Occasionally there is an event of such significance in shaping the future course of mission theology and practice that it becomes a permanent part of the landscape in mission studies. It may be a conference, a book, a secular development, or a report. In our last issue (October 1985), we discussed the decisive impact that Vatican Council II—a landmark event—has had on mission thought and strategy.

In this issue we present the full report of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (ERCDOM), another landmark, in our judgment, that will have lasting influence on our understanding and action in Christian mission. This report is a product of three international meetings that took place over a period of seven years, from 1977 to 1984, involving participants who are well known in both traditions (their names are listed at the end of the report).

The very fact that the dialogue took place is of historic significance—made possible, according to the report, by “a measure of convergence in our understanding of the nature of evangelism.” It was “a search for such common ground as might be discovered between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as they each try to be more faithful in their obedience to mission.” The report “is in no sense an ‘agreed statement,’ but rather a faithful record of the ideas shared.” While “not exhaustive,” it gives “a substantial idea of how the dialogue developed,” but seeks to avoid “creating misunderstandings or false expectations.” ERCDOM “was only a first step” and “is far from being definitive,” but it was an important step and, as the report suggests, “the dialogue needs to be continued and developed,” in fidelity to Jesus Christ, “so that the world may believe . . .” (Jn. 17:21). We commend the participants in ERCDOM for their initiative in this prophetic endeavor, and we recommend their report for prayerful study and critical discussion.

In his “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission” for 1986, David B. Barrett draws special attention to the increase in the number of large cities, the role of Christian martyrs, concern about ecclesiastical crime, Christian use of computers, urban mission, and megaministries. This widely acclaimed annual survey, along with our editors’ yearly selection of outstanding books for mission studies, provides much grist for the mill of missionary research in 1986.

In the face of great adversity, there are signs of great vitality in the world Christian mission. With realism and hope we affirm the classic assessment of Adoniram Judson that “the future is as bright as the promises of God.”
Introduction

The Evangelical–Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (ERCDOM) was a series of three meetings which took place over a period of seven years. The first was held at Venice in 1977, the second at Cambridge, England, in 1982, and the third at Landevennec, France, in 1984.

1. The Participants

Those who took part in the dialogue were theologians and missiologists from many parts of the world. Their names are given in the Appendix. Six of us (three from each side) attended all three meetings; others were able to come to only one or two of them.

The Evangelical participants were drawn from a number of churches and Christian organizations. They were not official representatives of any international body, however. For the evangelical movement has a broad spectrum, which includes evangelical denominations (both within and outside the World Council of Churches), evangelical fellowships (within mainline, comprehensive denominations), and evangelical parachurch agencies (specializing in tasks like Bible translation, evangelism, cross-cultural mission, and Third World relief and development), which accept different degrees of responsibility to the Church.

It is not easy to give a brief account of the distinctive beliefs of evangelical Christians, since different churches and groups emphasize different doctrines. Yet all Evangelicals share a cluster of theological convictions which were recovered and reaffirmed by the 16th-century Reformers. These include (in addition to the great affirmations of the Nicene Creed) the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the sufficiency of its teaching for salvation, and its supremacy over the traditions of the Church; the justification of sinners (i.e., their acceptance by God as righteous in his sight) on the sole ground of the sin-bearing—often called “substitutionary”—death of Jesus Christ, by God’s free grace alone, apprehended by faith alone, without the addition of any human works; the inward work of the Holy Spirit to bring about the new birth and to transform the regenerate into the likeness of Christ; the necessity of personal repentance and faith in Christ (“conversion”); the Church as the Body of Christ, which incorporates all true believers, and all of whose members are called to ministry, some being “evangelists, pastors and teachers”; the “priesthood of all believers,” who (without any priestly mediation except Christ’s) all enjoy equal access to God and all offer him their sacrifice of praise and worship; the urgency of the great commission to spread the gospel throughout the world, both verbally in proclamation and visually in good

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works of love; and the expectation of the personal, visible, and glorious return of Jesus Christ to save, to reign, and to judge.

The Roman Catholic participants, who spoke from the point of view of the official teaching of their Church, were named by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. The existence of the Secretariat is evidence of the effective renewal of attitude towards other Christians, which has taken place among Roman Catholics as a result of the Second Vatican Council twenty years ago, and which is still having its effects. In that Council it was acknowledged that "Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth." As a result, Roman Catholics have been able to acknowledge joyfully "the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ." This same renewal turned the attention of Roman Catholics to the Scriptures in a new way, exhorting the Church "to move ahead daily towards a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures," which "contain the Word of God and, since they are inspired, really are that word." And it led to a better expression of the relation between Scripture and tradition in communicating God’s Word in its full purity. Here indeed are the elements which have enabled Roman Catholics to acknowledge common ground with other Christians, and to assume their own responsibility for overcoming divisions for the sake of the mission of God and the fullness of his glory.

2. The Background

It is the will of God that “all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:4–5); “there is salvation in no one else” (Acts 4:12). Mission begins in the activity of God himself who sent his Son, and whose Son sent his Spirit. All who belong to God in Jesus Christ must share in this mission of God.

A dialogue on mission between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics has been possible for two reasons. First, both constituencies have recently been concentrating their attention on evangelism. In July 1974 the evangelical International Congress on World Evangelization took place in Switzerland and issued the Lausanne Covenant. A few months later the Third General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops studied the same topic, and at their request Pope Paul VI issued in December 1975 his apostolic exhortation entitled Evangelii Nuntiandi, or Evangelization in the Modern World.

Secondly, a study of these two documents reveals a measure of congruence in our understanding of the nature of evangelism, as the following quotations show: “To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures. . . . Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord. . . .” “Again, witness must be made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. . . . There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed.”

3. The Experience

In our time there are many possible forms of dialogue. Some are undertaken with an immediate view to working for organic unity between the bodies which the participants represent. Others do not exclude this purpose, but begin from where they are with a more general purpose. Still others begin by stating that they do not envisage organic or structural unity but aim rather at an exchange of theological views in order to increase mutual understanding and to discover what theological ground they hold in common. ERCDOM has been a dialogue of the latter kind. It was not conceived as a step towards Church unity negotiations. Rather it has been a search for such common ground as might be discovered between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as they each try to be more faithful in their obedience to mission. It was also undertaken quite consciously in the knowledge that there are still both disagreements and misrepresentations between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics which harm our witness to the gospel, contradict our Lord’s prayer for the unity of his followers, and need if possible to be overcome.
During the three meetings friendships were formed, and mutual respect and understanding grew, as the participants learned to listen to one another and to grapple with difficult and divisive questions, as well as rejoicing in the discovery of some common understandings.

It was a demanding experience as well as a rewarding one. It was marked by a will to speak the truth, plainly, without equivocation, and in love. Neither compromise nor the quest for lowest common denominators had a place; a patient search for truth and a respect for each other’s integrity did.

4. The Report

This Report is in no sense an “agreed statement,” but rather a faithful record of the ideas shared. It is not exhaustive, for more questions were touched on than could be described in this brief compass. Yet enough has been included to give a substantial idea of how the dialogue developed and to communicate something of it without creating misunderstandings or false expectations.

An effort has been made to convey what went on at all three meetings, bearing in mind that in none was a complete expose given of most issues. ERCDOM was only a first step, even if not a negligible one.

Our Report, as far as it goes, gives a description of some areas in which Evangelicals and Roman Catholics hold similar or common views, which we are able to perceive more clearly as we overcome the stereotypes and prejudiced ideas which we have of each other. In addition, it sets out some of the serious matters on which Evangelicals and Roman Catholics differ, but about which in the last seven years the participants in ERCDOM have begun to learn to speak and listen to each other.

Although all those who participated in the three meetings contributed richly, the responsibility for the final form of the Report rests with those who were at Landévennec. Publication is undertaken on the general endorsement of the 1984 participants, although it is not the kind of document to which each was asked to subscribe formally. Nevertheless it is their express hope that it may be a means of stimulating local encounters in dialogue between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics. Our Report is far from being definitive; the dialogue needs to be continued and developed.

The participants in ERCDOM offer this Report to other Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as a sign of their conviction that fidelity to Jesus Christ today requires that we take his will for his followers with a new seriousness. He prayed for the truth, holiness, mission, and unity of his people. We believe that these dimensions of the Church’s renewal belong together. It is with this understanding that we echo his prayer for ourselves and each other: “Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. . . . I pray . . . that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe . . .” (Jn. 17:17–21).

1. Revelation and Authority

It may well be asked why participants in a dialogue on mission should spend time debating theological questions concerned with divine revelation, the Scriptures, the formulation of truth, principles of biblical interpretation, and the Church’s magisterium or teaching authority. For these topics may not appear to be directly related to our Christian mission in the world. Yet we judged a discussion of them to be indispensable to our task, for two main reasons. The first and historical reason is that the issue of authority in general, and of the relation between Scripture and tradition in particular, was one of the really major points at issue in the 16th century. Indeed, the evangelical emphasis on sola Scriptura has always been known as the “formal” principle of the Reformation. So Roman Catholics and Evangelicals will not come to closer understanding or agreement on any topic if they cannot do so on this topic. Indeed, in every branch of the Christian Church the old question “by what authority?” (Mk. 11:28) remains fundamental to ecumenical discussion. Our second reason for including this subject on our agenda was that it has a greater relevance to mission than may at first appear. For there can be no mission without a message, no message without a definition of it, and no definition without agreement as to how, or on what basis, it shall be defined.

1. Revelation, the Bible, and the Formulation of Truth

Roman Catholics and Evangelicals are entirely agreed on the necessity of revelation, if human beings are ever to know God. For he is infinite in his perfections, while we are both finite creatures and fallen sinners. His thoughts and ways are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth (Is. 55:9). He is beyond us, utterly unknowable unless he should choose to make himself known, and utterly unreachable unless he should put himself within our reach. And this is what together we believe he has done. He has revealed the glory of his power in the created universe, and the glory of his grace in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Scriptures which he said bear witness to him (e.g., Jn. 5:39).

This process of special revelation began in the Old Testament era. “God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1:1). He fashioned Israel to be his people and taught them by his law and prophets. Old Testament Scripture records this history and this teaching. Then the Father sent his Son, who claimed to be the fulfillment of prophecy, himself proclaimed the good news of salvation, chose the twelve apostles to be his special witnesses, and promised them the inspiration of his Spirit. After Pentecost they went everywhere preaching the gospel. Through their word Christian communities came into being, nourished by the Old Testament and the gospel. The apostles’ teaching was embodied in hymns, confessions of faith, and particularly their letters. In due time the Church came to recognize their writings as possessing unique authority and as handing down the authentic gospel of Jesus Christ. In this way the canon of the New Testament was constituted, which with the Old Testament comprise the Christian Scriptures.

We all recognize that in the Scriptures God has used human words as the vehicle of his communication. The Spirit’s work of inspiration is such, however, that what the human authors wrote is what God intended should be revealed, and thus that Scripture is without error. Because it is God’s Word, its divine authority and unity must be recognized, and because he spoke through human beings, its original human context must also be taken into account in the work of interpretation.

But are human words adequate to describe God fully, even if they are inspired? No. The infinite reality of the living God is a mystery which cannot be fully communicated in words or fully comprehended by human minds. No verbal formulation can be co-extensive with the truth as it is in him. Nevertheless, God has condescended to use words as well as deeds as appropriate media of his self-disclosure, and we must struggle to understand them. We do so in the confidence, however, that though they do not reveal God fully, they do reveal him truly.

Roman Catholics and Evangelicals differ slightly in their understandings of the nature of Scripture, and even more on what the proper process of interpreting this Word should be. Both groups recognize that God spoke through the human authors, whose words belonged to particular cultures.

Roman Catholics speak of this relationship between the divine and the human in Scripture as being analogous to the divine and the human in Christ. As the Second Vatican Council put it, “indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like man.” Thus the written testimony of the biblical authors is inscribed within the logic of the Incarnation.

Evangelicals also sometimes use this analogy, but they are not altogether comfortable with it. Although it has some validity, they do not believe it is exact, since there is no hypostatic union between the human and the divine in Scripture. They usually emphasize instead the model of God’s providence, namely that he is able even through fallen human beings to accomplish his perfect will. So he has spoken through the human au-
authors of the Bible in such a way that neither did he suppress their personality nor did they distort his revelation.

Thus together we affirm that the written Word of God is the work of both God and human beings. The divine and the human elements form a unity which cannot be torn asunder. It excludes all confusion and all separation between them.

With respect to the process of interpretation, Roman Catholics affirm that Scripture must be seen as having been produced by and within the Church. It is mediated to us by the inspired witness of the first Christians. The proper process of interpretation is determined by the process of Scripture's creation. We cannot understand it in its truth unless we receive it in the living faith of the Church which, assisted by the Holy Spirit, keeps us in obedience to the Word of God.

Evangelicals acknowledge the wisdom of listening to the Church and its teachers, past and present, as they seek to understand God's Word, but they insist that each believer must be free to exercise his or her personal responsibility before God, in hearing and obeying his Word. While the Church's interpretations are often helpful, they are not finally necessary because Scripture, under the Spirit's illumination, is self-interpreting and perspicuous (clear).

Thus, contemporaneity has come to mean different things in our two communities. Each recognizes that the Word of God must be heard for and in our world today. For Roman Catholics God's Word is contemporary in the sense that it is heard and interpreted within the living Church. For Evangelicals it is contemporary in the sense that its truth has to be applied, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to the modern world.

Despite these differences, we are agreed that since the biblical texts have been inspired by God, they remain the ultimate, permanent, and normative reference of the revelation of God. To them the Church must continually return, in order to discern more clearly what they mean, and so receive fresh insight, challenge, and reformation. They themselves do not need to be reformed, although they do need constantly to be interpreted, especially in circumstances in which the Church encounters new problems or different cultures. Roman Catholics hold that "the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone."12 This seems to Evangelicals to derogate from Scripture as "the ultimate, permanent and normative reference." Nevertheless, both sides strongly affirm the divine inspiration of Scripture.

2. Principles of Biblical Interpretation

Our understanding of the nature of the Bible determines our interpretation of it. Because it is the Word of God, we shall approach it in one way; and because it is also the words of men, in another.

a. Humble Dependence on the Holy Spirit

Because the Bible is the Word of God, we must approach it with reverence and humility. We cannot understand God's revelation by ourselves, because it is "spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Only he who spoke through the prophets and apostles can interpret to us his own message. Only the Spirit of truth can open our hearts to understand, to believe, and to obey. This is "wisdom," and the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of wisdom and of revelation" in our knowledge of God (Eph. 1:17). Moreover, the Spirit operates within the Body of Christ, as we shall elaborate later.

b. The Unity of Scripture

Because the Bible is the Word of God, it has a fundamental unity. This is a unity of origin, since he who has revealed himself does not contradict himself. It is also a unity of message and aim. For our Lord said the Scriptures "bear witness to me" (Jn. 5:39; cf. Lk. 24:25-27). Similarly, we read that "the sacred writings . . . are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). Thus God's purpose through Scripture is to bear testimony to Christ as Savior, to persuade all men and women to come to him for salvation, to lead them into maturity in Christ, and to send them into the world with the same good news.

In the midst of great diversity of content, therefore, Scripture has a single meaning, which permeates and illuminates all the partial meanings. We renounce every attempt to impose on Scripture an artificial unity, or even to insist on a single overarching concept. Instead, we discover in Scripture a God-given unity, which focuses on the Christ who died and rose again for us and who offers to all his people his own new life, which is the same in every age and culture. This centrality of Christ in the Scriptures is a fundamental hermeneutical key.

c. Biblical Criticism

Since the Bible is God's Word through human words, therefore under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is the only one who leads us into the understanding of Scripture, we must use scientific critical tools for its elucidation, and we appreciate the positive gains of modern biblical scholarship. Human criticism and the Spirit of God are not mutually exclusive. By "criticism" we do not mean that we stand in judgment upon God's Word, but rather that we must investigate the historical, cultural and literary background of the biblical books.

We must also try to be aware of the presuppositions we bring to our study of the text. For none of us lives in a religion- or culture-free vacuum. What we must seek to ensure is that our presuppositions are Christian rather than secular. Some of the presuppositions of secular philosophy which have vitiated the critical study of the Bible are (a) evolutionary (that religion developed from below instead of being revealed from above), (b) anti-supernatural (that miracles cannot happen and that therefore the biblical miracles are legendary), and (c) demythologizing (that the thought-world in which the biblical message was given is entirely incompatible with the modern age and must be discarded). Sociological presuppositions are equally dangerous, as when we read into Scripture the particular economic system we favor, whether capitalist or communist, or any other.

One test by which our critical methodology may be assessed is whether or not it enables people to hear the biblical message as good news of God revealing and giving himself in the historic death and resurrection of Christ.

d. The "Literal" Sense

The first task of all critical study is to help us discover the original intention of the authors. What is the literary genre in which they wrote? What did they intend to say? What did they intend us to understand? For this is the "literal" sense of Scripture; and the search for it is one of the most ancient principles which the Church affirmed. We must never divorce a text from its biblical or cultural context, but rather think ourselves back into the situation in which the word was first spoken and heard.

e. A Contemporary Message

To concentrate entirely on the ancient text, however, would lead us into an unpractical antiquarianism. We have to go beyond the original meaning to the contemporary message. Indeed, there is an urgent need for the Church to apply the teaching of Scripture creatively to the complex questions of today. Yet in seeking for relevance, we must not renounce faithfulness. The ancient and the modern, the original and the contemporary, always belong together. A text still means what its writer meant.

In this dialectic between the old and the new, we often become conscious of a clash of cultures, which calls for great spiritual sensitivity. On the one hand, we must be aware of the ancient cultural terms in which God spoke his word, so that we may discern between his eternal truth...
and its transient setting. On the other, we must be aware of the modern cultures and world views which condition us, some of whose values can make us blind and deaf to what God wants to say to us.

3. The Church’s Teaching Authority

It is one thing to have a set of principles for biblical interpretation; it is another to know how to use them. How are these principles to be applied, and who is responsible for applying them?

a. The Individual and the Community

Evangelicals, who since the Reformation have emphasized both “the priesthood of all believers” and “the right of private judgment,” insist on the duty and value of personal Bible study. The Second Vatican Council also urged that “easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful.”

Both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, however, recognize the dangers which arise from making Scripture available to all Christian people and from exhorting them to read it. How can they be protected from false interpretations? What safeguards can be found? Whether we are Evangelicals or Roman Catholics, our initial answer to these questions is the same: the major check to individualistic exegesis is the Holy Spirit who must be interpreted within the Christian community.

Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have inherited a rich legacy of tradition. We cherish creeds, confessions, and conciliar statements. We peruse the writings of the Fathers of the Church."

and from exhorting them to read it. How can they be protected from false interpretations? What safeguards can be found? Whether we are Evangelicals or Roman Catholics, our initial answer to these questions is the same: the major check to individualistic exegesis is the Holy Spirit who dwells and works in the Body of Christ, which is the Church. The Scriptures must be interpreted within the Christian community. It is only “with all the saints” that we can comprehend the full dimensions of God’s love (Eph. 3:18).

Roman Catholics also say that Scripture is interpreted by the Church. Yet the Church’s task, paradoxically speaking, is at one and the same time to instruct and to exhort. How can they be protected from false interpretations? What safeguards can be found? Whether we are Evangelicals or Roman Catholics, our initial answer to these questions is the same: the major check to individualistic exegesis is the Holy Spirit who must be interpreted within the Christian community.

Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have inherited a rich legacy of tradition. We cherish creeds, confessions, and conciliar statements. We peruse the writings of the Fathers of the Church. We read books and commentaries. Christ also gives his Church teachers in the present (Eph. 4:11), and it is the duty of Christian people to listen to them respectfully. The regular application of these principles for biblical interpretation; it is another to know how to use them. How are these principles to be applied, and who is responsible for applying them?

"Many of our teachers belong to the past. Both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have inherited a rich legacy of tradition. We cherish creeds, confessions, and conciliar statements. We peruse the writings of the Fathers of the Church."
4. Can the Church Be Reformed?

a. The Need for Reform

So far in this first section of our Report we have concentrated on the Church's responsibility to teach. Can it also learn? Can the Church which gives instruction receive it? More particularly, can Scripture exercise a reforming role in the Church? Is the Church itself under the Scripture it expounds?

