Half a century ago John R. Mott canvassed world Christian leaders on the question "What is evangelism?" Their answers, published in a 300-page volume, came out in time to be discussed at the 1938 meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, Madras, India.

Half a century later the question is still central in mission debate. David J. Bosch, in this issue, argues that evangelism should be conceived as the very heart of mission. He also demonstrates how far apart we are on the basic definition of evangelism.

A decade ago John Stott, in *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, insisted that evangelism cannot be defined in terms of results; it is simply the preaching of the gospel whether anyone gets converted or not (p. 38). At the same time, he acknowledges that many of us read more into the word than that, as did the 1918 Archbishops' "Committee of Enquiry on the Evangelistic Work of the Church": "To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their king in the fellowship of his Church."

Our contributing editor David B. Barrett, in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, joins Stott in rejecting a results-linked definition: "Throughout Christian history [evangelism has] always been used in a broader sense to mean the spreading of the Good News" as distinguished from conversion and Christianization (WCE, p. 119). Yet, in the Dictionary section of *WCE*, the definition of the verb "evangelize" echoes 1918: "to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, ... persuading and convincing people to obey him as Lord in the fellowship of his church, and to serve him responsibly in the world."

We also struggle with the relationship of word and deed in evangelism. Is the one or the other primary?

Lesslie Newbigin, another of our contributing editors, wrote here in 1982 that he uses "the word 'evangelism' exclusively for an action of verbal communication in which the name of Jesus is central." But, he added, "the New Testament gives no authorization to assign primacy to words over deeds." Both are equally essential elements in the total witness of Christians in mission because "both point to the same reality—the presence of the reign of God."

The lack of depth and authenticity in our evangelism and its results is a good reason for continuing debate and study. This is where the issues of contextualization force themselves upon us. Paul Hiebert's analysis in this issue significantly advances and clarifies some of the issues.

And there are theological issues behind the questioning of evangelism. C. David Harley's discussion in this issue, "The Church and the Jewish People," forces us to grapple with evangelism in a situation where all too many are undecided, ill at ease, or just plain offended by the claims of Jesus Christ, the supreme Evangelist.

On with the debate!
My assignment is to provide a concise survey of the ways in which evangelism is being understood and practiced today. I assume that this does not preclude an attempt to give my own view on what I believe evangelism should be. One of the problems is that evangelism is understood differently by different people. Another problem is that of terminology. The older term, still dominant in mainline churches, is “evangelism.” More recently, however, both evangelicals and Roman Catholics have begun to give preference to the term “evangelization.” It does not follow that they give the same contents to the term, as I shall illustrate.

Yet another problem is that of the relationship between the terms “evangelism” and “mission.” Perhaps the best way of attempting to clear the cobwebs is to begin by distinguishing between those who regard evangelism and mission as synonyms and those who believe that the two words refer to different realities.

Mission and Evangelism as Synonyms

It is probably true that most people use “mission” and “evangelism” more or less as synonyms. Those who do this do not necessarily agree on what mission/evangelism means. Perhaps one could say that the definitions of mission/evangelism range from a narrow evangelical position to a more or less broad ecumenical one.

Position 1: Mission/evangelism refers to the church’s ministry of winning souls for eternity, saving them from eternal damnation. Some years ago a South African evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, wrote a book with the title Plundering Hell. This is what the church’s mission is all about: making sure that as many people as possible get “saved” from eternal damnation and go to heaven. According to this first position it would be a betrayal of the church’s mission to get involved in any other activities. Most people subscribing to this view would be premillenialist in their theology. Typical of the spirit of premillenialism is Dwight L. Moody’s most quoted statement from his sermons: “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, ‘Moody, save all you can.’”

Position 2: This position is slightly “softer” than the first. It also narrows mission/evangelism down to soul-winning. It would concede, nevertheless, that it would be good—at least in theory—to be involved in some other good activities at the same time, activities such as relief work and education. On the whole, however, such activities tend to distract from mission as soul-winning. It should therefore not be encouraged. Involvement in society is, in any case, optional.

Position 3: Here also mission/evangelism is defined as soul-winning. However, in this view, service ministries (education, health care, social uplift) are important, since they may draw people to Christ. They may function as forerunners of, and aids to, mission. “Service is a means to an end. As long as service makes it possible to confront men with the Gospel, it is useful.”

Position 4: Here mission/evangelism relates to other Christian activities in the way that seed relates to fruit. We first have to change individuals by means of the verbal proclamation of the gospel. Once they have accepted Christ as Savior, they will be transformed and become involved in society as a matter of course. In the words of Elton Trueblood, “The call to become fishers of men precedes the call to wash one another’s feet.” Jesus did not come into the world to change the social order: that is part of the result of his coming. In similar fashion the church is not called to change the social order: redeemed individuals will do that.

Position 5: Mission and evangelism are indeed synonyms, but this task entails much more than just the proclamation of the gospel of eternal salvation. It involves the total Christian ministry to the world outside the church. This is, more or less, the traditional position in ecumenical circles. When the International Missionary Council merged with the World Council of Churches (WCC) at its New Delhi meeting in 1961, it became one of several divisions of the WCC and was renamed Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. Both words, “mission” and “evangelism,” were thus included in the title, not because they meant different things but precisely because they were, by and large, understood to be synonyms. Another synonym was the word “witness,” which is also often used in the New Delhi Report. Phillip Potter is correct when he wrote, in 1968, that “ecumenical literature since Amsterdam (1948) has used ‘mission,’ ‘witness’ and ‘evangelism’ interchangeably.” This task was classically formulated as the ministry of the “whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.” This ministry would, in the classical ecumenical position, always include a call to conversion.

Position 6: This goes beyond the previous position in that it does not insist that mission/evangelism would under all circumstances include a call to repentance and faith in Christ. Gibson Winter, for instance, says, “Why are men not simply called to be human in their historical obligations, for this is man’s true end and his salvation.” Here mission/evangelism is understood virtually exclusively in interhuman and this-worldly categories. In similar vein George V. Pimley defines the kingdom of God exclusively as a historical category. The Palestinian Jesus movement, which was, according to him, a wholly political movement, was completely misunderstood by Paul, John, and others, who spiritualized Jesus’ political program. In Pimley’s thinking, then, salvation becomes entirely this-worldly, God’s kingdom a political program, history one-dimensional, and mission/evangelism a project to change the structures of society.

Evangelism Distinguished from Mission

There are four ways in which evangelism and mission are distinguished from each other as referring to different realities.

1. The “objects” of mission and evangelism are different. In the view of Johannes Verkuyl, for instance, evangelism has to do with the communication of the Christian faith in Western society, while mission means communicating the gospel in the third world. Evangelism has to do with those who are no longer Christians or who are nominal Christians. It refers to the calling back to Christ of those who have become estranged from the church. Mission, on the other hand, means calling to faith those...
who have always been strangers to the gospel. It refers to those who are not yet Christians.

This view is still generally held in continental European circles, both Lutheran and Reformed churches. It is, in fact, also the traditional view in Roman Catholicism, even in Vatican II documents such as the Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium) and the Decree on Mission (Ad Gentes).

2. A second group of theologians, instead of distinguishing between evangelism and mission, have decided simply to drop the word “mission” from their vocabulary. The French Catholic theologian Claude Geffré prefers “evangelization” to “mission” because of the latter term’s “territorial connotation . . . and its historical link with the process of colonization.” Other Roman Catholics appear to move in a similar direction. John Walsh, in his book Evangelization and Justice, calls everything the church is doing in the areas of “human development, liberation, justice and peace . . . integral parts of the ministry of evangelization.” In similar vein Segundo Galilea recently published a book in which the activities described in the Beatitudes of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew are designated “evangelism”: The Beatitudes: To Evangelize as Jesus did. Once more a very comprehensive, almost all-embracing understanding of evangelism comes to the fore and the concept “mission” is dropped.

3. A third group of theologians offer a variation of the position just described. They hold onto both concepts, “mission” and “evangelism”; however, the way they do it is to regard “evangelism” as the wider term and “mission” as the narrower term. Evangelism is described as an umbrella concept “for the entire manner in which the gospel becomes a reality in man’s life”; it includes proclamation, translation, dialogue, service, and presence. Mission, on the other hand, becomes a purely theological concept, “used for the origin, the motivation and the ratification” of the activities referred to above.

4. The fourth way in which we could differentiate between mission and evangelism is, in effect, the obverse of the one just described. Here “mission” becomes the wider, more comprehensive concept and “evangelism” the narrower one. There are, however, different ways in which this can be understood: (a) John Stott, and to a lesser extent the Lausanne Covenant, defines mission as evangelism plus social action. These two parts or aspects of mission are both important; indeed, they are imperative. The Lausanne Covenant adds, however: “In the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary” (italics added). John Stott defends this prioritization of evangelism over against social involvement, for “how can we seriously maintain that political and economic liberation is just as important as eternal salvation?” When criticized by Ron Sider for holding this position, Stott says, “Well, if pressed, I would still stand by it on the grounds that, if one has to choose, eternal salvation is more important than temporal welfare . . . . But . . . one should not normally have to choose.” (b) A second variation in the approach that regards mission as consisting of evangelism and social involvement is to state that these two expressions of mission are indeed genuinely different aspects of mission, but since they are equally important we should never prioritize. We may also say that they are so intimately intertwined that it would be futile to try to unravel them. (c) Third, there are those who—while agreeing with John Stott that mission is evangelism plus social action—would argue that in today’s world there can be no doubt that social involvement should take precedence over evangelism.

Evangelism: Toward a Redefinition

Let me now attempt to respond to the bewildering variety of
interpretations of evangelism. On the whole I would align myself with those who regard mission as the wider and evangelism as the narrower concept. I have problems, however, with those—and there are many—who, following John Stott, define mission as evangelism plus social involvement. Depicting evangelism and social action as two separate segments or components of mission is unsatisfactory, since it may—and often does—lead to a battle for supremacy. Stott himself maintains the primacy of evangelism, thereby willy-nilly relegating social involvement to a secondary position. To illustrate the problem, I refer to the Thailand Statement, produced by the Consultation on World Evangelization that was held in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980. The meeting was organized by the Lausanne Continuation Committee and there were frequent references to the Lausanne Covenant of 1974. At one point the statement says that “nothing contained in the Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, so long as it is clearly related to world evangelization” (italics added). The problem with this statement lies in what it does not say. It does not also assert that “nothing contained in the Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, so long as it is clearly related to social involvement.” In remaining silent on this aspect, the Thailand Statement is opting for a position of dualism. The moment you regard mission as consisting of two separate or separable components—evangelism and social action—you have, in principle, admitted that each of the two components has a life of its own. You are then suggesting that it is possible to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social action without an evangelistic dimension. Stott’s “separate but equal” position is, in fact, dangerous. It is too easy, in this definition, for any one of the two components to make a unilateral declaration of independence, so to speak.

I therefore wish to introduce an important modification in Stott’s definition. I accept—in broad outlines—his wider definition of mission as being the total task that God has set the church for the salvation of the world. In its missionary involvement, the church steps out of itself, into the wider world. It crosses all kinds of frontiers and barriers: geographical, social, political, ethnic, cultural, religious, ideological. Into all these areas the church—a form of ecclesiastical propaganda. Its aim cannot be to enlarge the membership of a particular church or to promote a particular doctrine.”

1. Evangelism is the core, heart, or center of mission; it consists in the proclamation of salvation in Christ to nonbelievers, in announcing forgiveness of sins, in calling people to repentance and faith in Christ, in inviting them to become living members of Christ’s earthly community and to begin a life in the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, article 9, puts it in the following words: “As kernel and centre of the good News, Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift of God which is liberation from everything that oppresses people but which is, above all, liberation from sin and the Evil One, in the joy of knowing God and being known by him, of seeing him, and of being turned over to him.” People are “being led into the mystery of God’s love, who invites [them] establish a personal relationship with him in Christ” (Ad Gentes 13).

This does not limit evangelism to soul-winning, as some argue. It is a biblically untenable position to take, as our ultimate concern in evangelism, the salvaging of a soul that must endure when all the world has perished. Lesslie Newbigin calls this a “Hindu solution,” and adds: “In the sharpest possible contrast to this attempt, the Bible always sees the human person realistically as a living body-soul whose existence cannot be understood apart from the network of relationships that bind the person to family, tribe, nation, and all the progeny of Adam.”

A variant of the emphasis on soul-winning is the idea that evangelism is concerned primarily with the inward and spiritual side of people. As Harold Lindsell puts it: “The mission of the church is pre-eminently spiritual—that is, its major concerns revolve around the non-material aspects of life.” This is a gnostic interpretation of the Christian faith, however; it denies the corporate nature of salvation as well as the incarnational character of the gospel.

If—in contrast to this—we describe evangelism in terms of calling people to faith in Christ, we refer to human beings of flesh and blood in all their relationships; we do not refer to evangelism as operative only in individual or spiritual categories. We do not believe, however, that the central dimension of evangelism as calling people to faith and a new life can ever be relinquished. I have called evangelism the “heart” of mission. If you cut the heart out of a body, that body becomes a corpse. With evangelism cut out, mission dies; it ceases to be mission.

2. Evangelism seeks to bring people into the visible community of believers (cf. Ad Gentes 13). In 1982 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches published a very important document entitled Mission and Evangelism—An Ecumenical Affirmation. Paragraph 25 of this document states, inter alia: “It is at the heart of the Christian mission to foster the multiplication of local congregations in every human community. The planting of the seed of the Gospel will bring forward a people gathered around the Word and sacrament. . . . This task of sowing the seed needs to be continued until there is, in every human community, a cell of the kingdom, a church confessing Jesus Christ.” Even so, evangelism is not the same as recruitment of church members. As Paul Löffler puts it: “[Evangelism] is not a form of ecclesiastical propaganda. Its aim cannot be to enlarge the membership of a particular church or to promote a particular doctrine.”

There are two manifestations of the understanding of evangelism as church expansion. In the traditional Roman Catholic approach, evangelism is defined as the road from the church to the church. Here the church is regarded as a divine institution franchised by God and stocked with a supply of heavenly graces, which the clergy can dispense to their customers. In Protestant circles, evangelism is frequently understood as “transferring” as many people as possible from the world into the church, for church and world are regarded as being in absolute antithesis to each other. Numerical church growth is frequently of the highest importance, and such growth is seen as the fruit of successful evangelism. Donald McGavran of the Church Growth movement, for instance, does not seem to experience much difficulty with the multiplication of denominations. In his major work we read, “Frequently a church splits and both sections grow,” and he does not appear to be overly worried by this. Proselytizing evangelism also seems to be in order; McGavran euphemistically calls...
it "transfer growth" (as distinguished from "biological" and "conversion" growth). 18

Such preoccupation with ecclesial ingathering may easily turn evangelism into a mechanism for institutional self-aggrandizement. In the face of this we have to emphasize that authentic evangelism may in fact cause people not to join the church, because of the cost involved.

3. Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do. It therefore does not announce anything that we are bringing about but draws people's attention to what God has brought about and is still bringing about. Evangelism is not a call to put something into effect. It gives testimony to the fact that Christ has already conquered the powers of darkness (Col. 1:13) and has broken down the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:14–17). The British Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism (in which "ecumenicals," "evangelicals," and Roman Catholics cooperated) put this in the following words: "Christians commend not themselves but the love of God as known in Jesus." 19

This does not suggest that evangelism consists in verbal witness only. It consists in word and deed, proclamation and presence, explanation and example. The verbal witness indeed remains indispensable, not least because our deeds and our conduct are ambiguous; they need elucidation. The best we can hope for is that people will deduce from our behavior and our actions that we have "a hope within" us. Our lives are not sufficiently transparent for people to be able to ascertain whence our hope comes. So we must name the Name of him in whom we believe (1 Pet. 3:15). But this does not mean that evangelism is only verbal.

The biblical concept evangelizesthai refers to more than the English word "preach" does. Richard Cook has suggested that—at least in Paul's epistle to the Galatians—the Greek word evangelizesthai should not be rendered "preach the Gospel" but "embody the Gospel in their midst." 20

4. Evangelism is invitation; it should never deteriorate into coaxing, much less into threat. Both these—coaxing and threat—are often used in so-called evangelistic campaigns. Sometimes evangelism is interpreted to mean inculcating guilt feelings in people. They have to be made to see how sinful they are so that they—in despair, as it were—will turn to Christ in order to be saved. They have to be shown that this is the only way out: like mice in a laboratory, the listeners are supposed to experience an electric shock each time they try a wrong solution, until they are persuaded to enter through the one and only safe door.

A variation of interpreting evangelism as the inculcating of guilt feelings is to scare people into repentance and conversion with stories about the horrors of hell. Lesslie Newbigin comments on this approach: "... to make the fear of hell the ultimate motivation for faith in Christ is to create a horrible caricature of evangelism. I still feel a sense of shame when I think of some of the 'evangelistic' addresses I have heard—direct appeals to the lowest of human emotions, selfishness and fear. One could only respect the toughminded majority of the listeners who rejected the message." 21 Such an approach indeed degrades the gospel of free grace and divine love. People should turn to God because they are drawn to him by his love, not because they are pushed into fear of hell. Newbigin elaborates: "It is only in the light of the grace of God in Jesus Christ that we know the terrible abyss of darkness into which we must fall if we put our trust anywhere but in that grace." Furthermore, "[T]he grave and terrible warnings that the New Testament contains about the possibility of eternal loss are directed to those who are confident that they are among the saved. It is the branches of the vine, not the surrounding brambles, that are threatened with burning." 22

5. Evangelism is possible only when the community that evangelizes—the church—is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and has a winsome lifestyle. Marshall McLuhan has taught us that the medium is the message. This is eminently true of the church-in-evangelism. If the church is to impart to the world a message of hope and love, of faith and justice, something of this should become visible, audible, and tangible in the church itself. According to the book of Acts the early Christian community was characterized by compassion, fellowship, sharing, worship, service, and teaching (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35). Its conspicuously different lifestyle became in itself a witness to Christ. The Christians did not need to say, "Join us"; outsiders come to the church, drawn to it as if by a magnet. We, however, frequently have to push or pull people into the church. In the words of Michael Green: "Sometimes when a church has tried everything else—in vain—it comes reluctantly round to the idea that if it is to stay in business it had better resign itself to an evangelistic campaign." 23 Usually, however, this achieves precious little, because of the image that our churches have and because of their lack of relevance. They tend to be clubs for religious folklore. So what the churches often do get involved in is not evangelism, but propaganda; that is, they reproduce carbon copies of themselves and impart their own ghetto mentality to the people they "reach." In their evangelistic outreach, they often resemble a lunatic farmer who carries his harvest into his burning barn.

