Time, in which the temporal dualism, the tension between the “already fulfilled” and the “not yet consummated,” is seen as the real key to the understanding of the entire New Testament.

“Missions with a focus on the End” also means always missions and church under God’s judgment. The ultimate goal of missions is not the church but the kingdom of God. The church is not the final purpose of God’s dealings. “Missions must realize that the crucial element in God’s plan of salvation is not the church but

“The central perspective that governs life and doctrine was for Hartenstein the returning Lord.”

the kingdom, not an institution but the witness of the believing church, not the formation of an independent, indigenous or ecumenical church, not the temple, but the unassuming and humble tabernacle, which Israel carries through the wilderness as the sign of and witness to God’s presence in the world.”

Hartenstein’s eschatological, salvation-historical basis of missions averts in principle any church-centered motivation for missions. The empirical-sociological form of the church, all that is institutional and legitimately organized in the church, is temporary, “a provisional, transitory entity, that derives its meaning and legitimacy only from the consummation.”

The only function of the church is the Johannine one of preparing the way for the returning Lord through its witness vis-à-vis all principalities and powers. The church loses its life and is submerged in the kingdom of God.

Church and missions, on their journey from the first to the second coming, go through three stages of salvation-historical development: (1) the powerlessness of the early church in its struggle with the powers of this world; (2) the merger of state and church under Constantine: the church in league with the ways and powers of this world; (3) the dissolution of this synthesis, which began with the Reformation.

Under the influence of Carl August Auverlen (1824–64), Har-
Hartenstein sought to provide an exegetical basis for this historical division of the interim by means of a historico-theological interpretation of the apocalyptic symbols of Revelation 13: to the extent that the church becomes politically stronger, the diabolical vitality of the world powers is weakened. According to Revelation 13:3, 12, 14, the beast, apparently in its seventh and final development, receives a fatal wound, which changes the character of the beast. This wound symbolizes the decisive historical caesura and the change of the pagan nations into Christian nations, although their Christianity is not real but merely façade and veneer. The Christian centuries are characterized by, on the one hand, a secularized Christianity and, on the other hand, a Christianized world. Correspondingly, the healing of the wound symbolizes that the Christian state becomes again an anti-Christian power, which tries to expel the church as an alien element. In the apocalyptically viewed present, Hartenstein sees, in the dissociation of the church from state and nation, the church in retreat, a retreat that is at the same time a return to the situation of the early church. The church becomes again a "free church" by its exclusive commitment to its Lord, independent and precisely for that reason excluded and persecuted by the powers of this world.

The interim between the "times" of God is according to 1 Peter 1:5 "the last time," and according to 1 Peter 1:17 the time of "living as strangers" (niv). The church is in the process of regaining its identity, its essence, and of becoming a minority church, a sojourning church, a witnessing church, a church under the cross. Thus comes about, in Hartenstein's perspective, the "miracle of the church" as the body of Christ among the nations.

From this view of the salvation-historical interim also follows the definition of the church's commission, which, according to Hartenstein, has the triadic structure missio—unico—passio. The first aspect of this commission, missio, has God as its subject, so that all missionary activity of the church is grounded in God's sending. But the missio Dei is also always a countermovement to the missionary endeavor of the church: the Spirit of God does not only blow powerfully into the sails of the ship that calls itself "church"—he can also be a head wind that blows the ship off a self-chosen course. Nor are missions a monopoly of missionary societies: missions do not belong in the realm of human governance and competence at all. God alone sustains missions, rather than any missionary or ecclesiastical institution. All believers, the whole church, are sent into the world and the missionary societies serve only vicariously.

Over all missions is written the "must" of the eschatological determinism of Mark 13:10, according to which missions are the last task of the church in the world and a sign of the coming End. Missions are the church in motion, while a church without missions is a church of rigid formalization. The "must" of the proclamation of the gospel before the End, the categorical imperative of missions, is grounded in the will of God itself. Thus, while the focus on the final consummation is the decisive motive of missionary activity, the End itself is God's concern.

Mark 13:10 should set us free from an unbiblical, activist, strained optimism in the evaluation of missionary results. Hartenstein wrote:

As the nation of Israel in Abraham was called and chosen out of the nations in order to intercede vicariously for the nations before God, so also has the church been called out and chosen from among the nations of the end time to intercede vicariously before God on their behalf as a believing remnant, to believe and hope on behalf of the world, to proclaim God's salvation to the world—until the returning Lord establishes his rule on a renewed earth in which all redeemed humanity and the whole renewed creation make manifest the final purpose of God's dealings.

The growth of the church toward its Head is by no means unconditional or always a quantitative expansion, and the victory of Christianity is not the result of an immanent development, but the result of the sovereign act of God, who comes to judge and who resolves the history of the world by lifting it up into its conclusion.

The second aspect is the unio, the unity of the church of Jesus among all nations. The interim period is also the time of the gathering of the church. This unio, viewed in the context of salvation history, is the reason why Hartenstein almost enthusiastically welcomed the founding of the World Council of Churches as a sign of the end-time. The end-time finds its climax in the third aspect, the passio (suffering), which ultimately will intensify into persecution.

These then are the essential features of Hartenstein's view of salvation history, which is not limited to the time from Christ's birth until A.D. 33, but comprises the "mighty event of God from Creation through Redemption to consummation."

