Some things never change.” But persons involved in the Christian world mission dare not underestimate the process that casts mission in ever-new perspectives.

This issue of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN offers readers two more contributions in the “Mission in the 1990s” series. The first of these, by Ralph Winter of the U.S. Center for World Mission, enumerates almost a score of contextual shifts that dictate change in mission. Mary Motte, F.M.M., director of the Franciscan Mission Resource Center in Providence, Rhode Island, highlights the “new” focus on the preferential option for the poor. She also notes, however, the venerable Catholic heritage of ministries to and with the poor. Jeffrey Klaiber, S.J., describes a groundbreaking project that will give us a new history of third world churches, written from the perspective of the recipients of Western mission. Christoffer Grundmann, recalling the history of medical missions, reminds us that traditionally it was taken for granted that healing belongs to mission; yet medical mission became compartmentalized and controversial once the modern scientific context came into play.

Readers have come to expect both pleasure and missional insights through two ongoing features in the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN, the “Legacy” and “My Pilgrimage” series. This issue offers a biographical sketch of Charles W. Ranson by his friend James K. Mathews; and Arthur F. Glasser, known and appreciated by colleagues in mission from many ecclesial backgrounds, shares the events and encounters that have shaped his personal pilgrimage.

Finally, Mark Thomsen addresses the issue of pluralism and insists that a missiology of the cross provides a basis for the sensitivity and openness demanded in today’s pluralist world. Thomsen’s credo reminds us of the one thing above all others that remains firm in this changing world: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).
Mission in the 1990s: Two Views

I. Ralph D. Winter

Change is the password of the 1990s—changes in perspective, changes in concepts of task and goal, and changes in methodology.

Changes in Perspective

1. New Missions from Former "Mission Fields." The existence of thriving "national" churches in the so-called mission lands is no longer the only "great new fact of our time." As we plunge into the 1990s, not just church life, but possibly an even more important indigenous, national mission movement is springing up from within those countries that were once "mission fields.

Of course, there never was anything really new about a church on the mission field, because the process of expanding across cultural frontiers began as soon as there were two or three gathered together in the name of Christ outside the Jewish cultural tradition. Neither is there anything essentially new about mission-field Christians becoming missionaries in their own right. The Western world itself is merely a mission field that has become a mission sending base. And it is well known that most of the South Pacific was missionized by South Pacific islanders themselves, learning foreign languages and going from island to island extending the Christian movement.

But now there are over fifty indigenous mission agencies that are members of the India Missions Association. The Asia Missions Association is nearing its twentieth year of existence. At the global level the Third World Missions Association is picking up momentum. In Nigeria, there is not only a strong association of Nigerian mission agencies, but one member mission alone is sending over six hundred missionaries to untouched language groups in and outside of Nigeria.

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Thus, the crucial and still-unreached goal is no longer merely the growing unity of a global church movement but the strategic interfacing of a global mission movement.

2. Triumphalism vs. Fatalism. In the past we have seen both of these extremes. But it is to be devoutly hoped that during the 1990s the Lausanne Statistics Task Force, or some other serious body, can bring into widespread public view a far superior picture than most people now have of the true status of the growth of Christianity in comparison to other world religions. Surely there must be some remedy to wild quotations like "Muslims are growing at 16 percent and Hindus at 12 percent while Christians are only growing at 9 percent." I have heard this precise phrase from the lips of three different prominent church leaders, but am entirely at a loss as to where such outlandish numbers came from. What is indisputable is that population growth rates (apart from immigration) range from 0.6 percent per year in Germany to slightly over 3 percent for Egypt. But the vital sector of the Christian sphere, which already numbers in the hundreds of millions, is growing by more than 6 percent, and there is no other religious or political bloc of comparable size with an even remotely comparable growth rate.

During the third of a century when it was easy to assume that everything had gone wrong in China, some theologians developed a theology that excused us from concern over the growth rate of Christianity. However, the adverse comparisons in the quotation up above, besides being untrue, unnecessarily undermine the entire Christian world mission.

3. The Sending Culture vs. the Receiving Culture. The 1990s will not likely improve greatly the ability of the general citizenry in a sending country to see themselves as those from other countries see them. Yet nothing is more obvious and embarrassing to those of us who have lived in a foreign country for any length of time than the tendency of our people back home to take the worst of the other country and compare it with the best of our own, the sending country. That is no way to see ourselves as we really are.

Americans rail against poor populations overseas supporting themselves by supplying the American appetite for drugs, while not wanting to acknowledge the onerous drug trade that Western governments have perpetrated for more than a hundred years. Are we Americans overlooking our gigantic international cigarette market, which is not only subsidized in this country but with the help of our federal government is literally forced upon certain Southeast Asian nations by political processes attempting to "protect" our own drug growers? Panama's government is not the only one that has been involved in pushing drugs. What if our exports to Thailand prompted their troops to invade North Carolina and burn the tobacco plantations—the source of our enforced export of that highly addictive drug. What if they circled the White House, seized the president, and flew him off for trial in Bangkok?

Do we realize we have a hundred times as many alcoholics as hard drug addicts? Will we send troops to smash our own distilleries or to Scotland to take care of their export whisky production?

How do we look to foreign eyes when we get more violent about a Central American dictator who sasses us than we do about an East African dictator who is determined to starve 4.5 million human beings who are "the wrong tribe"?

We are told that certain Japanese government publications warn against caricature certain foreign visitors. These documents are surely as outrageous as they are outlandish. But, unfortunately, we can find the same desperate provincialities in

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4. The Nature of the Task. One of the most urgent areas of reflection and transition, even at this late date in history, is in the area of understanding the basic task of the Christian world mission. In the 1980s great progress was made in recognizing the wholeness of the Gospel. This is reinforced by new understanding of the full meaning of the word blessing as it occurs in the Genesis version of the Great Commission, namely Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18 (Abraham); 26:4, 5 (Isaac); and 28:14 (Jacob-Israel). One nation is blessed, and all nations are to be blessed. What does this mean? Tony Campolo tells us that it does not mean finally being able to afford a BMW!

In English the word blessing implies merely a benefit—not also a relationship, as in the Hebrew barak. Americans—even American missionaries—typically do not understand the full significance of the privileges, obligations, and permanent benefits of the family relationship. Yet a relationship of just this significance is implied in the Hebrew barak. The implications here are profound and exceed the normal intent of evangelistic appeals. For example, in a family relationship you do not choose between evangelism and social action.

Will the 1990s bring us closer to the full meaning and implications of making into one family people from every tribe and tongue and people? Is the hymn still ahead of most of us: “Who serves my Father as a son is surely kin to me” (Oxenham, 1913)?

5. The True Receptivity of World Religions. This century has emphasized anthropological insights about cultural relativism, and many missionaries today are strikingly better equipped to understand the strong and weak points of all human cultures. But it is still possible for us to reject entire religiocultural systems en toto. We have semantic “snarl” words such as syncretism and accommodation for anything tainted with foreign religion. Yet it is precisely in the area of religion, and specifically in the quest for the best words for God, that we may have our most significant points of contact with other religious systems.

How can we believe, on the one hand, that all humankind derives from God’s creative handiwork and, on the other hand, expect in our mission contacts to find none of that handiwork still remaining? Why need we quibble about the use of the word Allah for God? Arabic-speaking Christians for centuries before Mohammed prayed to Allah. The New Testament itself employs a deeply deficient term for God in the Greek theos. Only centuries later, for English speakers, the word God, despite its pagan origin, was adapted and newly charged with meaning.

Phil Parshall’s recent book, The Cross and the Crescent, goes in the right direction. Will the 1990s allow us to realize that some of the most devout Muslims are closer to the kingdom than (1) shaky Muslims who are apparently coming our way only due to their rejection of their own faith or (2) purely “culture Christians” who don’t really believe and obey anything? Isn’t the Islamic cultural tradition—prayers, mosque, and entire way of life—far more redeemable than the ancient hellenic way of life with which Paul was willing to work?

6. The Myth of Closed Countries. In the 1990s this never-correct concept will hopefully be broken down almost completely. It is fueled by those who have certain specialized mission services to
offer. It has been a favorite theme for those who stress "tent-making" or who are in the Bible-smuggling business, but it tends to paint an unrealistic picture that undermines obedience to the Great Commission. This emphasis may not only divert monies from worthy agencies that are doing unpublishable work in "closed countries," but it may also reduce the guilt level of those who do not in any event wish to support the Christian world mission.

7. The Number of Unreached Peoples. Many missiologists agree that the most strategic goal to aim for is establishing a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement within every human culture, that is, within every community sufficiently homogeneous to enable all to hear and understand in their own milieu. Where such an internal witness is lacking, such groups are defined (by a widely representative Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March 1982) as "Unreached Peoples." It is inevitable that this number can only be estimated until all clusters of such groups are actually penetrated and the necessary homogeneity is confirmed.

This is so crucial a goal, and is so foundational to mission, that I have thought it justified to coin a term for the basic concept behind this March 1982 definition. I have suggested the term unimax peoples, since, as defined, the concept involves the maximum sized groups still sufficiently unified to allow "the spread of a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

Careful compilations of two or three thousand groups already exist. These compilations, according to the March 1982 definition (1) list some Unreached Peoples (unimax peoples) more than once if their people are found in more than one country, (2) often list as a single group what are actually clusters of unreached unimax groups but at least (3) include virtually all remaining unreached unimax groups within these clusters. Nevertheless, it is fairly safe to say that once church-planting efforts take place in these clusters, these lists of groups will turn out not to include many more than twelve thousand total Unreached Peoples by the March 1982 definition. The Lausanne Statistics Task Force has agreed on twelve thousand as a reasonable estimate of the number of these relatively small people groups that are still unreached. Even as we enter the 1990s, the task of making new missionary penetrations into twelve thousand new cultures is being parcelled out to the various sectors of the mission sending base all over the world—continent by continent, country by country, and even denomination by denomination.

Thus, all of this lays down one of the most concrete and significant mandates for the 1990s: reach all such (unimax) groups by A.D. 2000. Or, to use more precise language: establish by the year 2000 a viable, indigenous evangelizing church movement within every people that is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread by a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

8. The Challenge of the Cities. The astonishing thing is that once the definition of Unreached Peoples is clear, it is possible to anticipate that the global urbanization of humanity may very soon carry at least a few key individuals from every unimax people into a city somewhere in the world, where they will likely be much easier to reach. In the 1990s the gradual urbanization of much of the world will continue, and it may well be that by the end of the 1990s a slight majority of the world's population will be found in cities. The continuing existence of nationalities and ethnic groups in the cities, and even the creation within cities of new groups, will require us to be much more perceptive about the different kinds of peoples we need to deal with in the growing cities of the world.

9. The Concepts of Closure and Countdown. One of the expectable and irrepressible trends in the 1990s—at least until the middle of the decade—will be for many to do what was done a hundred years ago, namely, to try to answer the essentially unanswerable question, "What will it take to complete the Great Commission, and can it be done by the year 2000?" Those who feel it is necessary to wipe away every tear, resolve every social problem, and cure all poverty, disease, and injustice may not be attracted to schemes to conclude the task by the end of the century. However, the Unreached Peoples terms make realistic, I believe, the year-2000 goal of completing the necessary initial missionary penetration of every unimax group. This is a heartening and strengthening challenge to work toward with all we have to give. This goal is essentially a refined version of the one developed at the Edinburgh 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions: A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.

Meanwhile, many other goals are being forged for completion by the year 2000. Some of them are not, strictly speaking, closure goals, that is, they do not complete any particular process but simply constitute legitimate, measurable goals to shoot for. An example would be the goal of planting a million churches by the year 2000. By contrast, DAWN's closure version of this goal aims to plant a church in every "small group of every class, kind and condition of people in [each] country" by the year 2000, however many that may be—an estimated total of 7 million new congregations (Montgomery, 1989: 15, 53). Incidentally, by my calculations, this additional 7 million churches would only about double the present number of vital congregations worldwide.

Some Roman Catholic mission leaders have set another significant goal, for which no closure version exists: enough individuals being won to the faith that half of the world's population will call itself Christian by the year 2000. I personally think it is best, however, not to think in terms of conquest—how many are won to the faith—but of extending opportunity: how many have been given a chance to respond. The Bible seems to give no basis for assuming that any particular percentage of the world's population will become Christian on a personal level. Rather, the Bible does speak (mysteriously) of ethnic groups being "discipled" in some sense, which is clearly not a case of winning either a certain number of persons or of winning a certain percentage. To plant "a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement" (a paraphrase of the 1982 definition) only requires some minimum, vital, incarnational response within a group. Yet the Bible does speak of every group being at least partially represented in the ultimate family of God.

Changes in Methodology

10. The Free Expression of Worship. Already it is obvious that the world church is rapidly taking on the cultural characteristics of the so-called pentecostal-charismatic tradition. This shift is being resisted, but mainly by nongrowing groups. Our modern world is now irretrievably more of an emotion-accepting world. It is no longer only at football games that the full range of human emotions can be expressed.
This is not to say that emotions are now being invented or created or that the Christian movement had no emotional content before. It is certainly not as though the Spirit of God has been out of action all these centuries. Rather, there is a new dimension in what is increasingly a world mood, which has allowed Christian groups in recent years to give this element legitimate public expression. It would not appear that the 1990s will retreat in this area.

11. Recovering from a Professionally Trained Ministry. Despite the normal perspective of new missionaries sent out from the United States, the Christian movement on a global level continues doggedly to depend upon informal apprenticeship methods of ministerial training rather than the historically recent adoption in the United States of a European state-church style of professional education in residential schools. This is mainly because apprenticeship is more versatile and flexible than the classroom. It may even be that movements in the United States, such as the rapid growth of the new charismatic congregations often called “Christian Centers,” will assist the Christian movement to outgrow the kind of professional processes of ministerial formation that have been so assiduously cultivated in the past fifty years in the United States. The fact is that wherever seminaries—or other types of lengthy residential programs—have been introduced overseas and made mandatory for ordination, the growth of the church has been severely crippled.

Thus, what has in some circles become almost universally hailed as a legitimate goal—a seminary education—may become more clearly a questionable goal in the 1990s, even in the United States. It is hoped that the goal of a highly trained ministry will be retained, but methods other than an extractive, residential process will be employed. The latter must be seen both as an inappropriate technology for most of the world, and also as an undesirable method even where it is employed. The Assemblies of God now has its own seminary in the United States, although its great strength was achieved without the help of this kind of residential training that generally tends to exclude older persons, as well as those with jobs and families.

12. Going to, through and beyond Partnership. In the 1990s we will increasingly come to doubt the universal applicability of the very idea of partnership in mission. We arrived at the concept legitimately as missionary efforts produced church movements around the globe. Wherever those efforts succeeded, it became necessary to shift gears from outreach among untouched populations to church-to-church relations, and the definition of mission has adjusted to fit.

Westerners tend to think in terms of political entities and to mistake them for nations in the ethnolinguistic sense. Many of our church boards have overlooked until recently the fact that in most countries they are dealing exclusively with, or through, one tiny minority population and are therefore unable to deal fairly and effectively with the many other legitimate peoples and nations of that same country.

If Christianity were only today reaching the United States through Japanese missionaries to the Navajo Indians, the logic of partnership in mission might suggest that the resulting Navajo church be called “The Church in the United States.” This could happen even though, say, its membership was entirely within the Navajo nation. Worse still, it might then be expected that all other Americans could best to be reached only through Japanese partnership with Navajo Christians. Worst of all it might imply that the Navajoes could not reach out on their own without the Japanese being involved. The worst thing, ultimately, is when partnership has been employed to deny the validity of any pioneer evangelism at all—because a church must already be there to be able to invite missionaries!

Thus, what for Western mission offices has been an administrative convenience (dealing with one church per country) has turned out to be a missiological nightmare. Missiologically, it would be far better to denote church movements by their culture base than their country. However, surging national churches in the 1990s will drastically question the significance of the partnership perspective on a country-wide basis.

13. Pluralistic Church, Plural Mission. Pluralism in mission is one of the inevitable developments in all the older church traditions, especially those that have over the centuries expanded into strikingly different parts of the world or within the highly pluralistic United States. A wholesome pluralism is the natural outgrowth of an intelligent response to rich diversity. But a pluralism in unity in a sending church cannot easily be expressed through a single office. In fact, a pluralism in mission fully expressing the pluralism of the home church is a goal yet to be achieved for most Protestant denominations as we begin the 1990s.

United Methodists have sprouted a new unofficial mission board in Atlanta, which is opposed by Methodist leadership just as the Church Missionary Society was opposed for many decades by the Anglican hierarchy. The Roman Catholic tradition has provided us with many excellent models to demonstrate that mission orders are in order in Protestantism. The Internal Revenue Service in the United States is currently involved in a study of what the Protestant equivalent of a Catholic order would look like.

14. Home and Foreign Boards. In the shuffle of recent history, many church boards have wondered if the old home/foreign dichotomy is valid. It is easy to put all mission in a single board, as some denominations have done, but this may only perpetuate a confusion about the very definition of mission.

It is hoped that in the 1990s, the fact that thousands of Unreached Peoples have at least some small representation within the United States will be recognized as requiring classical foreign mission work to be pursued at home. But local churches and donors are not prepared for this and deny funding to those eager to take strategic advantage of the opportunities here. Mission money tends instead to go only to those who have been willing to go and “suffer” in foreign circumstances. Thus support for missions builds on sympathy for the missionary rather than concern for the mission purposes involved.

This faulty prioritization is not something that will quickly be resolved, even though its grievous deficiencies are eminently clear. Frontier mission work everywhere in the world needs to be cut out of cloth different—both in training and approach—from the kind of mission that emphasizes helping churches to expand within their own ethnic nationalities but that does not necessarily help them to reach out to Unreached Peoples beyond them. The fact is that the vast majority of missionaries is involved in existing

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church programs; at most, 15 percent of all missionary personnel are engaged in expanding the boundaries of opportunity for the Gospel.

15. Value in Secular Approaches. Dozens of major mission agencies, both denominational boards and interdenominational agencies, have seen fit to found secular entities through which they can offer valid, understandable services without confusing governments with their religious terminology. This method of approach has proven to be helpful and will continue to increase.

Bibliography


II. Mary Motte, F.M.M.

As we enter the final decade of the twentieth century we are obliged to write a new missiology. A gradual evolution over the past twenty-five years has reached a level of demarcation with past understandings. The starting point for mission now begins with the poor of the earth. Their different realities in popular movements networking for solidarity and community throughout the world are shaping mission for the years ahead.

Base ecclesial communities, part of this larger phenomenon, are specifically affecting understandings of mission. In addition, one must also take into consideration the religious awareness of various kinds present among the poor, especially their sense of sacredness in creation.

Vatican II awakened a fresh exploration of the church’s relation to the poor, a relation rich in tradition but somewhat ambiguous in recent centuries. Change became more emphatic when the Latin American bishops met in Medellin in 1968 and interpreted Vatican II for the Latin American continent principally as a preferential option for the poor. Their reflections guiding this decision were situated in a larger historical context in which the poor had begun to take in hand their destiny through various grass-roots liberation movements. This option shifted the focus of mission to a new place, namely, the place of the poor, not only for Latin America but eventually for the whole world. The call to all persons to hear the Gospel message comes from their place. Some twenty-two years later, a significant proportion of theological studies, papal encyclicals, documents from episcopal conferences, and decisions by missionary institutes reflect a preferential option for the poor. If mission is to be a credible Gospel witness, then it must begin with the experience of the poor.

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This does not mean that mission is something that is brought into the lives of the poor, but that the place of the poor is where the reign of God is always on the way of coming to fulfillment. Anyone who would be concerned about mission must start there, discovering first of all what God is doing.