The German missiologist Hans-Werner Gensichen mentions five characteristics of a church involved in evangelism: (a) it lets outsiders feel at home; (b) it is not merely an object of pastoral care with the pastor having the monopoly; (c) its members are involved in society; (d) it is structurally flexible and adaptable; (e) it does not defend the interests of any select group of people. 24

6. To evangelize is to take risks in at least two respects. In the first place, the evangelist or the church-in-evangelism has no control over how the gospel it proclaims will "come alive" in the hearers' context. The gospel may, and probably will, surprise and even upset them. There is no way, however, of avoiding this risk. Lesslie Newbigin puts it as follows: "The way in which the Gospel will 'come alive' to every human person will be known in that person's experience and can not be determined a priori. The attempt so to determine it always ends in the legalistic distortion of the Gospel—that is to say the distortion by which a free personal response to grace is replaced by a pre-determined pattern of behaviour." 25

Second, the evangelist is running a risk of getting changed in the course of the evangelistic outreach. Take the well-known story narrated in Acts 10 as an example. We know it as the story of the conversion of Cornelius. It could, with equal justification, bear the title "The Conversion of Peter" or "The Conversion of an Evangelist." The person facing the toughest decisions here is not the pagan Cornelius but the Rev. Simon Peter. Walter Holtenweger comments correctly: "The real evangelist cannot help but take the risk that in the course of his evangelism his under-
standing of Christ will get corrected.” For this is precisely what happened to Peter. In Cornelius’s house he did not just receive some additional theological insights. No, he began to understand that they themselves will change: all necessary change has to take place at the “receivers’” end. After all, we go out to help others get converted, not to be converted ourselves!

If, however, we are involved in authentic evangelism, things are indeed different. Look at Paul, for instance. José Comblin describes what happened to Paul. “When the Spirit sent Paul to the Greeks, it was not just to evangelize them; it was also to make it possible for Paul himself to see the real heart of his gospel.”

“Whenever the church’s involvement in society becomes secondary and optional, whenever the church invites people to take refuge in the name of Jesus without challenging the dominion of evil, it becomes a countersign of the kingdom.”

message. . . . The Spirit reveals to the Church through the mediation of new Christians . . . that many old things are not necessary, that they actually obscure the truth of Jesus Christ.”

7. Those who respond positively to evangelism receive salvation as a present gift and with it assurance of eternal blessedness. It is, however, not the primary purpose of evangelism to impart to people such guaranteed happiness, neither for this world nor the next. Some evangelists preach: “Are you lonely? Are you unhappy? Do you want peace of mind and personal fulfillment? Then come to Jesus!” Others say, as Francis Grim states in his book, *Die hemel en die hel*: the most important question facing every one of us is: “Where will I spend eternity?”

Christ gives people joy, hope, trust, vision, relief, and courage in this life, as well as a blessed assurance for all eternity. But if the offer of all this gets center-stage attention in our evangelism, if evangelism becomes the offer of a psychological panacea, then the gospel is degraded to a consumer product and becomes the opiate of the people. Then evangelism fosters a self-centered and self-serving mind-set among people and a narcissistic pursuit of fulfilled personhood. Then evangelism has become a television commercial where the call to conversion is presented in a Things-go-better-with-Jesus wrapping.

Karl Barth, in a penetrating excursus in his *Church Dogmatics* (IV/3), addressed himself to this issue. Christian teaching, he says, has tended to regard Christians as enjoying an indescribably magnificent private good fortune. People’s chief concern is then with their personal experiences of grace and salvation. Barth regards all this as thoroughly unbiblical and egocentric. The personal enjoyment of salvation, he argues, nowhere becomes the central theme of biblical conversion stories. Not that the enjoyment of salvation is wrong, unimportant, and unbiblical, but it is almost incidental and secondary. What makes a person a Christian is not primarily his or her personal experience of grace and redemption, but his or her ministry.

These comments of Barth have tremendous consequences for our understanding of evangelism. Evangelism that stops at calling people to accept Christ is incomplete and truncated. The church exists for the world, not the world for the church, as a reservoir from which the church draws. It is not simply to receive life that people are called to become Christians, but rather to give life.

8. Evangelism thus does not simply offer individuals personal bliss. Evangelism is calling people to become followers of Jesus. It is enlisting people for mission—a mission as comprehensive as that of Jesus. This hardly happens in most present-day evangelistic outreach. Often evangelists preach an entirely uncontextualized and disembodied gospel. They frequently employ all kinds of psychological and rhetorical devices to persuade people to accept their specific message. People are then indeed challenged to repent and come to faith, but often the challenge is issued in respect of those areas of life where conversion will not be too costly. That evangelism will take on these features is, in a sense, a foregone conclusion, in view of the fact that the churches into which new members are invited are usually compromised in the surrounding culture, particularly in societies where the pastor is considered to be in the employ of the congregation and thus dependent on the parishioners’ goodwill and support.

This kind of evangelism calls upon people to adopt a lifestyle that is defined almost exclusively in micro-ethical and religio-cultural categories. A case in point is Bishop J. Waskom Pickett’s classic, *Christian Mass Movements in India*. Pickett measures successful evangelism in terms of “attainments” in eleven areas: (1) knowledge of the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Ten Commandments; (2) Sunday observance; (3) full membership in the church; (4) church attendance; (5) frequency of church services; (6) support of the church; (7) freedom from idolatry, charms, and sorcery; (8) abstention from participation in non-Christian festivals; (9) freedom from fear of evil spirits; (10) Christian marriage; (11) abstention from intoxicating beverages.

Where these characteristics manifest themselves in people, so the argument goes, evangelism has been successful. In similar vein Peter Wagner suggests that evangelism means calling people to a “code of life which includes positive behavior traits such as a daily Bible reading and prayer, grace before meals, and regular church attendance, as well as certain negative traits such as total abstinence from or extremely moderate use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and profanity in speech.”

To all this we must say that, whenever the church’s involvement in society becomes secondary and optional, whenever the church invites people to take refuge in the name of Jesus without challenging the dominion of evil, it becomes a countersign of the kingdom. It is then not involved in evangelism but in counter-evangelism. When compassionate action is in principle subordinated to the preaching of a message of individual salvation, the
church is offering cheap grace to people and in the process de-naturing the gospel. The content of our gospel then is—in the devastating formulation of Orlando Costas—“a conscience-soothing Jesus, with an unscandalous cross, an otherworldly kingdom, a private, inwardly spirit, a pocket God, a spiritualized Bible, and an escapist church.” If the gospel is indeed the gospel of the kingdom, and if the kingdom is “the detailed expression of [God's] caring control of the whole of life,” then we are concerned in our evangelism with a God whose “nature as king [is] to... uphold justice and equity, to watch over the circumstances of strangers, widows and orphans, and to liberate the poor and the prisoners.”

In Conclusion

In summary, then, evangelism may be defined as that dimension and activity of the church's mission which seeks to offer every person, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ, with a view to embracing him as Savior, becoming a living member of his community, and being enlisted in his service of reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth.

Notes

18. Ibid., p. 98.
22. Ibid.
31. C. P. Wagner, Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimension of Church Growth (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), p. 3.
33. J. Andrew Kirk, “The Kingdom, the Church and a Distressed World,” Churchman 94:2 (1980): 139 (the italics are Kirk's).
Critical Contextualization

Paul G. Hiebert

A great deal has been written on contextualization in the past few years (see bibliographies of Bevans 1985, Gitari 1982, Haleblian 1983, and Lind 1982). I shall not summarize this literature or trace its development. Rather, I wish to propose a model, made up of three "ideal types" in the Weberian sense, which we can use to examine the ways in which Protestant missionaries have handled the problem over the past 100 years. This is not a history of events, but an analysis of how missionaries dealt with the awareness of cultural pluralism that swept the West following the age of exploration.

I shall limit myself to the narrow question of how the missionaries responded to the traditional beliefs and practices of non-Christian cultures. They pray to their gods and propitiate their spirits. How did—and how should—missionaries who bring a new gospel respond to the old one?

The data will be drawn from the Indian scene, which has a long history of debates on the subject and with which I am most familiar. I believe, however, that the model is applicable to many other parts of the world.

Early Responses to the Question

There is a long history of answers given in missions to the question of what to do with traditional cultures. The early Roman Catholic missionaries struggled with the issue when they came to India. They were impressed with the sophistication of Indian culture. In many ways it was superior to that of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But they were sharply divided over the question of what to do with the existing culture. The Jesuits advocated accommodation and the retention of traditional Indian cultural forms. The Franciscans contended that they were selling out the gospel.

Early Protestant missionaries, too, were impressed with the Indian culture and its philosophical foundations. Many of them learned Indian languages well enough not only to produce dictionaries and to write classical literature and hymnology in them, but also to translate Indian sacred texts into German and English. This was later to play an important role in the rise of the Orientalist movement in the West. By the early nineteenth century, however, a major shift had taken place. With some notable exceptions, Protestant missionaries entered an era of noncontextualization.

The Era of Noncontextualization

Roughly from 1800 to 1950 most Protestant missionaries in India, and later in Africa, rejected the beliefs and practices of the people they served as "pagan." John Pobee writes: "... to the present time all the historical churches by and large implemented the doctrine of the tabula rasa, i.e. the missionary doctrine that there is nothing in the non-Christian culture on which the Christian missionary can build and, therefore, every aspect of the traditional non-Christian culture had to be destroyed before Christianity could be built up." Consequently, the gospel was seen by the people as a foreign gospel. To become Christian one had to accept not only Christianity but also Western cultural ways.

In view of the earlier willingness to use traditional cultural forms, what had changed? Why this growing rejection of existing cultures?

Rise of Colonialism

One reason was the emergence of colonialism with its belief in the superiority of Western cultures. The expansion of the East India Trading Company in India came at a time when the Mogul and Vijayanagar empires were decadent and collapsing. By default it became not only the economic but also the political master of much of India. The process was completed in 1858 when, because of the Indian Mutiny, the British government made India its star colony.

Colonialism proved to the West its cultural superiority. Western civilization had triumphed. It was the task, therefore, of the West to bring the benefits of this civilization to the world. Old medical systems were seen as witchcraft and hocus-pocus, and had to be stamped out. Old governments were seen as feudalistic and had to be replaced by modern, national governments. The result was "direct" rule in which the British sought to replace the Indian governmental structures from the top to the bottom.

For Christians, the parallel was the superiority of the gospel. Paganism had to be rooted out. Many missionaries, in fact, equated the two. Christianity, civilization and, later, commerce (the three Cs) went hand in hand. Western civilization was spreading around the world, and it was assumed that people would become both Christian and "modern." There was no need, therefore, to study old cultures or to take them seriously. They were on the way out.

Not all rejection of traditional cultures, however, was rooted in a naive equation of Christianity with Western civilization, as Pobee suggests. Some missionaries developed a deep understanding of the local cultures. For example, in India, W. T. Elmore, H. Whitehead, and W. H. and C. V. Wiser wrote early ethnographies based on their lives in the villages. There they came face to face with Indian culture little changed by modernity and Christianity, and saw the burning of widows, infant sacrifice to idols, the cruelties of untouchability, and demon worship.

These missionaries were profoundly aware that in peasant and tribal societies, religion is at the center of culture and permeates most of its forms. Food, clothing, house construction, marriages, markets, farming, fishing, hunting, festivals, music, dance, and drums all had religious significance in traditional cultures. In India, even the direction in which you place your head when you sleep has theological importance. If that is the case, they argued, religion and culture, and forms and meanings cannot be arbitrarily separated. One cannot simply change the meanings of old forms in order to communicate the gospel, for the ties between them are rooted in social convention and cultural history.
The Theory of Cultural Evolution

A second reason for the rejection of non-Western cultures was the emergence of the theory of cultural evolution. If the political solution to the awareness of cultural pluralism created by the age of exploration was colonialism, the intellectual solution was evolutionism. Westerners could ignore other cultures by labeling them "primitive," "animistic," and "uncivilized." In fact, anthropologists until 1915 spoke of "culture," not of "cultures." They saw all cultures as different stages of development of the same thing; some were more advanced and others more primitive.

After the debates over the monogenetic versus polygenetic origins of human races that had wracked anthropology in the last half of the nineteenth century, anthropologists united in emphasizing the commonness of all humanity. Differences, therefore, whether in race or culture, were seen as variations in the same thing, not as different things.

Christians argued with secular biologists over biological evolution, but cultural evolution was another matter. While biological evolution challenged the fundamental Christian tenet of the uniqueness and divine nature of human beings, cultural evolution was simply another updating (along with Marxism) of the Christian medieval paradigm that sought meaning in a universal history of humankind. Both sought meaning in diachronic (historical) rather than synchronic (structural) paradigms. Both saw history as directional—with an origin, a progression or regression, and a culmination in an ideal state whether through redemption or development. There was argument over the causes of historical progression, but not over the fact that history was going somewhere.

Given this historical paradigm, noncontextualization made sense. Why contextualize the gospel in other cultures when they are in the process of dying out? It is only a matter of time before all people are civilized. What is important, therefore, is to bring the gospel along with civilization.

The Triumph of Science

A third factor leading to the rejection of other cultures was the triumph of science. When William Carey went to India, he was much impressed by its cultural sophistication. Certainly in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries there was nothing in Europe comparable to the sophistication and technological advancement of the Mogul empire.

The rise of science changed all this. By the end of the nineteenth century, Western technology had conquered the world, and science had made giant strides in conquering nature. Faith in the final triumph of science was widespread. As late as 1953, in his Reith Lectures for the British Broadcasting Corporation, J. Robert Oppenheimer could say without fear of contradiction: "Science has changed the conditions of man’s life. . . . the ideas of science have changed the way men think of themselves and of the world" (Raven 1953:101). Sir Francis Smith could write in the preface of his The Neglect of Science: "The world to-day is moulded, in the last resort, by scientific discovery. . . . whether we like it or not, science is forcing the pace" (1951:iv). As C. A. Coulson points out (1955:20):

It is important to realize that . . . the influences of a scientific view . . . have passed far beyond mere technology or gadgeteering. We may begin there, because that is about as far as the man-in-the-street, or the young apprentice at his lathe, can state his beliefs. But his unrecognized convictions go much deeper. For he knows that science grows, even though he may have no personal knowledge of any of its fundamental principles; and he knows that scientific controversy nearly always issues in a universal agreement, frequently very quickly. Science becomes the cohesive force in modern society, the ground on which may be built a secure way of life for man and for communities.

F. S. C. Northrop of Yale added (1952:9): "If one wants to understand the culture of the United States, one must not look at its departments of economics, sociology or politics, important as they are, but at its universal education in the natural sciences and their skills, its agricultural colleges, technological institutes and research laboratories."

Underlying this optimism was a positivist (or, to use Ian Barbour’s term, "naive realist") epistemology (cf. Hiebert 1985a and 1985b). This held that a careful examination of experience can lead us to the discovery of the “laws of nature,” which upon further examination can be proved to be “true.” Scientific knowledge was seen as objective (uncontaminated by the subjectivity of the scientist), cumulative, and true in an ultimate sense. In contrast to this, the knowledge of other cultures was thought to be subjective, piecemeal, and false.

The same epistemological foundations were widespread among many conservative Christians, including most missionaries. Only here, theology replaced science, and revelation re-
This stance was essentially monocultural and monoreligious. Truth was seen as supracultural. Everything had to be seen from the perspective of Western civilization and Christianity, which had shown themselves to be technologically, historically, and intellectually superior to other cultures; and so those cultures could be discounted as "uncivilized." The missionary's culture was "good," "advanced," and "normative." Other cultures were "bad," "backward," and "distorted." Christianity was true, other religions were false.

In missions this had two consequences. First, Christianity was perceived in other cultures as a foreign religion identified with Western culture. Christian converts were expected to adopt Western ways. This cultural foreignness was a great barrier in the spread of the gospel.

The second consequence was more subtle. Old beliefs and customs did not die out. Because they were not consciously dealt with, they went underground. Young converts knew they dared not tell the missionary about their old ways lest they incur his or her anger. So these ways became part of the new Christians' hidden culture. Public marriage ceremonies were held in the church, and then the people returned to their homes to celebrate the wedding in private. Amulets were hidden under shirts, and Christians did not admit to Christian doctors that they were also going to the village shaman. In India caste differences were denied in public, although Christians privately continued to marry their children along caste lines.

In the long run, this uneasy coexistence of public Christianity and private "paganism" has led to syncretism. Non-Christian beliefs and practices have infiltrated the church from below. In India caste is becoming public in the church and destroying it with political strife and lawsuits. In Latin America, spiritism taught by nannies to upper-class children is becoming public and respectable in Kardicism and Umbanda.

From a Christian point of view this monocultural point of view has its good sides. First, it affirmed the oneness of humanity and of human history. Second, it took history and culture change seriously. Third, it affirmed absolutes and universals, both in human cultures and in the gospel. It was concerned with preserving the uniqueness of the gospel and avoiding the syncretism that might result from the incorporation of non-Christian beliefs and practices in the church.

But this view also had its bad sides. It was reductionist and acultural—it did not take other cultures and religions seriously. It was ethnocentric—it judged other cultures and religions by its own standards and found them wanting, while assuming that its own ways were right. And in the end it hindered the missionary task. The foreignness of the gospel was a barrier to evangelism, and syncretism was not prevented. Far too often the missionaries ended as policemen enforcing what they believed to be Christian practices on the people.

The Case for Contextualization

The picture began to change by the end of the nineteenth century. Colonial rule was expanding, but already the seeds of its destruction had been planted. These were to bear fruit in the recognition that other cultures had to be understood and appreciated in terms of their own worldviews, and in a revolution that would call into question the nature and supremacy of science itself.

Postcolonialism

By 1900 three important forces were at work that would bring about the destruction of colonialism and its intellectual founda-

Phenomenology, Structural Functionalism, Linguistics, and New Anthropology

The impact of all this on anthropological theory was profound. In many circles, evolutionism with its diachronic models was replaced by British structural functionalism with its emphasis on synchronic analysis. The central questions were no longer ones of origin but of the structure and integration of a society and the function of its various parts. Each society had to be understood in its own terms, not in comparison with Western society.
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A parallel development was the emergence in North America of descriptive linguistics. In studying tribal cultures, which for the most part had no writing, new methods for reducing to writing and learning languages had to be developed. These methods not only enabled anthropologists to learn languages, but also to analyze the structures and internal organizations of these languages as ends in themselves. They also provided anthropologists with tools for recapturing images of cultures from aged informants and for reconstructing tribal histories.