These are questions which the Roman Catholic Church put to itself anew during the Second Vatican Council, and has continued to ask itself since. Evangelicals, however, to whom continuous reformation by the Word of God has always been a fundamental concern, wonder whether the reform to which the Roman Catholic Church consented at Vatican II was radical enough. Has it been more than an aggiornamento of ecclesiastical institutions and liturgical forms? Has it touched the Church's theological life or central structures? Has there been an inner repentance?

At the same time, Roman Catholics have always asked whether Evangelicals, in the discontinuity of the 16th-century Reformation, have not lost something essential to the gospel and the Church. Has it touched the Church's theological life or central structures? Has there been an inner repentance?

Yet we all agree that the Church needs to be reformed, and that its reformation comes from God. The one truth is in God himself. He is the reformer by the power of his Spirit according to the Scriptures. In order to discern what he may be saying, Christian individuals and communities need each other. Individual believers must keep their eyes on the wider community of faith, and churches must be listening to the Spirit, who may bring them correction or insight through an individual believer.

b. Our Response to God's Word

We agree on the objectivity of the truth which God has revealed. Yet it has to be subjectively received, indeed “apprehended,” if through it God is to do his reforming work. How then should our response to revelation be described?

We all acknowledge the difficulties we experience in receiving God's Word. For as it comes to us, it finds each of us in our own social context and culture. True, it creates a new community, but this community also has cultural characteristics derived both from the wider society in which it lives and from its own history which has shaped its understanding of God’s revelation. So we have to be on the alert, lest our response to the Word of God is distorted by our cultural conditioning.

One response will be intellectual. For God's revelation is a rational revelation, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. So the Christian community is always concerned to understand and to formulate the faith, so that it may preserve truth and rebut error.

Response to God's truth can never be purely cognitive, however. Truth in the New Testament is to be “done” as well as “known,” and so to find its place in the life and experience of individuals and churches. Paul called this full response “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). It is a commitment of the whole person.

Understanding, faith, and obedience will in their turn lead to proclamation. For revelation by its very nature demands communication. The believing and obeying community must be a witnessing community. And as it faithfully proclaims what it understands, it will increasingly understand what it proclaims.

Thus reform is a continuous process, a work of the Spirit of God through the agency of the Word of God.

2. The Nature of Mission

The very existence of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission testifies to our common commitment to mission. One of the factors which led to its inauguration was the publication of the Lausanne Covenant (1974) and of Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI’s apostolic exhortation Evangelization in the Modern World (1975). These two documents supplied some evidence of a growing convergence in our understanding of mission. Not that Evangelicals or Roman Catholics regard either of these statements as exhaustive, but they consider them valuable summaries and teaching tools.

1. The Basis of Mission

In response to the common criticism that we have no right to evangelize among all peoples, we together affirm the universality of God's purposes. God’s creation of the world and of all humankind means that all should be subject to his Lordship (Ps. 24:1-2; Eph. 3:8-11). The call of Abraham and of Israel had the wider purpose that all nations might see God's glory in his people and come to worship him. In the New Testament Jesus sends his disciples out in proclamation, witness, leading to the apostolic mission to all nations. In his Epistle to the Romans Paul teaches that, since all without distinction have sinned, so all without distinction are offered salvation, Gentiles as well as Jews (3:22f.; 10:12).

We are agreed that mission arises from the self-giving life and love of the triune God himself and from his eternal purpose for the whole creation. Its goal is the God-centered Kingdom of the Father, exhibited through the building of the Body of Christ, and cultivated in the fellowship of the Spirit. Because of Christ's first coming and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christian mission has an eschatological dimension: it invites men and women to enter the Kingdom of God through Christ the Son by the work and regeneration of the Spirit.

We all agree that the arrival of the messianic Kingdom through Jesus Christ necessitates the announcement of the good news, the summons to repentance and faith, and the gathering together of the people of God. Sometimes Jesus clearly used “the Kingdom of God” and “salvation” as synonyms. For to announce the arrival of the Kingdom of God is to proclaim its realization in the coming of Jesus Christ. And the Church witnesses to the Kingdom when it manifests the salvation it has received.

At the same time, long-standing tensions exist between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. While both sides affirm that the pilgrim Church is missionary by its very nature, its missionary activity is differently understood.

Vatican II defines the Church for Roman Catholics as “the sacrament of salvation,” the sign and promise of redemption to each and every person without exception. For them, therefore, “mission” includes not only evangelization but also the service of human need, and the building up and expression of fellowship in the Church. It is the mission of the Church to anticipate the Kingdom of God as liberation from the slavery of sin, slavery to the Law, and from death—by the preaching of the gospel, by the forgiveness of sins, and by sharing in the Lord’s Supper. But the Spirit of God is always at work throughout human history to bring about the liberating reign of God.

Evangelization is the proclamation (by word and example) of the good news to the nations. The good news is that God’s actions in Jesus Christ are the climax of a divine revelation and relationship that has been available to everyone from the beginning. Roman Catholics assert that the whole of humanity is in a collective history which God makes to be a history of salvation. The mystery of the gospel is the announcement by the Church to the world of this merging of the history of salvation with the history of the world.

Evangelicals generally, on the other hand, do not regard the history of salvation as coterminous with the history of the world, although some are struggling with this question. The Church is the beginning and anticipation of the new creation, the first-born among his creatures. Though all in Adam die, not all are automatically in Christ. So life in Christ has to be received by grace with repentance through faith. With yearning Evangelicals plead for a response to the atoning work of Christ in his death and

Announcing

The American Society of Missiology will hold its 1986 annual meeting at North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, June 20-22. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 19-20 at North Park in conjunction with the ASM. Dr. Charles R. Taber of Emmanuel School of Religion is President of the ASM, and Dr. Samuel Moffett of Princeton Theological Seminary is President of the APM for 1985-86. Further information may be obtained from Dr. Wilbert R. Shenk, Secretary-Treasurer of the ASM, Box 1092, Elkhart, IN 46515.
2. Authority and Initiative in Mission

Primary Christian obedience, we agree, is due to the Lord Jesus Christ and is expressed in both our individual and our common life under his authority. Roman Catholics and Evangelicals recognize that the tension between ecclesiastical authority and personal initiative, as also between the institutional and the charismatic, has appeared throughout biblical and Church history.

While for Roman Catholics hierarchical structures of teaching and pastoral authority are essential, the servant Church, as described by Vatican Council II, is called to express herself more fully in the exercise of apostolic “collegiality” and “subsidiarity” (the principle that ecclesial decisions are made at the lowest level of responsibility). Evangelicals have traditionally emphasized the personal right of every believer to enjoy direct access to God and the Scriptures. There is also among them a growing realization of the importance of the Church as the Body of Christ, which tempers personal initiative through the restraint and direction of the fellowship.

This issue of authority has a bearing on mission. Are missionaries sent, or do they volunteer, or is it a case of both? What is the status of religious orders, mission boards or missionary societies, and para-church organizations? How do they relate to the churches or other ecclesial bodies? How can a preoccupation with jurisdiction (especially geographical) be reconciled with the needs of subcultures, especially in urban areas, which are often overlooked?

Although our traditions differ in the way we respond to these questions, we all wish to find answers which take account both of Church structures and of the liberty of the Spirit outside them.

3. Evangelization and Socio-political Responsibility

The controversy over the relationship between evangelization and socio-political responsibility is not confined to Roman Catholics and Evangelicals; it causes debate between and among all Christians.

We are agreed that “mission” relates to every area of human need, both spiritual and social. Social responsibility is an integral part of evangelization; and the struggle for justice can be a manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Jesus both preached and healed, and sent his disciples out to do likewise. His predilection for those without power and without voice continues God’s concern in the Old Testament for the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the defenseless alien.

In particular we agree:

a. that serving the spiritual, social, and material needs of our fellow human beings together constitutes love of neighbor and therefore “mission”;

b. that an authentic proclamation of the good news must lead to a call for repentance, and that authentic repentance is a turning away from social as well as individual sins;

c. that since each Christian community is involved in the reality of the world, it should lovingly identify with the struggle for justice as a suffering community;

d. that in this struggle against evil in society, the Christian must be careful to use means which reflect the spirit of the gospel. The Church’s responsibility in a situation of injustice will include repentance for any complicity in it, as well as intercessory prayer, practical service, and prophetic teaching which sets forth the standards of God and his Kingdom.

We recognize that some Roman Catholics and some Evangelicals find it difficult to subscribe to any inseparable unity between evangelization and the kind of socio-political involvement which is described above. There is also some tension concerning the allocation of responsibility for social service and action. Roman Catholics accept the legitimacy of involvement by the Church as a whole, as well as by groups and individuals. Among Evangelicals, however, there are differences between the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist traditional understandings of Church and society. All would agree that Christian individuals and groups have social responsibilities; the division concerns what responsibility is assigned to the Church as a whole.

4. God’s Work Outside the Christian Community

We have written about the Church and the Kingdom. We are agreed that the concept of the Church implies a limitation, for we talk about “church members,” which implies that there are “nonmembers.” But how widely should we understand the Kingdom of God? We all agree that God works within the Christian community, for there he rules and dwells. But does he also work outside, and if so how?

This is a question of major missiological importance. All of us are concerned to avoid an interpretation of the universal saving will of God, which makes salvation automatic without the free response of the person. At least four common convictions have emerged from our discussions. They concern the great doctrines of creation, revelation, salvation, and judgment.

1. Creation. God has created all humankind, and by right of creation all humankind belongs to God. God also loves the whole human family and gives to them all “life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:25).

2. Revelation. There are elements of truth in all religions. These truths are the fruit of a revelatory gift of God. Evangelicals often identify their source in terms of general revelation, common grace, or the remnant image of God in humankind. Roman Catholics more frequently associate them with the work of the Logos, the true light, coming into the world and giving light to every man (Jn. 1:9), and with the work of his Holy Spirit.

3. Salvation. There is only one Savior and only one gospel. There is no other name but Christ’s, through whom anyone may be saved (Acts 4:12). So all who receive salvation are saved by the free initiative of God through the grace of Christ.

4. Judgment. While the biblical concept of judgment refers to both reward and punishment, it is clear that those who remain in sin by resisting God’s free grace (whether they are inside or outside the visible boundaries of the Church) provoke his judgment, which leads to eternal separation from him. The Church itself also stands under the judgment of God whenever it refuses or neglects to proclaim the gospel of salvation to those who have not heard Christ’s name.

The sphere for missionary activity is described differently within each tradition. Roman Catholics would expect God’s mercy to be exercised effectively in benevolent action of his grace for the majority of humankind, unless they specifically reject his offer. Such a position gives them cause for confidence. Evangelicals consider that this view has no explicit biblical justification, and that it would tend to diminish the evangelistic zeal of the Church. Evangelicals are therefore less optimistic about the salvation of those who have no personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

We all affirm that the missionary enterprise is a participation in the mission of Jesus and the mission of his Church. The urgency to reach all those not yet claimed by his Lordship impels our mission.

Whether or not salvation is possible outside the Christian community, what is the motivation for mission work? We agree that the following strong incentives urgently impel Christians to the task of mission:

a. to further the glory of God; the earth should be a mirror to reflect his glory;

b. to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ; all men and women are called to submit to his authority;

c. to proclaim that Christ has wrestled with Satan and dethroned him; in baptism and conversion we renounce Satan’s rule and turn to Christ and righteousness;

d. to proclaim that man does not live by bread alone; the gospel of salvation is the perfect gift of God’s loving grace;

e. to hasten the return of the Lord—the eschatological dimension. We look for the day of the Lord when the natural order will be completely redeemed, the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge...
3. The Gospel of Salvation

Roman Catholics and Evangelicals share a deep concern for the content of the good news we proclaim. We are anxious on the one hand to be faithful to the living core of the Christian faith, and on the other to communicate it in contemporary terms. How then shall we define the gospel?

1. Human Need

Diagnosis must always precede prescription. So, although human need is not strictly part of the good news, it is an essential background to it. If the gospel is good news of salvation, this is because human beings are sinners who need to be saved.

In our description of the human condition, however, we emphasize the importance of beginning positively. We affirm that all men and women are made by God, for God, and in the image of God, and that sin has defaced but not destroyed this purpose and this image (Gen. 9:6; Jas. 3:9). Therefore, as the creation of God, human beings have an intrinsic worth and dignity. Also, because of the light which enlightens everybody, we all have within us an innate desire for God which nothing else can satisfy.

As Christians, we must respect every human being who is seeking God, even when the search is expressed in ignorance (Acts 17:23).

Nevertheless original sin has intervened. We have noted Thomas Aquinas' description of original sin, namely "the loss of original justice" (i.e., a right relationship with God) and such "concupiscence" as constitutes a fundamental disorder in human nature and relationships; so that all our desires are inclined towards the making of decisions displeasing to God.

Evangelicals insist that original sin has distorted every part of human nature, so that it is permeated by self-centeredness. Consequently, the Apostle Paul describes all people as "enslaved," "blind," "dead," and "under God's wrath," and therefore totally unable to save themselves.

Roman Catholics also speak of original sin as an injury and disorder which has weakened—though not destroyed—human free will. Human beings have "lifted themselves up against God and sought to attain their goal apart from him." As a result this has upset the relationship linking man to God and "has broken the right order that should reign within himself as well as between himself and other men and all creatures." Hence human beings find themselves drawn to what is wrong and of themselves unable to overcome the assaults of evil successfully, "so that everyone feels as though bound by chains."

Clearly there is some divergence between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals in the way we understand human sin and need, as well as in the language we use to express them. Roman Catholics think Evangelicals overstress the corruption of human beings by affirming their 'total depravity' while Evangelicals think Roman Catholics underestimate it and are therefore unwisely optimistic about the capacity, ability, and desire of human beings to respond to the grace of God. Yet we agree that all are sinners, and that all stand in need of a radical salvation, which includes deliverance from the power of evil, together with reconciliation to God and adoption into his family.

2. The Person of Jesus Christ

The radical salvation which human beings need has been achieved by Jesus Christ. Evangelicals and Roman Catholics are agreed about the centrality of Christ and of what God has done through him for salvation. "The Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world" (1 Jn. 4:14). But who was this Savior Jesus?

Jesus of Nazareth was a man, who went about doing good, teaching with authority, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and making friends with sinners to whom he offered pardon. He made himself known to his apostles, whom he had chosen, and with whom he lived, as the Messiah (Christ) promised by the Scriptures. He claimed a unique filial relation to God whom in prayer he called his Father (Abba). He thus knew himself to be the Son of God, and exhibited the power and authority of God over nature, human beings, and demonic powers. He also spoke of himself as the Son of man. He fulfilled the perfect obedience of the Servant in going even to death on the cross. Then God raised him from the dead, confirming that he was from the beginning the Son he claimed to be (Ps. 2:7). Thus he was both "descended from David according to the flesh" and "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3-4). This is why his apostles confessed him as Lord and Christ, Son of God, Savior of humankind, sent by the Father, agent through whom God created all things, in whom we have been chosen from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), the Word made flesh.

The Incarnation of the Son was an objective event in history, in which the divine Word took upon himself our human nature. Within a single person were joined full divinity and full humanity. Although this understanding of him was not precisely formulated until the theological debates of the early centuries, we all agree that the Chalcedonian Definition faithfully expresses the truths to which the New Testament bears witness.

The purposes of the Incarnation were to reveal the Father to us, since otherwise our knowledge of God would have been deficient; to assume our nature in order to die for our sins and so accomplish our salvation, since he could redeem only what he had assumed; to establish a living communion between God and human beings, since only the Son of God made human could communicate to human beings the life of God; to supply the basis of the immiatio, since it is the incarnate Jesus we are to follow; to reaffirm the value and dignity of humanness, since God was not ashamed to take on himself our humanity; to provide in Jesus the firstfruits of the new humanity, since he is the "firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29); and to effect the redemption of the cosmos in the end.

"Roman Catholics think Evangelicals overstress the corruption of human beings by affirming their 'total depravity' . . . while Evangelicals think Roman Catholics underestimate it and are therefore unwisely optimistic about the capacity, ability, and desire of human beings to respond to the grace of God."

So then, in fidelity to the gospel and in accordance with the Scriptures, we together confess the person of Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary and became truly man, in order to be the Savior of the world.

In our missionary task we have not only to confess Christ ourselves, but also to interpret him to others. As we do so, we have to consider, for example, how to reconcile for Jews and Moslems the monotheism of the Bible with the divine sonship of Jesus, how to present to Hindus and Buddhists the transcendent personality of God, and how to proclaim to adherents of traditional religion and of the new religious consciousness the supreme Lordship of Christ. Our Christology must always be both faithful to Scripture and sensitive to each particular context of evangelization.
3. The Work of Jesus Christ

It was this historic person, Jesus of Nazareth, fully God and fully human, through whom the Father acted for the redemption and reconciliation of the world. Indeed, only a person who was both God and human could have been the mediator between God and human beings. Because he was human he could represent us and identify with us in our weakness. Because he was God he could bear our sin and destroy the power of evil. This work of redemption was accomplished supremely through the death of Jesus Christ, although we acknowledge the unity of his incarnate life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection. For his death completed the service of his life (Mk. 10:45) and his resurrection confirmed the achievement of his death (Rom. 4:25).

Christ was without sin, and therefore had no need to die. He died for our sin, and in this sense “in our place.” We are agreed about this basic truth and about other aspects of the Atonement. But in our discussion we disagree about the words “substitution” and “solidarity,” although these concepts are not altogether exclusive.

Evangelicals lay much stress on the truth that Christ’s death was “substitutionary.” In his death he did something which he did not do during his life. He actually “became sin” for us (2 Cor. 5:21) and “became a curse” for us (Gal. 3:13). Thus God himself in Christ propitiated his own wrath, in order to avert it from us. In consequence, having taken our sin, he gives us his righteousness. We stand accepted by God in Christ, not because Christ offered the Father our obedience, but because he bore our sin and replaced it with his righteousness.

Roman Catholics express Christ’s death more in terms of “solidarity.” In their understanding Jesus Christ in his death made a perfect offering of love and obedience to his Father, which recapitulated his whole life. In consequence, we can enter into the sacrifice of Christ and offer ourselves to the Father in and with him. For he became one with us in order that we might become one with him.

Thus the word “gospel” has come to have different meanings in our two communities.

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Thus the word “gospel” has come to have different meanings in our two communities.

For Evangelicals, it is the message of deliverance from sin, death, and condemnation, and the promise of pardon, renewal, and indwelling by Christ’s Spirit. These blessings flow from Christ’s substitutionary death. They are given by God solely through his grace, without respect to our merit, and are received solely through faith. When we are accepted by Christ, we are part of his people, since all his people are “in” him.

For Roman Catholics the gospel centers in the person, message, and gracious activity of Christ. His life, death, and resurrection are the foundation of the Church, and the Church carries the living gospel to the world. The Church is a real sacrament of the gospel. So the difference between us concerns the relationship between the gospel and the Church. In the one case, the gospel reconciles us to God through Christ and thus makes us a part of his people; in the other, the gospel is found within the life of his people, and thus we find reconciliation with God.

Although pastoral, missionary, and cultural factors may lead us to stress one or other model of Christ’s saving work, the full biblical range of words (e.g., victory, redemption, propitiation, justification, reconciliation) must be preserved, and none may be ignored.

The Resurrection, we agree, lies at the heart of the gospel and has many meanings. It takes the Incarnation to its glorious consummation, for it is the human Christ Jesus who reigns glorified at the Father’s right hand, where he represents us and prays for us. The Resurrection was also the Father’s vindication of Jesus, reversing the verdict of those who condemned and crucified him, visibly demonstrating his sonship, and giving us the assurance that his atoning sacrifice had been accepted. It is the resurrected and exalted Lord who sent his Spirit to his Church and who, claiming universal authority, now sends us into the world as his witnesses. The Resurrection was also the beginning of God’s new creation, and is his pledge both of our resurrection and of the final regeneration of the universe.

4. The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ

In a world of increasing religious pluralism we affirm together the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He was unique in his person, in his death, and in his resurrection. Since in no other person has God become human, died for the sins of the world, and risen from death, we declare that he is the only way to God (Jn. 14:6), the only Savior (Acts 4:12), and the only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). No one else has his qualifications.

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ implies his universality. The one and only is meant for all. We therefore proclaim him both “the Savior of the world” (Jn. 4:42) and “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

We have not been able to agree, however, about the implications of his universal salvation and Lordship. Together we believe that “God . . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4), that the offer of salvation in Christ is extended to everybody, that the Church has an irreplaceable responsibility to announce the good news of salvation to all peoples, that all who hear the gospel have an obligation to respond to it, and that those who respond to it are incorporated into God’s new, worldwide, multiracial, multicultural community, which is the Father’s family, the Body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. These aspects of the universality of Christ we gladly affirm together.