Discerning mission issues for the 1990s involves consideration of the experience of the poor, the consequences of a preferential option for the poor, and the new parameters for understanding mission.

The Experience of the Poor

When the Latin American bishops referred to the poor, they meant those who lack basic necessities and for whom daily life is a struggle. This same understanding attaches to various theological reflections concerning the poor. The reason for this perspective is that these people exist in the most critical space of creation, at the juncture of conflict between good and evil. It is the space where structural sinfulness builds up forces of oppression and violence that deprive the poor of their human dignity.

To recognize such structural evil is not to deny the presence of personal sinfulness. Even while the poor are those who offer us the starting point for mission, they are also in need of conversion. But the issue of conversion cannot be addressed apart from that of structural sin. Striving for survival very often causes interpersonal relationships to break down, and the immediate consequences can hide the real sources of systemic oppression and violence that make survival so difficult. Oppression and violence tend to stifle humanness in the poor.

As poverty increases on a world scale, more and more people are caught in situations of violence and oppression. At the same time, a growing number of popular movements among the poor are indicative of their increasing awareness that they must retrieve their dignity through mutual collaboration with others who share the same condition. Those who once were forced to vie with one another for the crumbs from the tables of the rich are now discovering their own power in mutuality and collaboration.

Base ecclesial communities, a specific type of popular movement among the poor, are of particular interest in a consideration of mission issues for the 1990s, because formation of these communities around the Word of God provides a model for understanding the dynamism at the heart of mission. Vatican II described mission as the responsibility of every baptized person and essential for the life of the church. Evangelii Nuntiandi illustrated the importance of this insight when it spoke of the community gathered around the Word of God being transformed for mission. The base ecclesial communities especially exemplify this understanding of mission, and for this reason it is helpful to consider

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the elements that constitute the structure of these communities:

1. the poor gather as disciples in memory of Jesus, celebrated in Word and Sacrament;
2. they read the Word of God in the context of their history, recognizing that God is alive and present with them;
3. conversion begins within the community encountering the Word of God;
4. the poor begin mutually to trust one another and form bonds of communion through their shared experience of God’s love in their lives;
5. they seek to share this experience with the larger society.

In other words, mission involves an experience of God calling a community to conversion and sending it forth with the message of love. It involves a mutuality of commitment among community members to read the Word of God and celebrate it sacramentally, responsive to the conversion this calls forth from each member. From this experience the message is brought to those who have not heard.

Boff speaks of these communities as a new birth in the church. They bear witness to God’s mission of bringing creation to fulfillment, that is already present in the interaction between the Word of God present in history and the community allowing that Word to enter its life. In this way the church becomes the sign of God’s salvific will for all persons.

A Preferential Option for the Poor

The experience of base ecclesial communities and a preferential option for the poor expressed by leadership with responsibility for the service of universal mission are interrelated, not causally but as two developments that took place in the same historical context of the past quarter century. Both had their origins in Latin America and as such do not necessarily represent a model to be copied by the rest of the world. Nevertheless, they do indicate a new model of evangelization understood as a calling to awareness of the meaning of the Gospel message for our times. In these years the Roman Catholic Church has become a world church. The unity of the Gospel lived in a plurality of ways is developing new expressions of faith in Jesus Christ and of ecclesial unity around the Bishop of Rome.

Development of a preferential option for the poor can be traced most consistently for our purposes by looking at the missionary institutes and societies that are at the service of universal mission. Traditionally, these have been sisters, brothers, and priests and remain so to a great extent. However, growing numbers of laity are being called to this service in the Roman Catholic Church. At present, a number of them are attached in some way to the missionary institutes, and therefore share in the visions and orientations these groups have developed.

Just about all of the missionary institutes in one way or another have taken a preferential option for the poor. This choice has led them to examine their activities and question their decisions. Traditionally, the members of these groups have made a vow of poverty or have had some form of commitment to live simply. Institutionally, they have not been poor but have had material resources provided out of their own sharing and contributions from others to carry on mission. They have examined their use of resources and determined how to put these more effectively at the service of the poor. Greater simplicity in lifestyle has been actively promoted, with an emphasis on smaller communities or living groups that have to grapple with day-to-day existence in ways not experienced in larger institutional facilities. Formation of new members and continuing education of other members has led to a probing examination of what an option for the poor means in concrete attitudes, methods, and choices in mission.

There was little immediate experience to build on from within the institutes, but two sources provided insight: (1) a return to the original sources of inspiration for their foundations, which were often poor, small, and simple; and (2) the growing experiences of the base ecclesial communities of the poor. These became foundational criteria for interpreting what an option for the poor meant.

A study including the results of a survey of Roman Catholic missionaries conducted by the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) provides concrete data on what this option has led to among its member missionaries. The critical areas being examined are the context and focus of the missionaries' work; the concerns of the people among whom they are working; and the missionaries' understanding of missionary proclamation. Information given about contexts in which the missionaries are located, and concerns of the people, show that practically all of the missionaries are working in situations of extreme poverty and oppression. The greatest concerns of the people are most often for the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, and work. The fact that the missionaries are in these situations would appear to reflect a preferential option for the poor, predicated on social analysis determining where the poor are who are truly on the periphery of society.

After social analysis, insertion is the next step in the process of articulating an option for the poor. Those who are called to the service of universal mission are at the service of the reality of the poor, and therefore insertion is a logical consequence. This means being with and walking in solidarity with the poor. And

The call to universal mission is a call to embody the message of good news especially for those least likely to hear it.

one does not just do this overnight; it is a journey into the world of the poor that begins with an invitation from those who are poor to join in their struggle and reality. For that invitation to be issued, one has first of all to be present to the reality of the poor: simple presence that is ready to receive and that stands before the other with respect and empty hands. It is a contemplative stance that recognizes the God who became incarnate, took upon himself human suffering, and who is present.

There was no history of church; people had to form new relationships; learn to live with people of different tribal traditions . . . much of my time is spent being with, listening to, searching together for some answers to the questions that life here poses . . . the desert is hostile . . . there are none of the usual tribal ties that bind, root and unite people here . . . everyone is relocated. Our main focus is to help one another survive, and to help build the relationships we need if we are going to survive here . . . then beyond survival . . . together to build our "family" here, our community, our church.

The person at the service of universal mission, that is, the
missionary, carries a message of hope, the good news of God's love for each person. The call to universal mission is a call to be at the service of the poor. The essence of this call is an experience of the love of God for each person that knows no limitation. God loves each one in a unique, concrete, existential way as evidenced in the Incarnation. The call to universal mission is a call to embody this message of good news especially for those who are least likely to hear it because of the conditions in which they live, for example, the poorest, the oppressed, those who live on the periphery of society. A missionary in Korea notes:

I work in labor apostolate—a new special work that tries to bring the church into contact with lower paid workers and link with farmers' groups and city poor by trying to bring the church's social teaching to modern day Korea that it may be a sign of concern for the workers and a sign of hope for all.  

Other missionaries describe their understanding of proclamation as follows:

To be the hope, the joy, give people a glimpse of God, which they need in order to survive.

To live so fully the mystery of life that people know without a doubt God is present in our lives even in the doubts and mystery of life so fully with our neighbors that we explain to each other the Gospel of Jesus.

To be living witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus by sharing the life of the people among whom we work.

[A] presence bearing witness; trying to hear God speak to us and then proclaiming the values of His Kingdom in the line of the prophets. It means challenging and being challenged, i.e., called to constant conversion of the individual and social structures.

My understanding of proclamation is that every thought, word, feeling and action of mine should proclaim the Word Who has come to liberate the captives and bring in a new Jerusalem where all can live in brotherhood/sisterhood, in peace, justice and love.

[C]alling forth to the fullness of life as revealed in Jesus Christ.

In summary, various experiences of missionaries illustrate that a preferential option for the poor is a choice made by those called to the service of universal mission and involves: social analysis of situations to determine where the poor are; insertion into the situation of the poor; an attitude of respect and listening, being present to; awareness of the hope in the message of good news that one bears in a personal experience of God's love.

The Parameters of Mission

Mission that starts with the experience of the poor has three concerns: human dignity, relationships, and community. Its ultimate goal is the fullness of God's reign. Practically all of the missionaries who responded to the USCMA study questionnaire are inserted in places that lack essential resources for a life imaging the dignity of the human person. Injustices rooted in economic, racial, sexist, religious, and/or political factors are the causes of these situations. People experience deep poverty and cruel oppression.

It is not easy to enter into the lives of the poor, but unless one enters their lives, one cannot engage in a dialogue that will articulate the message of the good news of God's love. It is by entering into the situation of the poor that the person at the service of universal mission shares in a dialogue communicating good news. Each instance of such a dialogue replicates that begun in the Incarnation, when God in Jesus Christ humbly entered the human condition, and began a conversation expressed in human love and caring, a service of washing another's feet.

Engagement in such dialogue begins to restore the experience of dignity robbed from the poor by violence and oppression. Human dignity is the most basic need of the poor who are caught in situations of oppression and violence. In the measure that dignity is gradually restored for the poor, the poor begin to assume responsibility for their lives. Liberation through Jesus Christ is incarnated in human reality. Those at the service of universal mission do not bring liberation; rather they bring a message of hope as part of a dialogue. The partner in dialogue is the Spirit of God present among the people, often in new and different ways.

Broken relationships are common in the experience of the poor. Without dignity they are often not able to enter into relationships that endure or reinforce a sense of bondedness. As mentioned earlier, their situation often places them in a condition of vying with one another for favors from the rich and powerful. They try to survive, and that can become a very personal agenda.

Building mutual trust toward more stable relationships is another aspect of the dialogue between the poor and the missionary. The first step in such an effort is to reflect together on the living Word of God present in their midst, how God is acting in their lives. As insights are shared, and hopes begin to be spoken and entrusted to one another, relationships begin to grow, and community is formed. As community bonds grow, the poor can begin to address those conditions that have deprived them of their dignity, and they can begin to liberate themselves from what has oppressed them.

The major focus of the missionaries' efforts is concern for human dignity, relationships, and the building of community in various situations of insertion among the poor. The goal of this commitment is to communicate how much God loves each person now, and how this will be fully realized in the time of God's reign announced in Jesus Christ. It is important to note that the model for the missionaries' efforts is found in the base ecclesial communities of the poor, in which the community gathers around the Word of God and is transformed by this experience. Therefore, the model for missionaries at the service of universal mission is found first of all among the Christian communities of the poor. They have articulated the dynamism of mission, that is, the transforming, liberating relation between community and God's Word.

Those called to the service of universal mission have a particular responsibility to make it possible for this liberating, transforming relationship to occur in those places where there has been no prior effective communication about the love of God. It is in such places that the efforts to focus on human dignity, relationships, and community become more clearly the service of universal mission. God's love knows no bounds, and no one is excluded. Therefore, the persons who are called to universal mission are at the service of the poor in all situations. The poor do not have to be Christian, and it need not be the intention of the missionary to make them so. The first call is to be present, to stand before and recognize how God loves them, and then to gradually enter into a dialogue that will articulate that love in the bondedness of human community. God's love is without condition, and those who are at the service of universal mission cannot place conditions on any dialogue that wishes to communicate something about that love.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article I noted the need for a new missiology that starts with the experience of the poor. The most
striking occurrence in that experience is the growth of popular movements of the poor networking around the world. Communal bonding predicated on human dignity and positive interpersonal relations are the elements in these movements that describe most accurately what is happening. The significance of these elements becomes clearer in the examination of what happens in the base ecclesial communities, where these phenomena are brought into the Christian experience. Liberation from oppression and suffering can be seen more clearly in their essential relation to salvation in Jesus Christ and the coming reign of God.

Mission begins in this place of the poor, in the building up of community. Theologically, the life of the Trinity as a model of communion is the basis for all community. It is the model of the reign of God and therefore the missiological model directed to the realization of the reign. Missionaries at the service of universal mission are called to situate themselves at the service of the poor. They have no agenda to accomplish but simply to approach the poor with respect, bearing only their own experience of God’s love. A dialogue that begins with listening and discovering the Spirit of God among the people is the way of mission. Proclamation is an experience of God that spills over and at the same time grows through the experience of others, even those outside the Christian experience. It is concerned with everyday life as intimately related to the experience of liberating grace.

At the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, members of missionary institutes, whether lay, religious, or clerical, are persons at the service of universal mission. They are bearers of one part of a dialogue that speaks of God’s love and wills that all be saved. Their task, if one can use that word appropriately, is to be at the service of the poor and to discover in their midst their partners in dialogue. This requires a deep personal experience of God and a humble openness to discover God’s presence in ways not expected. It involves the pain of rediscovering human dignity in the midst of oppression and violence. Mission is all that leads ultimately to the experience of community.

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**Mission is all that leads ultimately to the experience of community focused on the reign of God.**

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**Notes**

4. USCMA data.
5. USCMA data.
6. USCMA data.

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**Toward a New History of the Church in the Third World**

**Jeffrey Klaiber, S.J.**

In June 1989, a group of Catholic and Protestant historians met in London to draw up plans for writing the history of the Christian churches in the third world from a new perspective. In reality, this project was born as an offshoot of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). In 1983 in Geneva, EATWOT appointed the Working Committee on Church History in the Third World, and now the project is finally underway.

The London meeting brought together fourteen historians from three continents: Africa, Asia, and Latin America. First world historians and other sympathetic observers present offered constructive criticism of the project. The final product will be a three-volume work, one volume for each continent. Enrique Dussel of Argentina will be in charge of the Latin American volume, Ogbe Kalu of the University of Nigeria will oversee the African contribution, and Father Teotonio de Souza, a Jesuit in charge of a history research center in Goa, will assume responsibility for the Asian volume. The number of contributors for each volume will range from fifteen to twenty authors. It is hoped that this rather ambitious project will be completed within two years.

This will be an approach to church history that explicitly treats the third world as a distinct category within the history of Christianity. Up until now, most church histories have been European or North American-centered and have relegated Latin America, Asia, and Africa to the last chapters, at times under the heading of “Overseas Missions.” Now, this multivolume scholarly effort will treat the third world as the central focus of a church history. Furthermore, the project is ecumenical in scope, including both Catholic and Protestant churches and their respective missions. It will be virtually the story of Christianity itself in the emerging decolonized world, which embraces two-thirds of the human race.

These third world church historians, while acknowledging their indebtedness to the traditional church historians in the major intellectual centers in the West, aim to chart a new course by writing a history from the point of view of the Christians who live in the “periphery.” An important common denominator of the group is the importance they give to the concept of a church

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**Notes**

4. USCMA data.
5. USCMA data.
6. USCMA data.
of the poor and the oppressed. Christians in the third world, whether they make up the majority, as in the case of Latin America, or the minority, as in the cases of Africa and Asia, have all experienced the dehumanizing conditions of poverty and political oppression that characterize most of the underdeveloped nations of the world. In Latin America, the popular classes, while not rejecting official Roman Catholicism, have nevertheless transformed it and given rise to their own peculiar blend known as "popular Catholicism," a form of religiosity that bears the marks of a long-suffering people. For this reason the Latin American church historians have been particularly attracted to liberation theology, in vogue in Catholic Church circles since the major conference of the Latin American Catholic bishops at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. For these historians the history of the majority of the Christians of Latin America is to a great extent the story of a people struggling to leave behind the shackles of ignorance, economic exploitation, and political oppression in their quest to achieve a fuller and deeper freedom. In most other parts of the third world the history of the local Christian churches can be conceived of in a similar light.

The pacesetters for this new approach to church history have been the Latin Americans. One reason for this is obvious: the Catholic Church has been in Latin America for four centuries and Eduardo Hoornaert, a Belgian with more than thirty years of pastoral experience in Brazil, has described CEHILA as a critical scientific effort to help fortify the "collective memory of the poor."

Since its foundation, CEHILA has produced several major volumes on the church in Latin America, with specialized volumes on Mexico, Colombia-Venezuela, and the Andean region (Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia). Forthcoming volumes are on the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay), and the Caribbean. CEHILA has also produced a volume on the Hispanics in the United States. Currently in production are works dealing with such single themes as the history of religious life in Latin America. After these foundational and more academically weighted works have been completed, the next step will be to publish brief and more pastorally oriented histories of the church in each Latin American nation, and of course, one for the Hispanics in the United States. This will be a joint venture of CEHILA and Orbis Books. In every area there are Protestant members who contribute to the volumes. In addition, Jean Pierre Bastían, who resides in Mexico, has already written a volume on Protestantism in Latin America in the series of brief church histories.

But CEHILA does not limit its activities to the written word. Each region regularly organizes short courses on local church history. These courses are intended to stimulate interest in church history both from an academic and a pastoral perspective. With some success, CEHILA has already groomed a new generation of young church historians with new insights and a fresh outlook.

CEHILA, like the liberation theologians, has its sympathizers and its critics. Traditional church historians and conservative churchmen accuse CEHILA of projecting ideological biases into the past. But the new historians say that they are only bringing to light realities that have always been there. The theme of liberation is present, for example, in the example of Bartolomé de las Casas's struggle in favor of the Indians in the sixteenth century or the Jesuits in colonial Paraguay who armed the Guaraní Indians against the Portuguese slave raiders. CEHILA counters its critics by questioning the objectivity of the traditional historians, whose penchant for exactitude may have blinded them to larger social and political issues. CEHILA recognizes its own shortcomings as a new experiment. Some of the regional team members are sociologists and anthropologists and not professional historians, and undoubtedly the passion of the moment has influenced some of the judgments of CEHILA.

In 1980 Dussel broached the subject of a third world church history at a consultation of EATWOT in Delhi. In July 1983 the working committee took its first important step by organizing a workshop to debate the issue of periodization for the new project. Since then, Asians and Africans have set about organizing themselves and hammering out particular regional problems. Under the direction of Mohan David, professor of history at Wilson College, Bombay, the Asian historians have published two works that include studies of almost every major country of the continent: Asia and Christianity (1985) and Western Colonialism in Asia and Christianity (1988). In 1986 the papers presented by the African historians at a workshop in Nairobi were published under the title African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective. The highly ambitious nature of the project poses problems. To begin with, the concept of third world is quite nebulous. To define the third world as the habitat of the poor and the oppressed leaves Japan in an ambiguous status: geographically it falls within the area being treated, but economically it lies outside. The Latin Americans have faced that problem by nuancing their application of the generalizations. This flexibility has allowed them to examine...
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In many ways the history of the church in the third world is in reality the history of the future of Christianity.

Church was part of the established power structure. But in many parts of Africa and Asia the Christians have been and are minority groups struggling to gain recognition from the religious majorities. Then, too, it will be necessary to grapple with the problem of determining what role should be accorded the many sects and new religions that have some elements of Christianity and that have spread very rapidly in many parts of the third world. Should they be included in a work on Christianity or simply treated as "other religions"?

It is somewhat ironic that it is the historians, with their backward search, who are giving a forward impetus to Christian unity. By reliving past battles, but with an ecumenical perspective, they are helping to forge new links in the quest for unity. In many ways the history of the church in the third world is in reality the history of the future of Christianity.

Notes

1. Most of CEHILA's Spanish edition works have been published by Ediciones Sigueme in Salamanca, Spain.

The Legacy of Charles W. Ranson

James K. Mathews

Death came to Charles W. Ranson on January 23, 1988 in Delray Beach, Florida, soon after he had completed his autobiography, A Missionary Pilgrimage. We may say that, having lived a full and meaningful life, he died a significant death, for "whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

Ranson's legacy is manifold: to his family and to a vast network of friends all over the world; to the ecumenical movement; to missionaries and mission-minded persons; and to the church and its ministry in the third world. He has bequeathed to all who knew him a rich memory of one who combined qualities of Christian statesperson with eloquent preacher, inspiring teacher, sound administrator, scholar, writer, innovator, pastor, friend. I suspect that, most of all, he would want to be remembered as missionary, a thread running through his entire life. In fact, during the last year of his life, in the final conversation I had with Ranson, he expressed the view that the churches at present have not kept faith with the pronounced missionary vision of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—to the point of betrayal of that mission.