The combination of British structural functionalism, with its emphasis on the social organization of tribes, and of the American interest in languages and cultures as cognitive maps led to the school of thought known as ethnosience, or new anthropology. This theory, like those from which it was derived, emphasized the differences between cultures and the ways in which they see reality. Each culture was seen as an autonomous paradigm with a worldview of its own. In the end, all three schools of thought were forced to acknowledge the cultural relativism that was the logical outcome of their theories. Obviously, if we take all cultures seriously and emphasize their differences, no one of them can be used to judge the others. Where, then, are moral and cultural absolutes?

**Postmodern Science**

Not only was belief in Western cultural superiority called into question, but the certainty and absolute nature of science itself was under attack. By the mid-twentieth century, the charge was led by the social scientists who began to apply their theories to analyzing science itself. Psychologists began to examine the subjective nature of all human knowledge; sociologists showed that science was a community affair, influenced by normal social dynamics; anthropologists placed science into its larger cultural and worldview context; and historians of science showed that our textbook understanding of the nature of science was misplaced. Michael Polanyi’s writings and T. S. Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) drew these strands together in their theory that science was not a lineal, cumulative progression of objective knowledge, but a series of subjective, competing paradigms. Old positivist science had received a mortal blow. But where would postpositivist science find its new epistemological foundations?

For phenomenologists, including many psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, and for Kuhn himself, the answer was “instrumentalism.” Since we could no longer show that one theory or paradigm or culture was better than another, we could no longer speak of absolutes or truth. At best, we could appeal to pragmatism. Any paradigm was adequate so long as it solved the problems humans faced.

**Implications for Contextualization**

In such an intellectual milieu, it is not surprising that missionaries and missiologists placed a great deal of emphasis on contextualization, not only of the church in local social structures, but also of the gospel and theology in local cultural forms.

First, on the positive side, this approach avoided the foreignness of a gospel dressed in Western clothes that had characterized the era of noncontextualization. The gospel message had to be communicated in ways the people understood. It avoided the ethnocentrism of a monocultural approach by taking cultural differences seriously, and by affirming the good in all cultures. And it affirmed the right of Christians in every country not only to be institutionally but also cognitively free from Western domination. The right of every church to develop its own theology began to be recognized.

Embracing an uncritical contextualization, however, had its problems. Obviously the denial of absolutes and of “truth” itself runs counter to the core Christian claims about the truth of the gospel and the uniqueness of Christ. Moreover, if the gospel is contextualized, what are the checks against biblical and theological distortion? Where are the absolutes?

Second, as Mary Douglas points out (1970), the separation between form and meaning implicit in these theories blinds us to the nature of most tribal and peasant societies in which form and meaning are inextricably linked. For example, names and shadows are tied to a person’s identity, and religious rites are performances, not simply the communication of messages.

A third problem has to do with the emphasis that contextualization places on the accurate communication of meaning, often to the point of ignoring the emotive and volitional dimensions of the gospel. We are in danger of reducing the gospel to a set of disembodied beliefs that can be individually appropriated, forgetting that it has to do with discipleship, with the church as the body of Christ, and with the kingdom of God on earth. Here Charles Kraft’s call (1979) for a “dynamic-equivalent” response to the gospel message is a healthy reminder that in the Bible “to believe” is not simply to give mental assent to something; it is to act upon it in life.

A fourth area of concern is the ahistorical nature of most discussions on contextualization. Contemporary cultural contexts are taken seriously, but historical contexts are largely ignored. In each culture Christians face new questions for which they must find biblical answers. But in many things, particularly in developing their biblical and systematic theologies (and all Christians develop these implicitly or explicitly as diachronic and synchronic paradigms of Christian truth), they can learn much from church history. Exegesis and hermeneutics are not the rights of individuals but of the church as an exegetical and hermeneutical community. And that community includes not only the saints within our cultural context, and even the saints outside our culture, but also the saints down through history. To become a Christian is to become a part of a new history, and that history must be learned.

A fifth area of concern is that uncritical contextualization, at least in its more extreme forms, provides us with no means for working toward the unity of churches in different cultures. Instrumentalism is built on the belief that different cultures and paradigms are incommensurable—there is no basis for mutual understanding. Each can be understood only in its own terms. But if this is so, there can be no real communication between Christians in different cultures, no comparison between their theologies, and no common foundations of faith. At best Christianity is made up of a great many isolated churches. For any one of these to claim that its theology is normative is ethnocentric. There may be some common ground in our common human experiences, but that is limited and certainly not enough to provide the
basis for developing a common theology. The best we can do, then, is to affirm pluralism and to forget unity.

Sixth, uncritical contextualization has a weak view of sin. It tends to affirm human social organizations and cultures as essentially good. Sin is confined largely to personal evil. But social systems and cultures are human creations and are marked by sin. This is clear in Scriptures in which more than 75 percent of the time terms such as arché and archón (organizational power), exousia (authority), dynamis (power), and thronos (thrones) refer to human institutions (Wink 1984). There is a need, therefore, to take a stand against corporate evil as well as individual sin.

Finally, a call for contextualization without an equal call for preserving the gospel without compromise opens the door to syncretism. William Willimon points out (1986: 26): "[T]he persistent problem is not how to keep the church from withdrawing from the world but how to keep the world from subverting the church. In each age the church succumbs to that Constantrian notion that we can get a handle on the way the world is run." There is an offense in the foreignness of the culture we bring along with the gospel, which must be eliminated. But there is the offense of the gospel itself, which we dare not weaken. The gospel must be contextualized, but it also must remain prophetic—standing in judgment on what is evil in all cultures as well as in all persons.

Critical Contextualization

Where do we go from here? We cannot go back to noncontextualization with its ethnocentrism and cultural foreignness. Nor can we stay in more extreme forms of contextualization with their relativism and syncretism. As Peter Berger points out (Berger and Luckmann 1966), cross-cultural workers must move from monoculturalism, through the river of relativism that comes when we take other cultures and systems of belief seriously, to the firm bank of postrelativism that lies beyond. But what is this bank?

Interdependence

As the battle against colonialism is won (and the battle in more subtle forms is not yet over), we must look beyond the reactionary stance of "anticolonialism" and recognize the need to build institutions and understandings that take into account our common human context. We are rapidly becoming one world (though not one culture), and the peace, prosperity, and survival of all depends upon our thinking and working together as different cultures, peoples, and nations. As E. Stanley Jones put it, on the level of both the world and the church we must move beyond dependency and independency to interdependency.

Theoretical Complementarity

In anthropology the move is away from relativism and purely emic approaches to complementary theories and metacultural grids. Complementarity is rooted in a critical realist epistemology. In this, human knowledge is seen not as a photograph of reality but, rather, as a map or blueprint that gives us real but partial understandings of reality (Coulson 1955). Just as we need several blueprints to get a mental picture of what a house is like, so we need several complementary theories to show us the nature of reality. In anthropology there is a growing number of scholars who use more than one theory or paradigm, depending upon the questions being asked and the reality being examined. For example, emic and etic models are seen as complementing each other.

There appears, also, to be a growing affirmation that anthropology can provide us with metacultural grids by which we can compare cultures and translate between them. Certainly anthropology has its roots in Western culture, and it is deeply molded by Western presuppositions. But in its analysis of, and dialogue with, other cultures it has begun to free itself of some of its theoretical ethnocentrism.

Beyond Postmodern Science

As Huston Smith points out (1982), we are moving beyond postmodern science and its instrumentalism and relativism. In his chapter on "The Death and Rebirth of Metaphysics" Smith argues that a "comprehensive vision, an overview of some sort, remains a human requirement; reflective creatures cannot retain the sense of direction life requires without it" (1982:16). The epistemological foundation now emerging is critical realism (Barbour 1974; Hiebert 1985a) that affirms both the objective and the subjective nature of knowledge. We see through a glass darkly, but we do see.

In critical realism, theories are limited in the information they convey, but that information may be shown to be true by means of reality testing. In other words, theories are not totally subjective, relative, and arbitrary. Moreover, theories, like maps, may be complementary. Consequently, contradictions between them must be taken seriously. Finally, in critical realism, theories and paradigms are not incommensurable. As Larry Laudin (1977) and D.R. Hofstadter (1980) point out, metatheoretical models can be developed to compare them and to translate meaning from one to the other.

Critical Contextualization

What does all this have to say to the question of contextualization? Specifically, what does one do with traditional cultural beliefs and practices? Here I am indebted to Jacob Loewen (1975) and the work of John Geertz, who developed a method of contextualization among the Wanana of Panama that is applicable in other cultural contexts.

Exegesis of the Culture: The first step in critical contextualization is to study the local culture phenomenologically. Here the local church leaders and the missionary lead the congregation in uncritically gathering and analyzing the traditional beliefs and customs associated with some question at hand. For example, in asking how Christians should bury their dead, the people begin by analyzing their traditional rites: first by describing each song, dance, recitation, and rite that makes up their old ceremony; and then by discussing its meaning and function within the overall ritual. The purpose here is to understand the old ways, not to judge them. If at this point the missionary shows any criticism of the customary beliefs and practices, the people will not talk about them for fear of being condemned. We shall only drive the old ways underground.

Exegesis of the Scripture and the Hermeneutical Bridge: In the second step, the pastor or missionary leads the church in a study of the Scriptures related to the question at hand. In the example we are considering, the leader uses the occasion to teach the Christian beliefs about death and resurrection. Here the pastor or missionary plays a major role, for this is the area of his or her expertise.

The leader must also have a metacultural framework that enables him or her to translate the biblical message into the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of another culture. This step is crucial, for if the people do not clearly grasp the
bibilical message as originally intended, they will have a distorted view of the gospel. This is where the pastor or missionary, along with theology, anthropology, and linguistics, has the most to offer in an understanding of biblical truth and in making it known in other cultures. While the people must be involved in the study of Scripture so that they grow in their own abilities to discern truth, the leader must have the metacultural grids that enable him or her to move between cultures. Without this, biblical meanings will often be forced to fit the local cultural categories. The result is a distortion of the message.

Critical response: The third step is for the people corporately to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understandings, and to make decisions regarding their response to their new-found truths. The gospel is not simply information to be communicated. It is a message to which people must respond. Moreover, it is not enough that the leaders be convinced about changes that may be needed. Leaders may share their personal convictions and point out the consequences of various decisions, but they must allow the people to make the final decision in evaluating their past customs. If the leaders make the decisions, they must enforce these decisions. In the end, the people themselves will enforce decisions arrived at corporately, and there will be little likelihood that the customs they reject will go underground.

To involve the people in evaluating their own culture in the light of new truth draws upon their strength. They know their old culture better than the missionary, and are in a better position to critique it, once they have biblical instruction. Moreover, to involve them is to help them to grow spiritually by teaching them discernment and by helping them to learn to apply scriptural teachings to their own lives. It also puts into practice the priesthood of believers within a hermeneutical community.

A congregation may respond to old beliefs and practices in several ways. Many past beliefs and practices they will keep, for these are not unbiblical. Western Christians, for example, see no problem in eating hamburgers, singing secular songs such as “Home on the Range,” wearing business suits, or driving cars. In many areas of their lives, Christians are no different from their non-Christian neighbors. In keeping these practices they reaffirm their own cultural identity and heritage.

Other customs will be explicitly rejected by the congregation as unbecoming for Christians. The reasons for such rejection may not be apparent to those outside who often see little difference between the songs and rites the people reject and those they retain. But the people know the deep, hidden meanings and associations of their old customs. On the other hand, at some points the missionary may need to raise questions that the people have overlooked, for they may fail to see clearly their own cultural assumptions.

Sometimes the people will choose to modify old practices by giving them explicit Christian meanings. For example, Charles Wesley used the melodies of popular bar songs, but gave them Christian words. Similarly, the early Christians used the style of worship found in Jewish synagogues, and modified it to fit their beliefs.

At points the Christians may substitute symbols and rites borrowed from another culture for those in their own that they reject. For example, the people may choose to adopt elements of the funeral practices of the missionary rather than to retain their own. Such functional substitutes are generally effective, for they minimize the cultural dislocation created by simply removing an old custom.

Sometimes the church may adopt rites drawn from its Christian heritage. In becoming Christians they enter into a second new history. The addition of such rituals as baptism and the Lord’s Supper not only provides converts with ways to express their new faith, but also symbolizes their ties to the historical and international church.

Finally, the people may create new symbols and rituals to communicate Christian beliefs in forms that are indigenous to their own culture.

New Contextualized Practices: Having led the people to analyze their old customs in the light of biblical teaching, the pastor or missionary must help them to arrange the practices they have chosen into a new ritual that expresses the Christian meaning of the event. Such a ritual will be Christian, for it explicitly seeks to express biblical teaching. It will also be contextual, for the church has created it, using forms the people understand within their own culture.

Checks Against Syncretism

What checks do we have to assure us that critical contextualization will not lead us astray? We must recognize that contextualization itself is an ongoing process. On the one hand, the world in which people live is constantly changing, raising new questions that need to be addressed. On the other, our understandings of the gospel and its application to our lives is partial. Through continued study and spiritual growth, we should, however, come to a greater understanding of the truth.

First, critical contextualization takes the Bible seriously as the rule of faith and life. Contextualized practices like contextualized theologies must be biblically based. This may seem obvious, but we must constantly remind ourselves that the standards against which all practices are measured is biblical revelation.

Second, this approach recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers open to God’s leading.

Third, the church is acting as a hermeneutical community (cf. Kraus 1979). The priesthood of believers is not a license for theological lone-rangerism. We need each other to see our sins, for we more readily see the sins of others than our own. Similarly, we see the ways others misinterpret Scriptures before we see our own misinterpretations. Along the same line, we need Christians from other cultures, for they often see how our cultural biases have distorted our interpretations of the Scriptures. This corporate nature of the church as a community of interpretation extends not only to the church in every culture, but also to the church in all ages. To say that exegesis and hermeneutics are corporate processes does not (as some sociologists of knowledge, such as Karl Mannheim and Richter, suggest) reduce them to social determinism.3

Fourth, there is a growing discussion among evangelical theologians from different cultures and, one hopes, a growing consensus on essential theological points. Just as one can often see the sins of others better than they do themselves, so also theologians can often detect the cultural biases of theologians from other cultures better than the latter do themselves. Out of the
exercise of the priesthood of believers within an international hermeneutical community should come a growing understanding, if not agreement, on key theological issues that can help us test the contextualization of cultural practices as well as theologies.

Critical contextualization does not operate from a monocultural perspective. Nor is it premised upon the pluralism of incommensurable cultures. It seeks to find metacultural and metatheological frameworks that enable people in one culture to understand messages and ritual practices from another culture with a minimum of distortion. It is based on a critical realist epistemology that sees all human knowledge as a combination of objective and subjective elements, and as partial but increasingly closer approximations of truth. It takes both historical and cultural contexts seriously. And it sees the relationship between form and meaning in symbols such as words and rituals, ranging all the way from an equation of the two to simply arbitrary associations between them. Finally, it sees contextualization as an ongoing process in which the church must constantly engage itself, a process that can lead us to a better understanding of what the Lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth are about.

Notes

1. Peter Berger traces the impact of this Christian paradigm on both the Western concept of development and the Marxist view of revolution in Pyramids of Sacrifice (1974).
2. The term "metacultural" here is used as D. R. Hofstadter uses it, as a position above two or more systems of the same level (1980). David Bidney discusses three uses of the term (1967:156–82). A. Comte, E. Durkheim, and C. Levy-Bruhl saw it as the "prelogical" thought that characterized tribal societies. Others such as Malinowski saw metaphysics as stepping in where science fails. Finally, Henri Bergson, P. Sorokin, F. S. C. Northrop, and D. R. Hofstadter appeal to metacultural grids as conceptual frameworks that emerge out of and stand above different cultures, allowing us to compare their beliefs and translate between them. This position would reject Kuhn's suggestion that paradigms are incommensurable. Such a position, in any case, falls under its own weight, for it makes intercultural understanding impossible and provides no basis for explaining cultural change. It also renders anthropology meaningless.

In a sense any person who has lived in two or more cultures deeply becomes "bicultural." By this we mean that she or he has developed the ability to stand above these cultures and compare them. This "balcony" view is, in fact, a metacultural grid.
3. For a good critique of the sociology of knowledge with regard to science, see Larry Laudin, Progress and Its Problems (1977: 196–225).

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July 1987
Mission as Seen from Geneva: A Conversation with Eugene L. Stockwell

Eugene L. Stockwell is Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts, where his father was studying theology, and was raised from the age of three in Argentina, where his father served as president of Union Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires. As a young man Stockwell studied and practiced law before deciding to enter Union Theological Seminary (New York) and the ministry. He and his wife worked as United Methodist missionaries for ten years in Uruguay, from 1952 to 1962. This was followed by two years as Latin American Secretary of the Methodist Board of Missions and then eight years as Assistant General Secretary for Program Administration. In 1972 Stockwell became Associate General Secretary for Overseas Ministries of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. He took up his present responsibilities in Geneva in 1984.

While visiting at the Overseas Ministries Study Center recently, Stockwell shared some of his thoughts on developments and directions in world mission with Editor Gerald H. Anderson and Research Assistant Robert T. Coote of the International Bulletin.

What are your reflections on the responsibilities, opportunities, and special demands of your present position in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC), as compared to your previous years of service with the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches in the United States?

There are two obvious differences. One is that the World Council of Churches is, by its very nature, international in character whereas the work in the National Council of Churches is basically a United States-based operation. The international nature of the work in the WCC obliges one to be in an intercultural situation constantly, and this is something I have greatly enjoyed and welcomed.

The second major difference is that the Division of Overseas Ministries of the NCC, when I was with it, included under its mandate responsibility for Church World Service, which, as the interchurch-aid arm of the National Council of Churches, dealt with the whole area of relief and development worldwide. But the work in the CWME does not directly concern that aspect of work. The demands that I have found somewhat new in comparison with the previous position are the demands to take the question of evangelization far more seriously. We always believed in the importance of evangelization, but how to go about it, how to train people for it, how to find the resources to help churches around the world engage in evangelization according to their own understanding of the meaning of that task is something that has been a very important thing and extremely challenging in Geneva.