### The Missionary Encounter with the Religions

Since the early 1930s Hartenstein called more strongly for an "evangelical science of religion" as an inalienable task of the theology of missions. By an evangelical science of religion he means the attempt "to determine properly the relationship between the gospel and, on the one hand, Christianity, and on the other hand the non-Christian religions." With this call for the theological determination of the interrelationship between the three crucial concepts: gospel, church (Christendom), and non-Christian religions, Hartenstein turns against a relativistic and speculative study of comparative religions, which reduces and levels religion's claim to revelation on the basis of a "theologically and scientifically questionable concept of the nature of religion and of Christianity." All religions, when taken seriously in terms of their true spirit [Seele] and outward form, are distorted and misrepresented when stretched on the Procrustean bed of a general notion of religion.

In the wake of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Hendrik Kraemer, Hartenstein strove for a biblical-theological interpretation of the religions from the standpoint of the gospel and used for this theological departure the formula "a critique of all religions from the standpoint of the gospel." A Christian theology of the religions can be determined only by "the application of the doctrine of justification by faith alone to the world of the religions. The sweeping concept of pagandom outside Christ can become clear again only if revelation is taken as the starting point, and only through revelation can we receive definite criteria for pagandom from Christ's perspective. An 'evangelical science of the religions' can therefore only be a concrete critique of all religions with Christ as its principle."

Theology must grasp anew the essence of pagandom "in all its various forms standing under the drastic judgment on the deification of the creature and the humanization of God." In the perspective of biblical realism, the dreadfulness and the demonic aspect of the religions must be perceived more distinctly; at the same time, the signs and evidences that witness, in the perspective of revelation, to the active patience of God at work among the religions must also be perceived more clearly.

Yet in this rebellion and apostasy the nations prove that they cannot get away from God and the entire world of the religions, the "idolatry of the nations" (Brunner), becomes a testimony to a relationship with God, even if this is a wrong relationship. In all falsehood they ask for truth, in their flight they flee toward the "unknown God." This twofold statement makes it clear that the mystery of the revelation of Christ contains both the end of and the judgment on all...
religions and the offer of grace to the world of the religions, which signifies its end as much as it signifies the beginning of the church, the rule of the true God, pointing to the fulfillment in the coming kingdom of God.\(^7\)

In terms of Hendrik Kraemer’s polar concepts “continuity/discontinuity,” Hartenstein’s position on the question of the encounter with the religions falls on the side of discontinuity; the line of discontinuity can be traced from Tertullian via the Reformers Luther and Calvin to Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. Hartenstein sees the entire Reformation movement as a critique of all religions from the standpoint of the gospel. Through the intensive concentration on the word of the Bible alone, the Reformation, for the first time in the history of the Christian church, led to a theology of religion and the religions that was sharply distinct from the Christian philosophy of religion of the medieval Scholastics. For Hartenstein, the reformational contrast between religio vera (the theocentric form of religion of grace and salvation) and religio falsa (the anthropocentric form of religion of work-righteousness and self-redemption) remains fundamental to a theological interpretation of the religions.

With Luther, Hartenstein distinguishes between “work-religion,” the “attempt of man to reach up and grasp the eternal, to understand it, to earn it, to invent it,” and “arbitrary religion,” the attempt to “consciously detach that which is human from the eternal, to take human creations such as culture, science, and technology as ultimate and thus to deify them.”\(^{18}\)

From this Reformation position, Hartenstein understands paganism as “ill-gotten continuity between God and man, the sacrilege of the human being who believes himself to be standing before God and to be able to live in the certainty that somewhere and somehow the ultimate unity between God and man is given.”\(^{19}\) This “ill-gotten continuity” is the deepest expression of the human seeking after and longing for God, while the flight from and rebellion against God, on the other hand, express themselves in the “imagined discontinuity,” the illusion of secularism that it is possible to detach human beings and their world from God.

In the exclusively theological assessment of religion and the religions on the part of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, Hartenstein saw the Reformation position realized again for the first time in the history of theology. Barth’s strict distinction between religion and revelation, between the futile human activity aimed at self-liberation from below and the actio Dei, the salvation of the world from above, had erected a dam against the relativization of Christianity in the current of historicism, against any religious a priori, against religious metaphysics and the mere interiority of acculturated Protestant religiosity.

Hartenstein shares Barth’s basic theological concern to inquire after the meaning of religion and the religions in the light of the Christian revelation. Christ as the “crisis of all religion” from the perspective of the justification of the sinner, and revelation as the “dissolution of religion” form the central reference point in the theology of Barth, Brunner, and Hartenstein. The theological fork in the road where Hartenstein, Brunner, and Barth would later part ways was the view of the concrete historical reality of the religions.

In spite of Barth’s emphatic claim that his severe verdict on religion did not mean a blind condemnation of religion and that the “divine judgment” on religion should not lead to human condemnation and devaluation of that which is true, good, and beautiful in the religions, it is nevertheless evident that Karl Barth never came to a correct assessment of the concrete reality of the religions. Barth established a restricted zone around religion where theology henceforth was not allowed to enter. Through forcible simplification and the subtlety and constraint of systematic logic, which made all religions appear as merely the concern of godless people and as unbelief, he crippled the interest of evangelical theology in the concrete religions. But especially in view of the actual missionary situation of preaching the gospel to pagans, Hartenstein could not but experience this exclusively negative fixation of the concept “religion” increasingly as a burden and impediment in the effort toward an understanding of and coming to grips with other religions. The harsh dualism between religion and revelation was theologically problematic from the standpoint of the incarnation.