Charles W. Ranson was born on June 15, 1903 in Ballyclare, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. The middle initial in his name stood for Wesley, and that very fact may have shaped something in him. He was born in an Irish Methodist manse, the third of four children of Henry J. F. and Elizabeth Clarke Ranson. Both parents came from farming families.

Ranson's father trained for the Methodist ministry in Belfast and was ordained in 1895. Ranson remembers his father as a devoted and efficient minister content with mostly rural and small appointments. He was a "good man and a good parent." His mother was brought up in the Church of Ireland, where she acquired a lasting love of the Book of Common Prayer, an enthusiasm she passed on to her son. She also lent laughter, a light-hearted dimension to life, that never left her son. He spoke of a strictly disciplined but kindly upbringing that contributed in every way to his adult life.

The itinerant system of Methodism meant that the family moved at least once every three years. Thus by young manhood he had lived in seven towns. This did tend to his sense of rootlessness. Nevertheless, no serious consequences resulted from this feeling. In fact, it brought enrichment to Charles Ranson and not a bad training for missionary work. Compensation for Methodist ministers was very modest, assuring a simple existence, likewise familiar to the average missionary.

Early schooling was in the village schools, but at age twelve Ranson departed for Methodist College, Belfast, a good school that was mostly for the children of Methodist masons. He records that his achievements in the classroom and on the playing fields were modest. His years at this school coincided with World War I and so were marked by strictures of many kinds. Nevertheless, his five years at this institution gave him solid learning and lifelong friendships.

There followed a period of about two years during which young Ranson ventured into the business world as an apprentice in the wholesale textile business. This was accompanied by a venture into worldliness in the form of practices and diversions not in keeping with his rather strict Wesleyan upbringing. As he himself states it, he "drifted away from the faith" into a "gloomy nihilism." This took place during a period of considerable unrest in both parts of postwar Ireland.

This depressing period did not last long. His spirit awakened during evangelistic services in his father's church in 1921. Charles tells the story of his conversion in a simple, straightforward way. He came under conviction, confessed to his father, who did not...
condemn him but rather prayed with him. His burden lifted, new life began, and his life was redirected. Moreover, his mind was clarified: he was called to be a missionary.

Ranson began to study earnest for the ministry. He entered Cliff College in Derbyshire, an institution established for the training of lay ministers. A part of the curriculum was practical in nature, contributing toward self-support. Once again, this helped in no small measure to later missionary effectiveness. Cliff also afforded sound grounding in theological studies.

Irish Methodism required of ministers a probationary period of service under the direction of an experienced minister. Ranson was fortunate in having as his mentor a rather colorful and stalwart minister in Belfast, T. J. Allen.

After two years of experience, further formal theological study, and due examination, a successful candidate could be admitted into what was termed full connexion, ordained, and a conference member; that is, a member of a preaching order and subject to appointment to a pastoral charge by the Methodist conference. This nomenclature may seem a little quaint to those unfamiliar with Methodist parlance, but it is well understood by members of the Wesleyan family of whatever particular persuasion.

The aspiring young missionary, having completed his probationary period, studied theology at Edgehill Theological College in Belfast. At the same time he pursued studies in philosophy at Queens University in the same city, where he received a diploma in education—also much needed for his future work.

Meanwhile, having offered himself for missionary service, Charles Ranson was accepted by the Methodist Missionary Society in London, first of all for Africa (Gold Coast, later Ghana) and then for India. This involved directed reading in fields related to these areas.

After the manner of many other future ecumenical leaders, he became involved in the Student Christian Movement. He speaks of attending two SCM conferences in 1929. One was a Quadrennial Missionary Conference held at Liverpool and attended by more than two thousand persons. There he met and came under the influence of some of the outstanding missionary and ecclesiastical figures of the time, among them T. Z. Koo, C. F. Andrews, William Temple, Joseph H. Oldham, and S. K. Datta. He would see more of them and others like them through the years and throughout the world.

The second conference was of the World's Student Christian Federation at Glion above Montreux, Switzerland. This experience broadened Ranson's horizons and was the occasion for his first meeting with the young Dutchman, Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, later to become first general secretary of the World Council of Churches. Their paths would cross repeatedly in the years ahead.

The year 1929 was also marked by Ranson's ordination as a minister in the Irish Conference of the Methodist Church, and his departure for missionary service in India. As in the case of many missionaries he was not without a sense of pouring his life down the drain of history—"ministerial oblivion." But not so! It opened up the whole world to him and provided the wide stage upon which he would make his most solid contributions. It was a handsome and eager young missionary who was met at the bottom of the gangplank in Madras some weeks later.

It was another missionary, David Livingstone, who used to say that after the exploration was the beginning of the enterprise. That enterprise, for Charles Ranson, began at Madras, an often hot and sticky city. Actually, the setting was at the village of Ikkadu, west of Madras. There, as a neophyte missionary must, he was confronted with the formidable task of learning the language. In his case it was Tamil. It was not all work, however, for it was punctuated with tennis, teas, some other socializing, and the beginning of some direct involvement in the missionary enterprise and engaging in village church services. Some relief from the "hot weather" was a period each year spent in a hill station, beautiful Kodaikanal.

Unfortunately, the young missionary's study of the language was to be interrupted by his being transferred back to the city of Madras proper, to Triplicane, to fill a sudden vacancy. At Triplicane there was a threefold evangelistic, educational, and social-service institute all named after a famous predecessor, F. W. Kellett. Since the principal medium used was English, Ranson admits that he never really attained full mastery of Tamil, a great disappointment for him. He suddenly found himself principal of a school and a teacher of religious studies and English in the same. He had to do general coordination of the whole complex, including the securing of Sunday-evening lecturers for Kellett Hall. Frequently these were outstanding figures, and the lectures contributed to the cultural life of the whole city.

Ranson also engaged in other useful activities, notably the addressing of a succession of social problems of Madras. He helped motivate like-minded persons in social change through an organization called the Triplicane Sociological Brotherhood. He mentions the building of sewers, working toward a minimum wage law, opposing child labor, and later working toward the improvement of housing. He also helped establish the first radio station in India, later to become a part of All-India Radio. During this period Gandhi was at the height of his activity and influence; Ranson became acquainted with his thought and nationalist program.

Most important for him personally was that he met the woman who was to become his wife, Grace Gibb, a professor of history at Women's Christian College, Madras. She was of Quaker background and Scottish. They were married in 1932. Grace was a lovely lady, a person of spirit, as this writer can testify, having known her for the last dozen years of her life. In 1935 they returned to England on furlough.

Their two years in the homeland were well-spent at Oxford University. While at Triplicane the multifaceted institution was visited by the famous Lindsay Commission, which was studying the future of education in India. They were particularly taken by the rather unique approach of the Kellett complex. Moreover, the chairman, A. D. Lindsay, master of Balliol College, Oxford, seems to have been taken by young Ranson and especially by the social outreach of the institution. Accordingly, he encouraged the missionary to undertake studies at Balliol College during his forthcoming furlough.

Charles was actually enrolled as a student at Oriel College rather than Balliol. This proved to be a very successful venture, extending to two years. Years later while in England, Ranson proudly showed me around his college; clearly, it had been significant in his career. It afforded him once again a very wide circle of new friends. It served to mature his theological understanding and commitment. Almost by accident it afforded him an opportunity for an unusual visit to Nazi Germany with a group of concerned British churchmen. It saw the birth of the Ransons first child, Mary. (There was later a son, John, and a daughter, Anne.)

Charles earned an Oxford degree and published in book form his dissertation entitled A City in Transition: Studies in the Social Life of Madras. Lindsay wrote a foreword to it. The work had to do with the social outreach program of Kellett. Thus it arose out
of missionary activity and proved of further value in the later development of Christian social work in that great city, a part of Ranson’s legacy.

I have referred above to a maturing of his theology. This was influenced in part by Barth; in part by Kraemer’s emphasis on biblical realism; in part by British reflection as diverse as William Temple, C. H. Dodd, John Baillie; together with the practical missiological wisdom of J. H. Oldham, Walter Freytag, and Max Warren; and not forgetting the insights of such Indian theologians as Paul Devanandan, M. M. Thomas, and P. Chenchiah. He became a passionate believer in the meaning and relevance of Christ’s mission in the world today. Ranson was nothing if not Christ-centered, thoroughly committed to the mandate: “As the Father has sent me, even so send I you.” Hear him state his perspective directly:

The Christian world mission is rooted in the Christian revelation. That revelation, though it is preserved and communicated in the written record of the Bible, is essentially a revelation through action. For the Bible is the record of God’s mighty acts. God’s action in history—in His dealings with men—is a disclosure both of His sovereign purpose and of the way in which that purpose is fulfilled.¹

Upon returning to India in 1937 Ranson soon took up his erstwhile field of labor at Ikkadu. Medical, agricultural, and educational work was extended also to an industrial emphasis under the leadership of Blanche Tweedle, a perfect genius in this field and a person who was to become another close, life-long friend. Ikkadu was also the base of an extensive village evangelistic program in a mass-movement area. There Charles Ranson gained experience over a broad range of work that made up the missionary endeavor.

Ranson was an observer and minor participant at the famous World Conference of the International Missionary Council held in Tambaram at Madras Christian College, which brought together nearly five hundred Christian leaders from all over the world. Here again he was enabled to extend his already wide circle of acquaintances. It was also an opportunity to observe the state of the world church on the eve of World War II. The “Younger Churches,” as they came to be known in that setting, were already manifesting a mounting self-consciousness. Heated debates took place on relationships among the world religions, prompted by Hendrik Kraemer’s great and controversial book, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. Likewise a discussion of church versus Kingdom of God was carried on. One might almost say that the theological and missionary agenda was effectively set for the rest of Ranson’s life. Once again he was in the right place at the right time.

During World War II, Ranson made a self-conscious decision not to volunteer for military service. Probably he was right. The early war years found him a pastor in the hill station of Simla, India’s summer capital in the Himalayas. This appointment to a union congregation in that city was partly owing to his poor health. It meant that he did frequently preach to the viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, an elder in the Church of Scotland. Here he had occasion to become acquainted with some of India’s national leaders.

In 1943 Ranson joined the staff of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon, with headquarters in Nagpur. While there he shared responsibility as an editor of The National Christian Council Review, quite influential in its day. The council work enabled him to travel all over India. His major responsibility was for theological education, and he became thoroughly familiar first-hand with the then-existing facilities in the region. This, in turn, led to the publishing of a report on this subject, his second and widely influential book entitled The Christian Minister in India. Soon after its completion he returned to England for a well-deserved furlough, which began in 1945 and from which the Ransons were not to return to India.

It must be acknowledged that The Christian Minister in India is an authentic part of Ranson’s legacy to India. Though the survey itself was the work of scores of people over many years, the report was his own. It was well-received, widely used to guide theological education in India, and is not without continuing value to this day. Here are two samples from its pages, emphasizing that “the paramount need of the Church in India” is the recruitment and training of an adequate ministry:

The example of our Lord and the experience, through the centuries, of His Church sustain the conviction that the strategic point in the missionary task is the preparation of Christian pastors and teachers. The concentration of adequate resources at this point is, humanly speaking, the only guarantee both of the Church’s stability and of its power to meet widening opportunities.²

There is no task in the whole Christian enterprise in India which calls more clearly for the close and continued partnership of the older churches with the Church in India than the education of the indigenous ministry. There is no task on which the future well-being of the Church in India so greatly depends. The resolve to make the training of the ministry the pivot of Christian strategy may well be for churches and missions in post-war India, “the one great choice, which . . . carries all the rest in the end and carries them high.”³

The year 1946 saw a further turn in Ranson’s career. He became research secretary of the International Missionary Council (IMC), founded in 1921 largely on the initiative of John R. Mott. For the next several years the Ransons shuttled their residence between the New York region and the London region. It was in 1946 that this writer came first to know Charles Ranson in what was to be a growing and enduring friendship extending almost exactly over the last half of his life.

July 1947 saw the assembling of a smaller meeting of the IMC in Whitby near Toronto, Ontario. It picked up the missionary strains severed by the agony of World War II. In addition to his research duties, Charles was asked to organize this meeting. Moreover, he edited its proceedings in Renewal and Advance, published in 1948. The chief business was to receive an update on the missionary movement and to plan with regard to the new situation that lay ahead for the churches. Several phrases lifted out of the Whitby gathering reveal its emphases: “Partnership in Obedience,” “Supranationality of the Church,” “Expectant Evangelism.” All have remained in the parlance of the worldwide church. The meeting decided that the IMC should not then be a part of but “in association with” the World Council of Churches (WCC), which was founded in Amsterdam the next summer. Finally, Whitby unanimously elected Charles W. Ranson to the newly created post of general secretary of the IMC. He served in that capacity for ten years. It might be said that a

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¹ The example of our Lord and the experience, through the centuries, of His Church sustain the conviction that the strategic point in the missionary task is the preparation of Christian pastors and teachers. The concentration of adequate resources at this point is, humanly speaking, the only guarantee both of the Church’s stability and of its power to meet widening opportunities.

² There is no task in the whole Christian enterprise in India which calls more clearly for the close and continued partnership of the older churches with the Church in India than the education of the indigenous ministry. There is no task on which the future well-being of the Church in India so greatly depends. The resolve to make the training of the ministry the pivot of Christian strategy may well be for churches and missions in post-war India, “the one great choice, which . . . carries all the rest in the end and carries them high.”

³ The year 1946 saw a further turn in Ranson’s career. He became research secretary of the International Missionary Council (IMC), founded in 1921 largely on the initiative of John R. Mott. For the next several years the Ransons shuttled their residence between the New York region and the London region. It was in 1946 that this writer came first to know Charles Ranson in what was to be a growing and enduring friendship extending almost exactly over the last half of his life.

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principal contribution he made was simply to show over a decade what “partnership in obedience” really means in a global sense.

Ranson did not administer the IMC from a swivel chair in New York or London. He was very much a field person, and his field was the world, visiting the member councils. Those of us who were fortunate enough to receive his travel diaries were highly favored. He rendered a fascinating and illuminating account of his labors in what might be regarded as obscure corners of the world. A part of his contribution was thus on a person-to-person basis.

His tenure was punctuated also by two other IMC gatherings. One was at Willingen in West Germany, July 5–17, 1952. This was for the writer and for a number of other young mission executives a first ecumenical experience—a thrilling one. The theme was: “The Missionary Obligation of the Church.” For some this phrasing was regarded a “disastrous prejudgment”; for others a simple acknowledgment of the fundamental mandate of the church. The churches were beginning to renew their pace in global witness following World War II. Strangely enough and in contrast to Whitby’s “Partnership in Obedience,” Willingen produced no slogans. Still, the influence of Willingen continues until the present. Notable at this meeting were the remarkable Bible studies on 1 Corinthians by Hendrik Kraemer. Of significance also was the statement on behalf of Pentecostal churches offered by David J. du Plessis. Ranson’s firm hand was evident throughout the sessions.

The second major meeting was held from December 28, 1957 to January 8, 1958 at University College, Accra, Ghana, and is known simply as “the Ghana Assembly.” In contrast to its predecessor, sharper questions were raised concerning the legitimacy of the missionary movement. Its discussions presaged many of the more drastic changes that have characterized the enterprise since that time such as the rapid reduction in Western missionary personnel of mainline denominational mission agencies. A statement entitled “The Christian Mission at This Hour,” set forth the tenor of the meeting. This is found in The Ghana Assembly of the International Missionary Council edited by Ronald K. Orchard. The integrating of IMC with the World Council of Churches was hotly debated but generally approved. Thus in 1961 the IMC became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC.

A pall was cast upon this meeting with the word that Grace Ranson had been killed in an automobile accident on New Year’s Eve 1957. This tragedy occurred at about the time the assembly was celebrating John Wesley’s Watchnight Covenant Service. A part of this service includes the words: “put me to doing, put me to suffering; ... let me be brought low;... let me be empty.” By God’s mercy Ranson was given the power to endure this tragic loss. Tragedy was to strike again in the death by cancer of his second wife, Barbara, in 1971; and yet again in the death of his eldest daughter, Mary, of a brain tumor in 1984. Again, sustained of God, Charles endured.

In spite of all that has been recounted, what was to be in many respects Charles Ranson’s major contribution lay ahead of him. At its last meeting before “integration” the IMC approved in Ghana the Theological Education Fund (TEF). This initiative was consistent with Ranson’s interest in theological education in India, now enlarged to the world scene. The universal need was evident enough. Charles sought financial resources from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. He was very cautious and circumspect. Indeed, Yorke Allen of Sealantic Fund (a Rockefeller enterprise) was assigned to gathering facts on theological education around the world. He did this, amassing his facts in a massive volume, A Seminary Survey. The result was a conditional Rockefeller offer of $2 million, provided this was matched by mission boards. This was done in two weeks’ time.

The total sum was expended within five years. The Mexico City meeting of CWME (1963) then authorized raising another $4 million. It should be noted that Europeans were at first suspicious of these American proposals, but this was overcome and they too supported the continuing program. Charles Ranson was invited to administer the TEF and did so from 1958 to 1962. (He served also in 1961–62 as president of the Irish Conference of the Methodist Church.) Buildings, libraries, and textbooks were provided, but chiefly people benefited through more adequate ministerial training. This contribution of Ranson to church life and work in third world countries is beyond calculation.

From 1962 to 1968 Ranson was professor of Ecumenical Theology at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, serving in 1964–66 also as dean. This was followed by teaching theology and ecumenics at Hartford Seminary Foundation (1968–72). Finally, he was minister from 1969 to 1975 of the Congregational Church in Salisbury, Connecticut, where he had settled. Thus, toward the end of his active career his contribution was again as teacher and pastor, roles in which he was highly effective.

As the story has unfolded various aspects of Ranson’s legacy have been noted. Allow me to add two more. First, he had a talent for making and keeping friends in every setting and across every national and denominational boundary. He made each and all of his friends seem special. In the United States he was part of at least two small discussion groups, one of which was “Lux Mundi,” a circle of distinguished missiologists and mission administrators.

Another was a smaller and less-formal group that met for some years at Drew. He was the mentor of this group. Not the least of his contributions was to suggest to others the reading of books he had found particularly helpful. Among many others were these: The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments by C. H. Dodd; The Lower Levels of Prayer by George S. Stewart; and The Fourth Gospel by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns. This sort of thing was immensely helpful to the younger members of this group. He loved books. On the occasion of one his several retirements, our little group, having made a tacit inquiry of his preferences, presented him with the complete Oxford English Dictionary, which I later noted was well used. This was vintage Charles W. Ranson.

A further contribution, and an enormous one, is surely Ranson’s record as one of the ablest interpreters of and apologists for the world mission of the church in his day. This was accomplished in literally hundreds of forums, including many university lectureships, across the world. He had an attractive mode of speech and the hint of an Irish accent did no harm at all. He was thoughtful, analytical, evangelical, and always possessed of good common sense and great good humor. He had about him a touch of the poet. It was always a joy and a profit to hear him. Fortunately some of these utterances are preserved for us in such books as
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Arthur F. Glasser

"In der Wüste." That was the caption underneath a large portrayal of the Israelite tribes gathered around the Tabernacle in the wilderness. This colorful representation of a people striking out for the promised land more or less represented my first serious encounter with biblical faith. This took place again and again whenever our family visited "mein Grossvater" across town in Paterson, New Jersey. The picture was on the wall in my grandfather's living room. And although he could not speak English nor I German, I always came away with appreciation for this ardent Saxon with his patriarchal beard and his kindly face. His wife was "something else"—to say the least—but that is another matter! Grossvater was caught up in the vision of keeping Egypt—this world—behind him and facing the service and worship of Yahweh, even if it meant much loneliness and upward struggle to keep moving across the wilderness to Zion.