Perhaps one other thing to say is that in the CWME we say that, in one sense, we have no program at all. That is to say, we don't develop programs out of Geneva to try to sell them across the world. What we attempt to do is to respond to the requests, needs, and desires of churches and various communities around the world that want to engage in mission and evangelism; we make every effort to support them in what they want to do. This is often not true of other agencies of the World Council that deliberately build certain kinds of programs and try to get people involved in them. Basically we are not a programmatic commission. That again is a difference from what we were doing in the National Council of Churches.

Would it be correct to say that in the CWME you have far more association with the Orthodox churches than when you were with the National Council of Churches? What difference does that make in your work?

Yes, we do have more contact with the Orthodox in the CWME, although the relations of the National Council of Churches with the Orthodox denominations are of importance as well.

We tend to say that there are three major sets of relationships we have in the CWME on behalf of the whole World Council: one is with the Orthodox churches. Many Orthodox churches are members of the World Council of Churches and we have a secretary for Orthodox studies and relations, Father Ion Bria [succeeded in 1987 by Yorgo Lemopoulos], who is a key point of relationships between the World Council of Churches and the Orthodox churches around the world. We in the CWME are learning about the Orthodox concept of mission. The Orthodox, for instance, speak of the Eucharist as a missionary event. That is not a common Protestant concept, that the liturgy and the Eucharist are so central to God's mission on earth. At the same time we are trying to help the Orthodox churches understand a little more about the mission dimension of the church in terms of reaching out beyond their own community, or their own nation, or their own ethnic group. In April 1988 there will be an Orthodox mission conference, organized by the CWME, in which Orthodox...
leaders will examine their concept of mission and how they can grow in it.

Another set of relationships is with the Roman Catholics, particularly through the Vatican Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity. This secretariat has sent a Roman Catholic Sister, Joan Delaney, M.M., to be on the CWME staff as a participant in all that we do in the area of mission and evangelism.

The third set of relationships, perhaps a little less defined yet very central to the life of the CWME, concerns those we call "evangelicals.”

I take it there is not an evangelical member of your staff, though, in the same way that there is a Roman Catholic member?

That is correct, although in 1984 the Salvation Army considered appointing one of its members as a staff member to us precisely to provide an evangelical input from their particular perspective. Unfortunately, from our point of view, that has not yet come about.

At present, within the CWME, the person who has the closest relationship with evangelicals is Raymond Fung of Hong Kong, who is seen by many as being one with whom they especially can relate.

What are some of the major issues and developments in mission that have emerged since the CWME conference on world mission at Melbourne in 1980?

As you will recall, the Melbourne Conference had as its theme “Your Kingdom Come.” Although the kingdom was the central theological concern of Melbourne, perhaps what took center stage as the conference developed was the role of the poor—how the gospel speaks especially to the poor, how the church has learned from the poor, how Christian communities in Latin America, for instance, or Christian communities in Indian villages are themselves bearers of the gospel to their own people and to the rest of us. This whole question of the role of the poor and of the oppressed within the world, within the Christian community, has certainly been a very important concern to us. Within the CWME the point at which this has most visibility is in what we call our “Urban-Rural” mission work, which is in touch with poor people’s groups across the world—many within the church, some outside the Christian community. They are struggling for a very basic modicum of justice in their own situations, and the church wants to help in this struggle.

A second area that has emerged since Melbourne, more particularly at the Vancouver Assembly in 1983, is the relationship of gospel and culture. The issue is to what extent ought we affirm the values and beauties of many cultures across the world, while recognizing at the same time that the gospel is a source for change within every culture. This has another side to it when one thinks of the cultures of the West, which too easily we have tended to say are Christian cultures. Here the question becomes, “How does one disentangle or disengage a particular culture that has considered itself Christian, but in fact is not, from the gospel itself, which has a prophetic dimension and a prophetic challenge to that culture?”

One other area, which is by no means new, but which has been very important in recent years, is the whole area of “Common Witness.” Here we are talking particularly about the ways in which Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants can work together in ways that will give some indication of the unity of the church. Since Melbourne this has taken new impulse.

In quite a different direction, I would add that since I arrived in Geneva I have received many expressions of concern about the influx of independent Christian groups across the world. Frequently these groups, operating in countries where churches have been at work for years, have taken no interest in the ecumenical reality of the life of the churches. At many points they have become very divisive. We have no relationship with any of these groups, much less control, but it is a concern that keeps coming to us.

Somewhat related to that is the concern about groups that go either from Europe or from the United States with large funding possibilities to engage in all kinds of programs—evangelism or development or relief for refugees or whatever—and these groups have often been disruptive in the life of the churches. In some cases they are said to identify with very conservative power structures rather than with more progressive forces. We don’t know what to do about this type of concern, but the concern comes to my desk often from leaders of our member churches and ecumenical organizations.

What plans have been made for the next World Mission Conference under the auspices of the CWME?

The next World Mission Conference organized by the CWME is to take place in San Antonio, Texas, in May or June 1989. The theme for the conference, like the last one, is taken from the Lord’s Prayer: “Your Will Be Done,” and the supporting phrase is “Mission in Christ’s Way.” We had more than 150 proposals from around the world, and this was the one that was chosen. In terms of size, the conference will be similar to Melbourne, with about 600 persons altogether and about 250 voting delegates. In contrast to Melbourne, where some felt there were too many church bureaucrats, bishops, and so forth, there will be a determined effort to get a larger proportion of persons who are engaged in particular mission situations at what are called “grassroots levels,” with these persons coming largely from the second and third worlds. We are currently in the process of working on Bible studies and basic study materials, which we hope will be used across the world in preparation for the conference.

We see the conference itself as only one important moment out of three moments: the preparatory period is very important, almost as important as the conference itself; and even more so, the follow-up period after the conference. In the past, I think,
we have felt that our follow-up of conferences, like Bangkok in 1972 and Melbourne in 1980, has been rather weak, particularly in North America.

Is it correct that none of the World Mission conferences of the International Missionary Council and of the World Council of Churches since integration in 1961 has been held in the United States?

I think that is correct, but I don’t think that that fact has been used as an argument for holding the 1989 conference in the United States. The arguments for coming to the United States, which are put forth by third-world people, are essentially two. For one, the United States is where much of the power of the modern, contemporary missionary movement is located, and there are questions about how that power is used. Even more, there is, I think, genuine perplexity as to why the United States acts as it does in many parts of the world, when, in fact, as seen from the third world, it takes its religious faith so seriously. People ask, “Why, with the strong churches in your country, are you involved in Central America—especially in your relationship to Nicaragua—the way you are?” Some hope to get a better understanding of such issues in a conference of this nature, and some want to come and challenge the ways in which we carry out our mission.

But a second consideration is that people around the world are becoming aware of the fact that there are many fine examples of mission within the United States in the areas of race, drug programs, intercultural relations, and the inner city—and there is a genuine desire to learn.

Has any provision been made to involve the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in the conference planning?

We have invited the leadership of the Lausanne Committee to participate in the planning of our conference, and we have been sharing documents with them. We have made an effort to have representatives of some of the people who participated in past Lausanne conferences be present in some of our preliminary meetings, and I hope that the cooperation will grow. I was present in June 1986 at the World Assembly of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), another major evangelical body, trying to see where some bridges can be built. We want some of their people to be involved in the preparation of our conference, if they wish to do so. Another opportunity for cooperation was the consultation on evangelism that the CWME sponsored in March 1987, at which we had an equal number of leaders of evangelical organizations and churches (many of them involved either in the WEF or in the Lausanne Committee) and persons from the ecumenical movement. This conference took a fresh look at the meaning of mission and evangelism today. We have found encouragement for this kind of cooperation in the Open Letter of the evangelicals at Vancouver, which was widely welcomed by the World Council of Churches.

In 1982 the CWME issued a position paper, “Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation.” What has been the reaction and impact of this statement?

I know of no World Council document that has been more warmly received in recent years both within the World Council and by persons outside the World Council’s immediate fellowship, particularly evangelicals and Roman Catholics, than this document. Indeed, the fact that it has been so warmly received may represent its problem—the problem being that it may not have dealt with some of the more difficult issues. At the moment, this is our platform, and it is a platform that has been very widely and well received out across the world.

Has it contributed to any ferment with the CWME constituency itself?

Yes, this document has been used very widely as a study document within our constituency. Indeed, some churches—for example, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.—adopted it as their statement on mission. It has been translated into at least twenty languages, including Swahili and Burmese. Several study guides have been worked up, and they have been adapted in different parts of the world.

“Mission and Evangelism,” in my judgment, has some very strong sections on conversion, on the unity of the church, on mission in Christ’s way. But the section on dialogue with other living faiths needs more development, and we are in the process of working on that.

The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission is one of the consultative processes that has marked the 1970s and 1980s. How do you view these discussions and what impact have they had on the agenda of the CWME?

We have kept our eyes on the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (ERDOM) with great interest. I think we are at a potentially difficult moment between Roman Catholics and evangelicals. In contrast to the ERDOM report, the World Evangelical Fellowship Assembly, which met in June 1986, approved a position paper that was very critical of the Roman Catholic Church. It does not seem to take into account many of the developments since Vatican II, and I am concerned lest the WEF document might be a step backward in the relations between evangelicals and Roman Catholics. It was approved, apparently, for internal reasons having to do with the unity of the fellowship of the WEF, without any reference to the evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue that has been going on since 1975. I found this rather strange.

Are there ultimately insuperable obstacles to the linking of the WCC community and the Roman Catholic community in mission and evangelism?

There are some obstacles in the area of doctrine that we are a long way from discussing. We are not sitting around talking about the infallibility of the pope, for example, or many of the doctrines that surround the Virgin Mary. But I do not see those as insuperable obstacles to our carrying on very effective common work in the area of mission and evangelism. What is so surprising is how much Roman Catholics and Protestants or Orthodox have been able to do together over the last decade or two. When we
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bring our CWME commission together and begin discussing important issues of mission, one realizes that in the discussion you can't quite tell a Protestant from a Catholic. The way that we divide on issues is not necessarily between Protestants and Catholics, but rather, between members within the same communion, whether Catholic or Protestant. So I don't think in terms of "insuperable obstacles"; I think in terms of the tremendous richness that the Roman Catholic/Protestant/Orthodox discussions are providing for all of us.

How far has the ecumenical movement come in its understanding of the purpose and substance of interreligous dialogue in relation to mission? Are there formulations or definitions on the horizon that hold promise of satisfying both evangelical and conciliar bodies as to the role of dialogue as an expression of Christian witness?

I said a moment ago that the section on dialogue with persons of other living faiths in the CWME document on mission and evangelism was weak. It is weak, in part because it is extremely brief. What has happened in the last few years in the World Council is interesting. You have the Guidelines for Dialogue that the Unit on Dialogue developed at a consultation in Thailand in 1977, which speaks mainly of the methods of dialogue—the ways in which we should be engaged in dialogue with persons of other faiths. It does not, at any point, withdraw from a clear commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Some persons have suggested that people interested in dialogue are really giving up their faith in Jesus Christ. But in terms of the 1977 document, that is certainly not true. In 1988 there will be a WCC consultation on dialogue at which missiologists and theoreticians will try to sort out the fundamental issues in the dialogue/mission discussion. There are straw persons on both sides that we ought to get rid of. It is not true that the dialogue people are simply leading us down a garden path to syncretism. It is not true that the dialogue people don't believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. On the other hand, it is not true that the mission people simply want to convert people in some kind of imperialistic way without respecting the personality, the faith, the integrity of persons of other convictions.

Where are the real problems? There are some within the dialogue community who tend to say that if a person is a member of another faith, we ought to make no effort whatsoever to convert that person. Within the mission community, we would say that we ought to share our faith with other persons as they share their faith with us, and let the Holy Spirit work. If the work of the Holy Spirit leads to the conversion of a person, one direction or the other—and that's where the risk is for Christians—then we ought to let that happen. In response to that, some within the Christian family would say, 'If we even suppose that it is possible for us to be converted to another faith, then we are really putting our own faith at risk, and that indicates that we really do not have a firm conviction.' I would disagree with that. It seems to me that we simply must trust the Holy Spirit, related to Jesus Christ the Son of God, and to God the Creator, to work. I believe the Holy Spirit will not work against itself—against the faith that is revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But these are the kinds of discussions that we have ahead of us, and they will not be easy ones.

If Christian missionaries were to be restricted from most of the nations of the world, due to political or other factors, how optimistic would you be about the worldwide witness of the church of Jesus Christ? What forms would it take, and would there be a significant role for Christians from the West?

I am very optimistic about the worldwide witness of the church of Jesus Christ, because I am optimistic about belief in Jesus Christ. I don't think the worldwide witness of the church depends simply on persons crossing national boundaries. The more that Christians can cross international borders as a symbol of the international character of the church, the better, of course. But I am optimistic about the worldwide witness of the church because there are witnesses everywhere in the world, in every country, who are giving faithful witness to Jesus Christ and who are able to carry on and to participate in God's mission in those countries whether or not persons come from other countries.

I think this does have a special significance, as your question indicates, for those of us in the West. I think Christians in the West, who may not in the future be able to send missionaries to other countries as freely as we have done in the past, will be confronted more pointedly with the question, "What is the role of our churches in our own cultures? In our own countries?" It seems to me that whether or not we can continue to send missionaries, a major responsibility for churches in the West is to provide a more effective witness to their own societies, especially in the powerful societies of the West. Here I refer to both East and West, that is, the same applies to the Soviet Union and the churches in Eastern Europe as applies to the United States and Western Europe.

It seems to me that the role of the expatriate Christian missionary is up for considerable review. One of the reasons is that some third-world churches are now sending missionaries all over the world, and this sending is often uninformed by the experience of the missionary movement of the last 100 years, so that some of the errors of earlier times are being repeated. I am not speaking about evangelicals or persons outside the World Council fellowship—I'm talking about some of the churches within the World Council membership. As this whole third-world missionary movement develops, it is important to have a chance to reflect on it and to avoid some of the errors of the past.

The "option for the poor" and identification with "the poor and oppressed" seem to be almost universal language today among conciliar Protestants, Roman Catholics, and many evangelicals. To what extent do you see missionary policy and strategy keeping up with the rhetoric?

In my report to our commission in July 1986, I raised this very point. On the one hand, the language is more than rhetoric, it is genuine conviction. On the other hand, I have a feeling that in the World Council and in our member churches, our actions do not fully measure up to our words. It is still quite common when one raises the question of the poor to get into the eternal debate about whether Jesus in the Beatitudes meant the "poor" or the "poor in spirit," or "Are the poor going to be with us always?" Such discussions tend to lead to not doing much in relation to the poor. One of our staff members in the World Council is doing some research right now on this question: "Why is it that mission structures in the West have not been able to put into action the words they speak about an option for the poor?"
The Church and the Jewish People: A Theological Perspective

C. David Harley

During the past forty years, more and more Christians have questioned the propriety of Jewish evangelism. Some churches that had a mission agency for work among Jews have closed that agency down. Some denominations have deliberately discarded any form of evangelism in their relations with the Jewish people and have adopted a stance of dialogue. Even among evangelicals there are many who are uncertain as to what an appropriate approach toward the Jewish people would be.

This seems all the more remarkable in view of the teaching of the New Testament. In the Gospels, Jesus is described as the Messiah of the Jewish people (Lk. 2:11) who came to save his people from their sins (Mt. 1:21). He is the only way to the Father (Jn. 14:6). It is those who believe in him who have eternal life (Jn. 3:15). In Acts, Peter repeats the universal claim of Jesus, when he preached to fellow Jews in Jerusalem, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Paul is equally adamant that Jews need the salvation that is found in Jesus. He is convinced that they cannot be saved on the grounds that they are Jews, or on the grounds of their religious heritage, or on the grounds of their sincerity. For Jew as for Gentile it is those who confess that Jesus is Lord and who believe that God raised him from the dead who will be saved (Rom. 10:9, 12).

The Call for Theological Revision

The most radical objection to Jewish evangelism is simply to say that it is indefensible. It is argued that after Auschwitz, Christians can no longer proceed on the assumption that theirs is a superior faith and that the events of the holocaust must lead to a radical reappraisal of Christian theology. The book A Long Night’s Journey into Day by Roy and Alice Eckardt comes into this category. The basic thesis of the book is that traditional Christian theology sowed the seed that ultimately bore fruit in Hitler’s final solution. Therefore Christian theology must be radically changed. Christian triumphalism must be challenged. Traditional views regarding the person and work of Christ must be reexamined. “The entire Christological issue is re-opened.”

In their search for this theological solution, the Eckardts make a number of far-reaching statements. Jesus is not seen as the preexistent Son of God. The idea that Christ was God, reconciling the world to itself, is seen as idolatrous. Jesus, it is suggested, did not rise from the grave but “sleeps with the other Jewish dead.” He was “not the Messiah but a Jew who hoped for the coming of the Kingdom of God and who died in the hope.”

The Eckardts argue further that the Jewish community will not and cannot accept Jesus as the Christ. But in the past twenty years tens of thousands of Jewish people have accepted Jesus as
their Messiah and it is one of the weaknesses of the dialogue between Christians and Jews that the existence and views of this group are almost entirely ignored.

In the last resort this debate must focus around the person of Jesus. If he was merely a great prophet, then the Eckardts suggest a helpful way toward a postholocaust theology. But if Jesus was God incarnate, then that is the pivotal event of history. The presentation of Christian truth may alter in the light of a holocaust: the truth cannot change. It is not the cross that must be reexamined in the light of the holocaust, but the holocaust that must be understood in the light of the cross.

**Two-covenant Theology**

A less radical objection to Jewish evangelism is to argue that it is unnecessary. While the new covenant is available for the Gentiles, the old covenant is still valid for the Jews. James Parkes provides a good example of this view in his book *Judaism and Christianity*. According to Parkes there are two ways to God—one through Sinai, the other through Calvary. The Jews have access to God through the former. It is by means of the covenant made in Exodus 24 that Israel as a nation entered into an established relationship with God. It is through the rituals and sacrifices prescribed in Leviticus that they found peace with God and atonement for their sins. Today they still enjoy that status as the people of God and that means of access. They have not been rejected by God—the very idea is an anathema to Paul. The gift and call of God are irrevocable. The Jews are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the time being they are deprived of the opportunity of offering sacrifices in the Temple, but in time even that may be restored to them.