With Emil Brunner and Hendrik Kraemer, Hartenstein now placed more emphasis on the revelatory quality in all religions, the proofs of God’s revelatory activity in the realm of the religions. In the religions, people actually deal with God. That which is specifically religious in the religions, what makes the religions religion, is the hidden reality of the living God. Hartenstein attempted to revive in missiology the question of the missionary encounter with pagandom, and hoped that this effort would spread to theology. The revelation of God as the proprium, the characteristic mark, of the Christian faith, so clearly attested by Karl Barth, should not be lost again; at the same time, the elements of truth in the non-Christian religions should be recognized more clearly. Thus, Christ means both fulfillment of all religions and judgment on them, inasmuch as they are the organized effort of both searching for God and fleeing from God.

This double critique of paganism from the standpoint of biblical realism corresponds to the understanding of humankind in the conflict between Creation and sin: “created by God, incessantly busy asking for God, and at the same time fleeing from God, in rebellion and defiance against God. Only thus can we understand Genesis 3, Romans 1:18ff., and Romans 11:16ff.”\(^{20}\) An evangelical science of religion that takes its direction from biblical anthroplogy and epistemology must hold fast to this dialectical truth concerning human beings and must not minimize the ambivalent character of the divine and the demonic in all religions.

With Eduard Thurneysen, Hartenstein compares the world of the religions with a circle whose hidden center is identical with the living God. According to Genesis 3—11, the connection between the Center and the circumference (the religions) has been broken. Christianity also lies somewhere on the circumference, a religion among the religions, an “also-religion,” in its empirical form subject to ambiguity, relativity, and transience. But in the case of Christianity there is a living connection, the way of Christ, between Center and circumference.\(^{21}\)

According to Hartenstein, the Christian faith as a religion among, and in solidarity with, the religions can serve, penitently and humbly, only by obediently heeding the voice of the non-Christian religions. In this penitent and humble attitude toward the religions, missionary service, standing under the “critique of all religions,” sees itself ever anew as failure and weakness of the Christian proclamation. Yet this service may be done in the uncon-

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"Hartenstein sees the entire Reformation movement as a critique of all religions from the standpoint of the gospel."

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ditional, transcendent certainty that the unknown God has revealed himself, that Love has appeared, that the kingdom of God has begun in him who is the salvation of the world. Thus Christianity cannot lay claim to absoluteness, but can only be absolutely loyal and faithful to Jesus Christ.

The message of missions, the prophetic-apostolic witness of Jesus Christ, can only occur in boundless love, in deepest solidarity, and in humility, which excludes any personal sense of superiority, just as it excludes a relativistic tolerance with respect to the truth of the message. In the light of the biblical revelation seen as the crisis of all religions, including Christianity in the various forms of its historical manifestation, tolerance can have nothing in common with relativism, syncretism, or indifference. Tolerance exercised at the expense of the truth must sooner or later lead to the loss of the spiritual identity and legitimacy of the Christian faith.

Hartenstein's missiological thinking moves on the plane of discontinuity. His theological struggle is guided by the intent to preserve for the church, in the face of the challenge of historicism, relativism, and secularism, its prophetic-apostolic authority, that it may be able to maintain the position of the early church also with respect to the religions.

It is for Hartenstein, so to speak, a missiological axiom that revelation is the only criterion of truth and "that revelation can never be ultimately interpreted from the standpoint of religion, but the religions only from the standpoint of revelation." Neverthelss, Hartenstein has already clearly taken the step beyond Barth toward an attitude toward the religions that is more open to dialogue and more willing to understand; the religions are no longer seen as pure abstractions in the perspective of demonic self-assertion of human beings without God, but as realities with their own value and values. Only in the tension between Yes and No can missions do justice to the reality of revelation and of the religions. The dialogue, that is, the missionary encounter with the religions, derives life from the missionary intent to save. Missions are more than a sympathetic and friendly, but in the final analysis noncommittal, rapprochement. Missions must no longer be the world's advocate, but also an advocate and trustee of the inalienable soteriological claim of the Christian faith. The vertical dimension of faith must not be excluded from the theological-dialogical effort.

**Hartenstein and the Problem of Church and State in the Third Reich**

Hartenstein's theological determination of the unity of church and missions and his ecumenical missionary attitude caused him to recognize as early as 1933 the threat to the missionary societies posed by the effort to integrate church and missions in the planned Reichskirche, an effort based on a nationalismally motivated ideology of unity. It is in a real sense due to the determined stand of Karl Hartenstein, Johannes Warneck, and Walter Freytag that the German evangelical missions in 1933 remained largely resistant to the pragmatic organizational integration of missions into the Reichskirche that was demanded by the Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen (the Faith Movement of German Christians, a group of pro-Nazi churchmen), and aligned themselves rather with the Confessing Church. At conferences in Barmen (October 1933), Bethel (June 1934), and Tübingen (October 1934), the National Socialist strategy of assimilation was courageously resisted; thus was averted in good time the threatening danger of ideological infiltration and political abuse of missions as a National Socialist propaganda tool abroad.

Immediately after the war, Hartenstein was instrumental in the adoption of the Stuttgart Confession at the plenary session of the missionary convention in Herborn in September 1946. With this, the door that had for so long been closed to missions, the door to the ecumenical fellowship of the International Missionary Council, was reopened. Hartenstein participated in the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam (1948) as a church representative.

It is to be hoped that missions will not evade an encounter with Karl Hartenstein, one of their prominent representatives of the most recent past, but will, rather, come to grips with Hartenstein's position in a critical and self-critical discussion, in which both the weaknesses and the enduring significance of his theology of missions could be established. His was a theology of missions that grew out of a lifelong struggle for the recognition of missions as the unconditional obligation of the church into an inalienable act of witness to Jesus Christ before the world.