Roman Catholics go further, however, and consider that, if human sin is universal, all the more is Christ’s salvation universal. If everyone born into the world stands in solidarity with the disobedience of the first Adam, still the human situation as such has been changed by the definitive event of salvation, that is, the Incarnation of the Word, his death, his resurrection, and his gift of the Spirit. All are now part of the humanity whose new head has overcome sin and death. For all there is a new possibility of salvation which colors their entire situation, so that it is possible to say, “Every person, without exception, has been redeemed by Christ, and with each person, without any exception, Christ is in some way united, even when that person is not aware of that.” To become beneficiaries of the obedience of the Second Adam, men and women must turn to God and be born anew with Christ into the fullness of his life. The mission of the Church is to be the instrument to awaken this response by proclaiming the gospel, itself the gift of salvation for everyone who receives it, and to communicate the truth and grace of Christ to all.

Evangelicals, on the other hand, understand the universality of Christ differently. He is universally present as God (since God is omnipresent) and as potential Savior (since he offers salvation to all), but not as actual Savior (since not all accept his offer). Evangelicals wish to preserve the distinction, which they believe to be apostolic, between those who are in Christ and those who are not (who consequently are in sin and under judgment), and so between the old and new communities. They insist on the reality of the transfer from one community to the other, which can be realized only through the new birth; “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The relationship between the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the whole human race naturally leads Roman Catholics to ask whether there exists a possibility of salvation for those who belong to non-Christian religions and even for atheists. Vatican II was clear on this point: “Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church.” On the one hand, there are those who “sincerely seek God and, moved by his grace, strive by their deeds to do his will.” On the other, there are those who “have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to his grace.” Both groups are prepared by God’s grace to receive his salvation either when they hear the gospel or even if they do not. They can be saved by Christ, in a mysterious relation to his Church.

Evangelicals insist, however, that according to the New Testament...
those outside Christ are “perishing,” and that they can receive salvation only in and through Christ. They are therefore deeply exercised about the eternal destiny of those who have never heard of Christ. Most Evangelicals believe that, because they reject the light they have received, they condemn themselves to hell. Many are more reluctant to pronounce on their destiny, because their own freedom and God’s sovereignty make it difficult for them to judge the world in righteousness by a man whom they have appointed” (Acts 17:30–31).

5. The Meaning of Salvation

In the Old Testament salvation meant rescue, healing and restoration for those already related to God within the covenant. In the New Testament it is directed to those who have not yet entered into the new covenant in Jesus Christ.

Salvation has to be understood in terms of both salvation history (the mighty acts of God through Jesus Christ) and salvation experience (a personal appropriation of what God has done through Christ). Roman Catholics and Evangelicals together strongly emphasize the objectivity of God’s work through Christ, but Evangelicals tend to lay more emphasis than Roman Catholics on the necessity of a personal response to, and experience of, God’s saving grace. To describe this, again the full New Testament vocabulary is needed (e.g., the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, redemption, the new birth—all of which are gifts of Christ) and salvation experience (a personal appropriation of what God has done through Christ).

We agree that what is offered us through the death and resurrection of Christ is essentially “deliverance,” viewed both negatively and positively. Negatively, it is a rescue from the power of Satan, sin, and death, from guilt, alienation (estrangement from God), moral corruption, self-centeredness, existential despair and fear of the future, including death. Positively, it is a deliverance into the freedom of Christ. This freedom brings human fulfillment. It is essentially becoming “sons in the Son” and therefore brothers to each other. The unity of the disciples of Jesus is a sign both that the Father sent the Son and that the Kingdom has arrived. Further, the new community expresses itself in eucharistic worship, in serving the needy (especially the poor and disenfranchised), in open fellowship with people of every age, race, and culture, and in conscious continuity with the historic Christ through fidelity to the teaching of his apostles. Is salvation broader than this? Does it include socio-political liberation?

Roman Catholics draw attention to the three dimensions of evangelization which Evangelii Nuntiandi links. They are the anthropological, in which humanity is seen always within a concrete situation; the theological, in which the unified plan of God is seen within both creation and redemption; and the evangelical, in which the exercise of charity (refusing to ignore human misery) is seen in the light of the story of the Good Samaritan.

We all agree that the essential meaning of Christ’s salvation is the restoration of the broken relationship between sinful humanity and a saving God; it cannot therefore be seen as a temporal or material project, making evangelization unnecessary.

This restoration of humanity is a true “liberation” from enslaving forces; yet this work has taken on an expanded and particular meaning in Latin America. Certainly God’s plan of which Scripture speaks includes his reconciliation of human beings to himself and to one another.

The sociopolitical consequences of God’s saving action through Christ have been manifest throughout history. They still are. Specific problems (e.g., slavery, urbanization, church-state relations, and popular religiosity) have to be seen both in their particular context and in relation to God’s overall plan as revealed in Scripture and experienced in the believing community through the action of the Spirit.

Appendix: The Role of Mary in Salvation

Roman Catholics would rather consider the question of Mary in the context of the Church than of salvation. They think of her as a sinless woman, since she was both overshadowed by the Spirit at the Incarnation (Lk. 1:35) and baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14f. and 2:1–4). She thus represents all Christians who have been made alive by the Spirit, and Roman Catholics speak of her as the “figure” or “model” of the Church.

The reason why we have retained this section on Mary within the chapter on “The Gospel of Salvation” (albeit as an Appendix) is that it is in the context of salvation that Evangelicals have the greatest difficulty with Marian teaching and that we discussed her role at ERCDOM II.

The place of Mary in the scheme of salvation has always been a sensitive issue between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. We have tried to face it with integrity.

a. The Interpretation of Scripture

It raises in an acute form the prior question how we use and interpret the Bible. We are agreed that biblical exegesis begins with a search for the “literal” sense of a text, which is what its author meant. We further agree that some texts also have a “spiritual” meaning, which is founded on the literal but goes beyond it because it was intended by the Divine—though not necessarily the human—author (e.g., Is. 7:14). This is often called the sensus plenior. The difference between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals lies in the degree to which the spiritual sense may be separated from the literal. Both sides agree that, whenever Scripture is not explicit, there is need for some check on the extravagances of interpreters. We are also agreed that this check is supplied by the context, both the immediate context and the whole of Scripture, which is a unity. Roman Catholics, however, say that Scripture must be read in the light of the living, developing tradition of the Church, and that the Church has authority to indicate what the true meaning of Scripture is. Thus, in relation to Mary, Roman Catholics concede that devotion to Mary was a post-apostolic practice, but add that it was a legitimate development, whereas Evangelicals believe it has been unwarrantably imported into the Roman Catholic interpretation of Scripture.

b. Mary and Salvation

In one of our ERCDOM II sessions, entitled, “The Place of the Virgin Mary in Salvation and Mission,” an Evangelical response was made to Pope Paul VI’s 1974 apostolic charge Marialis Cultus (“To Honor Mary”). Evangelical members of the dialogue asked for an explanation of two expressions in it which, at least on the surface, appeared to them to ascribe to Mary an active and participatory role in the work of salvation.

The first (1.5) describes the Christmas season as a prolonged commemoration of Mary’s “divine, virginal and salvific Motherhood.” In what sense, Evangelicals asked, could Mary’s motherhood be called “salvific”? The Roman Catholics replied that the explanation of the term was to be found in the text itself, namely that she “brought the Savior into the world” by her obedient response to God’s call.

The second passage (1.15) refers to “the singular place” that belongs to Mary in Christian worship, not only as “the holy Mother of God” but as “the worthy Associate of the Redeemer.” In what sense, Evan-
gelicals asked, could Mary properly be described as the Redeemer’s “worthy Associate”? It did not mean, the Roman Catholics responded, that she was personally without need of redemption, for on the contrary she was herself saved through her Son’s death. In her case, however, “salvation” did not signify the forgiveness of sins, but that, because of her predestination to be the “Mother of God,” she was preserved from original sin (“immaculate conception”) and so from sinning. Positively, she could be described as the Redeemer’s “Associate” because of her unique link with him as his mother. The word should not give offense, for we too are “associates of the Redeemer” both as recipients of his redemption and as agents through whose prayers, example, sacrifice, service, witness, and suffering his redemption is proclaimed to others.

The Evangelicals made a double response to these explanations. First, they still found the language ambiguous, and considered this ambiguity particularly unfortunate in the central area of salvation. Secondly, they felt the whole Roman Catholic emphasis on Mary’s role in salvation exaggerated, for when the apostles John and Paul unfolded the mystery of the Incarnation, it is to honor Christ the Son, not Mary the mother. At the same time, they readily agreed that in Luke’s infancy narrative Mary is given the unique privilege of being the Savior’s mother, and on that account is addressed as both “highly favored” and “blessed among women” (1:28, 42). If Evangelicals are to be true to their stance on sola Scriptura, they must therefore overcome any inhibitions they may have and faithfully expound such texts.

Our discussion also focused on the use of the term “cooperation.” For example, it is stated in Lumen Gentium, chapter VIII, that Mary is rightly seen as “co-operating in the work of human salvation through free faith and obedience” (II, 56), and again that “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise . . . to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this unique source” (III, 62). The Evangelicals agreed that the notion of cooperation with God is biblical (e.g., “workers together with him” (2 Cor. 6:1)), but pointed out that this refers to a divine-human partnership in which our share lies in the proclaiming, and not in any sense in the procuring, of salvation. The Roman Catholics agreed. The “cooperation” between Christ and us, they said, does not mean that “to undo anything to Christ or his work, since he is complete in himself, and his work has been achieved. It means rather that we share in the benefits of what he has done (not in the doing of it) and that (by his gift alone, as in the case of Mary) we offer ourselves to him in gratitude to spend our lives in his service, and to be used by him as instruments of his grace (vid. Gal. 1). The Evangelicals were relieved, but still felt that the use of the word “cooperation” in this sense was inappropriate.

Another word we considered was “mediatrix,” the feminine form of “mediator.” The Evangelicals reacted with understandable vehemence against its application to Mary, as did also some Roman Catholics. She must not be designated thus, they insisted, since the work of mediation belongs to Christ alone. In reply, the Roman Catholics were reassuring. Although the word (or rather its Greek equivalent) was used of Mary from the 5th century onwards, and although some bishops were pressing at Vatican II for its inclusion in the text, the Council deliberately avoided it. It occurs only once, and then only in a list of Mary’s traditional titles. Moreover, in the same section of Lumen Gentium (III, 60–62) Christ is twice called “the one Mediatrix” in accordance with 1 Tim. 2:5–6, and his “unique mediation” is also referred to twice, which (it is added) Mary’s maternal ministry “in no way obscures or diminishes.”

The Final Document of the Puebla Conference on the Evangelization of Latin America (1979), which contains a long section entitled “Mary, Mother and Model of the Church” (paras. 282–303), was cited by Evangelical participants. Paragraph 293 declares that Mary “now lives immersed in the mystery of the Trinity, praising the glory of God and interceding for human beings.” Evangelicals find this a disturbing expression, and not all Roman Catholics are happy with it, finding it too ambiguous (if indeed “immersed” is an accurate translation of the Spanish original inmersa: there has been some controversy about this). Roman Catholics explain that the notion of Mary’s “immersion” in the Trinity means that she is the daughter of the Father, the mother of the Son, and the temple of the Holy Spirit (all three expressions being used in paragraph 53 of Lumen Gentium). But they strongly insist that, of course, she cannot be on a level with the three Persons of the Trinity, let alone a fourth Person.

In addition, they point out that Roman Catholics’ understanding of the role of Mary should be determined by the whole of chapter VIII of Lumen Gentium, and other official statements of Roman Catholic belief, rather than by popular expressions of Marian piety.

The fears of Evangelicals were to some extent allayed by these Roman Catholic explanations and assurances. Yet a certain Evangelical uneasiness remained. First, the traditional Catholic emphasis on Mary’s role in salvation (e.g., as the “New Eve,” the life-giving mother) still seemed to them incompatible with the much more modest place accorded to her in the New Testament. Secondly, the vocabulary used in relation to Mary seemed to them certainly ambiguous and probably misleading. Is it not vitally important, they asked, especially in the central doctrine of salvation through Christ alone, to avoid expressions which require elaborate explanation (however much hallowed by long tradition) and to confine ourselves to language which is plainly and unequivocally Christ-centered?

At the same time Roman Catholics are troubled by what seems to them a notable neglect by Evangelicals of the place given by God to Mary in salvation history and in the life of the Church.

4. Our Response in the Holy Spirit to the Gospel

We agree that evangelism is not just a proclamation of Christ’s historic work and saving offer. Evangelism also includes a call for response which is often called “conversion.”

1. The Work of the Holy Spirit

This response, however, does not depend on the efforts of the human person, but on the initiative of the Holy Spirit. As is stated in the Scripture, “for by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). There is therefore a trinitarian dimension to the human person’s response: it is the Father who gives; his supreme gift is his Son, Jesus Christ, for the life of the world (6:23); and it is the Holy Spirit who opens our minds and hearts so that we can accept and proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3) and live as his disciples. This means that the Holy Spirit guarantees that the salvation which the Father began in Jesus Christ becomes effective in us in a personal way.

When human persons experience conversion, the Holy Spirit illumines their understanding so that Jesus Christ can be confessed as the Truth itself revealed by the Father (Jn. 14:6). The Holy Spirit also renders converted persons new creatures, who participate in the eternal life of the Father and the Son (Jn. 11:25–26). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of faith, hope, and love, already enables converted persons to have a foretaste of the Kingdom which will be totally realized when the Son hands over all things to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28).

Thus, the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian conversion has to be seen as the actual continuation of his previous creative and redemptive activity throughout history. Indeed, at the beginning the Holy Spirit was present at the act of creation (Gen. 1:2), and he is continually sent forth as the divine breath by whom everything is created and by whom the face of the earth is renewed (Ps. 104:29–30). Although all persons are influenced by the life-giving Spirit of God, it is particularly in the Old Testament, which he inspired, that the recreative work of the Holy Spirit, after the fall of humankind, is concretely manifested. In order to ground the divine plan to recreate humanity, the Holy Spirit first taught the patriarchs to fear God and to practice righteousness. And to assemble his people Israel and to bring it back to the observance of the Covenant, the Holy Spirit raised up judges, kings, and wise men. Moreover, the prophets, under the guidance of the Spirit, announced that the Holy Spirit would create a new heart and bestow new life by being poured out in a unique way on Israel and, through it, on all humanity (Ezek. 36:24–28; Joel 2:28–29).

The recreative work of the Holy Spirit reached its culminating point in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ who, as the New Adam, was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34). Because Jesus Christ was the privileged bearer of the Holy Spirit, he is the one who gives the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of human beings: “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who gives the Holy Spirit”
Moreover, some who have grown up in a Christian home find themselves converted to him, that is, receive him by faith as their personal Lord and Savior. This new life in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit is signified by baptism and by membership in the Body of Christ, the Church. Furthermore, through his indwelling in converted persons, the Holy spirit attests to being incorporated into the Church, all signed to us in baptism (Acts 2:38-39). The expression “continuous conversion” (if used) must therefore be understood as referring to our daily repentance as Christians, our response to new divine challenges, and our gradual transformation into the image of Christ by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). Moreover, some who have grown up in a Christian home find themselves to be regenerate Christians without any memory of a conscious conversion.

We agree that baptism must never be isolated, either in theology or in practice, from the context of conversion. It belongs essentially to the whole process of repentance, faith, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and membership of the covenant community, the Church. A large number of Evangelicals (perhaps the majority) practice only “believers’ baptism.” That is, they baptise only those who have personally accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and they regard baptism both as the convert’s public profession of faith and as the dramatization (by immersion in water) of his or her having died and risen with Christ. The practice of infant baptism (practiced by some Evangelicals, rejected by others) assumes both that the parents believe and will bring their children up in the Christian faith, and that the children will themselves later come to conscious repentance and faith.

We rejoice together that the whole process of salvation is the work of God by the Holy Spirit. And it is in this connection that Roman Catholics understand the expression ex opere operata in relation to baptism. It does not mean that the sacraments have a mechanical or automatic efficacy. Its purpose rather is to emphasize that salvation is a sovereign work of the Spirit in mission.

In the light of biblical teaching, particularly in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and also in view of the insights gained through Christian missionary experience, we believe that, although the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Truth by the Holy Spirit is in itself complete in the Scriptures, nevertheless he is wanting to lead the Church into a yet fuller understanding of this revelation. Hence we rejoice that in the various cultural contexts in which men and women throughout nearly twenty centuries of Christian history have been enabled by the Holy Spirit to respond to the gospel, we can perceive the many-sidedness of the unique Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all humankind.

Accordingly, we hope that the Holy Spirit will make us open to such new and further insights into the meaning of Jesus Christ, as he may wish to communicate by means of various manifestations of Christian life in our Christian communities, as well as in human societies where we earnestly desire that he will create a response to the gospel in conversion, baptism, and incorporation into Christ’s Body, the Church.

### 3. Church Membership

Conversion and baptism are the gateway into the new community of God, although Evangelicals distinguish between the visible and invisible aspects of this community. They see conversion as the means of entry into the invisible church and baptism as the consequently appropriate means of entry into the visible church. Both sides agree that the church should be characterized by learning, worship, fellowship, holiness, service, and evangelism (Acts 2:42-47). Furthermore, life in the Church is characterized by hope and love, as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: “And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). It is the Holy Spirit who arouses and sustains our response to the living Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the unity of the human family, which was disrupted by sin, is gradually being recreated as the new humanity emerges (Eph. 2:15).

The issue of church membership has raised in our dialogue the delicate and difficult question of the conversion of those already baptized. How are we to think of their baptism? And which church should they join? This practical question can cause grave problems in the relationship between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. It is particularly acute in places like Latin America, where large numbers of baptized Roman Catholics have had a minimal relationship with the Roman Catholic Church since their baptism.

When such Roman Catholics have a conversion experience, many Evangelical churches welcome them into membership without rebaptizing them. Some Baptist churches, however, and some others, would insist on baptizing such converts, as indeed they baptize Protestant converts who have been baptized in infancy.

Then there is the opposite problem of Protestant Christians wishing to become members of the Roman Catholic Church. Since Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church has recognized other Christians as being in the first place “brethren,” rather than subjects for conversion. Nevertheless, since the Roman Catholic Church believes that the one Church of Christ subsists within it in a unique way, it further believes it is legitimate to receive other Christians into its membership. Such membership is not seen as an initial step towards salvation, however, but as a further step towards Christian growth. Considerable care is taken nowadays to ensure

“We have been agreeably surprised to discover a considerable consensus among us that repentance and faith, conversion and baptism, regeneration and incorporation into the Christian community all belong together, although we have needed to debate their relative positions in the scheme of salvation.”

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Roman Catholics affirm the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ and emphasize the mystery of Christ and his salvation becoming present and effective by the working of the Holy Spirit under the sacramental sign,25 whereas Evangelicals (in different ways according to their different Church traditions) view the sacrament as the means by which Christ blesses us by drawing us into fellowship with himself, as we remember his death until he comes again (1 Cor. 11:26).

Despite the lack of full accord which we have just described, both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics agree that the Eucharist is spiritual food and spiritual drink (1 Cor. 10:3-4, 16), because the unifying Spirit is at work in the sacrament. As a memorial of the New Covenant, the Eucharist is a privileged sign in which Christ's saving grace is especially signified and/or made available to Christians. In the Eucharist the Holy Spirit makes the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper effective in the Church and soul may have its dark nights. In summary, Evangelicals appear to Roman Catholics more pessimistic about human nature before conversion, but more optimistic about it afterwards, while Evangelicals allege the opposite about Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics and Evangelicals together agree that Christian assurance is more an assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22) than of experience, and that perseverance to the end is a gratuitous gift of God.

5. The Church and the Gospel

Evangelicals, because of their emphasis on the value of the individual, have traditionally neglected the doctrine of the Church. The topic was not neglected in our dialogue, however; we found ourselves united in certain convictions about the Church, and in our commitment to it. We were able to agree on a fourfold relationship between the Church and the gospel.