The weakness of this position is that it fails to set the relationship between God and the Jewish people into the wider context of New Testament teaching. Certainly Paul rejects the idea that God had abandoned the Jewish people and, by implication, affirms that they are still the beneficiaries of God’s covenant. But whatever may be the nature of the covenant between God and Israel, it cannot bring with it salvation—unless it is to be totally inconsistent with the rest of the teaching of the New Testament. Salvation for the Jew lies not in Sinai but in Calvary. That has been made abundantly clear in the previous ten chapters of Romans. All have sinned—Jew and Gentile—but there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Dialogue**

For many Christians today the appropriate approach of the church to the Jewish people is not proclamation but dialogue. It is argued that for too long Christians have caricatured the Jewish people and their religion, they have failed to understand rabbinic Judaism or to appreciate the riches contained in the Jewish religious tradition, they have assumed that they had all the truth and that there is in Judaism only darkness and distortion. Such a view is no longer tenable. Now, so the argument runs, it is high time for us to sit down together with them and share our religious insights, not in order to convert them, but in order to understand them better and live as their neighbors in greater harmony.

Of course, it is commendable that we should understand more of Judaism. Every theological student should do extensive studies of the Jewish faith. As these students’ understanding of both Testaments increases, their own lives will be greatly enriched. The Jews have much to share with us and teach us, for example, about the use of the Sabbath or the importance of the family. Jewish scholars can broaden our comprehension of the Scriptures and bring fresh insights to our study of the text.

We have much to learn. The more we sit down with our Jewish friends and learn from them, the better. Dialogue is highly desirable, but for those who would engage in dialogue a number of caveats are necessary.

1. Dialogue must be a genuine two-way process. It should involve both parties in listening to and learning from the other. It is not just a question of Christians learning about Judaism, but also of Jews learning about Christianity. Often this is not the case, and dialogue becomes monologue. Indeed, I have often heard it argued in ecumenical circles that it is not necessary for Jews to learn about Christianity, but it is only necessary for Christians to learn about Judaism. If this is the case, it is not dialogue.

2. In true dialogue Christians cannot abandon their desire that Jewish people would come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christians come to dialogue with the conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, Savior of the world. They will express their convictions and will expect their Jewish counterparts to do the same. True dialogue must involve an honest sharing of the full conviction of both parties.

3. In the dialogue between Jews and Christians, the opinions of those who stand in the middle is of particular importance—by these I mean Jewish-Christians or Messianic Jews. They understand both parties and are in a better position than any to interpret the views of the one to the other. In most cases of dialogue between Jews and Christians, the views of Jewish-Christians are ignored. The representatives of the Jewish community regard them as reprobate apostates who are no longer to be regarded as Jews. The representatives of the Christian communities are also embarrassed by Jewish-Christians and feel that the mention of them may hamper the dialogical process. Yet there are, in the United States alone, between 50,000 and 100,000 Jewish-Christians, who are proud of their Jewishness, who have much to share in the area of dialogue between Jews and Christians, and whose views deserve to be heard.

4. Not all Jews feel that dialogue with Christians is either possible or desirable. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, professor of comparative religion at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, sincerely questions the theological possibility of dialogical engagement between a convinced Christian and a committed Jew. He sees dialogue—as commonly understood—as a falsification of the true position of both sides. He writes, “If the Christian is true to his profession he will desire the Jew’s conversion and if the Jew is a true Jew he will look upon the Christian as an aberration of Biblical faith.” Eliezer Berkovitz, chairman of the Department of Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew Theological college (Skokie, Ill.), says, “As to dialogue in the purely theological sense, nothing could be more fruitless and pointless. Judaism is Judaism because it rejects Christianity and Christianity is Christianity because it rejects Judaism.”

**Further Evangelical Objections to Jewish Evangelism**

Finally, there is opposition to the idea of Jewish evangelism...
among some evangelicals, and for a number of reasons.
1. For some the maintaining of good relations with the Jewish community is more important than the proclamation of Christ.
2. For many their awareness of the atrocities committed by Christians against Jews, and particularly the events of the holocaust, make it inappropriate in their view to engage in overt evangelism. They feel that now is the time to “speak tenderly to Jerusalem” (Isa. 40:2).
3. For some the removal of blindness from Israel will be an act of God’s sovereign grace, which should not be anticipated by the human being’s frenzied evangelistic activity.
4. For some the moment of the lifting of that blindness will be when Jesus returns and they look on him whom they have pierced.

Often associated with such a position is a strong emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy and speculation about what the time is on God’s clock of history. I would agree with Verkuyl in his Contemporary Missiology when he argues that Jesus disallows such speculation in Acts 1. The disciples ask, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). To which Jesus replies, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:7). He deflects the attention of the disciples away from speculation about the future to their responsibility in the present. “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Perhaps an even more serious threat is posed both to Jewish evangelism and to the evangelization of the Arab world by theological Zionism, with its undue emphasis on the land and its identification of the political state of Israel with the kingdom of God. The Arab peoples are sometimes seen as the enemies of God. The conduct of Israel is exonerated by some on every occasion, and the impression is easily given that the return of Jews to the land is more important than their return to the Lord.

Whatever theological significance is given to the extraordinary phenomenon of the Jews’ return and the founding of the state of Israel—and it does require theological comment—we must not allow our interpretation of these events to contradict or override other biblical teaching. God is sovereign, he made a covenant with Israel his people and has caused them to maintain their national identity to this day. He is also a God who loves all people and desires justice for all. He wills that all should come to a knowledge of the truth. Therefore it is important for us to maintain that the ultimate destiny to which God would lead the Jewish people (and the Arab peoples) is not the land of their fathers but the land of their Father—their eternal destiny in the new Jerusalem.

The Unchanging Commission

When Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter is enabled by God to declare, “You are the Messiah, Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:15f.). On the day of ascension, when the disciples worshiped this same Lord now risen from the dead, they received from him the Great Commission to be witnesses first among the Jewish people and then to all the earth. If we would identify with Peter’s declaration and call Jesus “Lord,” we have no option but to obey his command and preach his gospel to Jew as well as to Gentile, and not in some distant future but now, for “now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Over the years I have been privileged to meet hundreds of Jewish people who have come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, Messiah, and Lord. When I ask them, “Why did you come to faith in Jesus Christ? What is it that you have found in him that you had not discovered previously?” there are three things to which they frequently refer.

First, they claim to have discovered in Jesus a personal relationship with God. Before, they had known of God, now they know God. One said, “I now know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Another said, “I have found what my father and my grandfather were looking for.” Such a concept of an intimate experience of God is rare in rabbinical Judaism. Indeed, Rabbi Rosenberg, senior rabbi of Beta Tsedec congregation in Toronto, one of Canada’s largest synagogues, in his book To Understand Jews, says, “The Rabbis saw God as more concerned that men should follow his law then that they should mystically long to commune with him.”

Second, Jewish believers in Jesus say they have received assurance of forgiveness. While it is true that some Jews would question that atonement for sin is necessary at all, there are many who will seek through self-examination, prayer, fasting, and the performance of good deeds to atone for the past so that their names may be inscribed in the Book of Life. But as Jacob Gar-
As one Jewish-Christian put it to me, "To withhold such news from the Jewish people is the worst possible kind of anti-Semitism."

Notes

2. Ibid., p. 62.
3. Ibid., p. 58.
4. Ibid., p. 126.
5. Ibid., p. 150.
6. Ibid., p. 110, quoting Rosemary Ruether.

The Association of Professors of Mission: The First Thirty-five Years, 1952–1987

Norman A. Horner

Events leading to a North American association of missions professors grew out of the interest generated by the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland. A group of missions teachers in the eastern part of the United States began to meet informally as early as 1917, to promote fellowship and professional usefulness, sharing their research through papers and discussion of mission issues. There were only four full professorships of missions in American seminaries at the time of the Edinburgh Conference: Southern Baptist (Louisville, Ky.), Yale Divinity School (New Haven, Conn.), Episcopal Theological School (Cambridge, Mass.), and Omaha Seminary (a Presbyterian institution in Omaha, Neb., which has since ceased to exist except as an endowed program of continuing education). However, many other seminaries, colleges, and Bible schools were offering courses in missions within the decade after 1910. By the early 1930s the eastern fellowship was meeting on a regular basis, twice a year. In 1940, with some twenty-nine members, the participants adopted a constitution, naming their group the Fellowship of Professors of Missions of the Middle Atlantic Region.

But the group continued to be known popularly as the Eastern Fellowship.

A wider association in the United States and Canada was a logical next step, and the Association of Professors of Missions (APM) was organized in June 1952 at Louisville, Kentucky. The group often thereafter became known as the Association of Professors of Mission, in the singular, although this change in terminology was never officially made. An invitation to the organizational meeting had been extended by H. Cornell Goerner of the Southern Baptist Seminary in that city and Norman A. Horner of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Goerner was elected the first president of the association, and Horner the first secretary-treasurer.

It was appropriate to hold the inaugural meeting at Southern Baptist Seminary. That institution justifiably claims the oldest continuing department of missions in America. There were indeed earlier professors at other seminaries who devoted part time to teaching missions courses, but the assignment of Southern Baptist's William Owen Carver to a new Department of Comparative Religion and Missions in 1899 marks the beginning of full status for this discipline in the curriculum of any American seminary.

The year of the APM's organization more than a half century later was in no other respect a high point in the history of missions as a recognized academic discipline in American theological education. Reflecting on it in 1974, R. Pierce Beaver wrote:

Mission teachers and scholars as well as field missionaries and board executives had the ground cut from under them. New justification for the inclusion of missions in the seminary curriculum had to be found and the very existence of the discipline had to be defended. Our Association of Professors of Missions came into existence in 1950 [sic] not as an expression of the old missionary triumphalism but as an attempt to build a lifeboat for floundering brothers and sisters. It really marks the beginning of a new era rather than the climax of the older development. The biennial reports of the Association reveal the wrestling we have done over our reason for being, curriculum, and teaching methods during the past twenty-odd years.

The APM met biennially for a period of twenty years, from 1952 to 1972, ordinarily in conjunction with scheduled meetings of the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS). During those two decades the membership was drawn chiefly from the United States, although a few Canadian professors participated from the beginning. The charter members were all Protestants, mainly because Roman Catholic seminaries then offered few if any missions courses in their curriculum. There were no women members in the earliest years of the organization. By the time of the 1962 meeting one woman had enrolled, and only three were included in a total membership of ninety-seven listed in the biennial report of 1972.

A constitution was drafted and approved at the second meeting of the association, on June 15, 1954. It specified that APM membership was open to professors of missions at seminaries belonging to the AATS and, by action of the Executive Committee, to other qualified persons. During the early years "other qual-
“Missionary Vocation”


1962 (Toronto)—“Our Teaching Responsibility in the Light of the De-emphasis on the Words ‘Missions’ and ‘Missionary’”

1964 (Philadelphia)—“Theology of the World Apostolate”

1966 (Takoma Park, Md.)—“An Inquiry into the Implications of Joint Action for Mission”

1968 (Webster Groves, Mo.)—“The Theology of Religions”

1970 (Washington, D.C.)—“Salvation and Mission”

1972 (Nashville, Tenn.)—“The Church Growth Movement”

1974 (Wheaton, Ill.)—“Missions in Theological Education”

The regional fellowship groups did not lose their importance. A Midwest Fellowship of Professors of Missions, centered in Chicago, had begun to meet informally sometime during the 1950s and was formally organized in 1957. From then on the biennial minutes of the APM normally included reports from both the Eastern and the Midwest fellowships. The first APM constitution (1954) provided that, in addition to the president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer of the APM, one member from each of those regional fellowship groups should serve on its Executive Committee, and that remained the practice until 1974. A plan to organize Southern and Southwestern fellowship groups was frequently mentioned but never carried through.

During the 1960s a small but increasing number of Roman Catholic professors joined the APM, four of them being admitted to membership at the 1968 meeting alone. By then it had become standard practice to have all three traditions—conciliar Protestant, Roman Catholic, and conservative-evangelical Protestant—represented in those assigned to read papers at each biennial meeting. The APM was thus in some important respects the most widely ecumenical body in North America at that time.

By the early 1960s the majority of missions teachers were no longer in the institutions of conciliar Protestantism but in the conservative-evangelical schools. The “mainline” Protestant mission agencies were appointing candidates primarily for short-term rather than lifetime missionary service, and they began to use the brief but intensive orientation courses at Stony Point, New York, and elsewhere rather than the traditionally longer academic preparation for appointees to overseas service. This signaled the demise of some distinguished and ecumenically oriented schools of mission and the emergence in strength of conservative-evangelical schools. As Walter Cason noted in his paper read at the APM interim meeting in 1973:

Clear signs of changing interests in specialized missionary training are to be seen in the rise and fall of institutions or departments devoted primarily to this task. Among those who have grown since 1962 are: the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Seminary; the School of World Mission of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; and the School of World Mission of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Protestant institutions which have ended this type of program include the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Scarritt College, and the Lutheran School of Theology at Maywood.

Throughout the period from 1958 to 1972 the APM maintained a fairly large total membership, usually well over 100, but attendance at the biennial gatherings was sometimes disappointing. Only twenty-two registered for the meeting in 1968, and the number dropped to fourteen, along with a few invited guests, in 1970. Those in attendance at the 1970 meeting expressed a concern to reevaluate the purpose of the association and the nature of its membership. They directed the Executive Committee to study the matter, seek suggestions from the members about possible changes, and report to the next meeting.

Some twenty-five members and a few invited guests registered for the meeting in 1972, but that small increase afforded little encouragement. Moreover, the total membership roll, recently pruned of those who had not so much as paid their dues for the previous four years, was considerably reduced. Clearly something was needed to increase interest. The Executive Com-

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(Note: *Occasional Bulletin* for April 1978 is out of print.)
Early in June 1972, just prior to the eleventh biennial meeting of the APM in Nashville, a small group of the association’s members had met during “Expo ’72” in Dallas, Texas, to discuss the future of the association. They concluded that it would be wiser to begin a more inclusive organization, to be called the American Society of Missiology (ASM), rather than merely try to broaden the scope of the APM. This, they argued, would attract a much wider constituency. It would also help to avoid the danger of further polarization, and would solve the problem of attempting to merge the APM with the recently organized Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions. Moreover, a larger organization would be better able to undertake publication of a scholarly journal, a goal of the APM first articulated ten years earlier at the 1962 meeting and reiterated in 1970 but always frustrated by the insurmountable problem of financial cost.

The proposal to organize the new and more comprehensive society was conveyed to the Nashville meeting of the APM by Gerald H. Anderson, chairman of the ASM Continuation Committee. Despite a few expressions of regret that the timing of the proposal seemed to preempt the APM’s effort to accomplish a similar purpose by restructuring its own organization, the reception was generally favorable. The mind of the group seems best summarized in the comment made by R. Pierce Beaver:

I am probably the only charter member of the APM present. I have long felt the need for an association that included professors of diverse fields, an organization that would bring together scholars and experts with an interest in the mission of Christ’s Church. . . . We in the field of missions need the light, guidance and help of men from many other fields, like anthropology, sociology, linguistics, etc. I am doubtful whether our APM could be enlarged in such a way as to draw these others in. . . . I think there are tremendous advantages in a new organization that right from the start is based on comprehensiveness. We have been through a period of polarization. It has been a great obstacle to our common concern and task. A new society offers the possibility of broader development including Conservative Evangelicals, Ecumenicals and Roman Catholics. . . . The new society also offers the possibility of enlisting lay members (from industry, etc.) who can have effect on others. Perhaps it will also be more effective in producing a reading public for mission studies, something we all desire and need.14

A remaining question was whether or not the APM should attempt to retain its independent identity or simply be absorbed into the proposed larger organization. That question was tentatively answered by a decision at the 1972 meeting to gather again the following year under its own APM auspices but in association with the inaugural meeting of the ASM. In effect this was a decision to continue as an independent association of professors, but it was also a recognition that most APM members would be unable or unwilling to attend the national meetings of both organizations unless those meetings were held at the same place, one following immediately upon the other. Just as the APM meetings had maintained a “piggy-back” relationship to the biennial gatherings of the AATS for the previous twenty years, the APM was now moving in the direction of meeting annually in conjunction with the American Society of Missiology.

The APM met again in June 1973 at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, for its “twelfth interim meeting,” called to celebrate “the creation of the American Society of Missiology with the help and blessing of the Association of Professors of Missions.”15 Members of the APM conducted their own business sessions. Three papers on the theme “Missions in Theological Education,” previously assigned and intended for the twelfth biennial meeting in 1974, were read and discussed. A fourth paper and further discussion of the same general theme were scheduled for the following year. The secretary was asked to investigate the possibility of having those and future papers published in the new ASM journal, Missiology: An International Review, no decision having yet been made about whether or not the APM would continue to publish its Proceedings in the accustomed format.16

At the meeting in 1974, article V of the APM constitution was changed to read: “This Association shall convene annually, preferably in conjunction with the meeting of the American Society of Missiology.”17 The association had thus firmly established its affiliation with the new organization. Some fears were expressed by those present that interest in the APM with its more specialized concerns would decline in consequence, but quite the opposite has occurred. Attendance at the annual meetings since 1974 has consistently been at least double that of the old biennial gatherings. More than seventy registered for the meeting in 1986, the largest attendance in the association’s history. The total membership roll, currently 119, is larger and more diversified than it has been for a number of years. In brief, the Association of Professors of Missions is flourishing because of, and not in spite of, its relationship to the American Society of Missiology.

Some APM members nevertheless continue to feel that the association need not maintain an independent identity but should become merely a special-interest section of the ASM. Motions to that effect were introduced at every annual meeting from 1979 to 1983, the liveliest discussion of the matter taking place in 1981. Such motions have invariably failed by a wide margin to pass. In 1984 a committee of APM/ASM members again moved to have the question reviewed, but that motion was tabled indefinitely by a vote of more than two to one.

Thus the continued existence of the APM as an autonomous organization seems reasonably secure, but only if it continues to meet the special needs and interests of its membership in ways the ASM cannot do. This means focusing on issues that relate specifically to the responsibilities of teachers, its main reason for being. To deal solely or even primarily with such broad missiological issues as characterized several of its meetings in the 1960s and early 1970s would risk merely duplicating the function of the ASM. Hence the recurrent appeal from APM members for more focus on pedagogical matters as such. The theme of the 1986 meeting was “Approaches to the Teaching of Missions,” and there are regular requests to share course syllabi again as was done in the past.