Actually, for most of my teenage years I was extremely nominal as a church person until that wonderful summer just prior to going to Cornell University to study engineering. Why engineering? Father thought that was best for me. His only reason was that I liked math. I only knew my restless heart was without direction or purpose and that I had no sense of personal fulfillment. But I had an older brother. Some months before, as a Princeton University undergraduate, he had made a commitment to Christ and began working on me—to my discomfort. Fortunately, he was able to persuade me to attend a week-long student conference. There I was transformed, simply because an utterly reasonable man took the time to show me from the Scriptures my need. I guess I was half won to Christ because this older person took an interest in me. What he said seemed so simple: all I had to do was to open my heart and receive the One who loved me, died for me, and had the right to become my Lord and Savior. Only then would I enter fully into life. It was the conscious decision of a moment but brought an entirely new orientation to all realities. On that day I truly felt that I became a "new creation in Christ." Conviction of sin, the need for repentance and the appropriation of divine forgiveness along with the release that comes through entering into the meaning of Christ's atoning death and bodily resurrection—all these realities came later.

University followed. Upon graduation a fine position opened up in an engineering firm in Pittsburgh. I was a Christian engineer, enjoying my work, taking further courses in reinforced concrete design, and giving the church all my spare time. Suffice it to say, the sense of God's control remained. In the end the vision of making Christ known where he was not yet being named, led to drafting a letter of resignation and a personal interview with my boss. His parting word was the friendly, "If you should ever think you've made a mistake, let me know." Then began estrangement from my father and the drastic retooling of my education. In those days evangelicals acted more like fundamentalists and caused unnecessary offense—I was better at this than most. But I was determined to put all heart and conscience to telling forth the Gospel—on the streets, if need be.

For me, on the streets became literally true. During three seminary years, on weekends and throughout the intervening summers, I served as a volunteer for the New York Bible Society. I assisted the older man who had led me to Christ. In Manhattan we distributed copies of a special edition of the Gospel of Matthew to Jewish people and made the most of Saturday evenings when we held outdoor informal meetings. In those days drawing a

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crowd was an easy thing to do. One just raised one’s voice. And it was generally my loud voice that started things.

You can imagine the larger context (1939–1942). The Jewish people suffering under the Nazis, and the churches, particularly in Germany, hardly raising one word in protest. And the savage questions put to me—a Gentile—challenging all that the church stood for. It was the sort of evangelistic outreach that needed to be constantly renewed by prayer and the study of God’s purpose for the Jews in both testaments. Otherwise we would have been overwhelmed. We knew much loneliness and conflict in that wilderness (in der Wüste indeed!).

I had been praying that following seminary graduation in June (1942) I might be able to devote myself fully to this work, but the answer was always, “No!” It was as though God said, “Depart! I will send you far away to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21). How far away brings a smile when I think of it now. One week after graduation I was involved in an experimental program the U.S. Navy hopefully launched to see if young seminarians could be taken directly from their studies with no church experience and put into the chaplaincy. I don’t think it was very successful. Among the forty hopefuls in that first experimental class I found Harry Boer, later to distinguish himself as a Christian Reformed Church missionary and missiologist in Nigeria; James Goff, who would become prominent in the Presbyterian mission in Colombia and Mexico; and David Burcham, the founder of La Canada Presbyterian Church—a church that has become very supportive of all that Fuller Theological Seminary stands for.

After a few months of service in the United States, during which God gave me Alice, the blessing above blessings—a wonderful wife committed to Christ and to missions, gracious and attractive, and clear in her head—I was sent to the South Pacific and served with the First Marine Division. Those two years in the islands during the “marking time” period insofar as the Pacific war was concerned, proved a confirmation of my calling to missionary service. I found that the Bible could become interesting to marines and draw them to faith in Christ. Rotation back to the States enabled my wife Alice and me to settle down a bit. But not much! My approach to the ministry was turned on end. But not burning brightly during the war years.

Once the atomic bomb abruptly resulted in Japan’s capitulation, Alice and I took the plunge of offering ourselves for service with China Inland Mission, and were sent to the Far East toward the end of 1946. On shipboard I met Ralph Covell and many others who had been part of our inner circle ever since. En route we read Edgar Snow’s Red Star over China and wondered what we were getting into. To say the least, a lot of “getting into” followed: into the language and into Chinese ways, into the Chinese church and into its problems. After varied ministry in and around Kunming in China’s southwest, we were sent to Wuting, a remote walled city, and eventually to Salowu, less than a village but in the heart of a flourishing tribal (Nosu) church. An evangelists’ training school was located there. We were high up in the mountains (7,500 feet) and quite isolated from the Chinese. We loved the work and would have remained there for the rest of our lives. But the victory of the Maoist revolution ended all such hopes. We remained for almost one and a half more years in the People’s Republic, but finally had to return home in 1951.

Had my Christian service to this point been fulfilling? I wasn’t quite sure. The experience of going through a communist revolution unsettled me. I had little desire to jockey into position and get ready for immediate service in another Asian country, now that China was closed. I was suffering from too many undigested experiences. I needed time to read and reflect, to ask questions and seek fresh guidance from the Lord. I had to study what this communist thing was all about, from A to Z. Not just Marx and Engels, but Hromadka and Mao. And what about mission itself? Was there more to it than the few biblical texts that constituted our marching orders? Furthermore, what about the various keen missionaries we had associated with in an international society (the China Inland Mission)? They had come from all sorts of traditions I had earlier been taught to regard with caution. The Europeans spoke of their indebtedness to Karl Barth, whereas we had been told to dismiss him as merely the promulgator of a “new modernism.”

But other serious questions also surfaced. When my earlier interest in the Jewish people was heightened by Hitler’s shocking efforts to exterminate them throughout Europe (aided and abetted by thousands of his countrymen), I naturally wondered whether the Christians of my stripe in Germany had protested and resisted their slaughter. Particularly, what of those “Darby-ite exclusives,” the Plymouth Brethren of my mother’s family still in Germany? We had long heard of their “in der Wüste” perspective on life, but what did it lead them to do when faced with this crisis? Actually, they did nothing significantly Christian. You can be sure that it was a very disturbing experience to discover that those most involved in talking about the anti-Christ and against all forms of worldliness had been unable to recognize a vicious anti-Christ when he appeared and were utterly seduced by his worldly and amoral nationalism.

Furthermore, what of that experience of finding a Japanese New Testament alongside the headless corpse of a Japanese soldier in New Britain? That didn’t quite fit into my next list of Calvinist arguments for the “Just War.” Should I not seek to “do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10)? The inner turmoil generated by this experience almost made me a Mennonite!

But there were other questions. For instance, did we really prepare the churches in China to cope with Maoist totalitarianism? Why did the youth (and the Nosu evangelists we were teaching in Salowu) so quickly melt away from the churches once they encountered face-to-face the ardent appeals of the Maoists to join them in making a “new China”? Why should a mission that had served in China for almost eighty-five years sense so little need to indoctrinate its new workers in all the methodologies and strategies that had been developed and refined throughout that long period? Was the pietist approach (“pray and God will lead you”) really the most effective approach to the task of evangelizing China’s millions? I never felt that I knew what I was supposed to do, or how to do it. God was very good to us personally while we were in China, but I never felt that I was of much use to the kingdom.
Much of my world crumbled in those first months after returning home from China. True, I had begun to discern some painful realities: the perils of uncruified nationalism; the foolishness of supporting the status quo because it’s there; the selfish resort to neutrality in the face of the moral and ethical issues of the day; the unwarranted condemnation of everything pertaining to ecumenism; the unguarded optimism that says Caesar can be the friend of Jesus Christ—on and on. You can well believe that it was quite a struggle during those years of the cold war and the Vietnam anguish to bring together into a harmonious whole my salvific experience of Christ, my evangelical understanding of the Scriptures, and my abiding desire to be guided by God. Fortunately, Alice proved a wonderful companion in all this, always loyal, always wise, and always supportive. Four years spent in teaching at Columbia Bible College followed by a thwarted attempt to go to the Philippines (on the day the ship sailed, I underwent surgery in a Jersey City hospital) and ending up as a homeside mission administrator—it was a lengthy period in which the ark rarely seemed ready to move forward, and the promised land was nowhere in sight!

But it all had to come to an end. Issues had to be faced and resolved. This meant resignation from my mission with no specific plans for the future. Then followed a year of intense study in

New York. Did Hans Hoekendijk at Union Seminary point the way? Or those “China study” gatherings convened at the Interchurch Center on 475 Riverside Drive? Or insight into the beginnings of the new Israel gained at the Jewish Theological Seminary? Or did formal study in Chinese culture at Columbia University prove helpful? One thing I truly gained that year was an appreciation for the internal upheavals of missionaries engaged in furlough study. I detected hidden agendas competing with the respectable task of seeking midcourse corrections with a view to heightening their effectiveness in the ministry. Strange as it may seem, this wide exposure served to deepen my conviction that “the heavens rule,” that Jesus Christ is “the one Word we have to hear” and the one Lord we must obey, and that the complete reliability and authority of Scripture is non-negotiable. If it teaches that Jesus needs Jesus Christ, we will proclaim him to them. If it repudiates all religious relativism and the worship of other gods, be it! We will upbraid his law that states: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” and evangelize all peoples who are strangers to his love, regardless of their religious allegiance. If it demands that we receive all those who manifestly belong to him, we will seek ecumenical involvement “that the world may believe,” regardless what the separatists say! If it warns against the seduction of civil religion and the political support of the selfish status quo, then we will gladly stand with the minority that protest the encouragement of greed and the neglect in high places of the poor in our land.

I was rescued from great uncertainty touching my future by a call to join the faculty of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. At once, I found myself among like-minded colleagues and began struggling with them. Overnight I was caught up in the growing ferment of church growth and the need to make sure that researching local situations must precede all strategizing. Furthermore, I found it folly to expect all churches everywhere to seek the same agenda. This led to new insight into the evangelical obligation to make laboring for church renewal a top priority, equal in importance to the task of planting new churches.

It is irresponsible to remove oneself from a “dead” church and indulge the fantasy that the only solution is to start new churches.

Where am I now? “Lord, Thou knowest!” But I must add: He has given me eyes to see the Jews hungering to know the One who “came unto his own, but his own received him not” (John 1:11). And I’ve seen churches delivered from the dreary, nonproductive activity called “church business” and liberated for “kingdom business.” They have retained their evangelistic fervor and activity but are now socially responsible as well. The poor are cared for and the Gospel is preached to them. The powers that rule are being challenged to exercise justice, promote compassion, and care for vulnerable minorities—and “sleaze” tendencies are exposed and denounced. And for myself personally, the breadth of Alice’s interests and concerns has delivered me from the sort of staleness that all too easily comes to those who can only see one dimension of the life and service to which God has called us. Yes, I find it great to be alive, blessed with a wonderful wife and family, and provided with meaningful and stimulating work on the edges of the emerging second generation in Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission.

But I must not close this review without calling attention to my greatest treasure insofar as biblical truth is concerned. All scholars, even the most radical, are agreed that we are closest to the historical Jesus of Nazareth when we ponder his teaching on the kingdom of God and trace its embodiment in his earthly ministry. For some years, indeed throughout most of my spiritual ministry. For some years, indeed throughout most of my spiritual pilgrimage, the kingdom of God has bothered me. When still a new Christian I was told with dogmatic finality that it was of Jewish eschatological relevance and should only be marginal to my Christian perspectives.

Over the years this dogmatism has steadily eroded, but the precise meaning of the kingdom of God long managed to elude me—even though I could affirm that this theme dominated all that Jesus said and did. Unfortunately, the constant pressures of missionary ministry and later of administrative work gave little time for the sort of careful study such a subject warranted. Of course, I had earlier discovered the writings of Fuller Seminary’s George Eldon Ladd. They marked the beginning of a Copernican revolution in my approach to the Bible. Still, his writings didn’t help me when I recalled the failure of the free churches in Germany and our failure to prepare the churches in China for the communist revolution. I sought to expose myself to politicized the-
ology, to liberation theology, and the other theological isms of our day, for they refer to the kingdom of God—but they didn’t help very much.

It was Ridderbos and Costas, Barth and Cullmann, Beasley-Murray and Jeremias, Snyder and Miguez Bonino—and so many others—that gave me clues, some here and others there, into the tremendous riches of this theme. But I would be derelict if I failed to express appreciation for the hundreds (by now) of students at the School of World Mission who put up with my struggles to lead them along the highways and byways of this theological exploration. Again and again they asked the right questions and enriched me through their discoveries in our library and the insights they personally gained through their reflection on Scripture and their awareness of the need to contextualize our biblical faith within the harsh realities of today’s world.

What has been my most recent bit of personal excitement? Nothing less than the willingness of the powers at Fuller Seminary to allow us to launch a two-year M.A. program in Judaic studies and Jewish evangelism. The first group of Jewish students to enter the program in the summer of 1988 was top quality, so much so that we are convinced that God is doing a “new thing” for us and through us by means of this program. Furthermore, the School of World Mission has added to the faculty Charles Van Engen. He is my replacement plus much more, and I rejoice that he has “come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” Churches in mission are going to hear a great deal of him in the days ahead.

MARK THOMSEN

Confessing Jesus Christ within the World of Religious Pluralism

Whether and how to confess Jesus Christ within religious pluralism are questions at the center of missionary thinking today. Some suggest that an abandonment of Christian claims to Jesus’ uniqueness would be a decisive step in moving humanity into a common future. It is also argued that contemporary scholarship forces us to move in this direction because it will not allow any particular historical factor to be universalized, since all faith perspectives are culturally conditioned.

I appreciate the concerns of those who critique the church’s faith and mission from the perspective of cultural relativism; however, the thesis of this article is the opposite. This study asserts that it is an acceptance of Jesus’ uniqueness and Lordship which will enable the Christian community to make a creative contribution to the future of humanity and will also enable Christians to enter into genuine dialogue and community with peoples of other faiths. This claim is made on the basis of a particular understanding of the Lordship of Jesus Christ that focuses upon Jesus crucified. Within the writer’s Lutheran tradition, this is designated as a theology of the cross.

Traditionally, Lutheran theology has interpreted a theology of the cross primarily in terms of the grounds of faith, the power of sin, and the source of salvation. First, a theology of the cross rejects any attempt to say that one can prove from creation or history the validity of faith. The cross signifies the opposite. The truth of the Gospel is not self-evident; only by the Holy Spirit does one confess the crucified Jesus as risen Lord. Second, a theology of the cross points to the cross of Jesus Christ as that event in which God redeems sinful humanity by taking the power of sin into God’s own being, thereby setting sinners free from condemnation.

The present study reflects this Lutheran tradition and expands this focus upon the cross within the context of particular contemporary missiological concerns. My thesis is that by focusing upon the cross as the clue to the nature and mission of God, one finds dimensions of the faith that are powerful and relevant as Christians are present within religious pluralism. In particular, the cross as clue to the suffering of God is at the heart of it all.

A Theology of the Cross as Prerequisite to Christian Witness within Religious Pluralism

The Cross and God’s Participation in Human Suffering. The resurrection faith proclaims that Jesus crucified is the one who is raised from the dead, sits at the right hand of God, and is the one to whom the future belongs. The resurrection announces that contrary to human expectations Christ’s way of the cross is God’s way in the world.

Incarnation theology explains that God is embodied in the crucified. Here we have seen and touched Life and Truth. Jesus crucified becomes the window through which one sees into the heart of the universe, the very heart of God. That means, among other things, the suffering of Jesus Christ manifests God’s participation in the suffering of the broken human community.

Before other dimensions of a theology of the cross are mentioned, it is necessary to note implications for mission already evident. One, in relationship to all human suffering, the Christian asserts that God knows and shares the suffering and

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inflicted upon the human family. "I have heard the cry of my people and know their suffering" (Exod. 3). All forms of suffering, including poverty and oppression, constantly raise questions concerning the absence, the silence, the judgment, or even the righteousness of God. In spite of all the signs that would indicate otherwise, the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ proclaims that God loves so deeply that God is with us—Emmanuel—and suffers with us—Compassion. That is in itself good news.

Two, Jesus Christ calls the body of Christ to follow him into the depths of human suffering and pain. It is there that good news is to be announced and celebrated. God does not speak at a distance from us but is personally present among us in Jesus. Those who witness to Jesus are likewise called by Jesus Christ to witness among people and within pain. Any attempt to communicate the Gospel from a distance while avoiding participation in the pain and tragedy of human brokenness is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus.

**The Cross of Jesus and the Divine/Demonic Struggle**

Jesus was crucified because he challenged and contradicted the religious, social, and ethical values and decisions of his contemporaries. Jesus stood within the tradition of Israel’s prophets, proclaiming the arrival of that which they had envisioned, the Kingdom of God (Luke 10:23), and calling Israel to repentance. Jesus denounced many of Israel’s religious elite as “blind guides, white-washed tombs, hypocrites.” In striking contrast to their lives and teaching, he called for forms of mercy, justice, and righteousness that transcended their moral legalism, and he proclaimed a form of grace that shattered their religious structures. Jesus announced forgiveness for those who had been ostracized and damned, infuriating the religious establishment. Jesus called for mercy and justice for the poor. He liberated the possessed and healed the sick. Jesus’ life-transforming ministry contrasted strikingly with those who focused on tithing mint, dill, and cumin (Matt. 23:23). Jesus’ denunciation of religious hypocrisy, mercilessness, and social irresponsibility inflamed his enemies.

Jesus’ prophetic struggle pitted the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Satan (Lk 11). The kingdom of God was embodied in Jesus. The realm of Darkness was embodied in priests, rabbis, thongs, and people who pushed Jesus out of the world and onto a cross. Demonic powers alive within historical agencies rejected Jesus’ mission of mercy, justice, and righteousness and nailed Jesus to the cross! In this struggle for mercy, justice and righteousness, God in Christ suffered for us and on our behalf.

This exploration into a theology of the cross places God within a historical, prophetic struggle for righteousness and justice. Jesus Christ, nailed to a cross, as prophet of God, proves beyond any shadow of doubt that God has a passionate concern for transforming the lives of those who are ostracized, damned, demon-possessed, poor, oppressed, or sick. That is good news!

The mission of the body of Christ is determined by its head and Lord. Any mission carried out in Jesus’ name is compelled to participate in the kingdom’s struggle for mercy, justice, and righteousness—for the transformation of life.

**The Cross of Jesus and the Heart of the Gospel**

God in Jesus’ crucifixion took humanity’s ultimate rebellion into God’s own being and reached out to draw all humanity to the foot of the cross. That is the heart of the Gospel—the ultimate cosmic fact!

Faith asserts that it was on that particular hill and in that particular prophet from Nazareth that God absorbed the fanatic and tragic rejection of God’s very best, God’s own final truth, the Father’s own Son (Mark 12:1–12). God accepted into God’s own being the costly

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**Noteworthy**

**Personalia**

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, has appointed Paul G. Hiebert as Professor of Mission and Anthropology, and Lois McKinney as Associate Professor of Mission, effective September 1, 1990. Hiebert has served on the faculty of Fuller Seminary School of World Mission since 1977; McKinney has served on the faculty of Wheaton College Graduate School since 1982.