1. The Church Is a Part of the Gospel

The redemptive purpose of God has been from the beginning to call out a people for himself. When he called Abraham, he promised to bless all nations through his posterity, and has kept his promise. For all those who are united to Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews, are Abraham's spiritual children and share in the promised blessing.26

This wonderful new thing, namely, the abolition of the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles and the creation of a single new humanity, was at the heart of Paul's gospel (Eph. 2:14-15). He called it "the mystery of Christ," which, having been made known to him, he must make known to others (Eph. 3:3-9).

Both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics are conscious of past failure in their understanding of the Church. Roman Catholics used to concentrate on the Church as a hierarchical institution, but now (since Vatican II) see it in new perspective by stressing the important biblical images such as that of the People of God. Evangelicals have sometimes preached an excessively individualistic gospel, "Christ died for me." This is true (Gal. 2:20), but it is far from the whole truth, which is that Christ gave himself for us "to purify for himself a people ... " (Tit. 2:14).

Thus both Roman Catholics and Evangelicals agree that the Church as the Body of Christ is part of the gospel. That is to say, the good news includes God's purpose to create for himself through Christ a new, redeemed, united, and international people of his own.

2. The Church Is a Fruit of the Gospel

The first clear proclamation of the good news in the power of the Holy Spirit resulted in the gathered community of God's people—the Church (Acts 2:38-42). This was to become the pattern for subsequent apostolic and missionary endeavors with the gospel. The condition for membership of the community is repentance (chiefly from the sin of unbelief and rejection of Christ), and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, witnessed to in submission to baptism in his name (Acts 2:38). The benefits of membership include the personal enjoyment of the forgiveness of sins, and participation in the new life of the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:13).

From the beginning, the community of God's people was marked by a devotion to the apostolic teaching, to fellowship (a sharing which extended to practical loving care), to the breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper), and to the prayers or public worship (Acts 2:42). To this believing, worshiping, caring, and witnessing community, "the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

Evangelicals on the whole have tended to emphasize personal salvation almost to the point of losing sight of the central place of the Church. The multiplication of evangelistic organizations and agencies which are not church-based has contributed to this distortion. There is however a growing desire to correct it. For wherever the gospel goes, it bears fruit in the spread and growth of the Church.

3. The Church Is an Embodiment of the Gospel

The very life of the Church as God's new community becomes itself a witness to the Gospel. "The life of the community only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the
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6. The Gospel and Culture

The influence of culture on evangelism, conversion, and church formation is increasingly recognized as a topic of major missiological importance. The Willowbank Report Gospel and Culture (1978) defines culture as “an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity.”

Viewed thus, culture pervades the whole of human life, and it is essential for Christians to know how to evaluate it. It is acknowledged that Evangelicals and Roman Catholics start from a different background. Evangelicals tend to stress the discontinuity, and Roman Catholics the continuity, between man unredeemed and man redeemed. At the same time, both emphases are qualified. Discontinuity is qualified by the Evangelical recognition of the image of God in humankind, and continuity by the Roman Catholic recognition that human beings and societies are contaminated by sin. The Lausanne Covenant summarized this tension as follows: “Because man is God’s creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.”

We have particularly concentrated on the place of culture in four areas: in the Bible, in cross-cultural evangelism, in conversion, and in church formation.

1. Culture and the Bible

We have already affirmed that the Bible is the Word of God through the words of human beings. Realizing that human language and human thought-forms reflect human cultures, we saw the need to explore two major questions:

a. What was the attitude of the biblical authors to their cultures?

b. How should we ourselves react to the cultural conditioning of Scripture?

In answer to the first question, we considered the New Testament. Its message comes to us from the context of the 1st-century world, with its own images and vocabulary, and is thus set in the context of that world’s culture. The culture has become the vehicle of the message.

Yet within that 1st-century culture there were elements which the Christian and the Church were required to resist, out of loyalty to the Lord Jesus. Distinctions between the new community and the surrounding culture were clearly drawn. At the same time, the Christian and the Church enjoyed a new freedom in Christ, which enabled them to discern those elements in the culture which must be rejected as hostile to their faith and those which were compatible with it and could be accepted on that account be affirmed.

Blindness, which leads Christians to tolerate the evil and/or overlook the good in their culture, is a permanent temptation.

Our other question was concerned with how we ourselves should react to the cultural conditioning of Scripture. It breaks down into two subsidiary questions which express the options before us. First, are the biblical formulations (which we have already affirmed to be normative) so intrinsically conditioned by their mode of specific cultural expression that...
they cannot be changed to suit different cultural settings? Put another
way, has biblical inspiration (which Evangelicals and Roman Catholics both
acknowledge) made the cultural forms themselves normative? The alter-
native is to ask whether it is the revealed teaching which is normative, so
that this may be re-expressed in other cultural forms. We believe the latter
to be the case, and that such re-expression or translation is a responsibility
laid both on cross-cultural missionaries and on local Christian leaders.32

2. Culture and Evangelization

Christian missionaries find themselves in a challenging cross-cultural,
indeed tri-cultural, situation. They come from a particular culture them-
selves, they travel to people nurtured in another, and they take with them
a biblical gospel which was originally formulated in a third. How will this
interplay of cultures affect their evangelism? And how can they be
simultaneously faithful to Scripture and relevant to the local culture?

In the history of mission in this century a progress is discernible. The
successive approaches may be summarized as follows:
a. In the first period the missionary brought along with the gospel
message many of the cultural trappings of his or her own situation.
Then culture, instead of being (as in the New Testament) a vehicle
for the proclamation of the gospel, became a barrier to it. Acci-
dentals of teaching and practice were taught as if they were
essentials, and a culture-Christianity was preached, as if it were
the gospel.
b. In the second period the gospel message was translated into terms
(language and thought-forms, artistic symbols and music) appro-
piate to those to whom it was brought, and the cultural trappings
began to be left behind. Now local cultures, instead of being ne-
eglected, were respected and where possible used for the better
communication of the gospel. In a word, the gospel began to be
“contextualized.”
c. So at the present time, missionaries endeavor to bring both the
biblical gospel and an experience of life in Christ. They also en-
deavor to take seriously the people to whom they have come, with
their worldview and way of life, so that they may find their own
authentic way of experiencing and expressing the salvation of
Christ. This kind of evangelism tries to be both faithful to the
biblical revelation and relevant to the people’s culture. In fact, it
aims at bringing Scripture, context, and experience into a working
relationship for the effective presentation of the gospel.

3. Culture and Conversion

We are clear that conversion includes repentance, and that repentance
is a turning away from the old life. But what are the aspects of the old life
from which a convert must turn away? Conversion cannot be just turning
away from “sin” as this is viewed in anyone particular culture. For
different cultures have different understandings of sin, and we have to
recognize this aspect of pluralism. So missionaries and church leaders in
each place need great wisdom, both at the time of a person’s conversion
and during his or her maturing as a Christian, to distinguish between the
moral and the cultural, between what is clearly approved or condemned
by the gospel, on the one hand, and by custom or convention, on the
other. The repentance of conversion should be a turning away only from
what the gospel condemns.

4. Culture and Church Formation

In the development of the Christian community in each place, as in
the other areas we have mentioned, missionaries must avoid all cultural
imperialism; that is, the imposition on the Church of alien cultural forms.
Just as the gospel has to be inculturated, so must the Church be incul-
turated also.

We all agree that the aim of “indigenization” or “inculturation” is to make local Christians congenial members of the Body of Christ. They
must not imagine that to become Christian is to become Western and so
to repudiate their own cultural and national inheritance. The same prin-
ciple applies in the West, where too often to become Christian has also
meant to become middle class.

There are a number of spheres in which each Church should be al-
lowed to develop its own identity. The first is the question of certain forms
of organization, especially as they relate to Church leadership. Although
Roman Catholics and Evangelicals take a different approach to authority
and its exercise, we are agreed that in every Christian community (espe-
cially a new one) authority must be exercised in a spirit of service. “I
am among you as one who serves,” Jesus said (Lk. 22:27). Yet the expres-
sion given to leadership can vary according to different cultures.

The second sphere is that of artistic creativity—e.g., church architec-
ture, painting, symbols, music, and drama. Local churches will want to
express their Christian identity in artistic forms which reflect their local
culture.

A third area is theology. Every church should encourage theological
reflection on the aspirations of its culture, and seek to develop a theology
which gives expression to these. Yet only in such a way as to apply, not
compromise, the biblical revelation.

Two problems confront a church which is seeking to “inculturate”
itself, namely, provincialism and syncretism. “Provincialism” asserts
the local culture of a particular church to the extent that it cuts itself adrift
from, and even repudiates, other churches. We are agreed that new expres-
sions of local church life must in no way break fellowship with the wider
Christian community.

“Syncretism” is the attempt to fuse the biblical gospel with ele-
ments of local culture which, being erroneous or evil, are incompatible
with it. But the gospel’s true relation to culture is discriminating, judging
some elements and welcoming others. The criteria it applies to different
elements or forms include the questions whether they are under the judg-
ment of Christ’s Lordship, and whether they manifest the fruit of the
Spirit.

It has to be admitted that every expression of Christian truth is in-
adequate and may be distorted. Hence the need for mutually respectful
dialogue about the relative merits of old and new forms, in the light of
both the biblical revelation and the experience of the wider community of
faith.

The Second Vatican Council addressed itself to these important mat-
ters. It recognized that in every culture there are some elements which
may need to be “purged of evil association” and to be restored “to
Christ their source. who overthrows the rule of the devil and limits the
manifold malice of evil.” In this way “the good found in people’s minds
and hearts, or in particular customs and cultures, is purified, raised to a
higher level and reaches its perfection.”

Hence it is not a question of adapting things which come from the
world usurped by Satan, but of repossessing them for Christ. To take them
over as they are would be syncretism. “Repossession,” on the other
hand, entails four steps: (a) the selection of certain elements from one’s
culture; (b) the rejection of other elements which are incompatible with
the essence of the biblical faith; (c) the purification from the elements
selected and adopted of everything unworthy; (d) the integration of these
into the faith and life of the Church.

The age to come has broken into this present age in such a way as to
Touch our lives with both grace and judgment. It cuts through every cul-
ture. Vatican II referred to this discontinuity, and also emphasized the
need for “the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age and nation”
to be fortified, completed, and restored in Christ.34

For Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and our supreme desire vis-à-vis each
culture is to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

7. The Possibilities of Common Witness

We turn in our last chapter from theological exploration to practical action.
We have indicated where we agree and disagree. We now consider what
we can do and cannot do together. Since our discussion on this topic was
incomplete, what follows awaits further development.

1. Our Unity and Disunity

We have tried to face with honesty and candor the issues which divide
us as Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. We have neither ignored, nor
discounted, nor even minimized them. For they are real, and in some cases
serious.

At the same time, we know and have experienced that the walls of
our separation do not reach to heaven. There is much that unites us, and much in each other’s different manifestations of Christian faith and life which we have come to appreciate. Our concern throughout our dialogue has not been with the structural unity of churches, but rather with the possibilities of common witness. So when we write of “unity,” it is this that we have in mind.

To begin with, we acknowledge in ourselves and in each other a firm belief in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This faith is for us more than a conviction; it is a commitment. We have come to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

We also recognize that the gospel is God’s good news about his Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1–3), about his godhead and manhood, his life and teaching, his acts and promises, his death and resurrection, and about the salvation he has once accomplished and now offers. Moreover, Jesus Christ is our Savior and our Lord, for he is the object of our personal trust, devotion, and expectation. Indeed, faith, hope, and love are his gifts to us, bestowed on us freely without any merit of our own.

In addition, God’s Word and Spirit nourish this new life within us. We see in one another “the fruit of the Spirit,” which is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23). No wonder Paul continues in this text with an exhortation that there be among us “no self-conceit, no provoking of control” (Gal. 5:22–23). No wonder Paul continues in this text with an exhortation that there be among us “no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another” (v. 26).

There is therefore between us an initial if incomplete unity. Nevertheless, divisions continue, even in some doctrines of importance, as we have made clear in earlier chapters of our report. Our faith has developed in us strong convictions (as it should), some uniting us, others dividing us. The very strength of our convictions has not only drawn us together in mutual respect, but has also been a source of painful tension. This has been the price of our encounter; attempts to conceal or dilute our differences would not have been authentic dialogue, but a travesty of it. So would have been any attempt to magnify or distort our differences. We confess that in the past members of both our constituencies have been guilty of misrepresenting each other, on account of either laziness in study, unwillingness to listen, superficial judgments, or pure prejudice. Whenever we have done this, we have borne false witness against our neighbor.

This, then, is the situation. Deep truths already unite us in Christ. Yet real and important convictions still divide us. In the light of this, we ask: What can we do together?

2. Common Witness

“Witness” in the New Testament normally denotes the unique testimony of the apostolic eyewitnesses who could speak of Jesus from what they had seen and heard. It is also used more generally of all Christians who commend Christ to others out of their personal experience of him, and in response to his commission. We are using the word here, however, in the even wider sense of any Christian activity which points to Christ, a usage made familiar by the two documents, jointly produced by the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, which are entitled Common Witness and Proselytism (1970) and Common Witness (1980).

a. Common Witness in Bible Translation and Publishing

It is extremely important that Roman Catholics and Protestants should have an agreed, common text in each vernacular. Divergent texts breed mutual suspicion; a mutually acceptable text develops confidence and facilitates joint Bible study. The United Bible Societies have rendered valuable service in this area, and the Common Bible (RSV) published in English in 1973, marked a step forward in Roman Catholic-Protestant relationships. The inclusion of the Old Testament Apocrypha (books written in Greek during the last two centuries before Christ), which the Roman Catholic Church includes as part of the Bible, has proved a problem, and in some countries Evangelicals have for this reason not felt free to use this version. The United Bible Societies and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity have published some guidelines in this matter, which recommend that the Apocrypha be printed “as a separate section before the New Testament” and described as “deutero-canonical.” Many Evangelicals feel able to use a Common Bible in these circumstances, although most would prefer the Apocrypha to be omitted altogether.

b. Common Witness in the Use of Media

Although we have put down the availability of a Common Bible as a priority need, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics are united in recognizing the importance of Christian literature in general, and of Christian audio-visual aids. In particular, it is of great value when the Common Bible is supplemented by common Bible reading aids. In some parts of the world Bible atlases and handbooks, Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and explanatory notes for daily Bible reading are available in a form which betrays no denominational or ecclesiastical bias. The same is true of some Christian films and filmstrips. So Evangelicals and Roman Catholics may profitably familiarize themselves with each other’s materials, with a view to using them whenever possible.

In addition, the opportunity is given to the churches in some countries to use the national radio and television service for Christian programs. We suggest, especially in countries where Christians form a small minority of the total population, that the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, and specialist organizations cooperate rather than compete with one another in the development of suitable programs.

c. Common Witness in Community Service

The availability of welfare varies greatly from country to country. Some governments provide generous social services, although often the spiritual dimension is missing, and then Christians can bring faith, loving com-

“There seems to be no justification for organizing separate Roman Catholic and Evangelical projects of a purely humanitarian nature, and every reason for undertaking them together.”

passion, and hope to an otherwise secular service. In other countries the government’s provision is inadequate or unevenly distributed. In such a situation the churches have a particular responsibility to discover the biggest gaps and seek to fill them. In many cases the government welcomes the Church’s contribution.

In the name of Christ, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals can serve human need together, providing emergency relief for the victims of flood, famine, and earthquake, and shelter for refugees; promoting urban and rural development; feeding the hungry and healing the sick; caring for the elderly and the dying; providing a marriage guidance, enrichment and reconciliation service; a pregnancy advisory service and support for single-parent families; arranging educational opportunities for the illiterate and drug addiction and young women from prostitution. There seems to be no justification for organizing separate Roman Catholic and Evangelical projects of a purely humanitarian nature, and every reason for undertaking them together. Although faith may still in part divide us, love for neighbor should unite us.

d. Common Witness in Social Thought and Action

There is a pressing need for fresh Christian thinking about the urgent social issues which confront the contemporary world. The Roman Catholic Church has done noteworthy work in this area, not least through the social encyclicals of recent Popes. Evangelicals are only now beginning to catch up after some decades of neglect. It should be to our mutual advantage to engage in Christian social debate together. A clear and united Christian witness is needed in face of such challenges as the nuclear arms race, North-South economic inequality, the environmental crisis, and the

January 1986

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Our Summer Seminars offer a faculty of 16 distinguished scholars. Each is a practical 'hands-on' professional missionary, dedicated to preparing top-level leadership for the task of world mission.

Designed not only for experienced field missionaries, our Summer Seminars are also for international church leaders, mission executives and those preparing themselves for cross-cultural ministries.

You will find the seminars particularly valuable if your time is limited. They will also allow and encourage you to concentrate on specialized areas through two-week 'intensives' throughout the summer. Our mandate is to meet the challenge of today by providing greater understanding and better preparation for cross-cultural evangelism and ministry.

REGULAR SESSIONS

SESSION 1: June 23-July 3 • nine days only

CLINTON: Implementing Change in Christian Organizations 8 a.m.-12 noon
KRAFT: Phenomenology and Institution of Folk Religions (CORE) 1-5 p.m.
HIEBERT: Anthropological Tools for Missionaries 8 a.m.-12 noon.

SESSION 2: July 7-18

PIERSON: Historical Development of the Christian Movement (CORE) 1-4 p.m.
GILLILAND: Pauline Theology and the Mission Church 9 a.m.-12 noon
WOODBERRY: Introduction to Islam 9 a.m.-12 noon
BREWSTERS: Language/Culture Learning and Missions 8 a.m.-12 noon (starts July 5).

SESSION 3: July 21-August 1

GREENWAY: The Dynamics of Urban Evangelism 9 a.m.-12 noon
McCURRY: The Gospel and Islam 9 a.m.-12 noon.

SESSION 4: August 4-15

GLASSER: Biblical Theology of Mission (CORE) 9 a.m.-12 noon.
GIBBS: Theology of Church Growth 9 a.m.-12 noon
BREWSTERS: Incarnation and Mission Among the World's Poor 8 a.m.-12 noon

SESSION 5: August 18-29

WAGNER: Foundations of Church Growth (CORE) 9 a.m.-12 noon
ELLISTON: Theological Education by Extension 9 a.m.-12 noon.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

MODULE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE LEARNING:

June 23-July 3

HIEBERT: Anthropological Tools for Missionaries 8 a.m.-12 noon
BREWSTERS: Language/Culture Learning and Mission 8 a.m.-12 noon. (*may be taken separately)

MODULE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES: July 7-August 15

WOODBERRY: Introduction to Islam 9 a.m.-12 noon (may be taken separately)
McCURRY: The Gospel and Islam 9 a.m.-12 noon
August 4-15—SAMUEL ZWEMER INSTITUTE FACULTY Church Planting in Muslim Contexts 9 a.m.-12 noon.
Whether a common mind will lead us to common action will depend largely on how far the government of our countries is democratic or autocratic, influenced by Christian values or imbued with an ideology unfriendly to the gospel. Where a regime is oppressive, and a Christian prophetic voice needs to be heard, it should be a single voice which speaks for both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Such a united witness could also provide some stimulus to the quest for peace, justice, and disarmament; testify to the sanctity of sex, marriage, and family life; agitate for the reform of permissive abortion legislation; defend human rights and religious freedom, denounce the use of torture, and campaign for prisoners of conscience; promote Christian moral values in public life and in the education of children; seek to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination; contribute to the renewal of decayed inner cities; and oppose dishonesty and corruption. There are many such areas in which Roman Catholics and Evangelicals can both think together and take action together. Our witness will be stronger if it is a common witness.

c. Common Witness in Dialogue

The word “dialogue” means different things to different people. Some Christians regard it as inherently compromising, since they believe it expresses an unwillingness to affirm revealed truth, let alone to proclaim it. But to us “dialogue” means a frank and serious conversation between individuals or groups, in which each side is prepared to listen respectfully to the other, with a view to increased understanding on the part of both. We see no element of compromise in this. On the contrary, we believe it is essentially Christian to meet one another face to face, rather than preserving our isolation from one another and even indifference to one another, and to listen to one another’s own statements of position, rather than relying on second-hand reports. In authentic dialogue we struggle to listen carefully not only to what the other person is saying, but to the strongly cherished concerns which lie behind his or her words. In this process our caricatures of one another become corrected.

We believe that the most fruitful kind of Evangelical–Roman Catholic dialogue arises out of joint Bible study. For, as this report makes clear, both sides regard the Bible as God’s Word, and acknowledge the need to read, study, believe, and obey it. It is surely through the Word of God that, illumined by the Spirit of God, we shall progress towards greater agreement.