Throughout the past thirty-five years the APM has brought together professors from as wide an ecumenical spectrum as that of any other professional society in North America. Their sharing of scholarly interests has resulted in more than personal satisfaction and professional usefulness. The Association of Professors

"Throughout the past thirty-five years the APM has brought together professors from as wide an ecumenical spectrum as that of any other professional society in North America."
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of Missions no longer serves as "a lifeboat for floundering brothers and sisters," as was the case in 1952. It has helped to restore a measure of prominence to their academic discipline in American theological education. Its wider influence can be seen not only in

the rise of the American Society of Missiology but, to a more limited extent, in the organization in 1972 of the International Association for Mission Studies.18

Notes

2. Ibid. Myklebust mentions only the first three of these schools. He does not refer to Omaha Presbyterian Theological Seminary, but it should be included. See Edinburgh Conference Reports, vol. 6, p. 175.
3. Myklebust, vol. 2, p. 185. Myklebust bases this information on an unpublished typescript, "History of the Fellowship of Professors of Missions," dated 1955, written by Daniel J. Fleming, then professor of missions at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and an active member of the eastern fellowship; also a letter from R. Pierce Beaver dated Nov. 29, 1955. Neither Myklebust nor Union Seminary library were able to locate or provide copies of these in December 1986.
5. See R. Pierce Beaver, "The American Theological Seminary and Missions: An Historical Survey," in *APM, Proceedings, Twelfth Biennial Meeting* (Wheaton, Ill., June 9-10, 1974), pp. 7-14. Beaver states that missions courses were offered at Princeton Seminary from 1836 to 1839 by Charles Breckinridge, professor of pastoral theology and missionary instruction, but the subject disappeared from the curriculum entirely in 1855. George Lewis Prentiss was appointed professor of pastoral theology, church polity, and mission work at Union Seminary, New York City, in 1873, but missions constituted a very small part of his teaching, and it was not until 1918 that Daniel J. Fleming became the first full-time professor of missions at that school. In 1885 Cumberland University of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Lebanon, Tenn., recognized H. C. Bell, a mission board executive, as professor of homiletics and missions, without salary, again a part-time teaching function. However, by the 1880s and 1890s missions courses had begun to appear widely in American Protestant schools.
6. Ibid., p. 13. Beaver here mistakenly dates the beginning of the APM as 1950. There was undoubtedly serious discussion about such a society by 1950 or earlier, but the organizational meeting was in 1952.
8. The Midwest Fellowship first adopted a constitution on March 30, 1957. Charles Van Engen, the current secretary, indicates that records prior to that date no longer exist. However, article V of the constitution provides for charter membership to "any person who attended meetings of the Fellowship up to the time of the adoption of the constitution." In Van Engen's opinion, the group had met informally for several years prior to 1957 and was probably stimulated to organize on a more formal basis by the emergence of the APM in 1952.
12. Ibid., p. 84 ("The Association of Professors of Missions, Constitution Adopted June 15, 1954, Revised June 14, 1972"). This amendment of article III, Membership, was the first substantive revision of the constitution. A 1962 modification had merely authorized each meeting to determine the amount of biennial dues.
13. Ibid., pp. 71-72.
14. Ibid.
16. Ibid., pp. 5, 47.
17. Ibid., p. 48.
The Legacy of David Livingstone

Andrew F. Walls

If any "man in the street"—at least, in any British street—were asked at any time in the last century to name a Christian missionary, it is likely that he would name David Livingstone. This might indeed be the only missionary name he could think of. Somehow Livingstone has come to stand as the representative missionary, the missionary par excellence. Yet he was hardly a typical missionary. Of his thirty years in Africa not much over a third was spent in the service of a missionary society, and even then his independence of action was untypical, his relations with missionary colleagues and directors often brittle. His fame as an explorer, his zeal in scientific investigation, his widely canvassed views on European commerce and settlement in Africa, his service in government appointments, his activity against the Arab slave trade—all have raised in many minds the doubt whether or not missionary vocation was the primary factor in his career.

There is no doubt, however, of Livingstone's own views on this subject. He always thought of himself as a missionary, always believed that his exploratory and scientific work had missionary relevance, always thought of the social and political implications of his work as missionary too. We must therefore consider Livingstone in relation to the whole development of the modern missionary movement and its perceptions of the missionary task.

Livingstone's African career covers the middle years of the nineteenth century, from 1841 to 1873. It is not insignificant that this period is almost co-extensive with the secretariat of Henry Venn at the Church Missionary Society. Despite the obvious differences of upbringing and churchmanship, and their different spheres of operation, there is a remarkable similarity between the two men in their view of the missionary task and their understanding of its relation to human society. The period of their activity began as missions had become accepted in the public mind as a beneficent operation, and established in all church thinking as a necessary one. No longer, as in earlier days, were missionaries assumed to be fanatics, sectarians, or subversives, nor were missions as uncertain of any solid, practical results.

When Livingstone and Venn died, a new missionary period was dawning, in which a tidal wave of eager young people and a host of new agencies would seek the evangelization of the world. When Livingstone and Venn began their work, a new consciousness of Africa was dawning in Britain, the first industrial nation, conscious as it was of a need for new raw materials and markets, and of a surplus population; but official policy recoiled from expenditure on expensive commitments and acquisitions of territory overseas. When their work was ended, the high imperial period was already at hand, when the Western powers would divide Africa among them and establish their hegemony over the rest of the world. They began their mission in a society where energetic Christian commitment was associated with strong sentiment against slavery and in favor of humanitarian causes, and where evangelical values counted in the nation as never before or since. At their end, the whole intellectual foundation of Christianity was being doubted where once it had been taken for granted, and a chorus of diverse voices would shortly call in question the whole validity of missions even as they reached their peak of activity. Livingstone, like Venn, represents a sturdy, confident evangelicalism, secure in its place in national life, sure of its right and duty to influence public and government opinion, and, for all its emphasis on personal regeneration and personal religion, looking to the transformation of society as a normal fruit of Christian activity.

David Livingston (the "e" was added later) was born in 1813 in Blantyre, Lanarkshire, Scotland. The family was of Highland origin, and an incidental remark by Livingstone that in times like the Cape Caffres, "reflects a consciousness seen in other nineteenth-century Scots missionaries that the African present had much in common with the recent past of Scotland. The family was poor, but valued learning. David worked in a cotton-spinning factory from the age of ten, and at the factory school laid the foundation of a sound, though never a learned, education. His home was devout after the best model of traditional Scottish Calvinism, but he had no inclination for scholastic theology, and his intellectual curiosity and interest in science raised fears of his conversion followed. His interest in China was kindled through the writings of Karl Gutzlaff, and he determined to serve in China as a medical missionary, a designation then newly developed with China specifically in mind. Factory work paid well enough to enable him to devote part of the year to the study of medicine, Greek, and divinity in Glasgow, and to qualify in 1840 as a medical practitioner. In the meantime he had been accepted by the London Missionary Society, to which he was attracted by its non-denominational character. He was, however, quite prepared to dispense with any missionary society: "It was not quite agreeable to one accustomed to work his own way to become in a measure dependent on others. And I would not have been much put about though my offer had been rejected."2

When he became available for service, China was closed by the Opium War, and Livingstone found himself en route for South Africa. He arrived in 1841, the year that the British government sought to implement the ideas of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton for extinguishing the slave trade by the dispatch of an expedition to the Niger.

African missions at this time were confined to a series of points along the west coast and a line of "stations" stretching inland from the Cape of Good Hope. European knowledge of the rest of the continent was very limited. The Portuguese, it is true, claimed enormous tracts of the southeast, but there was considerable doubt how far they could control them; and the same applied to the East African empire of the Sultans of Zanzibar, who exported slaves and ivory in quantity and imported goods from India. The mouths of the Niger, Congo, and Zambesi were all charted, but their upper reaches were unknown. The Niger Expedition of 1841 was the most ambitious expression of a favorite idea of the time that the rivers of Africa were highways to its interior.

Increasing knowledge about Africa was linked in some minds with the war against the slave trade. Militant opposition to the

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July 1987
slave trade had been mobilized by the "Clapham" group of evangelicals of whom William Wilberforce was the best known. Buxton, Wilberforce's Parliamentary heir, and like him an earnest evangelical, worked for the emancipation of the slaves in the British dominions in 1834; but he became aware that the abolition of the slave trade, Wilberforce's greatest Parliamentary achievement, had not had its intended effect. There were actually more slaves being transported across the Atlantic in 1839 than were in 1807 when the Abolition Act was passed. The slave trade and the wars it engendered were depopulating Africa. Buxton returned to an old Clapham theme, the relevance of economic arguments to moral issues; and the outcome was his "New Africa Policy." According to this, "the real remedy, the true ransom for Africa, will be found in her fertile soil." African agricultural development would undercut the slave trade at its source, by providing much more profitable access to the Western manufactured goods that Africans clearly wanted. The slave trade, demonstrably the enemy of a Christian enterprise in Africa, could be extinguished by calling forth Africa's own resources; and by this means agricultural development and enhanced trade would help to produce conditions in which Christianity would spread. Such developments would in turn lead to literacy and thus to printing, to new technologies in Africa, to roads and transport, to new forms of civil organization—in fact, to "civilization." Christianity, commerce, and civilization had interests in common and could unashamedly support one another. Their united effect would be to improve the life and prosperity of Africans, stem the loss of population, and shrivel up the more violent institutions of African society.

The Niger Expedition was a failure on a scale to preclude any future attempts by government to implement the New Africa Policy. But in missionary circles the underlying ideas remained potent, coupled with the belief that the eventual evangelization of inland Africa would be effected by Africans. Livingstone broadly shared these views. He detested slavery, which he met at firsthand in South Africa and later in its Arab form in East Africa. He was anxious that Christianity should break out of its narrow geographical confines and penetrate the interior. But such penetration required safe lines of communication, incompatible with the conditions of the slave trade and with endemic war. This could be secured only by regular trade of a kind welcome to interior peoples. If this could be accompanied by the spread of Christian influences, a new moral climate would exclude slavery and soften other features of African life. There was a further need for exploration: healthy locations for mission stations were necessary to avoid the devastations of missionary life that had marked West Africa. From these locations, with good communications, an African agency would bring the gospel to all areas. To "open up" Africa was thus a prerequisite for its evangelization, and it is in this context that we must see Livingstone's famous words to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge: "I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun." And in line with the ideas of the time, much of his effort was directed to the quest of riverine "highways to the interior"—investigations, often frustrating, of the Zambesi, the Rovuma, and the Shiré.

Livingstone began his work at Kuruman, the showpiece station of the London Missionary Society (LMS), already famous through the work and writings of Robert Moffat. He was anxious to realize in practice what most missionaries recognized as a principle, but one of future application: rapid expansion into new territory and the delivery of the responsibility for evangelization to "native agents," that is, African Christians. The population around Kuruman was too sparse for these aims, and Livingstone believed that in any case the neighboring people had been conditioned against the gospel by evil-living or oppressive whites, and that missionary work was always open to impediments from Boers who had moved out of Cape Colony following the abolition of slavery there. In these circumstances Christianity could be seen only in terms of a series of restrictions on liberty, especially in the matter of polygamy. Accordingly, we find Livingstone making a 350-mile journey within his first year at Kuruman. During it he made contact with Sgkoma, head of the ruling house of Khama of the Ngwato people, a family whose support was later to be vital to Christian progress in the whole of the Tswana-speaking area of southern Africa.

By 1843, Livingstone had formed a station of his own, with the Kgотa people; by 1845 he had moved to the Kwenya people. By now he was married to Moffat's daughter Mary, but neither marriage nor the birth of their children made him sedentary. Indeed, Mary and the children often accompanied him on increasingly long journeys across the Kalahari desert. In the course of one of these in 1849 he made his first major contribution to geographical knowledge, the identification of Lake Ngami.

The year 1852 marks a watershed. As if to prove his point about the fragility of mission work in the area, his Kwenya station, Kolobeng, was destroyed by the Boers. It also became desirable for his family to return to Britain. Livingstone accompanied them to Cape Town and then began the greatest of all his journeys. Its object was to find centers from which to reach substantial African populations, centers with healthy situations, good communications, and out of reach of the Boers. Livingstone had no illusions that the people of such areas were already "hungry for the gospel"—he reacted sharply against such language as pious fiction. But he expected them to be free from white contamination and thus without the disabilities to conversion of those further south. They would, moreover, immediately recognize the value of missionaries, attracting trade contacts and discouraging aggressors. Any understanding of deeper matters must spring out of that basis of human acceptance. Such realism is characteristic of missions in the pre-imperial period when missionaries had right of access only on terms set by African peoples.

From Cape Town, Livingstone moved up across what is now Botswana, and renewed contact, made on a former journey, with the Kololo people. Some of these came with him along the upper Zambesi and then right across Angola to the coast. Here he could have had a passage home to his family, but he had promised that his Kololo companions would return. He therefore went back with them, and then moved east, across modern Zambia (locating Victoria Falls in the process) and then through Mozambique until in May 1856, having walked across Africa, he arrived near the mouth of the Zambesi.

His journey had taken four years. He had found locations that met his criteria for mission centers, one, especially promising, with the Kololo and one with the Ndebele. He still believed in the community of interest of Christianity, commerce, and civilization, and his journey seemed to open new possibilities for the...
progress of all three. The Zambesi basin, in particular, had immense potential for agricultural development. It was now a principal source of slaves, a traffic that the introduction of plantation co-ops could undermine. The key to this was the riverine highway of the Zambesi.

The journey made him a celebrity. He had kept in touch with the scientific world, and his contributions to knowledge were applauded. He produced an excellent book, *Missionary Travels and Researches*, which made his activities known to a wider audience. He convinced his own society, the LMS, to open Kololo and Ndebele missions, and to appoint him to the leadership of the former. Established churchmen in the ancient English universities responded enthusiastically and formed the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) to follow up some of the openings he had made. Merchants in Manchester caught at the idea of African cotton to replace American (a blow, Livingstone judged, at American slavery). Even the British government was convinced, at least to the extent of commissioning an investigation of the lower Zambesi to survey sites for possible settlement and agricultural development along with the necessary communications. Livingstone's acceptance of the leadership of this expedition (and his consequent resignation from the missionary society, foregoing the opportunity to commence the Kololo mission) has to be seen in the light of his conviction that the Christian future of inland Africa was tied in with the whole complex of issues that his first great journey had revealed.

If the great walk across Africa from 1852 to 1856 represents the high point of Livingstone's career, the Zambesi Expedition, from 1858 to 1863, is probably its lowest. He was in charge of European colleagues, to whom he denied the trust and openness he commonly displayed to Africans. Personal relations went sour. Mary Livingstone came out to join him, and died soon afterward.

The first mission party of the new UMCA, under its bishop, C. F. Mackenzie (the event had been the occasion for zealous high churchmen to assert the theory of the necessity of the bishop to the church), accepted Livingstone's guidance and assistance. But soon Mackenzie and others were dead, and the mission abandoned its situation in the Shiré highlands (and with it, for the moment, the Livingstone principle of missions) for the coast. The Portuguese, alerted by the publicity surrounding Livingstone's earlier journeys, refused free trade on the Zambesi. All attempts to find an alternative river route failed, which reduced the value of the most solid geographical achievement of the expedition. This was the identification of an area that would support agricultural development; it was the future Malawi.

The government recalled the expedition. Livingstone's next journey, though little noticed, was perhaps as extraordinary as any; he sailed his little Zambesi River boat himself, all the way from Mozambique to Bombay, to clear up the expedition's affairs. His views as to the future of Christianity and commerce in Africa were unchanged; but neither missions nor government would lend such a ready ear as before. His renown as a geographer was undiminished and the Royal Geographical Society invited him to investigate the interrelations of the upper reaches of the Nile, the Zambesi, and the Congo rivers. But he did not want to be a mere geographer; he wanted geographical knowledge to issue in Christian action. His sense of the horror of the slave trade—that open sore of Africa—as he called it—was heightened. It seemed that the governments of Christian nations were determined to preserve the traffic; Portugal protected it, Britain did nothing to stop it but talk. Bitterest of all was the knowledge that in the circumstances his own explorations had simply opened new routes for slave-traders.

In due course, the remit given by the Royal Geographical Society was widened to allow other sponsors (including the British government, which gave him an unpaid status as consul) and additional objects. He was not only to investigate river systems but to "open Africa to civilizing influences," especially missions and healthy commerce. He followed this remit from January 1866 to his death at Chitimbo's village (now Ilala, Zambia) on May 1, 1873. In the meantime he covered immense tracts of what are now the republics of Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, and Zaire. For the last four years of the journey he was very ill, desperately short of supplies, often in deep depression, sure that he was forgotten, but still convinced of his duty to persevere, refusing opportunities to return. He was often humilitatingly dependent on the Arab traders, a principal part of whose trade he wished to destroy. Of Europeans, only one, H. M. Stanley, saw him alive. The last journey of all was symbolic; his body was carried by his African companions through eight months of danger and toil to the coast. His heart was buried in Africa; his corpse, in Westminster Abbey.

Judged by his own objectives, Livingstone had little to show at the time of his death. Those inland mission centers staffed by African evangelists, which he had dreamed of in the 1850s, were long in coming. The missions had not taken up his challenge in his terms with regard to Central Africa; or, as it seemed to him, they had given up. His assurances of the prospects of commerce and "civilization" in Africa met only occasional or tepid response. The British government, which alone could exercise power in the area for moral and beneficient ends, was leaving the field to the baleful influence of Portuguese and Arabs, perpetuating the curse of slavery, inhibiting the only forces that could undermine it.

True, within two decades the situation looked very different. The Central African mission of his own LMS recovered from its discouraging start (though by this time the Kololo, of whom he had hoped so much, hardly counted for anything). The Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland began missions in Malawi, explicitly linked with his name, and, in his spirit, combining with Christian preaching and teaching agriculture and industrial technology as well as academic education. The UMCA, the High Anglican mission, which owed its inspiration to the very nonsectarian Scots Independent, renewed and developed its inland work. Livingstone's name inspired others in the new age of missions. The British presence was extended across East and Central Africa in a way of which Livingstone never dreamed. The lands that he traversed now all have large Christian communities, and Livingstone is in a real sense the pioneer of Central African Christianity. There were trading companies in regions of the lakes; European settlement (which at one time he thought might be the seedcorn of Christian presence and acceptable orderly technological and commercial change) came to some parts of the region. But the world had changed, and the effects were far from his dream of Christian civilization and shared prosperity.