Byron L. Haines died on June 21, 1990. He was 61 years old. He was Associate for the Middle East/South Asia in the Global Mission Ministry Unit, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Earlier he served the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. as co-director of its Task Force on Christian-Muslim Relations, and at Hartford Seminary as director of degree programs and faculty.

The April 1990 issue of Missionalia, the journal of the Southern African Missiological Society, is a special Festschrift to honor its general secretary and editor, David J. Bosch, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday (December 13, 1989).

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Announcing


The annual meeting of the United States Catholic Mission Association will be held October 26–28, at the Hyatt-Lisle Hotel near Chicago. Theme of the meeting is “Mission: U.S.A.” For further information, contact: Fr Joseph R. Lang, Executive Director, USCMA, 3029 4th St. N.E.; Washington, D.C. 20017.

The next conference of the International Association for Mission Studies will be held August 3–11, 1992, at Hawaii Loa College, Kaneoaku, Oahu, Hawaii. The theme of the conference will be “New World, New Creation: Mission in Power and Faith.” For membership applications in IAMs and further information on the conference, write to: Joachim Wietzke, General Secretary of IAMs, Mittelweg 143, D-2000 Hamburg 13, Federal Republic of Germany.
pain and suffering inflicted on Jesus in order that God's love may encompass the whole of humanity and all creation. Salvation as forgiveness and reconciliation is infinitely costly. Atonement and grace has its roots in the grieving God who struggles to bring life into the midst of death and in the awesome life and crucifixion of Jesus. God incarnate among us confounds our expectations. Saving power is manifest in seeming powerlessness.

The uniqueness and Lordship of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with imperial, economic, political, or military power. It is precisely the opposite. "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for all" (Mark 10:45).

The Cross of Jesus and the Church's Vulnerability in Mission

The church which proclaims repentance and forgiveness in Jesus' name (Luke 24:47) is called to walk the same path as the Lord and Master. In absolute contrast to human desires, Christ-like forgiveness rather than retaliation is to be a mark of the church. Furthermore, in contrast to those who rule the Gentiles, Jesus says to those who follow him as disciples, "Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:44). These mandates of Jesus condemn all attempts by Christians to witness from the perspective of cultural or societal power. It calls us to share the mission of the body of Christ, molded by the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5-11) who, half-naked, washed his disciples' feet. All contemporary critiques of our Christian arrogance and imperialism were previously and powerfully made by the Lord of the church.

Only as the church takes the biblical reality of the cross seriously can it authentically witness to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Lord within religious pluralism. The body of Christ has the privilege of witnessing to a seemingly incredible vision of God in Jesus crucified. God in Jesus Christ shares the depths of our pain and participates in the struggle for life and justice. Contrary to human expectation, God incredibly appears as crucified, redeeming slave of the universe. The crucified Christ with nail-pierced hands and wounded side sits at the right hand of God. Before him every knee will bow!

The announcement of this incredible vision of the kingdom of God incarnate in Jesus crucified is to be carried by a people who are empowered by the vision and called to walk as humble participants within the vision. When the church in trust follows Jesus into the depths of human pain, it participates in the struggle for universal justice and is molded by the crucified mind of Christ, then it witnesses authentically to Jesus. Then the church authentically begins to speak of that one who transcends cultural relativism and who is the norm for all the manifestations of the Holy within the cosmos.

If we are not prepared to take this crucified Christ as absolute Lord of our own lives and the life of the church, if the theology of the cross does not provide the core of our faith and mission, we should replace our talk about the uniqueness and normativeness of Jesus with an honest Christian cultural relativism.

Christian Witness within Religious Pluralism

Religious Relativism and God's Universal Presence. Religious relativists, including excellent Christian scholars, assume: the universality of the presence of God or "The Holy," the activity of a cosmic saving power, a multiplicity of revelatory events, and the absence of any normative revelation by which all revelatory claims may be critiqued. Within the context of Christian history, often marked by intolerance and cultural imperialism, one may hear the gospel of universal relativity as a breath of fresh air that might impede the religious fanaticism found in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, and American fundamentalism, as well as the more sophisticated forms of Christian intolerance and imperialism present in our own documents and institutions.

There are very attractive aspects to the relativist approach to religious truth. There is the recognition that God is universally present to the whole of creation. Furthermore, the whole human family has the potential for imaging God. These emphases are recognized as major biblical themes: God's creation of and presence within every corner of the cosmos (Gen. 1, Ps. 139); God's universal pervading wisdom within humanity (Prov. 8, Rom. 2); God's planting of the human search for God within the heart of all peoples (Acts 17); and God's intention to reconcile the whole of creation (Eph. 1:9–10). These themes are made concrete in Melchizedek (Gen. 14), Jethro (Exod. 18), and many others. Furthermore, such emphases are supported by Christian experience that continually encounters persons of integrity and openness to God's will outside the Christian tradition. Christians rooted in creation as God's gift are always called to listen for the will of God in human voices of every religious family and to look for the imprints of God's presence in every culture.

Beyond Relativism to the Unsurpassable and Normative Crucified Jesus

The biblical faith challenges us to move from religious relativism to Jesus as Lord, Jesus proclaimed as messiah (Luke 24), heavenly Lord (Phil. 2:5–11), cosmic judge (Matt. 25), universal reconciler (Eph. 1:9–10), that one in whom the fulness of God was pleased to dwell (Col. 2:9–10). One can reject this claim to transcendent relativism on itself as a relative cultural form that must be eliminated for the sake of the future of humanity, as well as responsible participation in twentieth-century historiography. I believe otherwise, and I believe this is both morally and academically responsible.

First, I believe an authentic understanding of Jesus crucified will not be destructive of the human community and its future. On the contrary, it should lead Christians and persons of other faiths beyond an enlightened relativism to a deep, Christ-like concern for and involvement in one another's lives for the sake of universal peace and justice. Christians are called beyond mutual respect grounded in God's universal creative presence to a vulnerable love grounded in Christ's love that embraces even those who consume the children of God.

Second, I believe that Jesus in his uniqueness, transcends cultural relativity. There is no inherent reason for saying that is impossible. It is true that historiography assumes that historical evidence must be verifiable by that which is historically repeatable; however, there is necessarily no logical reason for denying that the non-repeatable has occurred.

Furthermore, there is "evidence" that indicates that the assertion of Jesus' uniqueness is cosmic fact. First, there is the
conviction that the Gospel proclaims a vision of God that if not true should be true. Nowhere else is God described as so deeply and passionately involved in human brokenness for the sake of human life. It may be charged that this vision of God is merely the figment of the human imagination; but it cannot be denied that it is a vision unsurpassable in depth and breadth. Second, there is an inner witness that persuades that the love and compassion embodied in Jesus is of ultimate value for life, making a claim upon our lives. Third, there is an inner testimony that persuades that the love embodied in Jesus is of God and that the compelling voice in Scripture and within is the voice of God (the Holy Spirit). Fourth, the resurrection is an external witness that in concert with inner convictions and the inner voice of the Holy Spirit proclaims that Jesus crucified is risen and sits at the right hand of God.

This evidential argument is not logically necessary (a theology of the cross assumes that) but neither is it logically impossible or irrelevant for the twentieth century. If our skepticism leaves us with nothing but a wager on eternity, I, for one, wish to wager on Christ. If doubt says it may not be true, I prefer to live with those doubts, sharing a possible unsurpassable vision with Jesus and his people, than to share with certainty something less than that. If, however, by the witness of the Holy Spirit we actually come to believe that the Gospel is true, then the Christian community possesses a hidden treasure that is so incredible and of such wonderful import that we will find it impossible to cease from witnessing to God’s grace revealed and given in Jesus Christ for the sake of the universe.

Salvation, God, and Jesus

God—the whence of all reality, the permeating life and order of the universe—is incarnate in Jesus. It is important to emphasize that the New Testament, as noted above, sees that incarnation as unique, normative and unsurpassable. God is universally present, revealed, and experienced; however, the revelation in Jesus norms and critiques all revelation and all religious experience. God is none other than God revealed in Jesus and therefore the Cosmic Vulnerable Companion willing to share human agony as suffering servant in order that the cosmos might move from darkness into light. As a Christian, I will insist that no present or future revelation may contradict or supersede that assertion. From my perspective, salvation as forgiveness, life, and hope are rooted in God incarnate in Jesus. The eternal future of every person within the cosmic family and the ultimate recreation and reconciliation of the universe are totally dependent upon the God incarnate in Jesus. There is no other God than the one embodied and decisively identified on Golgotha.

This celebration of the normative revelation and saving event embodied in Jesus is not to be mistaken for the assertion that the eternal destiny of every person depends upon meeting this Jesus through the preaching of the Gospel within history or being recognized members of our Christian institutions.

The Bible clearly states that to meet Jesus Christ is to have confronted judgment and life:

For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. [the one] who believes is not condemned, [the one] who does not believe is condemned already . . . . This the judgment, that the light has come into the world and [people] loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:16–21)

This passage makes it clear that a positive or negative response to Jesus has present and eternal consequences. The passage, similar to many other biblical texts, makes assertions about those who have had the privilege of meeting Jesus. Those who have met Jesus and trusted in Jesus have already passed from darkness into light, from death to life. They already dwell within the incredible reality of God’s Truth incarnate in Jesus, the magnificent of the messianic reign of God in Christ. In the words of Rom, 10:13–17, they have called upon the name of the Lord and have been saved.

The Johannine passage (John 3:16–21) and similar texts also indicate that those who have met Jesus and rejected God’s truth incarnate in Jesus have already been judged as outside the messianic kingdom “because they loved the darkness rather than the light.” This text and similar texts do not make any statement about those who have not met the Truth or seen the Light in Jesus. They have not yet been through judgment. One can also state that there are many who have never met the Truth and Light of Jesus even though they have heard of Jesus. It seems probable that we as Christians have so distorted Jesus Christ that we have made it impossible for Grace and Truth (John 1:14) in Jesus to be known and experienced by those that we have oppressed and crushed. The contemporary Jewish community would certainly be one example.

Questions are always raised as to how God will ultimately deal with those who have never heard the Gospel. One can leave that in the hands of God knowing that the same compassion, grace, and forgiveness is offered to them as to us. Their salvation, as ours, will be grounded in the pain and suffering of God embodied in Jesus. When and where they will encounter the grace and judgment of Jesus can be left with God.

Mission, Dialogue, and Witness

As disciples of the crucified Christ, we are sent into the world with a treasure that is beyond human comprehension. We believe that treasure is unique within the human community and to be shared with the universe. However, we share it as persons who know that God has preceded our witness and that we will meet people from other faiths who will surpass us in insights into truth and even insights into the Gospel, as well as in moral and religious integrity. We will also share that treasure as disciples called to share with the crucified Lord the human suffering and struggle for life and justice. Finally, we will share the Gospel treasure as persons called to an openness and vulnerability embodied in Jesus. That means listening and receiving in order that we may begin to understand, love, and know other persons who are created in the image of God and are of such eternal significance that God in Christ went through Hell on their behalf. We are called in our mission witness and dialogue to embody with Christ a gentle, patient strength in listening and witness. “A dimly burning wick [the servant] will not quench” (Isa. 42:3). Both dialogue and witness will take the form of half-naked servants at the world’s feet.

Notes

1. The resurrection faith lies behind the theology of the cross found in this document, but the focus of this essay is the significance of the cross for our faith and mission.
2. It is not possible within the limits of this article to discuss the complex issue as to how Christians understand their participation in social-political structures.
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Proclaiming the Gospel by Healing the Sick? Historical and Theological Annotations on Medical Mission

Christoffer Grundmann

Medical mission is a controversial issue. Advocates of medical ministries assure us that “the future of medical mission promises to be as exciting as its past.”1 But at times others have wondered “whether a missionary does not lose rather than gain influence . . . by the exercise of medical knowledge.”2 While some argue that “the history of Medical Missions is the justification of Medical Missions,”3 others object because “the soul is more precious than the body, and the concern for the soul is the supreme concern.”4

As long as it is held that proclamation of the Gospel through the preached word is the proper missionary means, and that to cater to the bodily ailments of individuals is secondary to spiritual afflictions, conflicts are unavoidable.

That there should exist such conflict, however, takes an unbiased mind with surprise. Rooted in the ministry of Jesus himself, the concern for the physical sufferings of individuals has been understood throughout the centuries as part and parcel of the Christian witness. It became an issue only when medicine matured as a scientific discipline, which the missionary movement employed as a means to an end.

In challenging the body-soul dichotomy, medical mission raises a principal question of Christian mission. To come to terms with this intricate issue we will first sketch the history of Christian care for the sick with special reference to work in foreign countries prior to the emergence of medical missions per se; secondly, we will focus on Peter Parker and the inception of medical missions; and finally we will attempt a brief theological investigation into the matter.

I. Compassionate Care and Medical Activities in Mission

Compassionate care for the sick has been present throughout the history of the Christian church and in all strata of the Christian community. Beginning with the time of the Apostles (cf. Mark 16:17-18; Acts 3:1-10; 5:12-16, etc.), Christians introduced “the most revolutionary and decisive change in the attitude of society toward the sick,” for “Christianity came into the world as the religion of healing, as the joyful Gospel of the Redeemer and of Redemption. It addressed itself to the disinherited, to the sick and the afflicted, and promised them healing, a restoration both spiritual and physical.”5 We know of a xenodochium (a house for the care of strangers and the sick) founded in A.D. 372 by Basil the Great (330-379)6 and of the Benedictine Rule according to which the care of the sick had to be given much attention. We are well informed about the special care for lepers in the Middle Ages7 and about the establishment of religious orders devoted to the care of the sick, like the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1113, the Hospitaler of St. John of God (Do Good Brothers) in 1540, and the “Bethlehemites” in Mexico in 1667.8 We also know of medical and pharmaceutical activities of the early missionaries to the Americas, to Africa, the Philippines, China, and Japan,9 and we have numerous accounts of the institution of “misericordia societies” in the New World settlements of the Portuguese, Spaniards, and Italians.10

In the Protestant tradition we know of initiatives by Gotthilf A. Francke and the Tranquebar Mission in commissioning the first physician ever to work overseas, Kaspar Gottlieb Schlegelmilch in 1730; and of the initiative of Count Zinzendorf in sending Dr. Grothaus to St. Croix, West Indies, in 1735.11 Dr. J. Scudder sailed as the first American physician in missionary service to India in 1819; and the Rev. Dr. R. Morrison from the London Missionary Society (LMS), who, in cooperation with a Dr. Livingstone of the East India Company, opened a dispensary at Canton as early as 1817 and another at Macao in 1820 for the poor. Dr. W. Lockhard and Dr. B. Hobson were sent as physicians by LMS to China in 1838 and 1839 respectively.12

But none of this was called medical missions nor did one speak of medical missionaries prior to the nineteenth century (unless in retrospect against the background of modern medical missions). What this rich tradition impressively shows is that physical human needs always prompted Christians to respond to the best of their ability and medical knowledge. Terms indicating an awareness of medical mission per se, and of a special ministry of the medical missionary first appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century. They denote a new phenomenon in the history of Christianity that is inseparably linked with the heyday of Christian mission activities and to modern medical, surgical, and pharmaceutical achievements.

Having himself been a medical missionary to China, Dr. L. Maxwell, in an article written in 1914 entitled “God’s Hand in Medical Missions,” acknowledges: “There is something in the history of [medical missions’] development which is in itself a contribution to the miracle of history in its relation to the Kingdom of God. . . . The great mission work to the world had begun, but was progressing very slowly. It needed what the medical art in service to Christ could alone give. But mark this: —If the medical and surgical art had remained as it stood [in 1840] the assistance rendered by it would have been comparatively limited. . . . There would be no great progress until God gave us the power to operate without pain. . . . God opened a great and wide door . . . by Lister’s famous discovery of how to guard against septic poisoning after operations” and by Dr. Patric [Manson’s] “discovery of the role of the mosquito in malaria. . . . This constantly increasing knowledge has made the position of the medical missionary one of singular value for the propagation of the Gospel.”13

The more medicine became a scientific art, the more effectively it alleviated diseases that had been fatal since the time of the Fall. That accounts for the euphoria with which the idea of medical mission got accepted, not only by the mission boards for their overseas work and personnel but by the general public as well. In a comparatively short time medical missions were established all around the globe as benevolent philanthropic agencies, partly to counteract colonial exploitation, partly to serve as spearheads in mission strategy. The effectiveness of the cures and their reliability made medical mission “the heavy artillery of the

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missionary army” and the medical missionary “the representative of all that was most admired in the ... missionary movement.”

II. Peter Parker and the Origin of Medical Missions

The new phenomenon of medical missions was signaled by the career of the Rev. Peter Parker, M.D. (1804–1888), the first medical missionary. A graduate of Yale College, he topped preparation for mission service with a full-fledged medical study program and degree. When sent to China as an ordained minister by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCYM) in 1834, he was charged: “The medical and surgical knowledge you have acquired, you will employ, as you have opportunity, in relieving the bodily afflictions of the people. You will also be ready, as you can, to aid in giving to them our arts and sciences. But these, you will never forget, are to receive your attention only as they can be made handmaids to the gospel. The character of a physician, or of a man of science, respectable as they may be in evangelizing China—you will never suffer to supersede or interfere with your character as a teacher of religion.”

As early as February 1835, while still in Singapore for language study, Parker confesses: “As it respects my intercourse with the Chinese and my medical and surgical practice among them, it far exceeds all of which I ever thought,” —a sigh frequently repeated in his diaries. When he moved to Canton later that year he opened an “Ophthalmic Hospital,” the fame of which spread rapidly among the resident foreigners as well as among the Chinese. “In the first three months of its existence it had accomplished more toward breaking down the wall of prejudice ... than had been brought about by years of ordinary missionary toil.” To support the hospital and “in order to give a wider extension and permanency to the efforts that have already been made to spread the benefits of rational medicine and surgery among the Chinese,” Parker in cooperation with other foreigners organized in February 1838 the Medical Missionary Society in China, the first of its kind ever.

The astonishing level of interest this comparatively modest enterprise generated was due not only to Parker’s success (especially his surgical work), which spread in influential circles. As a result, associations were organized to aid the cause of medical missions, the first at Edinburgh in 1841.

As soon as he returned to China, Parker resumed the hospital work, not losing sight of his missionary task. “When the mis-

Author’s Reply

To the Editors:

In his response to my article “Catholic Teaching on Non-Christian Religions at the Second Vatican Council” (April 1990), Paul Knitter stresses “the bonds between grace and nature within Catholic theology. Grace must always have a medium in nature and history” (p. 63). As Knitter points out, Karl Rahner is the major Catholic theologian who suggested that non-Christian religions could be understood as incarnated or sacramental media of God’s supernatural salvific grace.

In his well-known article “Das Christentum und die nichtchristlichen Religionen” (published in Schriften zur Theologie, Bd. 5 [Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1962], pp. 136–58), Rahner offers a new way of thinking by emphasizing that non-Christian religions are not only reflections of the natural human cognition of God, but they also contain a mediation of grace that adds something to our natural relation as creatures to the Creator. According to Rahner, a non-Christian religion “not only contains elements of natural knowledge of God,” but “also supernatural instances of the grace which God presents to man because of Christ.” For people who do not know the Gospel, their own religions are “legitimate religions,” that is, God uses them as channels of supernatural saving grace.

Rahner did indeed introduce a somewhat novel Catholic approach to non-Christian religions. His concept is founded on the principle of incarnation: God does not offer supernatural saving grace “directly”; grace is always incarnated in concrete elements or matter. Rahner extends the idea of the sacramental mediation of grace through natural matter from the explicit Christian media to the concrete material and historical elements of other religions as well. He created a theoretic model but did not go into detail about how supernatural grace is present in other religions.