We also think that there is need for Evangelical–Roman Catholic dialogue on the great theological and ethical issues which are being debated in all the churches, and that an exchange of visiting scholars in seminaries could be particularly productive.

Honest and charitable dialogue is beneficial to those who take part in it; it enriches our faith, deepens our understanding, and fortifies and clarifies our convictions. It is also a witness in itself, inasmuch as it testifies to the desire for reconciliation and meanwhile expresses a love which encompasses even those who disagree.

Further, theological dialogue can sometimes lead to common affirmation, especially in relation to the unbelieving world and to new theological trends which owe more to contemporary culture than to revelation or Christian tradition. Considered and united declarations by Roman Catholics and Evangelicals could make a powerful contribution to current theological discussion.

f. Common Witness in Worship

The word “worship” is used in a wide range of senses from the spontaneous prayers of the “two or three” met in Christ’s name in a home to formal liturgical services in church.

We do not think that either Evangelicals or Roman Catholics should hesitate to join in common prayer when they meet in each other’s homes. Indeed, if they have gathered for a Bible study group, it would be most appropriate for them to pray together for illumination before the study and after it for grace to obey. Larger informal meetings should give no difficulty either. Indeed, in many parts of the world Evangelicals and Roman Catholics are already meeting for common praise and prayer, both in charismatic celebrations and in gatherings which would not describe themselves thus. Through such experience they have been drawn into a deeper experience of God and so into a closer fellowship with one another.

Occasional participation in each other’s services in church is also natural, especially for the sake of family solidarity and friendship.

It is when the possibility of common participation in the Holy Communion or Eucharist is raised that major problems of conscience arise. Both sides of our dialogue would strongly discourage indiscriminate approaches to common sacramental worship.

The Mass lies at the heart of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, and it has been emphasized even more in Catholic spirituality since the Second Vatican Council. Anyone is free to attend Mass. Other Christians may not receive Communion at it, however, except when they request it in certain limited cases of “spiritual necessity” specified by current Roman Catholic legislation. Roman Catholics may on occasion attend a Protestant Communion Service as an act of worship. But there is no ruling of the Roman Catholic Church which would permit its members to receive Communion in a Protestant Church service, even on ecumenical occasions. Nor would Roman Catholics feel in conscience free to do so.

Many Evangelical churches practice an “open” Communion policy, in that they announce a welcome to everybody who “is trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation and is in love and charity with all people,” however their church affiliation. They do not exclude Roman Catholic believers. Most Evangelicals would feel conscientiously unable to present themselves at a Roman Catholic Mass, however, even assuming they were invited. This is because the doctrine of the Mass was one of the chief points at issue during the 16th-century Reformation, and Evangelicals are not satisfied with the Roman Catholic explanation of the relation between the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass. But this question was not discussed at our meetings.

Since both Roman Catholics and Evangelicals believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus as a means of grace, and agree that he commanded his disciples to “do this in remembrance” of him, it is a grief to us that we are so deeply divided in an area in which we should be united, and that we are therefore unable to obey Christ’s command together."

"Since both Roman Catholics and Evangelicals believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus as a means of grace, and agree that he commanded his disciples to ‘do this in remembrance’ of him, it is a grief to us that we are so deeply divided in an area in which we should be united, and that we are therefore unable to obey Christ’s command together."
proclaiming the gospel, and that therefore any common evangelism necessarily presupposes a common commitment to the same gospel. In earlier chapters of this report we have drawn attention to certain doctrines in which our understanding is identical or very similar. We desire to affirm these truths together. In other important areas, however, substantial agreement continues to elude us, and therefore common witness in evangelism would seem to be premature, although we are aware of situations in some parts of the world in which Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have felt able to make a common proclamation.

Evangelicals are particularly sensitive in this matter, which is perhaps not surprising, since their very appellation "evangelical" includes in itself the word "evangel" (gospel). Evangelicals claim to be "gospel" people, and are usually ready, if asked, to give a summary of their understanding of the gospel. This would have at its heart what they often call "the finished work of Christ," namely, that by bearing our sins on the cross Jesus Christ did everything necessary for our salvation, and that we have only to put our trust in him in order to be saved. Although many Evangelicals will admit that their presentation of the gospel is often one-sided or defective, yet they could not contemplate any evangelism in which the good news of God's justification of sinners by his grace in Christ through faith alone is not proclaimed.

Roman Catholics also have their problems of conscience. They would not necessarily want to deny the validity of the message which Evangelicals preach, but would say that important aspects of the gospel are missing from it. In particular, they emphasize the need both to live out the gospel in the sacramental life of the church and to respect the teaching authority of the Church. Indeed, they see evangelism as essentially a Church activity done by the Church in relation to the Church.

So long as each side regards the other's view of the gospel as defective, there exists a formidable obstacle to be overcome. This causes us particular sorrow in our dialogue on mission, in which we have come to appreciate one another and to discover unexpected agreements. Yet we must respect one another's integrity. We commit ourselves to further prayer, study, and discussion in the hope that a way forward may be found.

3. Unworthy Witness

We feel the need to allude to the practice of seeking to evangelize people who are already church members, since this causes misunderstanding and even resentment, especially when Evangelicals are seeking to "convert" Roman Catholics. It arises from the phenomenon which Evangelicals call "nominal Christianity," and which depends on the rather sharp distinction they draw between the visible Church of professing or "nominal" Christians and the invisible Church of committed or genuine Christians, that is, between those who are Christian only in name and those who are Christian in reality. Evangelicals see nominal Christians as needing to be won for Christ. Roman Catholics also speak of "evangelizing" such people, although they refer to them as "lapsed" or "inactive" rather than as "nominal," because they do not make a separation between the visible and invisible Church. They are understandably offended whenever Evangelicals appear to regard all Roman Catholics as ipso facto unbelievers, and when they base their evangelism on a distorted view of Roman Catholic teaching and practice. On the other hand, since Evangelicals seek to evangelize the nominal members of their own churches, as well as of others, they see this activity as an authentic concern for the gospel, and not as a reprehensible kind of "sheep-stealing." Roman Catholics do not accept this reasoning.

We recognize that conscientious conviction leads some people to change from Catholic to Evangelical or Evangelical to Catholic allegiance, and leads others to seek to persuade people to do so. If this happens in conscience and without coercion, we would not call it proselytism.

There are other forms of witness, however, which we would all describe as "unworthy," and therefore as being "proselytism" rather than "evangelism." We agree, in general, with the analysis of this given in the study document entitled Common Witness and Proselytism (1970), and in particular we emphasize three aspects of it.

First, proselytism takes place when our motive is unworthy; for example, when our real concern in witness is not the glory of God through the salvation of human beings but rather the prestige of our own Christian community, or indeed our personal prestige.

Secondly, we are guilty of proselytism whenever our methods are unworthy, especially when we resort to any kind of "physical coercion, moral constraint or psychological pressure," when we seek to induce conversion by the offer of material or political benefits, or when we exploit other people's need, weakness, or lack of education. These practices are an affront both to the freedom and dignity of human beings and to the Holy Spirit whose witness is gentle and not coercive.

Thirdly, we are guilty of proselytism whenever our message includes "unjust or uncharitable reference to the beliefs or practices of other religious communities in the hope of winning adherents." If we find it necessary to make comparisons, we should compare the strengths and weaknesses of one church with those of the other, and not set what is best in the one against what is worst in the other. To descend to deliberate misrepresentation is incompatible with both truth and love.

Conclusion

We who have participated in ERCDOM III are agreed that every possible opportunity for common witness should be taken, except where conscience forbids. We cannot make decisions for one another, however, because we recognize that the situation varies in different groups and places. In any case, the sad fact of our divisions on important questions of faith always puts a limit on the common witness which is possible. At one end of the spectrum are those who can contemplate no cooperation of any kind. At the other are those who desire a very full cooperation. In between are many who still find some forms of common witness conscientiously impossible, while they find others to be the natural, positive expression of common concern and conviction. In some Third World situations, for example, the divisions which originated in Europe are felt with less intensity, and mutual trust has grown: through united prayer and study of the Word of God. Although all Christians should understand the historical origins and theological issues of the Reformation, yet our continuing division is a stumbling block, and the gospel calls us to repentance, renewal, and reconciliation.

We believe that the Evangelical–Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission has now completed its task. At the same time we hope that dialogue on mission between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals will continue, preferably on a regional or local basis, in order that further progress may be made towards a common understanding, sharing, and proclaiming of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). We commit these past and future endeavors to God, and pray that by "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

"We recognize that conscientious conviction leads some people to change from Catholic to Evangelical or Evangelical to Catholic allegiance, and leads others to seek to persuade people to do so. If this happens in conscience and without coercion, we would not call it proselytism."

We commit these past and future endeavors to God, and pray that by "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15).
Appendix: The Participants

ERCDOM I
(Venice) April 1977

Evangelical Participants
Professor Peter Beyerhaus
Bishop Donald Cameron
Dr. Orlando Costas
Mr. Martin Goldsmith
Dr. David Hubbard
Reverend Gottfried Osei-Mensah
Reverend Peter Savage
Reverend John Stott

Roman Catholic Participants
Sister Joan Chatfield
Father Matthew Collin
Monsignor Basil Meeking
Father John Paul Musinsky
Father Waly Neven
Father Robert Rweyemamu
Father Thomas Stransky

ERCDOM II
(Cambridge, England) March 1982

Evangelical Participants
Dr. Kwame Bediako
Bishop Donald Cameron
Mr. Martin Goldsmith
Dr. David Hubbard
Reverend Peter Savage
Reverend John Stott
Dr. David Wells

Roman Catholic Participants
Sister Joan Chatfield
Father Parmananda Divarkar
Father Pierre Duprey
Monsignor Basil Meeking
Father John Mutiso-Mbinda
Father John Redford
Monsignor Pietro Rossano
Father Thomas Stransky

ERCDOM III
(Landévennec, France) April 1984

Evangelical Participants
Dr. Kwame Bediako
Bishop Donald Cameron
Dr. Harvie Conn
Mr. Martin Goldsmith
Reverend John Stott
Dr. David Wells

Roman Catholic Participants
Sister Joan Chatfield
Father Matthieu Collin
Sister Joan Delaney
Father Parmananda Divarkar
Monsignor Basil Meeking
Father Philip Rosato
Bishop Anselme Sanon
Father Bernard Sesboué
Father Thomas Stransky

Notes

1. “Evangelism” and “evangelization” are used indiscriminately in this Report. The former is commoner among Evangelicals, the latter among Roman Catholics, but both words describe the same activity of spreading the gospel.
2. Given the diversity of the Evangelical constituency, as well as the differences of understanding between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, the use of the word “Church” in this Report inevitably carries some ambiguity. Further conversations would be required before it would be possible to arrive at greater clarity and common terms of ecclesiological discourse.
4. Ibid., no. 4.
5. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum), nos. 23-24 (DOV II).
8. Lausanne Covenant, para. 4.
10. E.g., Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20.
12. Ibid., no. 10.
13. Ibid., no. 22.
16. In this Report we use “the Lord’s Supper,” “the Holy Communion,” and “the Eucharist” indiscriminately; no particular theology is implied by these terms. “The Mass” is limited to Roman Catholic contexts. Similarly, we use “sacrament” or “ordination” in relation to Baptism and Eucharist without doctrinal implications.
17. E.g., Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 2 Cor. 4:3-4.
18. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes), no. 13 (DOV II).
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
22. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), no. 8 (DOV II).
23. Lumen Gentium, no. 16.
25. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacerdalanum Concilium), nos. 7, 47 (DOV II).
26. E.g., Rom. 4; Gal. 3.
27. Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 15.
31. Lausanne Covenant, para. 10.
32. Here Roman Catholics will want to make reference to the encyclical of Pope John Paul II, June 2, 1985, Slavorum Apostoli (“Apostles of the Slavs”).
33. Decree on the Church’s Missiory Activity (Ad Gentes), no. 9 (DOV II).
34. Gaudium et Spes, no. 58.
36. See above, chapter 4:3.
Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1986

David B. Barrett

Introduction

The table opposite is the second in an annual series. Last January we gave statistics on sixty variables and commented on general twentieth-century trends. This year we add thirteen new variables (lines 7–10, 27, 52, 56, 66–71), and we shall now comment on them.

Worldwide Expansion of Cities (lines 7–10)

One of the most startling phenomena of the twentieth century has been the massive increase in the number of large cities. In the year 1900, the world had some 400 metropolises defined as mother cities of over 100,000 population each. Of these, only 20 were megacities (over 1 million population each), and 2 were supercities (over 4 million), i.e., London and New York. By 1986 these have mushroomed startlingly to 1,780 metropolises, 286 megacities, 46 supercities, and 14 supergiants (over 10 million population each). By A.D. 2000 megacities will have reached some 433 in number.

The Central Role of Christian Martyrs (line 27)

People often criticize statistics of Christians for not including quality of commitment. Line 27 describes Christians who undergo the ultimate test of commitment: martyrdom, which means losing one’s life for Christ as a result of human hostility. The annual numbers involved throughout the twentieth century are far higher than any of us had hitherto imagined. Martyrdom continues to play a major role in local, national, regional, continental, and global evangelization. Pentecostal theologian W. J. Hollenweger was right when he once wrote: “Evangelism is the most dangerous business.”

Ecclesiastical Crime (line 52)

It brings a note of reality to any analysis of Christian finance (line 48 onward) to realize that ecclesiastical crime is becoming a significant factor in many parts of the world. In the first world (Western world), embezzlement of church funds is still rare, largely because of the power of public opinion, tenacity of the investigating press, and swift retribution from the law. In the second world (Communist world), secret police discredit clergy and bishops with false accusations, and agents deliberately subvert or entrap church leaders with large cash payments. In the third world, ecclesiastical crime now has reached serious proportions. Whereas 95 percent of church leaders there are honest persons of integrity, some 5 percent have become small-time ecclesiastical crooks embezze lling sizable church funds, overseas grants, relief donations or foreign currency, or setting up phony relief or third-world-mission projects. A major factor contributing to this rash of petty crime has been the reluctance of Western donor agencies to enforce strict accounting for the huge sums of money they unload on third-world churches every year.

Christian Urban Mission (lines 66–70)

The number of urban Christians as a percentage of urban dwellers has fallen markedly during this century from 68.8 percent in the year 1900 to 45.5 percent today, largely as a result of massive urban population increase in third-world countries traditionally hostile to Christianity (line 69). The churches are losing the cities at the rate of 80,900 new non-Christian urban dwellers every day, or one every second (line 67). Whereas in the year 1900 there were only five non-Christian megacities in existence (the largest being Tokyo, Peking, Calcutta, Osaka), today that number has mushroomed to 126 non-Christian megacities and is likely to reach 202 by A.D. 2000. Many of these cities show growing hostility to organized Christian mission. This is formidable opposition indeed, totally unexpected by mission strategists in the year 1900.

Christian Megaministries (line 71)

Lastly, we should note that over the last five years, the number of persons reached by organized mass Christian outreach every day has been increasing markedly. In 1983 the United Bible Societies distributed 497,714,000 Scriptures (Bibles, Testaments, Portions, and Selections) in 1,800 languages (which is an average of 1.4 million a day). Christian movies in 1985 were shown to audiences averaging a million each night. Christian broadcasting in 1985 reached 23 percent of the entire world once a month or more, which means an average of 37 million different people every day. Such megaministries offer the only hope for keeping up with or surpassing the global population explosion of 84 million a year.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON TABLE (referring to numbered lines on facing page). Indented categories form part of, and are included in, unindented categories above them. Definitions of categories are as given and explained in World Christian Encyclopedia (1982), with additional data and explanations as below. Sources include in-process world surveys by author 7–10. Indentation means: supergiants are also counted as supercities which are also megacities, all of which are also metropolises (“mother cities”). 11. Widest definition: professing Christians plus secret believers. 25. Active members of the Renewal in older mainline denominations (Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant). 26. Secret believers. 27. World totals for all confessions (from survey by author, forthcoming). 34–38. The total of these entries can be reconciled to line 11 by referring to WCE, Global Table 4. To the total of these entries, add the category “nominal Christians,” and subtract “doubly-affiliated” and “disaffiliated” members, as found there. 35. Definitions of the eight continents or continental areas follow exactly United Nations practice. 42. Including 44. 48–55. Defined as in article “Silver and Gold Have None,” in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, October 1983, p. 130. 51. As distinct from churches’ (denominational) income.
### STATUS OF GLOBAL MISSION, 1986, IN CONTEXT OF 20TH CENTURY

#### WORLD POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total population</td>
<td>1,619,886,800</td>
<td>3,610,034,400</td>
<td>4,373,917,500</td>
<td>4,867,006,100</td>
<td>6,259,642,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Urban dwellers</td>
<td>1,354,212,000</td>
<td>2,797,490,000</td>
<td>2,108,978,000</td>
<td>2,316,381,000</td>
<td>2,617,211,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Rural dwellers</td>
<td>475,674,800</td>
<td>812,544,400</td>
<td>2,264,939,500</td>
<td>2,748,586,000</td>
<td>3,099,260,100</td>
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<td>4. Adult population</td>
<td>1,025,938,000</td>
<td>2,245,272,300</td>
<td>2,698,396,900</td>
<td>2,990,163,500</td>
<td>3,808,364,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Literates</td>
<td>486,705,000</td>
<td>1,437,761,900</td>
<td>1,774,022,700</td>
<td>1,999,793,100</td>
<td>2,413,221,000</td>
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<td>6. Nonliterates</td>
<td>729,233,000</td>
<td>807,465,600</td>
<td>924,394,200</td>
<td>990,701,500</td>
<td>1,110,969,200</td>
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#### WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolises (over 100,000 population)</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megacities (over 1 million)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supercities (over 4 million)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supermegacities (over 10 million)</td>
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#### WORLD POPULATION BY RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1986</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal religionists</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite indigenous Christians</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholics</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliens (foreign missionaries)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal income of church members</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parachurch and institutional income</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income of global foreign missions</td>
<td>53</td>
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#### MEMBERSHIP BY RELIGIOUS BLOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloc</th>
<th>1986</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglicans</td>
<td>34.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholics (non-Roman)</td>
<td>33.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodists</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite indigenous Christians</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholics</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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#### MEMBERSHIP BY CONTINENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>1986</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>8,756,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>1,765,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>273,788,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>60,025,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>59,569,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>4,311,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>16,347,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>97,002,000</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service agencies</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-mission sending agencies</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>9,500</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN WORKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National</th>
<th>1986</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>62,000</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in U.S. $, per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own personal income of church members</td>
<td>270 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving to Christian causes</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches' income</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish and institutional income</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastical crime</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income of global foreign missions</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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#### SCRIPITURE DISTRIBUTION (all sources)

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New commercial book titles per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>New titles including devotional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian periodicals</td>
<td>3,500</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibles per year</td>
<td>5,452,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Testaments per year</td>
<td>7,300,000</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING

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<th>Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian radio/TV stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monthly listeners/viewers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for Christian stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for secular stations</td>
<td>0</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN URBAN MISSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian megacities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New non-Christian urban dwellers per day</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Christians</td>
<td>159,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Christians as % of urban dwellers</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelized urban dwellers %</td>
<td>72.0</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN MEGAMINISTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World total all persons reached per day</td>
<td>250,000</td>
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#### WORLD EVANGELIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1986</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unevangelized populations</td>
<td>788,159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unevangelized as % of world</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correct Ideas Don’t Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology.


This is a European version of liberation theology. The book is exciting because it comes from a serious European (French Protestant) theologian doing theology inductively with full force. The author has decisively parted company with his peers who continue in the “venerable” tradition of propositional theology. The diagrams he uses to illustrate his inductive hermeneutic become progressively a little too complicated, but underlying them is this firm affirmation: “We believe on the basis of what we have lived, we believe a posteriori according to our life experience” (p. 41). In other words, even revelation “does not fall from the skies,” a saying he adapted from Mao Zedong’s writing in 1963 entitled “Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?” Mao answered his own question: “They come from social practice, and from it alone.”