But this is too narrow a frame on which to consider the legacy of Livingstone. Not for nothing is he remembered as the representative missionary of his time. His stature (not greatly damaged by modern biographers who have brought out the faults and limitations unmarked in earlier hero worship) was that of the missionary of his period writ large. His ideas and ideals were fully compatible with the central missionary thought of that period; once more the comparison with Venn comes to mind. But we must remember what that period was. It was one in which a missionary could become a national figure. In the British public mind, missions could embody national ideals, high endeavor, justice, generosity, self-sacrifice; they did not typify the zeal of a minority, as in earlier times, or the religious and educational
aspect of the imperial presence, as in a later period. By the same token, the missionary movement, still holding firmly to evangelical doctrine and experience, felt an obligation to transform society abroad, and to influence government at home. Abroad, the missionary presence was small, and looking to the future; and in Africa, before the massive acquisitions of territory by the Western powers from the 1880s onward, this could only be seen in terms of persuading African peoples. At home, the missionary movement sought to lead, rather than to follow, national policy. The idea of mission based on personal conversion and personal piety alone belongs most characteristically to the imperial period.

The Western world awoke to Africa, and to much of the world, through the voices and writings of missionaries. Livingstone, like his father-in-law, Robert Moffat, and several other noted contemporary missionaries, wrote well and spoke powerfully. The missionary societies of the day created an informed readership and audience that could influence and at times change public opinion. By any reckoning, Livingstone is one of the outstanding explorers of the nineteenth century, and as a scientific observer hard to equal. (His commentaries on African life and belief are strangely sparse, though often revealing when they come, as in the famous abstract of dialogues with the rainmaker.) In this he is representative of others of his generation of missionaries who opened new frontiers of knowledge for the West, pioneered new disciplines in linguistics, comparative literature, oriental-history studies, ethnography, the history of religions. Yet—and this is also characteristic of the period—Livingstone’s contributions to knowledge were all made in the context of a missionary purpose. As he put it, “The end of the geographical feat is but the beginning of the Missionary enterprise.” He added, “I take the latter term in its most extended signification, and include every effort made for the amelioration of our race, the promotion of all those means by which God in His providence is working, and bringing all his dealing with man to a glorious consummation.”

The missionary task as seen by Livingstone and Venn and their fellows is marked, not by an attempt at balance between a message of personal salvation and one of social renewal (a division they would have found hard to understand), but by the acknowledgment that the very presence of missions in a society had social implications. It is therefore fair to inquire what was the eventual social legacy to Africa of Livingstone and the mission of his day; and immediately one is conscious of some ambiguity. Undoubtedly he is, on one side, the herald of the coming imperial order. He took British power for granted; he desired that it should be used for moral ends. The presence of other incomers to Africa—Boers, Portuguese, Arabs—he saw as largely malevolent. He thought of white settlement—always, he insisted, with the right type of settler—as able to bring about beneficial economic transformation. He died before the annexations of the Western powers, or the realities of the white settlement that came about, brought a wholly new situation.

Yet equally Livingstone is a pioneer of modern independent Africa. His life and writings show a respect for Africans and African personality unusual at the time, and his confidence never wavered in African capacities and in the common humanity of African and European. His missionary principles gave the primacy to Africans in the work of evangelizing Africa. His later career was dominated by the desire to root alien oppression out of Africa. There is a real truth behind the title of one of the popular biographies—Livingstone the Liberator—by J. I. Macnair, published in 1940.

If Livingstone is a herald of imperialism, he is also more importantly and permanently a herald of African independence. In this, too, he is typical of the missionary movement of his day. In some respects it led the way to the empires. But, more than any other force of Western origin, it pointed beyond them.

Notes

2. Ibid., p. 6.

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My Pilgrimage in Mission

J. Herbert Kane

It would appear that I was destined for full-time Christian service from the beginning. Three months before I was born my parents came to personal faith in Christ, and in the glow of their first love they dedicated me to the Lord—something I did not know until many years later.

My own conversion occurred when I was fourteen, and immediately I began studying the Scriptures, reading Christian literature, and in general preparing myself for a useful Christian life. My first feeble efforts at Christian service included teaching Sunday school, visiting the Old Folks’ Home, tract distribution, and preaching in the open air while still in my teens.

Unlike that of many others, my spiritual pilgrimage has followed a fairly smooth and consistent course. I heard no voices. I saw no visions. I cannot remember any period of spiritual conflict leading to a major crisis. It never occurred to me that one could accept Christ as Savior and not at the same time acknowledge him as Lord. So, from the beginning I was prepared to accept God’s will for my life. Conflict usually comes when the individual will encounters the divine will. I can honestly say that I have never knowingly opposed God’s will. My problem was to know his will, and that does not get any easier with the passing of time.

My interest in world missions likewise developed gradually over a period of time. I attended missionary meetings, subscribed to missionary periodicals, and read missionary literature. Two biographies made a deep impression on my life—Hudson Taylor and William Borden of Yale University. The latter was a young millionaire who volunteered for service with the China Inland Mission but died in Egypt on his way to China in 1912.

As my knowledge of missions grew, so did my interest; and interest led to conviction, conviction led to decision, decision issued in action; and in the fall of 1935 I found myself in China, quite certain I was there by the will of God. Looking back over fifty years of missionary service I can trace the goodness and guidance of God at all major points along the way. God has been bigger than my faith and better than my fears.

My fifteen years in China (1935–50) coincided with a very turbulent period in China’s recent history. They were years of great social unrest and political upheaval—first the Sino-Japanese War, then the civil war that brought the Communists to power in 1949. Needless to say, the Sino-Japanese War played havoc with both church and mission work. Following Pearl Harbor in 1941, missionaries in Japanese-occupied territory went into concentration camps for the duration. Those in Free China did their best to keep one jump ahead of the advancing armies, until the greatly reduced missionary body was confined to the western provinces of Yunnan, Szechuan, and Kansu. Millions of Chinese, mostly students and upper-class people, made the long and arduous trek to west China, and remained there for the duration of the war. Thousands of them passed through our city of Fowyang.

I was located in North Anhwei in the eastern part of China,
and soon found myself in a pocket of Free China behind the
Japanese lines where my colleagues and I, all first-termers, carried
on as best we could without any supervision. On three different
occasions I was separated from my wife and family, for a total of
almost two years. It was hard on the flesh but good for the spirit.
Fortunately, my wife was of one mind with myself and never
objected to the long periods of separation. It certainly pays off
when the wife has her own call to missionary work and does not
go along just to make a home for her husband.

There was, of course, a certain amount of physical danger
as well as disruption. Our city of Fowyang was completely gutted
by fire on the morning of May 24, 1938, after nine Japanese bomb­
ers dropped hundreds of incendiary bombs on the city. When
night fell, the large church on the main street was the only build­
ing left standing in that part of the city. That evening a handful
of church leaders gathered in the church and we sang the Dox­
ology. I have sung the Doxology a thousand times, but never
with more fervor than on that occasion.

In spite of the unsettled conditions, church work went for­
toward with surprising success. For some unknown reason, the
people in our part of China were very responsive to the gospel.
The city church, the largest building in town, was filled every
Sunday, and the rural churches grew in strength and numbers
until there were about 150 of them within a radius of fifty miles
in all directions. And we had no schools or hospitals to attract
“rice” Christians.

In addition to the vicissitudes of war, we had recurring
droughts and floods leading to famine. During such times it was
necessary to suspend normal operations and devote all our time
and effort to famine relief. For six consecutive summers, after the
Yellow River dikes were destroyed, the walled city of Fowyang
resembled an island in a sea of water that stretched in all directions
as far as the eye could see. Through it all, the peasants were
amazingly patient—always cheerful, never complaining.

Missionaries have always been warned against interfering in
the domestic politics of the host country. That was difficult to do
during my time in China. Naturally the sympathy and support
of the missionaries were with China. Japan obviously was the
aggressor. Moreover, the brutality of the Japanese soldiers during
the rape of Nanking in December 1937 only confirmed the mis­
sionaries in their determination to work and pray for a Chinese
victory. They were not, of course, able to participate directly in
the fighting; but they did make an all-out effort to participate in
war relief. They opened their homes, schools, and hospitals in
an effort to protect tens of thousands of Chinese women and
girls, thereby gaining the gratitude of the Chinese government
and people. In the summer of 1937 the missionaries, at the sum­
mer resort of Mokanshan, sent a cable to the State Department
urging the United States government to stop the sale of pig iron
to Japan. Later I learned that the missionaries in Japan were
urging the opposite!

When the Pacific War was over in 1945 I was at home on
furlough, and wrote a letter to the Montreal Star urging Great
Britain to return Hong Kong to China as an act of justice, not
charity. The editor refused to publish my letter. “Space in my
paper,” he said, “is too valuable to be cluttered with such
nonsense.” In the meantime, the editor is dead, the Montreal Star
went bankrupt, and Prime Minister Thatcher has agreed to return
Hong Kong to China in 1997!

Alas, peace did not come to China with the end of World
War II. The civil war between the Nationalists and the Commu­

nist flared up, and again church and mission work were greatly

The outstanding feature of the Chinese is their homogeneity.
All one billion of them look similar, dress alike, write alike, and
to a lesser degree, speak alike; and, thanks to Confucius, they
think and act alike! As a people, they are patient, frugal, peaceful,
hard-working, and law-abiding. Filial piety, the greatest of all
Confucian virtues, is the cement that holds Chinese society to­
gether. They are pastmasters at the art of interpersonal relations,
and when they turn on the charm, you had better look out! They
are indeed, a remarkable people.

The mission with which I served was founded by J. Hudson
Taylor in 1865 for the express purpose of carrying the gospel to
the eleven then unreached provinces of inland China. With the
blessing of God, it grew to be the largest mission in China and
the largest faith mission in the world. Needless to say, it was a
privilege to work with such a mission. There were several things
about the mission that I especially liked. I liked its international,
interdenominational membership, which did much to broaden
my view of the Christian church. My early years were spent with
the exclusive branch of the Plymouth Brethren; consequently I
knew little about other Christians and nothing about the church
universal. To work day by day with colleagues from other coun­
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- Author or editor of eight books on missions, including *Cross-Cultural Counseling* (Baker) and the forthcoming *Today's Choices for Tomorrow's Mission* (Zondervan)
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tries and other denominations not only opened my eyes, but also
enlarged my heart. It was a great experience. Without fuss or
fanfare we practiced a form of ecumenicity rarely seen in church
and mission circles.

I also appreciated the fact that we were encouraged to adopt
a simple lifestyle and thus identify more closely with the Chinese.
Many of our missionaries lived in Chinese houses with earthen
floors, thatched roofs, and small stone courtyards. In the early
days, all CIM missionaries were required to adopt Chinese dress,
including the despised queue. Even in my time, all our women
missionaries still wore Chinese dress. Of course, there was noth-
ing we could do about our blond hair, blue eyes, and big noses!
In spite of our best efforts, we were often called “foreign
devils”!

Another feature that I liked was our attempt to distance our-
selves as a mission from Western imperialism. For a century,
missionary work in China suffered from an unholy alliance be-
tween the gospel and the gunboat. The CIM expected the local
missionaries to provide protection for the missionaries up-country. However, the
missionaries were not permitted to seek or to accept protection
from their respective consuls. When the European powers de-
manded heavy indemnity from the Chinese government after the
Boxer Rebellion in 1900, the CIM refused to submit any claims or
accept any compensation, even though we lost seventy-nine mis-

sionaries and suffered extensive damage to mission property.

I was not in China more than a year when my senior mis-

sionary introduced me to two books by E. Stanley Jones,
_The Christ of the Indian Road_ and _Christ at the Round Table_. They opened up
a whole world of new ideas and convinced me for the first time
of the social and political implications of the gospel. I had been
brought up with a group of good and godly Christians whose
separation from the world was so great that they didn’t even
bother to vote! Stanley Jones was just what I needed. He intro-
duced me to the Sermon on the Mount with its emphasis on love
rather than law, and grace as well as truth. His identification with
Indian nationalism, his friendship with Mahatma Gandhi, his
soft-sell, yet effective, evangelistic approach to high-caste Hin-
dus, and his quiet insistence on the uniqueness of Christ in the
most pluralistic country in the world were an eye-opener to me.
And when, in the summer of 1937, I heard Stanley Jones as the
principal speaker for a whole week at Mokanshan, my “con-
version” was complete. Imagine my joy when in 1975, while
traveling by plane from Chicago to Philadelphia, I sat beside
the woman who for twenty years had been Stanley Jones’s private
secretary and had typed most of his manuscripts!

No one could live for fifteen years in Chinese society without
learning a few things. First, I learned to appreciate the role of the
middleman in social as well as business transactions. We could
do with a few “middlemen” in our society! I also learned to
appreciate the way in which the Chinese go out of their way to
“save face”—for others as well as for themselves. It is a big
improvement over our confrontational approach to social prob-
lems. I also learned to appreciate the warmth and generosity of
their hospitality. In the Orient, hospitality is a way of life. One
can never outgive or outdo the Chinese.

Another feature of Chinese life that I came to appreciate was
the people’s genuine enjoyment of the finer, better, simpler things
of life: the ubiquitous cup of tea preferred and accepted with both
hands, escorting visitors through several courtyards to the main
gate and bowing them on their way, sharing a watermelon with
friends and neighbors in the cool of a summer evening. I learned
something else, too—that missionaries can live on less and like it
more. Following the loss of all our personal possessions in 1938
we carried on for another six years and hardly missed them. It
is surprising what missionaries can get along without and still be
happy, healthy, and productive.

I learned another valuable lesson: not to underestimate the
power and resources of God. When we left China, we knew it
was the end of the mission as we knew it. We feared it would be
the end of the church. Well, it wasn’t. The Communists made a
big mistake. They got rid of the missionaries but did nothing
about God. He stayed on when the missionaries left; and when
we were out of the way God went to work, in his own way, by
his own power, for his own glory: and the end result is beautiful
beyond anything we could have imagined. From many points of
view, the churches in China are the strongest and purest in the
world today.

Do I have any regrets? Yes, I have several. I regret that my
missionary career was cut short just as I was reaching peak per-
formance. That, of course, was occasioned by circumstances over
which I had no control. I regret that conditions in China were so
unsettled that church and mission work were frequently dis-
rupted. Our grandiose plans to celebrate the diamond jubilee of
the mission in Fowyang were abruptly canceled at the last minute
when the Eighth Route Army surrounded the city, and martial
law was declared.

I also regret that I failed to cultivate more social contacts.
Most of my contacts were related to the work. One mistake was
that my family and I ate Western meals in Western style. More-
over, we ate three meals a day while the Chinese ate only two.
This meant that when we were eating, they were working; and
when they were eating, we were working! Besides, they couldn’t
handle such barbaric instruments as knives and forks. So we
seldom entertained. This was a great mistake.

Another regret is that since coming home I have had no
opportunity to use the Chinese language, which I learned to read,
speak, and write. I also regret that for thirty years it was not
possible to correspond with my friends in China.

When I returned from China in 1950 I had two options: accept
a pastorate or go into teaching. I chose the latter and have never
regretted it. From 1951 to 1980 I had the privilege of teaching
missiology at Barrington College, Lancaster Bible College, and
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. On the side, I was able to
produce a few books and through them my ministry has been
enlarged. Today hundreds of former students are serving the
cause of Christ in all six continents of the world. No one gets rich
in the teaching profession; but it surely affords an enormous sense
of satisfaction. Old professors never die; they just live on in their
students.
Book Reviews


This indispensable reference work is a gold mine for all who are participants in the missionary movement of today. Missionary agencies, training institutions, churches, and scholars cannot afford to be without this tool. The fact that its data come mostly from 1984 must be kept in mind by the user, but viewed in historical perspective this lateness of publication is not a major problem. This work is the only source of complete information on the North American Protestant missionary endeavor.

Researchers will find no major surprises. Short-term participants in missions have continued to increase, but no more than expected: Out of 67,242 missionaries from North America, 27,933 are short-termers and 39,309 career missionaries, making 59 percent career and 41 percent short term. There are no major shifts in where they go to serve: Africa, 24 percent (up from 22 percent in 1979); Asia, 27 percent (down from 31 percent); Europe, 11 percent (up from 10 percent); Latin America, 33 percent (same); Oceania, 5 percent (up from 4 percent). Income for overseas ministries reached $1.3 billion (up from $921 million in 1979). However, when adjusted for inflation that is an increase of only 3 percent.

The chapter “Christianity in the World: An Overview” is a brief summary of the situation of all branches of Christianity in general and by regions. A unique feature of this edition of the Handbook is a lengthy article by Robert T. Coote entitled “Taking Aim on 2000 AD.” Recalling a variety of “watch words” and “slogans” that embodied numeric or time goals, the article evaluates the progress made toward these stated goals. Detailed and thought-provoking, this article deserves careful study by mission strategists. Embedded in the article is probably the most complete analysis of mission growth (and decline) ever prepared. It relates this flow to the various associations of missions (DOM, EFMA, IFMA, FOM, TAM, etc.) and the increase of agencies not belonging to any. Atypical of the rest of the research is one statement that seems speculative and doubtful: “It is generally thought that up to half of all missionaries do not last beyond their first term” (p. 63). While no good research is available on the subject, that claim seems less solid than most material in the book.

The core of the Handbook is a very complete listing of the 764 agencies, which send out 67,242 North American Protestant missionaries. It provides rather complete basic information, including address, telephone number, chief executive officer, number of missionaries, countries where they serve, and so forth. Another core section lists the countries where missionaries serve and how many are sent there by each organization. Users will miss the information about the types of ministries in a country, which appeared in earlier editions, but did not appear in the twelfth edition or this one.

The data are presented in a variety of ways in the analysis that follows the main sections. For example: Brazil still receives the most North American missionaries—2,211; India now receives only 614. The top twenty-five denominations ranked by number of missionaries sent: Southern Baptist first with 3,346; Missouri Synod Lutheran twenty-fifth with 310. Six agencies have more than 1,000 career missionaries; seventy-six additional have more than 100; and seventy-three additional have over thirty. This means that only 155 agencies send a number greater than thirty.

The Canadian missions are listed separately in the thirteenth edition, providing a very helpful research tool. Out of the 67,242 missionaries reported for North America, 2,453 come from Canada.

Because of the variety of ways the material is presented, there is no end of uses for people at all levels. I cannot imagine what it would be like to be without this tool.