Certainly Rahner was one of the main theological figures who affected the theological substance of Vatican II. But Rahner—much more than his students and followers—was aware that his particular idea about the non-Christian religions as a sacramental mediation of supernatural grace did not gain conciliar recognition. He expressed his disappointment over this in his article “Über die Heilsbedeutung der nichtchristlichen Religionen” (Schriften zur Theologie, Bd. 13 [Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1978], pp. 341–50).

Rahner says that in the Nostra aetate declaration, “the proper theological quality of non-Christian religions remains undefined.” With profound insight into the conciliar teaching, Rahner notes that the text does not acknowledge any specific status of the salvific mediation in other religions. He expressed his astonishment at the conciliar teaching and asked how atheists—lacking the incarnated mediation of grace—could be in the same position as the religious non-Christians: how could “explicit, verbalized and institutional religiosity be superfluous in all human life for the relation of man to God?”

In general, Rahner’s understanding of the conciliar teaching on non-Christian religions is in line with the analysis I offered in my article. On the whole, the Second Vatican Council clung to the traditional Catholic interpretation of other religions, the natural
The medical missionary became "the representative of all that was most admired in the . . . missionary movement."

Chinese interpreter to the Mission of the United States to China, later as chargé d'affaires, and finally as the United States Commissioner to China. Returning home for good in 1857, he joined the Evangelical Alliance and soon became a leading figure of the movement. In 1871 the ABCFM rectified their former decision by making Parker a corporate member of the board. He died on January 10, 1888, at eighty-three years of age, in Washington, D.C., and was buried as "a prominent figure in the vast undertakings of modern evangelical missions, keenly alive to everything that concerns the highest welfare of mankind."

The medical missionary aims to imitate Jesus Christ. While rejoicing that these labors are appreciated and approved by the most enlightened, devoted, and Christian communities, and by the highest personages, civil and ecclesiastical, of the age, the deepest consolation is in the humble hope of the approbation and blessing now, and the future reward of that Saviour whose kingdom we devoutly desire to see established in China.27

Paradoxically, about the same time as Parker was spelling out his conviction (fall 1845), the American Board’s Prudential Committee resolved “that Dr. Parker be advised to seek his support from the Medical Missionary Society in China,” since his work appeared to be almost entirely of a medical character. This caused great disturbance to their faithful missionary28 and kindled a major discussion on the subject. Rufus Anderson, then senior secretary of the ABCFM, declared: “I am certain that too much reliance has been placed upon [the medical mission at Canton], and that the great éclat of the world that has attended it is fitted to increase our apprehension that it is not the way to secure the glory of God and the gospel of his Son; and, of course, not the way most likely to secure the blessing of the Holy Spirit.”29 Responding to Anderson’s discounting of “medical men” in mission work, a defender of Parker argued: “If the idea is merely medical men, I would ask who has ever advocated such? But if the term ‘medical men’ is the same as ‘medical missionary,’ a technical term by which those are designated who endeavor, in their imperfect manner, to follow the example of [Jesus Christ]. . . . permit me to ask if, in sending such to China, you are not, in the most successful manner, sending ‘preachers’?30

Parker, obliged to yield, continued his work independently, now taking on political responsibilities, first as secretary and afterwards as the permanent resident of the Mission of the United States to China.31

_The medical missionary became “the representative of all that was most admired in the . . . missionary movement.”_
III. Proclaiming the Gospel in Imitating Christ

In spite of the fact that medical missions were established with a clear-cut objective of advancing the Gospel, many medical missionaries suffered from controversies similar to the one that embroiled Parker. This reflects, I believe, the failure of the supporters of medical work to develop an adequate rationale. Several attempts to do so failed, and the statement on “The Place of Medical Missions in the Work of the Church,” adopted by the World Missionary Conference at Jerusalem in 1928, could only reiterate the postulate: “In the missionary enterprise the medical work should be regarded as, in itself, an expression of the spirit of the Master, and should not be thought of as only a pioneer of evangelism or as merely a philanthropic agency.” The specific difficulties faced by Catholics (which had the effect of delaying their engagement in medical missions until 1922) centered around the placement and role of medical personnel in relation to the “religious” and the “laity” in the mission apostolate, as defined by canon law. The Roman Catholic debate on medical missions, which we cannot develop here, would further highlight the intricacies of our subject.

Given the fact that reflection on medical mission followed rather than preceded the establishment of medical missions, and that all participants in the discussion sought either to impede or advance what was already in place, it should not be surprising that a rationale acceptable to all was not forthcoming. Even as recently as 1964, when medical missions were rightly interpreted as part of “the Christian ministry of healing,” the specifics of the discussion were neglected. It is simply asserted that, “A proper understanding of the healing ministry excludes the concept of medical missions as a specialized service. Christian medical service in Asia and Africa (as in Europe and America) is an expression of stewardship on the part of Christians in the medical profession.” This applies, of course, to medical service in general; as far as helping to build a rationale for medical service in missions, the issues remain.

Yet it is possible to break the deadlock by arguing that medical mission “imitates Christ” in bringing about healing. The “imitatio Christi” motif, so far neglected in this controversy, is a longstanding principle of Christian ethics. Based on the Jewish “imitatio Dei,” Paul the Apostle counseled others to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thes. 1:6, et al.). The church fathers used the “imitatio” principle to admonish the faithful to carry the cross and to show mercy upon fellow human beings.

Without a conscious recollection of this tradition, pious people in the modern era interpret the potential of scientific medicine to cure disease as a special gift of God to this generation. Dispensed with purely “disinterested benevolence,” the gift is loosely identified with Christ’s healing power. Supporters of medical mission who take this approach fall short of a true theological rationale, because medical cures on the whole work successfully even without such a claim. The underlying question is how healing correlates with redemption.

Healing touches upon the very question of life and therefore upon one’s entire weltanschauung. Like the experience of illness, healing too is common to all mankind, denoting the recovery of strength and ease after a time of disease. In the Judeo-Christian tradition this will be understood as a personal and bodily expression of God’s ongoing creation (creatio continua) and as a token of God’s desire to restore humans to what they ought to be.

To perceive healing as a potential encounter with redemption/recreation, and to enable people to avail themselves of it, requires the explicit proclamation of the Gospel. Witnessing for healing as the gift of God by means of scientific medicine, thereby facilitating the call of redemption which requires a personal response, constitutes the specific ministry of a medical missionary. (And, nowadays, this is no less a critical mission toward medicine!) The claim to imitate Christ must be seen in line with the ancient ethical principle of the “imitatio Christi,” and it must cojoin words (preaching) with deeds (medical skill). As the goal of life, the “imitatio Christi” is a stimulating vision for medical missionaries and all their missionary colleagues.

Proclaiming the Gospel by healing the sick distinguishes the unique ministry of Jesus Christ. Proclaiming the Gospel in imitation of him is the ongoing challenge for genuine Christian mission.

Reflection on medical mission followed rather than preceded the establishment of medical missions.

Notes


6. “Bishops were directed to provide accommodations for the des­titute. These buildings were originally called xenodochia, a term that eventually gave way to hospita or hospitalia. These were usually attached to a cathedral or other church. It is a mistake to envision these facilities for the most part as hospitals in anything approaching the modern sense. Some, particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries were designated for the extension of medical care by a staff of trained physicians, but these were probably an exception. The vast majority of xenodochia simply provided refuge in the form of shelter, food, and a few amenities” (Darrel W. Amundsen, “The Medieval Catholic Tradition,” in Caring and Curing, p. 83.)

8. As far as the orders of “St. John of Jerusalem” and of “St. John of God,” which are still existent today, are concerned, sufficient literature will be found, whereas with regard to the “Bethlehemites,” which dissolved in 1820, it is extremely difficult to get hold of the respective sources, which includes Fr. José García de la Concepción, *Historia Belemética. Vida ejemplar y admirable del venerable siervo de Dios y Padre Pedro de San José Betancur Fundator de el regular Instituto de Belén en las Índias Occidentales; frutos singulares de su fecundo espíritu, y successes varios de esta religión escrita* (Seville, 1723: 2d ed., Bibliotheca “Goathemala” de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1956).


17. Thus part of the “Instructions” of the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM, delivered to Parker when commissioned to China, June 1, 1834, at Bleeker Street Presbyterian Church, New York: cited in Stevens/Markwick, p. 82.

18. Ibid., p. 111; entry in his private diary.

19. In his first quarterly report Parker gives the reason for this choice: “Diseases of the eye were selected as those the most common in China, and being a class in which the native practitioners are most impotent, and the cures, it was supposed, would be as much appreciated as any other,” cf. Stevens/Markwick, p. 121. In the annual report of the hospital for the year 1845 we find the remark: “The ophthalmic affections continue to receive prominent attention, although the institution, as the reports have shown, has become to a great extent a general hospital” in ibid., p. 242.

20. Stevens/Markwick, p. 132.


24. Parker in his report for the hospital for the year 1845 as cited in Stevens/Markwick, p. 243, original italics.

25. “Suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of a foundation for support, as permanent I had supposed, as anything earthly could be . . . disinherit, [I] will never cease to cherish a warm affection for the society with which are most tenderly associated in my mind the dearest names on earth.” (Parker in his letter of January 1, 1846 to the Prudential Committee, cited in Stevens/Markwick, pp. 258–60).


27. Thus part of the “Instructions” of the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM, delivered to Parker when commissioned to China, June 1, 1834, at Bleeker Street Presbyterian Church, New York: cited in Stevens/Markwick, p. 82.

28. “Suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of a foundation for support, as permanent I had supposed, as anything earthly could be . . . disinherit, [I] will never cease to cherish a warm affection for the society with which are most tenderly associated in my mind the dearest names on earth.” (Parker in his letter of January 1, 1846 to the Prudential Committee, cited in Stevens/Markwick, pp. 258–60).


30. Stevens/Markwick, p. 266.


32. Funerary address delivered by the Rev. Dr. Sunderland, cf. ibid., p. 350. For the whole of this period, see ibid., pp. 315–56.

33. Such controversies are mentioned in Theron Kue-Hing Young, “A Conflict of Professions” (see n. 16 above); C. P. Williams, “Healing and Evangelism,” (see n. 2 above); A. F. Walls, “The Heavy Artillery,” (see n. 14 above); within the Adventist tradition mention should be made of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and the “American Medical Missionary College,” Battle Creek; cf. Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), esp. pp. 186–201.


In recent years, scholarly studies of Pentecostalism have appeared at an astonishing rate. The movement's size and diversity can no longer be ignored, and its worldwide impact is generally acknowledged. Yet much of the movement's story remains to be explored. Goff's book addresses an obvious gap by examining one of American Pentecostalism's pivotal characters, Charles Fox Parham. A controversial figure in his day, Parham was ignored by many Pentecostals who preferred to believe that God, not a man, had established their movement.

A native of Iowa, Parham spent his formative years on the frontier in south-central Kansas, where his restorationist message evolved out of private meditation on Scripture and lengthy discussions with the common folk. After interacting with several other turn-of-the-century restorationists during a visit to the northeast in 1900, he returned to Kansas, rented a large home in Topeka, and advertised the opening of Bethel Bible College. There, in January 1901, he announced the full restoration of the apostolic faith in the end-times. The event that heralded the restoration was the occurrence of tongues speech among those of his followers who prayed for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Parham proclaimed this as "Bible evidence" of the experience and concluded that his ministry embraced all the features of New Testament Christianity. He set out to proclaim the apostolic faith and spent the rest of his life itinerating from his home near Columbus, Kansas.

Goff painstakingly reconstructs Parham's life with constant attention to the cultural and social impulses that surrounded him. Whereas Pentecostals like Parham often considered that their message was uniquely inspired, Goff reminds the reader that Parham was shaped by his milieu and cannot be understood apart from it. He examines the allegations of sexual misconduct that haunted Parham most of his life, for the first time documenting their sources.

While some might debate Goff's contention that Parham understood Pentecostalism (which he called the apostolic faith) essentially as a missionary movement, it is amply evident that Parham did consider that tongues speech should facilitate evangelism. It seems equally clear, however, that he believed that Spirit baptism had eschatological significance as the "sealing of the Bride" that enabled participation in the much-anticipated secret rapture of the church. Parham eventually brought his message to Houston; from there, three of his black followers traveled to Los Angeles, and their efforts shortly made a rundown mission on the city's Azusa Street the hub of an emerging global revival.

Goff's book fills a large void in the story of Pentecostalism. Parham played a vital role as a founder—or progenitor, as he preferred to say—of a millenarian restorationist movement that has circled the globe and become a major stream in the story of twentieth-century Christianity. Goff's story of how Parham related to other prophets in the populist religious subculture of his day is also a revealing account of the dynamic of an often-overlooked segment of American religion.

—Edith L. Blumhofer

Edith L. Blumhofer is Associate Professor of History at Wheaton College and Project Director at the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals. Her doctoral dissertation at Harvard University and much of her work since has focused on American Pentecostalism.

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH
Livingstone’s Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking.


Horace Waller, London stockbroker, lay missionary, country clergyman, antislavery campaigner, relentless writer of letters to the Times, edited the papers written by David Livingstone during his long East African journey and published them as the missionary explorer’s Last Journals. In Dorothy Helly’s view he was also an effective promoter of our image of Livingstone, which could be used, by stressing the humanitarian, antislavery responsibilities of Britain, to pave the way to a British African empire.

After describing the development of Waller’s friendship with Livingstone, Helly describes the preparation and rapid publication of the journals, the roles of Waller, Livingstone’s family, and John Murray his publisher, the minefield of Livingstone’s references to living people, and the position of the porters Susi and Chuma and the “Nasik boy” Jacob Wainwright—all brought to England after Livingstone’s death. Then comes an analysis of Waller’s methods, his revisions, omissions, and especially his reconstruction of the death and the events that followed. The author compares Waller’s notebooks and drafts, showing how carefully he produced, from rather sparse materials, the picture of the fallen hero on his knees, (doubtless) praying for Africa’s deliverance. The last part of the book covers more familiar territory, the modern assessment of Livingstone and the progressive British involvement in Africa to 1896, giving perspective by relating it to Waller’s concerns and campaigns. The conclusion is that British imperialism was Livingstone’s legacy to Africa, with Waller, the image-maker, as an executor of the will.

Several questions arise. First, the editorial process revealed by Helly vi­rates the value of the Last Journals, as published, only if we desire a modern scholarly edition. But neither Waller, nor his publisher, nor his readers were looking for that. They wanted the book Livingstone would have written had he returned alive. Helly shows how Liv­ingstone himself revised his daily jour­nals when he transcribed them. Waller was handling the private memoranda of a public figure that mentioned other public figures very much alive. And Victorian ideas as to inappropriate topics and language, and the various pressures on editor and publisher, and the Last Journals seem, by contemporary standards, a pretty fair reflection. Nor do the revisions and omissions alter our assessment of Livingstone today; they add little to what we already knew of the darker side of his character.

As to his legacy, the path from Liv­ingstone the liberator to British imperial­ism is clear enough, and Waller illustrates its direction. But there are other strands to Livingstone and the Christian tradition he represents, which show the path to African independence and identity; strands that show a contrast with the racist arrogance of some of his eminent contemporaries as sampled by Helly. For Livingstone, the European presence in Africa was always tangential and episodic, as it has proved to be.

In view of the array of sources used, it is strange that Helly does not seem to have seen the printed version of Waller’s second introduction to the Last Journals. Dated December 31, 1874, it appears in copies after the first print run.

—Andrew Walls

The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet.


This brief autobiographical volume by the leading theologian of U.S. Hispanic Roman Catholicism is a gem worth many times its price. In the process of getting to know Virgil Elizondo, we come to know why he is so confident and passionate about the people whose cause he advocates. We also learn why his theological program bears high promise for all Christians who find themselves at the intersection where different cultural and religious traditions converge.

The notion of mestizaje (a new peo­ple born of two or more very different peoples mixing to become an open­ended synthesis) is for him, as a Mexican American Christian, the clue to rediscovering what is most distinctive about Jesus and his movement: the Galilean experience of reconciling en­emies from life lived at the margins of religion and power. These are themes he has convincingly argued in a num­ber of scholarly books, especially in his Galilean Journey (Orbis Books, 1983).

To his credit, Elizondo calls little attention to himself. Rather, he pays tribute to his family, to his Mexican neighborhood in West San Antonio, Texas, to the wise and kind Christians, Mexican and Anglo, who introduced him to the best of both cultures, and especially to the significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of Jesus of Nazareth.

Here is an enormously cosmopol­itan theologian, with prestigious Eu­ropean degrees and pastoral practice in Asia, Latin America, and the United States, who, from day-to-day identifi­cation with the mestizo marginals of the Mexico-U.S. borderlands, discovers in them the clue to the future of Chris­tianity.

In a time of much anxiety and doom, it is refreshing to find a theo­logian who can be unsparing in his analysis of injustice, and yet is able from his own daily pastoral practice, as rector of San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas, to celebrate the anticipation of a world no longer wallowing in parochialism or prejudice, but propelled to reason and blessing by the vision of a future that is mestizo.

—Jorge Lara-Braud
Pushing the Faith: Proselytism and Civility in a Pluralistic World.


Among the growing body of literature on the emergent situation of religious pluralism in America, here is a useful addition that attempts to examine the issue of proselytism. Why do people approach others in the spirit of proselytism? What in their faith and worldview impels them to interfere with the lives of others? Why doesn’t everybody leave everybody else alone? Questions such as these imply that in pluralistic contexts proselytism appears indeed to be a social menace and therefore very much in conflict with the etiquettes of pluralism: civility, tolerance, and politeness. How to bridge such tension between politeness and proselytization is the focus of this book, which originated in a symposium sponsored by the University of Denver’s Center for Judaic Studies.

The ten essays in this volume are ordered under four major themes: Universalism and Pluralism, Proselytism and Jewish Exclusivism, Proselytism and Christian Exclusivism, Social Science Perspectives. The two essays on Jewish perspectives provide a good historical analysis of Jewish attitudes toward other faiths and touch on the contemporary issue of conversion to Judaism. The essays on Christian perspectives deal with early Christianity, Protestant attitudes toward mission, modern Roman Catholic attitudes, especially since Vatican II, and the Fundamentalists’ efforts to proselytize Jews. However, the essays from social-science perspectives hardly deal with either Christianity or Judaism but concentrate on the motives and methods of conversion employed by some new religious movements.

The term “proselytism” in Protestant ecumenical discussions has come to mean coercively induced conversions from one faith to another; in this book, however, it refers to all forms of missionary witnessing and evangelism. The majority of contributors to this volume tend to view such endeavors with disdain and advocate the etiquette of pluralism, that everybody leave everybody else alone. It is in the concluding piece by the editor Martin E. Marty that the reader finds a thoughtful critique of that position and an attempt to see proselytism in a more positive way. Marty says that if everybody left everybody else alone, “it would be a more comfortable but probably soon comatose world”; and therefore the challenge of proselytism is that it provides a “great stimulus for communities to define themselves” (p. 158).

This book, then, deals more with pluralism and politeness than with proselytization. But it has initiated a line of inquiry worth pursuing in future studies, especially in regard to the assumptions of “pluralism” itself.

—J. Paul Rajashekar


This is a well-documented historical analysis and critique of Methodist mission schools in Peru, based on extensive primary sources. The author documents well the arrival of Protestantism and the establishment of the Methodist church.

The unique contribution of this study is to describe in detail “... progressively run schools which offered instruction in skills greatly in demand as a consequence of the penetration of foreign capital ...” (p. 34). It would be naive to say that there were not other more altruistic motives, but Protestant missions in Latin America have often been so perceived. The other significant aspect of this book is “the religious and social discourse which was impregnated by both triumphant expansionism and the reformist language of American progressivism” (p. 48). The author documents the strong reactions of British missionaries like Mackay and Ritchie against the advocacy of Protestantism as the religious aspect of Pan-Americanism.