**Notes**

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1928 "Was hat die Theologie Karl Barth's der Mission zu sagen?" Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag.

Writings about Karl Hartenstein

Mission im Neuen Testament.

The Biblical Foundations for Mission.

These two volumes—both by Roman Catholic biblical scholars—are without doubt the most important studies on mission from a biblical perspective to have appeared during the last decade or more.

Mission im Neuen Testament contains contributions by seven German-speaking New Testament scholars who met, with some missiologists, at a consultation in Würzburg. The papers presented and discussed there were redrafted for the present publication. In the case of The Biblical Foundations for Mission, the authors, who respectively teach Old and New Testament at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, had for several years been conducting a joint seminar on “Bible and Mission,” the participants of which came from many parts of the world. In both cases the authors set out to study the biblical material with a view to clarifying missiological issues for the church today, in particular the entire issue of the justification for a worldwide Christian mission and the way in which the study of Scripture can aid us in this respect. The method pursued was that of “an historical analysis of the texts” (Kertelge, p. 9), of searching out “those traditions and dynamics that shaped Israel’s consciousness of its destiny in relation to Gentiles, and that ultimately led Christians to proclaim the gospel to Gentiles” (Senior/Stuhlmueller, p. 3).

Both volumes proceed from the recognition that the church is essentially missionary and that, therefore, the theology of mission is to be regarded as “an essential dimension of Christian theology as such” (Kertelge, p. 7); and that approaching the Bible from the vantage point of mission would lead to the center of its message (Senior/Stuhlmueller, p. 4).

This basic methodological orientation is to be welcomed, particularly in view of the fact that most biblical scholars prefer to perceive the New Testament not as the history of a community-in-mission but, rather, as a collection of documents on inter-Christian doctrinal struggles (Senior/Stuhlmueller, p. 4 and note 4 on p. 6). Here, at long last, we have biblical scholars recognizing what missiologists have often drawn attention to: that biblical theology has first and foremost to be regarded as missionary theology, and that Martin Kähler was correct when he stated, almost a century ago, that, in the New Testament and early church period, it was the church’s missionary involvement that gave rise to its theological reflection.

To discuss here, in any detail, the analysis and results of the two sets of authors would be utterly impossible. A few remarks will have to suffice.

Unlike the German volume, the Senior/Stuhlmueller book includes a large section on the Old Testament. It is by far the best I have read on the subject, particularly since the author (in this case Stuhlmueller) is not interested in gleaning a few “missionary” texts from the Old Testament but, rather, is penetrating to the very center of the Old Testament witness as it is manifested in different periods and theological traditions. Stuhlmueller detects a basic three-stage procedure, repeating itself over and over again, in the Old Testament: (a) a new group or new idea manifests itself amid struggle; this is followed by (b) a long process of adaptation and domestication, which (c) eventually evokes a prophetic protest and new challenge. The author then studies the ups and downs of the missionary motif in these various stages. His research into Second Isaiah and his reflections on the tension between Israel’s election and its calling toward the nations are particularly illuminating.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, there is a remarkable degree of similarity between the two books as far as general layout and method are concerned. Here the English volume has the advantage of having only one author (Senior), which leads to a better integration of the material. In the German volume different theologians contribute chapters on the theology of mission in Mark (Klemens Stock), Matthew (Hubert Frankemölle), Luke (Jacob Kremer), and Paul (Dieter Zeller), whereas Rudolf Pesch provides an excellent opening chapter on the “Presuppositions and Beginnings of the Early Christian Mission” (pp. 11–70). Gerhard Schneider reviews “The Missionary Command of Jesus in the Gospels” (pp. 71–92), and Norbert Brox renders an excellent and very informative account (in spite of meager sources) of the theological issues operative in the Christian mission during the second and third centuries a.d. (pp. 190–237).

It is amazing about the two books under discussion that, although the authors in both cases are Roman Catholics and follow the same methodology, reading the one book in no way makes reading the other unnecessary. The major reason for this is the wealth of material on the subject. Each author merely selected what he deemed important, thus by necessity leaving more than sufficient material to other researchers. Still, in spite of the small degree of overlap, the two books arrive essentially at the same conclusions. Both recognize that the "catalyst that triggered the missionary consciousness of the early church and shaped its basic message was the person and ministry of Jesus" (Senior/Stuhlmueller, p. 141; cf. Kertelge, pp. 28, 36–40). Both argue

David Bosch is Professor of Missiology at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, and Editor of Missionalia, the journal of the South African Missiological Society.
persuasively that the authors of the Gospels were faithful to the tradition about Jesus handed down to them and at the same time faithful to their own contexts. Both recognize that the place of Israel in salvation history played a key role in the thinking of most New Testament authors. Both agree that Paul’s entire theology had its origin in his missionary work among the Gentiles.

In fact, the two books also share the same weaknesses. Given the fact that the authors in both instances intended to produce books that would be of value to the church in its worldwide missionary enterprise, one must conclude, after careful study, that they have succeeded in doing this only to a very limited degree. Let me make a couple of observations to illustrate my point.