Practice is a big word in Casalis’s inductive theology. It is impossible to say from the book whether he has learned anything else from Mao Zedong other than the catch phrase for his book title, but he is thoroughly inspired by Latin American theologians of liberation. His enthusiasm for liberation theology vibrates throughout the book. He tends to be overenthusiastic and has nothing critical to say about it. But he is right when he says: “A real understanding of the Bible is to be found in history, politics, and praxis,” and vice versa: “a real understanding of our times becomes articulated through the biblical message, through living as a disciple, through praying” (p. 74). Praxis in life and history is the key to faith and theology. Casalis goes on to apply this to his experience as a white Christian living in a West that has much to be liberated from, both internally and in relation to the third world. Perhaps it is his exercise of liberation theology within Western society that shows, incidentally, how far inductive theology has to go for Western theologians, including Casalis. He is one of the few enlightened and awakened ones, and his book is much needed spadework to ignite a belated theological revolution in Europe. —C. S. Song

Okumene Lexikon: Kirchen, Religionen, Bewegungen.


It is greatly to the credit of the editors and publishers of this substantial reference work that, in the midst of swirling controversies over all things ecumenical, they have brought world Christianity into focus for us as an interrelated whole. This the editors set forth as their purpose: “the knowledge and understanding of the forms of life and thought that have developed and are present in all the various churches as they follow and live the Christian message.” There is no given pattern for this, the editors realize. “So the nearly three hundred authors could be given complete freedom in their articles to set forth their ecumenical points of view.”

The result is a concise source book on ecumenicity in the broadest sense, on the issues at stake in relations among the churches, theological, organizational, and social, on the growth and change of churches themselves by confession and by country, on the major persons who have had influence in church life, and on the development and structure of the ecumenical movement among non-Roman churches and ecumenical changes in the Roman Catholic Church. A careful balance is maintained among Protestant, Roman Catholic and, where relevant, Orthodox perspectives on major doctrines and historical events. The authors are mostly German or Swiss, with a few drawn from other European countries and overseas. Understandably, developments in the German-speaking world are given fuller treatment than those elsewhere. Of particular value are the articles dealing with ecumenical issues that have been most intensely debated in that world: Abendmahl (communion), Amt (church office), Bekenntnis (confession), Dia­ konie (diakonie), and on through the alphabet to Taufe (baptism) and Union. These tend to be somewhat longer than the others and bring out most clearly the differences in thought and the varieties of experience among the churches and in the ecumenical discussion. Also helpful are substantial articles on the major Christian confessions including the differences within them, and on the principal non-Christian world religions. Nor have important secular categories that bear on church life—Friede (peace), Marxismus, Wissen­schaft und Technik (science and technology), et al.—been neglected, though on the whole not as fully handled.

The Lexikon’s treatment of the ecumenical movement and of the Christian world mission is highly varied, both in extent and in quality. Full attention is given to the World Council of Churches, in its origins, its history, its...
organization, its assemblies and conferences, and parts of its work. A supplement even brings an account of the Sixth Assembly, in Vancouver in 1983, a few months at most before publication date. The Faith and Order Movement is well described, up to its Lima meeting of 1982. There are good articles on the World YMCA and YWCA and on the World Student Christian Federation. The Christian Peace Conference is included and even the International Council of Christian Churches. On the Roman Catholic side Vatican Council II is given full coverage. A concise article on the Holy See presents its contemporary structure, and Roman Catholic perspectives are brought into various other contexts.

On the other hand, there are serious lacunae. Description of church life by continents is fairly good; by countries it is in most cases skeletal in the extreme. There is an article on world mission conferences, up through Melbourne and Pattaya 1980, but none on the International Missionary Council or on the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, its successor. There is no substantive treatment of the problematic of world mission over the past two centuries, or of its most recent expression in the fruitful dialogue among Protestant, Catholic, and conservative evangelical movements and scholars about the theology and practice of mission.

Equally serious is the Lexikon’s neglect of the work of the World Council of Churches in church and society. The Life and Work Movement up to the Amsterdam Assembly is described. The World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva 1966 is listed with other ecumenical meetings. But the vast sweep of ecumenical study and prophecy, centered in the Office and the Working Committee on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches—Responsible Society in World Perspective (1948-56), Studies in Rapid Social Change (1956-62), and the Future of Humanity and the Role of the Churches in a World of Science-Based Technology (1969-83)—receives only incidental mention and not even a place in the index. In the course of this, several world ecumenical conferences on social issues, most notably that on Faith, Science and the Future, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1979, are consigned to oblivion. A mountain has been ignored on the ecumenical landscape.

Finally, the Lexikon invites comparison with the substantial Weltkirchenlexikon of 1960, the first “ecumenical handbook,” as it called itself, to appear in any language. The Ökumen Lexikon is not a successor. It is about half the length. Its contributors and editors are drawn more from Germany and less from the ecumenical movement as a whole. The quality of the articles is comparable, but in the Ökumen Lexikon the concentration is more on the inner-church areas of doctrine and organization, less on mission and outreach. For fuller, more ecumenical information over the whole range of world Christianity up to the date of the book’s publication, one must still turn to the Weltkirchenlexikon. On the other hand, the Ökumen Lexikon is an important supplement. It brings the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions more directly into conversation. The older work had Orthodox, but lacked Roman Catholic participation. It deals worthily with changes in the past generation wrought by Vatican II, the ongoing series of World Council of Churches assemblies and at least, in ecumenical work, the Faith and Order movement, the Program to Combat Racism, and the interchurch aid and development work that is done ecumenically. And for those for whom the larger, earlier work is not available, it does cover the field enough to be a valuable reference tool.

—Charles C. West

---

**True or False?**

"We live in a global village."

**Answer:** False.

**We live in a global city.**

In 1900, six-sevenths of the world’s population was rural. By 1975, 24% of the world’s people lived in cities of 100,000 or more. By 2000, the United Nations predicts the world will have 414 cities of over one million people. Mexico City will have over 31 million people. Calcutta will have 19 million. Cairo over 16 million. The world currently spaws a new Chicago every month or so.

If you’re a Jonah in search of a Nineveh or a Paul on his way to Rome, join us in the Urban Missions Program at Westminster Theological Seminary.

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- internship in urban, cross-cultural churches for those without field experience
- inner city campus combining learning on the street and in the classroom
- extension materials to accelerate doctoral studies without leaving your place of ministry

---

Serving Christ in the city. For the city.
The Facts on File Dictionary of Religions.


Designed to give the general reader clear definitions of religious terms in brief compass, this dictionary presents various aspects of religion from ancient times to the present. The articles have been prepared by twenty-nine scholars, mostly from Great Britain. The subject matter was divided into thirty subject areas, and the authors were given a "matrix of thirty topics" to serve as a model of what they were to write.

The editor, senior lecturer in comparative religion at the University of Manchester in England, acknowledges the assistance given by Geoffrey Parrinder, Ninian Smart, and others, though their role is not defined. F. F. Bruce is the most widely known contributor.

Crucial to any such work is the list of topics assigned. While many entries are obvious choices, others seem to have been chosen arbitrarily. For example, we find ANGELS (BIBLICAL) and ANGELS (IN JUDAISM) but no entry for angels in Islam or Christianity. The General Index provides only spotty help here. Further, we find MUSIC (IN ISLAM) and MUSIC (JEWISH), but no other entries on music. The only article on slavery is SLAVERY (IN ISLAM).

While the greatest emphasis is given to Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, much space is devoted to the traditional religions of Africa, Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and North America. New religious movements in primal societies and Western societies are featured, but new religions in Japan are subsumed under either Shinto or Buddhism.

Special features increase the usefulness of the volume. There are sixty-four pages of bibliographical entries, grouped according to the thirty subject areas. Each article is coded with a reference to one of these areas, and further numerical markers within an article refer to specific books within the area. The General Index of eighty-six pages lists main entries and significant terms. Unfortunately the index contains significant errors and omissions. There is also a Synoptic Index, listing articles under each subject area. Eleven pages of black-and-white sketch maps provide a minimum of information. Nine widely scattered black-and-white sketches are of even less help.

The article MISSIONS (CHRISTIAN), in fewer than 250 words, is negative in tone. The achievement of missions "may have been as much cultural and political as religious," and "reforming zeal often damaged societies and their culture." There is no general discussion of conversion, but there is an entry CONVERSION (TO JUDAISM). The item "Conversion, Converts" in the General Index leads the reader to little more than casual occurrences of the terms.

In the article NICHIREN, Nichiren Shoshu is mentioned, but without a cross-reference to the article SOKA GAKKAI, which provides a clear and helpful discussion of the modern developments in Nichiren Shoshu. The name "Shakyamuni" occurs in several articles without any indication of its significance, but by tracking down all the entries in the General Index a definition can be found (in the article GOTAMA).

The article ZEN, a topic of considerable current interest, is particularly...
The Irony of Apartheid: The Struggle for National Independence of Afrikaner Calvinism against British Imperialism.


The roots of Afrikaner nationalism go back to the early nineteenth century, to the Great Trek and to the fear of the black danger. Biblical imagery from the Jewish Scriptures and the sense of a chosen people sustained by Calvinism also contributed to an inchoate sense of nationalism. This nationalism finally coalesced amid the agony of defeat and in the aftermath of the South African War (1899-1902). It is Hexham’s argument that in these early years of the twentieth century, Afrikaners had their consciousness raised and their apartheid mentality formed by myths and ideology propounded by a small splinter group, the Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church) of the “Doppers.”

Dopper ministers—preeminently the young poet/theologian J. D. du Toit and his brother-in-law, the writer Rev. Willem Postma—created heroic images and nurtured the people’s grievances. Their overwhelming commitment was to a Calvinistolk existing in their own apartheid sphere, separated from the contamination of British secular and liberal influences. The theological underpinnings for this were drawn from the Netherlands and the writings of van Prinsterer and Kuyper. Later the Doppers (particularly their intellectuals gathered in the University of Potchefstroom) were to extend their influence throughout Afrikanerdor when they came to dominate the Broederbond secret society from 1927 to the mid-1950s. It was in this period that the apartheid mindset focused more intensely on the black danger.

There are places where Hexham stumbles; for example, his misleading assessment of the Christian Institute, which bears the imprint of his informants at Potchefstroom. Moreover, he has not analyzed the class interests within Afrikanerdor, which contributed to the growth of modern apartheid; rather, his focus is the role of ideas in history. Within this limited framework, Hexham has written an important, empathetic, yet critical work as a result of his diligent use of archives and the cooperation of Dopper intellectuals at the University of Potchefstroom.

—Peter Walshe

Peter Walshe is Professor of Government and International Studies at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana). His publications include The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa and Church versus State in South Africa.

January 1986
Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus.


Formerly a bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia, Mortimer Arias is currently professor of Hispanic studies and evangelization at the School of Theology, Claremont, California, where the theme of this book was first stated in lecture form. What that theme is, may be described as “Kingdom evangelization.” As Arias puts it: “Kingdom evangelization may be the answer to our present crisis. The vision of the reign of God can be the motivating force which takes us beyond the paralyzing effect of our contradictory and worn out motivations” (p. xvii).

With this end in view, Arias analyzes a number of aspects of the kingdom of God—a concept by now extremely common in liberation theology—with a view to their evangelistic relevance. His approach is solidly biblical, and he has an eye to the well-known paradox of the kingdom, which is both here and not here, “already now” and “not yet.” He does not shy away from the question of apocalyptic, the original purpose of which he sees as being “not to terrorize people, but to raise and preserve hope in the midst of persecution and oppression” (p. 37). The proclamation of the kingdom he views as “gift,” “hope,” and “challenge.” All of these words could be applied equally to this book, which is graceful, hopeful, and challenging in equal measure.

There remains, however, the problem of the varying ways in which the kingdom has been interpreted in Christian, and especially missionary, history. Words come trailing associations, not all of them helpful. The problem neither began, nor did it end, with Paul. On the contrary: “the possibilities and perils of ‘Kingdom evangelization’ have been with us for many years, though many details have been forgotten. As well as excellent books like this, we badly need historical surveys of past ‘Kingdom theologies,’ to instruct and perhaps also to chasten us.”

—Eric J. Sharpe

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The Supremacy of Jesus.


This brilliant study is the last published book from Bishop Stephen Neill who died in 1984 before completing his projected three-volume History of Christianity in India. Having spent much of his life as a missionary and Anglican bishop in South India, Neill had wrestled personally and deeply with the basic missiological issues that are rooted in the person and work of Christ as “the central point in history.” Here we have Stephen Neill’s personal testimony to the uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus Christ over all contenders.

In his introduction the author supposes that if a number of reasonably well-educated people were asked to prepare a short list of those men and women who have influenced the course of human life more than any others, most of the lists would include Gautama the Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet Muhammad, and Karl Marx. In the nine chapters that follow, Bishop Neill draws upon his classical learning and erudite scholarship to contrast the life and teachings of Christ not only with the three named above but also with representative thinkers from Greek, Chinese, Jewish, and Hindu traditions. He does not want to take anything away from what is good and true in other faiths: it is simply not possible to forget or ignore the Buddha, the prophet Muhammad, and Karl Marx. In the nine chapters that follow, Bishop Neill draws upon his classical learning and erudite scholarship to contrast the life and teachings of Christ not only with the three named above but also with representative thinkers from Greek, Chinese, Jewish, and Hindu traditions. He does not want to take anything away from what is good and true in other faiths: it is simply not possible to forget or ignore the Buddha, the prophet Muhammad, and Karl Marx.

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“the supremacy of Jesus,” it also has a message for those who are followers of other faiths or of no faith at all.

—Warren W. Webster

Warren W. Webster, General Director of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, served in Pakistan from 1954 to 1970.
Alan Race, an Anglican chaplain at the University of Kent in Canterbury, surveys a spectrum of Christian theories that deal with religious pluralism as a theological issue. For his "broad typological framework within which most of the current Christian theologies of religions can be placed" (p. 7), he adopts the headings: Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism, and selects individuals who are representative of each position.

For representatives of exclusivism, who believe there is a radical discontinuity between the gospel and the non-Christian faiths, he chooses Barth, Brunner, Kraemer, and Newbiggin. After discussing their views, Race abruptly concludes that—in the present climate of critical historical "enlightenment"—"the exclusive position "can only be maintained at the price of a dishonest reckoning with history" (p. 37).

Under inclusivism, the author describes two types. The first is exemplified by the "anonymous Christianity" of Karl Rahner. The major problem here, Race writes, is that the issue of religious truth is prejudged. The second type is that represented by Hans Küng ("inclusive Christian universalism") and John Robinson ("an inclusivism which is not exclusively determined"). Even this troubles the author, because there is still "the claim that Christ represents the fullest expression of the Godhead" (p. 69).

For the position of pluralism, characterized by tolerance of other religions as a theological necessity, Race selects Troeltsch, Toynebe, Tillich, Hick, Cobb, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Knowledge of God, from the perspective of "tolerant pluralism," is partial in all faiths, including the Christian, and the religions must acknowledge their need of each other if the full truth about God is to be available. Accordingly, Christians will lay aside all claims of absoluteness and finality, and join with people of other faiths in a common quest for truth. The author recognizes the dangers of "debilitating relativism" and rules out an easy syncretism. The way forward, he suggests, is to hold together "the different types of religious experience in a creative tension" (p. 104).

All of this is background to the author's main concern and purpose, namely, a reconsideration of the doctrine of Christ, and the place of that doctrine in a Christian theology of religions. The incarnation, he says, is a myth (in the sense of a linguistic symbol), therefore no notion of the "finality of Christ" is any longer applicable. For an alternative doctrine of Christ, Race proposes an "action-christology" in which he holds that "God's action in Jesus was in no sense different from his action in the rest of creation, except in that through Jesus' particular 'aim,' ' lure' and 'prehension' he has become important,' and thereby makes a difference in the relationship between man and God" (p. 130).
The author maintains that "action-christology" provides "the most positive Christian response" for a pluralist position in the theology of religions. In this view "Jesus 'decision' is viewed as primarily related to those who have received the light of God made known through Jesus, and developed in one particular cultural form. Jesus is 'decisive,' not because he is the focus for all the light everywhere revealed in the world, but for the vision he has brought in one cultural setting" (pp. 135-36).

The author sees Jesus "as paradigmatic for man's relationship with God," and views "the sonship of Jesus metaphorically, not metaphysically." Any verification of the genuineness of "the style of relationship with God which Jesus initiated... will be eschatological" (p. 146). In the midst of conflicting truth-claims of the various religions, Race "looks to dialogue as the first step on the road to religious truth viewed from a world perspective" (p. 144).

In this reductionist, relativizing perspective, which minimizes the union between God and man in Jesus, there is clearly no place for a Christian evangelistic mission that is founded on the testimony of the New Testament. —Gerald H. Anderson

Faith and Ideologies (Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today, Vol. 1).


Latin American liberation theology is now mature enough to show its rich varieties. Segundo gives us its scholastic version—an academic theology, addressed to the intellectual world, but a theology that takes very seriously the oppression of the poor.

It is scholastic also in a more precise sense. Like Thomas Aquinas, Segundo has a careful concern for definitions (sometimes so far from conventional usage that the reader must constantly remember their special terms). He develops his intricate arguments by appropriation of and differentiation from others. As St. Thomas used Aristotle and Augustine, Segundo uses Bateson and Marx, Pannenberg and Tracy.

In still another sense Segundo is a scholastic theologian. He aspires to a comprehensive harmony—of faith and ideology, of normal experience and revelation. In opposition to much theology, he asserts that "Jesus was recognized as the revelation of God only by those people who already had those values" represented by Jesus (p. 64). If we ask whether Jesus did not transform the values of his followers, the answer is that he provided the "transcendent data" that altered those values. The continuity with the Thomist tradition is evident.

With other liberation theologians Segundo appropriates Marxist themes. Segundo finds Marx's atheism not essential to his historical materialism, which cannot itself evaluate faith. He urges that Marxist "suspicion" of dominant ideas and institutions be applied to Marx himself.

Segundo's ecological awareness provides a depth not evident in all liberation theologies. His discussions of Latin America are the most moving parts of the book. He describes the movement (1950-75) from desperation to desperate actions to despairing passivity, and urges the importance of sustaining hope for a distant future. He is especially sensitive on the issue of violence, maintaining that guerrilla warfare is morally less culpable than systems of oppressive violence, but that it destroys the social ecology. —Roger L. Shinn

Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response


Old and new themes, developed by theological meditation during the long and committed life of Kenneth Cragg among Muslims, have been here re-elaborated in a personal and courageous answer of a Christian to the Islamic question: "What do Christians say about Muhammad?"

Nine chapters help Christians prepare to respond: rediscovering the prophet in history, with the political equation; Muhammad in the soul, and Muhammad the definitive Muslim, with the prophetic experience. Christians are invited to appreciate the content of the Qur'an and are required to be guided by the gospel, so that they may finally be ready for response.

If the debate is to a great extent between Muhammad as event (in history) and Muhammad as myth-through-faith (in devotion) (p. 4), the Christian response cannot make an abstraction of faith in Jesus. Qur'an and Muhammad prefer the "activist patriarchs" of the Bible and finally the "manifest victory": "the pattern of Muhammad's Strahl will always be in conflict with the
power and perspective of the Cross" (p. 52). So how can Christians appreciate the Islamic equation God-with-man so often expressed by the sentence Al-lah-Muhammad (shahada), devotion and mysticism? Can Christians truly consider the postscriptural Qur'an as revelation for other places and times? How can they harmonize its strong and immune monotheism with its repeated denials of God's mysteries as revealed in Jesus Christ? Cragg twice appeals to Christians to contain these questions "within the predicates of theism" (p. 93)! This is the main difficulty of his enterprise.

If Christian-Muslim dialogue needs a new or renewed Christian appreciation of Muhammad in history and faith, Christians have to recognize with Cragg that for Muslims "the apostolate of Muhammad is not for debate or enquiry, but for acceptance" (p. 1). At least, let them say, with Timothy, the Nestorian patriarch of Baghdad, answering the Caliph al-Mahdi (eighth century): "Muhammad has followed the path of the prophets." Truly the mystery of Jesus and the personality of Muhammad remain the stumbling-blocks for dialogue between their disciples or followers.

—Maurice Bormans

Women at the Crossroads: A Path beyond Feminism and Traditionalism.


In the past two decades awareness and debate related to women's issues have gone through several stages. During the 1960s and early 1970s, secular feminism brought many concerns into public debate, so that "women's lib" was a household phrase. In response Christians have also reexamined the roles of women. Along with rejecting the angry rhetoric and combative ness of the earlier feminists, many conservative Christians reacted by reaffirming some of the very concepts that the feminists critized—male supremacy and authority simply by virtue of maleness, in the home and in the church. Other Christians became sensitized to legitimate issues relating to women and began a reexamination of Scripture, which focused on the idea that in Christ there is neither male nor female.