—Wade T. Coggins


Walbert Bühlmann—former missionary to Tanganyika, professor at Freiburg and the Gregorian University, secretary-general for Capuchin missions, now retired in Switzerland—is the intellectual gadfly of Catholic missiology. This effort at “ecclesiastical futurology” is about “the transition from the Western church to a world church, from uniformity to pluriformity, [that] will take place only under tension” (p. 7). One feels the tension! Now past seventy, often impatient, sometimes angry, Bühlmann chastises, challenges, and occasionally condemns his church for what he sees as its inability or unwillingness to change, and its retreat from the gains of Vatican Council II.

Some of the themes in his 1976 book The Coming of the Third Church are taken up again here: “I am con-
vinced that the most important drives and inspirations for the whole church in the future will come from the Third Church"—by which he means the church of the third world and the third millennium, which will have its center of gravity in the southern hemisphere. "Much will depend," however, "on whether the Northern church can be magnanimous enough to allow this Southern church to become itself and not remain merely a duplicate of the 'mother church'" (p. 133).

The two most important elements for the church of the future, in Bühlmann's model, are decentralization and pluriformity (pp. 136ff.). The church must allow for polycentrism in its structure, through ecclesial macro-regionalization, with continental bishops' conferences and continental councils of the church. These would have authority to settle continental problems and appoint their own bishops.

Just as the bishop of Rome has as one of his official titles "patriarch of the West," it is conceivable that "in the future other continents too could have a kind of patriarchate" (p. 139).

A natural consequence of decentralization would be pluriformity. Bühlmann would encourage "incarnational ecclesiology"—a legitimate contextualization of liturgy, theology, and church discipline. Noting the resistance of Rome on issues of inculturation, Bühlmann quotes Karl Rahner's judgment that "the real rites controversy lies in the future."

If the Roman Catholic Church does not allow for decentralization and pluriformity—"the Roman Curia stubbornly insisting on uniformity rather than magnanimously acceding to non-Western peoples and leaving final decisions more and more to local bishops and episcopal conferences" (p. 37)—then Bühlmann sees a real danger of schism in the future. Actually, he says, "within the Catholic Church a schism is more and more a fact, even though the structure officially remains intact. . . . Today the official leadership of the church is ignored by increasingly larger groups as irrelevant. The high command remains in its headquarters issuing orders, but the troops have gone off in search of freedom" (p. 164).

Although this book may not be taken seriously in the Vatican today, there may be a bishop reading it somewhere in Africa or Latin America who takes it very seriously, and who might be in a unique position in Rome in the future!

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson is Editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research.

New Eyes for Reading: Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women from the Third World.


These women writers reflecting on their reading of the Scriptures and their experiences in the churches recall the response of Peter and John during their interrogation by the rulers, elders, scribes, and high priests as recorded in Acts 4:1–22. The apostles had been called before this august body to explain why they, uneducated laymen, acted and spoke as they did. When
commanded to teach no more in the name of Jesus, they answered, "We cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard."

Throughout the history of the Christian churches, women have been admonished not to speak of their experience of the resurrected Jesus. However, periodically during the sweep of church history, women, in the face of critical human need and under the pressure of the truth of their experience, have spoken out. Their voices bring new insights into our understanding of Scripture and to our ecclesial fidelity to the teaching of the gospel. New Eyes for Reading is just such a moment of truth.

Edited by Bärbel von Wartenberg-Potter, former director of the Sub-unit on Women in Church and Society, and John Pobee, associate director of the Programme on Theological Education at the World Council of Churches, New Eyes for Reading is a collection of reflections and essays by women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They come from a variety of denominational backgrounds: Methodist, Presbyterian, Coptic, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, and Baptist.

Using women's experience as the theological filter, the women explore the human questions of power, suffering, poverty, Western Christian imperialism and its effects on women, patriarchy, prophecy and liberation. They raise new questions and challenge time-honored patriarchal interpretations and structures. Their words and images are not always comforting, but in fidelity to the gospel and to their own experience as women, the writers speak of what they have seen and heard. We are the richer for listening.

—Maria Riley, O.P.


This festschrift in honor of Wilfred Cantwell Smith is divided into two parts, the first treating the theme "faith and tradition" in five major religious traditions, the second consisting of essays on current approaches to the study of religion. The editor's introductory essay situates the contributions within the context of Smith's all-encompassing categories of "faith" and "tradition."

In the essays of Part I, the authors...
vary in their treatment of the interplay of faith and tradition. J. L. Mehta studies the interaction between the three streams of Hindu religiosity which flow from Vedic roots: “human religiousness,” its “word-borne” or scriptural current, and “lived history” (pp. 43-44). The primary Confucian concern, as described by Tu Wei-ming, of “character formation defined in ethical terms” (p. 56), places tradition at the service of the Self, understood as “a center of relationships.”

L. Jacobs's essay treats the complicated relationship in Judaism between “the personal convictions of the faithful, loyal Jew” (p. 80) and the tradition of the Torah as “a body of truth handed down intact from generation to generation” (p. 73), each adding something of its own. G. H. Williams holds that in Christianity the “range of modalities of faith and practice” constitutes a “congeries of religions” (p. 95). He outlines four degrees of specificity in faith and four temporal loci of salvation in the Christian tradition. A.-M. Schimmel's contribution on Islam focuses not so much upon the Islamic tradition itself as upon Cantwell Smith's application of his basic principles for the study of religion to his personal encounter with Islam.

This brief review cannot do justice to the diversity of approach and the wealth of insights in the essays of Part II. John Hick analyzes exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist Christian theologies of religion, while Gordon Rupp studies the process by which individuals “appropriate,” that is, identify with and live their religious traditions. S. H. Nasr makes a plea on behalf of the “traditionalist school” of religious studies. Ramundo Panikkar distinguishes between “dialectical dialogue” and “dialogical dialogue” (pp. 208-9) and elaborates the characteristics of the latter. The problematic role of mysticism in religion is treated in both Ninian Smart's essay and Geoffrey Parrinder's review article.

The volume is a serious contribution to the burgeoning material on the scientific study of religions and theology of religion. The conflicting views and approaches of the various authors prevents any consensus from emerging. The value of the book lies in its thought-provoking discussion of the current issues in religious studies by recognized scholars in the field. A work worthy of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, to whom it is dedicated.

—Thomas Michel, S. J.

The Rabbi from Burbank.

By Isidor Zwirn and Bob Owen. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986. Pp. 120. Paperback $4.95.

This is the autobiography of Rabbi Isidor Zwirn. It traces his pilgrimage to faith in Jesus as Messiah from Hebrew school in New York to conversion while rabbi of biblical Zionism in Burbank. While studying Zionism, Zwirn began examining Messianic prophecy. Primarily through his conclusions on Isaiah 11, he became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and that the present plight of the Jews was related to their rejection of this fact.

When he shared his new-found conviction with family and friends, he met with opposition. He was even taken forcibly from his own synagogue and told that he was forbidden to participate in its services.

The book concludes with a plea for Christians and Jews to carry on a dialogue on the matter of the Messianic claims of Jesus.

Readers of this book will find it helpful in understanding Orthodox Judaism as well as the problems that Jewish believers in Jesus as Messiah have with some Gentile Christians and unbelieving Jews.

—Paul D. Feinberg

Paul D. Feinberg is Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.
The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of the Modern Jewish Study of Jesus.


Hagner, who is associate professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, deals with the remarkable extent to which Jewish scholars are working to reestablish Jesus fully as a Jewish teacher of his time. Much has happened in scholarship since Wellhausen’s 1905 remark: “Jesus was not a Christian: he was a Jew,” and Hagner seeks to discuss it here.

Hagner states that neither Jewish nor Christian scholars of the period of Christian origins can ignore one another any longer, and he is to be congratulated on the persuasiveness of this aspect of the book, highlighting Jesus’ humanity, integrity, and distinctiveness. Only recently have Jews felt comfortable in speaking about Jesus in even this way. However, Hagner is rather narrow in his selection of sources and therefore of Jewish attitudes, and is uncomfortable himself with critical studies of the Gospels.

Hagner’s reservation (and conclusion) is a Christological one, namely, that Jesus is reclaimed in history in such a way that his divinity is excluded, and so a new, more radical wedge is driven between Jesus and the Christ (see p. 273 for his summary). This means that sometimes he generalizes from individual Jewish authors without doing each one justice, and too often speaks even of their intentions. In short, Hagner is not quite critical enough of his own methodology and goal. However, this is a book for the shelves of those who are interested in the question of Jewish-Christian dialogue, and the proclamation of Jesus to the Jewish people, as it is for those working in the area of research on the Gospels and the quest for the historical Jesus. His presupposition that the flood of Jewish work on Jesus the Jew will not lead to faith in the New Testament Jesus will prove controversial.

―Walter Riggans

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here. But the theological consequences as perceived by Smith are seismic, particularly where mission is concerned. “Christology operates as the central prop in Christian absolutism. Yet any form of absolutism prevents the Christian community from becoming a democratic member of the earth’s religions” (p. 196). So Christ cannot be central to a theology that takes serious account of other forms of faith. A missionary has to be redefined as a “man who deliberately participates in the history of another faith,” with Martin Buber as exemplar, (pp. 202f.). No distinction can be made between desiring the conversion of another and proselytism, and both are rejected because God saves Muslims through Islam, and so forth.

Hughes’s citations of Smith are not always reliable, and occasionally he can be found representing Smith’s polemic against traditional Christian thought as sharper than it actually is. More seriously he offers no real critique of Smith, or any recognition that there is a coherent Christian understanding of religious pluralism that is neither entrenched in exclusivism nor adrift in a sea of transcendental optimism.

—Christopher Lamb

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Crossroads Are for Meeting:
Essays on the Mission and
Common Life of the Church in a
Global Society.

Edited by Philip Turner and Frank Seguno.

Any Anglican Christian who is concerned for mission will be encouraged that this book of essays has been produced as a preparatory volume for the forthcoming meeting of Anglican bishops at Lambeth in 1988. In addition, it is clear that this manuscript has reached the desk of the person with most influence on the agenda of that meeting, Archbishop Robert Runcie, who writes a commendatory foreword to the collection. It seems likely that mission will feature in the discussions as it has regularly in the meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council, since its formation in 1973, also presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Of the contributors to this symposium, two are eminent Anglican statesmen: Paul Reeves, Anglican primate of New Zealand and champion of Maori rights; and Edward Scott, Anglican primate of the Church of Canada, and one of the most respected voices in the communion. From the third world there are interesting insights on the Sudan by Clement Janda, on Kenya by Bishop David Gitari, on India by P. B. Santram, and on Latin America by Bishop Adrian Caceres, Anglican bishop in Ecuador. There are also stimulating pieces by Professor John Pobee (on the continuing issues of missionary paternalism), by Lady Oppenheimer, the distinguished ethics writer and theologian, and by Bishop Colin Buchanan, among oth-

T. E. Yates is in Anglican parish ministry in Derbyshire, England. He taught previously in the University of Durham and was awarded his doctorate in mission studies by the University of Uppsala in 1978.
The so-called revivals took place 1880-1896. The stances on mission vary widely among the contributors. For the editors this is a welcome sign of Anglican comprehensiveness. For them the key to this variety is the changing stress on incarnational and redemptive theologies: as charted in these essays, the Anglican way "will be to find once again the connection between the incarnation of God in Christ and the death of Christ upon the Cross" (p. xlv). There is much interesting material to be found in this widely ranging collection.

—T. E. Yates


This significant dissertation illustrates the new trend of African church historiography in the Netherlands, namely, the explicit concern for African initiative and leadership in mission. Actually the Presbyterian church in Mozambique was planted by a team of black missionaries sent out by a Lassanne were facilitators, not initiators. An African church with its own ministers, men and women, was born.

Later, a new class of Swiss missionaries rose, but they did not lead to sizable independent movements. The so-called revivals took place within the circle of Christians and inquirers. When the Portuguese increased their colonial control, a war broke out in 1894 between them and the local kings. The Swiss missionaries took sides with the Africans and tried to stay with them; a most fascinating example is given by Georges Liengme, a medical doctor, confidant of King Nghunghunyane. The deportation of Dr. Liengme and the defeat of the African king in 1896 mark the end of a period; Van Butselaar stops here also.

Van Butselaar's story is based upon excellent archival research, checked by interviews with living Presbyterians in Mozambique. Whereas the author suspected a bias in missionary sources, he found substantially the same information in African memories: an interesting discovery! Again, Van Butselaar has his own bias: first, he is sure that the African way of church organization is spontaneously charismatic and democratic. Second, he maintains that the African revival movements drew very much from traditional religiosity and rituals (p. 186); his description of the traditional religion of the Tsonga, however, does not support this interpretation (pp. 8-9). A Portuguese version of this fascinating book is being prepared on the occasion of the first centenary of the Presbyterian church in Mozambique in 1987. Dr. Van Butselaar is now general secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council.

Marc R. Spindler is Head of the Department of Missiology, Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Leiden, Netherlands, and Associate Professor of Missiology and Ecumenics at the University of Leiden. A French Reformed minister, he served as a district missionary and later as a theological teacher in Madagascar from 1961 to 1973.

Wanted: World Christians.


Here is a book that informs, instructs, and inspires. Optimistically upbeat in its mood and overwhelmingly direct on the downbeat of its message, the local kings. The Swiss missionaries took sides with the Africans and tried to stay with them; a most fascinating example is given by Georges Liengme, a medical doctor, confidant of King Nghunghunyane. The deportation of Dr. Liengme and the defeat of the African king in 1896 mark the end of a period; Van Butselaar stops here also.

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Marc R. Spindler

Wanted: World Christians attacks the notion that missions is the concern of a selected few who are "called" as missionaries. Other Christians have

July 1987 139
Yale Divinity School seeks a Professor of Missions and World Christianity, beginning July 1988, who will attend the history and theology of missions, the dynamics of cross-cultural transmission of Christianity, and Christianity's interaction with other religions. Candidates should have competence in history or theology; a research specialization in a non-western area, and hold the Ph.D. (or equivalent). Send nominations and applications to Dean L. E. Keck, Yale Divinity School, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06510. Application deadline is September 8, 1987. Yale University is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer.

been led to believe that they need not concern themselves with world needs. Kane writes, “This unwarranted, unbiblical dichotomy has been disastrous both for the cause of missions overseas and for the health and well-being of the church at home” (p. 206).

The need of the hour is for World Christians, people who acknowledge the universal fatherhood of God, the universal Lordship of Christ, the cosmopolitan composition of the church, the absolute priority of world missions, the universal scope of the Christian mission, and personal responsibility for world missions. Kane elaborates on each of these six characteristics and explains how to grow, share, and live as a World Christian. Filled with practical suggestions that should lure the reader from the “wanted poster” into the “recruitment office,” Wanted: World Christians prompts action.

The author is a prime example of a World Christian. After fifteen years as a missionary in China and twice that number of years as missiologist educator, J. Herbert Kane retired from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and moved to Oxford, Ohio. There he produces World Christians among the students of Miami University and maintains an extensive speaking and writing ministry. Herb Kane is more “re-fired” than “retired.”

The vibrancy of Kane’s life comes through in this volume. He gives a whirlwind tour of God’s work in the world, a march through God’s Word to trace the golden thread of missions, and a look at some difficult topics like prejudice, exploitation, the high cost of North American missionaries, Marxism, third-world missions, and the charismatic movement.

Wanted: World Christians is bold and balanced. It is comprehensive yet concise. Written in a popular style that makes it appealing to the laity, it is penetrating in its scope so that mission leaders will be challenged as well. Everyone who reads it should become a better World Christian.

—J. Ronald Blue

J. Ronald Blue is Chairman, Department of World Missions, Dallas Theological Seminary. He served for ten years with the Central American Mission in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Spain.

Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa.


The author, a leading African theologian, brings in this small book a refreshing theological reflection from the feminine ranks. The first part examines African church history and experience as the context from which present African theologies have arisen. By including the early church history of North Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nubia (chap. 1), she gives modern African theologians a much-needed reminder. This too is our history. Not only should we discover continuities; we must also heed its bitter lessons.

The period of modern missions, beginning with the Portuguese contacts of the fifteenth century and climaxing in the more recent colonial event, is given a severe but penetrating critique. The theology of “soul-snatching” (p. 37) and the method of Christianizing Africa by Westernizing it are shown to have given rise to the three types of theology we discern today: the “traditional” (imported from the West), the “indigenizing” (acculturation or inculturation), and the “contextual.” The author here joins a growing number of analysts in exposing the doubtful use of imported theologies that prolong spiritual alienation in the churches. No less doubtful are the various attempts to “indigenize” the faith by imposing African cultural trappings on a presumed essence of Christianity, itself simply a construct from abroad. Unhappily further discussion of these categorizations is withheld (p. 69), leaving terms like “acculturation,” “inculturation,” and “indigenization” as fuzzy as before. But the author’s option for the contextual type is given a fair test in the second part (chaps. 6–11) where selected themes are expounded, albeit summarily. Oduyoye is in her element when she tackles feminism (or rather sexism) from the view-
point of an African woman (chap. 10), and demonstrates (chap. 11) how the mystery of the Trinity, as oneness in diversity, expands our theology of community. One wishes she had extended this able analysis to include other burning African themes, like healing, witchcraft, and spirit-possession.


The story of modern Pentecostalism cannot be rightly understood apart from its missionary fervor and expansion. That being true, Pentecostal missions in the twentieth century cannot be fully appreciated apart from the history and theology of the Assemblies of God, the largest and best known of the classical Pentecostal bodies. In less than seventy-five years, the Assemblies of God has grown from an initial gathering of some 300 people (April 2-12, 1914, in Hot Springs, Arkansas) to a worldwide membership in excess of 14 million, including more than 1,400 expatriate missionaries and over 90,000 national ministers. Here is the book we have been waiting for to give us missiological insights into this phenomenal movement of the Holy Spirit in our times.

The book was originally written as a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Theological Studies of Saint Louis University. It traces the historical and theological development of the Division of Foreign Missions of the General Council of the Assemblies of God between 1914 and 1959. It will be of great interest to all Pentecostals and also must be read by both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals who wish to get an inside glimpse of church-growth dynamics in the twentieth century. This was realized by the editors of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research who selected McGee’s work as one of their “Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1986 for Mission Studies” (see January 1987 issue, p. 39).

Gary McGee is a professor of theology and church history at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri. He is currently co-editing the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, an extensive project involving some forty writers from those traditions.

Researchers are indebted to McGee for an extensive bibliography and end-notes section (62 pages) and more than 800 index references. McGee’s research is extensive, dependable, and nonlaudatory. I heartily commend it to the cause of serious missiological research.

—L. Grant McClung, Jr.

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—Samuel Hugh Moffett

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