First, although both volumes frequently refer to “mission” and “salvation” (or “redemption”) and the relationship between them, strangely these concepts remain incompletely defined throughout. Franke篆ille defines “mission” as communicating a new praxis or a new interpretation of the total reality to others (Kertelge, p. 99). The definition of Senior and Stuhlmueller is similar (p. 3). All the authors would agree that the content of what is being communicated in mission is salvation/redemption. But what does that involve? For Zeller, sótiría (at least in Paul) is exclusively future (Kertelge, p. 173). Senior never really explains what salvation meant for Paul (Senior/Stuhlmueller, pp. 167–190). The purpose of mission in Luke, he says, is salvation, but he nowhere indicates whether or not salvation meant the same for Luke (and Matthew) that it meant for Paul. He does say that some of the current interest in Luke is generated by Third World churches and liberation theology’s concern about justice (p. 255), but he neither returns to this nor is his exegesis of Luke-Acts supportive of that of liberation theology. He summarizes Jesus’ ministry according to Luke as transformation (he refers here to the inaugural scene at Nazareth in Luke 4) and forgiveness (p. 263), but in what follows only the latter is explicated. In their concluding chapter the two authors do state explicitly that “mission . . . is not confined to survival of the human spirit or, in the traditional slogan, to ‘saving souls’ or ‘making converts.’ Redemption is total: body, spirit, structure, world, cosmos. Therefore a mission that participates in the redemptive drama must have the same breadth” (p. 329). However, this conclusion is not sufficiently substantiated in the analytical parts of the book, although both Stuhlmueller (e.g., p. 15) and Senior (e.g., pp. 131, 247–48) do broach it occasionally.

A second point of critique, related to the former: although Kertelge explicitly states (p. 7) that the “theory and praxis of the Christian mission draw the elements of their foundation teaching in particular from the original witness of the New Testament,” the book he edited nowhere really pushes through to the praxis of mission. It remains a biblical-exegetical study only. The Senior/Stuhlmueller volume ventures a bit further and here and there even explicitly mentions current theoretical and practical missiological issues; but here, too, the significance of the biblical materials is not really elaborated on. The authors do not go beyond asserting that the biblical records “remain unique and crucial,” and that the biblical witness “has been and will be the ultimate catalyst for the universal mission of the church” (p. 339). They do not show how and why the Bible can be of significance here and how the connection between the biblical evidence and the contemporary missionary scene can be made. Their book purports to be a book on the biblical foundations for mission, in other words (at least, as I understand it), on the scriptural justification for mission today, but this nowhere really becomes evident. At best one gets the impression that the authors suggest that the biblical models of mission may provide examples for missionary methods today, particularly in the area of contextualization (cf. p. 343), but the question whether and how the Bible may be appealed to for the very justification of mission today—in other words, the hermeneutical question—remains unanswered, in spite of a number of general intimations. Are Stuhlmueller’s expositions on pages 63–79 and 114–24, for instance, examples of Old Testament foundations for mission, or rather, of exercises in contextualization? I suggest that the latter is the case.

Still, in spite of the two points of criticism raised above, these books are of major importance for the areas of Old and New Testament studies as well as missiology. I hope that—at the very least—every teacher of missiology will thoroughly study at least one of them.

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The Bible and Liberation.
Political and Social Hermeneutics.


This is a revised and expanded edition of The Biblical Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics, which Gottwald edited with Antoinette Wire in 1976. It is essentially an anthology of previously published articles, and several reviews of pertinent books. All are germane to the topic and are grouped according to several headings: social scientific method in biblical studies, the hermeneutical factor of a social class, sociological readings of both Testaments, the Bible in political theology and Marxist thought. The rationale of this organization is presented in the introduction by Gottwald, and before each of the twenty-eight articles there is a prefatory notice. Three indices (names, subjects, and scriptural references) make the volume very useful.

Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., is George Washington Ivey Professor of Biblical Studies, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

I Am: This Is My Name.


Here, in brief compass, the widely known Old Testament scholar and former missionary presents his contribution to the current debate about God and the relationship of Christianity to the other religions of the world. Although Knight begins with a reference to John Hick’s God Has Many Names, he does not offer a direct reply, which he says would be “probably inadvisable.” Instead he sets out to help the Christian get his or her theology straight so as to be able to enter into contact with the religions of the world.

Beginning with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Knight traces the development of Israel’s distinctive faith as it arose out of the discontinuity and despair of Babylonian captivity. God reveals himself as the creator, and as the one whose name is “I Am,” whose nature is seen in the affirmation “I am with you.” God is the Holy One of Israel, the covenant-giver, who calls the nation into his service.

Continuity of God’s activity was maintained through the Messianic expectation and the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of man. He is the Suffering Servant, and the one who puts humans right with God, “the total opposite of the gods and heroes of man whom the world has admired and followed in both East and West ever since the dawn of history” (p. 72). The church is a covenant community that bears witness to God’s saving work among the nations, but, like ancient Israel, it also stands under the warning of Amos 3:2.

In short, Knight reaffirms the distinctive biblical basis of the church’s mission. This book will give encouragement to those who are committed to the truth of the biblical doctrines, but it will not convince those for whom the Bible is less authoritative than the perceived commonality of human religious experience across religious lines.

Keith Crim, Editorial Director, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, was a missionary to Korea under the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., 1952–66.

Keith Crim
With increasing religious pluralism and the growth of the visibility of evangelicals, a fresh study of the relation between church and parachurch (or as White prefers para-local church) is urgently needed. White, who was formerly a professor at the Air Force Academy and is now executive director of the Navigators, offers a popular and often helpful discussion of some of the issues involved. Through simulated conversations, anecdotes, and personal reminiscences, we get a feel for the causes of irritation, though we are not given much help in sorting out larger underlying factors. White seems to feel that since people are more aware of personal and pragmatic factors in the debate, it is permissible to deal with the question on this level.