Kari Torjesen Malcolm takes a look at two paths for women—secular feminism and traditionalism—and finds both seriously wanting. For example, in discussing the traditional woman, she says one result of "layers of sociological conditioning that keep women from a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ" is a "low self-image that keeps many women acting like children, led by their husbands and fed by their pastors till they become like stuffed sheep. The obstacle of a low self-image keeps them from becoming anointed channels of God's love to people starved for friendship, in need of healing, desperately waiting to hear the Word of God for their predicament."

The daughter of Norwegian missionaries to China, and a former missionary to the Philippines, Kari Malcolm presents a third path, one focused on a first-love relationship to Jesus Christ. "Innumerable women through the ages have found their identity as disciples of Jesus Christ and then let their roles flow from the identity."

Malcolm's approach is fresh, positive, and challenging, and she avoids red-flag terms that might narrow her...
Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A Study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective.


The remarkable story of the Baptists of Nagaland is too little known outside their own denomination, and Dr. Puthenpurakal's book is a valuable step toward rectifying that situation. The fact that the author is a Roman Catholic priest (vicar general of the diocese of Kohima, Nagaland) materially increases the significance of his work, because we are given not only a good history of the Naga Baptist community but also an ironic, ecumenical perspective on its life and witness. The ecumenical aspect of the study is especially important given the rather unhappy relationships that have often obtained between the dominant Baptists and the Roman Catholic missionaries.

It is clear from the outset that Puthenpurakal is engaged in more than narrative history. He is consciously seeking, as a Catholic, to understand the Naga Baptists as Baptists, and to interpret them properly to his own church, in the interests of greater Christian unity. It is this ecumenical concern that prompts him to spend almost fifty pages tracing the history and convictions of the Baptists in general before he begins to recount the origins of the Naga churches. The growth and spread of the Baptist movement in the Naga Hills is then surveyed in two substantial chapters; and a chapter is devoted to an analysis of the work of the missionaries, which includes their use of indigenous evangelists, their teaching, their methods, and their cultural impact. The book concludes with a careful evaluation of the Baptist contribution to the church at large, and a discussion of prospects for ecumenical interaction among Baptists and Catholics in Nagaland.

This is certainly a volume to be read with attention by Naga Christians, both Baptist and Catholic. Each group has much to learn about the other from its pages. And in the world church it can be studied with profit if for no other reason than it sheds such informative light upon what has happened and is now going on among some of the most vigorous Christians to be found anywhere. Puthenpurakal has served us well by offering us this "outsider's" look at them. He has made extensive use of primary sources as well as the secondary literature available, and his account is trustworthy. Regarding his treatment of the Baptists as such I had only one reservation. I doubt that we are as self-consciously ecclesiastical as he suggests in his formal definition of us. In our own subjectivity we see ourselves as loyal to Jesus Christ, and loyal to an ecclesiastical principle only as a result. I suspect that the Catholic viewpoint has led here to a slight distortion. But it does not at all affect the strength of the work as a whole.

—Joyce Bowers

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Ecclesiastes 3:6

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George Peck is President of Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. He served for five years as an American Baptist missionary in northeast India.


Originally designed as a text for students, this book has emerged as an important and original contribution to study of the missionary enterprise. The historical layout follows, perhaps rather too closely, the examination syllabus. After a stimulating initial chapter, which sketches in broad strokes the ancient history of Christianity in North Africa, five chapters contain a careful, detailed description, first, of the early Catholic missions, and then of the Protestant churches established along the West African coast in the nineteenth century together with their contributions to modern education. The originality of Sanneh’s book emerges, however, most clearly in the last three chapters, where he develops most convincingly his basic argument. Like other writers before him, he effectively demonstrates the crucial role of Africans as pioneers in the expansion and adaptation of Christianity in Africa. More fundamentally, however, he maintains that the contributions and influence of both foreign missionaries and African Christians can only be assessed within the continuing framework of indigenous religious experience and enterprise. An authority on the Jakhanke Muslim clerics in his native Senegambia, Sanneh also applies this argument to Islam. He contrasts the crusading elements of both these missionary religions with the tolerance and inclusive nature of African traditions, and he argues that the African response to both Christianity and Islam derives its force and vitality from indigenous models and experiences. This theme, drawing theologically on the distinction between missio Dei and the mission of the church, is of great significance, and one hopes that this young yet distinguished assistant professor at Harvard will return to it and develop it further.

—Richard Gray


Massyngbaerde Ford, professor of New Testament at the University of Notre Dame and author of the Anchor Commentary on Revelation, believes “that Jesus plants the seed of a new theology, that of ‘philo-echthrophy’ (love of the enemy).” This is best developed by Luke “the first evangelist to write a history of Christianity [who] deliberately records it in line with secular history and delineates the political stance of the new religion, especially with regard to war and peace.”

This is not a commentary but, rather, a study of several themes, which collectively demonstrate that “violence was not the way the King-

THE HEALING ARTS IN AFRICA

JESUS AND THE WITCHDOCTOR
An Approach to Healing and Wholeness
by AYLWARD SHORTER

Based on his twenty years experience as an anthropologist, missionary, and theologian, Aylward Shorter tells the story of integral healing at every level of human life. Shorter also explores the fascinating question of how the role of the witchdoctor helps us to understand Jesus as healer.

HEALERS IN THE NIGHT
by ERIC DE ROSNY

A fascinating personal account of the beliefs and healing methods of the practitioners of traditional medicine in West Africa. “This study uncovers human and theological dimensions of the African soul that churchpersons must take very seriously if they are to understand Africans, and, indeed, themselves.”

—SIMON SMITH, SJ, Jesuit Refugee Service in Africa

THE WORLD IN BETWEEN
Christian Healing and the Struggle for Spiritual Survival
by ARCHBISHOP EMMANUEL MILINGO

Catholic, Bishop, Healer ... Emmanuel Milingo’s gifts of healing and exorcising spirits generated a controversy that reached to the Vatican. This is the story of his healing ministry to the spiritual needs of Zambian Christians.

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dom of God could be established.” Ford is especially good in documenting the conflictual situation of first-century Palestine. Luke’s interpretation of Jesus’ life and ministry should be understood against the background of foreign occupation, class conflict, social banditry, religious fanaticism, revolutionary prophets, abusive officialdom, unjust taxation, and the bitter hostility between Jews and Samaritans.

Ford asserts that whereas the birth narratives of Luke 1–3 reflect some of the “revolutionary messianism” of first-century Judaism, John the Baptist becomes the “transitional forerunner” of the nonviolent Jesus. This force of Jesus’ message becomes evident at Nazareth, as noted in Luke 4, where he appears to be “proclaiming the imagination of a jubilee year” developed around “forgiveness and healing, not wrath and destruction” as assumed by contemporary revolutionaries.

Two chapters on Jesus’ attitude toward tax collectors and Samaritans foreshadow the passion, where enemy love reaches a climax. First tax collectors and Samaritans, then all people are admitted to “covenant intimacy.” Jesus’ followers are to forsake the theology of holy war widely accepted in the first century, and not to “take vengeance but to await God’s vindication of their cause and to pray unceasingly.”

The most striking contribution of these essays is not so much their interpretation of Luke—that has been served before—but rather, the way in which Ford has mined contemporary materials, especially Josephus, Qumran, and the Mishnah, to sense the situation Luke addresses. In the most profound sense Luke contextualizes Jesus and the gospel.

Ford’s insight into the strategic role of Samaria and Samaritans is important for missiological studies. Luke, according to the author, demonstrates “that the Samaritan mission was the beginning of the Gentile mission and was part of the divine plan.” If the gospel cannot deal with the enemy it really has no integrity for the redemption of friends. The implications for contemporary mission strategy are obvious.

—John A. Lapp

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Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: From Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia.

Edited by Ron and Marjorie Crocombe.

In this postcolonial age of mission there is a heightened awareness of the important role third-world missionaries have played and a greater appreciation for their continuing impact today. For example, in many Pacific mission history books the work of South Sea Island missionaries is overshadowed by their European counterparts, but this imbalance is being corrected by the Crocombes’ book, along with such works as Alan Tippett’s The Deep Sea Canoe (1977) and George Carter’s Ti-é Varanè (1981).

This book, a collection of essays, provides a variety of approaches to the study of Polynesian missionaries in Melanesia, beginning with an overview of when and where Polynesian missionaries served, noting that “hardly any facet of the traditional way of life of the people among whom these Polynesian missionaries lived and worked were left untouched by their influence” (p. 4).

Chapters by Ruta Sinclair focus on the Samoans, noting the powerful positions pastors had in Samoan society and how this influenced their work among the people.

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International Bulletin Special Issues

"China Mission History"
(April 1985)

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International Bulletin of Missionary Research
and behavior in Melanesia, leading many European missionaries to accuse them of authoritarian leadership and high-handed tactics with their Melanesian congregations. Sione Latukefu profiles the work of Sione Taufa with the Methodists on Bougainville (1949-68), and Marjorie Crocombe digs back into the archives of the last century to portray the courageous work of Rua-toka, a Cook Islander who worked closely with James Chalmers in establishing the work of the London Missionary Society in Papua New Guinea.

Included in the book are two fascinating pieces of missionary ethnohistory: a letter written by a Cook Islander describing his life and pioneering work in new Caledonia (1842-45) and a Tuvaluan's diary in Papua (1934-46).

The book shows how many of the Polynesians, with a history of fifty to seventy-five years of Christianity in their islands, interpreted that faith and propounded it in Melanesia. For example, they often advocated a curious mix of Christianity and Western Culture, and although they were often very ethnocentric in relating to Melanesians, many of them adapted more successfully than their European counterparts to the Melanesian cultural context.

—Darrell L. Whiteman

Protestantism in Central America.


Written originally in Spanish as a segment of a multivolume work sponsored by the Roman Catholic Commission for the Study of the History of the Church in Latin America, Wilton Nelson (d. 1984) offers his small but significant account of Central American Protestantism. Nelson was surely qualified to do a history, since he lived and worked for nearly a half-century as a missionary, professor, and president of the Latin American Seminary in San José, Costa Rica. He established himself as a competent historian with the publication in 1963 of a definitive history of Protestantism in Costa Rica.

Protestantism in Central America, however, is much briefer and attempts to cover a broader geographical area. There are seven short chapters dealing with the history of Protestantism during the colonial period, the nineteenth, and the twentieth centuries; conditions that facilitated and impeded Protestant growth during this development; and an analysis of the characteristics of early Protestants in Central America. A final chapter provides an update on the statistical growth of Protestants since 1975.

The book provides more details, names, dates, places, and other facts regarding Protestants beginnings than are found in most histories. Also, the characteristics of early evangelicals (pp. 49-56) as forthrightly presented help to explain the reciprocal antipathy that existed between Protestants and Roman Catholics, an antipathy unfortunately that prevailed at least through the mid-1960s.

The conciseness of the book is both its greatest strength and its weakness. There is much more of a story to tell, and one wishes that Nelson had been encouraged to relate it more fully. Excessive and often unnecessary paren...
theses clutter the text, inconsistent and dubious statistics raise questions of accuracy (pp. vi, 74, 76), and there is a use of Spanish words that should be translated: for example, quemadero, a place where convicts were burned, and relajación, the delivery of an accused person by an ecclesiastical to a criminal court of justice. Moreover, the statement that the present turmoil in Guatemala is not as clearly ideological as that in El Salvador and Nicaragua, but rather, “seems to originate in personal power struggles” (p. 72) is highly questionable.

Though not a serious misuse, it was the Northern (now American) Baptist Home Mission Society and not the “Baptist Mission Board” that sent the first Baptist missionaries to Nicaragua (p. 42). The current difficulties facing Protestants in Central America merit fuller consideration (pp. 66–69), as do their fits and starts in ecumenism. Two facts Nelson points out should engender careful reflection by those interested in the state of the Christian community in Central America: first, that natural disasters—earthquakes and hurricanes—have resulted in more genuine and widespread ecumenical cooperation than anything previously; and second, that the scattered, sporadic missionary presence prior to 1960 has now become a veritable missionary invasion. Nelson does not speculate as to the long-term results of either of these phenomena, but they should and likely will be observed with delight by some and apprehension by others.

—Alan Neely

Hope and Suffering.


“Hope and Suffering” is an appropriate title for this collection of sermons and speeches by the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Right Reverend Desmond M. Tutu of South Africa. Hardly a day goes by since Bishop Tutu was so rightfully honored in October 1984 that we do not see his name and picture in the media—daily newspapers, religious and secular magazines and periodicals, and television. The world needs to hear his prophetic Christian voice proclaiming so personally, authentically, and courageously the truth about apartheid in his country as the evil and destructive force it is.

Bishop Tutu’s words in this collection, initially intended for hearing, are usefully compiled by Motshobi Mutloaste and edited by John Webster under four chapter headings: “Introducing South Africa,” “Liberation as a Biblical Theme,” “Current Concerns,” and “The Divine Intention.” The dates, places, and occasions of these sermons and addresses are helpfully identified, which assists the reader to set Bishop Tutu’s words in proper and timely context. His message, rooted and grounded in a comprehensive understanding of and commitment to biblical Christianity and love of the Lord Jesus, is clearly communicated in this book. It is the story of the horrible suffering of the oppressed South African blacks that the bishop shares and the hope he knows, experiences, and radiates in the Christian gospel. I commend the reading of this excellent collection of Bishop Tutu’s sermons and speeches.

—Lyman C. Ogilby

Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859–1923.


Powerful chiefs often aided early missions in Africa in the precolonial period, and the church grew strong in Malawi, Botswana, and Uganda. An exception was the conspicuous failure of missionaries to the Ndebele people in what is now Zimbabwe during the 1859–90 precolonial period.

Ngwabi Bhebe, senior lecturer in history at the University College of Swaziland, himself a Zimbabwean, has written a clear history of early missions to the Ndebele from 1859, the year of the arrival of Robert Moffat at Mzilikazi’s krall, to 1923.

The first thirty years were a quarantine period, according to Bhebe. Converts became outcasts among their own people. Chiefs Mzilikazi and Lobengula were more attracted by the Shona Mwari cult than by the white people’s religion.

The fall of the Ndebele kingdom in 1893, the suppression of the 1896–97 rebellion against white rule, and the development of a capitalist economy, according to Bhebe gave Christian missions new opportunities from 1897 to 1923. While old people remained aloof, they encouraged their young people to seek education in mission schools. Still church leadership remained largely in missionary hands. Combined with missionary opposition to African cultural values, this was to provide a fertile seedbed for African independence in the years that followed.

Bhebe recognized one major weakness in his study—his dependence upon missionary and government archives. They provide little insight into the theology, rituals, organization, and sociopolitical aspects of traditional Ndebele religion, except for the official religion of the Mwari rainmaking cult. Largely overlooked is the family religion of guardianship by ancestral spirits, appeal to healers and diviners at times of misfortune, and reinforcement of traditional customs and values by religious sanctions. Bhebe neglects also the religious plurality that resulted as Ndebele warriors, who had entered Zimbabwe from South Africa no earlier than 1837, incorporated into their society wives, warriors, and slaves from tribes they conquered.

—Norman E. Thomas

Norman E. Thomas is Professor of World Christianity, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. He was a United Methodist missionary in Zimbabwe and Zambia from 1962 to 1976.
For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church.


James Cone, the Charles A. Briggs Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, is to be commended for extending his commitment to a theology of liberation beyond the particular concerns of black people in North America.

This book is intended to be more than a vicarious mea culpa for the myopia of the black church and the conceptual weakness of black theology. In asking black theologians to tell the truth about themselves, Cone is requesting a level of honesty that, if heeded, would be far more revolutionary than anything black theology has attempted thus far. Accordingly, he lets the chips fall where they rightly belong—against sexism, parochialism, and the anti-intellectualism of black clergy. These indictments are harsh but they need to be made before black theologians engage in substantive theological discourse on the future of the black church. Regrettably, the author does not spend enough time developing substantive theological arguments.

What is supposedly insightful about this volume is Cone's appropriation of Marxist critique of capitalism. However, Cone's use of Marxist critique is superficial and reflects the same weakness noted by Marx in his criticism of Feuerbach, namely, that the philosophers (theologians) have interpreted the world but have failed to change its structures of oppression. One wonders how seriously do the oppressed take the "liberative" murmurings of North American and European academicians. Far more incisive are the socialist critiques of capitalism adopted by H. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen on their brilliant monthly The Messenger in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the end, Cone calls on his people to join with the oppressed throughout the world in a common struggle for freedom. Black denominations in North America are encouraged to learn from the "base communities" in Latin America and accomplish what they have failed at thus far—to develop "a style of ecumenism that really transcends the politics of Black churches so that a genuine creative encounter with progressive elements in the Third World is possible" (p. 143). Good rhetoric, but the fact remains that the black church is unashamedly steeped in the competitiveness and triumphal religion of free-enterprise capitalism.

Cone's "vision of a new social order" is not compelling but it underscores the public character of theology, especially at a time when religion in America is being driven increasingly toward ideological purity, parochialism, and privatism.

—Romney M. Moseley

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT

An Annotated Bibliography of Theological Journals from Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America

Since 1980, the Institute of Missiology Missio has been publishing the journal THEOLOGIE IM KONTEXT. The first English edition of its bibliography was published in February 1984. Each issue of THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT consists of approximately 100 DIN A4 pages and offers an annotated bibliography of more than 50 theological journals from the Third World as well as indices of authors and key words.

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Romney M. Moseley is Assistant Professor of Theology and Human Development, and Associate Director of the Center for Faith Development, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. He is an Anglican priest and citizen of Barbados.
A Vision of Hope: The Churches and Change in Latin America.


Although the controversy surrounding liberation theology has been going on for some time, history may record it as only a prelude to a protracted debate that will likely have enduring consequences for the institutional church. The Vatican, long concerned about the rebellious overtones inherent in faith that responds to the supplications of the poor, has decided to opt for a more confrontational approach. On September 3, 1984, the Vatican issued a 10,000-word text, which warns the practitioner of liberation theology that "a system" of Marxist interpretation of the Scriptures "is a perversion of the Christian message." In this first official statement by the Catholic hierarchy on liberation theology, class struggle is sharply condemned although allowances are made for those whose evangelical commitment compels them to opt for the poor.

In A Vision of Hope, Trevor Beeson and Jenny Pearce declare their intentions in the opening paragraph. By examining the role of faith and church in a variety of Latin American countries, they set out to offer an account of obedience to God in societies largely controlled by extreme and repressive regimes. According to the authors, the main concern of the book is to describe the life and witness of the churches in Latin America through the eyes of Christians who have taken sides with the poor.

Although Beeson and Pearce's zealous embrace of the people's church would doubtlessly make the Vatican queasy, the book serves both as valuable history of the travails of Latin America and as a moving tribute to the heroism of those whose faith forces them to confront the daily peril and sometimes even death and martyrdom.

Each chapter summarizes the historical antecedents in twelve countries and thus establishes the backdrop against which Christians seek to act in response to the demands of God. A Vision of Hope provides not only good political analysis, but more important, it powerfully describes the link between context and Scripture (text).

The role of the Protestants, being a junior partner in Latin America, is too often overlooked in a discussion of the church and Latin America. Beeson and Pearce discuss in surprising detail the Protestant presence in Latin America, exposing the ecclesiastical cleavages, which are strikingly similar to those of their Catholic counterparts.

A Vision of Hope is a compelling introduction for those who want to understand better the origins of the Vatican's complaint. More important, it lays the groundwork for a debate that may potentially shape not only the church in the developing world, but the church's institutional manifestation everywhere.

—Joseph T. Eldridge

The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America.


Neuhaus is a Lutheran minister, scholar, and activist recognized for publications on Christian political thought. The "public square" represents areas of public interaction of both individuals and communities. It is "naked" because of the liberal position that moral values and religious beliefs are private. The boldness of Moral Majoritarians (who are treated with sensitivity) challenges this position. The response to them by the mainline churches should not be invoking the principle of the naked public square because the removal of religion is inimical to democracy. The public square is clothed with ultimate meaning by some elite; and if mainline churches decline the role through flabbiness or disillusionment, they will be replaced either by a new formation from the religious right or left or by the ambitions of the modern state. (The need for evangelizing the American masses and nurturing them in biblical values is not presented.)