The contributions of North American educational philosophy through “pupil-centered” curriculum and the enhancement of the education of women by the Methodist schools are duly recognized. On the negative side, the reader notes the silence of the missionary community on land reform (p. 54) and the labor practices of foreign mining companies (p. 104). The “unholy alliance” between the U.S. Embassy and the American Mission is seen as feeding anti-imperialism. Many missionaries are presented as woefully underestimating the riches of other cultures and their achievements and as trapped in their own ideological framework.

The author traces carefully the role of political figures like Haya de la Torre who were influenced by Protestant ideas. The quotation from John A. Mackay that “the religious problem is the main problem ... and its solution would give the key to the solution of other problems,” provides the continuing challenge of mission in Peru.

—John H. Sinclair
Against the Devil's Current: The Life and Times of Cyrus Hamlin.


Malcolm Stevens, a professor of chemistry at the University of Hartford in Connecticut, and Marcia Stephens, a freelance historical researcher, have lived in Turkey and Lebanon where they were affiliated with Robert College in Istanbul and the American University of Beirut. Their thoroughly researched and splendidly written book Against the Devil's Current is, in this reviewer's judgment, the definitive biography of Cyrus Hamlin (1811–1900).

In tracing Hamlin's life from humble birth on a New England farm to international renown, the book provides useful insights in the story of America's first mission agency, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). It is also a source of information about the dissolution of Ottoman power, the rise of American influence in the Middle East, early relationships of Protestant missionaries with Orthodox and Catholic hierarchies, and the emergence of Armenian Evangelical churches.

Part I, "Maine" (pp. 7–86), traces Hamlin's childhood, his education at Bridgeton Academy, Bowdoin College, and Bangor Theological Seminary, and influences leading to his decision for missionary service. His appointment in 1837 by the ABCFM, his marriage to Henrietta Jackson, and their long voyage to Turkey are described in fascinating detail.

Part II, "Constantinople" (pp. 89–360), is the heart of the narrative. The Eastern church hierarchs had become hostile to the Protestants of the Constantinople Mission before Hamlin's arrival, and the authors charge the missionaries with a large share of the blame.

Hamlin organized production workshops for student self-support in the emerging Protestant schools, and highly successful bakeries to employ Armenian evangelicals deprived of their guild licenses and reduced to poverty. But missionary colleagues in Constantinople and Rufus Anderson at the ABCFM in Boston opposed what they termed his emphasis on "secular labors." Hamlin's insistence on lengthy educational preparation for native pastors, using English as the medium of instruction, also met with missionary opposition.

Unable to persuade either the mission agency or his colleagues of his educational philosophy, Hamlin resigned from the ABCFM in 1860. Four years earlier he had befriended Christopher R. Robert, an American philanthropist, and these pages are a colorful account of his long but successful struggle to build the college that would bear Robert's name.

Part III, "New England" (pp. 363–478), recounts Hamlin's frustrated efforts in America to raise endowment funds for Robert College. His personal relationship with Christopher Robert became strained, and the ABCFM and his former missionary colleagues blocked his return to Constantinople.
Those disappointments, compounded by Bangor Seminary's refusal to grant him permanent faculty status, and his precarious family situation without salary or other financial resources, make this section of the book almost melodramatic.

The book includes over forty photographs and other illustrations. The final pages (479-504) provide a helpful glossary of historical names, a selected bibliography, and an index.

—Norman A. Horner


Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity.


The topic of these two books is Christianity in China. My China Memoirs is the story of the personal experience of an American missionary of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), who spent twenty-three years in China between 1928 and 1951. Unfinished Encounter is an overview of the development of Chinese Christianity in light of the contemporary situation of the church in China.

Despite its title, Father Henkels's work is not a book of memoirs, but rather, an annotated chronology of his assignments and wide-ranging duties. As such, the account is certainly a useful contribution to the recordkeeping of the past activities of SVD missionaries. Unfortunately, the author provides only a few glimpses of his own mood and feelings while in China. He also rarely engages in an analysis of events or missionary work.

Some eyewitness stories of little-known events might momentarily capture the reader. But so far, it seems that Henkels has kept the most informative and captivating part of his memoirs to himself.

In Unfinished Encounter, Bob Whyte's aim is not to provide a history of Christian missions, but to trace the story of “the encounter of Christianity with the world’s oldest living civilization.” Beginning with the arrival of a Persian missionary to China in A.D. 635, he takes us as far as the middle of 1987. This often complicated story is couched in 500 concise and easy-to-read pages.

In the first one-third of the book, Whyte surveys the various attempts at extending the Christian church into China up until the Communist liberation. Then he focuses on his primary concern, which is the evolution of Chinese Christianity since 1949—its various responses to the experiences of Marxist liberation, and how it is seeking to redefine itself in relation to this new social order.

What makes this storytelling so interesting is that Whyte is constantly injecting it with theological reflections. At various stages, he stops his narrative to look at the cultural context and in what ways Christians sought to relate themselves to Chinese culture. Two themes emerge as the main focus of this theological exploration. First is Whyte's conviction that China's deepest insights are expressed through art and poetry, friendship and feasting, rather than religion. Therefore, one must seek beyond the confines of the "religious" to understand truly the spiritual elements in Chinese culture. The second point is that Marxism in China came upon the church as a judgment on its long-term association with Western powers and its captivity within the thought-forms of the Western world. Consequently, Christian theology cannot continue with any integrity if it has not come to terms with Marxism. Some Chinese Christians have done it at both the ideological and the practical levels. It is, argues Whyte, an encounter that enabled them to begin a journey beyond the forms of theology that failed China in the past.

The main reservation about the book would be that the author's description of Catholicism in China is, by far, too weak when compared to his presentation of Protestantism. Occasional spelling errors, confused identities, and distorted figures betray a lack of familiarity with Catholic sources. The weakness is most obvious in Whyte's heavy reliance on Thomas Breslin's China, American Catholicism, and the Missionary to describe the first part of the twentieth century. Breslin's study is far from giving the whole picture of Catholicism in China, but, unfortunately, is one of the rare publications available on this subject. The blame, therefore, is to be placed not so much on Bob Whyte, but on Catholic scholars for lack of substantive research. For the period since 1949, and particularly since 1979, Whyte seems to be unaware of the 1987 publication of Dr. Kim-Kwong Chan's dissertation entitled Towards a Contextual Ecclesiology—The Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China, 1979–1983: Its Life and Theological Implications.

These criticisms should not, however, detract from the intrinsic quality of Unfinished Encounter. The book should be recommended not only as the best up-to-date account of the history of Christianity in China, but also, as Dr. Robert Runcie says in the foreword, a contribution to its future.

—Jean-Paul Wiest

The Middle East: A Directory of Resources.


This newly published directory is the sixth in a series of annotated guides to publications, organizations, audio-visuals, and other resource materials. As with the previous five (which focus on Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; Food, Hunger and Agribusiness; and Women in the Third World), this volume includes a wide range of resources readily available for those who seek information and/or ways to become more directly involved with Middle East issues in the United States.

The collection includes an annotated list of twenty-seven organi-
Presbyterians in World Mission:
A Handbook for Congregations.


Since the early 1950s Brown has provided creative and devoted service in world missions, first to the former Presbyterian Church U.S. (Southern) and, since 1983, to the reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He has written about missions in China, where he grew up, and in Korea, where he served as a missionary. He is now associate professor of World Christianity at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia. His concern for the life and work of the local church, both at home and abroad, is reflected in the present volume, which is indeed “A Handbook for Congregations.”

Brown presents a balanced picture of liberation theology, its contributions and some of its dangers. He does the same for the Church Growth movement, and then points out that “Both movements have as their priority a deep and passionate concern for the same people!” (p. 87, italics his).

In chapter 8 he draws on The World Christian Encyclopedia for statistics to illustrate his own list of megatrends and their challenge for the churches. Chapter 9 focuses on the role of the local congregation in supporting missions, and the final chapter, on “The Coming Kingdom.” Appendix A gives an outline of the biblical basis of mission, and appendix B a year-round plan for mission emphasis through a local church committee. There is also a suggested list of mission books for a local church library.

—Keith R. Crim

Charles A. Kimball
Critical Choices: A Journey with the Filipino People.


Dorothy Friesen writes with an authenticity gained from years of experience in the Philippines, first as codirector of Mennonite work there and then as researcher/journalist who has probed deeply and listened sympathetically to the Filipinos in their struggle against oppression. She writes with passion and conviction, conveying a vivid sense of the courage, the determination, and the hope of Filipinos seeking to build a free and just society.

Friesen is particularly good in describing life in the countryside, capturing the mood and longings of ordinary peasants and workers. She combines these personal impressions with political/economic analysis that U.S. churches especially need to ponder. As in other third-world countries, the Philippines suffers from U.S. economic and military policies that favor the few at the expense of the many, branding nationalistic strivings as communist and anti-American. A "politics of empathy" (p. 267) would lead to greater understanding on America's part and help us Americans to realize our interconnectedness and the common interests we share.

The great tragedy following the overthrow of Marcos is seen in the way the many hopeful new possibilities ushered in by the Aquino presidency have been undercut by the lack of land reform and an uncontrolled military, supported by U.S. policies that are against Philippine interests.

Friesen's book would have been strengthened by a consideration of the historical significance of the nonviolent overthrow of Marcos and the continuing relevance of radical nonviolence in completing the revolution that was begun with the ending of the dictatorship. The problem of means and ends remains one of the critical issues for Christians working for social transformation.

—Richard L. Deats

A Sense of the Sacred: A Biography of Bede Griffiths.


Bede Griffiths is well known to all who are interested in Hindu-Christian dialogue. His books and lectures have familiarized many with what he has called "the Marriage between East and West." We are much indebted to Kathryn Spink for this engaging biography. The author provides detailed information on Bede Griffith's childhood and youth, his studies and his friends, his years at Oxford and at Prinkash. She tells us how the acquaintance with Father Alapatt, a priest from Kerala who had entered a European Benedictine monastery, made grow in Father Griffith's mind the idea to establish a Christian monastic community in India as an expression of the contemplative tradition of Christianity assumed to be closer to the Indian religious genius than the usual bustle of Christian missions.

Father Bede Griffith's attempt to translate his dream into reality—spanning altogether over forty years by now—proved to be much more difficult than either he or the reader of this book might have expected. Human, all-too-human factors made it more than once necessary to relocate and to start again, before settling in Saccidananda-Ashram, where earlier Father Monchanin and Swami Abhishiktananda had worked. Even here the subversive activities and hostilities—interestingly enough all coming from the same church to which Father Bede belongs—made life often difficult to the point of near despair.

Kathryn Spink is an admirer of Father Bede and she succeeds in evoking in the reader a sense of admiration and affection for her hero. But one cannot hide the feeling that the dream of transplanting Christian monasticism to India and grafting it onto the tree of Indian samnyasa has failed.

—Klaus K. Klostermaier


This volume contains facsimiles of three manuscripts: Roth's Grammatica linguae Sanscretanae Brachmanum Indiae Orientalis (Ms. Or. 171, fols. 1r–48); Venidatta's Pañcatattvaprakāśa (Ms. Or. 172, fols. 1r–17v); and Sadananda's Vedaṭṭasāra with Roth's comments (Ms. Or. 172, fols. 18r–34r). These are preceded by Arnulf Camps' introduction (pp. 1–3) and an article on Roth and the history of his Sanskrit manuscripts (pp. 5–12); Richard Hauschild's notes on the contents of Roth's manuscripts (pp. 13–19), translated and revised by Jean-Claude Muller; Bruno Zimmels' list of Roth's letters, reports, and manuscripts, translated and revised by A. Camps (pp. 20–22); and a bibliography.

George Cardona, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, is the author of various works in Indo-Aryan, with particular interest in Indian grammatical traditions.
on Heinrich Roth (pp. 23-25) by Jean-Claude Muller.

The manuscript of Roth's "Sanskrit Grammar" is the most interesting work included in this book; the manuscript's history, from its composition between 1660 and 1662 to its rediscovery in 1967, makes fascinating reading. The work itself is also of considerable interest for what it reveals of Sanskrit grammar. Hauschild says "Sanskrit Grammar" is the most interesting work included in this book, which says simply tartamāṇe and gives the endings ti, and so forth. The Siddhāntacandrīkā mentions that these are referred to by the name lat. Also interesting, as possibly showing Roth's background, is his use of certain terminology, such as (fol. 22') intran­sitivum, transitivum for Sanskrit itma ­nepadī, parasmaipadī, used of verbs that take middle and active endings respectively. The facsimile of Roth's grammar makes me look forward with considerable anticipation to the final edition and editorial notes concerning this fine piece of work by a pioneer.

—George Cardona

Religion and Politics in Korea under the Japanese Rule.


Some subjects lend themselves to propagandistic treatments, and the tragic story of religion and politics in Korea under the Japanese colonial administration from 1905 to 1945 makes possible such a telling. Fortunately, this study by Wi Jo Kang, professor of missions at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, is a balanced treatment of this intensely controversial subject. Because a proper understanding of the events of this period is crucial for any interpretation of the history of religion in Korea, and particularly the history of Christianity, we are fortunate in having this even-handed study to cover what has hitherto been a relatively neglected era of modern Korean religious history.

After a brief introductory chapter on Korea's religions, Kang launches into what is the centerpiece of his study, "Christianity and Japanese Politics." The major problem that he tackles is why Christianity (as well as the Korean indigenous religion of Chondo­gyo) became such a thorn in the flesh of the Japanese colonial rulers, when Buddhism and Confucianism caused them very few problems. The account provides an overview of the main events of the story, and generally manages to give the Japanese credit when that is due, as well as to paint the darker side of the picture.

Another fascinating question with which Kang wrestles is why Korean Protestants, and Presbyterians in particular, were frequently at loggerheads with the Japanese rulers, while the Roman Catholics experienced fewer tensions. Kang concludes: "The Roman Catholics in Korea generally enjoyed steady growth after the Japanese annexation and had fewer conflicts with the Japanese administration. The Roman Church in Korea was not as strong as the Protestant Church and lacked the Protestants' ability to actively confront the Government" (p. 37). Theologically, things were made smoother for Catholics throughout the Japanese empire by the decision of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1936 to accept the Japanese government's interpretation that participation in Shinto rites was nonreligious and therefore could be carried out by Catholics (p. 37). For Protestants, and especially for Presbyterians, these rites were generally held to be idolatrous, and severe conflicts ensued before the Presbyterian church's General Assembly finally buckled under the pressures. These events bear interesting parallels with the tensions between Korean Christians and the South Korean governments in the 1970s and 1980s, when both Catholics and Protestants provided both protesters against and cooperators with the government.

By way of contrast, Kang shows, Korean Buddhism did not offer much resistance to Japanese colonial rule, but was actually helped by Japanese policies that encouraged Buddhists to carry out religious work in the cities, and not just in isolated rural areas where the famous old Buddhist temples were located. Confucianism was weakest of all, reports Kang, while the indigenous religion of Chondo­gyo offered the strongest resistance to Japanese rule, and accordingly suffered the most.

All told, this is a valuable contribution to the history of religions in modern Korea. Unfortunately, the book has numerous typographic errors, which can be annoying, as for instance on page 7, where "1938" should have been "1939." Some careful proofreading could have eliminated these distractions from what is otherwise a fine study.

—James M. Phillips

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James M. Phillips, Associate Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, served as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea (1949–52) and in Japan (1959–75).
With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology.


A significant collection of original essays, With Passion and Compassion provides an outline of the common struggle of third-world women to forge their own liberative theology. The contributors to this volume include leading Roman Catholic and Protestant women theologians and church leaders who are engaged in the emancipatory role of women. A common feature of the history of third-world countries is that it is grounded in patriarchalism, colonialism, and missionary paternalism, which has led to the denial of the full humanity of women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The papers presented in this volume have come from a process that began in New Delhi, India, at the first assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, in 1981. The topics discussed include: Bible, Christology, ecclesiology, spirituality, and the methodology of women doing theology. The three divisions of the book are made according to the continental contributions—Africa, Asia, and Latin America—and the subjects in each are presented in a thematic fashion.

Third-world women envision a new church emerging from the Bible. They strongly believe that the Bible needs to be reread and reinterpreted with feminine eyes and that a feminine interpretation is indispensable as a balance to the masculine. They also believe that there is need for developing a theology of God as Mother to complement and balance that of God as Father, since neither is meant to concentrate biological realities but to approximate our affirmation that God is the source of life.

Spirituality is expressed in faith, which originates and develops in the context of struggles to overcome oppressions. Accordingly, the theological reflections in this volume constitute powerful statements of faith that challenge the existing patriarchal structures. Spirituality is articulated in relation to the path of Jesus Christ, the true liberator of the oppressed and the suffering. This point is highlighted in the context of the utter poverty that women undergo in the third world.

One of the special features of the methodology is that it takes women's experience of struggle and multiple oppression more seriously than the academic input.

The papers presented bear the imprint of personal and collective compassion. "Passionate compassion," an unavoidable moral quality of justice, is not an ideal to be fulfilled, but a balance of complexities to be achieved. Jesus Christ, a man of passion, stands with women for their self-affirmation and dignity.

The emphasis on "partnership" between man and woman rooted in the principle of mutuality without discrimination on the basis of given sex differentiation, found in a few papers, is worth noting, and this may be taken as a special contribution on the part of third-world women theologians.

This is a book worth reading for anyone seriously engaged in the mission of the church in the contemporary world.

—Leelamma Athyal

Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology.


In this book Jacques Ellul is in his best polemical style. The theme that unites this collection of essays and comments is the critique of a wide variety of Christian ideologies, most of them on the left but a few on the right, and a vigorous defense of the revolutionary iconoclasm of the word of God and its vision of the kingdom breaking into human history.

The objects of Ellul's analysis are mostly French, but the types are familiar everywhere. As an old Marxist, he recognizes the real challenge that the Marxist movement presents to Christianity: the struggle for justice, concern for the poor, the union of theology and praxis, involvement with material reality, and a militant communal spirit. The translator in fact suggests in her preface that the sharpness of Ellul's polemics reflects his own wrestling with this challenge. Marx's exposure of the ideology in Christian theology and church life is Ellul's premise. For this very reason, however, he takes the field against expressions of the gospel in terms of new pseudo-Marxist ideologies.

Ellul's polemic is a double-edged sword. He discerns in most of his opponents not a full-blooded Marxism but the adoption of slogans from its literature plus romantic identification with the praxis of its movement. He finds in their theologies refusal to face the transcendent judgment of God on the sin that is part of all human institutions and causes. Concern for the poor is a biblical command; to treat the poor as bearers of salvation is idolatrous. To respond to the saving word of God is liberating faith; to test divine truth by its service to human self-liberation is ideology. To depend on the saving power of God or of the people's revolution, is human religion and false confidence. Marxism is such a human religion. True Marxists, however, do not deceive themselves and others by mixing the biblical God with their humanist faith.

All of this is vintage Ellul. This book is a continuation of his lifetime themes into new debates with "hor-
among the Cherokee and some southwestern tribes, during which time he came to know and learn from several professional anthropologists. Upon his return to Canada, according to Nock, Wilson published a number of pamphlets defending native rights to cultural sovereignty, under the pen name of Fair Play. The book contains appendices with examples of these papers, along with Venn’s excellent memoir of 1868, setting forth his thought on cultural synthesis.

—Charles C. West

A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement.