White understands very well the feelings of many pastors toward parachurch groups: they drain leadership and finances and often lack doctrinal or operational accountability; and he knows the opposite arguments from the inside: churches are often either insensitive to or incapable of meeting specialized needs. He feels the basic issues are people (here we need to allow God the freedom to direct as he will); theology (we need to recognize a larger legitimacy for any who are building up the body of Christ); finances (surprisingly only about 13 percent of contributions go to local church groups); and authority (conflicting loyalties need to be settled through prayer and closer relationship).

White tries hard to be fair to both parties involved and has critical (and encouraging) words for both. There are chapters on attitudes and approaches that each side should take in mediating conflicts. Much of this is helpful. But when push comes to shove, clearly it has been the local church that has more often shown a lack of understanding. The church needs to recognize a broader legitimacy and working of God. "Churches that encourage and approve of para-local church groups will benefit in receiving a much greater portion of the members of those groups" (p. 102).

More serious is the fact that the "seeming inability of the local Church to give status and motivation to the laity has blocked the arteries of the institutional Church" (p. 106).

In the end, however, the discussion is limited by the failure to deal with the deeper questions that lie behind present tensions. To what extent are the proliferations of these groups reflecting complex cultural issues that the church has ignored? How do these tensions relate to the ecumenical challenge facing our churches and the need to minister across denominational lines? Finally how do tensions relate to an improper understanding of the mission of the church and the nature of the kingdom of God?

—William A. Dyrness
God Called, They Answered

FROM JERUSALEM TO IRIAN JAYA
A Biographical History of Christian Missions
RUTH A. TUCKER
The history of Christian missions, as Ruth Tucker makes dramatically evident in this fascinating and highly readable volume, is a story about people — about the men and women who, throughout the centuries, left their homes to bring the Word to others. Here are warmly human portraits of those who answered God's call to preach the gospel. From these biographical sketches emerges the inspiring story of Christianity's remarkable expansion during two millennia.

Noteworthy

James A. Cogswell is the new Associate General Secretary for Overseas Ministries of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Since 1978, Cogswell has been director of the Office of World Service and Hunger, Presbyterian Church in the United States, now part of the new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Earlier he served for 13 years as a Presbyterian missionary in Japan. Cogswell succeeds Eugene L. Stockwell, who is now Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, in Geneva.

After serving nine years as Executive Secretary of Jesuit Missions, Simon E. Smith, S.J. has been appointed Africa Coordinator of Jesuit Refugee Service, and is stationed in Nairobi, Kenya. Fr. Smith is the recipient of the 1984 Annual Mission Award of the United States Catholic Mission Association. The award cited him as "a radical disciple, a gentle prophet, a dedicated minister of God's coming among us, a missioner of the third millennium."

Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Massachusetts, has appointed Orlando E. Costas as Dean of the seminary and Judson Professor of Missiology, effective September 1, 1984. Since 1980, Costas has been Professor of Missiology and Director of Hispanic Studies at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

John A. Lapp, Provost of Goshen College, Indiana, will become Executive Secretary of Mennonite Central Committee in January 1985. Prior to his service at Goshen College, Lapp was executive secretary of the MCC Peace Section from 1969 to 1972.

Boston University School of Theology has appointed Dana L. Robert as Assistant Professor of World Mission as of September 1984. She has a Ph.D. in mission history from Yale University, with a doctoral dissertation on Arthur T. Pierson.

Jorge Lara-Braud, a lay theologian, has been appointed by San Francisco Theological Seminary to the seminary's new chair of Theology and Culture, effective September 1984. Lara-Braud, a native of Mexico and a citizen of the United States, has been director of the Atlanta-based Council on Theology and Culture of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the past four years.

Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan has elected Marvin D. Hoff as President. A minister of the Reformed Church in America, Hoff will continue to serve also as Executive Director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia, a part time responsibility he has filled since 1977.
John Hamlin is a retired missionary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), who has served in China (1947-51), Switzerland (1952-54), Thailand (1954-74), and Singapore (1974-75). He taught Old Testament in Japan, China, Thailand, and Singapore, and served as president of Thailand Theological Seminary (1955-74).


President Dyrness of New College for Advanced Christian Studies, Berkeley, California, has written an attractive, nontechnical book that will be useful to those who are interested in biblical theology as a serious and authoritative source for missions. This is not an original book in which the author ventures new interrelations. But it is a faithful and suggestive presentation of the best scholarship available to us.

Two things strike me as especially commendable about this book. First, the author pays attention to the biblical text and moves through the sequence of "telling the story." Second, the author has a most impressive grasp of current scholarship. The book will be especially valuable for those who wish to pursue such issues.

One peculiar factor may be noted in the context of the International Bulletin. The subtitle of the book is "A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission." What strikes me is how reticent and restrained the author is in making references to or connections with mission. I suggest that readers with that interest will be somewhat disappointed. The book is stronger as a statement of a standard biblical theology (expressed in rather conventional categories) than it is in a mission dimension. But what the author does, he does well and carefully.

—Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann is Evangelical Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. His writings focus on interpretive issues in biblical faith, including Prophetic Imagination, The Land, and The Creative Word.

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The strength of the volume obviously lies in its breadth of perspective: geographically, denominationally, theologically, and ideologically. Slender ecumenical bridges boldly span the supposedly unbridgeable gulfs between Falwell-fundamentalist-type proselytism and Marxist-dominated theologies in Latin America and China, and from Pentecostal indoctrination by correspondence course to Roman Catholic "basic Christian communities" in Third World slums. The twenty-nine case studies appear to leave only a few scattered islands and Antarctic penguins unaffected by the revolution.