In his best chapter (seven) Neuhaus states (but does not demonstrate) that revelation presents a design for public order to be held accountable to transcendent truth and for a "lively interaction among people who are acting from values that are, in most instances, grounded in specific religious belief" (p. 120). (These values are not identified.) The interaction is by persuasion, not coercion, by translating the values into terms that as much as possible are open to public argumentation, and with a sense of provisionality. In view of competing religious claims, one is willing to compromise out of faithfulness to an open public order.

The problem is important, the strategy helpful, but Neuhaus fails to treat the area of religious values that are appropriate for legal enactment and the protection of minority religious positions. The important thesis will be lost to many by its neo-conservative context, such as the bipolar worldview, the distorted presentation of liberation theology, the threat of totalitarianism, and the concentration on the secularity of church-and-state bureaucracies versus that of political fundamentalism. The "theory" (only in the back in a note is there acknowledgment of its questionable character) of the political self-interest of the "new class" of helping professionals is applied to those in religious agencies. Capitalism, one of the most far-reaching secularisms, is not treated. The effect may be a further delegitimization of the social problems of the churches—and a more naked public square.

—Stephen Charles Mott

Stephen Charles Mott is Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, Massachusetts.
The Middle East Remembered.


This book is a collection of John S. Badeau’s personal reminiscences, a delightful narrative that will hold the reader's interest to the last page. It begins by providing information about his family and educational background, which prepared him for the series of careers that comprised his lifetime of person-oriented service. First experiencing the Middle East as a missionary in Iraq (1928-35), he then taught at the American University of Cairo (1936-44) and assumed its presidency in 1945. In 1953 he returned to the United States to head the Near East Foundation, where he remained until appointed ambassador to Cairo by President John F. Kennedy (1962-64). Finally he returned to teaching at Columbia University (1964-71) and Georgetown University (1971-74).

These memoirs are not intended to present a comprehensive overview of the Middle East. Rather, they are a series of anecdotes culled from many years of experience in listening to and talking with people from all walks of life, as well as some seasoned observations of classical and modern Arabic literature. Badeau illuminates significant aspects of Middle Eastern culture and politics in a very human presentation that will appeal to a wide range of readers. His experiences and his narrative reflect his overriding concern for the human element. Objecting to the temptation of many students of the Middle East to view the area as if it were a problem in political science, he declares, “It is people. People who are alive. People living. And how to combine that with analysis is the problem” (p. 60).

The reader will find in this work not only personalized glimpses of Middle Eastern culture, but an autobiographical narrative of an American patriot, an astute politician, and a Christian gentleman. Without condescension or paternalism, Badeau illustrates the ways in which it is possible to relate to persons of another culture, to understand them on their own terms, and thus to be able to contribute to their welfare with sensitivity and appreciation. It is refreshing, entertaining, and informative, as well as just plain good reading.

—Wadi Z. Haddad

Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1985 for Mission Studies

The editors of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research have selected the following books for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies in 1985. We have limited our selection to books in English since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to advance the cause of missionary research with scholarly literature.


Wadi Z. Haddad is Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at the Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, and editor of The Muslim World.
Speaking the Gospel Today: A Theology for Evangelism.


For evangelism to develop further as a field of practical theology, it must forge a distinctive dialogue with the theological disciplines. Correlation with sociology, anthropology, and communications theory is not enough. The dialogue must extend to the mainstream of scholarship in the Christian tradition. These volumes from Concordia Publishing House are therefore welcome additions to evangelistic literature. Each author approaches his subject from the vantage point of a classical discipline: Kolb from that of Christian doctrine, Rudnick from that of church history. And they both break important new ground.

Kolb's thesis is arresting and substantial. Drawing heavily on the Lutheran tradition, he proposes that evangelists must proclaim a twofold message for the resistant and defiant sinner, a proclamation of law; for the broken and contrite sinner, a message of grace.

Where Kolb keeps to this agenda, there are some helpful evangelistic insights: a schematic of the dynamics of surrender to grace, for example (p. 175); and a brilliant passage on the specificity of evangelistic agape (pp. 198-99). Yet his concern for doctrinal fidelity ultimately locks his argument into a conservative Lutheran existentialism. Eschatology, the generally accepted cutting edge of evangelism, is treated as an appendage (p. 208); and theodicy, while rightly identified as the essential mystery of evangelism, is deprived of any immediacy of hope (pp. 76ff.). Even so, this is incisive writing, which any thoughtful evangelist will want to read as a salutary doctrinal self-evaluation and a creative prognosis of human response to the gospel.

Milton Rudnick's volume is equally stimulating. Beginning with a definition of evangelism as the Christianizing of others and the renewal of Christians (p. 9), he proceeds to an outline of Christian history, which informs and illuminates on every page. There are occasional lapses of historiography, as in his assessment of the mass "conversions" of the medieval period (pp. 43ff., 58ff.). But for the most part, his narrative is sure, and his scholarship erudite. This is church history at its best.

This is why, in the final analysis, Rudnick leaves us with a fresh awareness of the need for a more refined definition of evangelism as a field of study in its own right. Rudnick is working with a handicap in this regard—as are we all—and it shows in some surprising anomalies: a mere passing reference to the Lollards, for example (p. 90), who surely provide one of the most important paradigms for prophetic evangelism in the whole of Christian history; or a treatment of black evangelism that fails to come to grips with the issues of the gospel as eschatological promise (pp. 178ff.). On the other hand, and by the same token, the book points time and again to the rich potential for further interdisciplinary study, as in a very fine section on Pietism (pp. 113ff.), and an extremely perceptive overview of contemporary trends (pp. 210ff.). Rudnick has opened the way for much new work in the field.

It may seem carping to finish on a critical question for the editor of the Kolb volume, but it must surely be asked whether we can afford any longer to leave a manuscript with the First and Third Persons of the Trinity so frequently identified throughout by the masculine pronoun.

—David Lowes Watson

Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa.


In Africa the question of methodology for Christian theology is increasingly coming to the forefront of the debate on contextualization. This shift of emphasis indicates a movement from problems to lucid and critical evaluation of the task at hand. In the various families of Christianity in Africa, the question no longer is: Should we make the gospel fit into African realities? but rather: How do we make the gospel take root in African soil? Osadolor Imasogie's Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa is an example of the maturity that has taken place in the debate on African theology.

Osadolor Imasogie is the principal of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho. He explains that the need to write his book arose out of the observation that the "usual resort of the average African Christian in crisis situations is a reversion to traditional African religious practices" (p. 11). This is due "to the lack of 'fit' between Christian theology and African life" (p. 12). Developing an African theology therefore becomes a pastoral necessity. Such a theology will not be created unless specific guidelines are established. That is why Imasogie's stated goal is to "engender fresh interest in the study of theological methodology" (p. 13).

Of the book's four chapters, only the last one deals specifically with theological methodology. In chapter 1 the author develops his basic thesis, which

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is that Christianity is, in its very nature, incarnational. Consequently, "Christian theology must . . . be informed by the contextual milieu of its target audience in such a way that the Word will become flesh among the people" (p. 14). Chapter 2 deals with traditional Western Christian theology and the new theologies. Chapter 3 contrasts what the author calls the quasi-scientific worldview of the West with the (singular) African worldview.

Imasogie successfully moves the debate to another level, but the final chapter is disappointingly general in the three guidelines suggested.

—Tite Tienou

Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Belief.


The word "religions" may be very limiting, representing only traditional god-worship. In the same way "religious studies" evokes images of comparing religious beliefs and theologies. Worldviews was written as an introduction to the modern study of religions—modern in that the author attempts to explore the problems in looking at religions from a traditional standpoint based on history, anthropology, and comparative studies. Ninian Smart, well known in this field and professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Lancaster University, England, while not rejecting the importance of traditional religious studies, points out the need to include all religions and ideologies in the study of the world.

In addition to what is offered by the usual Christocentric religious studies, Smart points to the richness of Eastern religions as well as the importance of recent developments in non-traditional ideologies such as Marxism, nationalism, and secular humanism. From this stance the term "worldviews" is appropriate, as it crosses disciplines and relates to ideas of symbols and practices as they affect each other.

Approaching the different worldviews, Smart spends considerable time elaborating on six aspects needed in their study—doctrinal, mythical, ethical, ritual, experiential, social—and the necessity of understanding, experiencing, and comparing them. Worldviews may be outward looking or introspective, but all involve elements of search for the ultimate truth in the cosmos. There can be no superiority of one worldview over another. Whether one is a conservative Christian or a Marxist atheist, one cannot deny the power that lies behind any worldview. In essence, the world is dominated by different worldviews, many of which are in conflict with each other.

—Y. Franklin Ishida
A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement.


The great interest over the past fifteen years in the charismatic movement has also served to awaken interest in the wider phenomenon of Pentecostalism. Students of this complex movement will be pleased with the appearance of Charles E. Jones’s large, two-volume Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement.

Jones, author of an earlier Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement, divides his work into four parts. The first treats the general literature of Pentecostalism. Part 2 identifies and provides bibliographic information on more than 284 Pentecostal church bodies. Parts 3 and 4 provide, respectively, bibliographic information on Pentecostal schools of learning, and biographical references concerning leading Pentecostal figures. An index is also included.

Several aspects of Jones’s work render it useful to both pastor and student. He refines the traditional Wesleyan/Baptist division of Pentecostalism by delineating Holiness-Pentecostal and Signs Following groups within the Wesleyan tradition, and distinguishing between Trinitarians and Oneness believers in the Baptist tradition. Second, he includes not only churches but also Pentecostal evangelistic agencies in his study, some of which (such as those of Dave Wilterson and Oral Roberts) have had extremely wide popularity and influence. Finally Jones includes much information about Third-World Pentecostal movements, which will do much to correct the all-too-common view of Pentecostalism as a largely American phenomenon.

This is not to say that the work does not have its problems. Jones occasionally includes rather tangential material. Albeit Marilyn Monroe was baptized by Aimee Semple McPherson, the necessity of listing Norman Mailer’s biography of Monroe not once but twice may be questioned. On a more serious level, the lack of adequate notes and references raises a fundamental problem. Jones’s thumbnail descriptions of the various Pentecostal churches in part 2 often bear parallels in fact, and occasionally even in phrasing, with standard secondary sources. (Compare Jones, vol. 1: 263-64, 266, 314, 333, 534, 616-17, with Arthur Piepkorn’s Profiles in Belief, vol. 3: 149, 18, 184-85, 131-34, 140, 205-6.) Jones’s failure to cite the source of his information flaws the work for the serious reader.

These caveats aside, however, Jones’s Guide is a monumental endeavor and undoubtedly will become an important tool for anyone interested in the subject.

—Robert Bruce Mullin

Theology and the Third World Church.


In this brief study, J. Andrew Kirk describes the development of theology on the basis of his own personal pilgrimage through different continents, including Asia, Africa and, in particular, Latin America. He speaks about the shift since the mid-1960s among those being educated theologically in Latin America away from abstract and detached studies to something more obviously related to everyday life.

“Much of the content of this study will be devoted to analyzing the reasons for and the implications of this shift, as well as trying to assess its positive and negative virtues” (p. 14).

He mentions as reasons for the
shift the rise of national self-awareness, the European ethnocentrism in traditional theology, the Greek and Roman bias, and finally the philosophical shift in base from Kant to Hegel. Kirk reflects upon the consequences of this shift—which he calls a revolution—and deals then, among other things, with cultural relativism in the communication of the gospel.

As essential condition for any Christian theology he mentions to be committed to Jesus, to change, and to the whole people of God. He discusses the implications this has for theological education. He closes with a profile of a theologian for the church of tomorrow.

It is obvious that in 62 pages—excluding some notes and a select bibliography—any treatment of such a vast subject is bound to be too swift and therefore superficial. Only the church of Latin America comes somewhat into the picture (theologians such as Guíterrez and Sobrino), but the theological developments even there are not explained very well.

—Anton Wessels

Pilgrimage in Mission.


The “pilgrimage” is at once the author’s own as a missionary in East Africa, mission administrator, and missiologist, and that of Mennonite churches out of intense missionary involvement in the Reformation era through several centuries of isolation into extensive reengagement in mission in the present century.

In their current reengagement Mennonites borrowed heavily from the theology and praxis of the Protestant missionary movement, only superficially integrating these borrowings with their own vision for the church as a disciplined community of faith under the Lordship of Christ existing in distinct tension with the world.

Jacobs seeks to “update” Mennonite missiology, drawing on biblical images for a theology of mission that holds in holistic perspective a vision for accommodation of the gospel to cultures as well as its confrontation with cultures, for evangelism as well as “convivial fellowships” in which God’s plan to bring all things together in Christ is first being realized.

The key image he suggests is that of “fellowships” (churches) keenly aware of the presence of Jesus in their midst. Missiology is therefore “really Christocentric ecclesiology. God is working out his plan [for the redemption of the whole of creation] through fellowships of believers who cluster around Jesus, their Lord” (p. 148).

With this at the center Jacobs assumes—questionably, I believe—that matters of mission dynamics and practice will fall into place.

Though speaking to issues as they are being faced by Mennonites in mission, his discussion has much broader relevance.

—Lawrence M. Yoder

A Century of World Evangelization

NORTH AMERICAN EVANGELICAL MISSIONS, 1886-1986

A conference sponsored by
The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals
June 17-19, 1986
With funding from the Lilly Endowment

PURPOSE:
To explore a neglected field of study: the past century of American evangelical foreign missions.

FEATURED TOPICS:
The American context
Missions Since 1900
New Directions in Missions History
African, Asian, and Latin American perspectives

PARTICIPANTS:
Andrew F. Walls, University of Aberdeen
Lamin Sanneh, Harvard University
Dana Robert, Boston University
C. Rene Padilla, Latin American Theological Fraternity
Bong Ro, Asian Theological Association
Richard V. Pierard, Indiana State University
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Wheaton, IL 60187
312/260-5917
The recent death of Stephen Neill at the age of eighty-three has cut short his labors on his largest and most ambitious piece of writing, the history of Christianity in India. Stephen Neill wrote over forty books in English in the course of a long literary career, and in addition wrote an important series of books in Tamil for the education of pastors when he was a bishop in India. For fifty years he planned to write a full history of Christianity in India and carried on reading and research devoted to that end. It was to have been a three-volume work. The first is now in print. The second was delivered to the publishers in manuscript form shortly before his death. It is to be hoped that it will also be published. The third, presumably, will never be seen.

The first volume is an imposing piece of work even without its companions. It covers the years up to the beginning of Protestant missions. The volume, therefore, is basically about the Thomas Christians and the Roman Catholics, though there is one chapter at the end about the work of the English and Dutch chaplains who came to India during the seventeenth century. All this is set within the wider context of Indian history. Neill was clearly enamored of the whole Indian experience and he provides much material about the scene in which his main story took place.

The book is a good example of history writing in the classical style. It is an absorbing narrative that carries the reader forward. At times the author stops for summaries and judgments on the events and actors he has described. The writing is based on long and meticulous research. Original documents have been used wherever they are available and the variety of their languages seems to impose no impediment to the author. His thorough knowledge of Tamil is particularly useful, as in the section where he analyzes the Tamil writings of Robert Nobili. He finds Nobili’s Tamil always correct, its terminology. the value of this work in light of the arguments of recent canon lawyers. He gives an interesting summary, for example, of the judgments he reaches on the points of view have arisen through fresh investigations. He gives an interesting summary, for example, of the judgments he reaches on the arguments of recent canon lawyers over the legitimacy of the Synod of Diamper. It is clear from this that that synod, which had such devastating effects on the old Syrian church of South India, was highly questionable in its constitution and its actions in the light of Roman Catholic canon law.

The judgments he reaches on the various periods and persons are sometimes open to challenge, but he provides the reader with the facts on which a challenge can be made. Sometimes his judgments seem to emphasize the positive contributions of Christianity and of Europe and to play down the negative effects. For example, his overall judgment on the Portuguese impact on India is that it made contact with Europe a permanent part of Indian life and that it assured a continuing, active Christian presence in the land. He does not draw into this final evaluation the cruel and destructive side of the Portuguese activity, but he has narrated these at some length so the reader can bring them into the balance.

A question naturally arises as to the value of this work in light of the multivolume and multiauthored history of Indian Christianity now being developed by the Church History Association of India, of which one volume, that by Joseph Thekkadath on the late sixteenth and the whole of the seventeenth centuries, has already appeared. Thekkadath’s volume is an excellent piece of work and augurs well for the remainder of the project. However, it is good to have in addition the whole story surveyed by one mind and viewed from a single perceptive. This provides a unity and coherence to the narrative, which contributes much to our understanding. For such an effort, even though not fully completed, we will continue to be indebted to Stephen Neill.

—Charles W. Forman

Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition.


Allan Boesak is a black South African theologian, an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, who did his doctoral studies at the Theological Academy of Kampen in the Netherlands. In 1982 he was elected president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The present volume contains lectures, sermons, and open letters. The reader who expects a flamboyant revolutionary book will be disappointed. On the contrary, Boesak writes in a cool, matter-of-fact style. That does not prevent him from telling the horror story of oppression in South Africa, but he does it with understatement. That is why it hurts a white reader all the more when he reminds us of the laws that prevent a wife living with a black man.

Walter J. Hollenweger, Professor of Mission at the University of Birmingham, England, is a Swiss theologian who did his doctoral work in Zurich. He is the author of The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, Conflict in Corinth, and several volumes on intercultural theology.
with her husband or allow white people to ill-treat and torture their black brothers and sisters.

However, the most important part of the book is Boesak’s argument that the Reformed Churches in South Africa have misrepresented the Reformed tradition and Calvin in particular. Boesak is right when he quotes Calvin and Barth against the Reformed Churches in South Africa and reminds the South African minister of justice, the Honorable A. Schlebusch, that “blind obedience to civil authorities is alien to the Bible and that, for the Christian, loyalty and obedience to God are first and foremost” (p. 37). He also reminds the minister that his (Boesak’s) position of critical and nonviolent opposition is the only alternative to a violent eruption in South Africa. An important though painful book.

—Walter J. Hollenweger

The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts: An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology.


This volume, the first of its kind, is an evangelical perspective on Asian theology. It is evangelical, Asian, contextual, and up-to-date. The first two chapters record Asian evangelical declarations on contextualization. The remaining seventeen chapters tell us how Asian evangelicals view contextualization and Asian religions.

“Evangelical” means based on the text of Scripture as the normative source for theology. The evangelical theologian begins with the Bible’s message, not with the daily struggle and conflict with people (p. 124). The text rules the context, and the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary in order to understand the normative text. The evangelical theologian feels a close personal attachment to Jesus Christ and a compulsion to witness for him.

The Asian context, one reads repeatedly, is similar to that of the Bible writers (e.g., p. 91). The Asian mind is monistic and intuitive in its approach to reality. It has a unitary worldview that resolves the obvious disparity between evangelism and social concern (p. 175). The Asian mind does not, like the Western mind, work so largely in abstractions. Evangelical theology should therefore be non-abstract, concrete. Evangelical theology in Asia is not easier to produce than elsewhere, for in this continent the confrontation is with the renascent religions to which the vast majority of people belong: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto.

Then there is the totalitarian culture of Chinese socialism. As evangelicals see it, the central issue is: Where does one draw the line between being contextual (which is required) and being syncretistic (which may be disastrous)? (p. 120).

Evangelicals in Asia have made real progress toward developing their own theology. They no longer limit their theologizing to a criticism of liberal theology. They do distance themselves somewhat from their largely Western parentage. They take the context more seriously than they did previously. They have even begun dialogue with liberal and ecumenical theologians and with the Asian non-Christian ideologies and religions.
Asian evangelical theology. On its
They are still running at the back of the
The church should take note of
Asian and global
Asian theology, seen from my per­
Evangelicals in Asia might also do some homework
Asian theology is. There are in this book
Asian theology as a service
to the everyday nonscientific life
Asia might also do some homework
Asian and global
Asian theology as a human theoretical enterprise
Asian and global theology.
|—Paul G. Schrotenboer

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New Forms of Mission for Tomorrow's World. Dr. James M. Phillips, Associate Director, OMSC; former missionary in Korea and Japan.

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Community-Based Primary Health Care: The Challenge for Christian Missions. Drs. Jean and Jim Morehead, International Child Care and Tufts University School of Medicine, Jeannette M. Thiessen, MAP International, and Mr. Eldon Stoltzls, Mennonite Central Committee. Co-sponsored by American Leprosy Missions, Associated Medical Mission Office/NCC, MAP Int'l, and World Concern.

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