Edward Francis Wilson was an Anglican missionary who came to Canada in 1868 under the commission of the Church Missionary Society and the great Henry Venn. This book is an account of Wilson’s ministerial and intellectual pilgrimage, especially in his thought on missionary policy. Wilson, like a number of other zealous evangelicals, began by ignoring the advanced cultural-religious counsels of Venn, who advocated a praxis of cultural synthesis, that is, the gradual and creative interaction between host and missionary cultures. Thus did Wilson spend the first portion of his ministry as principal of two different residential schools, whose policy was to purge thoroughly Indian children of all traces of native identity. The reader may read an excellent first-hand account of such a school in Ojibway Basil Johnston’s Indian School Days.

Wilson came gradually to see the damage this “replacement” practice and theory did to native children. He was converted to Venn’s ideas by his own lengthy travels southward

Carl F. Starkloff, S.J., is Associate Professor of Pastoral and Systematic Theology in Regis College, Toronto School of Theology. He has worked among the Arapaho and Shoshone tribes in the United States, and is now an instructor for native ministry formation at Anishinabe Spiritual Centre at Anderson Lake, Ontario.
Le Dieu qui vient: La mission dans la Bible.


This book is a splendid contribution to the biblical theology of mission. It comes from Bangalore, India, where Father Legrand teaches Holy Scripture at St. Peter’s Pontifical Seminary and where he cares for the publication of the excellent quarterly Indian Theological Studies. Actually many preliminary studies for the present book have already come out there in English. Here we have the final sheaf, the product of a mature biblical scholar, perfectly at home in the world of international research in the subject.

The first part of the book is devoted to the Old Testament, the second to the message of Jesus, the third to the early church in mission, the fourth to conclusions and questions. There is a short bibliography and an index of biblical quotations.

When compared with the other big Roman Catholic contribution in the field, The Biblical Foundations for Missions, by D. Senior and C. Stuhlmueller (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), Legrand’s book stands out by a greater attention to exegetical details and a greater independence from current missionary discussions, for example, about the policy of inculturation or dialogue with people of other faiths. He sees mission in the Bible within the framework of a developing history of salvation where, of course, Israel has a central place but where the gentiles have also received their place through Jesus Christ. He does not look for biblical justification of past and present missionary policies, but refreshing exposes the bias that has crept into the interpretation of many biblical passages used in missiological discussions. He clearly states the difference between “mission in the Bible” and “mission today.” Of course, there are many forms of mission in the Bible and, as such, diversity is always legitimate. The main point, however, according to Legrand, is the theocentric emphasis of the Bible, not exactly in the sense of the famous theology of the missio Dei (mission of God), but more precisely in the sense that mission is marching toward God, who is coming to God’s people. Mission is not only sending, but also calling back to the center, to the depth of God’s power and God’s wisdom. Mission is not only proclaiming the word of God and taking action on God’s behalf, but also “listening to his silence” (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 15:2, quoted p. 209) in prayer and in joyful hope of the eschatological plenitude.

The present reviewer discerns in Legrand’s final thrust the double influence of the Indian religious context and of the French school of spirituality illustrated in India by Father Jules Monchanin and Dom Le Saux (Abhishtikananda). We are greatly indebted to Father Legrand for his unique combination of sound scholarship and deep spirituality.

—Marc R. Spindler

A Guide to Christian Churches in the Middle East: Present-day Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa.


The author is well qualified to prepare this unique and invaluable guide to the origins, characteristics, membership, geographical distribution, and relationships of the various Christian communions in the Middle East. For several years he lived and traveled in the Middle East, becoming personally acquainted with the various eastern churches. In 1974 the Near East Council of Churches published his 110-page booklet, Rediscovering Christianity Where

It Began: A Survey of Contemporary Churches in the Middle East and Ethiopia. In 1983 he undertook extensive travel and research to update his material and add to it.

This concise handbook packages a wealth of information on the variety of Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic churches bordering the Mediterranean east and south. Eastern churches show a vitality surprising to American Christians. Many churchgoers assume that Christianity faded from the Middle East with the end of the Crusades. Many do not know, for example, that a significant percentage of Palestinians are Christians, or that Lebanon’s Christian element, about 40 percent of today’s population, comprises a variety of traditions and viewpoints. Eastern Christians face complicated and often explosive issues. They expect western Christians to be informed, understanding, and supportive.

Dr. Horner also describes a unique and dynamic ecumenical situation among the churches. Probably no other area of the world has the same interconnectedness of ancient Christian traditions. In that network churches are developing new relationships to one another, as well as to their social and political environment. That dynamism is described in the closing chapter, “The Churches in Today’s Region-Wide Turmoil.”

This modest treatment is a useful guide for anyone studying Christianity in the Middle East or traveling there. It can open a new window of understanding. Though further changes have occurred since the manuscript was completed in 1986, it is still the best and only adequate treatment of the topic, with a good bibliography.

—Benjamin M. Weir
Ancestor Worship and Christianity in Korea.


This book consists of seven essays of which some were presented at the Consultation on Korean Religions, held in 1983 at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, in Dallas, and others in Taipei at the 1983 Consultation on Christian Presence to Ancestor Practice.

The writers are all Koreans who are actively involved in academic circles nationally and internationally in the field of religions and Christian theology. Their theme is very timely because of the diverse opinions and reactions in Korean churches regarding traditional ancestor rites. The book treats ancestor worship from the perspectives of Korean tradition, Korean church history, Confucianism and Catholicism, modernization, family life, and from the theological perspective.

The contributors suggest positive and creative adjustments toward ancestor worship in Korea in order to revitalize the traditional cultural aspect of it, and at the same time to transform its character. As Jung Young Lee points out, “What we need to do with the practice of ancestor worship is to retain it as a cultural and ethical heritage while at the same time nullifying its idolatrous character” (p. 88). Wi Jo Kang proposes a model of eucharistic service for use in Christian homes to be led by the head of the family upon occasions for remembering ancestors of the family (p. 75).

Yet the writers stress concern and caution about including ancestor worship in the formal worship life of Korean Christians. One can appreciate that the authors are struggling with the issues. Bong-Ho Son writes, “Whether Korean Christians should object to the ancestral rites in this diluted form has to be carefully studied. . . . Ancestor worship should be examined not only in terms of the Second commandment but also in terms of the Fifth” (p. 70). There is much insight to draw out from this very provocative book.

—Chun Chae Ok

Chun Chae Ok is Professor of Missiology, Department of Christian Studies, Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, Korea.
one now living. Robert S. Bilheimer, as Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (i.e. Chief of Staff to W. A. Visser't Hooft), prior to coming to Geneva in 1948 had served as leader in both the Interseminary and Student Volunteer Movements. At the WCC he served as Visser't Hooft's organizer of assemblies and conferences, as troubleshooter and emissary. Year after year, often taking the minutes, he worked within the ecumenical pantheon. His profiles of leaders such as John Mackay, John R. Mott, Henry P. Van Dusen, Robert Mackie, Paul Abrecht, M. M. Thomas, D. T. Niles, Kathleen Bliss, Frederick Nolde, Madeleine Barot and, most of all, Visser't Hooft are priceless for those who wish to understand the dynamics of power and personality that brought into being the WCC.

The Triune God, the Lordship of Christ, and the church as the Body of Christ form the theological center and major passion of Bilheimer's ecumenical commitment ("career" would be too superficial a designation). The church as the Body of Christ is, I gather, for Bilheimer the conviction that sustained him through the endless meetings and dilemmas of those years as churches, cultures, and personalities sought to find a powerful new unity in God and Christ.

These words of the writer are a resounding conclusion to this intriguing book: " . . . the ecumenically oriented Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant Christians have more in common with one another than they have with the non-ecumenically oriented persons and institutions within their own confessions" (p. 220).

If I were now serving as General Secretary of the WCC, I would insist upon two things: first, that in addition to the standard and comprehensive histories of the ecumenical movement, each new WCC staff member be required to read this book and, second, that Bilheimer be called back to chair a WCC Conference on "The Future of the WCC."

—Walter D. Wagoner

Walter D. Wagoner, a minister of the United Church of Christ, attended both the Evanston and New Delhi assemblies of the WCC. In addition to parish ministries, he also served as director of the Rockefeller Brothers Program in Theological Education, and as director of the Boston Theological Institute.

Missions and Missionaries in the Pacific.


This book is a compendium of articles by three professors of history—James A. Boutilier, Royal Roads Military College, Canada; Char Miller, Trinity University, Texas; and Charles W. Forman, Yale University, recently retired. They discuss three issues pertinent to missionary enterprise in the Pacific: conversion, family relationships, and financial independence. By taking a historical approach, the authors are able to present a full picture of events in the largest of the world's culture areas during the transition from neo- to post-colonialism.

Boutilier focuses on conversion and missionaries as agents of change in "We Fear Not for the Ultimate Triumph: Factors Affecting the Conversion Phase of Nineteenth-Century Missionary Enterprises." Beyond the spiritual endeavor, missionaries were not so very different from other entrepreneurs, colonial masters, beachcombers, and other outsiders. Pressures for change from outside confronted local belief systems and often precipitated conversion. As today, missionary attitudes largely affected local response.

In "Domestically Abroad: Work and Family in the Sandwich Island Mission, 1820-1840," Miller uses a case study to demonstrate the tension between "a missionary's public role and private life" (p. 66). Commitment to family in regard to ministry affects conversions, as well as personal success or failure of family members.

Forman's thesis is in his title, "Playing Catch-Up Ball: The History of Financial Dependence in Pacific Island Churches." In reality, Pacific churches have been more financially independent than most regions, and islanders provided an early model for local mission outreach. As the expense of modernity and internationalization impacts churches, however, "the policies of their founding missions" condition their attitude with respect to finances (p. 109).

Despite the poor-yet-expensive packaging (computer-printout format, typos, and repetitions), these timely, well-researched articles present the communication premise that presenter attitudes affect recipient response. The title belies the wealth of ideas contained in the pages of this book.

—R. Daniel Shaw

New Religious Movements in Nigeria.


This fifth volume in the African Studies series of Edwin Mellen Press is concerned with basic realities of the phenomenon under discussion. The editor, who has done excellent work on religious life in West Africa and teaches at the University of Tennessee, brings together case studies on the new religious movements by eight contributors, including herself, of whom only two are not Nigerians.

Studies of new religious movements (NRM) at the grassroots level should be encouraged, and the editor herself has done significant work. Studies in the book include aspects of traditional religions, Islamic millenni-
ianism, and the Mahdist tradition in Nigeria; a phenomenological study of the beliefs of an indigenous church as well as a sociological analysis of the growth and change in this church; aspects of the Aladura movement, with its readiness to adapt to the Nigerian existential situation, are analyzed; a mass movement is historically surveyed; an independent church with great emphasis on the parousia receives special attention; a study on schism and religious independency in Nigeria shows the various phases in this process; the role of women in the

“Spiritual Churches” is highlighted—women derive obvious psychological and sociological benefits from being members of these churches; a contribution on the public response—varied, complex, and often paradoxical—is also significant, as much has to change in the so-called historic religious attitudes toward the NRM.

This book of case studies meets the new religious situation at the grassroots level. One gets the impression that in spite of diversity there is an underlying unity. Furthermore, these movements having originated in crisis situations, reveal “this worldly pragmatism,” as the editor indicates; they give scope for the development of spiritual powers; they are sociopolitically conservative but make a distinct contribution through their symbolism, liturgy, prayer, and healing. This is a movement of self-determination.

These studies are of great value and should serve as models for the type of research that needs to be done on the new religious movements.

—G. C. Oosthuizen

The Moral Nation:
Humanitarianism and U.S.
Foreign Policy Today.

Edited by Bruce Nichols and Gil Loescher.

At the outset, the very title of this book sets one’s teeth on edge. The United States as “the moral nation”? By whose judgment? On the basis of what criteria? In spite of Vietnam, Central America, the growing mass of homeless and imprisoned? Certainly some degree of humility would be appropriate. It is this very air of self-righteousness that offends so many in other nations. Yet as the book proceeds, one gains the impression that the title is given somewhat with tongue in cheek, appropriate. It is this very air of self-righteousness that offends so many in other nations. Yet as the book proceeds, one gains the impression that the title is given somewhat with tongue in cheek, yet there is much in the book that is worth careful consideration. This reviewer found the following essays especially valuable: (1) Henry Shue’s “Morality, Politics, and Humanitarian Assistance,” which introduces three aspects of morality (constraints, mandates, and ideals), and examines...
their relationship to "national interest." (2) Peter Macalister-Smith's "Humanitarian Action and International Law," which contains helpful information regarding the present status of international law in relation to humanitarian action. (3) Gil Loescher's "Humanitarianism and Politics in Central America," a careful on-site analysis of the political factors affecting the refugee situation in three "receiving" countries (Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica) and how U.S. foreign policy has played a major role both in creating the refugee situation and in determining the refugee policies of those countries to which refugees have fled. (4) Jason W. Clay's "Ethiopian Famine and the Relief Agencies," a carefully reasoned and documented account of how U.S. food assistance, administered by numerous U.S. relief agencies, actually aggravated the Ethiopian famine by aiding the Ethiopian government in the forced resettlement of untold thousands in the midst of Ethiopia's civil war.

In spite of the shortcomings mentioned above, the book deserves the attention of Christian mission and relief/development agencies, if for no other reason than to understand better the sad state of confusion that now prevails in humanitarian assistance vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy. It confirms the conviction of this reviewer that such agencies need first to be "wise as serpents," recognizing that all humanitarian efforts ultimately have political implications; and then, to clarify their own Christian motivation for undertaking such efforts, so as to know if and when to cooperate with governmental "humanitarian assistance," and when to stand prophetically against it and advocate such resistance as an essential aspect of Christian mission.

—James A. Cogswell

The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter.


Professor Lochhead, who teaches at Vancouver School of Theology, is convinced that interfaith dialogue is essential and not optional for the church, because dialogue is the right relationship to the world as a whole. Mission is cosmic dialogue. Some, however, are not ready or presently capable of dialogue and so "dialogue is either impossible or obligatory." There are great riches in this small book, especially its new typology to replace the old scheme of Exclusive/Inclusive/Pluralist. Lochhead is keenly alert to sociological dimensions and proposes Isolation, Hostility, Competition, Partnership, and Dialogue as the ruling character of different relationships. As in the ecumenical experience within the churches, dialogue partners should meet as genuinely "other" to each other, without any insistence on a theological conversion as a precondition for dialogue. Here he is particularly critical of the theocentric school, who allege that it is impossible to enter dialogue with a high Chris-

Christopher Lamb served as a missionary in Pakistan, was engaged in research into the Christian mission to Islam, and is now Community Relations Adviser to the (Anglican) Diocese of Coventry, based at Coventry Cathedral, England.


Only a respected student of the world's religions could have permitted himself the luxury of clearing out his files in public, as Geoffrey Parrinder, emeritus professor of the comparative study of religion at London University, seems to have done in this anecdotal, inconclusive volume. Parrinder, at the end of an adventurous career, modestly offers more questions than answers, concerning the value to be attached to interreligious dialogue and shared devotions, approaches to teaching the religious traditions of other people, the degree to which truth claims in the several traditions can be reconciled, and the right conduct of Christian mission in the light of the foregoing. With sparkling insight he parallels, for example, Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church in the Korean Christian and Buddhist environment with an independent church in an African setting.

Respect for historical evidence emerges as one of two operative norms in Parrinder's evaluation of competing religious communities. British witches, by this standard, do not warrant credit, because they have exaggerated their linkage to pre-Christian European religious traditions.

Parrinder's other absolute is respect for the life and liberty of others. By this standard he is able to say that "the religion of the ancient Aztecs, who held up the beating hearts of their victims to the sun, was clearly not so good a faith as the peaceful way of the Buddha" (p. 224). One misses, in these generous and candid musings, any fresh suggestion of the grounds for such judgments.

Parrinder rejects an exclusive view of the truth of Christian (or other) teaching as too domineering and too closed to the possibility of multiple or ongoing revelation. He rejects a pluralist view as tending toward either indifference or an ill-informed expectation that religions can escape being influenced by one another. He is left with an inclusivist view, namely, that all other ways pass unawares but complementarily through the universal Christ. The trouble is that this theoretical solution is not supported by...
Parrinder’s empirical work. In Islam, whose Scripture he has previously studied in detail, he finds no openness to the notion that God was in Jesus reconciling the world to himself on a cross.

Parrinder ends by reinforcing the Christian missionary dilemma: Christians “can only” continue to bear witness on the basis of the gospel record; yet as a practical matter they can expect this witness to find acceptance chiefly among “idolaters and illiterates.” Theistic Hindus and Buddhists are unlikely to respond; Jews should “certainly not” be addressed, and Muslims “probably not” (p. 205). More frustrating guidance from the study of religions for the practice of Christian outreach would be hard to imagine.

—Richard J. Jones

Dissertation Notices

Aigbe, Sunday Agbons.
“The Prophetic Role of a Church in a Developing Economy: The Case of The Assemblies of God in Nigeria.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989.

Chea, José Luis.
“The Process and the Implications of Change in the Guatemalan Catholic Church.”
Ph.D. Austin, Tex.: Univ. of Texas, 1988.

Chiow, Samuel.

Davies, Ronald Edwin.
“Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord: The Missiological Thought and Practice of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758).”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989.

Desmither, Carol Marie.
“From Calling to Career: Work and Professional Identity among American Women Missionaries to China, 1900–1950.”

Efesoa Mokosso, Henry Teddy.

Kim, Man-Poong.
“Faithfulness, Guilt, and Shame in Women of the Yi Dynasty in Korea: With Contemporary Illustrations and Implications for Pastoral Care and Counseling in the Korean Church in the Republic of Korea.”

Lee, Chun Kwan.
“The Theology of Revival in the Chinese Christian Church, 1900–1949: Its Emergence and Impact.”

Noelliste, Dieumene E.
“The Church and Human Emancipation: A Critical Comparison of Liberation Theology and the Latin American Theological Fraternity.”

Priest, Douglas D., Jr.
“The Problem of Animal Sacrifice among Maasai Christians.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989.

Ramsey, Dwayne George.
“College Evangelists and Foreign Missions: The Student Volunteer Movement, 1886–1920.”
Ph.D. Davis, Calif.: Univ. of California, 1988.

Simmons, James Samuel, Jr.
“An Inquiry into the Correlation between Theology and Mission as Illustrated in the History of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.”

Sohmer, Sara Harrison.

Thompson, Michael D.

Widder, Keith Robert.

Wosh, Peter J.
“Bibles, Benevolence and Emerging Bureaucracy: The Persistence of the American Bible Society.”
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Nov. 6-9: Gospel and Culture: Missions in Creative Tension. Dr. G. Linwood Barney, Alliance Theological Seminary. $60


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Aldrich, Robert.
The French Presence in the South Pacific, 1842–1940.

Anderson, Bernard and John Correia-Afonso, eds.
Annual Bibliography of Christianity in India, No. 8, 1988.

Bonk, Jonathon J.

Francis, T. Dayanandan, ed.

Geisendorfer, James V.
A Directory of Religious and Parareligious Bodies and Organizations in the United States.

Jomier, Jacques.
How to Understand Islam.

Keenan, John P.

Littell, Franklin, ed.

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The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims.

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The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Chrisma and Institutional Dilemmas.

Stern, David H.
Messianic Jewish Manifesto.

Vroom, Hendrik M.
Religions and the Truth: Philosophical Reflection and Perspectives.

Wietzke, Joachim, ed.

In Coming Issues

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The Journey of the Lausanne Movement
Valdir R. Steurnagel

Personality Disorders and the Selection Process for Overseas Missionaries
Esther Schubert, M.D.

The Christian Gospel and World Religions: Will Evangelicals Ever Change?
Ralph R. Covell

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