Some chapters are outstanding and will be of interest to theological educators and others working in such diverse fields as theology, hermeneutics, missiology, church history, and philosophy of education. But even the simplistic, uncritical denominational and organizational reports appear more "racing" than plodding and are essential to fill out the global picture. For the ordinary reader an editorial paragraph introducing each case study would have been of great help in highlighting distinctive elements easily overlooked.

The relation of what purports to be extension (not dilution) to residence education urgently needs clarification and development. Dichotomy, not healthy dialectic, appears to prevail at present. Emilio Castro in the Foreword (p. xii) wisely insists on the necessity of Third World churches to "have the scientific equipment to work with original texts" (i.e., Greek and Hebrew). This is a task I long thought could only be accomplished with younger students in residence study—until recently in Peru I discovered that our own seminary extension program offers

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Isaiah called for a deepening of stakes to accompany the “extension” of tent cords (54:2). If the next decade does not produce a corresponding transformation and strengthening of quality residence education in the Third World, we may awake to find that the miraculously lengthened “cords” of TEE have only increased the already staggering brain drain and bound us more irrevocably to dependence on First World education centers and ideologies—giving us not the promised TEE but ideological indoctrination by constriction.

—Thomas Hanks

Since 1963 with the Latin America Mission in Costa Rica, Thomas Hanks is Professor of Old Testament, Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, active in both residence and extension programs.

The Community of Women and Men in the Church: The Sheffield Report.


The World Council of Churches Conference on the Community of Women and Men in the Church, held in England in 1981, was the culmination of an initiative begun seven years earlier, calling churches to examine the roles of women and the implications for the churches of new levels of women’s participation in theology, ministry, and mission. The project was lodged with the Commission on Faith and Order, establishing it as fundamentally an eclesiological study, an issue of inclusive community, rather than a justice or “women’s issue” per se. This project enjoyed the most extensive grassroots participation of any such project in the history of the World Council of Churches; the value of this volume lies to a great extent in its reflection of this participation.

The consultation issues were those that had emerged in the study process:
—Rethinking the authority and interpretation of Scripture. An example is the joint address by Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann. One wishes for a report of the discussion that must have been aroused by their assertions about patriarchy and “the distress of the male Ruler-God,” for example.
—A new understanding of the church as the whole people of God. The section reports and the “Sheffield Recommendations” expressed this specifically.
—Tradition as an energizing source of power rather than an oppressive force. An African woman and one from the Orthodox tradition gave major presentations on this issue.
—Looking at race and class issues along with the new understandings of identity and community for men and women. Third World participants insisted that women’s issues cannot be dealt with in isolation from the global “web of oppression.”

Parvey’s summary catches up the complexities of participation from widely varying cultures and faith traditions (e.g., ordination, Mariology). The wilderness theme of the closing worship symbolized the promise in being nourished in community and guided in

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faithfulness, yet working within the limitations of necessity. Rather than a closing Eucharist, participants joined in the sharing of honey, from an ancient baptismal rite—a rite that welcomed and included all, providing nourishment to go forward to a time when there might be a truly inclusive ecumenical feast.

—Alice M. Roth

Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice.


When Holland and Henriot first published their booklet from the Center of Concern in 1980, neither expected that it would quickly sell almost 50,000 copies and be translated into several languages.

That phenomenon in itself partially explains the need for such a book, which now appears in a slightly revised edition under the Orbis imprint, which will assure it an even broader circulation. The moment was ripe for a good treatment of social analysis: what it means, why and how it helps people to understand the structures of today’s world, and how to do it. While this book treats its subject in some depth, it is not a “how to” book, nor was it intended to be.

What Henriot and Holland (director and staff member, respectively, of the Jesuit-related Center of Concern in Washington, D.C.) have done in this superb book is to explore the nature of social analysis, to relate it to theology and spirituality, and to demonstrate how various models of social analysis relate to and help to interpret some broad social realities, such as development, capitalism, and alternative movements.

In this revision, Henriot offers an appendix that can be used as a model for some initial social analysis. It is a fine tool for beginning to grasp experientially the broader and more challenging dimensions of the process itself and for laying bare the underlying values of both one’s analysis and the structures one analyzes.

The long-range value of this book for those involved in mission(s) is (1) to make them aware of the necessity of using some form of social analysis as integral to their planning, (2) to suggest some resources available to mission personnel in the field and (3) to present a simple model to use when they initiate their own social analysis.

—Simon E. Smith, S.J.

The Theology of Promise: The Dynamics of Self-Reliance.


Throughout his book, the Rev. C. S. Banana—a Methodist minister and the president of Zimbabwe—is appealing to Zimbabweans, particularly Christians, to transform themselves to the socialist ideal. Rejecting the assertion
that politics and religion do not mix, the author demonstrates with appropriate examples that Zimbabwean socialism is basically Christian. As there is no Christianity without love, there is no love without politics (p. 43). Christ’s violent cleansing of the temple justifies revolutionary means to eradicate social calls for a revolutionary Christian theology that “emanates from the people and never from a selected elite” (p. 111). In other words, the church must become a proletarian church, “a church inside history, the church that accompanies people in their struggle” (p. 142).

The book gives many good ideas that are food for thought to churches and their theological schools. It shakes the foundations upon which many erroneous colonial church doctrines have been based (pp. 56, 108). Each chapter concludes with questions and topics for discussion.

Banana is correct in his thesis that we, like Abraham, must be on a pilgrimage for a better future (p. 15). However, he is perhaps too optimistic that socialism alone is the answer to humanity’s socioeconomic problems. He overlooks the fact that in some socialist countries the citizens have lost their freedom, and are thus transformed into a slave machine whose primary function is to follow the leadership without questioning. Only a “revolutionary Christianity” that ensures freedom will truly transform a human being into a selfless being, one who will promote egalitarian living not by government legislation, but by Christian love.

Finally, the author seems not to realize that human nature is inherently evil (Gen. 8:21). This is why Christianity has always been trying to transform humankind, whether in a capitalist or a socialist environment. But because socialism, like Christianity, advocates an ideal socioeconomic community, by then very nature human beings will always find it hard to achieve. This is why I agree with Banana that socialism and Christianity should be brought together, “to save each other” (p. 128).

—T. J. Mafico

Five hundred years after Luther’s birth, the great Reformer’s ideas of mission and the missionary impact of the confessional movement he founded are important for all students of missionary theology and history. By placing these concerns in the context of the whole range of recent missiological thinking, this unpretentious volume provides a valuable resource for Lutheran and non-Lutheran alike.

Chapters on “The Lutheran Missionary Idea in Historical Perspective,” “Lutheran Mission in the 20th Century,” “Evangelism in the 20th Century,” and “Lutheran World Federation Involvement in Mission and Evangelism” tell the Lutheran story in a way that illustrates the interplay of denominational and ecumenical factors.

Chapter 3 on “Ecumenical Missionary Thinking in Its Recent Development” analyzes in some detail all the major ecumenical conferences and study projects from the International Missionary Council meeting at Whitby, 1947, to the World Council of Churches Assembly at Nairobi, 1975. Chapter 4 then discusses the WCC meeting on Mission and Evangelism at Melbourne, 1980, together with the major “evangelical” developments reflected at Lausanne, 1974, and Pattaya, 1980. The Roman Catholic missionary stream is traced from Vatican Council II to the Puebla conference of Latin American bishops in 1979.
James Scherer was a missionary in China and Japan, then a scholar and teacher of mission theology and history and an active participant in the mission work of the Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran World Federation. He does far more than summarize skillfully a great deal of mission thinking.

His analysis of the dynamics of the several streams, with succinct commentary and outlines of the issues, makes this an excellent guide to the missiological state of the art. Forty-six pages of notes and indexes of names and topics add to the book's value.

—David M. Stowe

Christianity and Japan: Meeting, Conflict, Hope.


Here is another attractive book about Japan's religions by a Scottish writer who teaches philosophy and comparative ethics at the International Christian University in Tokyo. This volume follows the format of his two previous publications on Shinto: Japan's Spiritual Roots and Buddhism: Japan's Cultural Identity, with text kept to the minimum and ample room for well-chosen photographs, mostly in full color.

James M. Phillips, formerly a professor of church history at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in Japan, is associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey.

As was also the case in the two previous books, an introduction has been contributed by Edwin O. Reischauer, professor emeritus at Harvard University. Reischauer's comments are on a more personal level, relating the story of Christianity in Japan to the lives of his own parents, who served as Presbyterian missionaries in that country.

Picken utilizes the "medium" well for the "message" he brings. Particularly memorable are the contrasting photographs on pages 11-12 of the towers of Cologne Cathedral ("a forest of stone"), and a massive tree on the grounds of a Shinto shrine. In fact, the photographs of the book have often been chosen to evoke a mood, even when they depict some aspect of Japanese Christian history. On page 71 we catch a glimpse of the author himself, conducting an infant baptism.

Picken's text deals mainly with Japanese Christianity before World War II, with only brief passages on the post-1945 period, a concluding chapter on "A Future of Hope," and a one-page bibliography. There are only a few hints about contemporary Christianity in Japan, with its vitality in such areas as devotional life, theological writings, social action, and artistic contributions.

Such a book is intended as an introductory piece for the general public, for there are no new scholarly furrows cut here. Its superb layout and engaging photographs make it a delight to possess as a souvenir of Japan's small but remarkable Christian community.

—James M. Phillips

Dissertation Notices

from the United States

Barreno, Manuel M.
"Conflicting Christologies Met at Puebla."
Ph.D. St. Louis: Aquinas Institute, 1983.

Giorlana, Pasquale T.
"A Theological Analysis of the Changing Understanding of the Social Mission in the Philippine Church after Vatican II."

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Ph.D. Fort Worth, Texas: Southwestern Baptist Seminary, 1983.

Onuwah, Polycarp E.

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"The Doctrine of Man as Embraced in Creation, Fall, Flood and Confusion of Tongues Myths of Five American Indian Tribes."
Th.D. St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1983.

Sokol, Frank C.
"The Mission of the Church and the Nature of Catechesis in the Writings of Pierre-André Liegé (1921-1979)."

Turner, Barbara G.
"Judaism: Possibility of New Perspectives: A Study in Contemporary American Christian Theology."
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Back Home. Robert Coote, OMSC staff.

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Dr. Gerald Anderson, OMSC director.

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Dr. David Barrett, editor, World Christian
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The Advance of the Gospel Among
Primal Peoples: Lessons for Wider
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Ahonen, Risto.
Kristillisen lähetystyön ja amerikkalaisen imperialismin dilemma John R. Mottin ajattelussa. (With summary in English.)

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Christianity and Judaism: The Deepening Dialogue.

Scudder, Dorothy Jealous.
A Thousand Years in Thy Sight: The Story of the Scudder Missionaries of India.

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Norman A. Horner

Urban Evangelization: A Lausanne Strategy since 1980
Raymond J. Bakke

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William R. Burrows, S.V.D.

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Evangelicals Rediscover the Kingdom of God in Mission Theology
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In our Series on the Legacy of Outstanding Missionary Figures of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, articles about
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